

BAB I

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The main function of literature according to Scholes, Silverman and Klaus (1978: xxv) is for understanding and communication. Literature helps to find meaning in the world and to express it and share it with others. And this is the most humane activity of man's existence. Scholes, Silverman and Klaus differentiate four forms of literature: essay, fiction, poetry, and drama.

The other functions of literature are that literature uses language to relate to the world of experience, and literature uses language to communicate to a reader in two ways, namely, first, in the way these words are used either to create imaginary people and events, or, second, in the way to give immediate expression to ideas and feelings about experience.

The reader develops an interest in an imaginary world, or feels sympathy for ideas and feelings about experience. This is possible because of the ways in which the language of literature is communicated to a reader, either addressed directly or overheard by the reader (Scholes, Silverman and Klaus: xvii).

The four forms of literature are distinguished according to the ways the language of literature is conveyed to the reader. The essay uses language to establish ideas addressed directly by the essayist to the reader with persuasion as its essential quality. The poem uses language to express feelings addressed by a speaker talking or thinking to himself or herself rather than to the reader with meditation as its essential quality. The story uses language to create a view of imaginary persons and events through the report of a storyteller to the reader with narration as its essential quality. The play or drama uses language to create action through the dialogue of imaginary persons talking to one another rather than to the reader with interaction as its essential quality (Scholes, Silverman and Klaus: xviii).

The Scarlet Letter is a fiction which comes under the form of the story. As Scholes, Silverman and Klaus (1978: 101) say a fiction is "a made-up story". They show the relation between fact and fiction, as etymologically both are derivatives of Latin words which have the same meaning: "fact" comes from "facere" means "to make" or "do", "fiction" comes from "fingere" means "to make" or "shape". "Fact" is associated with "reality" and "truth", "fiction," is

consorted with "unreality" and "falsehood." Fiction thus has the meaning of "a thing made". Fiction can be very factual, maintaining the closest possible correspondence between its story and things that have actually happened in the world, or it can be very fanciful, defying readers sense of life's ordinary possibilities. It can be concluded that fiction itself has a real existence, and the reader's experience of fiction is unreal, though it has some resemblance to life.

The writer thus has chosen a novel for her analysis due to one valid end, that is to prepare herself for her part in the literary experience of Nathaniel Hawthorne to the enrichment of life.

Life itself is a sequence of sensations, actions, thoughts, and events that is expressed with language in order to please the reader as a relief from the confusions and pressures of daily existence, and by understanding the author's experience in fiction helps the writer to understand her own experience.

The writer is interested in the author Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-1864), who called The Scarlet Letter "not a novel but a romance" (Hillegass, 1960: 54). Nathaniel Hawthorne says that a novel tries to get its readers to get ideas from its characters who behave

themselves as ordinary people in a certain setting. Whereas a romance in Hawthorne's idea is that his characters stand for ideas, that means readers can understand the characters since the characters show some strong and constant light on the readers to form a more beautiful and romantic impression than the reality for a long time. This idea is supported by the definition of romance as "a fictional work that presents a world better than the real world" (Scholes, Silverman and Klaus: 105). Thus Hawthorne wants to raise the story beyond the grim and strict reality of the Puritanic world of Salem (Boston) as the setting of The Scarlet Letter (Hillegass: 55).

The writer admires the author in his ways of making use of language to enable the writer to understand the experiences of Roger Chillingworth, Hester Prynne and her child Pearl, and Arthur Dimmesdale in the world of the New England Puritans of Boston (Hawthorne, 1961: 213). The Puritanic characters of self-sacrifice, persistency, honesty and unswerving loyalty lead to their intolerance of others. Their belief in man's nature of sinfulness such as murder, robbery, adultery should be "purified" without compassion, forgiveness and be punished for the whole life, for instance, to wear a letter on his or her clothing

which identified his or her crime (Hawthorne: 214), as in the case of Hester the letter "A" for "Adultery" (Hawthorne: 215).

The religious enthusiasm of the Puritans with their strict enforcement of the laws set forth by the government and the church with reference to the teachings found in the Bible (Hawthorne: 213) has caused the characters to suffer in most part of the story. Roger Chillingworth the revenging husband, Hester Prynne the unfaithful wife, and Arthur Dimmesdale the sinful minister as Hester's lover, whose illegal relation results in a child called Pearl, undergo severe physical and mental stress. Roger's wicked character, Hester's strong determination, and Arthur's weak character cause each of them to contribute a part in the carrying out of revenge and in the seeking for absolution.

The writer has chosen the characters in this novel as her data source for analysis with the reason in order to bring out some light on the understanding of the characters, especially on Chillingworth. She tries to understand why Chillingworth and each of the other characters act as they do in the novel and in this way she can benefit herself from the impression and understanding of the characters to enrich her own

character in her daily life. The writer's analysis is entitled "A Character Study of Hester Prynne's Husband in Hawthorne's The Scarlet Letter".

1.2 Statement of the Problems

Based on the background above, the writer wants to put forward the problems for her analysis, they are:

1.2.1 How is Roger Chillingworth's character?

1.2.2 Why and how does Roger Chillingworth carry out revenge?

1.2.3 Why is Roger Chillingworth called "the leech"?

1.2.4 How does Roger Chillingworth affect Arthur Dimmesdale to obtain absolution?

1.3 Objective of the Study

Through this analysis, the writer tries to find out:

1.3.1 How Roger Chillingworth character is;

1.3.2 Why and how Roger Chillingworth carries out revenge;

1.3.3 Why Roger Chillingworth is called "the leech";

1.3.4 How Roger Chillingworth affects Arthur Dimmesdale to obtain absolution.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The writer hopes that through this thesis, the readers come to understand about the factors for people's revenge and absolution especially the factors which lead to denying the love and committing adultery. By knowing the reasons for their misleading behaviors, they can learn to avoid bad temptations and to lead a better purposeful life. Besides people can learn to preserve the purity of love to prevent themselves from deceiving each other, and to reject adultery when it comes to tempt them. Adultery makes people enjoy the forbidden pleasures, but get people to take the consequences, either in bearing the revenge of those who are the victims of their sin, or in overcoming the pressures of their own sin to declare the absolution. There are things in life which are more rewarding, such as loyalty and love. In this way people can learn to appreciate happiness rather than fake misleading pleasures.

The writer hopes this thesis can be a contribution to the character building which helps someone to suppress hatred and revenge and to avoid unnecessary declaration of absolution, and to cultivate love and loyalty in a pure relationship in life.

1.5 Scope and limitation

The writer's scope of discussion focuses on the character Roger Chillingworth, as Hester's husband, and as "the leech" in affecting Arthur Dimmesdale, as Hester's lover, in obtaining absolution. She focuses also on the factors which cause them to deceive their purity and so to develop revenge on the part of the deceived one, and in the end to declare absolution on the part of the deceiver, as consequences of their sin. The writer, therefore, limits her discussion on Roger Chillingworth character and the factors for his revenge and the factors for the absolution, and how the revenge and absolution are carried out to come to happy solution in the end.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

1.6.1 Character and Characterization

In literature the word character refers to "a person represented in a story, novel, play, etc" (Shaw, 1972: 70). Character also refers to those qualities of personality that account for the individual's significant purposes and conducts. Whereas, personality is defined as the sum total of one's integrated traits and reaction tendencies, a composite of characteristics expressed in habits, attitudes,

ideas, motives, and behavior patterns. (Smith, Barnes & Bates, 1983: 220)

Characterization is the giving of characteristics or specifically the inner qualities to a character in a story by an author. These characteristics or personalities determine how a character reacts to various conditions and attempts to shape his or her environment in the story (Robert, 1977: 54).

1.6.2 The "Leech"

The original meaning of "leech" as given by Webster (1990: 682) is "physician or surgeon". This meaning comes from the practice that former physicians made use of the help of a freshwater annelid worm to bloodsuck a patient in order to get the patient's blood. The worm usually bloodsucks carnivorous animals. From this practice by the worm or the "leech" comes the verb "to leech" which means "to bleed by the use of a leech". This means in order to get blood from a patient the doctor uses the leech which sucks out the patient's blood without his or her realizing it.

The meaning later on develops into the meaning "to drain the substance of an animal or human and in order to exhaust the substance". The literary meaning then gains its connotative meaning used figuratively, that is, "*the leech*" is "*a hanger-on who seeks advan-*

tage or gain", the verb "to leech" means "to attach oneself to a person as a leech" (Webster: 682).

The meaning of "the leech" in this analysis is thus referred to a person who secretly and cleverly lives with another person by trying to benefit from the host, trying to get advantage of the host, or trying to avenge the host without the host's realizing the evil intention.

1.6.3 Revenge

The term "revenge" used synonymously with "avenge", "vengeance", "vengefulness" has the basic meaning of "determination to get even", "to take vengeance for or on behalf of", "to exact satisfaction for a wrong by punishing the wrongdoer", and the worst stadium is "to inflict injury in return for the wrong" (Webster, 1990: 1009).

This feeling of revenge is perceived according to Smedes (1995: 29) towards "anyone who has caused heartache unjustly". He adds that the heartache feeling leads to natural revenge and can be caused by aggressive anger "which pushes someone out of his or her reasonable mind" (Smedes: 30).

The writer concludes that anger and several other emotions like wrath, bitterness, hate, resentment and

jealousy form the basic cause which stimulates a person in taking revenge towards anyone who has hurt him or her unjustly. The avenger will justify all means and ways to get even with the wrongdoer (Darley, Glucksberg, Kinchla, 1991: 356).

1.6.4 Absolution

Wrongdoing is the one thing that causes heartache feeling in the other person who then exerts revenge towards the wrongdoer. The wrongdoer is, on the other hand, suffering a feeling of guilt and remorse, which leads to absolution.

The word absolution etymologically comes from the verb "to absolve" which means "to set free from an obligation or consequences of guilt" (Webster: 46). In Christianity absolution means "a remission of sins pronounced by a priest". The idea comes from the basic meaning to be "absolute" or "pure", that is to be free from imperfection (Webster: 46).

1.7 Theoretical Framework

Literary theories on character and characterization and psychological theories on revenge and absolution:

1.7.1 Character and characterization

Scholes, Silverman and Klaus (1978: 109) say that

characters in fiction are like real people. They are also unlike real people. An author tries to emphasize the lifelikeness of their characters. This means the author tries to surround these characters with details drawn from contemporary life and the author also tries to restrict the events of his or her narrative to things likely to happen in ordinary life.

Using the newly developed ideas of psychology and sociology, the realistic authors have offered readers instruction in human nature. The motivation of characters, the workings of conscience and consciousness, have been made the focal point of most novels and short stories, and not to mention The Scarlet Letter. Perhaps the most extreme movement in this direction has been the development of the stream of consciousness technique, through which authors of fiction offer readers a version of mental process at the level where impressions of things seen and heard converge with confused thoughts and longings arising from the subconscious mind. In reading this kind of fiction readers must check the validity of its characterization. The best realists always offer the readers a shock of recognition through which they share the authors' perception of human behavior.

It may be useful for the readers to think of

character as a function of two impulses: the impulse to individualize and the impulse to typify. Great and memorable characters are the result of a powerful combination of these two impulses. The readers remember the special, individualizing quirks, habitual patterns of speech, action, or appearance, and the readers remember the way the character represents something larger than himself. These individualizing touches are part of the storyteller's art. They amuse the readers or engage readers' sympathy for the character.

This tendency of writing as presented above explains why the psychological aspects on revenge and absolution play a very important role in The Scarlet Letter.

1.7.2 Revenge

People perceive a feeling of revenge towards anyone who has caused heartache unjustly to them. Revenge is a "natural perception toward a person's deep and unjust heartache feeling" (Smedes, 1995: 29)

Revenge according to Smedes may be caused by aggressive anger, "which pushes a person out of his or her reasonable mind" (1995: 30). Revenge which is the feeling of to inflict injury in return for an insult or a wrong (Webster: 1009) in order to get even in

exacting satisfaction for that wrong by punishing the wrongdoer.

Darley, Glucksberg, and Kinchla (1991: 356) state that the feeling of revenge comes under the general category of emotion. They quote Shaver and colleagues who found that emotion are of six basic categories: love, joy, surprise, anger, sadness, and fear. From the six basic emotions, three of them are positive (love, joy, and surprise), and three are negative (anger, sadness, and fear) (Darley, Glucksberg and Kinchla: 356). They further categorize the emotions which come under anger where revenge belong to such as the following: anger, rage, outrage, fury, wrath, hostility, ferocity, bitterness, hate, loathing, scorn, spite, vengefulness, dislike, resentment (357).

From the category the writer sees that it is justifiable to say that revenge is caused by anger (Smedes, 1995: 30). And in carrying out revenge, the avenger is burdening himself or herself with several other feelings, among other, rage, wrath, hate and resentment.

These emotions will be the writer's concern of finding them out in the novel under analysis; how the characters act and react toward these emotions and how these emotions affect the characters in the course of

the story.

1.7.3 Absolution

As has been said before absolution is the penance carried out by the wrongdoer as an act to purify or to free himself or herself from imperfection (Webster: 46). Absolution comes from the guiltfeeling, an emotional resentment (Darley, Glucksberg and Kinchla: 357). As each emotion involves a "conscious experience an internal and overt physical responses that tend to facilitate or inhibit motivated behavior" (Carlson and Hatfield, 1990: 5), any emotion is closely related to motivation and thus emotion is an indication of motivational potential which refers to a person's ability to pursue a variety of courses of action (Darley, Glucksberg and Kinchla: 357).

Referring to the feeling of resentment which basically means "a feeling of annoyance or indignant displeasure or persistent ill will at something regarded as a wrong, insult, or injury" (Webster: 1002) that pushes, motivates a person to free himself or herself from the obligation or consequences of guilt.

The potential to behave can be energized by challenges from a person's environment, for example,

in response to an insult (the challenge), heightened the person's readiness to fight the insult or expressed through the emotion of anger. This expression is represented by changes in such behaviour as facial expression and posture or harsh attitude toward the insulter (Darley, Glucksberg and Kinchla: 357). The same also holds true for the feeling of guilt, which is a challenge to absolve oneself from the guilt. When suppressed it can have mental as well physical consequences, as Selye (1956: 54 as quoted by Carlson and Hatfield, 1995: 477) defines stress "the state manifested by the specific syndrome which consists of all the non-specifically induced changes."

The emotional stress is the product of situations that generate strong emotions such as anger, fear, depression and even joy (Carlson and Hatfield, 1995: 477). The sources may be physical (such as weather changes, natural disasters), social (such as irrational bosses), and personal (such as adultery, loss of a loved one), thus major life events, from marriage to death, are stressful because they force people to make significant changes in their lives (Carlson & Hatfield: 479).

When stress is severe and prolonged, the person displays maladaptive behaviors, such as acting in

rigid, stereotyped ways, losing competitive instincts, task performance going down, becoming antisocial and aggressive, and self-destructing, overeating or losing appetites, and so on (Carlson & Hatfield: 489).

The writer will use all of the explanation above for her analysis of the revenge and absolution in The Scarlet Letter.

1.8 Organization of the Study

The thesis is divided into five chapters. The first chapter introduces the background of the study, statement of the problem, the significance of the study, scope and limitation, definition of key terms, theoretical framework, and the organization of the study. The second chapter discusses some theories that are related to the topic of the thesis; psychological theories on revenge and absolution and previous studies. The third chapter is the research methodology which deals with the nature of the study, research design, source of data, procedures of data collection and data analysis. The fourth chapter analyzes what causes Chillingworth's revenge and Dimmesdale's absolution and how they respectively carry out the revenge and absolution. The last chapter, the fifth chapter is the conclusion of this thesis.