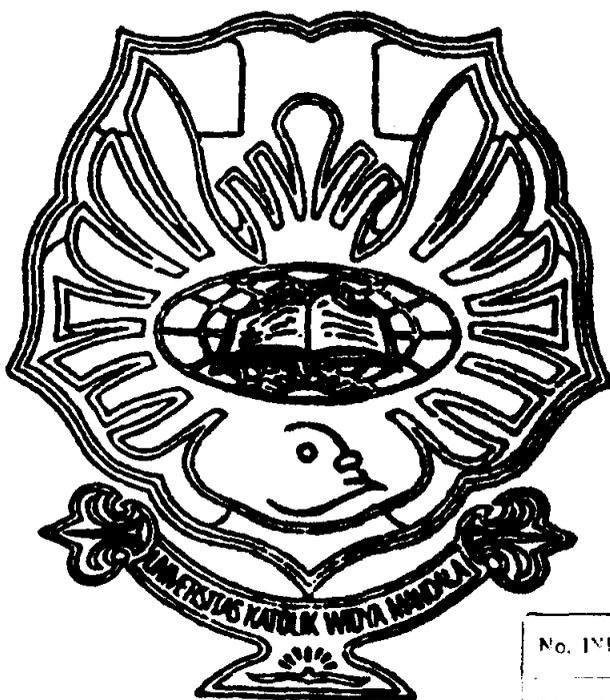


**A CHARACTER STUDY OF HESTER PRYNNE ' S HUSBAND
IN NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE ' S
" THE SCARLET LETTER "**

A THESIS

**Presented In Partial Fulfilment of
the Requirements for the Sarjana Degree in
English Language Teaching**



BY :

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**UNIVERSITAS KATOLIK WIDYA MANDALA SURABAYA
FAKULTAS KEGURUAN DAN ILMU PENDIDIKAN
JURUSAN PENDIDIKAN BAHASA DAN SENI
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APPROVAL SHEET

(1)

**This thesis entitled A Character Study of
Hester Prynne's Husband in Nathaniel Hawthorne's
" The Scarlet Letter "**

**and prepared and submitted by Ery Kusumawati
has been approved and accepted as partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the Sarjana Pendidikan degree
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**Drs. Antonius Gurito
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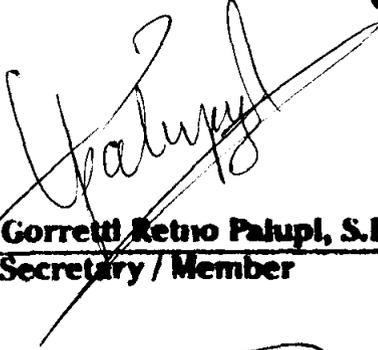
APPROVAL SHEET

(2)

This thesis has been examined by the committee on
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Praise to the Lord!

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The writer.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	i
TABLE OF CONTENTS	ii
ABSTRACT	iv
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background of the Study	1
1.2 Statement of the Problems	6
1.3 Objective of the Study	6
1.4 Significance of the Study	7
1.5 Scope and Limitation	8
1.6 Definition of Key Terms	8
1.7 Theoretical Framework	11
1.8 Organization of the Study	17
CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE	18
2.1 Character and Characterization	18
2.2 Revenge and Absolution	23
CHAPTER III: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	30
3.1 The Research Design	30
3.2 The Source of Data	31

3.3 The Procedures of Collecting	
the Data	31
3.4 The Procedures of Analyzing	
the Data	32
CHAPTER IV: ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS	34
4.1 Roger Chillingworth's Characters ..	34
4.2 The Revenge	36
4.3 The Leech	40
4.4 The Absolution	51
CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION	58
5.1 Conclusion	58
5.2 Suggestions	59
BIBLIOGRAPHY	61

ABSTRACT

Eny Kusumawati, **A Character Study of Hester Prynne's Husband in Nathaniel Hawthorne's "The Scarlet Letter"**. S-1 thesis. Unika Widya Mandala, Surabaya, 1998. Advisor: (1) Drs. Antonius Gurito.

Key words: Character and Characterization, The Leech, Revenge, and Absolution.

The main function of literature is for understanding and communication, i.e., to find meaning in the world and to express it and share it with others. One form of literature is fiction, as The Scarlet Letter comes under the form of the story, as "a made-up story", which sometimes shows a close relation between fact and fiction. 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." Thus, 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. The choice falls on the author Nathaniel Hawthorne, who called The Scarlet Letter "not a novel but a romance" through which he "wishes to claim a certain latitude, in other words, to raise beyond the grim and strict reality of the Puritanic world of Salem as the setting of The Scarlet Letter."

The author's use of language has succeeded in enriching the writer in understanding the experiences of Hester Prynne, Arthur Dimmesdale, Pearl, and Roger Chillingworth in the world of the New England Puritans of Boston with their 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, as in the case of Hester the letter "A" for "Adultery".

The religious enthusiasm of the Puritans with their strict enforcement of the laws set forth in the Bible has caused the sinners (Hester and Arthur Dimmesdale) and the fruit of their sin (Pearl) and the revengeful husband (Roger Chillingworth) to undergo severe physical as well as mental sufferings through their life. Each character is equipped by the author with clear portrayal of their characterization, showing their development in achieving their goals. They become fully developed and a different character at the end of the story.

The writer is of the opinion that choosing this novel as her data source for thesis analysis is a reasonable way to bring out a light on the understanding of how Chillingworth, as Hester Prynne's husband, called "the leech", carries out revenge on Dimmesdale, as Hester's lover, and how Dimmesdale obtains absolution as revealed in the story.

The problems for her analysis are:

- (1) How Roger Chillingworth's character is,
- (2) Why and how Roger Chillingworth carries out revenge,
- (3) Why Roger is called "the leech", and,
- (4) How Arthur Dimmesdale obtains absolution.

The research design is a qualitative research stresses on phenomenological model, and it emphasizes on the understanding and meaning through verbal narratives and observations. It is also a descriptive study which simply describes or documents a phenomenon being studied. In this study the writer deals with the description of the characters in relation with other characters of the novel, "The Scarlet Letter" written by Nathaniel Hawthorne as the source of data.

In collecting and analyzing of the data on the characters, revenge and absolution, the writer takes the following steps: first, identifying and describing Roger Chillingworth's character; second, describing how he carries out revenge on Arthur Dimmesdale; third, Roger Chillingworth's scheme of revenge by becoming "the leech"; and, fourth, the character Arthur Dimmesdale obtains the absolution he is seeking for. In describing both the revenge and absolution, the writer tries to describe the origin, the development, and the solution by tracing down the characters' speech, actions, intentions in the interactions with other characters in the novel.

The findings of the analysis are as follows:

First, Roger Chillingworth's mental wickedness of character, his physical deficiencies, his intelligence and his experience in the art of medicine are some of the factors that support his carrying out the revenge. As Hester's legal husband, Roger has the rights to claim her faithfulness and love as well as the responsibilities on her adultery and infidelity in her relation with Arthur Dimmesdale.

Second, in carrying out the revenge on Arthur Dimmesdale, Hester's lover, Roger has made use of his intelligence and experience in the medical art as an effective means to play the role of physician. Hester's personality of strong promise in keeping her husband's identity is also an influential factor for Roger's revenge. Her plea that Roger would stop his revenge on Arthur has been rejected since Roger is evil by character which will never deserve her love.

Third, his scheme of revenge has worked perfectly well without anybody's noticing his illwill and evil plan by slowly putting Arthur under mental and physical stress and sufferings. Roger deserves to be called "the leech" as he becomes Arthur's physical physician and mental killer at the same time.

Fourth, the minister Arthur Dimmesdale who has vowed celibacy has broken the vow and committed a deadly sin with the consequences of executing penance and obtaining absolution. Besides his physical advantages and youth and his mental weakness of cowardice and seclusion, as well as his intelligence and professional role among his parishioners and community, Hester's herself plays an important part in their sin. Her strong determination of character, youth and beauty and sure love to Arthur, and also her strong personality in bearing the burden of the scarlet letter A, her determination to keep her lover's identity, are supporting factors for helping Arthur to free himself from his guilt. Hester's revealing of Roger's real identity and revenge plan has put Arthur under unbearable stress and has become an effective factor for Arthur in obtaining absolution.

The writer suggests that whenever man has violated his vow and broken the rules of life, he has to use his sound mind. Man has been granted with the mind that he can use it in order to reason and to judge the actions he has to take as in both contradictory phenomena of human passions which should be treated reasonably and wisely.

Rationality should be able to suppress the burning emotions of the evil feelings in man's heart and to free himself from the guilt he has committed through pathways of wisdom and love.

Hopefully, the thesis will be of any good to contribute to students' character building, which may help them to suppress hatred and revenge and to avoid unnecessary absolution and especially to cultivate love and loyalty in a pure relationship in life.

Surabaya, 1 December 1998

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