

CHAPTER I

I N T R O D U C T I O N

I. 1. Background of the Study

Many people like to read literary works, although these works are old and the fact which they contain are long out of date such as the Shakespeares'. Nonetheless, such people read literature and students spend years in school and college in the study of the greatest masters of literature. Those kind of subjects ask an understanding; primarily it is necessary to get to know the term of literature itself.

Graham Little states in his book Approach to Literature (1966, p.1) that :

Wherever there is education, there is the study of literature. Men have always found it essential, from the most primitive stages of society to the most advanced, to teach their scriptures, lore and legends to their children.

This is because the literature of a people is the principal element of its culture. It contains the record of the people's values, their thoughts, their problems and conflict—in short, their whole way of life. Whether transmitted through the spoken or the written word, literature may fairly be regarded as the chief art of mankind. Through this art, each generation tries to pass on to the next "the best which has been thought and said".

Literature is the record of what men have thought and felt about life, and from that record the modern reader can enrich his own meager experience with the thoughts and emotions of the past. Through literary works one can find how, in certain period, men look at facts. It looks that literature is able to inform people about history, along with it much information of psychology and sociology and other fields can also be obtained in order that generations from age to age shall try to impart the best matter done before.

One of literary forms that is our immediate concern with, then, is drama which seeks to tell a story by setting actual characters in action. It is a form that is to be seen and heard rather than read. Beside as vehicle for 'live' presentation on the stage, drama is as more than representation of life and character through action and dialogue.

As a dramatist, Richard Brinsley Sheridan is accounted as one of the great English playwrights. Particularly in England in the eighteenth century, besides Goldsmith, Sheridan was distinguished in drama. A lot of people admire him. They say that Sheridan's comic characters go beyond others, that his dialogue is wittier, his situations funnier, and his satire is more biting.

Even when Sheridan's career was about cooling down, Lord Byron commented on him that what Sheridan had written is the best. As Atkinson wrote about Sheridan in Four Great Comedies of the Restoration and Eighteenth Century (1971, p. xii) :

During the twilight of Sheridan's career, Byron had this to say about him : "Whatever he tried he did better than anyone else. He wrote the best comedy, *The School for Scandal*, the best opera, *The Duenna*, the best farce, *The Critic*, and the best address, the Monologue on Garrick. And to crown it all, he delivered the very best oration ever conceived or heard in this country, the famous Begum speech."

Sheridan produced all of his important works between 1775 and 1779; those refer to The Rivals (1775), The School for Scandal (1777) which is considered as Sheridan's masterpiece, and The Critic (1779).

When Sheridan was twenty-six, he produced the most successful comedy of his time, The School for Scandal that is the best eighteenth century play as well. It has entertaining turns of action and a steady flow of sparkling dialogue (Bellinger, 1927). This play which is written in the form of comedy has been holding the stage for two centuries. It has been popular for its fine acting opportunities ensure its frequent presentation.

As for comedy, The School for Scandal, which in this

thesis is going to be analysed, aims primarily to amuse and ends happily; just like Scanlan stated in his book entitled Reading Drama (1988) :

Sooner or later, in comedy, the screen comes tumbling down, the truth comes out, and everyone lives happily ever after.

It intends to please the audiences. It is begun and embodied with scandals spread out over the high class of society. Those slanderous intrigues are headed for certain characters. They keep on delivering made-up stories more and more. Yet, those accomplishments just about lead to their ruin and the veraciousness emerges, at last the play has a happy ending.

In the late 1700's Goldsmith and Sheridan tried to bring back the spirit of the Restoration by making comedy less tearful and funnier, just like Cazamian marked in A History of English Literature (1929) :

The English theatre from 1730 to 1790 shows us the struggle of the new forms, in which sentiment is the animating force of inspiration, against the authority of regular comedy and tragedy, such as the Restoration had handed down to classicism.

A term most commonly used to designate the realistic, often satirical, comedy of the Restoration period, as practiced by Congreve and others, is comedy of manners.

It is also used for the revival, in modified form, of this comedy a hundred years later by Goldsmith and Sheridan. Moreover about it Scanlan (1988) says :

Comedy of manners, the drama of social behavior, is meant to keep us civilized by making us laugh at our antisocial tendencies. It is also, in its fullest form, a drama which celebrates social continuity and renewal, affirms the succession of youth to social power, and reminds us that good sense is more fun in the long run than extremism and crankiness. It is this spirit which keeps the plays of Molière, Oliver Goldsmith, and Richard Brinsley Sheridan alive for today's readers and playgoers alike.

In the stricter sense of the term, the type is concerned with the manners and conventions of an artificial, highly sophisticated society. The School for Scandal of Sheridan's tells about such people in compliance with their deeds.

Acquainting literature with analysis, all analysis and interpretation is based on a careful study of context, the surroundings in which an element of a literary work appears. These elements may be words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs, images, allusions, or plot details. In drama, there are also contexts for people and their actions: the settings or environments in which they live, the events which surround them, and the other people who enter their lives. What happens to ideas within a story is the same, they also have context, that

is people whose actions represent them, meaningful events, or the key words and sentences the author uses to express his concepts.

The idea of hypocrisy the author created in The School for Scandal reflects on Joseph Surface's character of which characterization the writer focuses her intention. He is the young man existed within the play who behaves such hypocrite that some other characters believes in what he professes. He appears to be a good person that holds a converse personality from he is actually.

He wishes to marry Maria, a wealthy ward of Sir Peter Teazle. For in fact Maria loves and is loved by Charles, his youngest brother, he conspires with Lady Sneerwell who has special feeling to Charles. Joseph's major vice is a love of money. He apparently has an illicit love for Maria; he only wants to marry a heiress. But he acts like he is really in love, as far as he endeavours to court Maria, though she pays back no attention to him. Moreover, he makes a move to ingratiate himself with Lady Teazle, so that she may not be his enemy with Maria. All courses of socializing actions Joseph takes here is assigned him to be supposedly a best

natured person.

To the writer those mentioned above give a glance how hypocrite Joseph is; he affects virtues, qualities, or attitudes he doesn't have in achieving what he means for Maria. These happenings attract the writer. Since the matter that somebody is so dying to obtain what he wishes for, he even becomes someone else, who takes measures contrary to the reality of himself, is likely quite often met in society. In this undeniable world people live between two big distinguished sides, factuality and hope, some may act hypocrite to come up with either good or bad result upon the life they desire.

I. 2. Statement of the Problem

Knowing the background of the problem, the writer assumes that the essence of studying Sheridan's The School for Scandal can be put in the statements as follows :

- Is Joseph Surface a hypocrite?
- Does Joseph Surface's hypocrisy lead him into his intention to win Maria?

Further on the formulation cited above is discussed in detail within the chapter of analysis.

I. 3. Objective of the Study

As implied in the study background, the writer will examine Joseph Surface's hypocrisy through his characterization in Sheridan's The School for Scandal. Since the writer sees that from the beginning till the end of the story there is hypocrisy carried out by one of the Surface brothers, of which purpose is to realize his ambition. Therefore, the writer underlines her eventual attention on hypocrisy conveyance by analysing the characterization of Joseph Surface in this play.

I. 4. Significance of the Study

By analyzing The School for Scandal, it is hoped that this thesis provides some acknowledgment to English Literature, especially written by Richard Brinsley Sheridan. Besides, it also gives an illustration over social phenomenon which is called hypocrisy. Since this play reveals hypocrisy of human being, a better understanding of it can be reached by apprehending this work. Henceforth, the hope of being able to see deeply about hypocrisy through literary perspective shall be attained.

On the other hand, the elaboration of hypocrisy through Sheridan's play, The School for Scandal, may help

readers to realize their own attitude in life. In addition, there is some expectations that this thesis bring some meaningful contribution in understanding literature as well as human being.

Furthermore, this study can broaden the views of English Department's students on literary work, at least on Sheridan's works. Eventually in wider range, the reader may be able to learn something about hypocrisy.

I. 5. Scope and Limitation

In order to focus the study of Joseph Surface's hypocrisy, this thesis is limited on Joseph Surface's behaviour and treatment towards people around him. It is narrowed down into Joseph Surface's manner to impress certain characters about his goodness instead of his real personality.

I. 6. Theoretical Background

In this section, the writer sets a bit forward the theory to analysing for chapter II will deliberate it more. Due to the need of study, the objective theory will be used here. The assumption of it is to view the play as an individual entity, existing on its page which is intelligible in its own value, without necessarily in-

volving the life of its author, or the age in which it was written, or its possible effect on the readers.

I. 7. Method of the Study

The characters in this typical comedy of manners say everything they think and feel in a clear and orderly way. They are being straightforward in their speech. Noticing this fact, in the analysis the writer intends to figure those words out for they, as a language, link each other referring to any meaning. Apparently the text of the play occupies the writer's concentration in seizing the subject matter of her thesis after all.

Based on what the French philosopher Jacques Derrida say about language of which main point owns an unlimits chain of words, the writer thinks that word by word established in the play is different from each other till they unite together to express a meaningful sense. The text within the play has an endless stream of idea, with words only pointing to other words, without any determinate meaning.

A central idea is that language is an infinite chain of words which has no extralingual origin or end. To describe this chain Derrida introduced the concept of *differance*: words are defined by their difference from other words, and any meaning is endlessly deferred as each

word just leads us on to another word in the signifying system. Language only makes sense if the reader imposes a fixed meaning on the words. (John Peck & Martin Coyle; 1988, p.165)

From that point of view, common sense appears obvious because it is inscribed in the language the text speaks. Visibly Derrida's method is to look closely at individual texts, which signifies the individual interpretation upon the elements shaping the play. In other words, since he said that structuralism, whatever its conceptual limits, was a necessary stage on the way to deconstruction (Christopher Norris; 1991, p. 30), thereby the study manages to face the relations of the elements existed in the play through personal reading which becomes deconstructive return towards the text.

As follows the ground stated already, the major method applied in this thesis is desconstructive, which is a sort of double study: it acknowledges the way in which the playwright attempts to order things, but then points to the contradictions and problems in the text. Thereupon, after reading the play, to study it will result in requiring the writer's personal understanding. She wants to pull the text into her own frame of reference, that demands an authorial command, claims a summarizing function and a power of abstracted systematic statement.

Derrida's writings seem more akin to literary criticism than philosophy. They rest on the assumption that modes of rhetorical analysis, hitherto applied mainly to literary texts, ... (Christopher Norris; 1991, p.19)

Deconstruction is therefore an activity of reading which remains closely tied to the texts it interrogates, and which can never set up independently as a self-enclosed system of operative concepts. (Ibid., p.31)

It is inevitable to see that, in deconstructive analysis, subjectivity, the individual mind is the source of meaning and of action. Despite the authoritative meaning from the individual subject (the author), in this context the notion of a text is reconstructed by the writer through largely devoting to conjectures, based on the evidence of the stories, and concerning matters only hinted at in the text. All will generate the writer to do the analysis.

In doing the analysis, the method the writer puts in additional use is descriptive one. It pictures the text and clarifies that the result of analysis is then described systematically. The analytic description within this thesis lies its point on Joseph Surface's hypocrisy which is manifested in characterization.

I. 8. Definition of "H y p o c r i s y"

Hypocrisy is the act of pretending to believe, feel,

or be something very different from and usually better than what one actually believes, feels, or is (Dictionary of Contemporary English, 1987). It embodies the practice of professing standards, beliefs, and so on, contrary to one's real character or actual behavior.

A character who plays a role such a hypocrite applies an extreme insincerity in his characterization for he says one thing and does another, something quite contradictive each other. He puts on a pretence or false appearance of virtue or goodness.

I. 9. Organization of the Thesis

This thesis constitutes a background of the study as a start, continued with specifying the problem found in the play, of which scope then is bound on limitation by its statement. Both points determine how this thesis will go on its path. Subsequently, significance and a frame - theory, method, key term - in which the study engages itself is established in this beginning chapter too.

The next chapter will give particularly theory grounds and approach used in analysis. As the final outcome, chapter four completes the thesis on the conclu-

sion, without denying the analysis done in the preceding chapter.

Besides to bring the synopsis of Sheridan's The School for Scandal, the appendix is also believed to draw on the author's life and his works. This part is only added as a supplement.

Chapter II

Theoretical Background