

An Analysis of Themes in The Casher Short Story by John Collier

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ABSTRACT

The study examines the theme of "The Chaser" a short story by John Collier. "The Chaser," is known for his complex themes, the contrariety between love and obsession, explores the moral dilemmas that arise when persons attempt to control and manipulate the emotions of others, etc. This study aims to find out the theme of "The Chaser" by John Collier to gain a deeper understanding of the story, because themes provide layers of meaning to a story. The data of this study was taken from the short story entitled "The Chaser" by John Collier. This short story was chosen as the data of this study because this story is easy to understand and has some themes, it provides a basis for deeper analysis. The data was collected through library research and the to collect the data, the researcher applied some steps. The first step is reading the whole story of "The Chaser", the second step is understanding the story, and the last step is identifying the themes of the story. The data was analyzed using qualitative method. The result shows that there are four major themes in "The Chaser" short story, they are they are love, obsession and desire, changes and loss of individuality, and irony. The analysis dives into how the protagonist, Alan Austen, attempts to earn Diana's affection by unconventional tactics, delving into the deep issues of love and the consequences of obsessive desire. The story depicts the ironic twist in Alan's desire for love, highlighting the risks of loss of individuality associated with such pursuits.

Keywords: American literature, love, short story, The Chaser

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengkaji tema cerita pendek "The Chaser" karya John Collier. "The Chaser," dikenal dengan tema-tema yang kompleks, pertentangan antara cinta dan obsesi, mengeksplorasi dilema moral yang muncul ketika seseorang berusaha mengendalikan dan memanipulasi emosi orang lain, dll. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui tema "The Chaser" karya John Collier untuk mendapatkan pemahaman cerita yang lebih mendalam, karena tema memberikan lapisan makna pada sebuah cerita. Data penelitian ini diambil dari cerita pendek berjudul "The Chaser" karya John Collier. Cerpen ini dipilih sebagai data penelitian karena cerita ini mudah dipahami dan mempunyai beberapa tema sehingga memberikan dasar untuk analisa yang lebih mendalam. Data dikumpulkan melalui penelitian kepustakaan dan untuk mengumpulkan data, peneliti menerapkan beberapa langkah. Langkah pertama adalah membaca keseluruhan cerita "The Chaser", langkah kedua adalah memahami cerita, dan langkah terakhir adalah mengidentifikasi tema cerita. Data dianalisis dengan menggunakan metode kualitatif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa terdapat empat tema besar dalam cerpen "The Chaser", yaitu cinta, obsesi dan hasrat, perubahan dan hilangnya individualitas, dan ironi. Analisis ini menyelami bagaimana tokoh protagonis, Alan Austen, berupaya mendapatkan kasih sayang Diana dengan taktik yang tidak konvensional, menyelidiki masalah cinta yang mendalam dan konsekuensi dari hasrat obsesif. Kisah ini menggambarkan perubahan ironis dalam keinginan Alan akan cinta, menyoroti risiko hilangnya individualitas yang terkait dengan

pencarian tersebut.

Kata Kunci: sastra Amerika, cinta, cerita pendek, *The Chaser*

INTRODUCTION

A literary work serves as a medium for an author to disclose his or her concept or emotion to the readers or listeners, and it may have a message or aesthetic value. According to Mutiarani (2017) a literary work is a part of literature that is formed by an idea or feeling. Poetry, prose, and theater are the three major genres of literature. Prose is a type of written or spoken language that follows the natural flow of speech and employs a language's standard grammatical structures. It is a fundamental mode of communication and is classified into several categories, including nonfictional prose, fictional prose, prose poetry, and epic prose. Klarer (1999) states that a short story is a brief of narrative prose. A short story is a fictional prose narrative that is usually shorter than a novel and concentrates on a limited number of characters. According to Limbong (2018), short stories can be classified as literary works in the form of fictional prose with a word count ranging from 750 to 10,000 words. It is a fictional work in which the characters are loosely based on real-life people and the plot is inspired by an actual incident.

A short story is a narrative that can be read in one sitting, usually between half and two hours, which is difficult with a novel. Short stories are those that focus on the most minor aspects of fiction. According to Heri (2019), as referenced by Rahayu et al (2021), a short story is a piece of writing that illustrates human life in an area and time period. Short stories exist not just because they are shorter than novels, but also because the problem has a very narrow scope. The short story is an important form of writing in American literature, offering a concentrated description of characters and events. They allow authors to convey their ideas, emotions, and cultural identities while representing the many experiences and opinions found in American culture.

In a short story, there are intrinsic elements. A short story's intrinsic elements are vital components that contribute to its overall structure and meaning. These elements distinguish a short story from other kinds of literature. These elements include theme character, place, plot, conflict, language and style, and point of view. In his book "Theory of Fictional Studies," Nurgiyantoro (2010: 23) defines intrinsic components as "the aspects that comprise the literary work itself." The topic is the foundation of the story, and it is usually linked to many life situations and the like. In diverse settings, themes are frequently tied to the fundamental idea or goal of the story (Nurgiyantoro, 2010:25). To find a theme in a work of fiction, we must take conclusions from the entire story, not just a few sections of it. The theme is not an implicit or hidden meaning in the story, even though the fact that detecting it can be difficult. The idea is not always stated directly.

One of the short stories in American literature is "The Chaser". "The Chaser" is an American short story written by famed English novelist John Collier, who is recognized for his modernist style and dark humor. This short story was published in 1940. The plot revolves around Alan Austen, a young guy who is deeply in love with

Diana, but she is oblivious to his feelings for her and is uninterested in him. Alan comes across an old man who offers him a love potion in his attempt to win Diana's heart. The old man warns Alan that the potion will make Diana jealous and possessive, but Alan decides to use it nonetheless.

"The Chaser," recognized for his complex themes, the contrariety between love and obsession, explores the moral dilemmas that arise when persons attempt to control and manipulate the emotions of others, etc. Therefore, this study aims to examine the theme of "The Chaser" by John Collier to gain a deeper understanding of the story, because themes provide layers of meaning to a story. They express the underlying messages, opinions, and perspectives of the author on many elements of life, society, or human nature. Recognizing these themes enables readers or viewers to engage with the material on a deeper level.

RESEARCH METHOD

The qualitative method was used to analyze the data in this study. According to Moleong (2010), a qualitative research method relies on analytical techniques rather than statistical analysis or other quantitative data. As a result, because it employed an analytical study, this study belongs to the qualitative method. The data for this study was gathered from a short story entitled "The Chaser" by John Collier, which was obtained from the website https://mrwhiteman3.weebly.com/uploads/5/8/7/5/58759253/the_chaser.pdf. This short story is chosen as the data because this story is easy to understand and has some themes, it provides a basis for deeper analysis. The data was collected through library research and to collect the data, the researcher applied some steps. The first step is reading the whole story of "The Chaser", the second step is understanding the story, and the last step is identifying the themes of the story.

DISCUSSION

After carefully reading and understanding the entire story, the researcher identified several important themes in "The Chaser" by John Collier. These themes cover a variety of important aspects, including:

1. Love

The main theme in this story is "love". This can be seen from how Collier describes Alan in this story. Alan is very in love and crazy about Diana. This is proven by Alan seeking the services of an old man selling potions. Alan was willing to do anything to buy a love potion to make Diana fall in love with him, including spending a lot of money. This action shows how big and passionate Alan's love for Diana. He was very happy when he imagined Diana falling in love with him.

"That's love!" cried Alan.

"Yes," said the old man. "How carefully she will look after you! She will never allow you to be tired, to sit in a draft, to neglect your food. If you are an hour late, she will be terrified. She will think you are killed, or that some siren has caught you."

"I can hardly imagine Diana like that!" cried Alan, overwhelmed with joy.

These sentences describe how happy Alan was when the old man explained the effects of the love potion on Diana. This action reflects Alan's strong desire to possess Diana's love, and he believes that the potion is a means to achieve this.

2. Obsession and Desire

Related to the theme above, about obsession and strong desires. Alan is obsessed and wants Diana. To the point that he is willing to use unethical methods to win her affection. He was willing to visit shops that sold illegal, hard-to-find potions, and only accepted customers through referrals as implied in Alan's visit. He was also very nervous about the meeting. The effects of the potion provide further evidence to support the theme of obsession and desire for love. This creates loyalty, adoration, and jealousy in the recipient who only focuses on their partner. The implied consequence of this kind of love, that Alan will be driven to kill because of Diana's devotion and loyalty towards him after drinking the potion makes clear the danger.

3. Changes and Loss of individuality

The old man tells Alan about his love potion and how it will change Diana in a variety of ways. The first is that it will make her fall in love with Alan, but the potion will also cause other changes. It could be seen in these sentences:

"For indifference," said the old man, they substitute devotion. For scorn, adoration. Give one tiny measure of this to the young lady -- its flavor is imperceptible in orange juice, soup, or cocktails-and however gay and giddy she is, she will change altogether. She will want nothing but solitude and you."
"She will not like them anymore," said the old man. "She will be afraid of the pretty girls you may meet."

"Yes," said the old man. "How carefully she will look after you! She will never allow you to be tired, to sit in a draught, to neglect your food. If you are an hour late, she will be terrified. She will think you are killed, or that some siren has caught you."

People lose a piece of themselves when obsessive love hits them. However, not only will Diana lose her individuality and change, but so will Alan. The elderly guy firmly anticipated that Alan would require the poison later as well, meaning that all of his clients would require it. Diana's character will be lost by magic. Alan will lose his individuality as a result of falling in love.

4. Irony

Alan adores Diana, but his feelings get confusing because of he is obsessed with her. At first, he wants her just as she is, but then he considers transforming her completely with a love potion. It is as if he cannot decide whether to accept her as she is or attempt to transform her into his idea of a perfect person. There is this old man selling love potions for a low price, making it appear to be a terrific deal. But here is the ironic part, the inexpensive love potion is a scam to get people addicted, because the old man also sells pricey poisons. Therefore, it is as if he is exploiting people's emotions to get money. The oddest part is that when Alan knows about the love

potion's effects, which should make him happy, he becomes worried and disappointed. It appears that things are not going as planned for him.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, "The Chaser" by John Collier published in 1940 was chosen as the data of this study because this story explores the moral dilemmas that arise when persons attempt to control and manipulate the emotions of others. After reading and analyzing the entire story, the researcher found four major themes in this story, they are love, obsession and desire, changes and loss of individuality, and irony. The analysis dives into how the protagonist, Alan Austen, attempts to earn Diana's affection by unconventional tactics, delving into the deep issues of love and the consequences of obsessive desire. The story depicts the ironic twist in Alan's desire for love, highlighting the risks of loss of individuality associated with such pursuits.

After analyzing the theme of this story, the researcher hopes that the reader will recognize these underlying messages about life, society, and human nature, allowing readers to engage with the story's message on a deeper level. The study of themes, in essence, enriches the whole reading experience by allowing for a more profound analysis of the story and its broader implications.

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