CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

A narrative is a fictional story which is based on imaginative events or a story that does not actually happen in real life (Janovsky, n.d.). In addition, according to Munand (2013), a narrative text is a story with a problematic event in which a resolution to the problem is sought for. The function of a narrative is basically to entertain other people or the readers. A narrative comes in a lot of different forms, like fables, myths, legends, fairy tales, parables, novels, horror stories, and also short stories.

A short story is a brief fictional prose narrative that is shorter than other types of narrative and usually deals with only a few characters (Hansen, n.d.). Furthermore, Rout (2016) also states that a short story mostly focuses on one particular or specific incident and has few casts of character; it also has a lesser degree of length than other narratives. A short story usually uses uncommon prose or literary devices to make it more interesting (Harcourt, n.d.). The purpose of the short story is to entertain, and also provides authors with the freedom to convey a message without the burden of committing to a lengthier, more time-consuming task (Kipling2448, 2014). Simply put, a short story is basically used to entertain

the readers, and also where the author can easily focus on the message that he or she wants to tell the readers or society.

The message that an author conveys in the story can be some kind of criticism of the society or the government or a propaganda to support something. It can also be the way the author sees something, for example how he portrays a certain character. Representation is the production of meaning through language so the language itself can be used to find the representation of something or how something is represented by other (Hall, 1997, p.16). Based on Amarang9 (2012), a representation in a story may contribute to an overall message from the author. In other words, the readers can get the message that the writer wants to convey by looking at how they represent something in the story.

Algirdas Julien Greimas, a French semiotician, proposes several theories that focus on the structure of a narrative in order to find a deeper meaning inside it. One of the theories is the Actantial Model theory. In this theory, a narrative is divided into six components, i.e. subject, the element that has the desire; object, the desire or the target; sender, the elements that give the desire; receiver, the benefit after the target is achieved; opponent, the element that hinders the subject; and helper, the element that helps the subject. Focusing on these elements helps us to see every role and also action in order to see how the element or the subject is being represented within the story or each event.

Another theory which is also developed by Greimas is Narrative Trajectory. This theory, although it can stand on its own, can also be used to support the elements or the six components of the Actantial Model. It shows how the function of each element corresponds to the actions happening in the narrative.

It is divided into four categories: the contract, the quest or test that is given from the sender to the subject; the qualifying test, the preparation of the subject to do the test; the decisive test, the test where the subject does the performance; and the glorifying test, the result of the test.

One of the stories in which the structure plays a role in revealing a deeper message is Roald Dahl's "The Last Act". The story was written in 1966 and is set in the United States of America. It is about a depressed woman who wants to end her life by committing suicide. The topic as well as the ways in which Dahl structures this story is very intriguing as it reveals more about the main character of the story.

This thesis aims to find the major events in the story based on the Actantial Model and Narrative Trajectory theories. In addition to finding the structure of the story, this thesis also aims to find how the structure of the story helps in revealing the way Dahl represents the main female character in the story.

I believe that this study is significant as it can give a new insight on how the structure of a story can help reveal the representation of a character in the story. In addition, it can also help the readers to become more aware about a message that the writer may want to convey in their story. Moreover, it is hoped that this may add to the existing literature in Linguistics field, especially in Semiotics.

(Total Words : 787)

1.2   Statement of the Problem

In doing the thesis, there are some issues that need to be solved:

1.   What are the major events in the short story?

2.   How is the female character portrayed in these events by using Actantial Model and Narrative Trajectory theories?

1.3   Purpose of the Study

By doing the analysis, I will find out:

1.   what the major events in the short story are, and

2.   how the female character is portrayed in these events by using Actantial Model and Narrative Trajectory theories.

1.4   Organization of the Thesis

This thesis is divided into five chapters. Chapter One is the Introduction of the thesis which consists of Background of the Study, Statement of the Problem, Purpose of the Study, and Organization of the Thesis. Chapter Two is Literature Review, which is about the theories that I use to analyze the data, and including a review of previous study that is related to my research. Chapter Three consists of Methods of Research, which are Research Design, Data Collection Technique, Framework for Analysis, and Data Analysis. Chapter Four contains the analysis of my data using the two theories discussed in Chapter Two. Chapter Five consists of the conclusion of the analysis and my personal opinion of the findings. At the end of this thesis, I also include References and Appendices.