

## CHAPTER THREE

### CONCLUSION

After reading and analyzing the novel, I conclude that the subject matter of Bernard Malamud's *The Assistant* is transformation. In my opinion, the novel shows one's transformation through other people's good values and manners. It surprises me to observe that a criminal can imitate one's good values and manners which later become his own characteristics. The theme of the novel is 'One's misdeeds are transformed by another person's values and manners.' The two major characters' actions, reactions and speeches help to reveal the theme.

Both the major characters in Bernard Malamud's *The Assistant* play significant roles to present the theme. The major characters are Frank Alpine and Morris Bober. Frank Alpine is an Italian and a criminal who is later transformed into a good person. While Morris Bober is a Jewish and a grocery store owner who has good values and manners and the one who changes Frank.

In this novel, Malamud shows two major human characteristics which are very contrasting to each other. Frank Alpine represents the bad while Morris Bober represents the good. Frank shows that a person can be as bad as the evil. When a person has been helped by someone, he has to show his gratitude. It is different in this novel, because the protagonist returns goodness with evil deeds.

However, it is also interesting to notice how an evil characteristic can be fully transformed into a good one.

Morris shows how good a person can be. Morris has very good values which are represented through his manners toward others. In my opinion, Morris' actions bring the readers one step further to practice human kindness among people. Morris' actions imitate Christian values. Morris does not simply imitate Jesus Christ's kindness, but also imitates His honesty and His willingness to suffer for others.

Malamud presents the theme of *The Assistant* through Frank's transformation into a better person in both values and manners. When Morris sends Frank out of the store, Frank realizes that he has lost the chances to change. Therefore, he is depressed about the fact. In his depression, Frank rapes Helen, Morris' daughter. Frank's action does not make the situation better. Only after Frank rapes Helen does he feel deeply regretful and realizes that he has to change.

Frank's transformation happens when he realizes he has committed the worst sin ever. Frank's transformation also happens when he harms his role model and the girl that he loves. Finally, Frank realizes that it is important for him to love others as he loves himself, and to treat others kindly. In my opinion, Frank's actions reflect Christian values that teach people to love others as they love themselves. Christian values also teach us to repent when we have committed mistakes, and we must not repeat them.

In my opinion, the theme is revealed clearly through the characters. Malamud shows various kinds of human characteristics in order that the readers can have them as guidance in life. I think that an individual can be very evil or can

be very good. It depends on his own choice. However, I believe one's good values and manners are possible to be a guidance for someone who is lost. Malamud wants to show that one's misdeeds can be transformed through one's consistent values and manners. The theme may look simple but it is inspiring as it inspires me to be a better person.

In real life, I gain an understanding concerning transformation through values and manners. I need someone's good values and manners to guide me to the right way of life. And I have to be a person who has very good values and manners toward others. I am going to apply this novel as a reference through my social life.