

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

Valerie Martin is the author of six novels and two collection of short fictions. Her works are mostly about a love relationship between men and women, slavery, and also passionate love. I am interested with her works because the protagonist in her novels mostly have strong characteristics and the point of view in her novels is very clear.

She is known as a formidable writer in her class by herself...and she has clear and penetrating gaze, Martin looks at the world and sees its horrors and contradictions, its terrifying beauty, and renders her insights through the characters of memorable women. She is disturbing, provocative writer of risky and dangerous fiction (“Love Short Fiction by Valerie Martin”).

Some of her characters reflect the dark side of life and erotic love, as her trademarks are “a preoccupation with the dark underside of life, a taste for disturbing, even macabre imagery...excursions into an unseen realm of strange and magical events” (“Love Short Fiction by Valerie Martin”).

From her six novels, I am interested in Mary Reilly to be analyzed for my thesis. The book itself is an intertextual narrative of Robert Louis Stevenson's The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, which was first published in 1886. The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde describes "the disturbing tale of the dual personality of Dr. Jekyll, a physician. He develops a drug that transforms him into demonic Mr. Hyde, in whose person he exhausts all the latent evil in his nature" ("Preview of Analysis of Mary Reilly by Valerie Martin"). Martin uses the same story about Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde for her novel, Mary Reilly, but she retells the story from a different perspective, which is from Mary Reilly as a housemaid in Dr. Jekyll's house. I believe Martin's Mary Reilly is an equally good piece of literature compared to Stevenson's novel as Mary Reilly is regarded as "a tense drama, an authentically detailed historical novel, and a remarkable psychological portrait of an unusual and very sympathetic woman" ("Synopses and Review").

My analysis focuses on the protagonist, who is Mary Reilly, because I am interested in her "remarkable psychological portrait" ("Synopses and Review") as the protagonist of the novel. She is indeed "an unusual and very sympathetic woman" ("Synopses and Review"). Moreover "[she] is a survivor, scarred but still strong, familiar with evil, yet brimming with devotion and love" ("Synopses and Review"). This is a very unique portrayal and I believe this becomes the point of strength in Martin's work. I also believe that the protagonist is created in order to reveal the theme of the novel. According to Kenney's How to Analyze Fiction, "theme is the meaning of the story" (Kenney 88). Thus I will analyze the protagonist and through the analysis of the protagonist, I will reveal the theme of the novel.

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

1. What is the theme of the novel?
2. How does the protagonist help reveal the theme of the novel?

## **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

Based on the statement of the problem, the purposes of the study are:

1. To show the theme of the novel.
2. To show how the protagonist helps reveal the theme of the novel.

## **METHOD OF RESEARCH**

In my analysis, I used a library research. I read a Valerie Martin's novel, which is Mary Reilly as the primary text. I chose to analyze the protagonist because it is the most significant element in the novel. Then I searched other sources and references from books and electronic website in order to support my analysis. Finally, I drew a theme as the conclusion of what has been discussed.

## **ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS**

This thesis will be organized into three chapters. Chapter One contains the Background of the Study, the Statement of the Problem, the Purpose of the Study, the Method of Research and the Organization of the Thesis. Chapter Two contains the analysis of theme through the protagonist in Valerie Martin's novel, Mary Reilly. Chapter Three is the conclusion of the analysis. The thesis ends with the Bibliography and the Appendices, which include the Biography of the Valerie Martin and the Synopsis of Mary Reilly.