

Chapter I

Introduction

In this chapter, I am going to discuss about the background of the study, in which I explain the reasons why I choose Shakespeare as a poet rather than as a playwright. Moreover, I also explain why I choose his poem Venus and Adonis rather than Shakespeare's other poems and sonnets. I also state my reasons in choosing the topic of seduction.

I will include also the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the importance of study, the scope and limitation, also the scope and the methodology. This chapter is closed by the organization of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

I chose Shakespeare for my thesis because of the following reasons. First, Shakespeare was a great and a well-known figure not only in England, but throughout the world as well. Shakespeare's works were among the first top rank of any other creations. Shakespeare was one of the remarkable poets during the Elizabethan period who had more than one skill; he was a poet, a playwright, and an actor too. Shakespeare was considered as the world's greatest dramatist (Magill 2528). As a playwright, Shakespeare had created 37 famous plays and many of them such as Romeo and Juliet, Hamlet, and A Midsummer's Night Dream have been made into movies. As a poet, Shakespeare had created successful poems and sonnets; Venus and Adonis, The Rape of Lucrece, 154 Sonnets, A Lover's Complaint, The Passionate Pilgrim, Sonnets to Sundry Notes of Music, and The Phoenix and The Turtle. Shakespeare's poems show the great ability and moments of a genius (Barnett 1667).

Second, I chose Shakespeare because he was a genius. Though Shakespeare never completed his study at the free grammar school of Stratford, he could develop his great abilities in literature. Shakespeare's lack

of education did not form him as an unlearned or untutored author, instead, it made him as an author of natural writings. Shakespeare wrote by feeling and not only by rules. Though Shakespeare never gained education in universities, he could provide his writings with perfect Latin and mythology from education he got at the free grammar school. For all these abilities, Ben Johnson credited him as a genius. Dryden believed that Shakespeare was "naturally learn'd", and needed not 'the spectacles of books to read nature; he look'd inwards and found her there" (Reese 270). Shakespeare's mastery of his material was a poet's mastery and not a scholar's one (281). Shakespeare's life in a small community and his formal education at the free grammar school gave a great impact in his writings about nature.

Third, I chose Shakespeare because Shakespeare was a unique person. During his life, Shakespeare was known as an honest and strong-minded man. No one could force him into transactions against his will (269). Shakespeare was also firm in deciding what was right or wrong and this characteristic often appeared in his writings. Shakespeare's writings always contain moral values on life. Moreover, Shakespeare had a unique way of telling stories. Here, Shakespeare not only drew or

told the readers of what was going on. He made the readers see it for themselves as if they were a part of the story. The way Shakespeare presented nature is as if, "All the images were still present to him..when he describes anything, you more than see it, you feel it too" (Eastman 335). Shakespeare was good at pulling emotions of the readers through the story telling and the characters he created. The characterization of Shakespeare's characters are clear, as if they were real and alive and not just an imagination of the author. Shakespeare made his characters full with human strengths and weaknesses. Furthermore, Shakespeare liked to write lines on reality and experiences better than on romantic imagery only. All of Shakespeare's writings are based on his countless observations on love, marriage, and life. Lots of Shakespeare's works contain his very thinking of life that started from his boyhood, youth, until his elder life. The way Shakespeare described his ideas through his writings really presented his characters and thoughts. Hence, Shakespeare was writing facts in a world where the readers lived and knew exactly of what was "real" to them (Reese 269).

Among Shakespeare's poems, I chose Venus and Adonis, which was printed in 1593 and dedicated to

Henry Wriothesley, the young earl of Southampton, because it is Shakespeare's first poem. Shakespeare called it "the first heir of my invention" meaning that it was his first poem or his first work to be printed (Kilvert 306). Venus and Adonis was tremendously successful of that time. Venus and Adonis was a narrative poem full with the honey-tongued of Shakespeare that made it a beautiful poem.

Moreover, I also chose Venus and Adonis because the poem was "sensual". The poem contained all the lustful actions of a goddess to a young mortal boy. William Empson said that Venus and Adonis soon made its impact after appeared in the Stationer's Register and a lot of libidinous undergraduates were said to have slept with the poem under the pillow, merely because of the sensuality of the poem (Barnet 1668). J.C. Maxwell wrote that Shakespeare was "exploiting ...the sheer comedy of sexuality" (1668). Compared to Shakespeare's other poems, it is unique since it describes a woman's seduction upon a man, which was not common during that era. The main female character, Venus, offers "all the delights of sexual love with unabashed frankness" (Magill 2528). Though Shakespeare also made similar theme of lustful actions in his other works, only Venus and Adonis has a greater attention from the readers

because of the woman's peculiar act of seduction. A critic, Gabriel Harvey, mentioned that 'eventhough The Rape of Lucrece and Hamlet have it in them to please the readers, it was in Venus and Adonis that the younger generation took most delight' (Reese 266). It means, the younger generation loved Venus and Adonis more since it was strange for a goddess to have an open sexual interest upon a man, moreover to do the sexual aggressiveness. However, the strange action indeed made the poem more popular and loved.

Next, I chose Venus and Adonis because the poem is a combination between tragedy and comedy. The part of Venus's love's labours lost is a comedy while the death of Adonis is a tragedy (Stanley Wells 45). Venus's lamentation over Adonis created the tragic situation of the poem. The contrast situation has created in the readers an 'unresolved conflict of impressions' (45). Seemingly, Shakespeare wrote the poem in order to delight and amuse the readers to "gaze on the movements of Venus and Adonis as you would on the twinkling dances..." (Robert Speaight 78).

Furthermore, Venus and Adonis is a story of myth and legend and Shakespeare had made a different version of it. Originally, Venus came from the Roman mythology in which she was known as the goddess of spring, bloom,

and beauty. Venus was also identified by the Romans with Aphrodite as the goddess of love and beauty, from the Greek mythology. Venus and Adonis was inspired by Ovidian Epyllion, Scillaes Metamorphosis which talked about Adonis returned from Hades (Reese 276). However, Shakespeare's Venus and Adonis, stresses on Venus's action of seduction and her sense of loss when Adonis dies. The difference is that in Ovid's Metamorphosis there is no sense of sensuous enjoyment since Ovid was a religious man (276). Moreover, Ovid's Metamorphosis only contained 75 lines while in Shakespeare, there were 1200 lines.

I am interested in analyzing the topic of Venus' attempts to seduce and Adonis' refusal to it since I think it strange for a goddess to seduce a man and a man to refuse a goddess. Shakespeare in writing the poem, seems to draw the public's attention by showing off the goddess as having the character trait as a human being. According to the Greek mythology, the tale of Adonis does not end up with his death and Venus' mourning. Shakespeare eventually follows the version by Ovid rather than the original one (Asimov 8). Still in Shakespeare's writing, he stresses on the event of seduction. Venus and Adonis contains "a peculiarly high and severe moral allegory" (Barnet 1668). It seems that

Shakespeare wants to draw the goddess along with their human strengths and weaknesses. Here, Venus is the goddess who stands for lust and chases after a boy. The coldness of Adonis toward Venus' advances is used by Shakespeare to turn to the "harder and less familiar task of a woman's praise of manly beauty" (Asimov 10). Superficially, though the story seems to include the relationship between male and female, yet I aware that more than that the story is about a goddess and a human being. However, in Venus and Adonis, the actions of the characters are the other way around. Venus becomes the agent and aggressor of sexual pleasures while Adonis becomes the victim of the seduction in which he refuses to have sexual intercourse with her. These contradictive attitudes of the main characters against the common assumption have made me interested in analyzing the topic of seduction and refusal in Venus and Adonis.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In this thesis, I would like to find out the factors that make Venus try to seduce Adonis and the factors that make Adonis refuse it.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

My purpose of the study is to reveal the internal and external factors of Venus's seduction toward Adonis and the internal and external factors of his refusal.

1.4 Importance of the Study

Through this study, I bring seduction as a significant matter to be concerned. In reality, seduction always involves two sides; the doer and the victim. There are internal and external factors that make someone commit seduction. The internal factors come from within due to the character traits, while the external factors are things outside the person that influence him or her to commit seduction such as setting of time, place, etc. By recognizing the internal and external factors of seduction, I hope the readers would get the notion of how to avoid it when the same things happen to them.

Moreover, by knowing the internal and external factors of refusing seduction, the readers will realize that actually a person has the right to refuse seduction since it is a cruel act that can damage or destroy the victims.

Last, I hope readers will put high appreciation to Shakespeare's works; which include not only his

plays, but also his poems and sonnets, especially his poem Venus and Adonis.

1.5 Scope and limitation

The scope of discussion in this thesis is Venus and Adonis's relationship in which Venus tries to seduce Adonis and Adonis refuses her. I limit my discussion only on the factors that make Venus commit the seduction and Adonis refuse the seduction.

1.6 Methodology

In doing my thesis, I use library research in order to gain and collect data, criticism, and other information that can support my analysis. Moreover, I also surf the internet in order to collect more data and information that might help me to understand Venus and Adonis.

Venus and Adonis is a narrative poem, a story that is made more vivid by dramatization and dialogue. As a narrative poem uses action and speech chiefly as means of character revelation (Altenbernd 34), I need the theory on characterization in order to find out the factors that make Venus commit seduction and Adonis refuse it. To do the analysis, I need some literary tools namely figures of speech, imagery, and diction.

These tools will help me to analyze the factors of seduction and its refusal.

1.7 Organization of the Study

This thesis is divided into four chapters. Chapter one is the introduction which consists of the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the importance of the study, the methodology, the scope and limitation, and the organization of the study. Chapter two, the review of related literature, consists of literary devices and also story about Venus and Adonis which was written by Ovid in Metamorphosis. Chapter three is the analysis, which consists of Venus's factors of seducing and Adonis's factors of refusing. Chapter four summarizes the analysis and the findings. This thesis is closed with the appendix.