

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Alexandre Dumas pere, a French dramatist and novelist, is a prodigious writer and playwright. Because of his tremendous works of literature, not only was he France's best known writer but also the most famous Frenchman of his day. According to David Coward, "he was a star who was recognized wherever he travelled' (Dumas xi). Even Victor Hugo and de Musset acknowledge Dumas as "a paragon" of novelist and playwright (introduction). He is considered as a perfect example of a great novelist by his rivals, and to

this day he remains possibly the most widely known French novelist in the world.

Dumas pere, that is what people call him in order to distinguish him with his son, Alexander Dumas fils, is best known as a historical and romance writer. According to Sir Paul Harvey, Dumas is renowned for his long series of romantic novels in which he deals with many periods of European history (253). In his hands, history becomes more appealing. He mixes French history, adventure and romance into great stories. “The Three Musketeers (1844) and **its** sequels, together with The Count of Monte Cristo (1844-6), his most enduring novels, have not only delighted generations of readers but made history exciting” (Dumasi).

He wrote a series of historical romances since he hoped it would make him the French Walter Scott. “By the mid-1830’s, “asserts Coward, “(being) conscious of the inadequacy of his education, he began reading history seriously with a view to creating the French ‘historical novel’ which would be as respected and successful as the English historical novels of Walter Scott” (x).

Dumas is a terrific worker and has turned out a staggering amount of **work**. “Because of his excellent plays and novels”, noted Conrad Cady, “critics say that Dumas is one of the most successful, beloved, and prolific

writers in history” (“Introduction to *The Count of Mount Cristo*”). Dumas has written countless successful plays, novels, travel diaries, and interesting memoirs. He is considered one of the most prolific writers since his complete works comprise three hundred volumes. Coward notes, “He is able to publish over 300 plays, novels, travel books, and memoirs; 1,348 volumes, in all, it has been calculated’ (Dumas xiv). Dumas wrote travel books since he frequently made journeys to different parts of the world. As a travel writer, Dumas gave short historical and geographical measure in his books (x). In all his works, he always succeeded in interesting his reader with his wide knowledge, amazing anecdotes, and astounding adventures.

Dumas began his career in the world of literature as a dramatist. He scored an enormous success in theatre. However, by the late **1830’s** he turned his attention away from theatre to the novel because he was interested in the possibilities **of** writing fiction. Since then on, he was well-known as a remarkable novelist. “By the time *The Three Musketeers* and *The Count of Monte Cristo* were both published, in **1844**, his literary reputation was well established, not only as a celebrated playwright, but also as one of the foremost authors **of** romans feuilletons, the serialized novels which were all the rage in the nineteenth-century Paris” (Dumas introduction). Excellent novels have been created **by** Dumas’s hands. His works receive

acknowledgements from all kinds of people all over the world. “His output was prodigious and **fills** more than **300** volumes in the standard French edition” (i). His books brought him enormous popularity and extraordinary wealth.

Although Alexandre Dumas is a French playwright and writer, he has achieved a world wide reputation. Even Victor Hugo regarded him a great playwright. He wrote, “The name **of** Alexandre Dumas is more than French, it is European; and it is more than European, it is universal” (xxii). Most of his excellent works have been translated into many languages. Furthermore, some of the stories have been made into great movies, such as The Three Musketeers, The Man in the Iron Mask, The Count of Monte Cristo.

The prestigious reputation of Alexander Dumas pere makes me definitely choose him as the author **of** the novel I want to analyze in my thesis. I am stunned by his elegant handwriting. Conrad Cady mentions, “His most successful novels contain marvelous adventures and actions” (“Introduction to The Count of Monte Cristo”). Moreover, Swinburne says, “It was for ‘the Great Dumas’ capacity to stir the emotions and carry his reader into a world **of** excitement and adventure that Thackeray was kept ‘on the stretch for nearly nine hours a day’ in July **1849**” (Dumasxxii). In Dumas’s hands, a story would be as interesting and wonderful as it could be.

Another thing in Dumas which deserves admiration is the fact that he was an autodidact person. He had never studied in a particular school **of** art; however, he could be a great writer and playwright who had produced marvelous novels and plays. Hochman notes that after a sketchy education, Dumas became a notary clerk in Villers-Cotterets. Dumas rounded out his education by omnivorous reading, especially of plays (51). He only did self-study by reading a lot of **books**, but his works of literature was tremendous.

Dumas's fame rests chiefly on The Count of Monte Cristo. It is rated as one of the best classic **books** ever written. It is considered as the most interesting and popular novel **of** Alexander Dumas. "The Count of Monte Cristo", according to Drinkwater, "is a book without a peer" (706). It is totally unlike any **of** Dumas's other stories **and in many** respect is **the** strongest of all. Cady notes that even the Three Musketeers, though containing points of superiority, must yield to this novel in interest and popularity ("Introduction to The Count of Monte **Cristo**").

The Count of Monte Cristo tells about Edmond Dantes, who later becomes a master of disguise named the Count of Monte Cristo in order to avenge his enemies. Being falsely accused of treason, Dantes's life is totally dissolved His very **own** beloved father dies of hunger, his beautiful fiancée marries another man while he alone is imprisoned in the **Chateau d'If**.

Afterwards, he could successfully come out of the prison after staging a dramatic escape. Empowered with fabulous treasure **of** Monte Cristo and a store **of** worldly knowledge, Dantes sets out to avenge his enemies. Believing himself to be the representative **of** God, Dantes pursues his vengeance to the bitter end, only then realizing that he has not the right to take revenge.

The Count of Monte Cristo is primarily about Dantes's carefully wrought revenge. Cady states that "The Count of Monte Cristo is the story of Dantes's long, intolerable years of captivity, his miraculous escape and his carefully wrought revenge which has held millions of readers spellbound for more than a hundred years" ("Introduction to The Count of Monte Cristo"). "The escape of Dantes from the Chateau D'If", noted by Drinkwater, "is one of the most exciting incidents in all literature" (706). Frank N. McGill declares that the ~~story~~ of The Count of Monte Cristo is a breath-taking experience for all who read his adventure, a dramatic tale filled with mystery and intrigue (694). This **gorgeous** novel of mystery, adventure, and vengeance is Dumas's masterpiece.

Written with the consummate skill, The Count of Monte Cristo becomes one of the great thrillers of alltime For even during Dumas's lifetime, The Count of Monte Cristo had travelled far beyond the frontiers of France. It was quickly translated into German, Spanish, and Italian and subsequently into

countless languages from Arabic to Swedish (Dumas xxii). The above-mentioned facts make me definitely select The Count of Monte Cristo to be discussed in **my** thesis

The topic I choose is about the vengeance of Edmond Dantes towards his enemies. The topic draws my interest because nowadays in some parts of the world jungle law still rules. Starting from the age of Hammurabi until the present time, the ‘law:“an eye for an eye” has been applied by some people. They demand justice and think of satisfaction by taking revenge. In returning ~~evil with evil~~, **they** tend to ignore civil and spiritual laws. Thus, disorder in the society that might lead to a riot occurs in some places. Concerned about this **situation**, I discuss the topic of vengeance in my thesis.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Edmond Dantes, who was a simple and soft-hearted sailor, undergoes a miserable life after he was wrongfully denounced by men who envy him. **Later, after escaping from the prison**, he devotes his life to take revenge upon his enemies. I aim to figure out whether Edmond Dantes undergoes character change **before** the denunciation, after the denunciation, and after the revenge.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

Through analyzing Alexandre Dumas’s The Count of Monte Cristo, I want to prove that there is character change in Edmond Dantes before the

denunciation, after the denunciation, and after the revenge. The misery that Dantes bears affects his character traits afterwards. Moreover, Dantes's taking revenge also gives an impact towards his character traits.

1.4 Importance of the Study

This thesis is written so that the readers know more about Alexandre Dumas, a great writer and playwright, together with his excellent **works** of literature. As far as I know, not many of the student of the Faculty of Letters, Petra Christian University have discussed Dumas's works in their thesis. Hopefully, they would be encouraged to learn more about the prodigious Dumas and his marvelous works **of** literature. Furthermore, the readers become interested in reading and analyzing especially The Count of Monte Cristo since, as far **as** I know, it is the best novel Dumas has ever written.

Moreover, by discussing the topic of revenge in this thesis, I will show that taking revenge does not always bring satisfaction for the doers. Dantes, the main male character in the novel, successfully reprises his enemies. However, he feels empty rather than fulfilled by his retaliation. Instead of being satisfied and contented after getting even with his enemies, Dantes feels lonely and eventually realizes that only God has the right to punish man.

1.5 Scope and Limitation

In my analysis, I limit the analysis by discussing the main male character, Edmond Dantes, particularly his character traits before the denunciation, after the denunciation, and after the revenge. Furthermore, internal conflicts are also discussed as a tool to show Dantes's character change.

1.6 Methodology

In writing this thesis, I use the novel entitled The Count of Monte Cristo which is published by Wordsworth Editions Limited in 1997 in Hertfordshire as the main source. Besides, I also does library research and internet browsing to collect data and information which can support my study. Moreover, I use literary approach namely characterization and inner conflict in analyzing the novel. Characterization is applied **for** discussing Edmond Dantes's character traits. Inner conflict is used as a tool to find out whether Dantes undergoes character change or not.

I. 7 Organization of the Study

The thesis is presented in four chapters. The first chapter introduces the background of the study, the statement **of** the problem, the purpose **of** the study, the importance of the study, the scope and limitation, the methodology, and the organization of the study. The second chapter contains theories **of** characterization and conflict, and a keyterm of revenge. Thereafter, the

analysis of Edmond Dantes's character change before the denunciation, after the denunciation, and after the revenge **is** discussed in the third chapter.

Finally, the last chapter is written to show the conclusion after **have** analyzed the process **of** Dantes's character change.