

The Conflict between Life and Death Instinct in *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne

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Abstract

This study aims to show how Hawthorne uses characterization techniques and figurative languages such as metaphor and simile to describe the mental state of Arthur Dimmesdale and Hester Prynne's characters. This study uses a qualitative method with a psychological approach. The theory used in this research is the theory of life instinct and death instinct by Sigmund Freud. This study analyzes the style of language and characterizations to reveal the characters' mental conditions and inner conflict. The results of this study show that Hawthorne uses characterization techniques and figurative language to tell the conflict between the life and death instinct in Arthur Dimmesdale and Hester Prynne. Arthur Dimmesdale represents human weakness and hypocrisy that results in feelings of regret, inner conflict, and suffering that lead to the instinct of death. At the same time, the character Hester is described as having a strong and patient nature that leads to the instinct of life. This study concludes that Hawthorne uses characterization techniques and figurative language such as metaphor and simile to show the characters, Dimmesdale and Hester. They experience inner conflicts and life and death instincts.

Abstrak

Konflik antara Naluri Kematian dan Naluri Kehidupan dalam Novel *The Scarlet Letter* Karya Nathaniel Hawthorne

Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menunjukkan bagaimana cara Hawthorne menggunakan teknik penokohan, gaya bahasa metafora dan simile untuk menggambarkan kondisi mental tokoh Arthur Dimmesdale dan Hester Prynne saat mengalami konflik batin. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan psikologi. Teori yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini ialah teori naluri kehidupan dan naluri kematian oleh Sigmund Freud. Penelitian ini menganalisa gaya bahasa dan penokohan untuk mengungkap kondisi mental dan konflik batin tokoh. Hasil penelitian ini memperlihatkan bahwa Hawthorne menggunakan teknik penokohan dan gaya bahasa untuk mengungkapkan konflik antara naluri kehidupan dan kematian di tokoh Arthur Dimmesdale dan Hester Prynne. Arthur Dimmesdale merepresentasikan kelemahan manusia dan kemunafikan yang mengakibatkan rasa menyesal, konflik batin, dan penderitaan yang berujung pada naluri kematian. Sedangkan tokoh Hester dideskripsikan memiliki sifat yang kuat dan sabar yang berujung kepada naluri kehidupan. Simpulan dari penelitian ini ialah bahwa Hawthorne menggunakan teknik penokohan dan gaya bahasa metafora dan simile untuk menunjukkan tokoh Dimmesdale dan Hester yang mengalami konflik batin.

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1 Introduction

Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-1864) was a famous writer American national living in the era of Romanticism. Most of his struggle with criticism of cultural Puritanism and humanitarian issues with its weaknesses was caused by the inability of a man to control the passions that drive suffering for themselves and those around him. Many experts in the field of literature assessing the works of Hawthorne contain social criticism, particularly concerning morality. Besides literary works are closely related to psychological concepts. (Hawthorne, 1959: vii-viii).

One of his famous novels is *The Scarlet Letter*. This novel discusses the forbidden love between a doctor's wife, Hester Prynne, and a respectable Puritan pastor, Arthur Dimmesdale. As a result of their actions, Hester gave birth to a daughter named Pearl. Hester had to wear embroidered with a maroon letter "A" which means adultery and forever embedded on her clothes; She came to be languishing in jail. While not the slightest untouched Dimmesdale's result from this illicit relationship; he even interrogates Hester in the presence of religious leaders by asking Prynne who is the one that should take responsibility for the scandal. Nevertheless, Hester was determined not to mention her lover's name, while Arthur suffered from emotional wounds – inner conflict as a result of his guilty feeling. Although Arthur was saved, as he didn't want to be responsible, he could not escape from terrible mental condition.

The issue of life and death instinct can be seen in the story of the scarlet letter. Feelings of guilt, shame, sadness, and fear surround the two characters in this text. Unlike Dimmesdale, who hurts himself because of guilt, Prynne tries to be more patient and tough with her feelings of shame. The comparison between the two characters in the text, namely Dimmesdale and Prynne, becomes very interesting. Dimmesdale seems to be described as a perfect foil for Hester. Facing the same problem, Hester is more influenced by life instinct while Dimmesdale is more influenced by death instinct. For this reason, this study intends to find the purpose of the text in describing the differences in the characteristics of the two figures. The researchers seem to see dualism in this Hawthorne's work. Using the theory of life and death instinct by Sigmund Freud, the researchers will explain these issues.

This research is a continuation of previous research that analyzes Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*. This novel has many compelling aspects to discuss like love, morality, and its style of figurative language. Zheng (2017) conducted research entitled "An Analysis of Symbolism in the *Scarlet Letter*. The symbols being analyzed are the letter "A" which refers to adultery, Alone and Alienation, the Forest, and the Scaffold. This research concludes that the symbolic reading of the *Scarlet Letter* helps the readers understand more about the characters and the society they live in. Listyowati and Hanna (2020) discussed the factors that caused Hester Prynne to commit adultery, they are: the need for affection, the need for safety, the need for love and belongings, and the need for sex. The impacts of adultery are some conflicts with the society, magistrates, Chillingworth, her child, and Dimmesdale. The psychological condition of Hester Prynne is esteem needs, psychotic anxiety, safety need, and developed superego. The impacts of adultery psychological condition of Arthur Dimmesdale are double avoidance conflict, approach-avoidance conflict, neurotic anxiety, mental disorder, and psychosomatic illness. The conclusion of this research: Hester Prynne is a responsible character, brave, and struggles for life; while Arthur Dimmesdale is a coward and afraid to lose his dignity as a priest. Fadlilah (2017) also conducted research entitled *Figurative Language in the Scarlet Letter*. She concluded that the figurative language in *The Scarlet Letter* created a symbol that has meaning to give powerful message to the reader. Next, Liu (2021) conducted research entitled "The duality of Hester Prynne's image: Subversion and Submission". Using a feminist perspective, he concludes that Prynne's silence of his daughter's father is the symbol of patriarchal domination. Different from previous research, this research focuses on the life and death instinct in both characters, Dimmesdale and Hester, in the *Scarlet Letter*. Using psychological approach of Freud's life and death instinct



theory, this study will focus on the interplay between life and death instinct in both characters, Arthur Dimmesdale and Hester Prynne.

The study using life and death instinct was conducted Ejupi et al. (2014) and Singh (2019). Ejupi et al. (2014) conducted research entitled "The Struggle of Eros Against Thanatos in The Novel "Lady Chatterley's Lover by D.H Lawrence". They concluded that Eros becomes the winner of the conflict between eros and Thanatos in some characters of that novel. Singh (2019) analyzed Eros and Thanatos in Julian Barnes' *The Sense of an Ending*. He concluded that Eros and Thanatos appear in some characters of Julian Barnes' *The Sense of an Ending*, but Thanatos or death instinct seems more compelling in that Novel. In contrast to both previous studies, this study compares two characters, Prynne and Dimmesdale, in Hawthorne's *the Scarlet Letter* novel. This study analyzes at how Eros give more effect in Prynne while Thanatos give more effect in Dimmesdale. Comparing Eros and Thanatos in the two characters, it seems that there is a dualism in Hawthorne about his ideas of life, especially regarding the life and death instincts.

This study will analyze both characters Arthur Dimmesdale and Hester Prynne. In the novel, Arthur's character has the opposite characteristics of Hester's character. Therefore, this study will use foil character. A foil character is a character who has intense contradiction with main character in literary works or film (Abrams & Harpham, 2012; DiYanni, 2000). This character is the main character's counterpart and has a distinguished personality from that main character (Abrams & Harpham, 2012; DiYanni, 2000).

In addition, this study also uses characterization theory through figurative language. Figurative language appears in story to describe a character and develop human characteristics in that character (Gibbs, 1998). Using figurative language in characterization can create a more powerful effect in the text of the story (Athanasidou, 2020). Therefore, it can sometimes give emotion and a sense of everyday language to the reader (Athanasidou, 2020). Many figurative languages are used in the story such as metaphor, simile, metonymy, overstatement, understatement, paradox, oxymoron, and irony (Ibáñez, 2020). Because its function that can emphasize physical and mental characteristic (Colston, 2015), metaphor and simile appears more often in a story, especially in characterization.

This study also uses a psychological approach using Freud's theory of life and death instinct. Freud believed that human behavior is guided by two fundamental energies, namely, first, the sense of life instincts - Eros which is manifested in sexual behaviour, love, and creativity, as well as the life-sustaining growth (Akhtar & O'Neil, 2011; Kli, 2018). Second, is the death instinct (Thanatos instincts) underlying the aggressive, destructive, and negative actions (Akhtar & O'Neil, 2011; Kli, 2018). Death instinct can lead to suicide or self-destruction (self-destructive behaviour) or behaving aggressively towards others (Hilgard et al., 1975: 335). The desire to die (death wish) can be generated by, for example, the freedom of someone blocked from caring for disabled people. In such circumstances, he was unconsciously wanted to escape from this burden with the hope that the patient would soon die. He actually denies the desire because the nature of life itself, but without realizing he often sang songs Bridesmaids death. In this case there is a contradiction between the desire to be free with their deaths with a sense otherwise because he was concerned that it could threaten her desire (Hilgard et al., 1975: 499).

2 Methods

The method of this study is qualitative. The use of a qualitative research with the conceptual realm, to get the message that comprehensive literature includes: the validity of semantics and understanding the symbolic meaning inherent in context; while reliability is used for adjustment between the results of the review of the research literature that has been formulated (Endraswara, 2008). This study uses character and characterization, figurative language and life and death instinct theory. There are some steps to do this research. First, the writer carefully reads the novel using the



technique close reading. Second, the writer chooses the sentences that is related to character and characterization, figurative language and life and death instinct theory. Third, the writer analyzes the characters and figurative languages using the theory of life and death instinct to find how Hawthorne uses characterization techniques and figurative languages such as metaphor and simile to reveal the conflict between the life and death instinct in both character of *The Scarlet Letter*, Arthur Dimmesdale and Hester Prynne.

3 Results and Discussion

3.1 Life and Death Instinct in Dimmesdale

Involved in a scandal with Hester Prynne, Dimmesdale suffers from feelings of guilt that ultimately deprive his desire to live. In Freud's work, the superego can gradually develop so that it becomes the cause of a person being driven by his death instinct, because basically the super ego itself has a dependence on the death instinct which acts as social control (Kli, 2018). When the superego manifests itself in the form of coerced consciousness, this will foster feelings of guilt in a person which ultimately makes that person filled with feelings of frustration and depression (Kli, 2018). The text describes how Dimmesdale as a minister as well as a pastor is more affected by his guilt and shame due to the sin he commits. In fact, he tries to hurt himself until in the end because he cannot stand being haunted by his feeling of guilt, he finally confesses his sin and dies.

Even though no one knew about the scandal he had committed, Dimmesdale couldn't shake the feeling of embarrassment. It was difficult for him to make eye contact with other people: "He always hides his face to avoid face to face. ... – whatever be the delinquencies of the individual, – no outrage more flagrant than to forbid the culprit to hide his face for shame; as it was the essence of this punishment to do." (Hawthorne, 1959: 55). The quotation: – no outrage more flagrant than to forbid the culprit to hide his face for shame, means hiding one's face because of shame is a very bad attitude.

In addition to the feeling of shame surrounding his feelings, Dimmesdale also felt afraid if this secret was revealed: "A writhing horror twisted itself across his features, like a snake gliding swiftly over them, and making one little pause, with all its wreathed intervolutions in open air." (Hawthorne, 1959: 145). The quotation: like a snake gliding swiftly over them, illustrates overwhelming fear.

The inner suffering that Dimmesdale experienced over time made changes to him both mentally and physically. He looked very unattractive; his appearance was very boring to look at. "He looked like the darkly engraved portraits which we see prefixed to old volume of sermons, ..." (Hawthorne, 1959: 71). The quotation means that the appearance of Mr. Dimmesdale was very unattractive and very boring to look at.

Although the embroidered form of The Scarlet Letter was emblazoned on her lover's chest, Dimmesdale could feel the pain of his lover, Hester Prynne.: "And thus, while standing on the scaffold, in this vain show expiation, Mr. Dimmesdale was overcome with great horror of mind, as if the universe were gazing at the scarlet token on his naked breast, right over his heart." (Hawthorne, 1959: 148). These words: as if the universe were gazing at the scarlet token on his naked breast, right over his heart mean, how Mr. Dimmesdale could feel the pain of his lover's heart at holding back the shame.

A priest who used to appear very attractive, dignified, and honorable, because this shameful scandal made all that honor disappear replaced with suffering: "At first, his expression had been calm, meditative, scholar-like. Now, there was something ugly and evil in his face, which they had not previously noticed, and which grew still the more obvious to sight, the oftener they looked upon him." (Hawthorne, 1959: 127). At first, his expression had been calm, meditative, scholar-like means before this incident became an open secret Mr. Dimmesdale was considered a highly educated and respected pastor.



Roger Chillingworth, husband of Hester Prynne was a good friend of Dimmesdale. In connection with this scandal, it seems that Chillingworth is suspicious of Dimmesdale. He felt that this man was in love with his wife. This suspicion can be felt by Dimmesdale. She felt haunted by her lover's husband who seemed to always be shadowing him: "To sum up the matter, it grew to be a widely diffused opinion, that the Reverend Arthur Dimmesdale, like many other personages of especial sanctity, in all ages of the Christian world, was haunted either by Satan himself, or Satan's emisary, in the guise of old Roger Chillingworth." (Hawthorne, 1959: 128). This like many other personages of especial sanctity, in all ages of the Christian world means he is considered a holy priest as the Christian world views their pastors.

He always looks confused and sometimes he forgets what he said because his mind is always clouded by this event. He often talks to himself as if regretting everything that has happened: "None, -- save the freedom of a broken law," answered Mr. Dimmesdale, in a quiet way, as if he had been discussing the point within himself." (Hawthorne, 1959: 134). The words as if he had been discussing the point within himself means, he seemed confused not realizing what he was saying.

Day by day his thoughts and feelings became more and more chaotic which made his appearance very strange. Dimmesdale was so frightened that it made him look bad: "A writhing horror twisted itself across his features, like a snake gliding swiftly over them, and making one little pause, with all its wreathed intervolutions in open water." (Hawthorne, 1959: 67). "He looked like a ghost, evoked unseasonably from the grave." (Hawthorne, 1959: 145). He looked like a ghost, evoked unseasonably from the grave means the feeling that enveloped his mind made his appearance peculiar and frightening.

Time passed without him noticing, Dimmesdale's mental state getting worse. So great was the pressure he was feeling, without realizing it he often shouted loudly so that it could be heard everywhere: "Without any efforts of his will, or power to restrain himself, he shrieked aloud; an outcry that went pealing through the night, and was beaten back from one house to another, and reverberated from the hills in the background; as if a company of devils, detecting so much misery and terror in it...." (Hawthorne, 1959: 148). The words as if a company of devils, detecting so much misery and terror in it.... mean his mental state began to be disturbed so that he was acting out of his consciousness.

Dimmesdale feels alone, he feels abandoned by the honor and fame of the past. Even the people closest to him, now has left him in pain: "And now, surrounded like the saint-like personages of olden times, with a radiant halo, that glorified him amid this gloomy night of sin, -- as if the departed Governor had left him an inheritance of his glory, or as if he had caught upon himself the distant shine of the celestial city..." (Hawthorne, 1959: 150). The quotation, like the saint-like personages of olden times, with a radiant halo, that glorified him amid this gloomy night of sin means his condition was in stark contrast. In the past he was respected and praised by his congregation. Now he felt very guilty, covered in sin.

He felt very hopeless. He was no longer able to handle all this suffering. Dimmesdale needs help: "With a chill despondency, like one awaking, all nerveless, from an ugly dream, he yielded himself to the physician, and was led away." (Hawthorne, 1959: 157). The quotation, with a chill despondency, like one awaking means his condition was now such a nightmare that he could no longer handle it on his own.

Dimmesdale's feelings of guilt ultimately drove him to self-harm. it is influenced by the instinct of death. The entropic descent to Death constitutes the unconscious escape from pain and necessity (Kli, 2018). This is a process that goes on in very distinct ways within each individual, and the formation of this process is dependent on a multiplicity of factors generated by the individual's singular experience (Kli, 2018). He was very depressed. There is no hope for life anymore.



Dimmesdale began to think about ending his life: “There was a listlessness in his gait; as if he saw no reason for taking one step farther, nor felt any desire to do so, but would have been glad, could he be glad of anything, to fling himself down at the root of the nearest tree, and lie there passive for evermore.” (Hawthorne, 1959: 188). There was a listlessness in his gait; as if he saw no reason for taking one step farther, nor felt any desire to do so means he was discouraged, weak and did not want to live any longer.

Dimmesdale felt that everyone was only focusing on him. All are concerned and all hope this scandal is the last: “Dimmesdale's anguish grew so much that he wanted to self-destruct: The minister started to his feet, gasping for breath, and clutching at his heart as if he would have torn it out of his bosom.” (Hawthorne, 1959: 192). as if he would have torn it out of his bosom. This means he was very sad.

Dimmesdale begins to experience hallucinations and admits that he is helpless, he no longer wants to live more. He was hopeless: “It cannot be!” answered the minister, listening as if he were called upon to realize the dream. “I am powerless to go. Wretched and sinful as I am, I have had no other thought than to drag on my earthly existence in the sphere where Providence hath placed me.” (Hawthorne, 1959: 197). This quotation, listening as if he were called upon to realize the dream means that he felt that he could no longer endure this suffering, so he wanted to end his life.

Dimmesdale is regarded a criminal, a hypocrite, irresponsible for what he does....; “that, between fleeing as an avowed criminal, and remaining as a hypocrite, conscience might find hard to strike the balance; ...” (Hawthorne, 1959: 200). The quotations (and remaining as a hypocrite) means he was confused about having to report himself or trying to be hypocritical and guilt-free.

Dimmesdale is sick and feels his presence on the American continent is suffering: “But methinks, dear Sir, you look pale; as if the travel through the wilderness had been too sore for you.” (Hawthorne, 1959: 223). This expression, as if the travel through the wilderness had been too sore for you means he was very upset and desperate, did not know what to do next.

The days he passed only added to his suffering. He couldn't handle it anymore: “Thus the night fled away, as if it were a winged steed, and he careering on it; morning came, and peeped blushing through the curtains; and at last sunrise threw a golden beam into the study, and laid it right across the minister's bedazzled eyes.” (Hawthorne, 1959: 225). This quotation, as if it were a winged steed, and he is careering on it; morning came, and peeped blushing through the curtains; means the days passed seemed boring, he lost his enthusiasm for life.

In the end, Dimmesdale admit his sins and dies.

“The law we broke I—the sin here awfully revealed! —let these alone be in thy thoughts! I fear! I fear! ... God knows; and He is merciful! He hath proved his mercy, most of all, in my afflictions. By giving me this burning torture to bear upon my breast!” (Hawthorne, 1959: 240).

In this dialog of Dimmesdale, that shows his characteristics who is depressed and weak, it can be argued that the death instinct develops within him due to his feeling of guilt. However, the text seems to describe a paradox in Dimmesdale's character, on the one hand Dimmesdale is described as a person who fears God, and believes that God is merciful, on the other hand he is depicted as desperate with his suffering and hurts himself and ends up in death. In can be argued that the text wants to describe the hypocrisy in Dimmesdale.

Thus, in the case of Dimmesdale's character, it appears that this fictional character is driven more by his death instinct than by his life instinct. this is because as a priest the sinful act he commits made him feel guilty which progressively grows until he decides to punish and hurt himself. Text shows the moral burden that he bears makes him despair and pushes him to become frustrated and unhappy.

3.2 Life and Death Instinct in Prynne

In contrast to Dimmesdale, Prynne is more influenced by the live instinct. Prynne is indeed covered in feelings of shame because of her sinful actions, but Prynne is also described as a strong woman. This is due to the influence of the child as a result of his illicit relationship with Dimmesdale

"The mother of this child-stood fully revealed before the crowd, it seemed to be her first impulse to clasp the infant closely to her bosom; not so much by an impulse of motherly affection, as that she might thereby conceal a certain token, which was wrought or fastened into her dress." (Hawthorne, 1959: 52).

Prynne's shame comes from being exposed to many people as an adulteress. This made her hug her baby tightly, besides she herself seemed to have a bit of maternal instinct. "to ease her feelings of shame, Hester hugged her baby tightly; in addition to reducing feelings of discomfort. (Hawthorne, 1959)". having a baby by her side, when everyone insulted her, seemed to make Prynne stronger.

Text describes Prynne as a strong person and stubborn, though she was forced to admit who the father of her baby was she would not admit.

"I will not speak!" answered Hester, turning pale as death, but responding to this voice, which she too surely recognized. "And my child must seek a heavenly father; she shall never know an earthly one!" (Hawthorne, 1959: 74).

Even when everyone insults her, "Hester Prynne might have repaid them all with a bitter and disdainful smile. (Hawthorne, 1959: 57)."

However, besides describing Prynne as a strong character, the text also describes how the pressure she received affected her physically making her weak and helpless.

"Here, there was the taint of deepest sin in the most sacred quality of human life, working such effect, that the world was only the darker for this woman's beauty, and the more lost for the infant that she had borne."(Hawthorne, 1959: 56).

The text uses metaphors to describe Prynne's character who loses her aura of beauty due to the sin she committed.

Indeed, the text shows that on the one hand the baby Prynne made herself strong, but on the other hand being in prison as a sinner makes her feel weak. "For Hester Prynne had immediately become as still as death, although the child continued to moan. (Hawthorne, 1959: 71)." Despite being strong, Prynne suffers greatly and despairs of her condition in prison. In fact, this seems to disturb her mind so that she cannot take care of her baby.

"There was much need of professional assistance, not merely for Hester herself, but still more urgently for the child—who, drawing its sustenance from the maternal bosom, seemed to have drunk in with it all the turmoil, the anguish and despair."(Hawthorne, 1959).

From here, the text shows a battle between the death and life instincts within Prynne.

Moreover, the text describes the conflict between the instincts of life and death in Prynne through the paradox of Prynne's characteristic who is on the one hand looks strong in facing everyone's insults, but on the other hand she feels ashamed of herself who has committed a sin, especially with the mark pinned on her bosom. In the text, Prynne is described as patient and firm in facing the insults of people around her. "And she never responded to these attacks, save by a flush of crimson that rose irrepressibly over her pale cheek, and again subsided into the depths of her bosom. She was patient--a martyr. 88" Prynne tries to control her anger when people taunt her because of her adultery. Even though She suffers from the situation she is in, she tries to hold back her feelings of irritation and suffering in his heart. Indeed, there is a picture of how a person tries to survive in the midst of the suffering she goes through in the text. Thus, it can be seen that the text shows Prynne's life instinct.

Prynne's life instinct is also depicted in the text through her strength to face a life that is despised by everyone.

“Walking to and fro, with those lonely footsteps, in the little world with which she was outwardly connected, it now and then appeared to Hester--if altogether fancy, it was nevertheless too potent to be resisted--she felt or fancied, then, that the scarlet letter had endowed her with a new sense. She shuddered to believe, yet could not help believing, that it gave her a sympathetic knowledge of the hidden sin in other hearts.” (Hawthorne, 1959: 89).

Text shows how Prynne must struggle alone enduring what people think about her as a sinner. However, it does not always make her feel weak. Indeed, text describes Prynne as a wise person in dealing with her life's problems. Moreover, it seems that Prynne is described as a victim of Dimmesdale and the society itself. Based on Prynne's narrative point of view, it seems to be a discourse that every human being cannot be free from sin. Also, based on the social background of the text, namely in the puritan era, it can be seen that there is a criticism of puritan society itself.

However, the text not only describes how strong Prynne is, but also her helplessness.

“Weeks, it is true, would sometimes elapse, during which Pearl's gaze might never once be fixed upon the scarlet letter; but then, again, it would come at unawares, like the stroke of sudden death, and always with that peculiar smile and odd expression of the eyes.” (Hawthorne, 1959: 98).

The way Pearl, Prynne's daughter, looked at the scarlet letter, made her feel scared and embarrassed. Simile “like the stroke of sudden death” describes the death instinct in Prynne. Prynne seems unable to see her child's gaze and smile. Thus, the text describes Prynne's inability to contain her shame, especially in front of her child who stares at the scarlet letter.

Moreover, Prynne's death instinct was also seen, in the text, when she tried to kill Pearl, her daughter.

“Thus Hester Prynne, whose heart had lost its regular and healthy throb, wandered without a clue in the dark labyrinth of mind; now turned aside by an insurmountable precipice; now starting back from a deep chasm. ...At times a fearful doubt strove to possess her soul, whether it was not better to send Pearl at once to Heaven, and go herself to such futurity as Eternal Justice should provide.” (Hawthorne, 1959: 192)

Based on the quote above, it can be seen how Prynne is described as a helpless person, who is finally influenced by her subconscious and in the end intends to kill her own child. However, on the other hand the text describes the doubts in Prynne to kill Pearl. From this characterization of Prynne, it can be argued that text develop the idea of life and death instinct. Indeed, It can be seen that there is a conflict between life and death instinct in Prynne.

Nevertheless, it can be argued that text narrate how the life instinct in Prynne is stronger than her death instinct. Text shows how Prynne's love affect Prynne's life. Indeed, from the Freudian perspective, human development is greatly influenced by the happiness they achieve and their relationships with other people. (Kli, 2018). It can be seen form the quote below.

“All at once, as with a sudden smile of heaven, forth burst the sunshine, pouring a very flood into the obscure forest, gladdening each green leaf, transmuting the yellow fallen ones to gold, and gleaming adown the gray trunks of the solemn trees. The objects that had made a shadow hitherto, embodied the brightness now.” (Hawthorne, 1959: 193)

The quote above, using a metaphor, is an explanation that the conditions soon changed to be more friendly and brighter which made Prynne more optimistic in living life. It happens when “the stigma gone, Hester heaved a long, deep sigh, in which the burden of shame and anguish departed from her spirit. (Hawthorne, 1959).” Therefore, it can be argued that text created an image of life in its metaphor to bring the idea of tendency of human that always toward to happiness.

Furthermore, text also described how love brings happiness to people through its metaphor.

“Love, whether newly born, or aroused from a death-like slumber, must always create a sunshine, filling the heart so full of radiance, that it overflows upon the outward world. Had the forest still kept its gloom, it would have been bright in Hester’s eyes, and bright in Arthur Dimmesdale’s.” (Hawthorne, 1959: 193).

The quote states that love, whether new or has lasted a long time, always gives happiness. The text describes how the characters of Hester and Dimmesdale feel happy because of the love they have. It can be argued that love is part of the instinct of life that is owned by humans. This can be seen through the depiction of the character Prynne in the text who can survive in the end because of the love she has.

The text also shows how the instinct of life grows strong in a person through their attachment and love for others which drives them to happiness.

“Hester comforted and counselled them, as best she might. She assured them, too, of her firm belief that, at some brighter period, when the world should have grown ripe for it, in Heaven’s own time, a new truth would be revealed, in order to establish the whole relation between man and woman on a surer ground of mutual happiness.” (Hawthorne, 1959: 249)

After Dimmesdale tells the truth that happens between him and Prynne, and eventually dies, Prynne finally went abroad. But, in the end, she decided to come back. This narration prove how text described how Prynne is stronger than Dimmesdale. Moreover, it can be argued, that through the depiction of Prynne who ultimately lives as a giver of encouragement and advice to people who have the same suffering that has been faced by her, the life instinct in Prynne is stronger than Dimmesdale’s.

In summary, through the characterization of Hester Prynne, on the one hand is described as a woman who is strong and patient in facing the judgment of society for her sinful acts, but on the other hand also experiences suffering and shame due to her sin, it can be argued that there is an ambivalence in the text towards the depiction of Prynne's character. By this ambivalence, the text seems to want to describe the interplay between the life instinct and death instinct in Prynne's character. Indeed, by narrating that the character Prynne is able to face all of her sufferings by filling them with love, the text makes the idea that Prynne's life instinct is greater than her death instinct. This is precisely the opposite of Dimmesdale, which is more dominated by his death instinct.

4 Conclusion

In Conclusion, Hawthorne uses characterization techniques and figurative language to reveal the conflict between the life and death instinct in Arthur Dimmesdale and Hester Prynne. A leading writer of literary works usually conveys covertly by way of, among others, using the style of language, for example the use of simile and metaphor. To understand the story completely, the readers should have the ability to understand the deep meaning of simile and metaphor. In this case the use of simile and metaphor shows the character’s: feeling, thinking, regret, shame, sorrow, helplessness, and the death instinct.

Arthur Dimmesdale, an intelligent and honourable Puritan preacher, is not able to control his emotions of forbidden love. Although he was able to hide his secret, he did not escape from the guilt that made him suffer. The inner conflict that enveloped Arthur's thoughts and feelings is sadness over the treatment of society to Hester and suffering he must endure. In addition, he felt guilty because he is not responsible for the act of doing. Arthur is a figure that defensively hypocritical self-esteem for dignity. Although he can hide from crime, inner conflicts have led to the death instinct because of feelings of shame and sorrow.

In contrast to Arthur Dimmesdale, Hester Prynne who also has a feeling of shame is described as a woman who is strong and patient in facing suffering. Unlike Arthur Dimmesdale, who was more influenced by his death instinct, the text describes how Hester Prynne was dominated by her life instinct.

By comparing these two fictional characters, it seems that there is Hawthorne's critique of the society in the puritanical Era. These two characters both commit adultery, however, the text describes how Arthur, who is a priest, is more dominated by feelings of guilt. On the other hand, the character of Prynne is more depicted as a victim who suffers greatly because she has to bear the moral burden alone.

In the final conclusion, by using characterization techniques and figurative languages to reveal the conflict between the life and death instinct in Arthur Dimmesdale and Hester Prynne, Hawthorne conveys to the reader about the weakness of human morality as: inability to control lust, hypocrisy, and criticizes the Puritan era which were too fanatical about humanitarian issues. The teachings of The Scarlett Letter convey to the reader that people suffer because of their inability to control themselves that cause suffering. In addition, people who are fanatical cover moral damages to be hypocritical. Hypocrisy in this context makes the fictional characters suffer of body and soul. All the suffering felt by Arthur made him helpless and led to health deteriorated and cause death.

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