

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Repentance is a form of virtue that must be done by man to ask forgiveness from God to escape from sin. In the process of repentance, the individual can return to sin. Repentance can be stated as a review process of one's actions and feeling contrition or regret for past wrongs, which is accompanied by commitment to and actual actions that show and prove a change for the better. Nowadays, a commitment is involved to personal change and the resolve to live a more responsible and humane life. Shortly, being sorry for one's misdeeds. However, it can also involve sorrow over a specific sin or series of sins that an individual feels guilt over, or a conviction that they have committed.

The practical process of repentance plays an important role in the soteriological doctrines of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Repentance, in Judaism is one element of atoning for sin. Ethical self transformation is the primary purpose of repentance. Everybody sins on occasion, but that people can stop or minimize those occasions in the future by repenting for past transgressions. For Christianity, repentance is a stage in Christian salvation where the believer turns away from sin. repentance is part of the larger theological concept of penance in Roman Catholic theology. Meanwhile, in Islam, repentance is called Tahwa. Tawba means repenting to God due to performing any sins and misdeeds. There is no intercession because it is a direct matter between a person and God. Tawba is the act of leaving what God has prohibited and returning to

what he has commanded. If someone sins against another person, he requires restitution.

The practices of repentance have also been found in other world religions as well. For religious side, it often involves an act of confession to God or to a spiritual elder (a monk or priest). The confession might include an admission of guilt, a promise or intent not to repeat the offense, an attempt to make restitution for the wrong, or in some way reverse the harmful effects of the wrong where possible.

The concept of repentance can not only be seen in the real life but also portray in literary works such as novel. The novel is a genre of fiction, and fiction may be defined as the art or craft of contriving, through the written word, representations of human life that instruct or divert or both. The various forms that fiction may take are best seen less as a number of separate categories than as a continuum or, more accurately, a cline, with some such brief form as the anecdote at one end of the scale and the longest conceivable novel at the other (Burgess, 2022). One of literary works which portrays about repentance as the theme is *The Last Song* written by Nicholas Sparks. *The Last Song* by Nicholas Sparks is a romantic and drama genre novel published September 8th 2009 by Grand Central Publishing with 390 pages.

This novel tells of a Veronica "Ronnie" during a visit to her father Steve Miller's home in North Carolina. Yes, Ronnie's parents have separated and since that moment Ronnie's attitude towards his father changed 180°. Kim Miller, Ronnie's mother sent her with her only sister Jonah to spend the summer vacation there. Arriving at their father's house, Jonah was excited. Unlike Ronnie, although

the view of their father's house faces the beach directly. He prefers to walk along the beach while looking around rather than greeting his father. Ronnie hated his father so much. To the extent that he does not want to play the piano keys anymore, because of the separation of his parents. In fact, his father who is also good at playing the piano is a former teacher at the Juilliard School music school. And Ronnie is talented in that area. The relationship between Ronnie and his father had subsided since he found out that his father had a serious illness.

This is such an interesting theme for a literary works to be discussed. No one never committed a sin in his life. It can be a reflection of the human life in the reality to repent. It can also be a moral lesson for the reader. To be a good human being, someone need to repent for his wrongdoings.

1.2. Statements of the Problem

From the description related to the title of this study, the problems of this study are stated as follow.

1. What kinds of repentance are found in Nicholas Sparks' novel *The Last Song* ?
2. How does the protagonist repent her sins in Nicholas Sparks' novel *The Last Song* ?

1.3. Objective of the study

The objective of the study is the goal why the problem stated. The objectives of this study are as follow.

1. To laborate the kinds of repentance found in Nicholas Sparks' novel *The Last Song* .

2. To describe how the protagonist repent her sins in Nicholas Sparks' novel *The Last Song* .

1.4. Scope of the study

A scope is need in doing a study or research to make it focusses. As make up of study more practical in real sense of scientific work, this study should be limited to a certain extent pertaining to the protagonist's repentance. This study is focussed on the kinds of repentance found in the novel and also how the protagonist repent her sins. Any other points which are not linked to the subject matter will be excluded.

1.5. Significance of the study

Technically, this research can be useful as an additional reference for other conversion analyzes and further by other researchers because they can cite the findings of this study for their scientific work as one of their references.

Practically, this research can provide moral lessons as life lessons to have good ethics for the researchers themselves and for the readers of this work related to repentance and protagonist.

CHAPTER II LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Protagonist

The inferior novelist tends to be preoccupied with plot; to the superior novelist the convolutions of the human personality, under the stress of artfully selected experience, are the chief fascination. Without character it was once accepted that there could be no fiction. In the period since World War II, the creators of what has come to be called the French *nouveau roman* (i.e., new novel) have deliberately demoted the human element, claiming the right of objects and processes to the writer's and reader's prior attention (Burgess, 2022). It means that characters are one of the important aspects in a novel beside theme, plot, and setting. Characters can be divided into protagonist, antagonist, and deutronist. The protagonist is the character with a fate which is most closely followed by the reader or audience, and who is opposed by the antagonist. Meanwhile, the antagonist is the obstacles and complications and create conflicts to test the protagonist, and also revealing the strengths and weaknesses of the protagonist's character. Protagonist can be hero/heroine, antihero, tragic hero, villain protagonist, or supporting protagonist. Protagonist should have an important dramatic goal to achieve.

According to Nurgiyantoro (2010:259), the main character is the perpetrator of the incident. Therefore, in certain novels, the main character is present in the incident and can be found on every page of the story book. The main character plays an important role in determining the storyline of the film. The main character usually appears more often in the story. Characters are also

used as a center to determine the overall development of the plot. The main character is also the determinant of his life in a story. The protagonist is related to other characters, while the characters themselves are not all related to one another.

Definition of protagonist is “The chief character in a dramatic work. Hence, in extended use: the leading character, or one of the main characters, in any narrative work, as a poem, novel, film, etc.”

The role of the protagonist is a role that should represent positive things in the needs of the story. This role is likely to be the most hurt, either, and suffering that will cause sympathy for the audience. The role of the protagonist is usually the central figure, the figure that determines the motion scenes.

2.2. Repentance

Spendlove & Spendlove (2016: 177) state that The word repent, in its various forms (repenting, repented, repentance, etc.) shows up with differing rates of recurrence within the scriptures. Repent appears with much greater frequency in the Book of Mormon than it does in the Old or New Testaments. It is derived from the Latin *repenitet* and simply means “to be sorry again.”

The meaning of the Greek word, ‘metanoia’ for ‘repentance’ means, making amends (for guilt, including changing our attitudes) and effecting positive change. We are called to consider the moral implications of sin in our life, which includes a reformation of our ways. This is what it means to be truly repentant. Our heartfelt and mindful awareness is in accordance with God’s will, and will result in salvation. When we have come to this place of unhappiness due to our actions, and reflect upon what we have done, we repent of our sin, and we should then confess our sin to God (Tsaftaridis, 2017: 2). True repentance means more

than to be sorry for what a person has done. It means also and no less to do differently from now on. .

Hudyakova takes a different stance on this subject and notes that the terms “remorse” and “repentance” are often treated as interchangeable. She mentions that in Dahl’s Explanatory Dictionary the word “remorse” has a narrower meaning compared to “repentance”: “... to repent, feel remorseful about one’s action, to recognize that something wasn’t supposed to be done or said”. When a person is feeling remorseful, they only regret a specific action, without renouncing their former selves, unlike repentance, which is characterized by a “change of consciousness” (Hudyakova, 1997: 23).

Repentance means the action or process of repenting especially for misdeeds or moral shortcomings. Zavada (2020) states that repentance in Christianity means a sincere turning away, in both the mind and heart, from self to God. It involves a change of mind that leads to action—the radical turning away from a sinful course to God. A person who is truly repentant recognizes God the Father as the most important factor of his or her existence.

In Islam, repentance refers to tawba. Tawba is a core Islamic construct that structures ethical conduct in human relationships as well as the human relationship with God. Although it is described as repentance and is associated with sin and judgment, it is a much more nuanced concept, through which an intricate interaction of human repentance and divine forgiveness unfolds (Khalil, 2009). Repentance, then, is the door to divine mercy that reconnects the person to God (Ayoub, 1997).

Khalil (2012, 296) points out that repentance can function as a viable translation of tawba in most cases, it does occasionally obscure the deeper semantic nuances of the term which accent not an emotional experience but an ethical or moral directional reorientation. Tawba therefore is an important instrument for ethical conduct in Islam and the ways in which it is interpreted, including its lexical, religious and practical dimensions, reflects this complex nature.

Al-Ghazali (2013) defines tawba as turning away from the sin you have committed, preventing yourself from repeating it in the future, and correcting the mistakes that you have made due to not performing good deeds in the past. Tawba concerns the act of leaving God's prohibitions and following His commands. Repentance means that humans strive to purify themselves and to return to their original disposition in a sinless state (also known as fitra).

Repentance is a form of virtue that must be done by man to ask forgiveness of Allah SWT to escape from sin. In the process of repentance, the individual can return to sin. This study aims to describe the psychological dynamics in the process of repentance and repentance factors.

Simply, repentance is recognizing that our sin is offensive to God. The invitation to repent is a call to absolute surrender to the will and purposes of God. It means to turn to God and live in constant awareness of Him. Repentance is an essential part of salvation which requiring a turning away from the sin-ruled life to a life characterized by obedience to God.

Repentance cannot be achieved merely by words or gestures, but needs to be a thoroughgoing change of attitude, thinking and behaviour. To repent is to be

responsible for the past experience. Repentance is a matter of change of one's mind or heart. It means that he regrets when reviewing his past for what he has done or not done when he repents; he changes his mind and has different attitude or judgment to his previous action or decision, and would not take the similar action if given another chance. He takes what he has done as wrongness. The significance of it lies not only in the regretful man's sincere remorse for the past or the resolution not to repeat the offense in his future, however, but his responsibility for his past action and the determination to be responsible for his later life. This latter is what I take the foremost of the repentance (see Gianyu, 2018: 310).

Repentance, a central practice of the Christian faith, is a two-part response to transgression. It involves both facing sin and turning away from it, both looking back and looking forward, both "dying" and "rising." Believers are called to face their culpability, God, and the victim as they humbly and honestly confess their wrongdoing, apologize, make amends, seek forgiveness, and reconcile with God and with the other to the extent that it is possible and wise (see Smedes, 1996 in Witvliet et al (2011: 3).

Moreover, Witvliet et al (2011: 12) states that repentance condition includes remorse, apology, restitution, and change their future behaviors in positive ways. McCauley in Murashko (2022) states that Essentially, to repent is to turn away from sin and to turn to God and trust in the Gospel (for Christian). It involves the altering of both the inward emotions of the mind and heart and the outward actions of the body. He, moreover, states five vital elements in

repentance: recognition of sin, remorse of sin, resentment of sin, removal of sin, and rejoicing over forgiven sin.

Repentance is surely the clearest way in which a wrongdoer can sever himself from his past wrong. In having a sincere change of heart, he is withdrawing his endorsement from his own immoral past behavior; he is saying, “I no longer stand behind the wrongdoing, and I want to be separated from it. I stand with you in condemning it.” Of such a person it cannot be said that he is now conveying the message that he holds me in contempt. Thus I can relate to him now, through forgiveness, without fearing my own acquiescence in immorality or in judgments that I lack worth. I forgive him for what he now is (Murphy and Hampton (1998) in Khoury (2022: 4)).

John Tasioulas in Gupta (2021: 1) on the other hand, advances the view that repentance is the intrinsically correct recognition and regret of one’s wrongdoing due to the simple fact that it is wrong in itself, and not due to the other consequences that stem as a result of it, like an offender should regret stealing from his boss, for the simple reason that stealing is wrong and not because stealing from his boss led him to be fired from his job.

From the explanation about repentance above, it can be stated that the goal of repentance should not just be a resolve to be a better person in the future, but should also motivate the offender to want to make amends with the victim that has been wronged in the past.

2.2.1 The Characteristics of Repentance

One must have a sense of responsibility for one’s transgression strong enough to energize the will; then he must repent and voluntarily perform such

penance as seems appropriate. Gerber's explanation on the sin and penance agrees with the definition of repentance in Wikipedia. To repent is to be responsible for the past experience (Gianyu, 2018: 310). She then adds that the criterion of repentance is the recognition of wrong-doing in one's heart, instead of the forgiveness from others. It means that one feels sorry for the wrong-doings and will not commit to do it again in the future.

Spendlove & Spendlove (2016: 177) state that there is a four-step process of repentance which is known as the 4-Rs: 1. Recognize the sin, 2. Feel remorse, 3. Make restitution, and 4. Resolve not to do it again. Repentance demands a sincere determination to change one's mind and behavior – transformation (turning to God with the whole heart), not just a lip service. Repentance, literally means "return," describes an experience that's meant to bring about a return to one's true self. With this recognition of our atonement - our "at-one-ment"- with God, the letting go of sins becomes a daily process of reconciliation and renewal.

The process of repentance can begin in a number of different ways. Some people come to realize that organized religion has not taught them the whole truth about the real God, and feel a strong desire to find and know Him. Some people reach a point where they simply don't know how to continue in life, or have fallen down so far it seems there is no way up again. Some people realize they're lost, trying to fit into a world that makes no sense. Others, in various ways and times, understood they had witnessed something miraculous, and set their hearts to seek the Creator God who gives life and heals.

There are certain causes that can trigger individuals to repent. According to Lewin and Keller (1992) in Fachitiandi & Permadi (2020: 18), problems can

cause fear in individuals. This fear then makes the individual change their behavior. Based on preliminary research data, it was found that fear makes people aware of their mistakes and sins that have been committed.

According to Chamberlain (1943: 21), the sequence of repentance are (1) contrition for sin, (2) confession, (3) amendment, and (4) penitential works. This led to a practice of works-based repentance whereby the penitent sinner would be “voluntarily” subjected to a punishment (penance) that was “meet for repentance”.

Gupta (2021: 2-3) states that repentance also can be justified as a ground to grant mercy in some cases. However, this depends on the aim of the punishment and what it is trying to achieve. There are three main and widely recognized aims of punishment along with their connection with repentance:

1) Deterrence

Under this theory of punishment, the offender is punished with a view to deter him from committing the crime again in the future (special deterrence), as well as to use him as an example to showcase to the wider community the consequences of committing a crime, in order to deter them as well (general deterrence). One of the major critics of this theory is Immanuel Kant, who disapproves of this idea of “using” humans as objects to further a purpose. Moreover, he is doubtful of the extent to which general deterrence actually works in practice. Under this purview of deterrence, it would be hard to take into account an offender’s repentant behaviour in order to reduce his punishment as that might not only make him believe that he can commit a heinous crime again and get away with it, but might also show to the wider

community that serious crimes might not always be punished with equal seriousness, and thus it might cripple the whole point of deterrence.

Therefore, under this system it is unlikely that repentance will be considered as a factor that could potentially give rise to mercy.

2) Retribution

Under this theory, the offender is given a punishment that is his moral “desert”. The retributive desert is identified as being proportional to the wrong committed by the offender, ie, what he deserves. Jeffrie Murphy further breaks this theory down into two parts, namely, “grievance retributivism” and “character retributivism”. Under grievance retributivism, it is mainly the wrongful act that determines an offender’s desert and creates criminal liability, whereas, under character retributivism, it is the offender’s very character and its shortcomings that are taken into account. It is easier to fit the concept of repentance under character retributivism, as repentance on part of the offender would mean that he now has a “better” character, and therefore based on his improved character, he deserves a milder punishment. It seems too intrusive and almost as if the state is assuming a role akin to God. Under grievance retributivism, however, it is the wrongful act that is at the heart of determining the severity of the punishment that the offender should be sentenced too.

Murphy argues that repentance can play a role here too, as any moral and rational victim would expect the criminal who has wronged him to face a fixed “amount” of suffering. He says that a repentant criminal has already suffered in the sense of the internal pain that stems from the judgement and feelings of guilt, and thus the punishment meted out to him by the hands of the State

should be adjusted so that the previously self-inflicted suffering into account. John Tasioulas rightly points out two major problems with this approach; the first being that any form of self-inflicted punishment is at the end of the day, qualitatively different from legal punishment and secondly, only those cases where the offender has actually undergone a form of penance, can be qualified as self-inflicted suffering. Mere pangs of guilt will not suffice. Thus, agreeing with the latter view, it seems to be difficult to place repentance under the umbrella of grievance retributivism as a valid reason for reducing the offenders' just desert, i.e. what he rightfully deserves. Nonetheless, repentance on the part of the offender might be a good reason for him to gain forgiveness. This is because of the idea that when an offender commits a crime against an individual, he puts forward the message that the liberty, rights and existence of that individual are inferior to his, and he can merely use the individual as a means to his own end. For example, when a man rapes a woman, he promulgates that the woman is superior to him and can be used merely as an object for his sexual satisfaction. However, if he genuinely repents, he might retract this message, and make it easier for the victim to forgive him, however, it still does not affect what he deserves as punishment for committing the rape in the first place.

3) Communication

Under the communicative theory of punishment, as advanced by Anthony Duff, the aim of the punishment is to communicate with the wrongdoer the deserved censure for his wrongdoing through the medium of hard treatment. The concept of retributive desert again plays a major role in determining the

deserved censure. Under this theory, the offenders are given respect as they are seen as moral and rational agents, capable of communicating and understanding. The punishment is seen as a vehicle for and a stimulus to repentance; by giving the offender the opportunity to accept and undergo the deserved punishment as a means of public repentance of his wrongful conduct.

The methods of punishment that are most likely to bring about repentance should be favoured, and Duff gives the example of prisons, where when separated from the community whose norms the offender has flouted, he will recognise his fault, and repent in order to be reintegrated into that community. Thus, under the strict interpretation of this theory (as advanced by Duff), antecedent repentance might not have a place in determining the retributive deserts of an offender, as the idea is that the repentance should flow from the punishment, and not precede it.

Tsaftaridis(2017) argues that repentance implies a positive changing of the mind, of our thoughts and attitudes, and also our feelings. It is recognition of the accountability and the guilt for committed sins, but also of our essentially sinful nature. Our recognition of necessity requires us to be willing to change our ways, yet even this is not sufficient. Our atoning attitude needs to be accompanied by a continual will and effort not to remain in a state of sin, but to continue to live in His Grace and to ascend the spiritual ladder towards His Kingdom. Repentance is thus a progressive state of existence and it is required for our sins to be expiated, cleansed, purified, justified and also sanctified. We should bear in mind that repentance and confession are not a trial or a court-room process. It is a refuge for

sinner, a hospital for the spiritually infirmed. The one who confesses is not judged or convicted. They are offered care, assisted, and treated by the physician, tutored, and pardoned.

However, the analysis of this study will also be supported by the element of repentance proposed by Saadia in Jacobs (2016: 4). She says that the penitent “carries out the terms of repentance”, which include “(a) the renunciation of sin, (b) remorse, (c) the quest of forgiveness, and (d) the assumption of the obligation not to relapse into sin. It is also supported by Bahya’s view in Jacobs (2016: 4) who says that the elements essential to repentance are four in number: contrition for one’s former sins, determined avoidance of them, admitting them and asking pardon for them, and undertaking in heart and conscience never to repeat them.

Al Jauziyyah in Ekalestari and Siregar (2021: 221) identifies six characteristics of a repentant person:

- (1) maintaining relationships with pious people and avoiding those who have negative influences;
- (2) improving their behavior;
- (3) overcoming sin and accepting virtues with an open mind;
- (4) feeling constant fear of God’s wrath and punishment;
- (5) detachment from worldly desires and the tendency towards divine values; and
- (6) being mindful of their thoughts and actions.