

HOLLY'S PERSONALITY ALTERATION AS PORTRAYED IN AHERN'S *P.S. I LOVE YOU*

Pramudana Ihsan

pramudana_ihsan@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

This study attempts to discuss the issue raised from the novel entitled P.S. I Love You written by Cecilia Aherm. This novel provides a personality alteration performed by the main character, Holly Kennedy who is portrayed as dependent, selfish, and fragile person. The writer mainly uses qualitative method to present the data, furthermore the data obtained will be analyzed vividly with intrinsic elements: characterization and plot. To get a profound understanding, he divides characterization into character and characteristics while plot is sharpened into conflict. Thus problems arisen in Holly's adult life will be taken out and discussed further using two elements of conflict: man vs man and man vs self. The result is a force for Holly Kennedy to have a significant personality alteration into a better one. In conclusion, this paper is aimed at finding the personality alteration performed by Holly Kennedy.

Keywords: *Personality, alteration, conflict*

A. Introduction

Every single human's personality can sometimes be different from one to another. A human's life personality is significantly divided into two, the good and the bad. Actually, the personality itself is something that is shaped by a person's process of thought and searching, which is sometimes added by the surrounding people's behaviors. The person's personality is not merely about good and bad ones, the interesting thing about of human is that they are different from some other crea-

tures which can be seen from its complexity. The complexity of human's life can be filled with problems, conflicts, feelings, thoughts and behaviors. Human beings can choose what they want based on that complexity above. As problems arise, human beings can learn something, possess something, and come with a conclusion. From the conclusion, their thoughts can be diverted into action that they choose.

Personality alteration is one of the biggest issues that each single human being may

have in his/her life. Sometimes a human being can alter the personality based on the function that is currently required by him/her. For an example, a spoiled woman changes his habit into a good one because he needs to continue living in an appropriate way. Indeed that kind of personality alteration seems to suit new personality to cover something just because that person wants something. This idea is best reflected in *P.S. I Love You*, a fictional novel written by Cecelia Ahern. The title of the novel is taken from the letters left for the main character, Holly Kennedy, by her beloved husband Gerry Clarke. Each letter is meant to assist her along her life, Gerry writes some letters before he dies. In this novel, P.S. here means postscript, the note added by the writer of the letters written in the end of his letters. I Love You simply refers to a feeling of owning love to someone. Therefore, P.S. I Love You here is the word Gerry took in his letters meant for Holly, to encourage her because he knows exactly that his death would bring a harmful impact to Holly.

P.S. I Love You is opened with Holly's great sadness after Gerry's death. It tells about Gerry's suffer from brain tumor. After that, the story moves backward, telling about how a great man Gerry was. Holly actually is a spoiled woman who marries Gerry at the age of twenty three. Holly is one year younger

than him. She acknowledges that she owns a great love to Gerry and so does Gerry. After describing Holly in an informative way, Ahern as the author narrates Holly's childhood. According to the writer, although Ahern merely gives limited facts about Holly's childhood but they are very essential in her future life. Regarding to the facts about Holly's childhood, the writer has simply taken out complete characteristics of Holly which is inferred because of Holly's childhood life.

P.S. I Love You provides the facts of Republic of Ireland furnished with several places there as a symbol of a wealthy family. There are also added some places to hang out with its uniqueness and the Irish hospitality. The author, Ahern, determines the works as a selling-point media to her beloved country. She was born on September 30, 1981 in Dublin, Ireland. She is the daughter of Bertie Ahern, Irish Taoiseach (Prime Minister) since June 26, 1997, and is the sister-in-law of Nicky Byrne, member of Irish pop group Westlife who is married to her older sister, Georgina Ahern (Wand, 2009: 1). Before embarking on her writing career, Cecelia Ahern completed a Degree in Journalism and Media Communications. At the age of twenty-one, she wrote her debut novel *P.S. I Love You*, published in January 2004, which was sold to over forty countries. The novel was one of the biggest-selling debut novels of

2004, reaching No.1 in Ireland and in the U.K. Sunday Times bestseller list and was selected for the Richard and Judy Summer Read campaign. It was also a bestseller throughout Europe and the U.S.A., staying on the best-seller list in Germany for over 52 weeks. For her debut novel, she was nominated for Best Newcomer 2004/05 at the British Book and in 2006; she was long-listed for the IMPAC award (*ibid*). The film of the same title was optioned by Warner Bros and Wendy Finerman Productions. It has now been made into a motion picture directed by Richard LaGravenese, starring Hilary Swank, Lisa Kudrow, Kathy Bates, Gerard Butler, Harry Connick Jr., Gina Gershon and Jeffrey Dean Morgan. Ahern became a productive writer by publishing the other books in the following years, *Where Rainbows End* (2004), *If You Could See Me Now* (2005), and *A Place Called Here* (2006) (*ibid*).

Specifically, *P.S. I Love You* implies the personality alteration from feeling of helplessness into a better form. The writer here will focus on how Holly handles conflict happened between her versus herself, her versus other people that is started from her childhood life, and then it improves into personality alteration caused by several factors. Hence, according to the writer of this study, the novel *P.S. I Love You* written by Cecelia Ahern is worth analyzed. Thus, this paper is aimed at reveal-

ing Holly's personality alteration.

B. Literary Theory

1. Intrinsic Approach

When dealing with the analysis, the writer focuses his discussion on the novel *P.S. I Love You* itself. According to Rene Wellek and Austin Warren in *Theory of Literature*, the natural and sensible starting point for work in literary scholarship is the interpretation and the analysis of the works of literature themselves. After all, only the works themselves justify all our interest in the life of an author, in his social environment and the whole process of literature (1979: 139). The writer will strictly analyze the text based on the supported by intrinsic approach. Intrinsic approach, however primarily valued irony in a broader sense of the term, to indicate a text's inclusion of varying perspectives on the same characters of events (Tyson, 2006: 122). The most essential thing in a literary work is the analysis of the intrinsic elements which consist of theme, setting, conflict, character, characterization and plot. Thus the writer focuses his analysis on three aspects of the intrinsic elements, which are character, characterization and conflict.

a. Character

Character in the main point of a story. As stated by Richard Gill in *Mastering English*

Literature, characters in any literature works have specially created by the authors. When authors create characters, they select some aspects of ordinary people, develop some of those aspects whilst playing down others, and put them together as they please. The way they created characters finally produced fictional characters (1985: 90-91). According to Edgar V Robert in his book entitled *Writing Themes About Literature. Seventh Edition*, Character in fiction is an extended verbal representation of a human being – the complex combination of both the inner and the outer self. Through actions, speech, description, and commentary, authors portray character who are worth caring about, rooting for, and even loving, although there are also characters at whom you may laugh or whom you may dislike or even hate (1991: 64). Robert also stated in his other book entitled *Literature: An Introduction to Reading and Writing. Third Edition*, An important feature of deep characterization is the presentation of development and change, and here we will encounter two types of character which E.M Forstell calls ‘round’ and ‘flat’ (Roberts and Jacobs, 1992: 143).

Robert explained, a round character is one major figure in the work who profits from experience and undergoes change of some sort. A round character usually has many realistic traits and are relatively fully developed.

Many major character acted as the protagonist – the center of attention – moved against the antagonist, and usually exhibits the human attributes we expect of round character (*ibid*).

Robert argued, a round character with its many individual and unpredictable human traits, also because of the changes or growth they undergo as the result of their experiences, therefore can be considered dynamic character. round character are just complex and as difficult to understand as living people and therefore totally identifiable within the class, occupation or occupation or circumstances of which he or she is a part (*ibid*, 144).

Robert added, unlike round character, a flat character is undistinguishable from other persons in particular group or class. The flat character is representative and usually minor character since flat character do not change or grow or static (*ibid* 145-146).

b. Characterization

Since the writer focuses his analysis on the main character’s characteristics, he considers to use Edgar V. Roberts’ *Writing Themes about Literature* to explain the meaning of characterization as, “what the characters themselves say (and think), what the characters do and what other characters say about them” (1991: 147). Characterization is the technique that an author uses to

describe someone's image character, and the personality of the people he/she creates in a story. Each character has its own characteristic that differentiates his/her from the other characters. As characterization is the way an author presents his or her character, it is intensively significant in a novel because the story, in which an author conveys his or her idea, is closely interrelated to it (*ibid*).

Here, Erik Simpson describes characterization as the development of character (Simpson, 2009: 1). Holly undergoes several phases in the process of her personality changes starting from before and after she met Gerry. After Gerry's death, her close relationship with her brother, Jack who is very close to her after her younger sister was born, Holly can be considered as a round character. Robert suggests that "in analyzing the developing or changing character in a story, it is necessary to make an attempt to show the character traits possessed by the character at the beginning of the story and the change or development that occurs" (1991: 60).

c. Plot

Wellek and Warren stated that it is customary to speak all of plots as involving conflict (man against nature, man against other man, or man fighting with himself); but then, like plot, the term must be given much latitude. Conflict is 'dramatic', suggests action

and counteractions (1979: 216-217). As mentioned above, it is obvious that a good story provides complex events, named conflict, and those conflicts can reveal some actions by the character. There must be a motivation and desire behind actions done by the characters who attempt to achieve something in dealing the conflicts.

There are two main kinds of conflict in stories: external and internal. A struggle between characters and an outside force is an external conflict. Characters may face several types of outside forces, may be with another character, community, or nature. On the other side, a struggle takes place in character's mind is called internal conflict (*ibid*, 218). Sometimes, characters must deal with their own mixed feelings or emotion, happens when they have to decide right or wrong between two solutions to a problem.

Conflict is the major problem that makes plot rising into climax. The interesting level about any work of literature is usually based on the conflict faced by the character. It will happen when the character is facing some great source of difficulties for themselves. These conflicts then deliver the story to a central idea of the whole story of the work (Wellek and Warren, 1979:219).

C. Research Method

This research's purpose is to analyze

Holly's personality alteration using intrinsic approach. The research is provided with the data taken from the novel *P.S. I Love You* was published in Indonesia in 2007. The data from the novel are gathered with the theory of intrinsic approach. Those data would be linked and combined into one complex and worth analyzed research.

Two basic techniques that would be used here are: data collecting and data analysis. Data collecting is obtained from library researches in which the writer gains information from various sources such as: literary books, essays, critics, dictionaries, encyclopedia and online library. Some relevant theoretical books are used to support the understanding about literary theories. After collecting and identifying the qualitative data, the writer applies the data analysis: a descriptive analysis.

D. Research Findings

1. The Process of Holly's Personality Alteration

Gerry's death brings a fatal impact to Holly. Holly, as the writer has explained before, is a dependent woman. She always needs a powerful partner to help and support her in every single circumstance. By doing so, she has already vanquished her basic anxiety. However, by losing a solid powerful partner unawarely brings more harm to her. Holly

becomes a woman with a lot of complex problems.

a. Losing a Powerful Partner

After Gerry's absence in accompanying Holly as her powerful partner, Holly locks herself in her house and avoids meeting people she knows. She only wants her husband to remain alive inside her house. She always pretends that someday her beloved husband is certainly back. Some thoughts which will never become a reality. Holly then keeps locking herself for more than two months without doing anything as any human being should do.

Holly's problems in her marriage life is impacted by her selfishness which still can not be cured instantly. In every single fight, Holly's selfishness is the main trigger. Actually, the selfishness itself is always referred to the only child's habitual personality. The only child has a tendency to be more selfish rather than child who has brothers and or sisters (Gerungan, 1988: 190-191). Indeed, Gerry has a tendency to be more selfish than Holly since he is the only child of The Clarkes. But Gerry does not do that. He is not selfish at all to Holly. Horney stated as quoted in *Theories of Personality* written by Jess Feist and Gregory J. Feist,

Each person begins life with the potential for healthy development, but like other living organisms, people need favorable conditions

for growth. These conditions must include a warm and loving environment yet one that is not overly permissive. Children need to experience both genuine love and healthy discipline. Such conditions provide them with feelings of safety and satisfaction and permit children to grow in accordance with their real self (2002: 159).

In fact, Gerry's childhood and teenager is filled with warm and loving environment but Gerry's parents teach Gerry to be a tough man by taking him to try a sailor life, like his father. Based on the quotation above, Gerry is categorized as a person grows in accordance with him real self. He can control and limit his selfishness. Moreover, by the warm and loving environment in his childhood and teenage life, Gerry is completed with huge love and care which he can share to Holly as the one who is portrayed oppositely. One of the example is, Gerry behaves to yield to his beloved wife. To yield here means that Gerry does not want to perform his selfishness since he knows exactly the personality of Holly.

As mentioned previously, Holly always performs her selfishness in most of her activities in her daily life. Holly even makes Gerry's parents upset in her early marriage life.

'Yeah, I remember that,' Sharon laughed. 'His mum gave me an earful at the wedding. She said it was the woman's duty to change her name as a sign of respect to her husband'.

They couldn't understand why I wouldn't change my name (Ahern, 2007: 261).

Holly decides not to change her last name in order to be recognized as – still an honorable descendant. On the other hand, Gerry's parents want Holly to change her last name to keep the family name 'Clarke' continues. The request from Gerry's parents is actually quite simple since Gerry is their only child. They have no other descendent except him. They do not want their family name stops due to Holly's selfishness.

In those two months, Holly does not care about herself. She only spends every hour grieving by doing nothing. The hours seem to pass into days and months without her realizing what time or even what day it is. She seems to be living outside her body, numb to everything but the pain in her heart, in her bones and in her head. She can not face the truth and always imagines something beyond her ability (to bring Gerry back from death). She feels very tired because she lacks enough time to rest her body, soul and mind. Holly sometimes finds her stomachgrumbling and she realizes she can not remember the last time she eats. What a bad circumstance she is dealing with now. She is completely helpless and isolated from the outside life.

Holly's helplessness is a combination between the death of her beloved husband and the inability to convert her sadness into

reality that she should face. The meaning of reality here is everyone will die whenever and by whatever it causes. Holly seems to forget it since she is accustomed to feel the mountain of delighting memories she and Gerry have and she is also accustomed to be spoiled by Gerry. Now she believes the spoiling time is completely over as she has lost a solid powerful partner she had. It is getting worse due to her fear to face the outside life without her husband.

In two month time, Holly has become so different in appearance. She used to look pretty with her blonde hair and sexy body. The beautiful appearance is something which is missing from her. Her pale skin is getting paler, her blonde hair becomes greasy and her weight is reduced drastically. She has no attention even to have a shower.

The real sadness of losing Gerry can be easily figured out by,

She shuffled into the kitchen, for over a month dressed in Gerry's dressing gown and her favorite pink 'disco diva' slippers that Gerry had bought her the previous Christmas. She was his disco diva, he used to say. Always the first on the dance floor, always the last out of the club (Ahern, 2007: 12).

From the fact above, the readers will know that Holly is described as a party queen. She loves to go to a club. Gerry used

to be called her as his disco diva due to her habit, a childish habit that wastes her money and sometimes wastes her husband's money to have a party and spend it buying outfits. This is something that is missing during this two months as she locks herself. The simple part from the above quotation is that she misses her beloved husband. It is explained that she is wearing Gerry's dressing gown and her favorite slippers just to bring her closer to Gerry. Everything goes for Holly, must have dealt with Gerry, even in his absence. The good point is, she does not have a desire to commit suicide, even though she is in her darkest phase of her age.

b. The Assistance from Holly's Family and Friends

Actually, the people around Holly do not close their eyes on what happens to Holly. They do worry but they also give some room for Holly to be alone. Thankfully, Holly also has her previous outside powerful partner, Sharon. Sharon is a type of person who never wants to beat about the bush. That is why Holly loves her so much. When Sharon does not like something that Holly does, she used to yell and argue. Sharon does not seem afraid to criticize Holly. She is the one who says something she wants to say and in fact, she is also Holly's guardian angel in certain circumstances. That is why Holly loves her so much.

“That’s also why Holly hadn’t been around to see Sharon for the past month. She didn’t want to hear the truth” (2007: 16-17). The quotation shows that Holly does not want to see Sharon for some times. She needs to prevent her to say the truth, the only truth she hates and denies for, the death of her beloved husband, Gerry Clarke. Holly does not wish Sharon to say and give severe words about it since Holly always pretends that Gerry is still alive and Sharon’s presence might ruin all the things Holly has pretended.

In fact, Sharon has given some calls, some calls which often ends with Holly’s automatic answer on the phone or even rejection when Sharon tries to get through Holly’s cell phone. It is Sharon who first gives Holly a visit after more than two months Holly has no visitors, no visitors at all even to ask about her condition. It is obviously a visit that opens Holly’s eyes that she also has a best friend who knows her better than anyone else does.

‘God, it’s so stuffy in here. When’s the last time you opened a window?’ Sharon marched around the house, and runned her house neatly. ‘Oh you don’t have to do it, Sharon,’ Holly protested weakly. ‘I’ll do it. .’

‘When? Next year? I don’t want you slumming it while the rest of us pretend not to notice. Why don’t you go upstairs and shower, and we’ll have a cup of tea when

you come down?’

A shower. When was the last time she had even washed? Sharon was right, she must have looked disgusting, with her greasy hair, her dark roots and dirty robe. Gerry’s robe. But that was something she never intended to wash. She wanted it to exactly as Gerry had left it. Unfortunately, his smell was beginning to fade, replaced by the unmistakable stink of her own skin (Ahern, 2007: 17).

This conversation shows Holly’s inability to take care of herself. How can a woman forgets when the last time she had a shower while women are always pictured as beautiful and fragrant human beings. Holly feels embarrassed due to her lack of care for the house and for herself. She looks like a child who only obeys her mother’s commands. She directly goes upstairs and takes a shower while Sharon is running Holly’s house.

In the Republic of Ireland, people commonly respect others’ privacy. As a noble family member who holds others’ privacy, Holly’s mother does not visit Holly for more than two months after Gerry’s death. Her mother only gives Holly some calls as a respect to Holly’s privacy. She calls just to ask about Holly’s condition but Holly does not answer her mother’s calls. Later, her mother’s calls are answered by the automatic answering machine from Holly’s home telephone.

In Holly's perspective at that time, her mother's lack of sensitivity to her once again has shaped her into a feeling of basic hostility. Horney described basic hostility is the condition which parents do not satisfy the child's needs for safety and satisfaction (Feist and Feist, 2002: 159). The writer chooses this quotation since Holly's personality is still performing her child's. It makes Holly come back to the phase which actually she had conquered in her childhood. Holly easily cries and she cannot face the reality. The basic hostility itself is shown in Holly's childhood, she realizes her mother completely reduces her care from the first child into the last five, especially to Holly. Her mother thinks Holly has already had her own life and her mother would not want to bother her for a while. Holly's mother seems to forget the fact that Holly is relieved by her mother's heed, something that a mother – who has five children, forgets. Her mother is supposed to realize that Holly is still a childish person no matter whomever she lives with and whatever her age is. It seems that her mother is completely tired to take care of five children. Thus, the sensitivity of a mother is simply vague as each baby was born.

Holly wants her mother to understand that she is not a type of person who can deal something alone neatly. Indeed, she was accustomed to be forced by her neurotic sys-

tem to deal with the first three neurotic needs. The impact is that she is accustomed to be seen frequently striving to remain inconspicuous and to take second place beside the powerful partner (*ibid*, 161). She downgrades her own abilities and gives her life fully to Gerry. Undeniably, by the time Gerry has gone, Holly feels no longer alive. She loses her complete life which she has been dealing with for almost seven years, seven years in a joyful marriage.

The dependent characteristics of Holly is simply seen by the fact from the novel, "Hi, this is Gerry, please a message after the beep and I'll get back to you as soon as I can". "Gerry," Holly said crying, "I need you . . ." (Ahern, 2007: 299). Holly always performs this action whenever she feels lonely and needs a friend. In fact, Holly still pays Gerry's phone bill in order to keep his voice mail remains in his cellular phone. Whenever she needs a friend or when she is in a difficult situation, she calls Gerry's number to encourage her instantly which does not really have an impact on her. This proves that she pretends that Gerry is still alive. It seems that Holly needs Gerry in every circumstances even when he has died.

Aid from Holly's parents comes when Holly has already had the courage to go out from her house. They welcome Holly every time she comes back to her big house in

Portmarnock. The mother's heed is clearly shown in this dialogue, 'You're right,' her mother nodded. 'Take your time and think about what you like or else you'll end up rushing into a job you hate, like the first time.' Holly was surprised to hear this (Ahern, 2007:30).

The quotation above explains that actually Holly's mother, Elizabeth Kennedy, is encouraging her to do what she demands just now. Elizabeth does not want Holly, at least for this time, to do something that she hates very much. It shows that money is not the major concern of The Kennedys since they were born rich. Holly is surprised at Elizabeth's supportive advise. Holly replays her thought to her golden age, before a five-year-old memories. It was her four years full of spoiling time, a precious time she wants to feel in her following years. Holly admits she can rely her life on her mother nowadays.

Holly's dissatisfaction at her beloved mother is directly reducing at that time. She is awoken by this conversation she has with her mother. She knows her mother would not abandon her in her grave sadness. In Holly's mother's opinion, Holly needs some time to think, to renew her thoughts to get the spirits, to transform the spirits into power and to apply powers into actions. By permissive action of her mother as it is explained above, Holly commits her mother as still her beloved

mother where she can rely her life on. The writer here delivers 'permissive action' referring to her mother's absence from visiting her in her house for more than two months. Her mother allows Holly to have times to grieve instead of having visited Holly.

c. The assistance from Gerry's letters

After having the first conversation with her mother on Holly's first time coming out of her house, Holly encourages herself to visit a house where actually she had a hostile to her mother in her childhood. Holly forces to go there since her mother's last call – which is also ended in automatic answers machine – tells about a bundle of letters addressed to Holly. The letters are delivered to her parents' house. It is quite confusing since Holly has her own address, why would not the sender deliver them to her house. Having filled with curiosity and lots of questions in her head, Holly slowly opens one of the letters in her parents' house. She is surprised to figure out that the letters were written by Gerry, her beloved husband. She reads it slowly. Tears roll down on her cheeks. The first letter, the opening one, tells,

My darling Holly,

I don't know where you are or when exactly you are reading this. I just hope that my letter has found you safe and healthy. You whispered to me not long ago that you

couldn't go alone. You can, Holly.

You are strong and brave and you can get through this. We shared some beautiful times together and you made my life . . . you made my life. I have no regrets.

But I am just a chapter in your life – there will be many more. Remember our wonderful memories, but please don't be afraid to make some more.

Thank you for doing me the honour of being my wife. For everything. I am eternally grateful.

Whenever you need me, know that I am with you.

Love for ever

Your husband and best friend,

Gerry.

PS. *I promised a list, so here it is. The following envelopes must be opened exactly when labelled and must be obeyed. And remember, I'm looking out for you, so I will know . . .* (Ahern, 2007: 33).

That Gerry understands Holly very much, can be seen from Gerry's first letter. Gerry knew very well that Holly cannot continue her life alone. So before his death, he had prepared several letters for Holly, to guide her, to encourage her, to help her and to please her. What a wonderful and thoughtful husband Gerry was, that even during his sick-

ness and later when he was dying he was concerned and was still thinking about Holly's future life. In this first letter the phrase 'must be obeyed' was underlined. The writer is certain that this is not a mistyping, but it is a definitely clear order for Holly to follow. Gerry understood that Holly was putting herself in a second place after Gerry. She always obeyed what Gerry told her even though they had to argue before she did it. Holly will certainly do every thing Gerry told. She also believes Gerry is out there, looking out for her, admires her for doing his orders.

The opening letter contains supporting and thoughtful ideas from Gerry. Gerry wrote eleven letters, including the opening one, which Holly should open each month starting from March to December. Gerry seemed to realize that he could not hold on any longer, that is why the first letter was written 'March'. Gerry realized that he could not reach March, and he was quite correct. However, Holly opens and reads the opening and the first letter on April since she was suffering from grief.

The first letter, a March letter, tells Holly to buy a bedside lamp. It is an interesting order from Gerry since he definitely comprehended Holly, her badness and her goodness. They used to have argumentation on who was the appropriate person to turn off the central bright lamp by the time they were going to

bed and sleep. Holly usually rejected to do it, but Gerry always succeeded to have her do it. This portrays how similar Holly is to a child. A child usually needs to be persuaded first to do something that she does not want to do (Gerungan, 1988: 202). Holly's smile is slowly painted in her face, and a beautiful smile is decorated on it. Holly realizes that her beloved husband is back to life, and living in his letters. Holly reads and rereads his letter over and over again in an attempt to summon him back to life which a normal sane human being understands as useless.

Gerry's letters are orders for Holly to do something and which are connected from one letter to the following one according to the label given. The March letter, for instance, is an order that Holly has to buy a bedside lamp; the April letter tells Holly to buy an outfit. This is later continued to the May letter which enlightens Holly to wear the outfit during a karaoke contest. Actually, doing karaoke is least interesting action for Holly. In fact, Holly was traumatic for karaoke due to her past experience. She had been humiliated last time for her accident after singing it. The connection of Gerry's second and third letter implies about Holly's most interesting hobby such as: shopping, buying new outfits, combined with the most terrifying karaoke event in her house with Gerry's friends.

The writer reveals the term of Gerry's

order in his letters, he provides Holly with happiness to increase her bravery in doing a karaoke. It suddenly works and the bravery of Holly portrays on the conquest of her past trauma. Gerry knew that Holly was still traumatic about her humiliating karaoke experience. Because of his great love, Gerry orders Holly to do a karaoke again so that she can overcome her fears and trauma. He wants her to be happy again. And because of her love for Gerry, Holly follows his instructions. Gerry can be very happy now that Holly has successfully conquered her fearfulness. Holly is relieved and proud of herself. Her friends are also proud of Holly since she has conquered her fear. She is happy for herself, and she admits that there will never be any terrifying action that she hates. Holly stays on smiling during the rest of May by doing some pleasant activities with her friends, Ciara and Sharon.

d. The Climax of Holly's Conflicts

The previous chapter has already explained that conflicts exist inside the plot and to understand the conflicts, the writer sets the climax of Holly's conflicts as Holly's crisis. According to Stephen C. Behrendt in his journal entitled *Study Questions to Help You Get the Most out of the Short Story* which is given by Widjajati, Crisis here means the ultimate difficulties Holly faces. Crisis aims to

show what precipitates the crisis and how the crisis arises (2). By knowing the crisis, the writer certainly follows the flows of the resolution Holly chooses.

One of the conflict occurs when Holly reads Gerry's June letter that is,

PS. I love you, Holly, and I know you love me. You don't need my belongings to remember me by, you don't need to keep them as proof that I existed or still exist in your mind. You don't need to wear my sweater to feel me around you; I'm already here . . . always wrapping my arms around you (Ahern, 2007: 140).

This letter tells Holly to remove all of Gerry's stuffs. Gerry wanted Holly to pack all his belongings by the time passed away. Holly cannot manage her sadness and begins to cry. Holly prefers to be told to do karaoke a hundred times rather than to remove all Gerry's belongings. As a matter of fact, she does not want to do that. Her mind keeps fighting for the urge of not removing Gerry's belongings—since she does not want her memories that are related with Gerry's stuffs are gone forever—versus her readiness to obey Gerry's order. Holly faces an internal conflict named 'man fighting with himself', a famous term that Rene Wellek and Austin Warren have explained in their book entitled *Theory of Literature* (1979: 216). This re-

fers to a conflict which arises in the character's mind and which happens when the character faces two difficult options but he/she must choose only one. It is similar with what Holly faces, she must choose to remove or not to remove Gerry's belongings. After fighting with herself, Holly decides to obey Gerry's order. It seems that the two underlined words in the letter have become a big help for Holly in taking decisions. Holly can not manage to do it alone, indeed, she needs a friend to handle it. Holly then calls her brother, Jack, to accompany her when she is removing all of Gerry's stuffs.

e. The Presence of a New Man

This subchapter focuses on the presence of a new man, Daniel. Daniel is the owner of a famous pub named "The Hogan's". It is the place where the young beautiful people go to show off their latest fashions. The ground floor is a traditional Irish pub for the older crowd (usually containing old men sitting on the bar stools, some old men playing cards and the rest are usually having chats about old people's things). The top floor is used for a karaoke place called Club Diva. Actually Club Diva is not merely a place for karaoke, Club Diva is also rented to persons who intend to have some private parties. From the classification of The Hogan's, the writer thinks that this pub belongs to the all genres pub because all kinds

of people can fit here depending on which they want to belong to.

From the portrayal of his pub, Daniel is simply recognized as a wealthy man, since this place is always crowded. Daniel actually buys this place from one of the Hogans family. Declan's family name is Connolly. He is also from a wealthy descendant from The Connollys. From the research of J.G. Watson in the book entitled *Irish Identity and the Literary Revival*, the writer is assisted with the family root of the prominent families in the Republic of Ireland. The Connollys are also one of the wealthy families in Dublin. The members of The Connollys are usually recognized as an army descendant (1994: 2). It is strengthened by the fact that, "Daniel was born and reared in Dublin, 'and if any of the people I grew up with saw me drinking red cocktails and listening to Jazz, I'd be in trouble.'" (Ahern, 2007: 239). This quotation proves the habits of Daniel. As the army descendant who stays at troop's barrack, Daniel is forbidden to have liquors to drink and by staying in the barrack, Daniel cannot enjoy his favorite music, Jazz. It seems all the characters here are described as well-known people, even Holly's favorite hair-stylist is also well-known and has become the favorite of the people in the Republic of Ireland.

Daniel is described as a firm, masculine and healthy guy. Holly is first acquainted with

Daniel when Holly attends her little brother, Declan's band performing in Daniel's pub. As the writer has explained before, Holly still has the same personality, she a kind of person who hates a crowded and noisy place since she only used to live around few people. Holly is used to maintain her bad habit which is hardly enough in making a new friendship by her own. Holly cannot shift her staring at Daniel's body. Holly then, admires his bottom and admits that Daniel's bottom is better than Gerry's though she realizes a few seconds later that she is comparing her husband with a stranger.

Daniel is typically an easy-going person combined with his maturity from the choice of words when he speaks. He is also a cheerful and humorous person. Holly needs that kind of person as a friend to share with and cheer her up. It is likely beyond Holly's expectations to have a new male friend. She expects more from her families and best friends. Fortunately, Daniel is getting separated with his fiancée so he is a free man. No one will be angry in case Holly gets too close to Daniel.

The only reason Daniel moves his business from Galloway to Dublin is to avoid meeting his fiancée. Daniel is pretty resentful with his fiancée because of her cheating with another man. It breaks Daniel's heart and he decides to sell his pub in Galloway and buy

The Hogan's. In fact, at that time The Hogan's is not for sale, but the previous owner cannot refuse a large amount of money Daniel offers. It is extremely much money that Daniel is bargaining with, which is actually beyond the normal price. This scene also shows how a real descendant of The Connollys performs his business actions – based on J. G. Watson's book – that is, losing (in bargaining) is not an option for a soldier, just like what he learned from the army, even though he must pay a much higher price.

The simple perspective and cheerful conversation are what Holly likes from Daniel. For months they have been dealing problems together as friends. Daniel has fulfilled Holly's life in many new circumstances. In every single party or official dinner, Holly can count Daniel as her mate since every person attending must be coming with his/her couple. But one day after, Daniel, Holly and her friends have dinner and followed by going to a party. Holly realizes that she needs time to be alone. It is twelve past five and time to read Gerry's next letter. Meanwhile, at that same time, Daniel wants to be with her; he does not want Holly to leave him just for the sake of reading a letter from a dead person. Daniel cannot stand this. Daniel argues that Gerry is a dead man already and Holly pretends Gerry to live in his letters. A little argumentation occurs that night in Holly's house.

She took the envelope from his hand and hugged it close to her heart as tears rolled down her cheeks, 'Gerry's not gone', she sobbed. 'He's here, every time I open these, he's here' she said. 'Gerry is not a piece of paper'. Holly said angrily. 'He is a living breathing human being that I loved. Gerry is a man that consumed my life for fifteen years. He's a million billion happy memories. He is not a piece of paper,' she repeated" (Ahern, 2008: 466).

From the fact above, Holly – who sometimes feels that Gerry always present but in a different shape – is falling back to the earth, to reality that Gerry is dead and gone forever. She intends to keep Gerry's letters as a new part of her new life but Daniel reminds her that Gerry's new shape is just nonsense. Daniel has taken great effort to convince her that Gerry is just a piece of paper. He has done his utmost to remind her of his presence that he is given a chance to get along with Holly more than just a best friend. Daniel wants to know exactly where he stands, by telling and reminding her why she has to pretend that Gerry is still alive instead of having another living human beside her.

By Holly's refusal to admit about Gerry's death, she faces a conflict. A conflict which Wellek and Warren have stated in their book entitled *Theory of Literature*, as 'man against

other man' (1979: 216). This conflict occurs when the main character is facing a problem caused by other people. This conflict is known as an external conflict. This occurs when a character meets other character who sometimes have contrasting desires. It generally happens when two or more characters are pushed to have the same aim and purpose, in fact, they have different point of view in their mind. "Characters may face several types of outside forces, may be with another character, community, or nature" (*ibid*, 218). This is what Holly deals with now. Holly faces this external conflict since she finds out that Daniel has implicitly waiting for a chance to propose to Holly. Daniel is really annoyed that his rival is a dead person whom Holly pretends to be returning home from his death. Daniel yells out to Holly to drag him out of her from her fantasies by telling her that Gerry is just a piece of paper. Holly on the other hand, is completely shocked, she is scared, she is not ready to have a new relationship. Two different points of view from those two people above, have caused conflicts to each character.

f. Holly's Unintentional and Intentional Moves

This subchapter reveals Holly's resolution of her crisis. The resolutions she make are her unintentional and intentional moves, which later becomes her unintentional and intentional

cure. In this phase of her life, Holly has come to a new part of life which she has never dealt with, that is, when she runs out of money. Holly has never been in this situation. With Gerry gone and having no job for some time she still behaves like a wealthy person. She gives the last twenty euros in her purse to a gardener's son as compensation to her guilt for making him cry after she accuses him gardening in her house. Holly is a young widow with no income but she demands to spend her money every single day because she has a truly false pleasure and delight when doing all these activities.

Fortunately, Gerry had prepared a September letter, "*Shoot for the moon and if you miss you'll still be among the stars. Promise me you will find a job you love this time! PS. I love you . . .*" (Ahern, 2007: 291). Gerry's September letter has encouraged her to look for a job; to which Gerry knows very well about her spending habit. He knows that when Holly gets upset or lonely she will spend money to comfort herself.

1. Holly's Unintentional Move

What is meant by unintentional move here is Holly's first resolution to be away from overcome her crisis. Holly is now looking for a job that she likes because Gerry told her so. She makes an interesting application letter and

curriculum vitae. Holly wakes up early in the morning and she goes to the Ethernet café which is located in the right corner of the library. After sending her application letter and curriculum vitae, Holly remembers that she has no money. Being very confused, she then calls her mother. Her mother comes to Ethernet café and pays Holly's fifteen euro bill. Holly has become a poor woman now. She has given her last twenty euros to a child she did not even know of and now she has really run out of money. Her mother drives her back to their Portmarnock house for a late breakfast. And then her father drives her back to her own house and gives Holly a cheque of five thousand euros. The large amount of money she receives from her father shows how wealthy this family is. It makes Holly embarrassed because at her age now, she should be able in managing her own life but she does not.

Holly finds out that her stern brother is facing a serious problem; he is fired from his job. Unfortunately, his wife does not support him by looking for another job. His wife, Meredith, has driven him out from their house by then. She takes her children with her. Richard is very much shattered. Holly is aware of another person's feeling right now. She wants to help him to get through with it. She counsels Richard that he should take his time about the house and should find another way

to get along with his family, especially his children. Holly has become wiser than before. She is one step forward now by helping his brother getting through his problems. Holly is no longer a thirty-year-old spoiled woman.

The second is when Holly is taken aback when she finds Ciara crying bitterly. Holly has never seen Ciara crying before; she only knows that Ciara is a tough woman. Holly then discovers that the reason why Ciara is back to their parents' house is because of a guy named Matthew. Holly calms her sister down by hugging her tightly and slapping her gently on the back. Holly realizes now that there is something that she does not know about her younger sister, Ciara. Holly can understand Ciara's feeling now. She determines that Ciara and she need some time together to know and understand each other. The things that Holly had missed in her childhood and her teenage life, is to take care and pay attention to her sister. At that moment, both Holly and Ciara are staring at each other, "Well, I guess you and I are more alike than we thought" (Ahern, 2007: 198-199). Holly explains that the disagreements that occur between both of them are caused by their not understanding and not being close to each other. Ciara used to be alone; sometimes she is accompanied by their little brother, Declan. Meanwhile, Holly's childhood and teenage life were filled with Jack.

From those two facts above, the writer considers that Holly's unintentional move has become Holly's unplanned cure. Holly has changed from a selfish woman into a sympathetic and caring woman. She is now full of guilty feelings when she recalls her selfish deeds she made in the past to the people whom she much-loved. She regrets that because she had badly treated the people whom she loved dearly. Richard and Ciara are being aimed and have become the targets of miseries by their mates. Holly has laid the foundation of the new member of the Kennedy family by not being selfish anymore without her selfishness. Holly is categorized as a round character. According to E.M Forstell in the book written by Edgar V. Robert entitled *Writing Themes about Literature*. "A round character is one major figure in the work who profits from experience and undergoes change of some sort" (1992: 143). A change here represents Holly's personality alteration which happens because of the bitter experiences that Holly faces.

Holly's other unintentional move is, when she is eventually called for an interview. Holly has shown the great quality of a member of the Kennedy family by her good manners during the interview. She is hired by the magazine publishing company as an advertising staff. Holly is successful in dealing with herself, as a

new person; and this is something that Holly has never done previously. This is absolutely due to her unintentional move because at first she is only looking for money to pay her bills and fulfill her needs. And due to this, she has an extra benefit that is to become a good person when dealing with others. Moreover, from the first time she begins her new job, she has become one of her boss' favorite staff to chat with. She can make a good friendship with Alice, one of the reporting staff. Holly has undergone a tremendous change after she promises to herself that she will be good to everybody because she does not want to hurt and harm the people around her again.

This phase of Holly's life can be defined as completely different from her childhood and teenage life. It is once again shows the personality change in Holly after she manages to conquer her crisis. The resolution from the crisis has flown easily after she has repented for all her bad behaviors that she had done in the past.

2. Holly's Intentional Move

The intentional move here means Holly's willing to have a bright future by the suggestion Gerry's last letter to be fulfilled as the door of her future, "*Don't be afraid to fall in love again. Open your heart and follow where it leads you . . . and remember, shoot for the moon . . . PS. I love you . . .*" (Ahern,

2007: 468). Gerry's last letter is the most thoughtful letter he had written. Gerry has encouraged Holly to fall in love again. He permits her to find a better man to accompany her days.

In fact, Holly has met a charming and handsome guy but at that time she has not released her wedding ring yet. Holly met Rob in the supermarket when she was buying her groceries. But, the wedding ring which is still in Holly's finger is discouraged Rob to get further information of Holly. Rob suddenly goes away without any additional words. The good point of Holly is, she no longer has any bad thoughts. Her friendship with Rob is caused by accidental meeting so Holly does not care much about the breakup. What she needs now is to have and enjoy life on her own.

The symbolic action of taking off the wedding ring is a fundamental prove that she is no longer grieving from Gerry's death. She will always cherish her memories with Gerry as something worthwhile but she does not want to have her miseries remain for a lifetime. By the time the year changes, Holly has considered herself as a new born person. She is more appreciative and wise; she has also buried her painful memories. As a new born person, she does not rely her life to other people like the ones she did in the past. She is happy for her family, for herself, for her best friends and for the most beloved person in

the world, Gerry, for his thoughtful guidance during his lifetime and death.

Holly meets Rob again. She explains everything to him and asks him for a dinner. Holly is an open minded woman now and she believes that happiness will come to a person who searches for it not to a person who only asks for it.

D. Conclusion

Gerry's death brings a fatal damage to Holly. Holly locks herself for over two months and avoids meeting people. She only wants her husband to remain alive and to be with her at home. Holly then receives Gerry's letters that encourage her in facing the reality of life. The people around her also help to ease her grieves, that is, her former caring partners (Jack and Sharon), Holly's parents and siblings, and also the new man in Holly's life (Daniel). With the company and spirit of the people she loves, Holly performs unintentional and intentional move. Holly's first unintentional move is performed when she is looking for a job. She does this because Gerry tells her so in the letter. Holly's other unintentional move is, when she tries to understand Richard and Ciara's problems. By doing these, Holly is also trying to help herself. The unintentional move turns out to be an unintentional cure for Holly. She has become a woman who understands other people; and

she is not egocentric any more. By doing the intentional move, Holly has banished her dependency on other people and has now become an open minded woman who believes happiness will come to a person who searches for it not to a person who only asks for it.

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* Dosen FKIP Universitas Muhammadiyah Surabaya