

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

It would be difficult to define what literature is. The great eighteenth century English Critic, Dr. Samuel Johnson, once said that literature is like light; everyone knows what light is but few can define or even describe it. In a widest sense, literature is just about anything written.

A study of literature involves the reader's imagination and feeling so that they feel as though they become the part of literary text they read. It is supported by Howe, Hollander and Bromwich. They (1979:2) state that literature means imaginative writings which can be stories, novels, plays, poems which portray or reflect or deal with human existence.

Literature is a kind of art that offers pleasure and illumination. It is made for relaxation, it brings distraction from the monotony or strain of day to day concerns. Literature can take us out of the track of weary routine. According to Barnet, Berman, and Burto (1992:1), literature is a performance in words which holds an attention with a complete composition in itself. It is not regarded as a source of factual information, but offers a unique delight or satisfaction. This is also supported by Robin Mayhead. He (1965:3) states that literature is to be enjoyed.

Literature seems to give something important and valuable about perception of the world and its situation with the intrigues of human beings. Here,

the authors and playwrights are demanded to loathe their expertise. Through the language and also gestures, they portray or suggest something significant which leave a great impression to the reader.

Learning literary work is not as easy as people think. It needs a deep discussion to reveal the message from the poet or the narrator to the reader. Because of this problem, most students discourage to study literature. However, they must study it because literature also supports the education. By learning any literary works such as: poem, short story, novel, and drama, the reader can get not only enjoyment but also understanding about culture, life value, facts and some other things. Little (1966:1) states that wherever there is education, there is the study of literature. In addition, studying literature can also broaden the reader's vocabulary and grammar.

According to the writer herself, learning a literary work is useful. It has a relation to human life, able to broaden mind and also deepen insight by observing and learning from human being's problems and their solutions. Robert and Jacobs (1989:2) argue that literature can help people grow into a broader cultural, philosophic and religious world, to recognize human dreams and struggle in order to develop mature sensitivity for the condition of all living things. If someone observes a literary work carefully, he can get more knowledge about human life of which the positive aspects can be applied to real life and guide them to the better value of life. According to Kennedy (1979:1379) a literary work is a force that effects people. It stirs responses in them, arouses their emotions and perhaps argues for ideas that change their minds.

There are at least two major types of literary works. The first type is such as poem, short story and novel. Play or drama and opera are categorized in the second type. The functions of both of them are the same. They say something worth saying and also help people to appreciate and criticize about the value of life surround us.

The writer here takes a novel as the subject matter of the study because among the forms of imaginative literature in English, the novel has long been the favorite of both writers and readers. Most of the students of the English Department of Widya Mandala University enjoy novels more than any other literary forms. As far as we can tell from sales figures, the novel has far outdistanced the popularity of other literary form. While we read, we experience actual life. Moreover, novel gives more complete and original story than the drama or the film. Novels are also special. The specialty of the novel according to Foster (1955:84) that the writer can talk about his characters as well as through them or can arrange for us to listen when they talk to themselves. Kennedy (1983:231) also says, “ A novel is a book – length story in prose, whose author tries to create the sense that while we read, we experience actual life.”

From the quotation above, the writer can conclude a novel is a part of a literary form, which teaches people about life, facts and truth. Hence, a novel might be a kind of mirror that reflects man’s attitude and behavior towards our society and life itself.

The writer focuses his study of this novel on the character. First, she believes that character is the most important element in narrative fiction. Roberts

(1977:53) says that most of any fictions consider about characters. In any fiction one will realize that novels with which you are familiar talk about characters and their reaction to an extended series of action. Potter (1967:1) adds " Character is a basic element in much imaginative literature and therefore they merit the considerable attention paid to them."

Second, a character is interesting because they portray human's actual life. Roberts (1977:56) also mentions his interest in characters: " In fiction you may expect characters from every area of life and because we all share the same human capacity for concern, involvement, sympathy, happiness, sorrow, exhilaration, and disappointment, you should be able to become interested in the plight of characters and in how they try to handle the world around them."

The writer chooses the character development because she realizes that analyzing a character development is useful. Since the writer here is a teacher candidate, she must study the character development. For a teacher, it's important to know the character development of the students in order to be able to give what's suitable for them.

The writer is interested in discussing Isabel as the protagonist in The Portrait of A Lady since Isabel plays the most important role in the story. Roberts (1965:55) says that Isabel is the central concern of the novel and she also has expansive personality.

The writer chooses Henry James because of his sensitive and realistically complex portrayal of character, his formally intricate and allusive style. Lecker and Brien (1987:765) "James is a master of the formally structured,

psychologically realistic novel.” The stories of Henry James’ novels are modern in outlook and realistic in the aspect of life they present. James also had an extraordinary grasp of the English language, which is reflected in his highly stylistic writing - Thomas Hardy called it "a ponderously warm manner of saying nothing in infinite sentences".

The writer chooses "The Portrait of A Lady" because this poignant story of an American Lady who is deceived by the good look and the charm of a worthless suitor is generally regarded as the finest book of James' middle period. It is a story of the spiritual tragedy resulting from a human situation that is often met with in life.

This novel tells the readers about a woman named Isabel Archer. Isabel Archer is brought to England from Albany, New York, by her aunt Mrs. Touchett to extend her education possibly to marry well. Isabel, who is proud and independent, has other ideas. She has no desire to marry and wishes to create her own future, rather than finding it as a wife. Consequently, she refuses two very eligible suitors: Lord Warburton and also Caspar Goodwood, who follows her to Europe from America. Isabel’s character is very complex and interesting. She goes through four stages. The first stage is when she first arrives at Gardencourt from New York. The second stage is after she becomes an heiress. The next stage is after she travels everywhere. The last stage is after she gets married with Gilbert Osmond.

When her uncle, Mr Touchett, dies, he leaves Isabel a fortune. He unwittingly does her a great disservice, for on a visit to Italy, she is introduced by Madame

Merle to Gilbert Osmond. Osmond is a charming but worthless dilettante who sees Isabel as a beautiful prize, a mother for his daughter Pansy, and a source of easily attained wealth. From his cruel cynicism comes Isabel's tragic disillusionment. In this exquisitely crafted and deeply ironic novel, Henry James depicts the heart and soul of a young woman whose destiny is taken from her own hands.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The study is intended to analyze the protagonist's (Isabel) character development in Henry James' novel The Portrait of A Lady. The writer would like to find the quality of the work in terms of character study. There are two questions:

1. What stages does Isabel go through?
2. What changes or developments of character occurred to Isabel during those stages ?

The analysis of the protagonist will be done based on Barnet, Berman and Burto's points of analyzing character. They are what the protagonist says, what the protagonist does, what the others say about the protagonist and what the protagonist looks like.

1.3 Objective of the Study

In line with the problem statement, the purpose of this study is to analyze the development of the protagonist's character. The writer wants to find out the

stages that Isabel goes through and the changes of Isabel's character during those stages.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study hopefully can give some contributions to the teaching of literature in the English Department of Widya Mandala University. Since this study concerns with the character analysis, it hopefully can be a good reference and consideration for the students in studying characters in a novel. Besides that, this study is expected to be use for students of non-literary department who are interested in studying literature. It can help them in comprehending literary works.

1.5 Scope and Limitation

The protagonist in Henry James The Portrait of A Lady has a very complex character. It needs a very deep and careful discussion to fulfill the objectives of the study. Considering the matter and realizing the primary concern is in the discussion of the protagonist, the writer would like to limit the discussion toward Isabel Archer as the protagonist. She plays an important role in the whole story. The writer would like to limit her discussion to Isabel's character development (mental and physical). The writer also limits the discussion to what other characters say about Isabel because her character can be observed by analyzing what the other characters say about her. The writer also limits the discussion to what the protagonist looks like (face, body clothes) for these may help to convey the personality or they may in some measure help to disguise it.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

In this study the writer gives some key terms which are related to this study. It is intended to give clearer comprehension for readers.

A novel is a long written story about imaginary people and events (Martin and Hill, 1996: 12).

Analysis is an examination of something together with thoughts and judgements about it (Longman, 1987: 30).

Characterization is the means by which the writer creates the sum of traits, thoughts and actions which taken together, constitute a character (Fergusson, 1949: 785).

Character does not only refer to a person in a literary work, but also to what he likes including his whole nature, such as his personality, his ways of thinking or spiritual qualities, his intelligence, even his physical build (Potter, 1967: 3).

Development is a progression from a simpler or lower to more advanced mature or complex ; the development of an aptitude into an accomplishment ; attempts made to foster social progress (Soukhanov, 1966: 511).

The protagonist is the one who takes the leading part or the principal part in a novel and becomes the central character in the conflict and the action (Perrine, 1966: 59).

1.7 Organization of the Study

There are five chapters in this study. In chapter I deals with the introduction which consists of: background of the study, statement of the problem,

objective of the study, significance of the study, scope and limitation, definition of key terms and organization of the study. Chapter II will concern the review of the related literature. Chapter III deals with the methodology of the study. Chapter IV concerns with the analysis of the data. Finally, chapter V presents the conclusion.