

CHARACTER ANALYSIS OF BARTLEBY IN BARTLEBY THE SCRIVENER BY HERMAN MELVILLE

By
Ni Kadek Ayu Widasari Astuti
Jurusan Sastra Inggris
Fakultas Sastra Universitas Udayana

Abstrak

Dalam studi ini cerita karangan penulis Amerika Herman Melville yang berjudul Bartleby the Scrivener dipilih untuk dianalisis. Tokoh Bartleby dalam cerita ini dapat diinterpretasikan sebagai dua psikologis bagi pencerita atau narrator yang sebenarnya ingin mengkritik tentang dunia pengacara yang eksklusif dan kehidupan yang seperti mesin tanpa perasaan.

Karena fokus pembahasannya adalah pada tokoh Bartleby, maka aspek psikologi dan pendekatan biographi penulis di aplikasikan untuk menganalisis konflik dalam diri pribadinya maupun sikapnya yang eksentrik.

Metode menganalisis data dalam studi ini adalah deskriptif. Data yang dikumpulkan dari sumber data dianalisis berdasarkan teori William Kenney dalam bukunya How to Analyze Fiction, teori Warren dan Wellek dengan bukunya Theory of Literature, dan sebagai penunjang ditambah teori Knicbocker dan Reninger dalam Interpreting Literature.

Adanya saling mempengaruhi antara dua tokoh sentral yaitu Bartleby dan Pencerita yang menggambarkan bahwa batas pertanggungjawaban seseorang sebagai individu terhadap kawan-kawannya tidak dapat dilakukan dengan sepele atau hanya kalau tidak menyusahkan dan ditemukan bahwa cerita ini sangat manusiawi, tentang hubungan antara dua orang yang gagal karena kurangnya rasa kemurahan hati terhadap sesamanya, dan Bartleby sendiri mendapatkan dirinya terjebak dalam lingkaran kerja manusia yang monoton dan berpikiran kurang.

Dalam cerita ini, Bartleby adalah sebagai tokoh sentral yang berfungsi sebagai diri Melville sendiri, menjawab bahwa ia "lebih suka tidak" dan akhirnya terjadi pada dirinya sendiri dan rahasianya. Penulisnya menginginkan bahwa manusia kembali pada suatu kehidupan yang jauh dari dunia yang monoton dan tidak menarik, dan jauh dari kegilaan kota besar, bersifat lebih alamiah dan hidup dengan sesamanya.

Kata kunci: ahli menulis, pengacara, depresi

1. Background of The Study

Literature is a kind of art to entertain and educate people. A work of literature develops an element of entertaining that gives pleasure for everyone who reads it and it is considered interesting since it presents many things about common life.

In literature, there are many things that can be analysed both intrinsically and extrinsically, there are elements to study such as theme, setting, character, plot, point of view, style and tone, structure and technique, and so forth. Extrinsically it can be concerned with author biography, social and cultural status, personal experience with life and language, moral values, and so forth.

In this study, the story entitled *Bartleby the Scrivener* was chosen to be analysed. Bartleby's character can be interpreted as a "psychological double" for the narrator that criticizes the impersonality, and mechanical adjustments of the world which the lawyer inhabits.

Furthermore, in this study, Bartleby as the main character is analysed from psychological aspects and biographical approach.

2. Problem of The Study

Based on the background mentioned above, the focus of this study is limited to the study of character. The problems then appear in this story are:

1. How is Bartleby characterized throughout the story of Bartleby the Scrivener?
2. How do these characterizations function in the story?

3. Aims of The Study

This study is intended to fulfil three aims: the general, specific, and academic aims.

The general aim of this writing is to apply theories related to short story in order to get better understanding of Melville's book entitled *Bartleby the Scrivener*.

Meanwhile the specific aim of this writing is to find out the critical estimate of the story and what message the writer wants to convey.

The last is an academic aim that is to apply the theory of literature studied in the English Department to write a scientific work which gives contribution to

this department, so this writing can be used as reference to help the student who takes the same genre.

4. Research Method

There are three aspects of the research of the study; they are data source, data collection and data analysis.

4.1. Data Source

The data were collected from the story entitled *The Bartleby the Scrivener* by Herman Melville (cited in *Adventures in American Literature*, 1968:254 – 281). This story tells about Bartleby, a scrivener, or copyist, for a law firm.

4.2. Method and Technique of Collecting Data

The data were collected through reading the story intensively and note down all the information relevant to Bartleby as the focus of being discussed and the other characters. Then the data were identified in accordance with their type then descriptively presented. They are several steps of collecting data :

1. Reading the story carefully, selecting and taking note the selected items based on the related topic
2. Finding out the conflict and characteristics of the main character in term of psychological aspect

4.3. Method and Technique of Analysing Data

The analysis correlates to the problems that are formulated. The method for analyzing the data was descriptive. The data were collected from the data source and through the data collection, The Data were analyzed using the theory of William Kenney. 1978. *How to Analyze Fiction*, theory of Warren and Wellek. 1962. *Theory of Literature*, and other supporting theory of Knickerbocker and Reninger. 1963. *Interpreting Literature*.

5. Analysis

This chapter discusses about the biographical approach to the study of literature, which in principle tries to find the interrelation between the life of the author and his works. The concepts which are related to the features of literature and biography of the author are also presented in this chapter.

Bartleby arrives at the Narrator's law practice, seeking employment. He immediately gets to work. Nothing strange from Bartleby, and though he is strangely quiet, the Narrator Lawyer finds this helpful, compared to the other eccentric employees, Nippers and Turkey. Business seems to go on as usual after Bartleby's arrival.

But when all copies must be examined for accuracy, and the Lawyer calls in Bartleby and asks him to examine a document; Bartleby replies, "I would prefer not to." This reply surprises the Lawyer so much, he cannot respond. Later, when a large document must be examined and all the copyists are lined up to examine each page, the Lawyer again calls in Bartleby, who again replies that he "would prefer not to" examine the document. Bartleby "prefers not to" examine a paper with the Narrator even when the smallest favors are asked of him.

Eventually, Bartleby just stops working at all. This gives the Narrator reason to fire him. But Bartleby prefers not to leave the building, and continues to live there. Unable to get rid of Bartleby, the Narrator moves his whole office equipment to another building just to get away from Bartleby. But Bartleby continues to live in the Narrator's old office. A few days after the move, the Lawyer is confronted by a small mob of people who inform him that Bartleby is now hanging around inside the building all day. To resolve the problem, the Narrator uses the impractical way that is to take Bartleby to prison.

While this looks like the end of the story, it is really not. This "resolution" is a false one, and while things seem to have been cleared up, the central problem of Bartleby has simply been pushed aside, but not resolved.

Bartleby shows the fact of Melville's life. A scrivener is a kind of writer, and Bartleby is regarded a representative of Melville himself, discouraged by the collapse of his popular reputation. Bartleby's isolation behind the screen is

interpreted as a symbol of Melville's isolation from the reading public, and the scrivener's "I would prefer not to" is used to be the version of Melville's own declaration, "What I feel most moved to write, that is banned- it will not pay. (Adventures in American Literature, 1968. 280)

In many ways *Bartleby, the Scrivener* is a story representing the tribulations of modern society. Bartleby finds himself trapped within the mindless and monotonous cycle of the working man. Melville attempts to awaken the reader to their own inhumanity and apathy towards each other, and perhaps Melville wishes the readers to return to a life before they resigned themselves to sentences of monotony and disinterest in the world and madness of the big city.

Bartleby the Scrivener is one of Melville's great stories. The description of the office is very bleak, and the landscape of Wall Street is completely unnatural. The work environment is sterile and cheerless. Though the narrator is a successful man, he is a victim, in some ways, of progress. People can learn that Bartleby may have lost a job due to similar bureaucratic change. The modern economy includes constant and unfeeling change, which comes sooner or later.

6. Conclusion

It concludes that the mystifying death of the character of Bartleby is not understood. After Bartleby dies, alone and imprisoned, it finally can be learnt one little bit about his past: apparently, he previously worked in the Dead Letter Office (a section of the Post Office that gets rid of undeliverable mail). The narrator wonders if this horrifyingly depressing job might have affected Bartleby's state of being sanity. The theme can be humanistic.

Finally, the theme is very humanistic as Bartleby can be interpreted as a story about a relationship between two men who fails for lack of human charity and the past traumatic experience may affect human thought and attitude.

7. Bibliography

- Adventures in American Literature*. 1968. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc
- Bernhart, Kerl S. 1953. *Practical Psychology*. Canada: McGraw – Hill Book Company, Inc.
- Chalikoff, Lisa. 2003. “No Place for A Girl”: Place and Gender-identity in The Channel Shore in *Mosaic: a Journal for the Interdisciplinary Study of Literature*.
- Charliana, Putu. 2009. *Conflict Analysis of Main Character in Novel The Da Vinci Code*. Denpasar: Faculty of Letters Udayana University.
- Dewi, I.G.A.A Pradnya .2006. *Jane Eyre as the Main Character of Brontee’s Jane Eyre: A study on the Psychological Aspects*. Denpasar: Faculty of Letters Udayana University.
- Forster, E. M. 1974. *Aspects of the Novel*. Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd.
- Iswara, Ida Bagus Yogi. 2010. *Character Analysis of Santiago in The Old Man and the Sea by Ernest Hemingway*. Denpasar: Faculty of Letters Udayana University.
- Kenney, William. 1966. *How to Analyze Fiction*. New York: Monarch Press.
- Knickerbocker,, K.L. 1963. *Interpreting Literature*. USA: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, Inc.
- Stanford, Judith. A. 2003. *Responding to Literature; Stories, Poems, Plays, and Essays. Fourth Edition*. New York: The McGraw Hill Companies, Inc.
- Tarigan, Henry Guntur.1984. *Prinsip-prinsip Dasar Sastra*. Bandung: Angkasa.
- Wellek, Rene and Austin Warren. 1963. *Theory of Literature*. London: Cox and Wyman Ltd.