

THE CHARACTER ANALYSIS IN WELTY'S A VISIT OF CHARITY

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Abstrak

Sebuah karya sastra yang dibuat berdasarkan imajinasi penulis dan umumnya mencerminkan kondisi sosial, yang menggunakan lingkungan sosial di sekitarnya sebagai dasar. Wellek dan Warren (1973:39) menyatakan bahwa karya sastra itu sendiri membenarkan semua kepentingan kita dalam kehidupan seorang penulis, dalam lingkungan sosial dan seluruh proses sastra.

Untuk menganalisa sebuah karya sastra diperlukan mengidentifikasi bagian-bagian terpisah untuk menentukan hubungan antara bagian-bagiannya untuk menemukan hubungan bagian tersebut dengan karya sastranya (Kenney, 1966:5). Novel adalah salah satu contoh prosa fiksi yang menggambarkan karakter dan memperkenalkan lebih dari satu kesan, efek atau emosi digambarkan sebagai cerita lama untuk menulis dalam sebuah buku. Karakter merupakan salah satu aspek penting, ia membawa berita dari penulis yang dapat membawa berbagai nilai dalam kehidupan manusia seperti moralitas, pendidikan dan banyak lainnya.

Dalam studi ini, cerita berjudul A Visit of Charity dipilih untuk dianalisa. Penulis menggambarkan suatu tema tentang kepentingan diri sendiri dan ketidakpekaan melalui tindakan tokoh Marian, terutama di akhir cerita. Marian datang untuk memberikan sesuatu, yaitu pot tanaman, bukan dirinya sendiri. Dia bahkan tidak memberikan waktu seperti yang diberikan gadis yang lainnya yaitu membaca alkitab kepada perempuan tua di rumah tersebut. Saat ia berteriak untuk menunggu bus, melompat pada, dan menggigit buah apel, dia tidak menunjukkan perasaan yang tersentuh. Dia hanya menginginkan mendapatkan nilai tambah pada kunjungannya, tidak ada lagi yang penting.

Selanjutnya dalam cerita ini penulis mengatakan bahwa amal palsu dapat menghancurkan kemanusiaan yang berpura-pura mengakui. Orang-orang seperti Marian bertindak baik karena tugas atau untuk keuntungan pribadi yang telah menciptakan Rumah panti asuhan bagi orang tua dan kondisi yang telah membuat penduduk marah, dan merasa tidak suka. Marian meninggalkan dua wanita tua di panti asuhan tersebut merasa lebih kesepian dan putus asa. Kunjungan semacam ini bukanlah kunjungan sosial tentunya.

Kata kunci: Girl, charity, Old age

1. Background of Study

Literary work cannot be separated from human life. The expression of literary form is language. Literature is an act of language, it is inseparable from life because it presents and describes the events that can happen in real life in society. Through literary work, which usually reflects our life, we can experience through our imagination and also we learn about human being.

A literary work is created based on the imagination of the writer and it generally reflects the social condition, which uses the social surrounding as the foundation. Wellek and Warren (1973:39) state that the works of literature themselves justify all our interests in the life of an author, in this social environment and the whole process of literature.

To analyse a literary work is to identify the separate parts that make it up, to determine the relationship among the parts, and to discover the relation of the parts to the whole (Kenney, 1966:5). Novel is one of examples of fictional prose that describes character and introduces more than one impressions, effects or emotions described as a long story to write in a book. Character is one of important aspects, it carries the author's message that can bring various values in human life such as morality, education and many others.

In this study, the story entitled *A Visit of Charity* was chosen to be analysed. A Mississippi author Eudora Welty, the first living writer to be published in the Library of America series, mentored many of today's greatest fiction writers and is a fascinating woman.

In *A Visit of Charity*, Eudora Welty illustrates the story of a fourteen-year-old girl named Marian, who is a Campfire Girl that is paying a visit to the Old Ladies Home in order to earn points as a Campfire Girl. Marian thought that this would be an easy task that would take just a little of her time and an insignificant effort on her part. She even brought a potted plant for extra points. Marian thought that she was going to visit a sweet and kind little old lady, but she encountered not that type of ladies, but two old ladies who were bad-tempered, argumentative, and uncooperative.

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 does the writer make contrast between the fourteen-year-old girl with the other two characters in *A Visit of Charity*?
2. What message does the writer want to show to the readers?

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 Eudora Welty's work entitled *A Visit of Charity*.

Meanwhile the specific aim of this writing is to find out what message the writer actually wants to say.

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 a reference in literary analysis.

4. Research Method

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

4.1. Data Source

The data were collected from the story entitled *A visit of Charity* by Eudora Welty (cited in *A Visit of Charity*. Page 600 - 604. *Adventures in American Literature*. 1968. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc).

4.2. Method and Technique of Collecting Data

The data were collected through reading the story intensively and make note all the information relevant to the narrator and his father as the focus of being discussed and then the data were identified in accordance with their types then descriptively presented. The Story of collecting data are as follows:

1. Reading the story carefully, selecting and taking note the selected items based on the related topic.
2. Find out contrast between the fourteen-year-old girl with the other two characters in *A Visit of Charity* and what message the writer wants to convey to the readers?

4.3. Method and Technique of Analysing Data

The analysis correlates to the problems that are formulated. The method for analyzing the data is 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 another supporting theory of Knickerbocker and Reninger. 1963. *Interpreting Literature*.

5. Analysis

This chapter discusses how the writer, Eudora Welty clearly employs her cynical feelings toward the nursing home. With clear imagery, diction, and significant details, she gives the reader a good understanding of how she feels toward the nursing home in this story.

A Visit of Charity tells about a fourteen-year-old girl named Marian, who is paying a visit to the Old Ladies Home. The purpose of her visit is to earn a three-point for her score in Campfire Girl. By bringing a potted plant to the nursing home, she can earn an extra one point, or a double point is counted if she brings a bible and reads it to the old ladies. In the nursing home, she is so shocked

by the inferior environs and two bad-tempered, argumentative, and uncooperative old ladies.

When Marian first approaches the nursing home it is described as a very cold place, *whitewashed brick and reflected the winter sunlight like a block of ice* (Page: 600). The colour white, and a block of ice indicates the coldness of the home. Also the nurse wears a white uniform looking cold accompanied with unfriendly attitude. Throughout the story, the author describes that the nursing home is cold, it may not be physically cold, but mentally and emotionally cold. This makes the home feel unwelcoming, dead and unloving.

The inside parts of the building, the *loose, bulging linoleum on the floor* (Page: 600) indicates that the place is cheaply built and poorly cared for, and the halls that *smell like the interior of a clock* (Page: 600) suggests a used, unfeeling machine. Perhaps the clearest evidence of dehumanization is the small, crowded rooms, each inhabited by two older women. The room that Marian visits is dark, with a drawn shade and too much furniture. And there are no colours, decorations, or beauty brightens this room, which is packed with beds, a chair, a wardrobe, a washstand, a rocker, and a bed table. The wet smell of everything and the wet appearance of the bare floor suggest that this cramped room is more like a stall in a barn, a place for animals, than for use by human beings.

Described as a clock working on time, the nursing home is a place that is always on schedule and slow moving. Welty describes the home as even smelling like a clock. Not only is the house a working clock but also the nurse is described as moving mechanically and checking her wristwatch.

Stopping in her tracks, she first extended her arm bent her elbow and leaned forward from the hips-all to examine the watch strapped to her wrist (Page: 600)

Many details express that the nursing home is much like a zoo. Filled with animals all trapped inside their cages wanting to get out. As Marian walked down the hall, all the doors were closed. When she entered the room, the floor smelt wet, showing that the room was unsanitary. It was also small and tight with too much furniture and not enough ways to get out of the room. The elders in the room were wild, with pet-like mouths and red eyes like a sheep.

Throughout the so-called visit of charity, Marian perceived the old women she meets sometimes as things and sometimes as animals. During her brief stay at the Home, Marian thinks of the first old woman as a bird and the second as a sheep. In her eyes, the first woman moves in like a bird and her hand is like a bird claw and grabs her with the claw. The other woman, bundled up in bed with a quilt, appears to Marian to resemble a sheep. When Marian first sees her, she describes her mentally as having a bunched white forehead and red eyes like a sheep. When this second woman clears her throat or talks, she sounds to Marian like a sheep bleating or a lamb whimpering. She refers to an old woman as an object to be used and discarded when she announces the purpose of her visit: I'm a Campfire Girl ... I have to pay a visit to some old lady. These words and her frequent thoughts about the points she will get for the visit reveal her real reason for coming. Clearly, her concern is focused on her progress in Campfire Girls.

Finally, Welty, the writer illustrates the theme of self-interest and insensitivity through Marian's actions, particularly at the end of the story. Marian came to give a thing, a potted plant, not herself. She even gave less time than another Campfire Girl who read the Bible to the old women. As she yells for the bus to wait, leaps on, and chomps on her apple, she shows her untouched feelings and undisturbed ignorance. She had her points; nothing else matters.

The writer further suggests in this story that fake charity can destroy the very humanity it pretends to acknowledge. People like Marian acting either out of duty or for personal advantages have created the Home and the conditions that have made the inhabitants irritable, and unlovable. Marian left the women more lonely and distraught than she found them. This kind of charity is uncharitable indeed.

6. Conclusion

After discussing the story, it comes to the conclusion that Welty, the writer uses her gift of literacy to express sympathy with human difficulties which are illness, old age, poverty, and ignorance. In the story, Welty provokes thought about selfishness, callousness, negligence, and dehumanization through an ironic

tone. The title itself is rather a paradox. Charity means to show kindness, humanity, and social conscience toward people in need. But, neither Marian nor the society possesses these values.

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Finally, it can be said that through *A Visit of Charity* the writer wants to convey that the story has a moral message to the readers. She conveys through the story the inhumane treatment in nursing homes. The nursing home lacks amenities for older people. The condition of the room is comparable to a jail, small, wet, dark, and closed door. A nurse acts more like a jail guard than a compassionate professional. Welty portrays Marian as an individual person or as a whole society that is insensitive to the welfare of elderly people. People in society were used to living in their own comfort place and neglect the inferior lives of unfortunate people. The story uses campfire girls who visits the nursing home for self-benefits as a mirror of the selfishness and dehumanization of society in reality.

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