



HENRY JAMES' THE AMBASSADORS
AN ANALYSIS OF STRUCTURAL ASPECTS

A THESIS

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini membahas tentang struktur dari novel The Ambassadors. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menganalisis unsur-unsur intrinsik dari karya tersebut dan juga media yang digunakan untuk menyampaikan ceritanya. Melalui pembahasan hal-hal tersebut, diharapkan pembaca akan dapat lebih memahami novel ini. Dalam penelitian ini penulis menggunakan teori struktural yang digagas oleh Tzvetan Todorov. Dalam teorinya, Todorov menjelaskan bahwa dalam pemahaman karya sastra, ada tiga aspek yang harus dibahas, yaitu aspek sintaksis, aspek semantik dan aspek verbal. Selanjutnya penulis mengidentifikasi dan menganalisis tiap-tiap aspek tersebut untuk mendapatkan makna dari novel The Ambassadors. Dari hasil analisis tersebut penulis menemukan bahwa jika dilihat dari aspek sintaksis, novel ini mempunyai plot yang sederhana dan detil. Lebih lanjut, jika dilihat dari aspek semantik, The Ambassadors merupakan cerita yang ironis. Terakhir jika dilihat dari aspek verbal, penulis dari novel ini, yaitu Henry James, menyampaikan ceritanya dengan menggunakan berbagai macam teknik yang mendukung analisa dari dua aspek sebelumnya dan membuat The Ambassadors menjadi novel yang menarik untuk dibaca.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Background of the Research

A narrative text is built by various elements that are needed to be analyzed in order to find its meaning. There are two major approaches in analyzing a literary work; extrinsic and intrinsic approaches. The extrinsic approach is aimed to analyze the external aspects of a literary work, while the intrinsic approach is focused on the analysis of its intrinsic elements.

There are various theories that can be grouped into the intrinsic approach, one of them is structuralism. It focuses on the analysis of the literary work's structure to find its meaning. Until now there are few students of English Department in Andalas University who have applied structuralism in conducting their analysis. Thus, in this research, the writer tries to use a structural theory proposed by Tzvetan Todorov in analyzing Henry James' novel The Ambassadors. Todorov states that to understand a literary work we have to analyze three aspects; syntactic, semantic and verbal aspects. The analyses of syntactic and semantic aspects focus on the intrinsic elements of a literary work. Meanwhile, the analysis of verbal aspect deals with the use of language as the medium to present the story in a narrative text. The writer chooses to apply this theory in analyzing The Ambassadors because from her first reading, she finds that the story is quite hard to understand. Henry James' fictions are often considered by critics as the most highly conscious, sophisticated and difficult of their era, and The Ambassadors is not an exception. In fact, the novel is

considered by its author as the best among his works. Professor Harry Levin states in the introduction of the novel that The Ambassadors “might prove a daunting handbook for beginners.” (1986: 27). He also suggests that the novel is not easy to be understood since it is replete with intelligence and craftsmanship (28). Based on those reasons, the writer thus assumes that she can attain an optimum comprehension of the work by analyzing its intrinsic elements. Moreover, the author of this novel is also famous for his unique style in presenting the story in a narrative text. Many critics who analyze James’ works give particular attention to his presentation’s technique. Therefore, the writer assumes that the analysis of the media which are used to present the story in The Ambassadors is inevitable.

1.2 The Statement of the Problem

As stated before, from her first reading, the writer finds that The Ambassadors is quite hard to understand. Thus she tries to analyze the works by using Tzvetan Todorov’s theory. He proposes that we need to analyze three aspects of a literary work to find its meaning. Those aspects are syntactic, semantic and verbal aspects. The analyses of syntactic and semantic aspects are dealing with the novel’s intrinsic elements while the analysis of the verbal aspect deals with the use of language as the medium to perform the story in a narrative text.

1.3 The Objective of the Study

In this research the writer applies a theory proposed by Tzvetan Todorov toward The Ambassadors, a novel by Henry James. By using this theory, the writer hopes that she can analyze the structure of the work to gain an optimum comprehension.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

The structure of The Ambassadors is analyzed by using theory which is proposed by Tzvetan Todorov. According to him, there are three aspects of a literary work that should be analyzed in order to get a better understanding of the work. Those three aspects are the syntactic, semantic and verbal aspects.

After analyzing The Ambassadors, the writer can conclude several things related to three aspects of the work. The first one is about the syntactic aspect which is related to the plot of the work. The development of The Ambassadors' plot is slow and detailed. At the same time, it is also simple since it is built through the causal relationship between Lewis Lambert Strether's impressions, judgments and actions. Furthermore, if we see from the analysis of semantic aspect, it can be said that The Ambassadors is an ironic story. The main character, Lewis Lambert Strether, is an envoy sent by his fiancée to Europe to bring her son back home. However, since his arrival in Europe Strether gets influenced by the continent's atmosphere, as well as the other characters whom he meets there. Having impressed by Chad and his community in Paris, Strether thus decides to change his mission. He is determined to save Chad's life by preventing him to go home and urges him to stay with Madame de Vionnet whom Strether believes can give good influence to the young man. However Strether's efforts are useless since Chad finally decides to go home and Strether himself is abandoned alone by his American fellows. The world which Strether observes has given a huge

influence toward the old man. Yet, the old man himself can not affect people around him.

Moreover, through the analysis of the verbal aspect, the writer finds that the narrator of the novel belongs to the heterodiegetic type means that the narrator does not exist in the story he narrates. The story is told to through the point of view of a single character, that is Lewis Lambert Strether. The technique which is called as the third-person limited narration allows the reader to know Strether's thoughts in detail but not with other characters. This technique thus supports the previous analysis about the plot of the work. Moreover, through the dominant presentation of the transposed and reported speeches, the reader can understand the personalities of the characters in the novel. Other media that are used in the novel also support the reader's comprehension about the work. Therefore, the media which are used to present the story are very effective to make The Ambassadors becomes an interesting piece of work.

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