

AN ANALYSIS OF FREEDOM OF MAKING DECISION AS THE PORTRAYAL OF INDEPENDENT WOMAN REFLECTED BY ISABEL ARCHER IN JAMES'S *THE PORTRAIT OF A LADY*

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Abstract

This thesis discusses freedom of making decision of Isabel Archer as the main character which portrays her as independent woman in James's *The Portrait of a Lady*. The discussion uses the philosophical approach which focuses on human thought, rationally and critically in order to decide their choices in life. Philosophy is the interpretation of the world in order to change it. The philosophy studies more than the other sciences done, it studies about everything that is related with human's problem. The method of this research is library research, which the data are taken from the novel entitled *The Portrait of a Lady* by Henry James. To support the analysis the writer also employs some theories which related to the discussion, freedom of making decision. In the summary, *The Portrait of a Lady* by James is true that the main character Isabel Archer is an independent young woman who briefly decides every decision by her own thought. Isabel's spirit of freedom makes her decides to go to England with hopes her life will be better. In England, Isabel gets a lot of experiences which changes her life; she gets legacy, she rejects lord Warburton and Caspar Goodwood and finally chooses Gilbert Osmond who loves her only for the money. But Isabel shows to the people that she is responsible for her decision by survive in her miserable marriage life with Gilbert Osmond.

Key words: Freedom of making decision, the portrayal, The Portrait of Lady.

INTRODUCTION

Naturally human is free and completely responsible for his choices. This freedom to choose something is based on human individuality and subjectivity (Mulyanto et al., 2019), (Ulfa et al., 2016). These factors shape someone free to choose anything; action, decision, or believe that he thinks is right (Borman et al., 2018). If he succeeds in realizing his choice, every people could consider him exist in his life. Without freedom, human existence grows to be absurd. The freedom is always nearer than human's action itself. It describes that every human's action is the reflection of his freedom in his life.

What is best for an individual may not be what others think is best for the collective or society. We have to be able to choose our own destiny individually, to make our own choices and to be our own person (Kuswoyo et al., 2020). We do not need the society to tell us what to do and how to live our life, to take our choices from us, and make our choices for us. We need to be free to live our life as we so choose. We can and should decide for ourselves the course of our own life and destiny. To be free as adults have to decide things for ourselves, and take responsibility for our own life, actions and decisions and not give the responsibility to someone else or the society (Damayanti et al., 2020).

Independent is very important for each person. With this independent, people can face the problems come to their life, without waiting or depending on other people (Kuswoyo & Susardi, 2017). Means even none helps to solve the problem (Suryono et al., 2019). Being independent does not mean we do not need other people, because we are social creatures, who have possibility, and need other people help (Evayani & Rido, 2019), (Rido et al., 2014). In other word, independent means ready to solve the problem itself, or by helped by others, but if with someone helps, it does not mean we are free from the responsibility (Suprayogi & Novanti, 2021). "*The Portrait of a Lady* is consistently focused on the idea of Isabel Archer's independence: whether she has it, whether she is true to it, whether she betrays it, and whether it is more important than her social duty. But the novel never really defines what "independence" means.

The portrait of a Lady is the story of a spirited young American woman, Isabel Archer, who affronts her destiny and finds it overwhelming. She inherits a large amount of money and subsequently becomes the victim of Machiavellian scheming by two American experts. It is also profound way the themes of personal freedom, responsibility, betrayal and sexuality.

The Portrait of a Lady explores the conflict between the individual and society by examining the life of Isabel Archer, a young American woman who must choose between her independent spirit and the demands of social convention. After processing and longing to be an independent woman, autonomous and answerable only to herself, Isabel falls in love with, and marries the sinister Gilbert Osmond, who wants her only for her money and who treats her as an object, almost part of his art collection. Isabel must then decide whether to honor her marriage vows and preserve social property or to leave her miserable marriage and escape to a happier, more independent life, possibly with her American suitor Caspar Goodwood. It is also important to note that *The Portrait of a Lady* is set entirely among a group of American who live in Europe, the setting shows us how the people of America live together with the European and how the way they appreciate and follow the culture, law and also the roles.

From the previous discussion the reseacher tries to analyze the characterization of the major character, Isabel Archer in *The Portrait of a Lady* by Henry James. The writer has several reasons for taking the urgency on it. The first, *The Portrait of a Lady* is an interesting novel by Henry James, the second the main Character, Isabel Archer represents independent women who are brave to decide marrying a man and responsible in it.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Since this analysis focus on freedom of making decision, here to support the analysis the writer employs some theories to find out the answer of the problem stated in the previous chapter.

Philosophical Approach

Since this thesis focus on Isabel archer freedom of decision, in order words focus on human way of thinking the researcher decides to use the philosophical approach to dig up the answer in the next chapter. Philosophy (*philo* is Greek for love, *sophy* or *sophic* relates to the truth or learning) means love of truth or learning. In simpler word, the philosophic approach is a methodology design to seek the truth of a matter. Philosophy is an interpretation of the world in order to change it. It means, by using human philosophical thinking, a human able to change the world because philosophy is dinamic things.

Philosophy seems like a ride to face the future of nation and human themselves. Philosophy is the attempt to think rationally and critically about life's most important questions in order to obtain knowledge and wisdom about them. Philosophy as reflection of an effort to get clarity, harmony, and knowledge then the people has to understand. It means philosophy the way of human in seeking the truth of life, harmony and wisdom about them. Philosophical theory presents in the literary analysis because philosophy is the science and mostly discusses about human's thought including the way of human thinking. The philosophy studies more than the other sciences done, it studies about everything that is related with human's problem.

Theory of Freedom

Since this analysis aims to analyze about freedom of making decision in life. Here, the writer try to give supported understanding about freedom in philosophical view. In philosophy, freedom often ties in with the question of free will. In other words, freedom is decision to take the wrong or good path for human life. Freedom appears as the result human consciousness and appears from human inner feeling of human (Gunawan et al., 2019). The liberation comes, when human choice is made and move along following the path that we choose. Freedom can also signify inner autonomy, or mastery over one's inner condition (Darwis & Pamungkas, 2021), (Darwis, 2016). This has several possible significances are, the ability to act in accordance with the dictates of reason, the ability to act in accordance with one's own true self or values, the ability to act in accordance with universal values (such as the true and the good) and the ability to act independently of both the dictates of reason and the urges of desires (Mahendra & Amelia, 2020), (Wantoro & Priandika, n.d.).

Theory of Independent

Being independent is very important for each person. With this independent, people can face the problems come to their life, without wait or depend to other people. Means even none helps, and solve the problem (Puspaningtyas, n.d.), (Ulfa, 2018). Being independent does not mean we do not need other people, because we are social creatures, who have possibility need other people. In other word, independent means ready to solve the problem itself, or by helped by others, but if with someone helps, it does not mean we are free from the responsible (Ulfa et al., 2016).

Concept of Independent Women

In this analysis, the writer analyses the freedom of making decision as reflection of independent woman, therefore the writer includes the theory of independent in this thesis (Ulfa, 2019), (Ashari, 2019). An independent woman is a woman who can control herself, know what the best things for herself, has strong believe and confident, she does not depend on other people and independent woman will responsible to her decision.

Women in Victorian Era

The Portrait Of a Lady was published in 1881, while the setting of the story is about England condition of life in 1863. The story consistently focused on Isabel Archer independence, the conflict between the individual and society by examining the life of Isabel Archer, a young American woman who must choose between her independent spirit and the demands of social convention. The Victorian era of British History was period of Queen Victoria reign from 20 June 1837 until her death on 22 January 1901 (Kardiansyah, 2019). It was a long period of peace, prosperity, refined sensibilities and national self-confidence for Britain. Furthermore the status of women in Victorian era is often seen as

an illustration of striking discrepancy between the United Kingdom's power and wealth and what many others, it is appalling social conditions (Kardiansyah, n.d.).

At Home

The home was regarded as a haven from the busy and chaotic public world of politics and business, and from the grubby world of the factory (KUSWOYO et al., 2013). Those who could afford to create cozy domestic interiors with plush fabrics, heavy curtains and fussy furnishings which effectively cocooned the inhabitants from the world outside. The middle-class household contained concrete expressions of domesticity in the form of servants, homely décor, comfortable furnishings, home entertainment, and clothing. Women became the walking symbol of their social function; wife, mother and domestic manager (Megawati, 2017), (Anuar et al., 2020).

Women and Marriage

In the Victorian era marriage was not as romanticized or fairy-tale like as depicted in many novels at the time (Evayani & Rido, 2019). On the contrary, love actually played a minor role in the majority of matrimonies that took place, an engagement was entered into as one would approach a business deal, and there were some generally accepted rules and guidelines to follow. In the Victorian era, women had seen in domestic realm, providing their husbands with a clean home, food on the table and to raise their children. Women's rights were extremely limited in this era, losing their ownership of their wages, all of their physical property, excluding land property, and all other cash they generated once married (Lim, 2018). Rights and privileges of Victorian women were limited both single and married women had hardship and disadvantages they have to live with (Afrianto & Ma'rifah, 2020).

Wife and Mother

Marriage signified a woman's maturity and respectability, but motherhood was confirmation that she had entered the world of womanly virtue and female fulfillment (Megawaty & Santia, 2019). For a woman not to become a mother meant she was liable to be labeled inadequate, a failure or in some way abnormal. Motherhood was expected of a married woman and the childless single woman was a figure to be pitied. She was often encouraged to find work caring for children - as a governess or a nursery maid presumably to compensate her for her loss (Saputra et al., 2020).

METHOD

Methodology is one important in doing analysis (Akbar & Rahmanto, 2020). Without using some method, a scientific research would not be executed well. Methodology is often considered the core of research design. There are some methods that are used in this analysis. Those are; Research Design, Data and data source, Data Collecting technique, and Data analyzing technique. The method uses are descriptive qualitative method. Descriptive is a method that the data is not numeric, but words or picture. While Qualitative is, a method that the analysis is formed by words it is not using statistic method. It is an analysis produce which the data are presented in the forms of the words. In this research the writer defines the data are the dialogues and narrations that describe about Isabel Archer's freedom of decision. The source of the research is from the novel entitled *The Portrait of a Lady* by Henry James, published by Penguin Book 1986 and consists of 654 pages.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As the response what being stated in the formulation of the problem, this chapter explains deeply about the Freedom of Making Decision as the Portrayal of Independent Woman Reflected by Isabel Archer in James's *The Portrait of a Lady*.

The Freedom of Making Decision as the Portrayals of Isabel Archer

Isabel is the main focus of *Portrait of a Lady*, and most of the thematic exploration of the novel occurs through her actions, thoughts, and experiences. Ultimately, Isabel chooses to remain in her miserable marriage to Osmond, rather than to violate custom by leaving him and searching for a happier life. Isabel Archer is a protagonist character, because she is discussed much as a kind woman and Isabel Archer is sort of flat character because her character does not change from the beginning until the end of the story. Isabel known as a smart woman and independent, since her child she was love to read in her grandmother's library secretly, without the instruction from her father or sister, this situation caused by her family's poor condition but Isabel's curiosity makes her does not stop study.

Isabel Archer and Her Freedom of Decision

Isabel's Decision to Come to England

Isabel Archer spent her childhood in Albany, America with her poor family, finally she decides to leave America and go to England to live with her aunt's family, she wants to changes her life and to have more experience by knowing others place and other people, and in England. Her families in England, Mrs. Touchett's family receive her as a good niece and interesting young woman because Isabel is smart, and humble.

Mrs. Touchett : "Well if you you'll be very good, and do
everything I tell you I'll take you there."
Isabel : "Do everything you tell me?
I don't think I can promise that."
Mrs. Touchett : "No, you don't look like a person of that
sort. You fond of your own way; but it's not
for me to blame you." (James: 89)

Isabel archer offered by her aunt Mrs.Touchett to come to England to see Florence, her living place. Isabel directly interested to know that place, Isabel is always interested in something new, which could enrich her knowledge, and experiences. She feels boring with the situation in her place, and Isabel decides to receive Mrs.Touchett invitation by herself, without asks to her sisters, Edith and Lillian, Isabel used to decides what she thinks is right by herself. Moreover Mrs. Touchett knows Isabel's characterization, Isabel is a young lady who loves doing something independently, based on her thought and felling, and nobody can judge or forbids someone to do what she likes to do, like Isabel does. This is because Isabel has already life independent without her parents, she only lives with her two sisters and they had got married, so that, Isabel decides to do or to choose something is her freedom.

"Dear me, who's that strange woman?" Mr.Touchett had asked.
"Perhaps it's Mrs.Touchett's niece – the independent younglady."

"I think she must be, from the way she handles the dog." (James: 69)

The dialogues above show the first appearances of Isabel Archer in Europe at Gardencourt. Mr. Touchett, her uncle and his friend Lord Warburton easily guessed that the woman who walks toward the yard is Mrs. Touchett's niece from America, Isabel Archer. Mr. Touchett and Lord Warburton, they said Isabel as independent woman, a poor woman come from America who lives without the parents and wants to develop herself by knowing another place to place. Isabel as a new comer in that place easily gets big attention from her family and relatives because of her interesting personality and good manner.

Isabel Archer's Financial Independent

Getting a large amount of money makes Isabel being financial independent; she does not need to worry about the future life because she has the money in her purse. This condition also enable her to live more independent than before, now Isabel does not need to think and to search for the man who will love and ready to live with her in the poor condition. This financial independent allows her to choose what kind of man and live will be her choice. Unfortunately Isabel naively falls in love to the man who looks only for the money, Gilbert Osmond.

Isabel : "Do you complain of Mr., Osmond because he's not rich? That just what I like him for. I have fortunately money enough; I've never felt so thankful for it as today. There have been moments when I should like to go and kneel down by your father's grave; he did perhaps a better thing than he knew when he put into my power to marry a poor man – a man who has borne his property with such dignity, with such indifference. Mr. Osmond has never scramble nor struggle- he has cared for no worldly prize." (James: 397)

The freedom of making decision and financial independent of Isabel show here, Isabel view's the wealth of someone is not a thing that she must count, for someone who would be her husband. Here Isabel feels if she is get a big fortune, to inherit fifty thousand dollar from her uncle. It makes Isabel feels so lucky and thinks that she should share it with other people. It is shows Isabel's social sides that care to other people live and she likes to please other. Here is the mistake of Isabel thinking that her uncle gave her money to marry a poor man, in this case Gilbert Osmond, which in Isabel's opinion is a man who does not care about world's prize means money. In fact, Osmond is ambitious materialist man who wants marry her only for the money. While the money is given with the purpose to puts her into a better life, not in a bad one.

Isabel: "I care very much for money, and that's why I wish Mr. Osmond to have little." (James: 385)

From the statement above Isabel declares that she has fortune to care a lot of money in her life which is she never think and wish to have the money. Isabel's life is always in poor condition it is making her always care to other people live. Now Isabel is woman with financial independent, with that independent Isabel has a right to use the money in her ways. Unfortunately in this case she wants to share her fortune with Mr. Osmond who in Isabel's view as a good man who loves her with freedom, instead Osmond purpose is only to get the money from poor Isabel.

Isabel's Decision to Rejects Lord Warburton and Caspar Good Wood

Isabel is physically beautiful and personally interesting woman, it easy to Isabel gets an attention from people near her, but that is not easy to Isabel to receive a man to marry her. Isabel will decide to receive and marries a man that she really loves. Lord Warburton is a friend of Touchett's family, who falls in love to Isabel, and wish to marry her, but Isabel decides to rejects his purpose because of Isabel is not in love with him and she thinks that she is not suitable for Lord Warburton with her class of society. The other man who loves Isabel is Mr. Caspar Good wood, an American man, who had been in love with Isabel but unfortunately, Isabel never receive his love even he comes to England and ensure Isabel about the real love he keeps.

*Isabel : "Very highly indeed, but at the cost of seeming bothtasteless
and ungrateful, I don't think I can marry Lord
Warburton." (James: 167)*

That sentence is what Isabel said about Lord Warburton, a friend of her uncle's family, Isabel thinks that a man with luxury life and lot of heritage but clumsy like Lord Warburton is not a good man for her. She supposes not marry a man that is living in luxury but become to be prisoner by a tradition of high class society. She wants to be exist in this life by making own decision and dedicating his life to the real facts of life, what she needs is just to be appreciated by people surround because of her dedication and decision, not living this life with a rule that forbid her to explore herself in the way she decided.

Isabel's Decision to Go to England

Ralph Touchett, when he is stay in Rome is in dying, he is suffering in his illness. He tries to survive in life to give support and accompany his cousin; Isabel. But Ralph is in very bad condition; however he has to go back to England. Isabel decides to go to England to come in Ralph's funeral even without Osmond Permission, because he does not like if Isabel visits Ralph, for Osmond Ralph is disturbing man in his family life.

*"Yes, it's a generous one," said Isabel, 'and it makes me deeply
ashamed. I ought to go with you, you know.'*

'Your husband wouldn't like that.'

'No. He wouldn't like it. But I might go, all the same.'

*'I'm startled by the boldness of your imagination. Fancy my being a
cause of disagreement between a lady and her husband!'" (James;
550)*

The dialogue above between Ralph and Isabel when Ralph has to go back to England with Caspar and Henrietta because of his bad condition. Isabel is very sad because she cannot go with him, but Ralph is a wise man. He knows that Osmond will not let Isabel goes to England, and Ralph never take it as a big problem, he does not want make Isabel in trouble with her husband, by force her goes together with him. But Isabel has her own thinking that she will go to England even though she knows her husband would not like it. Isabel's sense of freedom brings her to the finest decision of her thought that leaving Rome to comes to England is her right and her duty to dedicates her life to her family.

CONCLUSION

The novel, *The Portrait of a Lady* by Henry James, describes about the conflict between the individual and society by examining the life of Isabel Archer, a young American woman who must choose between her independent spirit and the demands of social

convention (Garrison & Wall, 2016). Inherits amount of money from her uncle Mr. Touchett, Isabel Archer completely become an independent woman. The wealth does not make Isabel turn into an arrogant woman, moreover financially independent makes Isabel falls afraid that she will falls and make mistakes in managing the money. After processing and longing to be an independent woman, autonomous and answerable only to herself, Isabel falls in love with, and marries the sinister Gilbert Osmond, who wants her only for her money and who treats her as an object, almost part of his art collection. Isabel must then decide whether to honor her marriage vows and preserve social property or to leave her miserable marriage and escape to a happier, more independent life, possibly with her American suitor Caspar Goodwood.

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