

# **AGATHA CHRISTIE'S CHARACTERIZATION ANALYSIS THROUGH SOPHIA IN THE NOVEL CROOKED HOUSE**

**Arya Bangbang Puja Suastika, Dra. Meilia Adiana, M.Pd, L. Dyah Purwita Wardani S.W.W, S.S, M.A.**

English Department, Faculty of Letters, University of Jember (UNEJ)

Jln. Kalimantan 37 Jember 68121

E-Mail: meiliaadiana.05@gmail.com

## **Abstrak**

*Crooked House* adalah salah satu novel dari karya Agatha Christie dan dibuat pada tahun 1944. Di dalam penelitian ini difokuskan pada karakter Sophia melalui perwatakan/karakterisasi. Karakterisasi adalah sebuah cara seorang pengarang menggambarkan mengenai tokoh di dalam sebuah novel. Karakterisasi terbagi atas *telling and showing*. Metode yang digunakan adalah induktif. Di dalam penelitian ini menggunakan induktif karena penganalisaannya dimulai dari hal yang spesifik ke umum. Dari hasil penelitian, Sophia sebagai karakter di novel *Crooked House* diceritakan sebagai wanita dari keluarga kaya. Dia tinggal dengan kakeknya yang bernama Aristide Leonides. Kematian kakeknya menyebabkan dia mengalami stress. Dia berusaha mencari tahu mengenai pembunuh kakeknya. Dari hasil investigasi, dia terkejut ketika pembunuhnya adalah adiknya sendiri yang bernama Josephine.

*Kata kunci: novel, karakterisasi, induktif, telling, showing.*

## **Abstract**

The *Crooked House* is one of Agatha Christie's novels and it was written in 1944. In this research, it focuses on the character of Sophia through characterization. Characterization is the way the author describes the character in the novel. It is divided into *telling and showing*. The method uses the inductive. It uses inductive because the analysis is starting from specific to general. Sophia as the character in the novel *Crooked House* is discussed that she comes from a wealthy family. She lives with her grandfather named Aristide Leonides. Her grandfather's death has made her stressed. She tries to find the killer. In her investigation, she is startled because the killer is her own sister named Josephine.

Keywords: novel, characterization, inductive, telling, showing.

## **Introduction**

Literary work is a creative written imagination. Novel is a part of literary work. In the novel, every author has different styles to create the story of his/her own novel. The style of each novel depends on the writer's character life experiences. Agatha Christie's *Crooked House* as the novel of my research is the creation of the author imagination to describe the character in the novel. Literary work can be created from the author biography (Wilbur Scott, 1962:71). It means that the author biography (the author's life) can create a novel because they get some inspirations from their own life experiences. Most of their life experiences can be created from the personal problems of the writers himself through the pattern of their writing. Agatha Christie is the author of the novel *Crooked House* born in Torquay, South Devon, on 15<sup>th</sup> September 1890. She is a popular novelist who has written a number of novels. She writes sixty six literary works and they are

translated into many languages in the world. Most of her works are about detective story. She is also well known as an innovative writer of detective fiction. The reason Agatha Christie is interested to make detective story in her novel because there are many mystery of Agatha Christie's life.

In this study, characterization is the subject analysis of my research. Based on Albertine Minderop (2005:2), characterization is the way the author describes and convey information about the character in the story. She divided characterization by showing and telling. Showing is a characterization that the author's position puts him outside of the story while telling is a characterization that it focuses to give some explanations to the character directly from the author.

In this research, a novel entitled *Crooked House* written by Agatha Christie is chosen. This novel was written in 1949. The story of the novel *Crooked House* describes about a wealthy family in America who has been

killed. The main character of this novel is Sophia Leonides. Sophia is a granddaughter of Leonides. Her parents are Philip and Magda who have three children. They are Sophia, Eustace and the youngest sister, Josephine. Sophia is the eldest sister in her family. She works in Egypt as a fairly high administrative post in the foreign office department toward the end of the war. She comes back to London because she gets information that her grandfather had been killed whereas at that time, she does not know who the killer of her grandfather, Mr Leonides murderer was. This situation makes her anxious because she always thinks that the killer of her grandfather is still inside of her house. From the above brief description about the novel, I would like to focus and more deeply discuss the characterization by Albertine Minderop through Sophia related to Agatha Christie's life. I use Albertine Minderop's and Rene Wellek and Austin Warren because it is relevant to the story in the novel of *Crooked House*.

### Research Design and Methodology

This research uses qualitative method. According to Hancock B, Ockleford E, Windridge K (2007: 6), qualitative method is a research method which focuses on data of non-numerical format or textual data. In this research, the researcher uses qualitative method because the novel of Agatha Christie entitled 'Crooked House' is a textual data not numerical data. Qualitative method is used to explain and explore the information, the data and the fact can be used to strengthen the opinion based on the data collected.

In addition, data collection is an important term to describe a process of collecting and preparing data which is divided into two types of data: primary data and secondary data. The primary data are some dialogues about Sophia in the novel *Crooked House* by Agatha Christie. The secondary data are some relevant information from books, internet, journal articles and previous researches.

The processes of this research are divided into three steps. First, the data are collected from books, internet, journal articles and the previous researches. Second, the researcher are finding the gap of knowledge from several previous researches. Third, it uses suitable theory relating to the issue discussed, that are the characterization by Albertine Minderop and the extrinsic approaches about literature and biography by Rene Wellek and Austin Warren.

In analyzing the data, the proposed research uses inductive method analysis. The researcher uses inductive analysis in the novel "Crooked House" by Agatha Christie because the process of the analysis is starting from specific to general (Hornby, 1989:636). The analysis will be started by providing specific information about the characterization through Sophia moving to the analysis about the result of characterization analysis related to Agatha Christie's life experiences through her biography. The *Crooked House's* novel is analyzed in the following steps: first steps, the researcher analyzes the characterization analysis of Sophia through telling and showing in the novel *Crooked House*.

The second step, it analyzes the result of characterization analysis related to Agatha Christie's life experiences through her biography. And the last, drawing conclusion based on the process of the analysis.

### Result

From the data of Agatha Christie's characterization analysis through Sophia in the novel *Crooked House*, it is found that the characterization include telling and showing are the important way for Agatha Christie as the author of the novel *Crooked House* to describe about Sophia's character.

It is an important way because Sophia's character in the novel *Crooked House* can be revealed from the reader's interpretation (showing) and Agatha Christie herself (telling). It means that the story will not make the reader bored to read the novel *Crooked House* because Agatha Christie also gives a chance to the reader to reveal the character of Sophia. In this research, it is also found that the story in the novel *Crooked House* has been related to Agatha Christie's life experiences. There many words that Agatha Christie used in her novel *Crooked House*. The words mystery, distress, murder, England, Egypt, marriage, wealthy family, Agatha's family, hotel and poison are the examples of Agatha Christie's life experiences that it is also described in Agatha Christie's novel *Crooked House*, although those words do not totally describe about the truth of Agatha Christie's life experiences.

### Analysis

The analysis in the novel *Crooked House* by Agatha Christie analyzes about Sophia's character through telling and showing then it is related to Agatha Christie's life experiences. The explanation as follows:

- Telling

As the definition, telling is the way of the author to give some explanations to the character directly (Minderop, 2005:8). From the analysis using telling in the novel *Crooked House*, Agatha Christie tells directly about the character of Sophia. Agatha Christie tells that Sophia is a kind and humorous person. She is a wealthy family that she lives at Swinly Dean, England. She has a good position as an high administrative post in one of the Foreign Office Departments in Egypt. She comes back to England because she heard that her grandfather died. In this situation, it makes her broken down, stressed and scared with her family problem. In this case, Agatha Christie tells that Sophia has a good partner. Her partner name is Charles. Charles position in this novel is a supporting character that Agatha Christie describes him as a friend of Sophia. Indeed, Charles is a person that he loves her very much and he wants to marry Sophia. Sophia does not accept Charles's love because she still wants to know about the killer of her grandfather. From the investigation, Sophia has found that Josephine is the killer of her own grandfather.

- Showing

Showing is the way of the author that he or she gives a chance to the readers to make some interpretation to reveal the character in the story (Minderop, 2005:22). To analyze the character in the story through showing, it can be identified from the character's intonation in the dialogue, the stress of the sound, and the facial expression of the character in the story. As the analysis in the novel *Crooked House*, the character of Sophia shows that Sophia has a complicated problem in her life. Although, there are many problems inside of her family, she tries to keep calm down and relax. She can be calm down and relax because she has a friend, Charles. In this position, Charles is a person that he wants to help the problem of Sophia's family especially the killer of Sophia's grandfather. The analysis shows that Sophia is always afraid and anxious with her problem. She feels not comfortable with the situation around of her house because she does not know about the killer of her grandfather. She is always suspicious with someone inside of her house. She has talked to Charles that she is suspicious with Brenda, Aunt Edith and Laurance. Although, in fact, Sophia's guess is totally wrong. The killer of her grandfather is her own little sister, Josephine. After she got the truth of the killer of her grandfather's death, she feels between happy and unhappy. She is happy because she knows the truth about the killer and she is also unhappy because the killer of her grandfather is her own little sister (Josephine). In the end, Sophia accepts to marry Charles.

- Agatha Christie's life experiences

The novel *Crooked House* has related to Agatha Christie's life experiences. The life experiences of Agatha Christie can be found from her biography. In Agatha Christie's biography, there are some words that her life experiences influence her novel *Crooked House*. The examples of Agatha Christie's life experiences can be identified from the words that Agatha Christie had written in her novel *Crooked House* such as the words: mystery, distress, murder, England, Egypt, marriage, wealthy family, Agatha's family, hotel and poison. Agatha Christie uses those words because she is inspired from her life experiences. For the examples the words England, poison, murder are always used in her novel *Crooked House*. She uses the word England because Agatha Christie was born in Devon, England. This situation influences the setting place of her novel *Crooked House*. In addition the words poison and murder are the important life experiences for Agatha Christie.

“During WWI Agatha worked as a nurse, tending to the ill and injured, many who were displaced Belgians. Their bewilderment and personal sorrows affected her deeply. She amassed a great deal of knowledge about sicknesses and poisons such as strychnine and ricin that she often featured in her novels.”([http://www.onlineliterature.com/agatha\\_christie/](http://www.onlineliterature.com/agatha_christie/))

This quotation is the proof that Agatha Christie has worked as a nurse when it was World War I. From her works, she gets a lot of information about poison. She has the knowledge about poison because there were many soldiers's death in the World War I caused by poison.

“But you know, Charles, I don't like it. I don't like the feeling that someone—someone in this house—someone I see and speak to every day is a cold-blooded, calculating poisoner....” (Christie,2011:124-125)

This situation makes Agatha Christie always use the words poison and murder in the novel *Crooked House* because it comes from her own life experiences. It means that Agatha Christie's life experiences has influenced her novel *Crooked House*.

### Conclusion

The novel *Crooked House* is an interesting detective story. Agatha Christie as the author of the novel *Crooked House* is a famous novelist. She is a famous novelist because she always makes a combination between detective and romantic story in her novel *Crooked House*. In this research, characterization analysis through telling and showing are used. Telling and showing characterization are the way of the author to describe the character in his/her novel especially *Crooked House*. In Agatha Christie's *Crooked House*, the researcher focuses on the character of Sophia. As the analysis through telling and showing, Agatha Christie describes that Sophia is a kind person with other people. Although she is a kind person, she is also described as a mysterious person. She is a mysterious person because Sophia does not like if somebody knows about her problem. Agatha Christie tells that Sophia is a wealthy family but she never feels happy because she is under the protection of her grandfather. Agatha Christie also shows that Sophia is an anxious, suspicious and emotional person. Sophia feels anxious, suspicious and emotional because Sophia has a problem about her grandfather's death. After the problem of Sophia's family is solved, Agatha Christie tries to make the story happy ending through Sophia's marriage with Charles.

Telling and showing are the important aspect to describe the character in the story. As the explanation before, telling is the way of the author to tell the story directly about the character, then showing is the way of the author to give a chance to the reader to reveal the character through the intonation in the dialogue, the stress of the sound, and the facial expression of the character. In the novel *Crooked House*, Agatha Christie is a good writer to describe the character. It is a good writer because she can combine between telling and showing about the character in the story *Crooked House*. From the combination between telling and showing, it makes the reader does not feel bored to read the novel *Crooked House*. It cannot be bored

because the reader has a chance to make some interpretations about the character of Sophia. In addition, the dialogue of the novel *Crooked House* through telling and showing, there are some correlations with Agatha Christie's life experiences. There are many words can be found in her novel *Crooked House*. The words "mystery, distress, murder, England, Egypt, marriage, wealthy family, Agatha's family, hotel and poison" are the examples of Agatha Christie's life experiences in Agatha Christie's novel *Crooked House*, although those words do not totally describe about the truth of Agatha Christie's life experiences. It means that Agatha Christie's life experiences inspire her in composing her novel *Crooked House*.

### Acknowledgements

My sincere affection to the following people who always in favor for giving hands until this thesis is completed: Dr. Hairus Salikin, M. Ed., the Dean of Faculty of Letters and Dra. Supiastutik, M.Pd, the Head of English Department for giving us a chance and permission to construct article.

### Bibliography

- Christie, A. 2011. *Crooked House*. Harper Collins Publishers Inc.
- Hornby, A.S. 1989. *Oxford Advance Learner's Dictionary of Current English*. Oxford University Press
- Minderop, Albertine. 2005. *Metode Karakterisasi Telaah Fiksi*. Jakarta: Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia
- Scott, W S. 1962. *Five Approaches of Literary Criticism: An Arrangement of Contemporary Critical Essay*. London: Collier Macmillan Publishers.
- Wellek, R and Austen W. 1956. *The Theory Of Literature*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company.
- Merriman, C.D. 2007. *Agatha Christie biography*. ([http://www.onlineliterature.com/agatha\\_christie/](http://www.onlineliterature.com/agatha_christie/). 19 December 2014)
- Hancock B., Windridge K., and Ockleford E. 2007. An Introduction to Qualitative Research. The NIHR RDS EM / YH. URL ([http://www.rdsyh.nihr.ac.uk/wpcontent/uploads/2013/05/5\\_Introduction-to-qualitative-research-2009.pdf](http://www.rdsyh.nihr.ac.uk/wpcontent/uploads/2013/05/5_Introduction-to-qualitative-research-2009.pdf), 6 July 2014)