A Study on Characterization of the Main Character in “The Fault in Our Stars”

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Abstract

This research analyzes The Fault in Our Stars, a novel by Green (2012). The Fault in Our Stars is one of Green’s novels that reflect the reality of life. This research focuses on the personalities of Hazel and August, the main characters of the novel. The author took from (Djasi, 2000) as the framework of the main character characterization. The design of this study was a descriptive qualitative study. The aim of this study is to see Hazel’s and August’s personalities as the main character of The Fault in Our Stars. By examining the character dialog and quotes of the novel, and related issues on the topic are taken from printed and online including journal, books, and magazine. In order to achieve the goal of this study the researcher applied theory of character and characterization. Some characteristics that represent Hazel's and August's character traits are: depressed, books lover, fighter, stubborn, chivalrous, kind, and loyal. Besides characterization of the main characters this thesis also represents the theme of this novel that is fighting for life.

Keywords: Characterization, character, the fault in our stars, novel.

1. INTRODUCTION

There are several ways in expressing ideas especially in a literary work. There is a literary work that brings us to the world of dreams and takes us away from reality. It has to be contrasted with a literary work that needs our interpretation. Literature is a product of creative activity it is an art (Welleck and Warren, 1956). According to Jones (1986) literature, in it broaden sense includes all written materials. Literary works include prose, poetry, drama, and novel. Novel is a part of prose form beside short story. Many people read novel and short story. A novel expresses some aspect of human’s love and existence. Because novel talks about human activities and describes what happened in society, so it is written in long composition.
Novel is generally thought of as containing about forty five thousand words or more (Kenney, 1966). Therefore novel is a kind of longer narrative than short story and novella. *The Fault in Our Stars* novel is a work of fiction that created through the various elements of intrinsic. *The Fault in Our Stars* was first published in 2012. Since the novel was published, it has a positive response from the readers. In this novel John Green gives the readers a lot of life experience and also mixed with romance, comedy, and human spirit.

Based on explanation above, the writer interested to analyze *The Fault in Our Stars* novel. In this study the writer wants to limit the problem on the main character characterization of this novel. Through this novel, we can learn about life, love, and human spirit. On the previous study which research about characterization (Napitupulu, 2010) state that the main character characterization has a dynamic character. According to (Holman and Harmon, 1986) a dynamic character is the one modified by actions and experiences and one objective of the work in which the character appears to reveal the consequences of the actions. The research about the main character characterization rarely has been studied. In this research, the writer does not only discuss about the main character characterization, but also about the theme which delivered by the character itself. Therefore, this research intends to fill in this gap.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Novel

Literally, novel come from a word “Novella” in Italian vocabulary, which is in Latin means *Novus* or newly. Definitely, novel is story regarding remarkable event or occurrence of someone’s life. According to (Sumarjo, 1991) novel is story in form of prose in wide of size measure. Wide of measure here can mean story with part, which is complex, immeasurable story atmosphere and immeasurable the story setting also. In creating a novel, imaginary factor is important in supporting the plot of the story. The story itself will depend on the brilliant factor in order to decide whether it can be logically accepted or not. In order to make an interesting story of the novel, the intellectual and imagination is strongly needed at the same time. (Taylor, 1981) also says that novel is a prose work of quiet some length and complexity which attempt to reflect and express something of the quality value of human experience or conduct. A novel according to (Reeve, 1985) is novel a picture of real and manners and of the time in which it was written.

2.2 Character

A character is a figure that appears in a literary work such as novel, poetry and drama (Barnet, 1988). Normally, a story consists of several characters one or more of this characters. One or more of this character appears as the main or primary character. Character is people who are appeared in a narrative prose or novel and it is interpreted by the readers as a person who has moral quality and certain tendency such as being expressed in what they say and what they do (Abrams, 1982). Character is the person who can contribute to a story in several ways (Dickinson, 1996). In his book, *Aspect of The Novel*, Foster differentiates flat character from round character. A flat character has a steady characteristic, which means that the characteristic does not change from the beginning of story until the
end of story. Meanwhile, a round character is changing, means that there is a difference of the characteristic at the end of story (Foster, 1954).

2.3 Characterization

Characterization is describing the physical and mental behaviors of the characters (Djasi, 2000). In the previous novel, it was the author who described the characteristics (physical and mental behaviors) of the characters. In majority of cases, the author would introduce new characters before they appeared in the story. Nowadays characterization is done indirectly through dialogues or conversations. In other word, the characters’ characterization is known through the dialogues among them. According to (Nurgiyantoro, 1955) state that characterization is a figure or people's character who is put forward in narrative work which interpret by the readers having a moral quality and certain tendency through dialogues and their behavior.

There are two kinds of characterization; there is direct characterization and indirect characterization. Direct characterization tells the audience what the personality of the character is whereas indirect characterization shows things that reveal the personality of character. The readers assume that direct characterization is easier to understand than indirect characterization. It is simply because indirect characterization is more complicated than direct characterization. On the other side indirect characterization can make us specifically know about the character in a novel or story.

A theme is a subject of discourse and discussion (Aziz, 2015). A theme, seen from a different angle, is the reason why the author writes a story. In abroad divisions, a theme may be based on violence, vengeance, religious conflict, love, hatred, and struggle for life.

3. METHODS

This research is a content analysis, using analytical approach. It draws on the data collected by the researcher to make sense of the human behavior within the research context. Analytical Approach aims to finding the idea. As (Aminudin, 1987) said that the analytical approach attempts to comprehend ideas, delivering idea and the attitude of the author in presenting his idea. The result of this research is presented in the form of the main character characterization in the fault in our stars novel.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Finding of Characterization

The main character in this novel is Hazel Grace and Augustus Waters. The role played by Hazel and August is not only important but dominant. To know the main characters characterization of this novel, the writer will enlist their characters characterization according to direct and indirect characterization and the writer mainly identify the characterization of the main characters in this novel through paragraph and the dialogues.

Hazel is one of the main character in this novel. She is 16 years old and she has thyroid cancer (a rare type of cancer that affects the thyroid gland, a small gland at
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the base of the neck (Americadictionary.com). After reading and analyzing this novel, the writer found Hazel characterization.

It can be seen that characterization Hazel has depressed characteristic. Hazel rarely left the house and spent almost of her free time to thinking about death. She thinks that depression is not a side effect of cancer but depression is a side effect of dying.

E1. “...my mother decided I was depressed, presumably because I rarely left the house, spent quite a lot of time in bed, read the same book over and over, ate frequently, and devoted quite a bit of my abundant free time thinking about death.” (the fault in our stars, 2012, p. 13)

In conversation between Hazel and her mom, we also can see Hazel depression characteristic. She does not want to attends cancer support group and because of it her mom compelling her. She wants her daughter to socialize with the others.

Me : If you want me to be teenager, don’t send me to Support Group. Buy me a fake ID so I can go to clubs, drink vodka, and take pot.” (the fault in our stars, 2012, p. 7)

Hazel loves books. Her favorite book is “An Imperial Affliction” which is a novel by Peter Van Houthen and she always reads it over and over again.

E3. “It wasn’t even that the book was so good or anything. It was just that the author, Peter Van Houten, seemed to understand me in weird and impossible ways. An Imperial Affliction was my book, in the way my body was my body and my thoughts were my thoughts” (the fault in our stars, 2012, p. 34)

From the monologue above, we can definitely found why Hazel loves that book, but not only about the book, she also found herself has interested on it because of the author itself, Peter Van Houten. Hazel thought that the author can understand her well through the book’s story. As we know Hazel is thyroid cancer survivor and to fight for her life she should always bring a lung tub wherever she went, to help her breathe properly.

E4. “The cylindrical green tank only weighed a few pounds, and I had this little steel cart to wheel it around behind me. It delivered two liters of oxygen to me each minute though a cannula, a transparent tube that split just beneath my neck, wrapped behind my ears, and then reunited in my nostrils. The contraption was necessary because my lungs sucked at being lungs.” (the fault in our stars, 2012, p. 8)

Hazel also struggling to meet her favorite author, she made some efforts and one of Hazel efforts is sending an email to Peter Van Houten. After she had sent the mail and never got a reply, she finally ventured to write an email again. Stubbornly Hazel wanted to go to Amsterdam to visited Van Houten. Even she not allowed to go because her condition. She wanted to meet Van Houten for the first time and she thought that it is the last chance to meet Van Houten. (the fault in our stars, 2012, p. 115 – 116)

In Peter Van Houten house Hazel asked him about his book and she forced him to answer her questions even he doesnotwants to answer it. The reader can identify it from the conversation between Hazel and Van Houten.

E.5 “I understand that the story ends mid-narrative because Anna dies or becomes too sick to continue, but you said you would tell us what happens to everybody, and that’s why we’re here, and we, I need you to tell me.” Van Houten sighed. After another drink, he said, “very well. Whose story do you seek?”. “Anna’s mom, but surely you must have thought about what happens to them, I earn as characters, I mean independent of their metaphorical meaning or whatever.” I said. “they are fictions,” he said, tapping his glass again. (the fault in our stars, 2012, p. 191)
August Waters is the main character of this novel. He is 18 years old. Before he had Osteosarcoma (a malignant tumor of bone in which there is a proliferation of osteoblast (Americadictionary.com), he is a one of famous basketball player. August is Osteosarcoma survivor. He got it around 16 years old and he lost his right leg because of it. They meet each other in cancer support group.

Before they went to Amsterdam, Hazel went into the ICU and before that August started to feel ache in his hip. When inspected turned out to be, cancer has spread his body and required him to treated. But he does not care about his illness and he chose to go with Hazel to Amsterdam. August also hides his illness from Hazel and he told Hazel during their last day in Amsterdam. We can identify it from conversation between August and Hazel.

August is a kind guy. He always makes Hazel Grace laugh and cheerful ever since they met in cancer support group. From chapter one of this novel the readers can identify this. We can see in their first meeting, Hazel receives two surprises from Augustus. The first, Hazel earn praise from him and the second is August invited her to his house.

August is a loyal person, especially with his best friend, Isaac. He want gave everything for Isaac just for his forgotten about his broke heart with his ex-girlfriend, Monica. Even he allowed his best friend for breaking his precious trophy. He can give everything even his precious things. Not only with his best friend, August is also a loyal person to Hazel. He sends an email to Van Houten assistant and he told about Hazel. He got replay from Van Houten via his assistant email account.

4.2 The Theme of the Character
The character is a basic element in a work of literature and deserves to study because the character is the important part of novel. The character also causes all sorts of events in the story. To describe the character in the novel, the researcher refers to the theory from Robert Stanton. According to Stanton (1965), the figures refer to the characters contained in the story. In The Fault in Our Stars novel, it has three characters that have been examined to support the theme of this novel; it is fighting for life.

Hazel is the main character and also narrator in this novel. Hazel is a thyroid cancer survivor and survives with a weak lung condition. Therefore, to fight for her life, she should always to bring lung tub wherever she went to help her breathe well. This is indicated by the thought of her through a narrative of the story. The next struggle of her life can be seen when she told August about how to she has a neck surgery and chemotherapy when she 14 years old. From the story above we can see how to Hazel struggling to fight cancer, trying to fight against the reality of life, and struggle against her own fear.

August Waters is a man who lost his right leg cause osteosarcoma. He cannot drive well because his leg was amputated and replaced with an artificial leg. He also told Hazel that he did not pass the driving test in three times. This is evidence that he never give up to trying and keep fighting for drive a car well, although he has always failed the driving test.
4.3 Discussion

The title of this novel is inspired by a famous play by Shakespeare and with the title is Julius Caesar. Nobleman in the nobleman Cassius says to Brutus: "dear Brutus, the fault is not in our stars, But in ourselves". The meaning of this quote is the fault is not in your fate but you who made it happen and for this novel title “the fault in our stars” the author has opposite meaning. In this novel the fault in our stars meaning is not your choice if you got a short lives and the world is a profoundly unjust place in which suffering is unfairly distributed.

From the main characters (Hazel and August) the author wants to convey the message by the title of his book. The first is the struggles in life and with cancer. This novel portrayed the battles with cancer in which the main characters are the ones who struggle with cancer. Hazel deals with her lung cancer that is showing no sign of improvement and Augustus struggles with his cancer returning. They don’t let cancer stop them from living their lives, they go out and make to best of their situation. They support and care each other.

The second messages are Love triumphs through hardship. Augustus and Hazel have an epic love story. They bring out the best in each other. Augustus shows Hazel that there is more to life than staying at home at letting the cancer consume her. Hazel brings the light back into Augustus’s life. When Augustus had to stop playing basketball he felt that there was something missing, and that is when he met Hazel. It doesn’t take long for these to friends to fall in love. Together they are unbeatable, and won’t let anything bring them down. In the story Hazel and Augustus go through some hard times, in the story Hazel passed out from overexertion and was admitted into the hospital. August had to battle with his Osteoscarcoma returning. In each of these situations the two lovers were sitting by each other side every step of the way.

The last is coping with the death of a loved one. At the end of the book Hazel is forced to cope with the death of Augustus. She feels that she was robbed of the chance to have a soul mate to grow old with. Hazel forces herself to put on a strong face and be there to support Augustus' family, even though she is depressed and feels that she lost the love of her life.

This novel is told on the perspective of Hazel. The author chooses Hazel as the narrator to show readers the fight that people with cancer experienced. Hazel struggled with her psychological and social problem describes as indifferent, depressed, selfish, and over idolized a person (Peter Van Houten).

From the result of this study the researcher find out four characteristics based on Hazel characterization (depressed, book lover, stubborn, and a fighter) meanwhile August has opposite characteristic from Hazel. The researcher finds out three characteristics based on August characterization (kind, loyal, and chivalrous). Hazel has the dynamic characteristic. Her personalities change after meet August.

According to Fata et al. (2016) a character may also be either static or dynamic. A static character is the one, a little if not at all that changes. The pattern of action reveals the character rather than showing the character changing in response to the action. This kind of character remains the same sort of person up to the end of story. A dynamic character is the one modified by actions and experiences and one objective of the work in which the character appears to reveal the consequences of the actions.
In this study, the researcher also finds out the theme delivered by the characters. The theme in this novel is fighting for life. Based on the research result we can see the proof that they are struggling for life, as they fight cancer to survive.

5. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The main characters of this novel are Hazel and August. In this novel Hazel described as a depressed girl. She rarely left her house. She always reads the same book over and over, eats infrequently, and use quite a bit of her abundant free time to thinking about death. August is a kind guy. He is very friendly and cheerful.

As the main character of the novel, Hazel and August possesses some characteristics. Hazel Grace personalities are depressed, books lover, fighter, and stubborn. Her personality is dynamic. It means that her personalities change. Her personalities change into a tough girl and cheerful person since she knew August. Augustus Waters had opposite characteristic of Hazel. In this novel he is described as chivalrous, kind, and a loyal person. August character has a positive effect for Hazel character growth.

*The Fault in Our stars* has a theme of struggling for life. The theme illustrated by the character. This novel is told that the characters are cancer survivor and how their deal with their lives. Through *The Fault in Our Stars*, we can learn about life. Through *The Fault in Our stars* the researcher hopes that the readers may get benefit and wisdom of life. From the novel we can learn the importance of struggling for life and should always be thankful with what we have in our lives.

In this study the researcher has analyzed about the characterization of the main character and theme of this novel illustrated by the character. The researcher believed that this novel has much more interesting topic to be described by the future researchers. It is possible for the next researcher to discuss the moral messages and they can also discuss about Peter Van Houten, the writer asserted bad characterization many times in this novel. Briefly, there are countless topics to be discussed by the future researcher in *The Fault in Our Stars* novel by John Green.

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