

**TENSIONS BETWEEN EUROPEAN AND AMERICAN BELIEFS AND
VALUES, REFLECTED IN HENRY JAMES' *THE PORTRAIT OF A LADY*:
A SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH**



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by

HERI SUSANTO

A 320 050 332

**SCHOOL OF TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION
MUHAMMADIYAH UNIVERSITY OF SURAKARTA**

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APPROVAL

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HERI SUSANTO
A 320 050 332

Approved to be examined by Consultant Team:

Consultant I

Consultant II

(Drs. M. Thoyibi, M.S.)

(Titis Setyabudi, S.S.)

ACCEPTANCE

TENSIONS BETWEEN EUROPEAN AND AMERICAN BELIEFS AND
VALUES, REFLECTED IN HENRY JAMES' *THE PORTRAIT OF A LADY*:

A SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH

Accepted by the Board of Examiners
School of Teacher Training and Education
Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta
On May 19th, 2009

Teams of Examiners:

1. **Drs. M. Thoyibi, M.S.** ()
Chair Person
2. **Titis Setyabudi, S.S.** ()
Secretary
3. **Dra. Dwi Haryanti, M.Hum.** ()
Member

The Dean of Teacher Training and Education Faculty

Drs. H. Sofyan Anif, M. Si.
NIK.547

MOTTO



"From those I trust God guard me, from those I convinced I will guard myself." - hé@i



"Hold fast to your culture."



*"Beauty is only skin deep, but it is a valuable asset if you are poor or have not any sense." - Kin Hubbard (1868-1930)
American Humorist, Journalist*



"Make use of the sun while it shines and Set your sail according to the wind."



DEDICATION

Wholeheartedly, dedicated to:

❖ **KNOWLEDGE**

❖ **MY BELOVED FAMILY**

❖ **MY HALF OF ME**

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I realize that this research paper is not perfect yet. In order to make the research paper better, I welcome any comments, criticisms, and suggestions. I expect that this research paper will be useful for people to analyze Henry James' The Portrait of A Lady and increase the readers' knowledge related to literary studies.

Wassalammu'alaikum Wr. Wb.

Surakarta, May, 2009

The Writer

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SUMMARY

HERI SUSANTO. A. 320 050 332. TENSIONS BETWEEN EUROPEAN AND AMERICAN BELIEFS AND VALUES, REFLECTED IN HENRY JAMES' *THE PORTRAIT OF A LADY*: A SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH. MUHAMMADIYAH UNIVERSITY OF SURAKARTA. RESEARCH PAPER. 2009.

This study elaborates Americans struggle in surviving their life in new society which is different at all. The aim of the study is describing the tension between American and European beliefs and values in literature.

The study employs the qualitative method. The object of the study is Henry James' novel, *The Portrait of A Lady*. The theoretical approach employed is the sociology of literature that presupposes the close relationship between work and the social reality underlying the creation of the work. There are two types of data sources, first is primary data and as an objects that is Henry James' novel, *The Portrait of A Lady*, meanwhile the secondary data is any literature related to this sources in a sort of document as evidence. The dates are collected by descriptive and hermeneutic techniques.

The outcome of the study shows the following conclusions: 1) Beside reflects social reality, through this work the author also criticizes the subject matter of his society which is reflected in structural elements of the work.; and 2) *The Portrait of A Lady* novel shows there is tension between two different cultures especially in social belief and value system that result confused personality. In this novel Henry James criticizes against the social values of American society that is inferior in Europe. He proposes that American should be proud with their social status and their own culture.

Key word: tensions, beliefs and values, American and European, *The Portrait of A Lady*, Sociological analysis.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

A literary work is a meaningful object; it is more than a product of author in written form. Literature represents life and life in large measure is social reality (Welek and Warren, 1962: 82). It means that a literary work represents the condition of society when the work is created. Based on the Sociology of literature perspective, work is not only as a result of writer imagination, but rather a fact of social condition which reflects social reality, beliefs and values system, norms, and customs trough the writer lives.

Every society has its own thought about life. The thought about life always appears based on the convention of the members which becomes their culture. Groups, societies, or cultures have beliefs and values that are largely shared by their members. The values identify those objects, conditions or characteristics that members of the society consider important. In the United States, for example, values might include material comfort, wealth, competition, individualism or religiosity. The values of a society can often be identified by noting which people receive honor or respect. For example, the voters in the United States would be reluctant to elect an atheist as a president, suggesting that belief in God is a value.

Novel, as one of literary works, is a means of an author to express societies' thought about the beliefs and values as the elements of social culture

by means of language. It is because literary work as a conception of imitation implies a view of literature on a reflection of society (Laurenson and Swingewood, 1972: 23). In this case the author presents the society's feelings, thoughts, ideas, and experiences in the written form. It can be said; therefore, that almost literary works are written by the author based on the reality and condition of the time when and where the work is created, where the beliefs and values live as part of culture that also intrinsically live in all aspect of society.

Henry James is one of famous author with many masterpieces. He was born in New York City on April 15, 1843. His father, also named Henry, was a minister who had inherited wealth. In 1876, at the age of thirty-three, James moved permanently to England; he eventually became a British citizen. (Brownstein in Henry James, 2004: vi). The meeting of American and European cultures is the dominant theme in his works. James is considered a master of the novel form and one of the leading practitioners of realism. The contrast between the American character and the European character is a theme that appears throughout James's work. This is not surprising, since it is a contrast he observed throughout his life as an American who spent most of his adulthood in Europe. According to James, "Americans tend to be naive, energetic, practical, sincere, direct, and spontaneous, and they value the individual above society. Conversely, Europeans are sophisticated, lethargic, formal, insincere, obtuse, and scheming, and they value society above the individual." (Henry James in *The Portrait of A Lady*, 2004: x). These contrasts

become interest in studying the tension between European and American beliefs and values.

Although best known as a novelist, James was also a prolific and respected writer of short stories, plays, criticism, and travel essays. As was common at the time, many of his novels were serialized in magazines before they were published as books. *The Portrait of a Lady*, first published in 1881, is widely considered the best of his early novels. Other lasting novels of this period include *The Europeans* (1878) and *The Bostonians* (1886). Still-popular later works include *The Wings of the Dove* (1902) and *The Ambassadors* (1903); James himself considered the latter his masterpiece. ([http://pinkmonkey.com/booknote/monkeynotes/pm The Portrait of A Lady 01.asp](http://pinkmonkey.com/booknote/monkeynotes/pm%20The%20Portrait%20of%20A%20Lady%2001.asp)).

The Portrait of a Lady is a novel by Henry James, first published as a serial in the *Atlantic Monthly* and Macmillan's magazine in 1880 – 1881 and the first book edition was published in 1881. Physically it consists of: volume I, 266; volume II, 253; volume III, 248. *The Portrait of a Lady*, an authoritative text, Henry James and the Novel, reviews and criticism edited by Robert Bamberg, New York: W.W.Norton Company 2003. (Brownstein in Henry James, 2004: xv). It is encouraging this study will analyzes *The Portrait of A Lady* novel published in 2004 by Barnes and Noble Classics, New York, with new introduction by Gabriel Brownstein.

The Portrait of A Lady was turned into a film in 1996 by New Zealand director Jane Campion, starring Nicola Kidman as Isabel, John Malcovich as Osmond and Barbara Hershey as Madame Merle. In 1998, British Broadcasting Company (BBC) produced a television mini series version of *The Portrait of A Lady*, starring Suzanne Neve as Isabel and Richard Chamberlain as Ralph Tauchett. (Kidman in Henry James, 2004: 623). The movie got lukewarm reviews as talky and involving.

The Portrait of A Lady is often discussed as a novel of manners, a sociological study of the contrasts in more and styles of Americans and Europeans. The tension between Americans and Europeans beliefs and values are became interest points to be studied. Beliefs serve as the storage system for the content of past experiences, including thoughts, memories, and interpretations of events. One of important functions of belief systems is that the basis of our values (Brown, 1986: 57). All characters have rounded characterization and each character has different qualities that reflect the author's social culture where beliefs and values live.

Generally regarded as the masterpiece of his early phase of writing, this novel reflects James's absorbing interest in the differences between the New World and the Old. ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry James' The Portrait of A Lady](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry_James%27_The_Portrait_of_A_Lady)). It treats in a profound way the themes of personal freedom, responsibility, betrayal, and sexuality. Further we can find author's beliefs and values especially those reflected in the sociologist studies in one or where

specialties such as social organization, social stratification, racial mobility, education, or family.

The Portrait of a Lady has been the subject of critical since its first publication in the pages of *The Atlantic Monthly* and it remains the most popular of James' fictions. Contemporary critics recognized that James had pushed the analysis of human consciousness and motivation to new levels, particularly in such passages as the famous Chapter 42, where Isabel meditates deep into the night about her marriage and the trap she seems to have fallen into ([http://pinkmonkey.com/booknote/monkeynotes/pm The Portrait of A Lady 01.asp](http://pinkmonkey.com/booknote/monkeynotes/pm%20The%20Portrait%20of%20A%20Lady%2001.asp)). James celebrated this brilliant and moving account of Isabel's deepest terrors in his preface to the New York Edition version of the novel. Edith Wharton, from *A Backward Glance* (1933), comments “Exquisite as the early novels are – and in point of perfection none can touch *The Portrait of A Lady* – yet measured by what was to come Henry James, when he wrote them, had but skimmed the surface of life and of his art.” (*The Portrait of A Lady*, 2004: 630).

Based on the background above, the writer wants to conduct a study entitled **Tensions between European and American Beliefs and Values, Reflected in Henry James' *The Portrait Of A Lady*: A Sociological Approach.**

B. Literature Review

The first previous study, which relates to the research, is the research done by Mahera (2008), titled “Beliefs and Values in Kurt Cobain’s Lyrics of Nirvana’s Songs: Sociological Approach.” The research concludes that Kurt Cobain’s Lyrics of Nirvana’s Songs contain beliefs and values of the author that the readers should appreciate the norms and system of beliefs and values that are reflected in Kurt Cobain’s Lyrics such as divorce, drugs, free sex, and suicide.

The second is research which was done by Hanik (2007) “Woman’s Position in Henry James’ *The Portrait of A Lady*: A Feminist Perspective”. There are three outcomes from the research: 1.) *The Portrait of A Lady* reflects the social reality of American society in the late of 19th Century. 2.) Henry James is the opponent of liberal feminism for he creates a heroine in his novel. 3.) Henry James tries to assure the readers that women can not achieve equal position with men.

In this study the writer wants to conduct a study on Henry James’ *The Portrait of A Lady* based on the sociological perspective, entitled “Tensions between European and American Beliefs and Values, Reflected in Henry James’ *The Portrait Of A Lady*: Sociological Approach. The writer focuses on reflection of the societies’ beliefs and values in *The Portrait of A Lady* novel. Of course this research is different to previous researches and not done yet at least in Surakarta Muhammadiyah University.

C. Problem of the Study

Based on the background, the problem is how the tensions between European and American beliefs and values reflected in Henry James' *The Portrait of A Lady* analyzed in sociological approach.

D. Objective of the study

The objectives of the study are:

1. To analyze the novel based on the structural elements,
2. To analyze the tensions between European and American beliefs and values which are reflected in Henry James' *The Portrait of A Lady* based on sociological approach.

E. Limitation of the Study

The study focuses on the structural elements and the European and American beliefs and values which are reflected in Henry James' *The Portrait of A Lady* in sociological approach.

F. Benefit of the Study

The benefits expected from this research are as follows:

1. Theoretical benefit: to give some contributions to the larger body in knowledge or the development of knowledge particularly studies in Henry James' *The Portrait of A Lady*.
2. Practical benefit: to give deeper understandings in literary field as the reference to the other researcher, and enriches the literary study, particularly among the students especially on Surakarta Muhammadiyah University.

G. Research Method

1. Type of the Study

The type of the study is qualitative or library study, which data are based on non-human sources, especially the printed material. It is qualitative because it describes the tensions between European and American beliefs and values which are reflected in Henry James' *The Portrait of A Lady* in description text.

2. Object of the study

The object of the research is beliefs and values reflected in Henry James' *The Portrait of A Lady*.

3. Type of data and the data source

The data in this research is taken from the novel that consists of words, phrases, and sentences.

The data sources in this research are literary data, which are divided into two categories:

- a. Primary data, the data are taken from the novel of *The Portrait of a Lady* by Henry James, that published by Barnes and Noble Classics, Inc., 2004, New York.
- b. Secondary data, the data are taken from some references related to the research by picking up either from book or internet.

4. Method of Collecting Data

The method of the data collection is done through documentation or library research. There are some steps of collecting data:

- a. Reading and comprehending the novel for the first understanding,
- b. Reading for collecting and taking notes of the information in both primary and secondary data,
- c. Arranging the data into several information group based on its classifications,
- d. Analyzing the data based on sociological approach,
- e. Developing the data provided.

5. Technique of the Data Analysis

For analyzing the novel, the researcher uses descriptive analysis technique. It is begun with analyzing the structural elements and then sociological analysis.

H. Research Organization

This study consists of six chapters. *Chapter I* is introduction, which involves the research background, literary review, research problem, research objective, research limitation, research benefit, research methodology, and the last is research organization. *Chapter II* comprises of the underlying theory, which presents notion of sociology of literature, notion of beliefs and values, structural elements of the novel, and theoretical application. *Chapter III* is American social background in the nineteenth century. *Chapter IV* is structural analysis of the novel, which involves the analysis of character and characterization, setting, point of view, plot, style, theme and discussion. *Chapter V* constitutes sociological analysis of the novel. The last is *Chapter VI* contains conclusion and discussion.