CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

The Victorian Era happened in a time of the Industrial Revolution. Technological and industrial developments were so rapid that the financial sector grew significantly. Those economical developments created a massive urbanization because people from small cities came to big cities to look for job opportunities in England. Not only that, the effect of the Industrial Revolution was the increase of population in the urban area. Due to the increase of population in the urban area and the lack of job opportunities, a lot of parents forced their children "to work in factories and mines so that they [could] help their family finances even though their children [were] only given a small wage" ("Victorian Era Factories during Industrial Revolution, Living Conditions, Child Labor, Machinery").

Charles Dickens was one of the prominent British novelists in the Victorian era. Dickens was born into a wealthy family, but after his father went to jail because he was unable to pay his debt, Dickens' life changed. Dickens had to quit his school at the age of nine and became a child labourer. As a child labourer,

Dickens was "… sent to work in Warren's blacking factory and endured appalling conditions as well as loneliness and despair" ("Charles Dickens"). Dickens' bitter experience of being a child labourer for three years gave impact on his worldview about life and influenced much of his writing. Thus as an author, "Dickens was not only the first great urban novelist in England, but also one of the most important social commentators who used fiction effectively to criticize economic, social, and moral abuses in the Victorian era" (Diniejko).

A Christmas Carol is one of Dickens' most well-known stories. It was published in England on December 19, 1843. In this novella, Charles Dickens portrays how people at that time interpreted Christmas because at the beginning of the Victorian Era, Christmas was not an important thing to celebrate; in addition, "…people did not have holidays from work" (Johnson). However, people's view about Christmas was slowly changing after Queen Victoria was married to Prince Albert from Germany, who "… introduced some of the most prominent aspects of Christmas" ("History of Christmas"). Through this novella, Dickens wants to evoke the spirit of Christmas and love for others. It is said that "… his book *A Christmas Carol* is credited with helping to popularize and spread the traditions of the festival" ("History of Christmas").

In this thesis, I would like to analyse the portrayal of the protagonist in *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens. I choose to analyse portrayal of the protagonist because I want to reveal the central message that Dickens tries to tell regarding Christmas in the Victorian period as well as his criticism toward the Victorian society by using the protagonist's change of characteristics. Portrayal was, "the act or process of portraying someone or something" ("Portrayal, 1.1"),

while protagonist is defined as "the main figure or one of the most prominent figures in a situation" ("Protagonist, 1.1"). Therefore, I choose to analyse the portrayal of the protagonist who is categorised as a dynamic character which means that the character "… undergoes changes throughout the narrative, due to conflicts he encounters on his journey" ("Dynamic Character").

Since I only refer to the novella as the source of references of my analysis, the most suitable approach is Formalism, which is "a style of inquiry that focuses, almost exclusively, on features of the literary text itself, or the form of a work of literature which is inherently a part of its content" ("Formalism"). Accordingly, I have enough information for my analysis by reading this novella only.

Statement of the Problem

The problems that are going to be discussed in this thesis are:

1. How is the protagonist portrayed in the novella *A Christmas Carol*?

2. What is the purpose of the author in portraying such a character?

Purpose of the Study

Based on the statement of the problems above, the purposes of the study are formulated as follows:

1. To show how the protagonist is portrayed in Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*.

2. To show the purpose of the author in creating such a character.

Method of Research

The method I used in writing this thesis is library research. I started by reading Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*. After that, I did an online search for the theory, any necessary information and references that are relevant to the subject. Then, I used the results to analyse the characteristics of the protagonist. Finally, I made a conclusion of my analysis and write the thesis.

Organization of the Thesis

The thesis consists of three chapters. The first one is Introduction, which includes Background of the Study, Statement of the Problem, Purpose of the Study, Method of Research, and Organization of the Thesis. The second chapter contains the analysis of the portrayal of the protagonist in Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*. The third chapter presents the conclusion of the analysis done in the previous chapter. This thesis ends with Bibliography and Appendices, which contain the Summary of the novella and the Biography of Charles Dickens.