

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

I have chosen novel as the literary genre for my thesis because compared to drama or poetry, novel is the most common form of literature read by most people. According to Murphy, “The novel is the most widely practiced and most widely read form of literature today.” (127) Novel is also more interesting for me because it is usually life-like since it contains a description of life; as is stated in Dictionary of Literary Terms, novel is “an account of life which involves conflicts, plot, characters, action, setting and theme.” (Shaw 257)

Although there are a lot of well-known British writers, I have chosen Alan Hollinghurst and his novel, The Line of Beauty, to analyse. Alan Hollinghurst is a British novelist of the late twentieth century. He has produced great literature works, for instance, The Swimming Pool Library, which won Somerset Maugham Awards and The Folding Star, which won James Tait Black Memorial Prize for fiction. He is also known as one of Granta Best Young British Novelists. His works mostly deal with general topics considered to be taboo such as homosexuality, troubled relationships, drugs, isolation and sexism.

Hollinghurst's novel, The Line of Beauty, is a wonderful and touching novel. It is actually his best-known novel and it won the Man Booker Prize for Fiction in 2004. In The Line of Beauty, Hollinghurst presents careful descriptions of love, passion and beauty. He clearly portrays the protagonist, Nicholas Guest, as a dynamic character. Nicholas Guest is presented as a young gay who is immature and inexperienced. However, he undergoes dramatic change under a new condition that he experiences. Through the novel, the novelist wants the reader to be aware of the terrible things happening in high class society in London.

I have decided to analyse the portrayal of the protagonist in Alan Hollinghurst's The Line of Beauty because characterization is one of the most important aspects in literary works, besides plot, theme, setting and point of view. As is stated by M.J. Murphy, characterization is:

. . . how an author conveys to the reader the characters and the personalities of the people he writes about; in other words, how he conveys to the readers what sort of people they are, how he makes the readers get to know and understand them. Characterization technique consists of personal description, character as seen by another, speech, past life, conversation of others, reactions, direct comment, thoughts and mannerisms.(161-173)

To help the reader understand the characters, the author can describe a character, among others, through his appearance, speech, reaction, direct comment, and conversation of other characters.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In this study, I would like to state the problems as follows:

1. How does the author portray the protagonist of the novel?
2. What is the purpose of the author in portraying such a character?

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

In line with the statement of the problem, I would like:

1. To show how the author portrays the protagonist of the novel.
2. To show the purpose of the author in portraying such a character.

METHOD OF RESEARCH

In conducting the study, I use the library research method. At first, I read Alan Hollinghurst's novel entitled The Line of Beauty as a primary text. I then choose the most prominent literary aspect of the novel to be analysed. I also search for the references from the library and electronic websites which can support the analysis. Finally, I draw some conclusions from my analysis.

ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS

The thesis is divided into three chapters. Chapter One, the Introduction, contains the Background of the Study, the Statement of the Problem, the Purpose of the Study, the Method of Research and the Organization of the Thesis. Chapter Two contains the portrayal of the protagonist of The Line of Beauty. Chapter Three is the Conclusion of the analysis. The thesis ends with the Bibliography and the Appendices, which consist of the Biography of the Author and the Synopsis of the novel.