

## RELIGIOSITY IN CHARLES DICKENS' CHRISTMAS NOVELS

### A Study of Structural Genetic

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#### Abstract

*The objective of this research was to understand comprehensively the meaning and existence of religiosity in Dickens' Christmas Novels. It was a qualitative research by using structural genetic approach. The data were collected by using content analysis to classify the frequency of the concept or the code of the text. Then conducting them towards dimension of religiosity. The data analysis and interpretation indicates that (1) Dimensions of religiosity exist in intrinsic structures such theme, plot, character, setting indicate the importance of religiosity to make a better world. (2) Social structure indicates the gap between the rich and the poor in English society. (3) The author's world view indicates man's experience effect human character as religious or irreligious person. The findings lead to recommendation to practice literary research on religion and literature as well as motivate students gaining knowledge and good interpretation of the text and the context of religiosity.*

**Keywords:** *Religiosity, Christmas Novels, Structural Genetic*

In academic practice, the study of religious aspects in literary works has never been subsided. At the present time, the study of religious aspects is increasing and tends to foster a rich and comprehensive interpretation of religiosity related to religious beliefs, religious practices and religious values that can be extracted from the study of literary works.

On the ground of fact, the study of religious aspect is intensified in formal education such as in schools and colleges. Literary teaching and research are expected not only to contribute students' competent language skills, but also to enhance religious and socio-cultural knowledge to support character building of students.

In general, the curriculum in literary study encourages teachers/ lecturers to be more selective in using literary works such as English novels in accordance with the level of students' knowledge of English competency, maturity and proximity of literary themes with the life experiences of students. According to Ellie Chambers (2006: 34-35), the selection of English literary works which are presented should be selective by considering the closeness of literary texts' contents with students' backgrounds such as consideration of aspects of activities, ideas, beliefs, religions, customs.

The guidebook of the State-owned Christian Protestant High School of Tarutung (2016: 17-18) describes particularly on the subjects of English and English Theology. Descriptions of the two subjects are aimed at improving the proficiency of English skill both written and spoken with the priority of developing students' ability in reading English literary books comprehensively dealing with religious contents.

The description of the two subjects above shows that the importance of using English literary works within their theological contents is very appropriate to be applied as source material for English

teaching. In addition, the selections of literary works that have religious or theological themes can be a helpful comparative material in the socio-cultural circumstances of particular society in particular era.

Assessment of religious themes from various literary works can derive situational matters of religion from different regions and time. This assessment provides better outlook for students to see the "dynamic and contemporary" side of religious issues from time to time. Consequently, the study of literary works with the theme of religiosity is expected to develop comprehensive and constructive interpretations related to religious knowledge, religious awareness, and the implications of the essential importance of religious values and religious practices that can be explored in the literary works.

The primary reason for choosing Charles Dickens' Christmas novels as an object of analysis is that Charles Dickens' Christmas novels always reflect social phenomena of British society during Industrial revolution. According to Diane Neil (2004: 172), Charles Dickens' Christmas Novels always concern about religious issues so that his works became a reference to know about constellations history of British society in the 19th century. Based on this occasion, genetic structural approach can be applied to study the dimension of religiosity in Charles Dickens' Christmas Novel.

Furthermore, Charles Dickens' Christmas novels can be used as source material for the study of literature related to the issues of religiosity so that students can grasp comprehensive religious understanding and the final outcome of the study can be used as a guide to practice religious attitude.

Based on the background of the problem and the reason for choosing the object of research, the researcher is interested to examine "Religiosity in Dickens' Christmas novels". Description of religiosity in this research is based on theory of Pippa Norris and Inglehart (2004: 39-41) which divides religiosity into three dimensions namely: religious belief, religious practice, and religious values. According to Christian dogma found in Luther's Catechism, (2012: 248-249), The descriptions of religious belief are as follows:

1. Believe in God Almighty creator of heavens and earth.
2. Believe in the Word of God and all His promises as they are written in The Holy Bible.
3. God so love the world especially man as His highest creature so He gave His Only Son to save the World and whoever believe in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.
4. Man has sinned against The Lord through human's mind, deed, and desire, words and actions so that man has lost his/her glory.
5. God curse and punish all sin since the fruit of sin is dead. Because of the love of God and His true mercy, He promises all believers eternal life.
6. Jesus has offered himself as a perfect sacrifice upon the Cross to take the sins of the world.
7. Man is saved by the free gift of God's grace.

All the description of dimension of religious belief above will be conducted with the characters personal belief by using intrinsic structure of Charles Dickens' Christmas Novels.

Then dimension of religious practices is based on religious practices found in Luther's Catechism, (2012: 56-89), The descriptions of religious practices are as follows:

1. Keep the holiness of Sabbath and the other Christian holy days by gathering and worshipping God. Christian should have personal prayer and meditation.
2. Listen to the Word Of God and use the name of God in good ways. Always beware to call and take an oath in the name of God in plain way.
3. Always surrender to the Glory of the God
4. Do not tell lies toward others but be honest to them in good manner.
5. Faithful in marriage till death separate between husband and wife.

6. Honest in gaining and owning all property. Then all the property and money that effect the welfare of a large numbers of people should be legally responsible for those who own those property.
7. Respect and love one another especially to elders and parents and one may not take revenge to others.
8. Keep and protect the environment and all the living things in it as creatures of God.

All the description of dimension of religious practices above will be conducted with the characters personal belief by using intrinsic structure of Charles Dickens' Christmas Novels.

Then dimension of religious values is based on Peter C Hill and Ralph W. Hood (1999: 23-30). The descriptions of religious values are as follows:

1. Feel deep inner peace or harmony by reading the Word of God and Praying to the Almighty God.
2. Feel secure about strength and comfort in the present of God that all burdens are enlightened by the help of God.
3. Believe that God always helps people through the help of other people.
4. Believe that God has a certain purpose toward human life since he/she was born.
5. Always admire for the beauty of creation and its potential in it.
6. Believe that all creations especially Man have value in the God present.

All the description of dimension of religious values above will be conducted with the characters personal belief by using intrinsic structure of Charles Dickens' Christmas Novels.

To analyze religiosity, the dimensions of religiosity are related firstly to the individual psychological situation. Physical situation concerns with development of religious psyche. The development of religious psyche is based on Jalaluddin's theory (1996: 74-104) which i.e. the religious psyche in children, adolescents, adults, and the old age. To get better explanation of the obstacles to the development of religiosity, the researcher uses Jalaluddin's theory (1996: 106-123) which divides the obstacles to development of religiosity in two factors, namely internal factors i.e. individual temperament which forms attitude, psychiatric disorders, and doubts. The other factor is the external factor such as the experience of bad events i.e. disasters and crimes experienced by individuals. Thus, the study of the religious psyche and the obstacles to the development of religiosity is conducted with the religiosity of the characters in Charles Dickens' Christmas novels by using genetic structural approach.

## METHODS

This research uses content analysis method according to Klaus Krippendorff (2004: 18). Content analysis method serves as a method in analyzing the contents of the text and its context to gain better understanding of meaning of the text. According with Emzir (2011: 283), content analysis method is a qualitative-oriented procedure of textual interpretation in order to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the issues studied.

The literary approach used to analyze the object of research is the genetic structural approach by Lucian Goldmann cited by Emzir and Rohman (2015: 47). Based on genetic structural approaches, the dimensions of religiosity are examined in terms of: (1) the intrinsic structure of the Charles Dickens' Christmas novels, (2) the social structure, (3) the author's world view.

The step of data analysis are based the theory of Robert K. Yin (2011: 178-179). The step of data analysis uses theoretical studies, data analysis, and discussion. The first step is to review the theories which are relevant to the research focus and sub focus. Because this study uses the Genetic Structural approach, the steps taken are as follows: (1) Charles Dickens' Christmas novels are examined with intrinsic structure i.e. theme, plot, Character, and setting. Then this intrinsic structure is associated with the dimensions of religiosity. This procedure goal is to prove the result of the study concerning about each intrinsic elements may fit holistic outcome of the study. (2) The study of the

social structure that connects the dimension of religiosity with the phenomenon or social reality in society that contributes to novel creation. (3) The dimension of religiosity is viewed from the author's world view.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following term will describe research findings and a brief discussion of religiosity in the Charles Dickens' Christmas novel which is summarized in sub-focus of the study.

Based on research findings and research discussion, the results of study can be concluded as follows:

1. The dimensions of religiosity which are viewed from the intrinsic structures Charles Dickens' Christmas novels are as follows:

a. Theme.

Charles Dickens' Christmas novels generally describe the constellation of religiosity in British society. Intrinsic structure describes the decline of religious beliefs, religious practices and religious values in the Mid of English society since they became secular in their outlook toward daily life. In Charles Dickens' Christmas novels, the decline of religiosity is described as a matter of bad religious attitudes such compensatory actions. They are self-conflicts such as anxiety, pessimism, depression, loss of self-esteem, and suicide. While conflicts with others are reflected as anger, hatred, social ignorance, the imposition of social sanction towards individuals, groups or other communities without giving any solution or towards the sanctified. Based on the main problem mentioned above, the author gives moral message to the readers about the importance of the transformative religious attitude towards human life. The transformation of religious attitudes concerns three aspects: (1) increasing knowledge and understanding of religious beliefs as the foundation of faith, (2) increasing participation in religious practices (3) having close relationship with God in daily life.

The discussion of research findings about the theme can be found on the main problems described by the author and central purpose of the author to the readers, so the theme of Charles Dickens' Christmas Novels is "The importance of the transformative religious attitude in order to build a better life."

b. Plot.

Charles Dickens' Christmas novels generally have a progressive plot that the sequent of events develops coherently, logically and conventionally. The plot begins with brief description of problematic characters depicting the decline of the religious attitude, then the story begins to raise its conflicts against other deviant characters, the contradiction become on critical stage or climax that affects consciousness which influence a change of mindset about the existence of the love of God and the love of neighbor, then tension begins to be decreased unto the emergence of a self-commitment to have better new life by transforming religious attitude. In general, the five novels end with the story of happiness.

c. Character

The problematic characters in Charles Dickens' Christmas novels are mostly the old men (Victorian gentlemen). Each of problematic characters has different background i.e. their economic, educational, and social background in society. Problematic Characters such as Scrooge, Toby Veck, Doctor Jeddler and Prof. Redlaw have decline religiosity since they firstly characterized as bad attitude towards others and they did not believe in God, but then, they transformed to be a religious character since they experienced of serial conflict.

The author described the conflicts into two ways. They were inner conflicts and social conflicts that lead to awareness and religious commitment that impact on changing the mindset and transforming better attitude of religiosity. The transformation of the religiosity of these problematic characters involves three dimensions: (1) enhancing knowledge and

understanding of religious beliefs as the foundation of faith, (2) increasing participation in religious activities, and (3) always keeping on religious values in daily life. In technique of characterization, Charles Dickens uses a combination of expository and dramatic techniques. In an expository technique, the Author directly describes character traits. On the other hand, the author also uses a dramatic technique that describes character explicitly.

d. Setting, analyzing setting of the Charles Dickens's Christmas Novels consist setting of place, setting of time, and social setting.

1) Setting of place.

In general, Charles Dickens' Christmas novels used England as setting of place. Specifically, the places used as setting are the City of London, Waterloo, and Moorish Places. Descriptions of setting of places supported the characterization of problematic characters and helped reader's perspective on problematic characters concerning with the dimension of religiosity. Background urban areas such as London and Waterloo illustrated the decline of religiosity in the midst of secular society. While rural areas describe as traditional society that still maintained religious values and social norms.

2) Setting of time

In general, setting of time used in the Charles Dickens' Christmas novels uses Christmas celebrations, New Year Celebrations, Waterloo War memorials, birthday parties, and wedding anniversary parties. The celebration identifies the importance of exploring history or past memories then taking moral lessons from life experiences. Similarly, the purpose and nature of each celebration is to provide awareness and motivate people to change attitudes toward the transformation of religiosity.

3) Social setting

Charles Dickens's Christmas novels generally consist of two layers of social strata. They are the middle class of English society and the lower class. The middle class consists of businessman such as Scrooge, highly educated and wealthy people like Doctor Jeddler, and Prof. Redlaw. They have the same condition and situation due to social relation. Mostly, they have lack of daily experience in social interaction with others. Mostly, they just concern about their own business and their own interests without considering others or their surroundings. The problematic characters are mostly described materialistic rationalist, selfish and more self-interested without regard to the interests of others.

On the other side, characters from lower class like Toby Veck and John Peerybingle are described as traditional societies. They still lived according to social values or norms, and they showed solidarity towards other people. They tended to have intense social interactions with members of the surrounding community.

2. The dimension of religiosity in terms of social structure in Charles Dickens' Christmas Novels contains the phenomena of middle-class English society and the lower class. Characteristics of both layers of society above have sharp social and economic differences. The middle class lived in an abundance of wealth including expensive lifestyles such as provision of well preserved food, expensive and luxury clothing and housing, then they have luxury holidays. While the lower class lived in suffering because of their low wages and poverty. They had a less healthy lifestyle such as bad housing and unproprie standards of living because the high cost of living in the big cities. There were also many cases concerning about diseases since they did not get proper health service.

The phenomena of daily life in the middle class always dealt with professional or intellectual mindset in the industrial revolution. They mostly tended to be rationalists in viewing various approaches which demanded mathematical and empirical proof. The development of knowledge and technology put aside the transcendent things such as God and religion in the life of industrial secular society. The development of science created human beings to focus on anthropological

attitudes. Knowledge and science brought human reason to be the center of human daily life in solving and calculating everything empirically. On the ground of the fact, modern society was no longer interested in theological or religious teachings.

on the other side, the lower class was regarded as traditional society that still adhered religious values as well as social norms. But because of t poverty, the lower classes became pessimistic and considered themselves less valuable in the mid of English society.

3. The dimension of religiosity in terms of the author's worldview portrayed Charles Dickens's view as mediator of intrinsic structure and social structure in Christmas novels. Charles Dickens viewed that human character and attitudes are not solely determined by genetic heritage. In this case, Charles Dickens showed that recollection of memories and experiences of his life to determine the choice of perspective and attitude of human in everyday life.

Furthermore, the recollection of memory about beautiful things like good old times will produce good responds such as tears, smiles, passion, laughter and even an explosive expression of excitement. It motivates a person to do good things. Meanwhile, when the memory about painful such as betrayal, sorrow, and humiliation might cause compensatory action such as irritability, anxiety or excessive worry, frustration, depression, even suicide. Therefore, if the bitter memories are not well managed will cause negative impact for one's self and for others.

In this case, Charles Dickens advises the readers to forgive all the bitter memories of the past, as well as all regrets, self-disappointments, and worries about future life. People need to surrender all things to God. Charles Dickens also advises the readers to cultivate a religious attitude by believing in God, participating in religious practice and keeping in faith the importance of God and religious values in human life.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, Charles Dickens's Christmas novels contain the importance of transformation of religious attitudes to build better quality of human life. This religiosity concern three dimensions of religious attitudes, such as increasing knowledge and understanding of religious belief as a foundation of faith, increasing participation in religious practices, and always admiring to religious values. Therefore, the results of this study can be recommended towards various parties, they are:

Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia in particular the Directorate General of the Christian Ministry of the Republic of Indonesia to create a program for promoting religious attitudes to improve the quality of life of Indonesians. The programs might be derived through strengthening of learning literary studies for students in educational institutions under the authority of Ministry of Religious Affairs. Likewise, the fulfillment of the needs of facilities of education such procurement of novels with the theme of religiosity to be further improved in kinds and numbers of literary works.

State-owned Christian Protestant Theological (STAKPN) Tarutung should fix its curriculum to accommodate the study of literature. Hence the study of religiosity in Charles Dickens' Christmas novels proves the important contribution of literary teaching and research in the field of theology. Furthermore, the procurement of literary books such as novels, poetry and religious-themed drama is more concerned in the provision of the library.

Teachers/Lecturers are expected to be able to use English literary works in accordance with the theme of religiosity as source as reference for teaching English to improve the ability of students both oral and written in English. In addition study of literature within theological contents may enrich the comprehensive and constructive interpretations related to religious knowledge, religious

awareness, and the implications of the essential importance of religious values and religious practices that can be explored in the literary works.

Students are encouraged to read literary works with themes of religiosity to increase the knowledge and understanding of religious life so that students can grasp the better understanding of religious attitudes toward religious maturity.

Advance researchers are recommended that there are still many issues that can be studied in Charles Dickens' Christmas novels such as theological, psychological, sociological, economic, historical, and other perspectives. In addition, this research recommends that there are still other Charles Dickens' novels to be analyzed for the development of research repertoire.

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