

**AMERICANIZATION PROCESS OF GERTRUDE SIMMONS BONNIN AS
A NATIVE OF AMERICA IN ESSAYS “*IMPRESSIONS OF AN INDIAN
CHILDHOOD*”, “*THE SCHOOL DAYS OF AN INDIAN GIRL*” AND “*AN
INDIAN TEACHER AMONG INDIANS*”**

A THESIS

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the Sarjana Degree Majoring **American Study in English Department**
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Submitted by:
SUSI PARYANTI
NIM: A2B006088

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PRONOUNCEMENT

The writer confirms that she conducts this thesis by herself and without copying any thesis from other researchers in any major, any faculty, or any university. The writer ascertains also that she does not quote someone's paper except from the references mentioned.

Semarang, 13th of August 2011

Susi Paryanti

MOTTO AND DEDICATION

*“There is no great; there is no small;
in the mind that causeth all”*

Zitkala-Sa

Dream, believe, and make it happen

Agnes Monica

This paper is dedicated to

*My self,
and everyone,*

*“No matter what happened, even those don’t make any sense,
you could still stand strong since God is always right in your heart”*

APPROVAL

Approved by,
Thesis Advisor

Dra. Christine Resnitriwati, M. Hum.
NIP. 19560216 198303 2001

VALIDATION

Approved by
Strata 1 Thesis Examination Committee
Faculty of Humanities Diponegoro University
on 3rd of October 2011

Chair Person

Drs. Sunarwoto, M. S., M. A.
NIP. 19480619 198003 1001

First Member

Second Member

Dra. Christine Resnitriwati, M. Hum. Arido Laksono, S. S., M. Hum.
NIP. 19560216 198303 2001 NIP. 19750711 199903 1002

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Semarang, 13th of August 2011
The Writer

Susi Paryanti

ABSTRAK

Diskriminasi ras dapat didefinisikan sebagai bentuk nyata dari anggapan adanya hierarki ras. Essai yang akan dibahas oleh penulis dalam skripsi ini merupakan bentuk diskriminasi ras yang ditujukan kepada ras Indian di Amerika oleh orang kulit putih. Dalam essai tersebut, ras Indian yang merupakan penduduk asli Amerika harus beradaptasi dan mengikuti peraturan orang kulit putih demi mendapat status kewarganegaraan karena Indian dianggap lebih rendah dibandingkan dengan bangsa kulit putih yang justru merupakan pendatang baru di Amerika. Penulisan skripsi ini bertujuan untuk menjabarkan akibat adanya diskriminasi ras yang dialami oleh Gertrude Simmons Bonnin, seorang Indian yang menjadi tokoh utama dalam tiga essai; *"Impressions of an Indian Childhood"*, *"The School Days of an Indian Girl"* dan *"An Indian Teacher among Indian"*, yang terkumpul dalam buku *"American Indian Stories"*. Dengan penjabaran usaha-usaha yang dilakukan tokoh Bonnin ketika ia menemui beberapa konflik sebagai akibat proses asimilasi. Penulis menggunakan penelitian pustaka dalam skripsi ini karena data-data yang digunakan oleh penulis berasal dari sumber berupa buku cetak, baik data utama yaitu buku *"American Indian Stories"* dan data pendukung lainnya termasuk beberapa informasi dari situs-situs internet untuk mendukung argument penulis. Penulis menggunakan pendekatan Eksponensial untuk menelaah lebih dalam unsur-unsur yang membangun cerita tersebut sebagai karya sastra, dan pendekatan Sosiologi untuk mengkaji essai tersebut ditinjau dari keadaan sosial cerita. Berdasarkan analisis yang telah penulis lakukan, penulis menemukan bahwa dugaan penulis mengenai proses asimilasi yang dilakukan tokoh Bonnin sebagai hasil adanya diskriminasi terhadap ras Indian memang benar-benar terjadi. Proses tersebut dilalui tokoh dengan adanya proses kristenisasi, pendidikan dan juga interaksi sosial.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

Some of the important things of humanity are society judging of the individuals and the influence of themselves. In order to get those good values, people should consider themselves as a so well-viewed that they would be eager to raise and praise themselves as a good human. Education is one of the basics to begin raising degree of personality and the welfare would come along with the status.

The education itself could be taken from the life experiences, failures and weaknesses that teach us to be a better person. Thus, the writer finds her interest in these three essays; "*Impressions of an Indian Childhood*", "*The School Days of an Indian Girl*" and "*An Indian Teacher among Indians*", since she has seen such education of life experiences had been through by the character in the essays.

Considering that literary work is the art of expression felt by the maker and the surrounding situation, as Wellek and Warren said; "*Literature represents life; and life is, in large measure, a social reality, even though the natural world of the individual has also been objects of literary imitation*" (1977: 94), and the fact that these essays are the autobiography of the author, "*Zitkala Sa did manage to bring together in one volume her autobiographical essays*" (Creating America; Reading and Writing Arguments, 1999: 1008). Hence, the writer believes that the essays represent the issues of the author's social condition by the time of the story. The true story of assimilation in the essays builds the interest of the writer to make the story as her thesis object.

Since the character in the essays was an Indian, whereas the tribe is the native of America, and the character should assimilate in order to get civilized as an American, the writer called the term of the assimilation as 'Americanization'. Then the writer applies the term into her thesis title; "Americanization Process of Gertrude Simmons Bonnin as a Native of America in Essays "*Impressions of an Indian Childhood*", "*The School Days of an Indian Girl*" and "*An Indian Teacher among Indians*".

1.2. Purpose of the Study

The purposes of the study in this thesis are:

1. The writer would like to analyze Gertrude Simmons Bonnin's process of getting herself to be accepted in American society as the part of the society.
2. The writer wants to know Gertrude Simmons Bonnin's effort to overcome the conflicts happened during the assimilation process.
3. Like other students who wish to finish their studies, the writer also conducts this study as a partial fulfillment of S1 Degree requirement of the Faculty of Humanities of Diponegoro University Semarang.

1.3. Importance of the Study

The writer hopes that the readers may learn that every individual has his own character. The social condition takes a big role of the character building and vice versa. Everything happened around a human being certainly gives great impact to human for playing their role in society. Hence, when people could not take and play the role properly there would be unfairnesses.

1.4. Scope and Limitation

The case that would be discussed in this thesis is focused on the assimilation process of the main character to be accepted as a part of American society. The assimilation process is followed with conflicts faced by the main character. The writer would only discuss the process by describing the conflicts happened, the way of the main character to overcome the conflicts and the result of the assimilation process.

1.5. Methodology

These essays would be observed by the writer by using the following methods:

1.5.1. Method of Research

Research method that is used by the writer is library research because the data are taken from the library and other printed sources. The main data used by the writer is the book *"American Indian Stories"* that contains three essays; *"Impressions of an Indian Childhood"*, *"The School Days of an Indian Girl"* and *"An Indian Teacher among Indians"* as the object of the thesis. The writer also uses some other printed sources related to the thesis topic and any additional information from web sites that support the writer's argument.

1.5.2. Method of Approach

To observe a work, the observer needs to find an approaching method to help her figure out the answer of the topic discussed. Here, Method of Approach that is used by the writer is Exponential method.

We designate this method as the exponential approach because the inclusiveness of the term suggest at once the several meanings of motif, image, symbol, and archetype. (Gverin, 1992:197).

Exponential approach describes implicit meanings in a work which is represented by the motifs, symbols, images and basic patterns. The reader should re-create in their imagination to communicate the work.

Since the writer traces the essays by relating the story with the social background, hence, the writer uses a Sociological approach. Sociological approach is a term used to analyze an object or work by figuring out the correlation with the social background of the work.

"Pendekatan sosiologis atau pendekatan ekstrinsik yang biasanya mempermasalahkan sesuatu di seputar sastra dan masyarakat" (Atar Semi, 1996: 59)

1.6. Organization of the Study

Writing system that is used by the writer is dividing the thesis into chapters and sub chapters with definite numbering. The thesis outlines are:

CHAPTER I : INTRODUCTION

This chapter includes five subordinator chapters that are; Background of the Study, Purpose of the Study, Importance of the Study, Scope and Limitation, Methodology and Organization of the Study.

CHAPTER II : BIOGRAPHY AND SUMMARY

This chapter has two sub chapters that are; Short Biography of Gertrude Simmons Bonnin and Short Summary of "*Impressions of an Indian Childhood*", "*The School Days of an Indian Girl*", and "*An Indian Teacher among Indians*".

CHAPTER III : LITERARY REVIEW

In this Literary Review there are two main sub chapters; The Intrinsic Aspects and The Extrinsic Aspects. The Intrinsic Aspects include Character, Setting, Conflict, and Theme description. While in The Extrinsic Aspects are the Assimilation and Majority Theory.

CHAPTER IV : ANALYSIS

In this chapter the writer gives two main subordinate chapters; The Intrinsic Aspects followed with Character Analysis, Setting Analysis, Conflict Analysis, and Theme Analysis, and The Extrinsic Aspects; Gertrude Simmons Bonnin as the Native of America, including the analysis of Americanization Process of Gertrude Simmons Bonnin in the Essays, and The Efforts of Gertrude Simmons Bonnin to Overcome the Conflicts during the Americanization Process.

CHAPTER V : CONCLUSION

CHAPTER II

BIOGRAPHY AND SUMMARY

2.1. Short Biography of Gertrude Simmons Bonnin

Gertrude Simmons Bonnin was born on February, 22nd 1876. His father was a white man named Felker but he deserted the family, while her mother was an Yankton-Nakota Sioux, a name of certain community of Indian American, named Ellen Tate Iyohinwin who was married again and gave Bonnin a white man step father named John H. Simmon, this was the middle name of Bonnin "Simmons" came from.

When she was 8 years old, she entered the "White's Institution", a school in Wabash, the eastern of America built by the white men as a place to Christianize the Indians. She had been there for 3 years, then, she came back to her own town, Dakota, for several years, and then went back to Wabash continuing her school.

Bonnin was graduated from Quaker-run Earlham College by scholarship and become a musician, writer, and political activist of Native American. As an Indian, Bonnin often was not being considered as part of the society at the time. Her present was only being considered because of her works, her talents in music and oration. These talents drove her to get the acceptance from the American society.

Bonnin married a Yankton-Nakota Sioux named Raymond Talesfase, a captain of US Army and her old neighborhood as well. They had a son named Raymond O. and lived nomadically in Indian's reservation for 14 years. She had ever been in an opera "Sun Dance" in 1916, and became an editor and author of American magazine in 1918. Her pen name was Zitkala Sa whose meaning was Red Bird. Two years after the confession of America for Indian civilization in 1924, Bonnin headed an American Indian law organization named "National Council of American Indian" and joined some woman's organizations in Washington D.C..

She died when her age was 62, on 1938.

2.2. Short Summary of "Impressions of an Indian Childhood", "The School Days of an Indian Girl", and "An Indian Teacher among Indians"

a. Impressions of an Indian Childhood

"The Impression of an Indian Childhood" is an essay about Gertrude Simmons Bonnin as an Indian little girl. She lived in an Indian reservation, Dakota. She lived there with her mother in a wigwam. As an ordinary child she lived in happiness where playing is her world. In fact, in this essay Mother had told Bonnin about her hatred to the palefaces (white man). She told Bonnin about their cruelty story, the palefaces way to get Indians off their own land, and it made her hate the palefaces, just the same as her mother way.

In the middle of winter some missionaries (white man) came to the reservation in order to ask the Indian children to go to east to school and Christianization. However, in the missionaries effort, of course, they gave the children some present and little wonderful views about the east. These made Indian children loved to go with them, include Bonnin who was thinking that the palefaces were not that bad as her mother talked about. For the first time Mother did not permit her to go until her aunt suggested her mother to let Bonnin go. This was the first Bonnin's journey

to the Red Apple, symbol of the Great Eastern.

b. The School Days of an Indian Girl

This essay was about Bonnin's school days. This was the first time Bonnin go to school, brand new school, new place and new rules. In the essay before, when she wanted to go to the east, she thought that the Great East would be her lovely place. On the other hand, Bonnin felt a great disappointment. She missed her mother, her old society without any stressing rules and she was still able to play wherever, whenever.

The different culture and rules made her found a lot of misunderstanding. While the new culture, for example the knowing of God and devil made her got a very bad dream about the devil. She felt really home sick.

She had finished her first pre-school for 3 years. She came back to the reservation. When she reached Dakota she felt something different. Bonnin now was literate. She could read, write, and think differ from other Indian girl. She felt uncomfortable with the situation after she got back. She could not play with her brother because her range of age. However, she could not also fit with her mother anymore since her mother was uneducated person and Bonnin now was a different girl with different character.

Bonnin asked her mother's permission to let her go back to Wabbash to continue her school. Her mother was displeased with Bonnin's argument. Mother did not let her go, yet, Bonnin kept on her decision, went to school. It was really hard when she faced the life in Wabbash. People disparaged her and kept her in a distance, but she did not give up. She tried hard to make people felt that she was proper to be there. She followed an oration competition and she won it in the first place. She left other white man behind her back.

c. An Indian Teacher among Indians

Bonnin had finished her study, she was really famous with her winning in the oration. Bonnin decided to be a teacher for Indians. She went to east and applied as a teacher of Indians.

She was unwell when she reached the campus. People there stared at her and her employee, an old white man, very impressed with her, an Indian girl creating excitement among the college orators. The campus president gave her a job; went back to Dakota for gathering Indian pupils. She was very glad since she thought that she could meet her mother and surprised her.

When she reached her wigwam in Dakota, her mother was so angry with her. No hug, she was mad because Bonnin brought a paleface to their home. Bonnin explained that he was her driver, knowing it, her mother was really glad because the paleface now was in her daughter's hands. Looking at the wigwam, Bonnin felt sad, the place where her mother live was not proper. She told her mother to make the wigwam better but her mother told her that she could not earn money anymore. While his brother, Dawee, was no longer working for the government since the Great Father in Washington D.C. had sent a new paleface to their Dakota and taken her brother position. Bonnin did not believe in the paleface cruelty, but at the same time Bonnin felt terribly disappointed. Mother cursed the white men and Bonnin could not say any words except she felt sorry with the Great Father decision.

The Great Father's decision made Bonnin hurt. She began to think that may be the white men asked Indian pupils for going to school was not for their development but just a formal term to know Indian's ability, just a formal term so that the Indian would not consider them as bad men. Because of her upset to the white men, she decided to resign from the institution and took a long course in an eastern city.

CHAPTER III

LITERARY REVIEW

3.1. The Intrinsic Aspects

"Unsur intrinsik dalam novel adalah unsur-unsur yang (secara langsung) turut serta membangun cerita" (Nurgiyantoro, *Teori Pengkajian Fiksi*, 2003: 23). Based on Nurgiyantoro's book there are many aspects included in intrinsic aspects. Some of the aspects are theme, setting background, character, and conflict. Those intrinsic aspects would be discussed by the writer in this thesis to analyze the essays.

3.1.1. Character

Kennedy's statement in his book (1996: 40) ; *in literature, character is pointed in human nature characteristics due to the imagination of the writer and become a part of linking tragedy*. Due to the complexity of the character, Kennedy decides that there are two kinds of character; round and flat character.

a. Round Character

"Round character is obviously more than a simple, because in life, people are not simply embodiment of a single attitude." (Kennedy, 1996: 26). Round character could be called as complex character. This round character has some possibilities characters in the character's life itself. The personality of the character may change as the story move on. Somehow, the personality changing of the characters is unpredictable.

b. Flat Character

Flat character could be called as simple character.

The character only has one possible personality. It has static behavior, attitude, motivation or act. It is very rare that a flat character has behavioral or personality changing during the story. (Forster, 1970: 92).

As Forster said in the sentences above, a flat character is a static character that do not have personality fricative during the story.

There are several ways to determine the characters into those two kind of characters based on Kennedy's statements about 'characterization' (1996:26):

- character description directly from the narrator such as physical characteristics and the characters' actions.
- soliloquy: inner monologue by the characters.
- other characters comments.
- kontekstual: characters' naming and languages

3.1.2. Setting

Setting is an overall position or background in which the acts of a story are played. It includes the social, economic, culture, politic, or even just a simple setting like place or time setting and the environment where the character live, said by Abrams;

The overall setting at narrative or dramatic work is the general locate, historical time, and social circumstance in which its actions occur; the setting of a single episode or scene within such a work is the particular physical location in which it takes place (1971: 287).

From Abram's statement we can assume that generally, setting is divided into three basic elements:

a. General Locate

Every story has a certain place as the story background. General locate is the place where every single event happens in the story.

b. Time Setting

Time Setting is time background when the story takes place. Time setting could help the writer to find out what is normally happened at the time in the story. It also could define whether the story is relevant with the real condition or not.

c. Social Background

Social background is the social circumstances that become the background of the story.

However, the three settings above support each others in the story building.

3.1.3. Conflict

Conflict appears as the next part of the intrinsic elements of a story. The author ability of creating conflict in the story has big role of ranking how attractive is the story to read. The readers would be eager to read more when they find some attractive conditions or events with complex conflicts inside the story.

The conflicts itself should be written in a good proportion. It means that the author has to avoid to much repetition of the same conflicts. The athon should get the conflict balance with the story so that the readers are able to follow the flow of the story attractively without guessing the ending easily.

Based on Stanton's statement in Sofia-Sugihastuti (2003: 14), there are two kinds of conflicts; internal and external conflict.

a. Internal Conflict

According to Sofia-Sugihastuti in her book "*Feminisme dan Sastra*", internal conflict is the conflict happen within a character's inner-self, it could be emotionally or mentally (2003: 14).

b. External Conflict

External conflict is a conflict happened related with the outside factors, for example, the character and social and conflict among characters or groups. This external conflict could be devided into two conflicts; Physical Conflict and Social Conflict (Stanton, through Sugihastuti, 2003: 14).

Physical conflict comes out from the nature (Stanton, through Sugihastuti, 2003: 15). For example, conflict caused by disaster such as an extreme flood. While, social conflict is the conflict caused by social contact with human such as arguments between a wife and a husband because of misunderstanding existence.

3.1.4. Theme

In the creation of a literary work, theme takes an important role as the core of the storyline.

The theme of a piece of fiction is its controlling idea or its central insight. It is the unifying generalization about life stated or implied by the story. To derive the theme of a story, we must ask what its central purpose is: what view of life it supports or what insight into life it reveals. (Perrine, 1988: 90)

Theme has to be related with the story. Theme is enriched through other supporting aspects such as characters, conflicts and setting background to develop the story.

3.2. The Extrinsic Aspects

3.2.1. Assimilation

On the statement of Richard D. Alba and Victor Nee in their book *Remaking the American Mainstream*, the term of assimilation is described as:

“Assimilation a process of interpenetration and fusion in which persons and groups acquire the memories, sentiments, and attitudes of other persons and groups, and, by sharing their experience and history, are incorporated with them in a common cultural life” (2005:19)

Based on the definition above, cultural assimilation is used in a society with some cultural groups inside by adapting the difference cultures.

However, in the essays used by the writer in this thesis, the assimilation was done by the character who is an Indian American. As McLemore said in his book *“Racial and Ethnic Relations in America”*; *“Most American cannot trace their stay in this land to more than five or six generations, and only the American Indians can claim to have been here for more than a few centuries”*(1983:1), the writer considers the character as a native of America.

3.2.2. Majority Theory

The theory that is used by the writer to observe the assimilation process in the essays is Majority Theory. The theory had been stated by McLemore in his book *“Racial and Ethnic Relations in America”*. It is related to the existence of minority and majority in a society with many cultural groups involved.

In all human society, some group or groups will have greater power than others,

and the kinds of relations these more or less powerful groups have with one another represent a crucial element in the operation of the society (McLemore, 1983: 8).

McLemore's statement above shows us that majority power gives a huge influence in any aspect of life, where the minority has to follow the majority rules. *"The power of many groups is accepted as legitimate by those below them, and their commands are willingly obeyed..."* (McLemore, 1983: 8).