

**BOOK REVIEW OF *LITTLE LORD FAUNTLEROY*  
WRITTEN BY FRANCES HODGSON BURNETT**

**A FINAL PROJECT**

**In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement**

**For S – 1 Degree in American Studies In English Department,  
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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Writing

A novel is narrative story that is written by an author as a form of creative writing. It is basically longer than short story or novella. It describes uniqueness of intimate human life experiences. "Novel is normally a prose work of quite some length and complexity which attempts to reflect and express something of the quality or value of human experience or conduct" (Taylor, 1981:46). The role of all characters in a novel makes it more interesting to read by the readers.

There are many well-known writers who use their own imaginations of childhood for their novel. Burnett, for example, is a modern novelist in the early twentieth century. Her seventh novel was published by *Scribner* publisher in October, in 1886, entitled *Little Lord Fauntleroy*. It is interesting to review *Little Lord Fauntleroy* since it represents the kindness and ordinary life of a little boy noble who does not only care to his family, but also to the people around.

The main character in the novel is Cedric Errol, a half British – American boy, who is a successor to the Earldom of Dorincourt. Being an aristocrat is such a wonderful life for Cedric whose childhood is in poverty with his mother after the death of his father. In addition, the relationship between Cedric Mother and his Grandfather are not in line. Burnett pictures Cedric and Mrs. Errol as people who affectionate. However, the Earl of Dorincourt is not an easy person to console for. Burnett pictures him as a snobbery man in this novel.

The characters of the novel show the readers the sense of helping. The novel reflects struggle, friendship and love – caring. The main character Cedric Errol describes his friendship, struggle and love – caring since he has spent his daily activities as an ordinary boy in Brooklyn, New York State.

In brief, this novel is chosen to be reviewed because the story background involves a social life where Cedric's childhood as an ordinary boy who lives as a common American for a while, but he is chosen as a successor of the Earldom of Dorincourt. The novel also becomes more interesting to be reviewed because the main character is not arrogant to other people even though he becomes an aristocrat.

## **1.2 Purpose of the Writing**

The purposes of the writing are:

1. To describe theme of *Little Lord Fauntleroy*
2. To describe strengths and weaknesses of *Little Lord Fauntleroy*

## **1.3 Frances Hodgson Burnett and Her Works**

Frances Hodgson Burnett was born on November 24<sup>th</sup> 1849, in Cheetham Hill, Manchester. Burnett firstly loved reading a book when her grandmother bought it for her. One of many books that she read was *The Flower Book* which had colored illustration and poems in it. Burnett childhood was so complicated because she and her mother moved from one town to another. Burnett only got limited education for a year because her mother had limited income. However,

Burnett did not feel desperate for her poverty. She had an active imagination and wrote some stories in her old notebooks. She also had one favorite novel which was entitled *Uncle Tom's Cabin* by *Harriet Beecher Stowe*.

In 1863, Burnett and her mother lived in a smaller house because her mother business was bankrupt. At that time, Burnett's mother decided to move in Knoxville in America because of Burnett's uncle offer. Unfortunate life of Burnett family did not come to an end shortly. Her uncle business was bankrupt. Burnett and her family moved to Tennessee. In order to escape from family's poverty, Burnett turned to write first time to earn some money. In 1868, her first story was published in *Godey's Lady's book*. In the following month, her works were being published regularly in *Godey's Lady's book*, *Scribner's Monthly*, *Peterson Magazine* and *Harper's Bazaar*. She wrote some stories for five years. In 1869, she had earned money to buy a better house for her family in Knoxville.

Burnett spent much of her lifetime as a writing worker. In 1874, she began to write her full-length novel which was entitled *That Lass o' Lowrie's*. In 1886, she published another novel which was entitled *Little Lord Fauntleroy*. This novel was supported by her son, Lionel who asked her to write a story book for kids. *Little Lord Fauntleroy* character became famous in America for the cloth velvet collars worn by Cedric Errol.

Burnett had two children, Lionel and Vivian from her marriage with Swan Burnett. They lived in a happy family until her death on October 29<sup>th</sup>,

1924. Frances Hodgson Burnett was buried in the Roslyn Cemetery, on Long Island, New York State.

### **3. REVIEW**

#### **3.1 Theme of Little Lord Fauntleroy**

Theme is an intrinsic part of a literature works. It is a very important thing to discuss; in which the readers know the passage from the entire contents. "Theme is a central idea or meaning of a story. It provides a unifying point around which the plot, characters, setting, point of view, symbols, and other elements of a story are organized" (Meyer, 1990:196). In addition, theme is divided into two parts, namely major theme and minor theme.

##### **3.1.2 Major Theme**

Major theme is a main idea of theme to decide the purpose of the entire story of the novel. In this case, *Little Lord Fauntleroy* major theme is love caring. The love caring is a personal nature of Cedric's behavior that comes from his beloved mother. He learns how to treat himself in a proper way and how to be a good person with people around. It is supported by quotations in Chapter VI: "*I learned to dress myself many years ago, thank you,*" answered Fauntleroy. "*Dearest taught me. 'Dearest' is my mamma*" (Burnett, 1886:107).

### **3.1.3 Minor Theme**

The minor theme of this novel is self awareness. Self awareness of little Cedric is having thought process to focus what becomes his attention. It makes his personality and behavior to establish where he goes in this life. The kindness of little Cedric becomes bigger and he knows what he lives for. He uses his authority as an heir to the Earldom to treat the people equal and make them live in prosperity and comfort. It is supported by quotations in Chapter VIII: *“I’ve brought your son home, ma’am,” ses he, ‘because his leg hurt him, and I don’t think that stick is enough for him to lean on; and I’m going to ask my grandfather to have a pair of crutches made for him”* (Burnett, 1886:155).

### **3.2. Strengths of *Little Lord Fauntleroy***

The strengths of this novel includes the plot as intrinsic aspect and language as a Visual Mental Imagery. They are discussed as in the following.

#### **3.2.1. Progressive Plot**

In a progressive plot, the author introduces chronological plot; which firstly establishes introduction, rising action, climax and falling action. The plot of this novel is sequent from beginning until the end of the story. *“The sequent plot of the novel consists of introduction, rising action, climax and falling action”* (Abrams, 1981:138).

The first establishment of this novel is introduction. The introduction begins when the author of the novel tells that Cedric’s father is no longer in this

world, and, therefore, he is appointed as a successor to the Earldom of Dorincourt.

It is supported by quotation in chapter I and chapter II.

“. . . He knew that his papa had been an Englishman, because his mamma had told him so; but then his papahad died when he was so little a boy that he could not remember very much about him” (Burnett, 1886:1).

“After that, his own papa, if he had lived, would have been an earl, but, since they all had died and only Cedric was left, it appeared that HE was to be an earl after his grandpapa’s death – andfor the present he was Lord Fauntleroy” (Burnett, 1886:9).

The second establishment of this novel is rising action. The rising action begins when there is news from England comes to Cedric family by a Dorincourt lawyer, named Havisham, who says that he must move in to Dorincourt castle in England where he is appointed as a Lord Fauntleory to inherit the Earldom of Dorincourt. This news makes Cedric’s mother surprised and tries to consider it, as quoted in Chapter II.

“Then she came back to the table and stood looking up at Mr. Havisham very gently. “My husband would wish it,” she said. “It will be best for my little boy. I know – I am sure the Earl would not be so unkind as to try to teach him not to love me; and I know – even if he tried – that my little boy is too much like his father to be harmed. He has a warm, faithful nature, and a true heart. He would love me even if he did not see me; and so long as we may see each other, I ought not to suffer very much” (Burnett, 1886:27).

Furthermore, climax is the highest point of a dramatic point that is made up by the characters conflict. In contrast, falling action is a finalresolution; in which the story is ended up sad or happy.In addition, the writing style of the novel is easy to apprehend by the readers.

The climax of *Little Lord Fauntleroy* novel begins when her mother sees the truth of many sad things outside the Dorincourt aristocracy privileges. Therefore, she tries to fix it even though for the first time she gets a rejection from the Earl of Dorincourt himself, as quoted in Chapter X.

“She knew she could trust the kind, childish heart; so she told the little fellow the story of Earl's Court, feeling sure that he would speak of it to his grandfather, and hoping that some good results would follow. And strange as it appeared to everyone, good results did follow. The fact was that the strongest power to influence the Earl was his grandson's perfect confidence in him--the fact that Cedric always believed that his grandfather was going to do what was right and generous” (Burnett, 1886:172).

Finally, the falling action of *Little Lord Fauntleroy* is ended when his best friend comes to England, like Mr. Hobbs who opens his fruit and vegetable shop and Mr. Dick who can get back to school again. Fortunately, Cedric's mother is allowed to meet his son without living in separated places. The relationship between Mrs. Errol and the Earl of Dorincourt are becoming in line. They are all living in happy family, as quoted in Chapter XV.

“It was really a very simple thing, after all,--it was only that he had lived near a kind and gentle heart, and had been taught to think kind thoughts always and to care for others. It is a very little thing, perhaps, but it is the best thing of all. He knew nothing of earls and castles; he was quite ignorant of all grand and splendid things; but he was always lovable because he was simple and loving. To be so is like being born a king” (Burnett, 1886:248).

### **3.2.2. Language as a Visual Mental Imagery**

The way an author tries to express her purpose from the novel to the readers is by the language. In contrast, language can also become a visual mental imagery which means having a moment in one's head. “Visual mental imagery is a familiar aspect of most people's day experience which is sometimes colloquially



referred to as imagining the feel of people's day experience." (Galton, 1880). For instance, when the author tells about the personal appearances of Cedric's father, and what Cedric's mother feels the death of his father, as quoted in Chapter I.

“. . . He knew that his papa had been an Englishman, because his mamma had told him so; but then his papa had died when he was so little a boy that he could not remember very much about him, except that he was big, and had blue eyes and a long mustache, and that it was a splendid thing to be carried around the room on his shoulder" (Burnett, 1886:2).

Cedric imagines the feel of his mother's experience because his mother told about his father. It becomes a very important thing for little Cedric to know his own father as a Lord Fauntleroy because one day he would become the Earl of Dorincourt.

### **3.3. Weakness of *Little Lord Fauntleroy***

The writer also found the weakness from this novel. It was about character as a personal nature. In this case, Burnett as an author of the *Little Lord Fauntleroy* novel figures Cedric's mother as a weak woman. It is discussed as follows.

#### **3.3.1. Character as a Personal Nature**

Character as a personal nature aims to describe the individual's behavior. It is as a process to have a degree of insight or emotional feelings further. In addition, all characters had their own personal nature. However, the weak point of this novel is how Burnett as an author figures Mrs. Errol's negative characters too much and if in that case, the Earl of Dorincourt should not appoint a son from a vulgar woman heir to his Earldom or make him an aristocrat. It is supported by quotations in Chapter II.

“. . . the Earl of Dorincourt is not--is not very friendly toward you. He is an old man, and his prejudices are very strong. He has always especially

disliked America and Americans, and was very much enraged by his son's marriage. I am sorry to be the bearer of so unpleasant a communication, but he is very fixed in his determination not to see you" (Burnett, 1886:26).

On the other hand, the author of this novel figures Mrs. Errol as a weak woman. Cedric's mother gently prevents his son from squandering money because the Earl of Dorringcourt increases Cedric's income. Mrs. Errol gently makes her too tender to make a wise decision, as quoted in Chapter II.

"And Cedric's mother was too gentle to suspect any harm. She thought that perhaps this meant that a lonely, unhappy old man, whose children were dead, wished to be kind to her little boy, and win his love and confidence." (Burnett, 1886:44).

Mrs. Errol's Character becomes essential in this novel because she taught the kindness and sincerity to her son, Cedric. However, she does not have any power to change the bad temper of her father-in-law, Cedric's grandfather. On the other hand, Burnett figures Mrs. Errol as a weak woman and always crying even she tries to be steadfast in front of her child, Cedric.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

It can be concluded that *Little Lord Fauntleroy* tells us to love and care one another and to be a good man with people around. This life is not easy at the beginning, but with kindness and sincerity, this life goes with support of the society. In this case, *Little Lord Fauntleroy* has successfully written a good example for children to treat people with good behavior.

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