

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT OF ALBUS DUMBLEDORE AS SEEN IN J.K. ROWLING'S HARRY POTTER SERIES

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A Character Development of Albus Dumbledore as Seen in J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* Series

Abstract

This research discusses the character development of Albus Dumbledore in Harry Potter series. The research is conducted within the framework of objective approach. The aim of this research is to analyze the development of Albus Dumbledore's character throughout Harry Potter series.

The data used in this research are taken from the seven novels of Harry Potter which contain Albus Dumbledore's actions, other characters' dialogues about Albus Dumbledore and author's direct description. The data were classified in chronological order of Albus Dumbledore's life and analyzed by using plot analysis. The result of the research depicts that Albus Dumbledore developed from an ambitious, immature and selfish character into a regretful, wise and protective character as he grew older. The development also shows that Albus Dumbledore has become a good brother, a wise leader and a protective mentor throughout the series.

Keywords: character development, characteristics

Perkembangan Karakter Albus Dumbledore yang Dapat Dilihat dalam Serial Harry Potter oleh J.K. Rowling

Intisari

Penelitian ini membahas perkembangan karakter Albus Dumbledore dalam serial Harry Potter. Penelitian ini dibuat dengan kerangka teori objektif. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menganalisa perkembangan karakter Albus Dumbledore di sepanjang serial Harry Potter.

Data yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini diambil dari tujuh novel Harry Potter yang mengandung aksi-aksi Albus Dumbledore, dialog dari karakter-karakter lain tentang Albus Dumbledore dan deskripsi langsung pengarang. Data ini diklasifikasikan secara runtun sesuai riwayat hidup Albus Dumbledore dan dianalisa menggunakan alur ceritanya. Hasil penelitian ini menggambarkan bahwa Albus Dumbledore mengalami perkembangan dari karakter yang ambisius, tidak dewasa dan egois, menjadi karakter yang mengalami penyesalan, bijaksana dan protektif saat ia bertambah tua. Perkembangan ini juga menunjukkan bahwa Albus Dumbledore menjadi sosok kakak laki-laki yang baik, pemimpin yang bijaksana, dan penasihat yang protektif di dalam serial ini.

Kata kunci: perkembangan karakter, sifat-sifat

INTRODUCTION

J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series is chosen since it is one of the most influential literary works. Rowling wrote *Harry Potter* as a series of 7 novels which has received a lot of awards. It is stated on *Bloomsbury*, "The Harry Potter books and J.K. Rowling have received many honors and awards including Galaxy British Awards–The Book People, Whitaker's Platinum Award 2001, Edinburgh Award 2008" (<http://harrypotter.bloomsbury.com/uk/jkrowling/awards/>) and many more. The novel succeeded to attract not only children, but also the grown-ups by introducing an imaginative story of the wizard world.

Nevertheless, character is one of the intrinsic elements in literary works which is important to be considered. Character has a critical role in the literary work, since it is what a plot in the story is made from. As seen in J.K. Rowling's literary works, *Harry Potter* series, there are several main characters, for example, Harry Potter, Hermione Granger, Albus Dumbledore, in each novel which its character can be developed from its original character to completely different one.

Through these seven novels, each character develops their characteristics or personalities that results in their final character and true role by the end of the seventh novel. The researcher finds it worth to analyze one of Harry Potter's main characters, Albus Dumbledore, because Albus Dumbledore's character is described as a good wizard in the first six novels, but it turns out that Albus Dumbledore has complicated past which is revealed in the last novel. The researcher is curious to know why Albus Dumbledore can change into a better character. Thus, the analysis is focused on Albus Dumbledore's character and the stages of his character development.

The objective of this paper is to analyze the development of Albus Dumbledore's character throughout *Harry Potter* series.

METHOD

The method used in the study is a library research. The primary data sources are taken from the literary work itself. The data are the scenes, including dialogues and narrations, involving Albus Dumbledore, for instance,

"[Severus] Snape gazed for a moment at [Albus] Dumbledore, and there was revulsion and hatred etched in the harsh lines of his face.

'Severus ... please ...'

[Severus] Snape raised his wand and pointed it directly at [Albus] Dumbledore.

'AvadaKedavra!' (Rowling, *HPBHP556*).

The secondary data sources are taken from written sources in the library and from the internet, such as *Elements of Literature* (Potter, 1967), *A Glossary of Literary Terms* (Abrams, 1999), *A Handbook to Literature* (Holman, 1981), and *An Introduction to Literature* (Rohrberger, Woods, and Dukore, 1968).

After reading the series (1-7), the researcher finds that the number of series does not reflect the chronological order as seen from Albus Dumbledore's life. The researcher collects the chronological data by reading the series, then the researcher needs to select the important events which are influenced Albus Dumbledore's life, involving Albus Dumbledore which occurs in the particular plot by looking into Albus Dumbledore's way of thinking and his action, other characters' opinions, and the direct description from the author. Then, the selected data is analyzed through the events in the plot focusing on the chronological development of Albus Dumbledore. Then, the analyzed data is classified into several characteristics in chronological order of Albus Dumbledore's life. Finally, the writer is able to show Albus Dumbledore's character whether he develop or not develop throughout the series.

FINDINGS

Albus Dumbledore's character development is analyzed into two stages which are his early age and his later years and his turning point. Each stage consists of three characteristics that are explained in the following paragraphs.

The characteristics of Albus Dumbledore's early age are described as thirsty for power, immature and selfish. His characteristics in later years show that he becomes regretful, but wise and protective. From this point onward, the researcher will explain Albus Dumbledore's characteristics.

A. Albus Dumbledore's Early Age

Albus Dumbledore's characteristics in his early age are depicted in the last book, *HPDH*. Albus Dumbledore, who is the eldest son of Percival and Kendra Dumbledore and the eldest brother of

Aberforth and Ariana Dumbledore, was a half-Muggle born. It is because his mother, Kendra, was a Muggle and his father, Percival was a pure wizard. The facts that his sister, Ariana has an uncommon disability and his father, Percival has been imprisoned in Azkaban for attacking Muggles, make Albus Dumbledore want to live without his family's scandal, "You know the secret of my sister's ill health, what those Muggles did, what she became. You know how my poor father sought revenge, and paid the price, in Azkaban." (*HPDH* 573) Thus, he truly tries to achieve everything when he finally enters Hogwarts. He becomes the brilliant one in the family, yet later he becomes thirsty for power because of his brilliance. Also, the meeting between Albus Dumbledore and GellertGrindelwald changes Albus Dumbledore's fate in Wizing World.

The complication happens when the meeting between Albus Dumbledore and GellertGrindelwald happens after Albus Dumbledore's graduation. The immature side of Albus Dumbledore is depicted when he chooses GellertGrindelwald instead of his younger siblings whom he has to take a good care of. After the death of Kendra, Albus Dumbledore feels that it is not fair for him to be the head of Dumbledore family which shows his immature side. Also, the fact which Aberforth shows to him to make him realize that he has already neglected his family does not work.

The conflicts occur when Albus Dumbledore plans to collect the Deathly Hallows with GellertGrindelwald and wants to take Ariana too. Albus Dumbledore becomes selfish. He knows that Ariana cannot go with them because of her incapability of managing her unstable power. The more he wants to pursue his desire, the more selfish he becomes.

Moreover, something worse happens. The fight among Aberforth, who wants Albus Dumbledore to give up his ambitious plan, Albus Dumbledore and GellertGrindelwald cannot be stopped until Albus Dumbledore's younger sister Ariana is killed by one of their curses. The regretful face is shown on Albus Dumbledore's face. The shock of Ariana's death destroys everything. Albus Dumbledore's younger brother, Aberforth cannot forgive him and as the result, Aberforth punches Albus Dumbledore's nose and blames everything on him.

The early age of Albus Dumbledore shows that he has three important characteristics which are thirst of power, immature and selfish. The characteristics are depicted from Albus Dumbledore's behavior towards other characters. He is analyzed as follows.

1.1. Thirsty for Power

The death of Albus Dumbledore's mother, Kendra, makes him feel resentful because he has to be the head of Dumbledore family. At that time, he thought that "I [Albus Dumbledore] was gifted, I was brilliant. I wanted to escape. I wanted to shine. I wanted glory," (Rowling, *HPDH* 573). However, the meeting of Albus Dumbledore and GellertGrindelwald changes Albus Dumbledore's behavior. The change of Albus Dumbledore's behavior is because he falls in love with GellertGrindelwald. He becomes ignorant since he finds a partner to share the same desire which he admits, "it was the thing, above all, that drew us together," he [Albus Dumbledore] said quietly. "Two clever, arrogant boys with a shared obsession." (Rowling, *HPDH* 572). Even though Albus Dumbledore knows the background of GellertGrindelwald as an expelled student from Durmstrang, a school famous with its tolerance of Dark Arts, he is still befriended with GellertGrindelwald. His ignorance of GellertGrindelwald's background shows that Albus Dumbledore is overwhelmed by GellertGrindelwald's incredible ideas to get an authority over Wizing World. Albus Dumbledore also confesses that "his [GellertGrindelwald] ideas caught me [Albus Dumbledore], Harry, inflamed me. Muggles forced into subservience. We [They] wizards triumphant. Grindelwald and I, the glorious young leaders of the revolution." (Rowling, *HPDH* 573). The future glory which Albus Dumbledore wants to get is presented by GellertGrindelwald's ideas.

Moreover, their big plan is to seek the Deathly Hallows consisting of Elder Wand, the most powerful wand in Wizing World, Resurrection Stone, the stone which could call a person's dead spirit, and Invisibility Cloak, the cloak which can hide a person, which will make the wizard who finds and unites them, be the strongest wizard ever. The power which is offered by the Deathly Hallows is fascinated Albus Dumbledore and GellertGrindelwald. Albus Dumbledore confesses that besides his plan to rule over the Wizing World with GellertGrindelwald, "at the heart of our [their] schemes", there are, "the Deathly Hallows! How they fascinated him, how they fascinated both of us [them]!" (Rowling, *HPDH* 574). His desire to find all of the Deathly Hallows becomes much stronger. The news that has been spreading says "for the legend said that the man who united all three objects would then be truly master of death," and Albus Dumbledore concludes that it means "invincible." The

thought of becoming the invincible wizard grows his desire much more. It is proved by his confession which says “invincible master of death, Grindelwald and Dumbledore! Two months of insanity, of cruel dreams, and neglect of the only two members of my family left to me.” (Rowling, *HPDH* 574). By knowing that he can be the invincible wizard and fulfilled his desire, Albus Dumbledore, then, falls deeper into his ambition.

Therefore, the facts that Albus Dumbledore wants to pursue his fame by dominating Muggles and collecting the Deathly Hallows without considering the effect, show Albus Dumbledore’s arrogance. Even though he has already got a lot of achievements and acknowledgements, as a young and brilliant wizard, Albus Dumbledore does not want to lose his chance to get more fame, such as Winner of the BarnabusFinkley Prize for Exceptional Spell-Casting and British Youth Representative to the Wizengamot. It also means that he has to make an alliance with the young dark wizard, GellertGrindelwald. In short, this can be concluded that Albus Dumbledore is an ambitious character.

1.2. Immature

The facts that Albus Dumbledore neglects his siblings and wants to resurrect his parents, and chooses his friend, GellertGrindelwald, depict his irresponsible action of rebellion as the eldest brother. He takes a bad decision not to take care of his siblings which reveals his way of his thinking. As the eldest brother, he should not give his siblings in last priority because he has to fulfill their needs first, as in the family, not his own needs which are collecting Deathly Hallows, three magical things which is once collected makes the wizard able to beat the Death and be immortal, and planning the new Wizarding order.

Moreover, Albus Dumbledore is confused about his responsibility. His brother Aberforth says, “...And looking after Ariana took a backseat then, while they [Albus Dumbledore and GellertGrindelwald] were hatching all their plans for a new Wizarding order, and looking for Hallows,” (Rowling, *HPDH* 456). He does not understand how big the risk of neglecting his siblings and how big the responsibility his mother gives him. His confusion shows his inability to behave like what he should be, as the eldest son. He who just knows about love becomes illogical. He is blinded by his love for GellertGrindelwald, so it makes him chooses GellertGrindelwald instead of his siblings. His behavior is a reflection of his irresponsibility of

being an immature brother. It is depicted in this line, “I [Albus Dumbledore] returned to my village with anger and bitterness. Trapped and wasted, I thought!” (Rowling, *HPDH* 573). He shows his immaturity that he cannot accept the fact about his responsibility to take care of his family. Thus, Albus Dumbledore proves to be an immature character.

1.3. Selfish

His desire to pursue his ambition is bigger than his willing to take care of his siblings. He wants to shine and get his glory. The way of behaving that Albus Dumbledore shows is selfish too.

The fact is also shouted at Albus Dumbledore who makes his final plan with GellertGrindelwald by Aberforth, “I [Aberforth] told him [Albus Dumbledore], you’d better give it up now. You can’t move her, she’s in no fit state, you can’t take her with you, wherever it is you’re planning to go, when you’re making yourselves [Albus Dumbledore and GellertGrindelwald] up a following” (Rowling, *HPDH* 456). The fact hits Albus Dumbledore but he “did not want to hear that I [Albus Dumbledore] could not set forth to seek Hallows with a fragile and unstable sister [Ariana] in tow” (Rowling, *HPDH* 574). He is afraid that he already becomes unrealistic and selfish and his brother is right, yet he refuses to accept Aberforth’s advice. Albus Dumbledore only does not want to be burdened by his sister, so that he tries to take her as long as he can still pursue his ambition.

2. Albus Dumbledore’s Turning Point

The fact that Ariana is killed by one of their curses makes Albus Dumbledore scared to find who the real killer is. Because of Ariana’s unstable and uncontrollable power, Albus Dumbledore does not know when she joins the fight. The event becomes Albus Dumbledore’s greatest inner conflict.

Moreover, Albus Dumbledore’s feeling towards GellertGrindelwald makes him feel more suffered after GellertGrindelwald’s leaving. Albus Dumbledore is broken hearted because his first love leaves him. He is shocked by the leaving of GellertGrindelwald and the death of his sister. He realizes that he is the responsible one because he brings GellertGrindelwald into his life. He messes up his family and his own feeling. He does not think that GellertGrindelwald would leave him eventually because of the time they have spent together.

Albus Dumbledore's action in the event shows that he has through the biggest despair when he starts to lose everything. He loses his sister, Ariana and his friend, GellertGrindelwald. His fear that his plan will destroy his life comes out when GellertGrindelwald chooses to leave after Ariana's killed. Albus Dumbledore does not have any strength to defend himself when his younger brother, Aberforth blames him for Ariana's death.

However, these events become Albus Dumbledore's turning point that several years later Albus Dumbledore dedicates himself to the education of young wizards instead of chasing his past desire. He already gives up his thirst of power and decides not to repeat his mistakes. His meeting with Tom Riddle later becomes his fear that he meets the future Dark Wizard, Lord Voldemort.

3. Albus Dumbledore's Later Years

The writer finds that Albus Dumbledore has opposite characteristics after his turning point. His greatest inner conflict leads him to be a better person when the stage of his regretful feeling is finally passed. Albus Dumbledore, later, is remembered as a tragic hero who becomes the Wizarding World's greatest loss, yet the most Wizarding World's memorable and greatest wizard.

3.1. Regretful

Leaving with only a brother makes Albus Dumbledore have an awkward relationship with his brother Aberforth. After the incident of their sister death, Aberforth cannot forgive Albus Dumbledore. At the funeral, Aberforth hits Albus Dumbledore's nose in front of the mourners. Albus Dumbledore who gets hit does not fight back since he thinks that he deserves the punch. Albus Dumbledore feels regretful that he feels it might be him who causes Ariana's death. Albus Dumbledore's thirst of power, immature decisions, and selfish attitudes bring him to the state of regret. Later, Albus Dumbledore confesses to *Harry Potter* that "some wounds run too deep for the healing" (Rowling, HPOP735). It makes AlbusDumbledore sees his complete family happily and healthy in the Mirror of Erised. He says to *Harry Potter* in later year that "[the Mirror of Erised] shows us nothing more or less than the deepest, most desperate desire of our hearts." (Rowling, HPPS157). His regretful feeling is also depicted in later year when he finds the Resurrection Stone.

His confession shows that his ambition towards the Deathly Hallows, especially the Resurrection Stone, has changed into a desperate desire to see his family. His regret is really big that it makes him to do something recklessly. He shows that he cannot forget his guilty feeling even after he grows older. In the events of the death of Ariana, the punching incident, and the finding of Resurrection Stone, Albus Dumbledore is depicted as a regretful character.

3.2. Wise

Albus Dumbledore's bad experience has caused him to change his way of thinking. In later years, Albus Dumbledore has made up his mind to apply a position in Hogwarts as Transfiguration teacher. The fact that he has lost his entire family except his brother Aberforth gives him strength to finally devote himself in Wizarding World. The regretful feeling which still lingers on his heart makes Albus Dumbledore change.

His past experience has taught him that having power may bring another loss. He does not want to repeat his mistake that he is too afraid in taking any offer to have a superior power. Albus Dumbledore realizes that his weakness is having a superior power, so that he tends to avoid it more than any other thing. He says that "I [Albus Dumbledore] had proven, as a very young man, that power was my weakness and my temptation." (Rowling, *HPDH* 575).

The act of refusing the offer of Ministry of Magic, the decision to refuse Lord Voldemort's application, giving Severus Snape, Draco Malfoy and Rubeus Hagrid a second chance show that Albus Dumbledore is a wise character. His actions in taking different path from the Minister of Magic and using his authority as the Headmaster in the right situation also depict his wise characteristic. His way of thinking affects his behavior so that he becomes careful and has sensible decision. Because of the experiences and knowledge that he has, Albus Dumbledore grows to be a wise wizard.

3.3. Protective

The acts of Albus Dumbledore's sacrifice and strength show Albus Dumbledore's protective side. His actions depict how he protects his beloved ones to prevent him from any danger. The way he shows his affection and love is depicted in his statement to Harry Potter, "you do care! You care so much, you

feel as though you will bleed to death with the pain of it.” (Rowling, HPOP 726). In order to protect Harry Potter, Albus Dumbledore is willingly to be killed. As Albus Dumbledore has predicted, *Harry Potter* could defeat Lord Voldemort with the helps that Albus Dumbledore left before he died. Therefore, Albus Dumbledore is depicted as a protective character in his later years because of his behavior and his actions. His determination to change shows that he has developed into a better person. Albus Dumbledore’s personality has changed as well as his way of thinking. He suffers a lot in order to protect those who are loyal to him. He sacrifices himself to make *Harry Potter* defeat Lord Voldemort easier. In short, Albus Dumbledore has protective characteristics which he shows until his death.

Albus Dumbledore in his early years is known as a person who is thirsty for power and selfish, but he has developed through the series. Albus Dumbledore becomes a better character as he becomes older. Albus Dumbledore’s change is presented in the series clearly.

Albus Dumbledore’s character development is depicted in the chronological events of his life. There are six characteristics that show Albus Dumbledore true character. The younger Albus Dumbledore is ambitious, immature and selfish person. However, he has been through a long process which makes his characteristics change. Albus Dumbledore has his turning point when he realizes that his previous characteristics bring more harm to his surroundings, especially his family. He becomes a regretful brother who takes his lesson well, and then he changes into a wise and protective person. His wise and protective side is seen in Hogwarts when he becomes the Headmaster of Hogwarts. He is regarded as a dynamic and round character in the series. It is because he has done several actions that show his immaturity which bring him to harm others, but he changes to be a wiser character. The development of Albus Dumbledore has been depicted in his way of thinking, his behavior, his words and through other characters’ dialogues.

CONCLUSION

From the analysis of Albus Dumbledore’s development, the writer is able to see Albus Dumbledore characteristics. Albus Dumbledore’s development in the series is divided into two parts. The first part is Albus Dumbledore’s early age. As a brother he is depicted as having thirsty for power, immature

and selfish characteristics. This is in line with the fact that he has a big dream and desire, and at the same time he has to take care of his siblings. The second part is Albus Dumbledore’s later years. He becomes a leader and a mentor. As a leader he is depicted by his wise characteristic. He shows that he is a respectful and wise leader for everyone in the Wizarding World. As a mentor, it is shown in his great help for *Harry Potter*. He guides *Harry Potter* to be able to defeat Lord Voldemort. Thus, it is concluded that Albus Dumbledore’s character developed into a wise and protective character.

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