



**BOOK REVIEW OF *MISS BILLY*
WRITTEN BY ELEANOR H. PORTER**

A FINAL PROJECT

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PRONOUNCEMENT

The writer states that this final project is compiled by her without taking the results from other research in any university, in S-1, S-2, S-3 degree and diploma. In addition, the writer ascertains that she does not take the material from other publications or someone's work except for the references mentioned in bibliography.

Semarang, 16 January 2014

Eka Diah Aryuni

MOTTO AND DEDICATION

It is easier to find men who will volunteer to die, than to find those who are willing to endure pain with patience.

(Julius Caesar)

This final project are dedicated to my beloved parents and friends

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Semarang, January 2014

The writer

TABLE OF CONTENT

TITLE	i
PRONOUNCEMENT	ii
MOTTO AND DECICATION.....	iii
APPROVAL.....	iv
VALIDATION.....	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	vi
TABLE OF CONTENT.....	viii
ABSTRACT	ix
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER II SUMMARY OF THE BOOK	4
CHAPTER III REVIEW OF THE BOOK	7
CHAPTER IV CONCLUSION	13
REFERENCES	
APPENDIX	

ABSTRAK

Miss Billy merupakan novel pertama dari trilogy: *Miss Billy*, *Miss Billy's Decision* dan *Miss Billy Married*. Novel karangan Eleanor H. Porter ini berkisah tentang seorang gadis yatim piatu bernama Billy. Billy yang meyangnamaseperti anak laki-laki memutuskan untuk tinggal di kediaman keluarga Henshaw. Konflik muncul setelah Billy tumbuh menjadi gadis cantik dan Henshaw bersaudara pun menaruh hatipadanya. Di dalam novel ini banyak isuseperti kehidupan sosial, nilai moral, percintaan dan budaya. Dari review novel ini, maka kekurangan novel ini adalah mengenai karakter Billy yang tidak konsisten, sedangkan kelebihan yang dimiliki novel ini seperti adanya sentuhan humor, deskripsi karakter yang jelas, *Strata*, unsur romantisme, dan nilai moral yang terkandung dalam novel tersebut. Memperhatikan kelebihan dan kekurangan novel tersebut secara umum, maka *Miss Billy* merupakan novel yang menarik dan layak untuk dibaca.

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Literature is one of human works, which created to fulfill human's need and to represent human's life. Wellek and Warren say that "literature represents life" (1997:94). This statement explains that literature shows how life is. Because literature is created by human it tells about human's life. The problem that discussed in literature is a reflection of life issues.

There are some kinds of literature, poetry, drama, prose, and novel. At this time, there are so many novels and some of those novels are not just interesting to be read, but also interesting to be analyzed. One of those novels is *Miss Billy*, a romantic novel written by a famous writer, Eleanor Hodgman Porter. *Miss Billy* is a novel that tells about an orphan girl whose name is like boy's name, Billy. She lives in a house which is owned by her father's friend, Henshaw family. Its climax begins with Billy's arrival in Boston after she went abroad for couple years because of Kate Henshaw's anger. Billy grows as a nice girl until Henshaw brothers, William, Cyril, and Bertram fall in love with her and want to marry her. The writer finds that this novel is interesting to be analyzed, so the writer chooses this novel to analyze its strength, weakness, theme, and its other aspects.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The purposes of this study are to describe and explain about the theme, the strengths and the weaknesses of the novel. The writer hopes that the reader will get some lessons from cases which happened in this novel. Therefore, the readers will consider reading this book or not. In addition to the strengths and the weaknesses, the writer encourages the readers to read *Miss Billy*, because there are a lot of experiences and messages from this novel.

1.3 About the Author

This description is taken from <http://www.online-literature.com/eleanor-porter/>

Eleanor Hodgman Porter was born in Littleton, New Hampshire on 19 December 1868, the daughter of Francis Fletcher Hodgman, and Liwella Woolson. She became an excellent singer after studying at the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston. She married John Lyman Porter on 3 May 1892 and started writing short stories, usually set in New England.

Cross Currents (1907) was her first full-length novel to be published, followed by *The Turn of the Tide* (1908) and *The Story of Marco* (1911), *Miss Billy* (1911) was her first commercial success, followed by *Miss Billy's Decision* (1912), and *Miss Billy Married* (1914). However, with the arrival of *Pollyanna* (1913) Porter won international acclaim. The young orphan Pollyanna was inspiration to young boys and girls everywhere with her irrepressible optimism.

Pollyanna Grows Up (1915) follows the heroine in Europe with her Aunt Polly and Dr. Chilton, faced with yet more of life seems insurmountable hurdles.

It was followed by *Just David* (1916), another orphan who transform the lives of the people he meets; *Oh, Money! Money!*(1918), *Dawn* (1919), and *Mary Marie* (1920). Eleanor Hodgman Porter died at home in Cambridge, Massachusetts on 21 May 1920. She lies buried at the Mount Auburn Cemetery of Cambridge, Middlesex, Massachusetts

CHAPTER II

SUMMARY OF THE BOOK

Billy Henshaw Neilson or known as Miss Billy was eighteen years old when her aunt, Miss Henson, died. It made her live alone with no relative. Mr. James Harding, Billy's lawyer, tried to help by looking for someone or a close family whom Miss Billy can live with. There was just a name that appeared, Mr. William Henshaw, a close friend of Miss Billy's father. The unique thing was Billy's father gave her name which same with his close friend's name. By a chance, Mr. William Henshaw was an acquaintance of James Harding's son.

Henshaw lived in Beacon Street. The house was lived by three men; they were William Henshaw, a rich State Street broker and an antique collector, Bertram Henshaw who was a painter, and Cyril Henshaw who was an educated musician. There were also two servants, Dong Ling and Pete. The only one Henshaw's daughter was Kate Hartwell, and she was married.

The Henshaw's house was known by its area dividing, called "Strata". The first strata was lived by Cyril with his music instruments, the second strata was lived by William with his antiques, the third strata was lived by Bertram with his painting tools, and the last strata was lived by Dong Ling and Pete. At the last strata, there were a kitchen and a dining room. In a morning, William got a letter

from Billy who asked him for his help. This letter made a debate between the three brothers. Cyril did not agree with Billy's coming, Bertram could accept Billy, while William was uncertain between accepting Billy or not. But, after he read a letter from James Harding, he replied by telegram and wrote "Please, come". They prepared for an eighteen years old boy's arrival because in the letter did not inform that a child name Billy was a girl. The room that prepared for the child was full with boy decoration like a gun, knife, and sword.

William was confused when he picked up Billy at a station. William, who thought Billy was a boy, just noticed a boy aged eighteen years that came out from the train. Finally, William met Billy and he was surprised when he realized that Billy was a girl. He called his brothers and shared his surprised by telephone.

After few months, William, whom Billy considered as her own uncle, started to fall in love with her. Bertram, who since the beginning agreed to accept Billy, was also interested in Billy. William looked for a nanny for Billy, named Hannah Stetson or Aunty Hannah. Aunty Hannah had tasks to teach and treat Billy because Kate was impossible to treat her every day.

Until one day, Billy did something wrong that made Henshaw family angry with her. Kate who hated Billy since her arrival, scolded her because she tailed Bertram when he was with his wicked friend. Billy did that because she did

not like when Bertram has a wicked friend like Mr. Slave. Kate said to Billy that the situation in Strata and her brothers were changing since her coming. Kate's anger disenchanted Billy that she just a disturber in Henshaw family.

Billy was so serious to leave Henshaw's house. She did not only take time off in Hampden Falls, but she also sailed for couple months to America and France with Aunty Hannah. She met Mr. Calderwell in her voyage. Mr. Calderwell fell in love with her but Billy rejected him.

After two years left Henshaw's house, Billy sent a letter to William about her arrival in Boston and she wanted to come to Strata. Henshaw family was happy with the letter because they regretted that they ever let her go. Billy grew and became a beautiful woman. Henshaw brother's fell in love with her, one by one they told her about their feeling. William and Billy almost got engage, but finally she realized that her feeling to William is just as her uncle, not for another relationship. Billy's final choice was Bertram because she loved him so much, neither William nor Cyril. After rejected by Billy, Cyril fell in love with Billy's piano teacher, Marie Hawthorne.

CHAPTER III

REVIEW OF THE BOOK

Reading novel *Miss Billy* makes the writer realize that Eleanor Hodgman Porter has given her best effort to compose this book. This is proven by some strengths of this novel which makes this novel become interesting to be analyzed and read. But, nothing is perfect, including this novel. This novel also has a weakness, so in this chapter the writer will explain about the theme, the strength, and the weakness of this book.

3.1 Theme of the Book

According to Stanton (1962:20) and Kenny (1996:88), theme is the meaning that implied in a story. But there are any meaning conceived and offered by the story (the novel), then the problem is a special meaning which can be expressed as the theme.

The first theme is a young girl with an unusual name. A girl is named with a boyish name, Billy, and it brings her and her new family, 'Henshaw family', to an identity misunderstanding. The second theme is Billy's strength and struggle. She struggles for her life and she also makes effort to make her independent without being a troublesome girl for Henshaw family. Finally, her struggle changes her become a mature woman with settled life.

This novel is not perfect if the author does not include romantic element on it. Love is the last theme of this novel. Henshaw brothers fall in love with Billy and

they express their feeling by their own way, even they try to propose her. This makes the reader want to know who her choice is.

3.1 The Strengths of *Miss Billy*

1. Humorous Sense

In The Free Dictionary.com, humor is the quality of a literary or informative work that makes the character and or situations seem funny, amusing, or ludicrous. In this novel, the author gives another side from a romantic novel. She does not give poetic words to the reader merely. She also takes humor in this novel, it makes the reader think that she is a humorist. It also makes this novel interesting to be read by everyone.

The author has many ways to send her humorous sense to the reader. This humor is not only put on the main character, but also she put it on the antagonists, for example Pete and Dong Ling. In this novel, humor also becomes a media to send information or a message. By putting humor, the reader can little bit feel relax when reading this novel.

Quotes:

"Home-home!" chattered William. "Do you think we five men can bring up a distractingly pretty eighteen-year-old girl with curly cheeks and pink hair?"

"With wha-at?"

"No, no. I mean curly hair and pink cheeks. Bertram, do be sensible," begged the man. "This is serious!" (1911:23)

2. Distinctive Explanation of the Character

The second strength of this novel is the explanation of each character. The author explains the description of each character clearly, like Henshaw brothers

with their characteristics. She also explains their physical appearance, age, hobby, social condition, and psychological condition. Those make the reader understand the characters easily.

(a) *“First: stratum number one, the top floor; that’s Cyril’s, you know. They’d note the bare floors, the sparse but heavy furniture, the piano, the violin, the flute, the book-lined walls, and the absence of every sort of curtain, cushion, or knickknack. ‘Here lived a plain man,’ they’d say; ‘a scholar, a musician, stern, unloved and unloving; a monk.’”* (1911:6)

(b) *“Cyril, thirty years old now, dignified, reserved, averse to cats, dogs, women, and confusion, had early taken himself and his music to the peace and exclusiveness of the fourth floor.”* (1911:7)

The author also gives the reader a different thought about Billy. The reader maybe thinks that Billy is a boyish girl from the title. This is caused by a thought that Billy is name for a boy, not for an eighteen years old girl that feminine, nice, elegant, and expressive

3. The Strata

Strata is the plural form of the stratum. According to Vocabulary.com, stratum is one of several parallel layers of material arranged one on top of another (such as tissue or cells in an organism or a layer of sedimentary rock).

In the second chapter of this novel, the reader will find a word “Strata” which sounds unique and odd. The word “Strata” in this novel gives explanation about social condition of Henshaw family. The author explains that the word is another name of Henshaw’s luxurious house. The reader, generally, knows that strata mean level or a luxurious house with two or more floors. These stratums become unique because each stratum is lived by one of Henshaw’s family members. The reader, especially Indonesian reader, may have difficulty to imagine how the form

of the Strata because a home like that is rare in Indonesia. But, it can be solved by the author's explanation about the form and the interior of the Strata. The writer thinks that word "Strata" is unique choice because it can describe the Henshaw's house condition and their social condition.

4. Romantic

This novel has romantic element like the other romantic novels. The romantic element can be seen in love expressions between Billy, Hugh Calderwall, William, Cyril, and Bertram. The author gives those romantic elements with simple words. The author makes the reader do not feel bored by love expressions in this novel through direct explanation method. The romantic side of this novel is valued by the reader as a mature romantic, which directs to serious relationship. It is added by a thought that a man should be brave to express his feeling.

"Because I don't want you for a friend, or a sister, or anything else that's related." Stormed Bertram, with sudden vehemence. "I don't want you for anything but a -wife! Billy, won't you marry me?" (1911:106)

5. Moral Values

The author does not forget to give moral values to the reader. Although the author comes from a western country, she gives the reader a story that its characters live with norms. As the reader knows, Western culture and life style are different with Eastern. The Western are famous with their freedom and their bad manners, for example, the western usually has individual attitude toward the others, but the author gives the other positive side, which can be seen when William offers helps to Billy in the station, although in that time they do not know each other.

"I beg your pardon," he said kindly, lifting his hat, "but I notice that you have been waiting here some time. Perhaps there is something I can do for you?"

"Oh, thank you, sir! There is something you can do for me, if you will be so kind. You see, I can't leave this place, I'm so afraid he'll come and I'll miss him. But—I think there's some mistake. Could you telephone for me?"
(1911:21)

In this novel, the reader can see that its characters live in a social environment with western life style. The author uses a well-mannered word in each sentence. The characters also show their well-mannered life. It can be seen when Billy lives with five men, she is accompanied by Kate and Aunty Hannah to keep her. It is because, a woman lives with a man whom is not her husband, is not normal. Those things make the character's life is different with Western life style in general.

3.2 The Weakness of *Miss Billy*

Inconsistency of the character

The author created Billy as a cute, beautiful, and charming girl who makes many men want her. This is not balanced with her character which is not distinct in taking a decision and her choice. From the beginning until the middle of the story, the character of Billy does not change. Billy stays with her attitude, assertive and persistent, but in the end of the story Billy's character changes into a girl who is not consistent. The changing of Billy's character is caused by the conflicts that happen in her life. The reader feels that in the end of the story, Billy is confused to choose a man who will be her husband. Her inconsistency in taking a decision makes the reader feel that s/he is being cheated. It is because the author created Billy falls in love and changes her choice easily toward Henshaw brother.

This thing is considered as not appropriate thing when a girl changes her couple frequently; moreover the men still have family relationship. Billy's inconsistency makes the reader feels disappointed toward her behavior though in the beginning it makes the reader give sympathy to her.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

Miss Billy tells us about an orphan girl, named Billy, who looks for a new family to live with. Finally she finds Henshaw family which accepts her. William Henshaw is a best friend of Billy's father. An identity misunderstanding because of her boyish name, her struggle, and her love story are the conflicts that fill almost of this entire novel.

This novel has strength in detail explanations. This novel explains its characters, setting of place and time, situation, and its environment clearly. Humor sense also becomes its magnet for the reader because with humor the reader will not feel bored. The author also gives moral value to the reader and new stigma about western life style which is not always free and vulgar.

The weakness of this novel is Billy's inconsistency in taking decision. This weakness dominates in the end of this novel. The reader, who is in the beginning sympathy with Billy, becomes disappointed and feels being cheated because of her inconsistent.

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