
**AN ANALYSIS OF REALISTIC LIFE OF ERNEST HEMINGWAY'S
NOVEL "THE OLD MAN AND THE SEA"**

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ABSTRACT

This study is intended to analyze Hemingway's novel entitled "the old man and the sea" from realistic life. Through this approach, this study on the problem statement: How is the realistic life reflected in the novel? One of the characteristic of realistic of the novel is populated by a poor hero. In the old man and the sea, the poverty as a reflection of a lower class. The other characteristic of realistic is about the condition that suggests the hero is conditioned and controlled by his environment. The other characteristic is violence which is used to measure the old man and the sea as naturalistic or realistic is violence. Violence deals with using force or strength by human in his efforts to survive in the unfriendly environment. The conclusion of this research is by understanding this novel, the reader can supply herself/himself with realistic background to have an adequate result of analysis. Hemingway who is famous as a realist or naturalist is skill full in portraying his characters from the point of realistic description. He can present the hero with behaviour that reflect realistic.

Keywords: realistic; life; the old man and the sea

INTRODUCTION

Novel is a manifestation of human life imagination's work in writing form. The author concludes sentence after sentence representing his/her imagination to establish a series of realities which exist in the daily life of a person. The story reflected from the novel is a life story and various life events experienced by story characters who also play a variety of characters.

Reality is normally raised in a novel is the embodiment of stories which can provide new inspiration to the target reader(s). One of them is a historical story most often raised in a novel which reflects historical value. The author rearranges in a series of sentences that can represent a series of stories of past history and reappeared in the form of stories in the novel to be known by readers future times

A novel "The old Man and The Sea" is one of the many Hemingway's works on literature that was published on 1952. This novel made him get a Nobel Prize. It was a result of his prolonged thought and painstaking work (Campbell in Study Guide, 1962, p.100). It means that the novel was not created in short time and up to now, we still feel his work. In creating this novel he had to stay in Cuba by observing the life of fisherman in fishing, in handling equipment of fishing, and so on. Therefore his novel is realistic, not based on more imagination. Dealing with it, Campbell comments:

When writing a novel, a writer should create living people: people not characters.

[.....] "A character is a caricature. If a writer can make people live, there may be no great characters in his book, but it is possible that his book will remain as a whole, as an entity, as a novel people in novel, not skillfully constructed characters, must be projected from the writer's assimilated experience, from his knowledge, from his heart and from all there is of him (1962:102).

He himself said that the novel is fiction based on many actual occurrences (in Campbell, 1962:106). Among these occurrences may be his own experiences fishing for marlin in Caribbean waters. He acquired a reputation for bringing his fish in quickly before sharks had time to damage them, Carlos Baker said that Hemingway was known as a realist. Besides as a realist, the central figures of his novel have been men of action or concerned with life on the threshold of death and disaster. And in the Old Man and the Sea, he presented old age facing and death with courage, hope and wisdom. Man of action which is reflected in Santiago clearly shows that Hemingway likes the world of manliness and courage. By means of courage, the hero faces life problems. Life is based on the sordid laws of money grabbing, violence, and death. Besides the aspect of defeat, the researcher also found another sign that the novel is realistic such as the hero himself. He is an old fisherman and was called a *salao* the description on his body and his bad luck. The description of an old man is categorized as realistic, since it deals with the helplessness of man in the unfriendly universe. The unfriendly universe is the form of the wild sharks, and the community where Santiago lived. The people of the community mocked him because he was old and *salao*. There are many other aspects that shows naturalism in the novel.

On the basis of the elaborated reason, the researcher limits the study as following : The study is only focuses in the main character, Santiago who is exposed in the novel with his heroism in the sea (his struggle to catch the great marlin in the sea in his old age). The problem which is formulated in this study is "how is realistic reflected in the novel?". The objective of the study is to answer the problem statement is to find out the realistic that is reflected in this novel.

2. METHODS

Methodology is any orderly system of principle, by which a body of knowledge. In this study, the intended term of methodology means the science of scientific research method used in applying the research to meet the objective of the study. This research belongs to descriptive qualitative research which emphasizes on the facts finding but which is followed by analyzing and also interpreting on the basis of certain criterion. Since the study of literature belongs to descriptive study. In this research, the standard criteria deal with the characteristics of realistic of Ernest Hemingway, the researcher is going to analyze and interpret the novel "The old Man and The Sea".

2.1. The Procedure of the Study are:

(1)At the preparatory level, the researcher selects some novels and after that the researcher decides to analyze "The Old Man and The Sea" a novel written by Ernest Hemingway. (2) The researcher reads the novel intensively by paying attention on the content carefully. After she gained the reading comprehension she tries to come to the critical level of reading, which means that the act of her reading comes to a higher level. The researcher analyzing the plot, the setting, the conflicts and also the theme. (3) After reading the whole novel on the basis of structural analysis, she tries to find the best kinds of approach that fits the study. (4) After making some intensive consultation, and reads other references that deal with the novel, the researcher prepares to collect the data for further analysis and interpretation. The data are called document. (5) The data analysis and interpret begins. The analysis and interpretation is carried out the basis of the standard criteria on realistic. (6) At last, the researcher comes to the level of completion. Here, she writes the report of the research that deals with the Analysis of Realistic Life of Ernest Hemingway's Novel The Old Man and The Sea.

The data of the research are taken from the novel itself. The source of data are in the form of dialogue and narration. To make the data valid, the researcher takes some theory to triangulate this data. So the researcher uses theory triangulation. In analyzing the data, the researcher uses interactive model of analysis which include: data reduction, data display, and conclusion.

3. RESULTS AND THE DISCUSSION

Based on the problem statement, the researcher found that this novel belongs to the realistic or naturalistic approach which reflect on: (1) the characteristic of poor, (2) the characteristic of violence, and (3) the characteristic of environment. The researcher is going to show that The Old Man and The Sea that tells Hemingway's readers can be called a realistic or naturalistic novel. Because it deals with the struggle for existence which is very basic to the philosophy of existentialism. It means that when someone wants to live, he must struggle to exist. To live to exist.

In dealing with the poor people, Hemingway observed the life of sailors living in the cost area somewhere in Cuba in 1950's. Even to be able to describe Santiago, who becomes the major hero of the novel, he lived together with the sailors for months. For his purposed he had moved from USA to Cuba to present life like character. In Cuba he stayed at a village named "Cojimar" together with his wife, Mary Welsh. His activities in writing the novel is like told by Andre Naurois: "He writes his descriptive passages in pencil, his dialogues on the typewriter. In the afternoon, weather permitting, he fishes with his sailor navigator. He still believed that the writer must keep in touch with nature by some form of action. (Baker, 1962, p. 47).

By means of the explanation, it is clear that Hemingway tries to catch the real picture of the life as he describes in his novel realistically. He must keep in touch with life. So it is clear that Hemingway is a realist. But in this novel, Santiago is a poor fisherman. The poverty as a reflection of a lower class, it can be seen from this quotation:

The old man leaned the mast with its wrapped sail against the wall and the boy put the box and the other gear beside it. The mast was nearly as long as the one room of the shack. The shack was made of the tough bud, shield of the royal palm which are called guano ad in it there was a bed, a table, one chair, and a place on the dirt floor to cook with charcoal. (TOMTS, 1961, p.10)

The description of the hut of Santiago that there is no luxury. All are about poor things. His poverty is more felt when we observe his small boat to fish. The description of the boat is parallel to the description of the hut, for both are described in poverty. And poverty belongs to the lower class, who economically are weak. The weak class usually arouse a feeling of sympathy the readers because they are from powerless in the struggle for life. They are always defeated and frequently ended in tragedy in their struggle.

The old man was thin, and gaunt with deep wrinkles in the back of his neck. The brown blotches of the benevolent skin cancer the sun brings from its reflection on the topic sea were on his cheeks. The blotches ran well down the sides of his face and his hands had the deep-creased scars from handling heavy fish on the cords. But none of these scars were fresh (TOMTS, 1961, p.6).

The poor condition in economy as a lower class does not change his fate in the end of the story. Santiago as a poor fisherman remains the same. It means that he is determined to be a poor man who has to live in poverty. Although he tries hard to change his life, he does not succeed.

The second criteria which is used to measure the Old Man and the Sea as the description of realistic is violence. As mentioned above violence related with using force by human in

surviving his unfriendly environment. Santiago is in a bad relationship with it. If he wants to live longer he has to struggle by conquering the environment, for it has no feeling or affection to him.

The idea of violence seems to be influential on vision so that he has created a hero, Santiago, who has to fight against a group of sharks in the open sea alone. He fights in order to survive especially to protect his marlin from being torn into pieces of them. In this fight, he uses all of his power, strength to conquer the dangerous sharks that try to eat his marlin and to attack himself.

The use of force is further carried out by Santiago because he has to defend himself and his marlin from being attacked by a group of sharks. They come up two hours after he has killed the first shark. At the time he has sailed for two hours, resting in the stern and sometimes chewing a bit of the meat from the marlin, trying to rest and to be strong, when he sees the first of the two sharks. The description of their coming can be read through the following citation:

“Galanos” he said aloud. He had seen the second fin now coming up behind the first and had identified them as shovel nosed sharks by the brown, triangular fin and the weeping movements of the tail. They had the scent and were excited and in the stupidity of their great hunger they were losing and finding the scent in their excitement. But they were closing all the time (TOMTS, 1961, p.80).

To defend his marlin which means to survive from the unfriendly environment, Santiago has to use his force or physical strength. He fight hard to kill them or drive them away. He succeeds at last although he is finally very tired. Santiago ends the fight by hitting the shark’s head hard so that the wild fish goes away from him. In the fight, we see that the old man uses all of his force, even he has use to tiller until it is broken. It shows that the fight between him and the sharks is a reflection of violence. The violence itself happens as the consequences of the old man’s position to survive in the middle of the unfriendly environment. In this situation, we also see how the theory of evolution works, because there is a struggle of existence. In the theory we can learn that to survive, an organism or species must adjust itself to the environment through natural selection. Those who can survive are those who fit the environment although they must go through violence.

So we see that the idea of violence which is one of the characteristic of realistic novel is well expresses in the old man and the sea. In the novel, the idea of violence is expressed through the action or the use of force or physical strength of the old man named Santiago in his struggle for his survival by fighting against a group of sharks that will eat his marlin. The third criteria of this novel that is conditioned by environment. The other characteristic of the naturalistic novel as Donald Pizer explains is about condition that suggests that the hero is conditioned and controlled

by his environment. It is very important in shaping his fate so that he can not be free from the environment. This situation suggest the idea of defeat which is experienced by the hero. He will never be able to overcome the defeat that has imprisoned his fate. In other words, the environment plays an important role in determining the hero's fate. Instead of perfection of life, the hero has a destruction of life. It means that the destruction denies the hope for perfection of his life. However the hero tries hard to change his fate, he will remain the same. So instead of optimism, we feel the presence of pessimism around the hero.

In this context, a critic of Hemingway catches the idea of pessimism in the *Old Man and the Sea*. The critic is E.M Halliday who writes about the vision as follows:

Hemingway's weltanschauung at its most pessimistic; but there is no reason, actually, to think that there has since been a fundamental change in his view of life. Nothing is with thee (in P. Weeks, 1962, p.53)

The quotation indicates that Hemingway has pessimistic vision which does not change. The vision emphasizes that human being does not gain anything in his struggle for life, or in other words he gets nothing. This vision is reflected in the main character of the *Old Man and the Sea* in his struggle of existence, in the middle of the sea, Santiago does not bring the marlin intact the fish has been torn into pieces by the sharks. And now he only brings home the bone or the skeleton of the fish, while he is exhausted after he has fought against the sharks.

He unstepped the mast and furlled the sail and tied it. Then he shouldered the mast and started to climb. It was then he knew the depth of his tiredness. He stopped for a moment and looked back and saw in the reflection from the streetlight the great tail of the fish standing up well behind the skiff's stern. He saw the white naked line of his backbone (TOMTS, 1961, p.90).

It is clear that pessimism is the dominant situation of the fate of the hero who is conditioned by his environment. This happens because pessimism is the result of determinism which suggests that human's fate has been determined by the environment. Determinism itself a philosophical doctrine that is developed by a Greek philosopher named Democritus and then by modern philosophers such as Hobbes and Spinoza. According to the philosophical doctrine, "human fate and will are determined by such factors as inheritance and environment" (international Encyclopedia, 1972, p.566). The role of environment is so important that it becomes the major natural force that determines human fate. The environment brings destruction instead of perfection or improvement. The naturalistic novel are not, according to Donald Pizer, a detached account of the destruction of the individual by the environment as a material force.

Hemingway in *The Old Man and The Sea* shows his vision by placing Santiago as an old fisherman in a traditional environment which is full of superstition. It is shown how the people around him regard him as *salao* which means “the worst form of unlucky”, after he fails to catch fish in his fishing alone in skiff in the Gulf Stream for eighty-four days. In the novel it is described as below:

He was an old man who fished alone in a skiff in the Gulf Stream and he had gone eighty - four days now without taking a fish. In the first forty days a boy had been with him. But after forty days without a fish, the boy’s parents told him that the old man was now definitely and finally *salao*, which is the worst form of unlucky (TOMTS, 1961, p.5)

A traditional environment is usually difficult to change. In other words it tends to be static. One of the proofs that the environment is traditional of static is the way they regard him as *salao*. The researcher thinks that it, I related to the belief they have. The belief they have is irrational or superstition. They have it without questioning and accept it from their previous generation as a heritage. So the belief is static.

In such a static environment Santiago and other individuals will get difficulties to change. They are determined or controlled by their environment. They live according to the tradition without questioning. Because Santiago as an old fisherman is poorly equipped, he can’t gain much profit. He only catches little fish. In such condition, he will never become rich. Therefore we see that the novel ready shows that the character fate is conditioned by environment.

4. CONCLUSION

The final chapter of the thesis is about conclusion. After the researcher discussed from the previous chapter, the researcher concluded that the analysis is based on the theory. The theory reflected about the characteristic of poor, the characteristic of violence, and the environment. Santiago existence as an old fisherman by realistic phenomenon is characterized by the people from the lower class, violence and environment. He came to the lower society because he did not enjoy the wealth of the country. Besides that, he is poor fisherman who has unlucky fate, he doesn’t catch a fish after he has gone to sea for eighty four days. He has to face the reality. The violence of the nature especially in the sea also made him struggle hard against a group of sharks that eat his marlin which has been caught. Santiago did not care about his suffering he faces alone. He had hope that he could succeed although finally he failed. His optimism forced him to overcome his problem although found failure. The unfriendly environment also made him struggle hard to convince people around him that he could catch a fish alone without help. Because of , his environment Santiago tried to change his bad luck. His idea about sea is like a

mother who loves her daughter. The environment forced him to keep his life in the sea. He is certain that sea belongs to environment.

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