

BOOK REVIEW OF THE OLD MAN AND THE SEA

WRITTEN BY ERNEST HEMINGWAY

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ABSTRACTION

Book Review of The Old Man and the Sea by Ernest Hemingway is to understand strengths and weaknesses. This analysis uses literature methods, which are intrinsic as analysis focus. The intrinsic aspects are character, setting, conflict and theme. The results of this analysis are strengths and weaknesses. The author, Earnest Hemingway developed the story with the main character, Santiago. The story is developed by Santiago's journey and conflicts happened through Santiago's journey. In addition to this, Santiago gives the writer's message in the novel. Santiago's inner conflict and social conflict lead us to lesson of the book. Although this story is too simple, which can make readers feel bored to understand the book, the book implies many lesson and morals for who are living in modern society.

Keywords: understanding strengths and weaknesses

INTRODUCTION

1. Back ground of writing

The Old Man and The Sea is one of the most popular book in the world. This is the first English literature that I read. To be honest, I had thought it is a boring story at the first time I read but I found out there are many hidden meaning, which made me enjoy the novel. The novel describes a struggle between the old man and the marlin. The old man's endeavor and enthusiasm give us great lesson. This novel was awarded *Pulitzer Prize and Nobel prize for literature*. However, I realized the value of this novel while I was analyzing the novel.

2. Purpose of writing

The purpose of this project is to make a review about novel *The Old Man and The Sea* by Earnest Hemingway, and also to discuss, the strengths (character, plot and theme) and the weaknesses in this novel as well as to fulfill the graduation requirements in achieving a S1 degree in English Department, Faculty of Humanities, Diponegoro University, Semarang

3. The Author (Ernest Hemingway)

Ernest Hemingway (Ernest Miller Hemingway, 1899.7.21 ~ 1961.7.2) was born as the second oldest of six children and the village of Oak Park suburb of Chicago, Illinois in the US Midwest. He graduated from high school in April 1917 and he wanted to join the army in the First World War. However, his father opposed it and he became a reporter Hemingway became a reporter in "*Kansas City Star*".

In 1918, he quitted the newspaper in May, he attended the war as a troop carrier driver in Italy but he went back because he got injured from bomb. After coming back, he met the novelist Sherwood Anderson and decided to become a writer. In 1925, a short story collection was published in the United States. He published his first full length novel "*The Torrents of Spring*" in May 1926. He published a full length novel again "*The Sun Also Rises*", which made him a famous writer. This novel was about the custom of asylum on a back ground of Paris and Spain after the war, becoming a best seller of the youth. Hemingway was cited as a representative artist of the lost generation.

In 1928 (29 years old), he left Paris and back to the United States. He wrote a major work to stay at while in Key West, Florida. In 1929, he finished the book "*A Farewell to*

Arms" that he began to write in Paris. The book became a best seller as soon as it was released in September 1929 and sold 80,000 copies in four months. He published "*Death in the Afternoon*" in 1932 and published collection of short stories "*Winner Take Nothing*" in 1933. In 1935, non-fiction "*Green Green Hills of Africa*" that dealt with the African hunting trip was revealed. The famous short fiction "*The snow of Kilimanjaro*" was inspired by his trip of Kenya.

In 1937 (38 years old), when the Spanish Civil War broke out, he joined the Republican army. The civil war ended in the victory of the fascist revolutionary army and Hemingway returned to the United States completed the novel in 1940 "*For Whom the Bell Tolls*" that is on back ground of The Spanish Civil War, which became very popular. In 1944 (45 years old), he joined The World War II in the Normandy landings as a correspondent and he came back to Cuba after the War.

The novel "*The Old Man and the Sea*" was revealed in September 1952. Hemingway regained his reputation and won the Pulitzer Prize in 1953 and won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1954. After publication of "*The Old Man and The Sea*", he never released any story, and he suffered from depression and alcoholism, other illnesses. After all he committed suicide by shooting himself on July 2, 1961 morning.

Work cited: <http://www.hemingway-book.co.kr>

SUMMARY OF THE BOOK

There was an old man, Santiago who sailed around the Gulf stream alone with a small boat. His journey went on for 84 days that caught no fish. Early 40 days, he sailed with a young boy whose name is Marlin. However, after 40 days, his parents couldn't trust the old man. They even thought the old man became the worst and unlucky fisher man.

After all, the young boy's parents forced their son transfer another boat and he could not reject their instruction. The new boat that the young boy transferred took three heavy fishes for the first week but the old man came back without any fish which really made the young boy heartbroken. The boy always came to meet him and help to arrange the old man's fishing gears like harpoon, rake and sail. The young boy wanted to sail with the old man, but the old man refused it. The young boy bought beer for the old man. Other fisher men made fun of the old man who had caught any fish for 84 days, but the old man never got mad at it. He told the young man about his sailing and various experiences of fishing. They both like baseball. They often talked about baseball and both like Di Magio in Yankees. The old man told the young boy that on the next day, he would venture far out into the Gulf to fish, confident that his unlucky streak is near its end.

On the eighty-fifth day, Santiago set out alone. he departure with belief that he would find a big fish., However, he did not find any fish for two days. After three days, finally the old man found a big fish. the fish was so huge that the old man's boat was almost drawn by that fish. The old man fought with that fish, and on the second day, He reeled up the fish finally.

He went back toward home, but on the way to home, sharks attacked his boat. He killed the first shark but he lost his weapon so he made a new weapon with his knife. He could not give up the huge fish. He kept trying to come back to the harbor with the fish although more and more sharks crowded around his boat. He killed five sharks but the more sharks came to his boat. After all, only its tail and its head left after attacks from sharks in spite of his efforts. However, the old man was satisfied with himself although he lost almost part of the fish.

At last, he reached the harbor. As soon as he reached, he fell asleep. He was so exhausted by his sailing and fight with sharks. After he got to his bed, other fisher men were surprised, because the fish was so enormous. They thought it must be a shark. Meanwhile, the young boy was so worried about the old man and he cried after the old man got sleep. The boy brought him newspapers and coffee. , the old man woke up and had a conversation with the boy. He promised to fish together. And then again he fell asleep, the boy was next to him and gazed him. The old man had a dream of a lion.

REVIEW OF THE BOOK

1. The strengths of the Book

1.1 Characters

Character is divided into two which are flat character and round character. Flat character is a simple one who has only one personality that does not change. Flat character does not change personality in the story and it has only one singular personality and is not affected by circumstances, so flat character is described by simple sentences. Therefore, readers can catch the features of the flat character and remember the personality in an easy way.

Round character is complicated and complex. The personality of round character often changes. The round character tends to be dynamic character. It is not easy to catch the personality or distinctive feature of round character. Round character performs tragic role in the history. Since the feature of character is various and the personality often changes, round character gives diverse emotions to the readers. Above all, on the contrary to the flat character, round character always surprises the readers. Commonly round character is a main character. The flat character tends to be static character while the round character tends to be dynamic.

Characters are related with people around us, because writers observe and analyze us. Writers research the personality and characteristic of people around us and the analysis becomes a foundation of characters in the story. Although characters are made from people around us, they do not coincide with real people. Characters represent distinctive feature of groups.

There are two characters in the novella *The Old Man and the Sea*, which are Santiago and Manolin. Santiago is the main character in the novella. The author does not directly tell the old man's personality, but we can find out his personality from his act and talk. The author shows his messages through the old man, Santiago.

Santiago is an individualistic person. He does not involve with any group, but he is distinctive. He is a person who only concentrates what he has to do. He does not like to talk while he is catching fish. He often talks to himself loudly but he does not talk to other people loudly. We can find it from quotation "*He had probably started to talk aloud, when alone, when the boy had left. But he did not remember. When he and the boy fished together they usually spoke only when it was necessary.*" (Hemingway: 1954: 10) As was stated above, he does not endeavor to communicate with other people. He likes to think alone and does not want to be bothered by others. He only talks when it is necessary. This feature makes him go fishing alone.

Santiago is a passionate person. Actually, he is not lucky fisherman but he has passion for fishing. He believes he can get a big fish someday and he tries to be ready for it. We can find it from the quotation "*But, he thought, I keep them with precision. Only I have no luck anymore. But who knows? Maybe today. Every day is a new day. It is better to be lucky. But I would rather be exact.*"

Then when luck comes you are ready." (Hemingway: 1954: 08) In addition, we can find how much he loves fish and his passion in the above narration. He does not get any fish, but he tries to think positively. If he does not have passion, then he can not think positively. He always tries to be ready for fishing or getting his luck.

Santiago loves nature but also has aspiration. I actually did not understand why he talks with nature. He feels sorry to the marlin that he caught. He, however, also has aspiration. Sometimes those are contrasting. We can find it from the quotation.

I have never seen or heard of such a fish. But I must kill him. I am glad we do not have to try to kill the stars." Imagine if each day a man must try to kill the moon, he thought. The moon runs away. Then he was sorry for the great fish that had nothing to eat and his determination to kill him never relaxed in his sorrow for him. There is no one worthy of eating him from the manner of his behavior and his great dignity. I do not understand these things, he thought. But it is good that we do not have to try to kill the sun or the moon or the stars. It is enough to live on the sea and kill our true brothers. (Hemingway: 1954: 20)

This quotation above is found at the end of the third day in the story. As Santiago struggles with the marlin, he reflects on the nature of the universe and his place in it. He displays both pity for the fish and determination to kill it, because the marlin's death helps to reinvigorate the fisherman's life. The cruelty of this natural order is opposing, however, because of the kinship Santiago feels for his prey. His opponent is worthy, in fact, that he later says that it does not matter who kills whom. To find glory, Santiago does not need to extend himself beyond his animal nature by looking to the sun or the stars.

1.2 Setting

Setting is the important element in novel. Setting is the time and place or atmosphere that incidents take place. It makes atmosphere of the story and make the characters and incidents more vivid and specify the subject of the story. In other words, setting is the essential element to express environment of the story like when or where the incidents happens by giving temporal and spatial world to the characters in the story. For this reason, the setting is not an element arousing interests of readers.

Setting is indicative of inner state of the characters. That is, it is figurative role. Another feature is to create a certain mood or virtue. Setting of limited purpose is also used to perform a function that demonstrates the conscious and critical attitude and social aspects of the characters. Detailed description of the setting gives a sense of realism, which makes readers concentrate on the story.

Setting includes geographical location as well as customs and economic level, family type, life style such as food, or occupation, and the events and actions that take places, times, climate, season, historical period and time, and even religion in character and moral, intellectual, social and

emotional environment, etc.

Setting is divided into three elements which are place, time and social setting. Those elements are related each other. Each element affects other elements and the story is developed in the mutual process.

In *The Old Man and the Sea*, place setting is harbor and the sea. This setting guides readers to feel like that they are in the harbor or they are fishing on a boat. We can find it from the quotation "*When the wind was in the east a smell came across the harbor from the shark factory; but today there was only the faint edge of the odour because the wind had backed into the north and then dropped off and it was pleasant and sunny on the Terrace.*" (Hemingway: 1954: 02)

There is no precise mention of time setting. However, we can guess it from their conversation about baseball. All readers know that baseball is not played in the middle ages but played in the modern times. In addition to this, Santiago and Malnollin talk about baseball player, Joe Dimaggio who was actual player in 1950's. Readers can guess the time setting from it. "*In the American League it is the Yankees as I said,*" the old man said happily." "*They lost today,*" the boy told him. *That means nothing. The great DiMaggio is himself again.*" (Hemingway: 1954: 05)

Social setting in *The Old Man and The Sea* is relationship with nature especially for the old man and the ocean and fishes. The nature and the fishes were the friends in his lonely life. The old man really loves the nature and he even talked to the fishes and felt sympathy for fishes that he caught. He does not regard the nature as inanimate object but as sociable object. It became an enemy or friend. It seemed weird for the first time, but it lead me to understand how much the old man loves and values the nature and fishes.

We can find it from the quotation "*The ocean is very big and a skiff is small and hard to see,*" the old man said. *He noticed how pleasant it was to have someone to talk to instead of speaking only to himself and to the sea. "I missed you," he said.* (Hemingway: 1954: 35)

Another social setting is the relationship between Santiago and Manolin, and Santiago and other people. Every fisherman and even the young boy's parent looked down on the old man, because he did not make great profit. He sails with Santiago for forty days but came back without any fish. Although they did not catch any fish, their relationship remained strong. In spite of his parent's dissuasion, their relationship did not break up. This setting not only implies the relationship between captain and assistant but also implies strong human friendship.

"*It was papa who made me leave. I am a boy and I must obey him,* Hemingway." (Hemingway: 1954: 05) From this quotation, we can find the conflict between the boy and his father.

The boy's father took him away from Santiago but the boy wants to keep the relationship with Santiago. *"When I come back, you can tell me about the baseball. The boy saw that the old man was breathing and then he saw the old man's hands and he started to cry. He went out very quietly to go to bring some coffee and all the way down the road he was crying."* (Hemingway: 1954: 03) In this quotation, after Santiago comes back from the ocean, the boy, Manolin began crying. It means that Santiago takes him not as a fisherman he knows but family or like his father for Manolin. Manolin learned about Santiago's personality and his experiences, and they become good friends with a father-son relationship.

1.3 Conflict

Conflict means opposing relation from the different view or situation between the characters in the story. conflict is an important element to develop the tension in the story. Conflict bother inner or outer relationship between characters or characters and society. Conflict is important clue to find the subject in the story.

Conflict entangles to avoid from habitual and meaningless repetition for making it more interesting. The meaningless chain of actions and habits can not make the story interesting. Literature need is complex and intertwined conflicts to captivate the reader into the story.

Conflict is divided into inner conflict and external conflict. Inner conflict happens in one person's mind. It is similar to the situation that we hesitate between various choices. It involves worry, anxiety, hesitation, agitation, anger, etc. On the other hand, external conflicts between two more characters. In the external conflicts, the feeling or complication is expressed to the outside. External conflict involves an relationship between characters and characters or characters and setting. It involves wars, fights, love affairs and all other situations, etc.

The main conflict of *The Old Man and the Sea* is inner conflict of the old man, Santiago. He is in conflict between desire of getting big fishes and weakness of giving up. This conflict is the main element to develop the story. Santiago has another conflict with a marlin and sharks. Desires and weaknesses are inner enemy while these are apparent enemy. Santiago has social conflict as well. He does not well socialize with other groups. He goes out for fishing alone. As I found above, Santiago's conflicts develop the story.

There is external conflict between the old man, Santiago and the society *"If the others heard me talking out loud they would think that I am crazy. But since I am not, I do not care."*(Hemingway: 1954: 10) From the quotation above, we can find he is a person who is distinctive individuality. He admits his act is weird and ridiculous but he does not consider how other people think him. That is, he knows his act or thought is not allowed in the society. He does not accept customs of the society. Therefore, the old man and the society are in the confrontation. I think that the author points out the problem of the society that is being unified.

In the novel, Santiago has inner conflict. For example, “*You did not kill the fish only to keep alive and to sell for food, he thought. You killed him for pride and because you are a fisherman. You loved him when he was alive and you loved him after. If you love him, it is not a sin to kill him. Or is it more?*” (Hemingway: 1954: 29) The main conflict of the novel is the old man’s inner conflict. The old man is confused between fishing and killing. He loves fishing but he does not want to kill fish for living. It is ironical. He looks like me who is agonizing about the best way between principle and efficiency.

1.4 Theme

Theme is important to stress the topic and the intention of the writer in the novel. Theme is the core idea in a literature. It expresses implicated intention of the writer as well as main concept of the writer. Theme in literature generally indicates the main matters, that is, what is expressed.

Theme contained ideas and philosophies of the artist. Most of novels is quite evident of the theme. It is not to be exposed from one certain point but is spread out throughout the story. In other words, novel is constituted to express this theme.

Theme of the novel is indicative of the perspective and writer’s view, but theme and perspective are separated concept. Therefore, theme and moral should be differentiated.

In the novel *The Old Man the Sea*, themes are divided into the honor in struggle and pride. I think the author wanted to tell us that we have to honor the struggle and efforts. The old man, Santiago tries to keep his pride. We can find it from the quotation “*But man is not made for defeat,*” he said. “*A man can be destroyed but not defeated.*” (Hemingway: 1954: 27) In my opinion, this is the message that the author wants to give us. We often fail from lots of things, which make us disappointed and desperate. We are afraid of defeat and do not try to struggle for getting over the desperation. We can find how much the old man respects honor and pride. Our society tends to ignore individual honor and pride for making profit. I think the author criticize the social feature through this quotation.

2. The weakness of the book

To be honest, this novella has few weaknesses. This novella is awarded Pulitzer Prize and Nobel prize for literature, which means it is admitted as a great novella by world reader. However the story is too simple, which makes it boring. The development of the story is slow, which decreases tension of the story. In addition to this, it is easy to miss the hidden meaning of the story. If we read it catching the meaning of place or character such as the sea and sharks, there would be lots of messages and lesson, but it is not easy to catch the hidden meaning for young readers.

CONCLUSION

Above all, I would like to emphasize greatness of this novel. This novel led me into English literature. This novel seems to be boring as it is too simple story. It, however, has lots of hidden meanings which reflect on society and human's personality. The story begins with routine in the harbor and it develops Santiago's journey to catch fish and his struggles. Consequently, it finishes with Santiago's victory and his own satisfaction.

The story is developed by the main character, Santiago. He is regarded as the old fisherman. Everybody except the boy, Manolin, thinks that he is unlucky fisher man. His single journey to catch fish looks like reckless. Therefore, everybody does not believe his return with a full load of fish. However, the old man, Santiago, struggles alone with huge marlin and sharks and finally achieves his goal although the huge marlin left tail and head.

I figured out three lessons, which are patience, courage and friendship. The old man, Santiago was a brave man. He chose adventure rather than comfort. To be honest, his journey is not a wise choice. If I lived in the story, I would blame him because his journey is unprofitable. After reading this, I realized that I became a person to pursue profits. I probably lost the value of honor and dignity, but the old man, Santiago shows us how valuable it is. I consider the message from the writer, Ernest Hemingway. It could be challenge and respect. Provided that I was the old man, it would be very hard for me to try to go out for catching alone and I would give up catching the huge marlin. His journey taught me the value of challenge and courage.

He was a patient person as well. His fight with marlin, the big fish, was laborious but he did not let it go. Santiago's patience is suggestive of satisfaction and happiness after the patience. We are faced with lots of hardship and suffering. We often give up and feel desperate from it. It is not easy to struggle with those. Santiago's life and challenge encourage us not to be frustrated.

The last one, friendship between Santiago and Manolin, is meaningful. It is very hard to trust and honor each other in modern society. Manolin makes me realize the worth of belief.

At last, I suggest that this novel is valuable to read. It is not only because this novel is famous or interesting but also there are morals and messages and even courage. There is a quotation from Santiago *"A man can be destroyed but not defeated."* (Hemingway: 1954: 29) It still encourages me.