

Analysis of Main Character in Novel The Oldman and the Sea by Ernest Hemingway

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Abstrak

Artikel ini menguraikan tentang karakter utama dari novel The Oldman and The Sea tulisan Ernest Hemingway, Santiago. Hemingway yang dikenal sebagai seorang jurnalis, atlet dan penulis berbagai cerita dan novel pendek dan yang paling terkenal dari tulisannya adalah The Oldman and The Sea yang dapat saja disebabkan karena motivasi yang disuguhkan dalam buku itu mengenai nilai dan pelajaran hidup manusia. Cerita tentang Santiago, digambarkan sebagai seorang pahlawan miskin, yang dicemooh oleh sesama nelayan karena tidak mendapatkan ikan setelah melaut selamat delapan puluh empat hari, disebut sebagai ‘salao’, bentuk yang lebih buruk dari kemalangan. Walaupun diejek, semangat Santiago tidak patah. Dirinya bahkan berkata kepada muridnya, Manoin, bahwa dia akan pergi jauh ke samudera luas untuk mengakhiri julukan itu. Artikel ini untuk menggambarkan motivasi Santiago yang berjuang sendiri di tengah laut yang mengupas karakter utama buku ini secara mendalam lewat ungkapan dan penjelasan yang tertuang dalam buku namun belum dibahas sebelumnya. Metode yang digunakan yaitu studi literatur dan analisa kualitatif yang menjelaskan karakter dari seorang nelayan tua. Berbagai teori mengenai buku tersebut, khususnya teori Meyer dan Taylor juga ditelusuri untuk mendukung analisis, selain novel itu sendiri, baik dalam bahasa Inggris maupun Indonesia. Lacak internet juga dilakukan yang menghasilkan kesimpulan mengenai nilai karakter seorang Santiago yang memiliki semangat yang tinggi

Abstract

This essay discusses the main character of novel The Old Man and The Sea written by Ernest Hemingway, Santiago. Known as a journalist, a sportsman and author of short novels and stories, Hemingway published several books throughout his life, but the most outstanding book among all is The Oldman and The Sea, that might be due to it brings motivational lessons and human values. The story started with Santiago, drawn as a poor hero, being mocked by fellow fishermen because of not getting fish after sailing for eighty-four days and has been considered ‘salao’, the worst form of unluckiness. Even though he was bullied, his spirit had never down. He even said to his apprentice, Manolin, that he would be gone far out into Gulf Stream to end that fate. This essay is to describe Santiago’s motivation in struggling alone in the sea, exploring the main character in the book that needs to be elicited deeper through the utterance and explanation expressed in the story that had not been studied before. The method used in this paper is library research and qualitative research to depict the old fisherman’s character. Several theory books especially Meyer and Taylor theory were studied to support the analysis, not to mention the novel itself, both in English and the Indonesian translated version, to getting additional references. Internet search has been done as well. It resulted in the conclusion and the description of Santiago’s worth characters to be vivid in spirit, optimistic and never give up.

Kata kunci: main character, life, optimistic, lesson, values

1. INTRODUCTION

Literature, represents the author's soul and bringing up social problem existed in the society, one's experiences in facing life, or showing the ideal condition dreamed by author. A literary work reflects something in the past, today and future. It plays in the term of mirror occurred in the society whenever it is. In most cases, literature referred to as the entirely written expression, with the restriction that not every written document can be categorized as literature in the most exact sense of the world (Klarer, 1998:1). As a form of literature, novel could be said "realistic", because it describes about the picture of human life (Wellek and Warren 1976:15). For instance, love, the struggle for men to achieve independence and success in their life, the relationship, which happened among them, and etc. Character according to Robert (1964:78) is an extended verbal representation of a human being, especially the inner self that determines thought, speech and behavior. For instance, most young men usually want to be a successful man in the future but the fact does not come as like what they expected. Because of that it can be summarized about human life that it is fulfilled with greediness, arrogance, competition, ambitions, hatred, jealousy, ego, disloyalty, wickedness and dissatisfaction. Character is personality or traits. Character is ones who are involved in the story. If we talk about personality or traits. It is meant we will know the method of characterization. Method of characterization is the techniques an author uses to reveal the personality and character of a fictional person an author reveals a character's personality. Character is also meaner person. In the literary work there is character that never develops until end. It is called flat character. There is also character that develops or changes. It is called round character.

Characterization as one of the elements of structure of fiction, plot is like the bones of a person, not interesting like expression or sign of experience, but the support of the whole. In fact, plot is of the highest importance way in expressing a work of novel, that we can conclude that an understanding of plot is very important in understanding of fiction. Plot of a story deals with events that occur in temporal sequence. The event connects each other. They emphasize falling on causality. Plot makes us aware of events not merely as element in temporal series but also as an intricate pattern of cause and effect (Kenney, 1966; 14). The Old Man and the Sea is a novel written by an American author, Ernest Hemingway in 1951 in Bimini, Bahamas, and published in 1952. The Old Man and The Sea is a novel that made Hemingway popular in the world of literature. The novel made him awarded Nobel Prize in 1954. The Old Man and the Sea is the story of a battle between an old, experienced fisherman, Santiago, and a large marlin. The novel starts with Santiago has gone 84 days without catching a fish, considered "salao", the worst form of unluckiness. He is so unlucky that his young apprentice, Manolin, has been forbidden by his parents to sail with him and been told to, instead, fish with successful fishermen. The boy visits Santiago's shack each night, hauling his fishing gear, preparing food, talking about American baseball and his favorite player Joe DiMaggio. Santiago tells Manolin that on the next day, he will venture far out into the Gulf Stream, north of Cuba in the Straits of Florida to fish, confident that his unlucky streak is near its end.

Several papers have discussed the characters on The Old Man and The Sea. Sinha (2023) interpreted the author's use of elderly man character to discuss the powerlessness on man facing fate. Farooqui (2021) exploring Santiago's struggle displaying the aptitude of the indomitable spirit of man that endures suffering and adversity to success. Shahwan (2019) studied the role of Lacan to analyze the author's work. (Pratiwi:2018) reflecting the novel content from realistic life point of view. Upon those studies, none of them have discussed the character Santiago has and the motivation he holds to struggle far out into the sea.

2. METHODOLOGY

The methodology of this research is qualitative research. Silverman explains that "in qualitative research, small numbers of texts and documents may be analyzed for a very different purpose. The aim is to understand the participants' categories and to see how these are used in concrete activities., makes claims about their ability to reveal the local practices through which given 'end products' (stories, files, descriptions) are assembled" (Silverman, 1993: 10). The writer uses the library research by collecting the data from some books and many other resources, that can be related to the subject matter being analyzed. The writer uses Ernest Hemingway's Novel: The Old Man and The Sea as the main source of data. In analyzing the character of Santiago in novel The Old Man and

The Sea, the main data is taken from the novel itself, The Old Man and The Sea that was published by Charles Scribner's Sons in 1961. The supporting data includes some information that will support the research on the novel The Old Man and The Sea. This kind of data will be criticisms on The Old Man and The Sea, other studies that have been done related to the novel, and study guide in Hemingway's work.

The technique used to collect the data is documentation technique, a technique that tries to collect data from the written records (books, articles, archives, etc.) that are related to the problem (Moleong, 1990: 113-114, 131). While Moleong uses the term 'documentation technique', Nazir uses the term 'library technique' (Nazir, 1985: 53). Those two terms are the same but the naming is generated from different views. Moleong makes the term based on the way a researcher gets the data. The term Nazir used is based on the location where the data are collected.

Method of analysis in this research is descriptive with evaluation and interpretation. The writer during collecting data process makes some notes to distinguish between the data. The notes are in the form of descriptive codes. These descriptive codes do not give interpretation but show phenomenon (Miles and Huberman, 1992: 88). The last step then, is drawing a conclusion to answer the problem, which has been stated on the objective of the research. The conclusion derives from the explanation of the pattern from the descriptive codes and the general idea of it.

3. DISCUSSION

Analysis of Santiago's Characters in Novel

Santiago's appearance is drawn in the beginning of this novel as:

The old man was thin and deep wrinkles in the back of his neck. The brown blotches of the benevolent skin cancer the sun brings from its reflection on the tropic 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. They were as old as erosions in a fishless desert. (p. 5-6).

Although he is an old man, but his eyes shine a vivid spirit (p. 6). He has strong shoulders and his neck is still strong too (p. 12). He knows to take care himself. He often eats white eggs of turtle to give himself an extra power during periods of time (p. 26) and he also drinks a cup of shark liver oil each day to give him good stamina and good vision (p. 27). He is a skillful fisherman (p. 37). He has a powerful right hand. Santiago was called as the champion because his strong right hand made him to win a great arm wrestling against the great negro from Cienfuegos at his younger age (p. 50-52). Santiago is a wise man as well (p. 8, 23). Santiago is a man full of pride. Although he is very poor (p. 12), but he will not steal to get food. Santiago is a sentimental man. (p. 20-21). Santiago shows also his empathy to the great fish that he has hooked (p. 35). Santiago is a sentimental man. One occasion he says that flying fish are his principal friends. He feels sorry for the small delicate dark terns (p.35).

Santiago is a religious man. On the brown walls of the flattened overlapping leaves of the study fibered guano there is a color picture of Jesus' Sacred Heart. Next to it, there is a picture of the Virgin of Cobre (p. 10). In the middle of the sea, there are many times Santiago prays to God to help him to overcome his problems. Once he prays "God help him to take it." and then he says "Christ knows he can't have gone." (p. 30) and then, again he prays "God let him jump" (p. 39), "God help me to have the cramp go" (p. 43), "God help me endure. I'll say a hundred Our Fathers and a hundred Hail Mary's. But I cannot say them now." (p. 65). He is alone and he realizes that God is the only hope surviving the battle against the sharks (p. 76).

Santiago likes baseball. He is the big fans of the Yankees. The Yankees is one of the teams that plays in the American League of American Major League Baseball. He likes the Yankees because there is a player named Joe DiMaggio. Santiago believes that the Yankees will not lose since Joe DiMaggio always plays well for the team even when Joe DiMaggio suffers injury. There are many things that make Santiago loves Joe DiMaggio. First thing to mention is that Joe DiMaggio as a fisherman's son maybe as poor as Santiago and the second thing is that Joe DiMaggio plays full of determination in every chance given (p.11, 14-15).

Santiago is an optimistic person. He realizes that he has no luck for eighty-four days (p. 29) but the fighting spirit is never gone away. Santiago says that he is able to handle an upcoming big fish since he knows many tricks (p. 9). When Manolin, his friend and pupil, gives opinion that

Santiago is the best fisherman, Santiago does not reject or accept the statement but then he replies: "I may not be as strong as I think," the old man said. "... but I know many tricks and I have resolution." (p. 16). Santiago saying "My big fish must be somewhere." obviously reflects the optimistic spirit of him (p. 24). Even great man with battling soul should have a situation in his life where the fighting spirit in the point of decrease. It comes when Santiago begins to realize that he is alone. Many times, Santiago wishes that he had had Manolin beside him, but then many times also he convinces himself that he has only himself and he must have resolution (p. 32, 34).

When Santiago commits to fight until the fish is beaten, it shows that his battling spirit is never extinguished. He proclaims to the fish: "Fish," he said softly, aloud, "I'll stay with you until I am dead." (p. 38). Even when Santiago's left hand is cramp, his endless fighting spirit manifests in his words: "Cramp then if you want. Make yourself into a claw. It will do you no good." (p. 42). He tries to be practical rather than to complain his left hand. Santiago then changes his left hand which is used to handle the cord to the right arm (p. 43). But then in another time Santiago condemns his cramp. He hates a cramp because it humiliates oneself especially when one is alone (p. 45).

Santiago shows his determination also in the struggle against the fish. He is surely a man that will never give up (p. 46-47). He motivates himself to be calm and strong (p. 67) because he knows that any pain does not really matter to a man (p. 62) and a man is not made for defeat; "a man can be destroyed but not defeated" (p. 76).

The name of Santiago may signify three things. The first meaning is a saint. This meaning comes from the Spanish word santo; a saint. Then the second meaning and the third meaning come from the other names of Santiago de Cuba town. Santiago de Cuba is a town in the southeastern of the Cuba island 540 miles from Havana.

People call the town as City of Heroes or City of Giants. So, then the second and the third meaning signify a hero or a giant. The story of The Old Man and The Sea itself reflects these three meaning. Santiago is a symbol of a saint because he is an innocent, kind, and religious person. Santiago may be a symbol of a hero because he fights hard for what he believes. Santiago may symbolize also a giant because he fights alone with a great marlin fish and lots of sharks while nobody perhaps unable to do that.

Santiago's Motivation to Struggle Far Out into The Sea

This section tries to find out Santiago's motivation in struggling alone far out into the sea. His motivation is related to the society's assumption that Santiago is the unluckiest person. It includes Manolin's parents who have told him so.

In the first forty days a boy had been with him. But after forty days without a fish the boy's parents had told him that the old man was now definitely and finally salao, which is the worst form of unlucky, and the boy had gone at their orders in another boat which caught three good fish the first week. (p. 5)

The boy's parents forbid him to follow Santiago. It makes Santiago feels inferior in front of Manolin's parents. When Manolin asks him to fish together, Santiago rejects him because he feels that he does not deserve to accept Manolin in his unlucky boat.

"Santiago," the boy said to him as they climbed the bank where the skiff was hauled up.

"I could go with you again. We've made some money."

The old man had thought the boy to fish and the boy loved him.

"No, the old man said. "You're with a lucky boat. Stay with them."

"But remember how you went eighty-seven days without fish and the we caught big ones every day for three weeks."

"I remember," the old man said. "I know you did not leave me because you doubted."

"It was papa made me leave. I am a boy and I must obey him."

"I now," the old man said. "It is quite normal."

"He has not much faith."

"No," the old man said.

"But we have. Haven't we?" (p. 6)

It seems that in the deep of Santiago's heart there is a disappointment because he cannot take the boy to fish together. This is due to his parents' assumption about his being unfortunate. He knows that the assumption of Manolin's parents is not completely right, and then, he decides to go alone far

out into the sea to prove the boy's parents that their assumption is wrong. He wants to look stronger in the eyes of the boy's parents and wants to prove to Manolin that Santiago is actually a good fisherman. He is motivated to catch the fish, which weighs more than a thousand pounds to make the boy happy. He imagines that he can fulfill his imagination. He asks the boy to ensure himself that the boy will feel happy when he can catch the fish that weighs over a thousand pounds. It makes his motivation to catch the big fish far out the sea becomes stronger.

He decides to go alone far out the sea, to prove his unluckiness. He wants to fish alone. He thinks that this is the only way to prove whether he is still a good fisherman or not. Actually, he wants to take the boy out to fish together with him, but he realizes that Manolin is not his son. He is his father's and mother's and he feels that he does not deserve to take Manolin in his unlucky boat. Although deep inside his heart he really wants to take Manolin, but he cannot do that because he has to fish alone to prove himself that actually he is a lucky fisherman like other fishermen in his society.

"If you were my boy I'd take you out and gamble," he said.

"But you are your father's and mother's and you are in a lucky boat." (p. 8)

Behind his unluckiness, he knows that he still has hope and confidence. His spirit is always burned. When Manolin wants to buy him two baits for his fishing, Santiago rejects his offer. Santiago only wants one bait, but finally Santiago agrees to have two baits from Manolin. Santiago is sure that he will not need a lot of baits because he is sure that he can use a little one. He is sure that he will be able to get great fish by using some baits only.

"One," the old man said. His hope and his confidence had never gone.

But now they were freshening as when the breeze rise. (p. 8)

He is really sure that eighty-five is a lucky number. He is sure that he will catch the big fish within eighty-five days and the number of eighty-five will bring him luck. From his statement, it can be seen that he is very confident.

"Do you think we should buy a terminal of the lottery with an eighty-five? Tomorrow is the eighty-fifth day."

"We can do that," the boy said. "But what about the eighty-seven of your great record?"

"It could not happen twice. Do you think you can find an eighty-five?" (p.12)

He is sure that his journey, this time, will be a success His motivation is also influenced by the society's acceptance. He is an old man, but he does not get good respect from other fishermen in his society. It is because of his unluckiness and his failure in catching fish. He also has self-esteem, but other people never respect him. They never realize that, actually, Santiago is a good fisherman.

They sat on the terrace and many of the fishermen made fun of the old man and he was not angry. Others, of the older fishermen, looked at him and were said. But they did not show it and they spoke politely about the current and the depth they had drifted their line at and the steady good weather and of what they had seen (p. 6).

He often imagines about his success in the past. Actually, he wants to be successful like his experience in the past. But now, he is old. He is only able to look at other people's success. Actually, he wants to be a success like others and he is motivated to actualize his imagination. It can be seen from his action. Santiago keeps on looking at the successful fisherman of that day and think about his success of many years ago.

The successful fishermen of that day were already in and butchered their marlin out and carried them laid full length across two planks, with two men staggering the end of each plank, to fish house where they waited for the ice truck to carry them to the market in Havana. Those who had caught sharks had taken them to the shark factory on the other side of the cove where they were hoisted on a block and tackle, their livers removed, their fins cut off and their hides skinned out and their flesh cut into strips for salting. (p. 7)

Santiago keeps on looking at them while imagining his past.

"Santiago," the boy said.

"Yes," the old man said. He was holding his glass and thinking of many years ago. (p. 7)

When the boy brings him food, he says that he will gratitude the owner of the food, Martin. He says that he will give him more than the belly meat of a big fish.

"Who gave this to you?"

"Martin. The owner."

“I must thank him.”

“I thanked him already,” the boy said. “You do not need to thank him.” “I’ll give him the belly meat of a big fish,” the old man said. “Has he done this for us more than once?”

“I think so.”

“I must give him something more than the belly meat then. He is very thoughtful for us.”

“He sent two beers.”

“I like the beer in cans best.”

“I know. But this is in bottles, Hatuey beer, and I take back the bottles.” “That’s very kind of you,” the old man said. (p. 13-14)

At the time he talks about something as his gratitude for Martin when he does not have any fish. But he dares to say that he will give Martin more than the “belly meat” because of his thoughtfulness. Martin, indirectly has given him motivation to give a gratitude and the gratitude is “more than the belly meat” of fish. It means that he has to work hard to make his saying a reality. He has to work hard to find the big fish far out into the sea to be able to give his gratitude to Martin. It seems that he actually does not want to burden other people, so he thinks that it would be better for him to thank Martin by giving him his gratitude.

His motivation to struggle alone far out into the sea is to find a good catch. It is a pride of a fisherman. With his pride, he can be admitted as a normal fisherman, and other people will never mock him anymore and the older fishermen will not take pity on him. He needs to be respected by other people. He does not kill the fish only to keep alive and to sell for food. It means that the need for food is not the most important thing that must be done by a fisherman but to get the acceptance by the society and also to get respect from other fishermen.

Santiago is motivated by Manolin for he says that Santiago is his best fisherman. Firstly, he denies the boy’s opinion, because he knows that he never brings luck. But finally, the boy can convince him that in his eyes, Santiago is the best fisherman he knows. Santiago feels flattered. It makes his spirit rises. He wants to give his best in doing his job as a fisherman. He feels that he is still able to be a strong fisherman although in fact, he is already old and not as strong as before. He never thinks about this reality. But with the boy’s acceptance, he believes that he is a good fisherman, and he will do the best to prove to the boy that he is the best fisherman as he said before. He feels happy because he gets the self-respect from the boy. From here, we know that actually, he wants to be admitted as a good fisherman like others, and that he is still able to fish and bring a good catch.

“And the best fisherman is you.” “No, I know others better.”

“Que Va,” the boy said. “There are many good fisherman and some great ones. But there is only you.”

“Thank you. You make me happy. I hope no fish will come along so great that he will prove us wrong.”

“There is no such fish if you are still wrong as you say.”

“I may not be as strong as I think,” the old man said. “But I know many tricks and I have resolution.” (p. 16)

Santiago was born as a fisherman. He knows that it is his destiny and he is motivated to realize that he is a good fisherman who has dignity. As a good fisherman, he has to be able to get a good catch. So, one thing that he has to do is to concentrate in catching the fish for his life to prove that he is still a good fisherman. For him, it is the time to think of only one thing. What for he was born?

His motivation is clearly seen when he struggles alone far out into the sea, trying to catch the big fish.

“Christ, I did not know he was so big.”

“I’ll kill him though,” he said.

“In all is greatness and his glory.”

Although it is unjust, he thought. But will show him what a man can do and what a man endures.

“I told the boy I was strange old man,” he said.

“Now is when I must prove it.”

The thousand times that he had proved it meant nothing. Now he was proving it again.

Each time was a new time and he never thought about the past when he was doing it (p. 48)

He says to the fish that he will show what a man can do and what a man endures. His statements represent his feeling as a man. He is old, but he can do something, including catching big fish. His words also represent his feeling that he is a strong fisherman. He proves it by catching the big fish. When he cannot catch the fish, he thinks that he will lose his self-esteem and self-respect from others. Now, it is the best time for him to prove to himself that he is still able to create a good catch. It is his self-esteem. It is also the best time for the old man to prove to Manolin that he is still a strong and a good fisherman as he said before. And it is also the best time to prove to other fishermen that he still exists as a good fisherman. He can do something great, like catching a big fish. He wants to prove to other fishermen that he is still lucky, like them. And the most important thing for him is he needs to be respected as a normal fisherman who has luckiness. He wants to be admitted as a good fisherman, like other fishermen. He wants to be treated as a normal fisherman which means that other people will not mock him and take pity on him.

4. KESIMPULAN

Santiago is a fisherman lives in a village. Santiago fishes for a living. He has to go without a fish. Our first impression of Santiago is that of a failure. But as we go through the novel, we find a man who is resolute, courageous, Strong and undefeated. This old man is thin and gaunt. There are deep wrinkles in the back of his neck. He has brown blotches on his cheeks. His hands have deep creased scars from handling heavy fish. Everything about him is old except his eyes that are of the color of the sea and are cheerful and undefeated.

Santiago is the best fisherman of all. Santiago is an idealist. He considers fishing is more than occupation. He thinks that it is a way of life. He is conscious of the moods of the weather and sensitive to sunrise. He is well aware of the far of hills. He knows the thrill of the contest between man and fish. He is conscious of the patience of man in front of the sea. He believes in love, loyalty and respect. He is not religious but he believes in God. Santiago is man of determination and resolution. After eighty days failure, he decides to far out to catch a big fish. He succeeds in catching a big marlin but he losses the battle at the hands of sharks. He is ready to fight beyond the limits of his strength.

Analyzing character is interesting research. Because by understanding about characterization, we could understand the literary work very well. There are many other theories about characters that are available to conduct another analysis on the novel. This thesis may be a good information and comparison material for other researchers who want to make another analysis towards the novel The Old Man and The Sea.

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