

# Great Archetypal Contents in A Short Literary Work: *The Old Man and The Sea*

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**Abstract**— Ernest Hemingway's *The Old Man and The Sea* is one of great literary works in the type of prose. It has great interesting contents to read, to analyze and to learn. By close reading and relates it into the theory of archetypes, the finding about archetypal contents is found. There are two archetypes found; archetypal images and archetypal myths. Archetypal images such as; Character; the old man shows the guidance, the old man and the little boy shows binary opposition. Place; sea shows the blessing of God to the old man. Nature; moon represents a lady who takes care of him as his wife. Animal; fish shows the survival life, lion shows the old man's pride when getting the marlin as his achievement. Part of body; the old man's eyes show his honesty. Color; blue shows positive attitude and thought belong to old man and he trusts himself to be a fisherman. Dream; foreshadows the old man's next day to be proud of getting big marlin. Archetypal myths are shown by the archetypal hero and the journey. The old man as a hero who passes the impossible task through fighting and difficult struggle and finally he is saved and back with pride. This paper shows great archetypal contents in a short literary work.

**Keywords**— *archetypes, archetypal images, archetypal myth, literary work*

## I. INTRODUCTION

“Novel or fiction as one form of literary work is very interesting to be studied and much studied by literary connoisseurs especially fiction or novel type” [1]. The statement is very supportive for the researchers especially for them from the field of literature. Literary works as the products of literature are not only dealing with words and ability to create narratives but more than that, dealing with society, reality, and the truth as [1] added “The novel as a reflecting part of life can be used as an example to be able to retrieve the message the author wishes to convey through his work”. There are three types of literary works; poetry, prose and drama. While novel is one of examples of literary works from the type of prose. Another kind of prose is short story.

There are millions short stories around the world, one of them is a short story written by Ernest Hemingway, *The Old Man and The Sea*. The story successfully made its author

become a celebrity. The work is known as a simple story which achieved the Pulitzer Prize in 1953 and deserved noble prize in 1954. It was also recognized as best seller at that certain period and carried a fortune for Hemingway as the author. And then, in 1955 the story was made into a movie. [2]

The booming of the story in its period and becoming a historical legend literary work till now, lead many people to conduct studies about it. As [9] in his study, discussed the symbolism in the story. [3] Discussed about theme of heroism in the story. [4] Used the story as the study guide for discussing elements of the novel in the practice of New Criticism study. [5] Studied the interpretation of the story from the Psychological analysis. [6] Comparing the symbolism between Christian and the story.

There are still many studies about it. But what makes interesting is that what Hemingway's critic to a Bernard Berenson through letter saying that “There isn't any symbolism. The sea is the sea, the old man is an old man, the sharks are all sharks no better and no worse. All the symbolism that people say is shit. What goes beyond is what you see beyond when you know.” [6][2]. Hemingway stated that there was no symbolism in the story, while there are many studies found and discussed about it. That is the interesting.

When the symbolism is claimed, people will think about the consciousness and unconsciousness in the story. If it is not recognized as symbolism, then it is perhaps as unconscious behavioral patterns existing in the story. If it is so, the theory of archetype from Jung that there are patterns of behavior hidden in the unconscious must be found in the story of Ernest Hemingway [7]. To find the hidden pattern in the story, it needs to analyze based on archetype theory.

Archetype theory can be used as the way to analyze the patterns contain in literary works such as patterns of symbol

and patterns of plot. It reveals the tendency of how the authors write their story.

Thus, this paper aims to show the hidden patterns being carried in a great literary work both as implementation of literature theory and as the reaction to Hemingway's claim that the story is just a story. The significance of this paper is finding the possible hidden pattern in particular literary works in order to get the pleasure and value of reading literary works. The patterns in a literary works can be analyzed by theory of archetype.

## II. RESEARCH METHODS

This research was conducted firstly by such a library research. The activity of library research consists of two important steps. The first is close reading; reading the short story carefully while outlining the important elements, finding the interesting possible discussion which is going to analyze, determining what theory to be applied, collecting the data by close reading once again to relate it into the theory. The second step is analyzing the data, interpreting and presenting it.

In literature study, the method used to analyze literary works is by applying into the theory. So the method in analyzing, interpreting and presenting the data is will be focusing to archetypal contents whether individual and group.

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### A. *The Old Man and The Sea*

A literary work of Ernest Hemingway is known as the simple storytelling about an old man who catches a giant fish in the sea in Cuba. The story is started by the bad luck of the main character, an old man named Santiago. He has gone for eighty-four days and no fish at all he catches. Returning from his activity of fishing without any result, he dreams for more than once about certain places and a lion which is playing with him as he playing with his friend, a little boy named, Manolin.

In the eighty-fifth day, Santiago goes to the sea and luckily he successfully catches a big marlin after few days with big heroic struggle. But then he has to fight against the sharks which have the marlin to bite. And finally, he returns home only with the fish's skeleton attached to the boat. [8]

The story is just a simple one, but it is recognized that Hemingway derives elemental power from nature from archetypal actions, patterns, images, emotions, and characters.[9] Thus, what encourages this paper to find the archetypal contents in the story.

### B. *Archetype*

Archetype is defined as a figure that repeats itself in the course of history wherever creative fantasy is fully manifested. He convinced that human beings were born with an innate knowledge of certain archetypes.[10] While [7]"Archetype is similar motifs or themes may be found among many different mythologies, and certain images that recur in the myths of peoples widely separated in time and

place tend to have a common meaning...". They gave examples of archetypal images such as; Water, considered as the mystery of creation, birth-death-resurrection, the sea is as the mother of life, the sun as creative energy, and colors; red as sacrifice, green as growth, and so forth.

Beside the archetypal images, Guerin also presented the archetypal motifs such as; 1) creation is as fundamental of archetypal motifs which shows the nature, cosmos, an humankind, 2) immortality, 3) hero archetypes; transformation and redemption. The last archetypal genre is presented by [7].

Archetypal motifs presented by Guerin is mentioned as archetypal myths in [11]. She took the discussions about it from many theories of archetypal myths and then represents them into six; creation, great mother, hero, journey, underworld, nature.

Through the theories of archetype above, the short story *The Old Man and The Sea* is being analyzed to see the archetypal content found in the story.

As the aim of this paper that is showing the archetypes in the story of *The Old Man and The Sea* by Ernest Hemingway. And below is the archetypal contents found; Archetypal Images and Archetypal Myths.

- *Archetypal Images*

- 1) *Characters*

- *Old Man: Wise old man as knowledge and guidance*

The figure of an old man is recognized as a knowledge or guidance. In the story, the old man can be guidance for the little boy who encourages him to be wise and patient man in the future. The guidance is actually for all readers that age is not bound to struggle.

- *Old Man and Little Boy: Binary opposition*

The character in contrast by the age is as binary opposition that often found in the literary works. The concept of binary opposition can be explained as [12] described that the semiotic effect of such oppositions lies in their reference to the principles of contrast, antithesis, and contradiction between 'two mutually exclusive terms or concepts: on/off, up/down, left/right, etc.'

The binary opposition in the story unconsciously shows how an old man has spirit and power as young man. The binary opposition also shows how life will run by the times from young to old. In addition, it reminds people about time which is the concept of 'Seize the Day' is strongly meant.

- 2) *Place*

- *Sea: represents total universe against the humanity represented by Santiago*

Represent a great role in the novel. People has own identity in the land, but in the sea people are helpless from other and become alone.[13] The

mother of life, death and rebirth, timeless and eternity.

In the story the old man goes to the sea to catch fish means to survive his life, either earning money or maintaining his profession as a fisherman. It also shows the blessing of God to an old man. God gives him alive instead of death and it is can be seen as the bless because the old man is a good man.

### 3) Nature

- *Moon: represents lady*

In the story, moon unconsciously gives the old man warmth in the night and his loneliness. It is like his wife who loves and takes care of him. When he slept on the boat, the only who watches and takes care of him is the moon. It's like his wife, his lover.

### 4) Animal

- *Fish: is as survival*

In the story, the fish becomes the only thing wanted by the old man, the fishermen and the sharks. It reflects the real life that people will do anything to survive in life even getting fight with the competitors.

- *Lion: authority, power, pride*

In the story, the old man dreams the lion before going to fishing. It unconsciously foreshadows what will happen next to him. He gets the big marlin, he gets the pride even though it just for himself. He can prove to other fishermen that he is still a fisherman who is able to get big fish after hard struggle at an old age.

### 5) Part of Body

- *Eyes: sight, man's honesty*

Through the eyes of the old man, Hemingway shows that he believes that honesty is still there in human life. It is also as human sight to see the way how to take struggle. He believes in his own self that he will get the luck.

### 6) Color

- *Blue: highly positive, associated with truth, religious feeling, security, spiritual purity*

The blue eyes belongs to the old man describes his personality as having positive attitude and positive trust to himself. He is such a kind man. It is also as spiritual soul he has since he basically loves the other God's creatures.

### 7) Action

- *Dream: Foreshadow*

In some mythological story, a dream has important part in creating the tension of the story. The dream in the story of *The Old Man and The Sea* is foreshadowing his fortune in the next day that getting big marlin will make him pride either by himself or being proud by other people, even when he gets nothing from the fish but the skeleton.

- *Archetypal Myths*

#### 1) Hero

The main character in the story is considered as truly heroic figure since he has very great experience and rising moment in his life until he goes back to the first place. The old man has performed the impossible task when he fights to get the Marlin and fights against the Shark. Even though he is lost the Marlin for sale but he is saved and being proud. Beside that, it can be noted that the archetypal hero is always shaped by his journey.

#### 2) Journey

The journey of the main character shows the hero's journey when he gets the challenge to catch the fish by himself and he is saved. He passes the bad luck by the belief that he will get the luck, and then he performs the battle, and he is back with pride. It's like Jungian Criticism about the journey of hero; Home-Call-Guide-Crossing-Adventure-Initiation-Return-Bestow Wisdom. This is the pattern of cycle of a hero passing through the story. The pattern is almost the same as narrative's text structure.

## IV. CONCLUSION

As a simple literary work, the short story, *The Old Man and The Sea* has great interesting contents to read, to analyze, and to learn. Besides the story itself, the literary elements within the story is so interesting. If its author claimed that there is no symbolism in the story, then the archetypal contents is interesting to find. And the finding about archetypal contents in the story is two archetypes, archetypal images and archetypal myths.

Archetypal images such as; Character; the old man shows the guidance, the old man and the little boy shows binary opposition. Place; sea shows the blessing of God to the old man. Nature; moon represents a lady who takes care of him as his wife. Animal; fish shows the survival life, lion shows the old man's pride when getting the marlin. Part of body; the eyes of the old man shows the man's honesty. Color; blue shows positive attitude and thinking belongs to old man and he trusts himself to be a fisherman. Dream; foreshadowing the old man's next day to be proud of getting big marlin.

While the archetypal myths are shown by the archetypal hero and the journey. The old man as a hero who passes the impossible task through fighting and difficult struggle and finally he is saved and back with pride. The finding shows such a simple literary work contains great archetypal patterns. It makes the story is interesting till recent time.

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