

CHARACTER ANALYSIS OF TOM SAWYER IN TWAIN'S THE ADVENTURES OF TOM SAWYER

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ABSTRAK

*Dalam studi ini dianalisa novel karangan penulis Amerika Mark Twain yang berjudul *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. Tokoh dalam novel ini yaitu seorang anak laki-laki remaja yang bernama Tom Sawyer yang dan apa yang ingin dikemukakan oleh penulisnya kepada pembaca.*

*Metode menganalisis data dalam studi ini adalah deskriptif. Data yang dikumpulkan dari sumber data dianalisa berdasarkan teori William Kenney dalam bukunya *How to Analyze Fiction*, dan teori Warren dan Wellek dengan bukunya *Theory of Literature*.*

*The Adventures of Tom Sawyer adalah novel klasik karya Mark Twain. Novel ini banyak bercerita tentang masa kecil yang ceria. Konon, cerita-cerita di dalamnya berdasarkan pengalaman Mark Twain sendiri, berikut tokoh-tokoh di dalamnya. Segar dan penuh imajinasi, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* memanggil kembali jiwa kanak-kanak dalam diri pembaca.*

Bocah ini memang nakal bukan main. Ada-ada saja ulahnya, suatu ketika keisengannya membawa masalah pelik. Dia harus berurusan dengan penjahat licik. Bahkan, penjahat itu berhasil menjebak Tom di sebuah gua. Tom tak mau kalah cerdik. Jika dia berhasil keluar, bukan hanya dirinya yang selamat, tetapi juga kawan-kawannya, dan lebih penting lagi gadis pujaannya. Diceritakan betapa pandainya Tom Sawyer memengaruhi teman-temannya, yang dengan sukarela dan tanpa tekanan melakukan apa yang diinginkannya. Kemampuan mempengaruhi orang ini sangat penting, karena dengannya seseorang bisa mendapatkan apa yang diinginkan sekaligus bereksistensi dan beraktualisasi diri.

Masalah yang dibahas adalah tokoh dalam novel ini yang dianalisis berdasarkan sudut pandang perkembangan moral dan kejiwaannya. Mark Twain melalui tokoh utamanya, Tom Sawyer, sebenarnya ingin mengkritik kemunafikan masyarakat sejaman dengan terjadinya cerita dalam novel tersebut.

Kata kunci: petualangan, kenakalan, solidaritas

1. Background of the Study

Novel is one of the forms of literary works; it is a fictional piece of prose that is usually written in a narrative style. Novels tell stories, which are typically defined as a series of events described in a sequence. It has been a part of human culture for over a thousand years, although its origins are somewhat debated. Regardless of how it began, the novel has risen to prominence and remained one of the most popular and treasured examples of human culture and writing.

Generally, literature can be defined as the individual expression of human being which comes from experience, feeling, thought, ideas, spirit, faith in the form of concrete description using language. A work of literature develops an element of entertaining that gives pleasure for everyone who reads it, and it is considered interesting since it presents many things about life which are very common around us.

To analyse a literary work is to identify the separate parts that make it up, to determine the relationships among the parts, and to discover the relation of the parts to the whole (Kenney, 1966:5). Novel is one of the examples of fictional prose that describes character and introduces more than one impression, effect or emotion. Character is one of the important aspects because it carries the author's message that can bring various values in human life such as morality, education, and many other.

This study is focused on Tom Sawyer as the main character and the reason to analyse the main character is because it takes an important part in the story and appears continually from the beginning until the end of the story which makes it occupy the central position in the story.

2. Problem of the Study

Based on the background mentioned above, the focus of this study is limited to the study of the problems which appear in this story. They are:

1. How does Mark Twain develop Tom Sawyer's morality and psychology, as the main character throughout the story of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*.
2. What message does the writer want to convey through Tom Sawyer?

3. Aims of the Study

This study is intended to fulfil three aims: the general, specific, and academic aims.

The general aim of this writing is to apply theories related to novella in order to get better understanding of Mark Twain's novel entitled *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*.

Meanwhile the specific aim of this writing is to find out the metaphorical meaning of the story and what message the writer wants to convey.

The last is an academic aim that is to apply the theory of literature studied in the English Department to write a scientific work which gives contribution to this department, so this writing can be used as a reference to help the students write the analysis of this novel.

4. Research Method

There are three aspects of the research in this study; they consist of data source, data collection and data analysis.

4.1. Data Source

The data were collected from the story entitled *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* by Mark Twain (Down load from: <http://www.americanliterature.com/author/mark-twain/book/the-adventures-of-tom-sawyer/summary>). It was first published in 1876, and it is a novel about a young boy growing up along the Mississippi River. The story is set in the fictional town of St. Petersburg, Missouri, where Twain lived.

4.2. Method and Technique of Collecting Data

The data were collected through reading the story intensively and noting down all the information relevant to Tom Sawyer as the focus of discussion. Then

the data were identified in accordance with their type then descriptively presented.

The data were collected as follows:

1. The story was selected and carefully noted down the selected items based on the related topic.
2. The development of the character's morality and psychology was found out.

4.3. Method and Technique of Analysing Data

The analysis correlates to the problems that were formulated. The method used for analyzing the data was descriptive. The data were collected from the above data source and were analyzed using the theory proposed by William Kenney. 1978. *How to Analyze Fiction*, and theory of Warren and Wellek entitled *Theory of Literature* written in 1962.

5. Analysis

Characters are the most important component of any narrative. Without them, there would be no story. Character development is an important skill to master because characters are important parts of any creative writing from books and short stories, from biographies and autobiographies, to poetry.

The development of a character is a very detailed process, and one that requires a lot of thought. According to Schaefer and Diamond (cited in *The Creative Writer* by Addison. 1998), many factors should be considered when introducing a character to readers. All of the kinds of details mentioned are necessary to fully develop a character because each of them reveals a different part of the character's appearance or personality and gives background about that character's traits.

To think of things to mention about a character is to give more insight into his/her life. His/her family: relationships, beliefs, habits, religion, activities, and his/her strong point: strength, determination, forgiveness, etc. This trait may help the character to overcome hardship in the narrative. (Sandra Miller. 2006)

Central to Tom's character is his age, Twain does not clearly specify his age. For many readers, Tom's age fluctuates from scene to scene. Most readers view Tom's age as approaching puberty, around eleven or thirteen years old. If he were younger, he would not be so interested in Becky Thatcher whom Tom falls in love with, a new girl in town, and persuades her to get "engaged" to him. His fondness for Becky, is still marked by his youth, Tom acts foolish to get her attention, passing "love notes" back and forth in school, exhibits a caring and maturity that goes beyond only "monkey love."

Tom's character is a dynamic one, that is he moves from enjoyment in the most famous of boyhood games, playing "Indians and Chiefs," pretending to be Robin Hood, and so on, and to act that requires a high degree of moral integrity. Consider, for example, his highly moral decision to break the boyish oath he took and to reveal Injun Joe's guilt in murdering Dr. Robinson, it is an act that freed an innocent man and placed Tom, himself, in danger.

If Tom Sawyer is viewed simply as a boyhood adventure story, then it must be assumed that Twain viewed Tom erratically and used many episodes from his own youth. Thus two Toms must be seen from different sides. Tom who plays boyish pranks on his Aunt Polly, "hooking" an apple or doughnut when she is not looking, teasing her, and finding ways to get around her and another Tom who has the maturity to save an innocent man and protects a frightened girl.

However, if Tom Sawyer is viewed as a tale of maturing, a novel about the moral and psychological growth of the main character whose principal subject is the moral, psychological, and intellectual development of a youthful main character, then two Toms cannot be seen but only one Tom who, through his experiences, matures as a young man. Most readers then choose to see Tom as a dynamic character who occasionally reverts to childish pranks, but one who essentially moves from early childish endeavours and, to be mature to the point where he can make highly moral decisions and commitments, as he did in revealing Injun Joe's guilt and in protecting Becky while being lost in the cave.

When the story begins, Tom is engaged in and often to be the organizer of childhood pranks and make-believe games. As the novel develops, these initially

consequence-free childish games take on more and more serious. Tom leads himself, Joe Harper, Huck, and, in the cave, Becky Thatcher into dangerous situations. He also finds himself in difficult situation where he must put his concern for others above his concern for himself, such as when he takes Becky's punishment and when he testifies at Injun Joe's trial. As Tom begins to take initiative to help others instead of himself, he shows his increasing maturity, competence, and moral integrity.

Tom's adventures to Jackson's Island and McDougal's Cave take him away from society. These symbolic removals help to prepare him to return to the village with a new, more adult outlook on his relationship to the community. Though early on Tom looks up to Huck as much older and wiser, by the end of the novel, Tom's maturity is better than Huck's. Tom's personal growth is evident in his insistence, in the face of Huck's desire to flee all social constraints, that Huck stay with the Widow Douglas and become civilized.

Twain complicates Tom's position on the border between childhood and adulthood by ridiculing and criticizing the values and practices of the adult world. Twain's satires and exposes the hypocrisy and often the essential childishness of social institutions such as school, church, and the law, as well as public opinion.

Twain shows that social authority does not always operate wisely, sound, or consistent principles. Twain shows parental authority and constraint balanced by parental love and indulgence. Though Aunt Polly attempts to restrain and punish Tom, she always goes soft because of her love for her nephew. As the novel proceeds, a similar tendency toward indulgence becomes apparent within the broader community as well. The community shows its indulgence when Tom's dangerous adventures provoke an outpouring of concern: the community is perfectly ready to forgive Tom's wrongs if it can be sure of his safety. Twain ridicules the ability of this collective tendency toward generosity and forgiveness to go overboard when he describes the town's sentimental forgiveness of the villainous Injun Joe after his death.

The games the children play often seem like attempts to subvert authority and escape from conventional society. Skipping school, sneaking out at night,

playing tricks on the teacher, and running away for days at a time are all ways of breaking the rules and defying authority. Yet, Twain shows us that these games can be more conventional than they seem. Tom is highly concerned with conforming to the codes of behavior that he has learned from reading, and he outlines the various criteria that define a pirate, a Robin Hood, or a circus clown. The boys' obsession with superstition is likewise an addiction to convention, which also mirrors the adult society's focus on religion. Thus, the novel shows that adult existence is more similar to childhood existence than it might seem. Though the novel is critical of society's hypocrisy, that is, of the frequent discord between its values and its behaviour, Twain doesn't really advocate subversion. The novel demonstrates the potential dangers of subverting authority just as it demonstrates the dangers of adhering to authority too strictly.

6. Conclusion

Twain writes that the story must end here because it is strictly a story about a boy. Were the story to continue, he states, it would quickly become the story of a man. He adds that most of the characters in the story are still alive and that he might one day explore how they turned out.

Concerned with Tom's personal growth and quest for identity, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* incorporates several different genres. It resembles a bildungsroman or a novel about the moral and psychological growth of the main character, a novel that follows the development of a hero from childhood through adolescence and into adulthood. The novel also resembles novels of the picaresque genre, in that Tom moves from one adventurous episode to another. *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* also fits the genres of satire, frontier literature, folk narrative, and comedy. Finally, once again, through this novel Mark Twain satires and exposes the hypocrisy and often the essential childishness of social institutions such as school, church, and the law, as well as public opinion.

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