

## **BROTHEROOD TO NATURE'S ONSLAUGHT IN CRANE'S THE OPEN BOAT**

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### **ABSTRAK**

*Sebuah karya sastra yang dibuat berdasarkan imajinasi penulis pada umumnya mencerminkan kehidupan manusia yang seringkali disampaikan melalui tulisannya berdasarkan lingkungan sosial di sekitarnya sebagai dasar acuan. Wellek dan Warren (1973:39) menyatakan bahwa karya sastra itu sendiri membenarkan semua kepentingan kita dalam kehidupan seorang penulis, dalam lingkungan sosial dan seluruh proses sastra.*

*Sedangkan untuk menganalisis sebuah karya sastra, mengidentifikasi bagian-bagian terpisah untuk menentukan hubungan antara bagian-bagiannya diperlukan. Hal ini untuk menemukan hubungan bagian tersebut dengan karya sastranya (Kenney, 1966:5). Novel adalah salah satu contoh prosa fiksi yang menggambarkan karakter dan memperkenalkan lebih dari satu kesan, efek atau emosi digambarkan sebagai cerita lama untuk menulis dalam sebuah buku. Karakter merupakan salah satu aspek penting, ia membawa berita dari penulis yang dapat membawa berbagai nilai dalam kehidupan manusia seperti moralitas, pendidikan dan banyak lainnya.*

*Dalam studi ini, cerita berjudul *The Open Boat* karya Stephen Crane dipilih untuk dianalisis. Cerita terkenal karya Stephen Crane ini didasari pada insiden yang terjadi ketika ia masih sebagai seorang wartawan yang meliputi ekspedisi gunrunning di mana Crane menyebutnya filibustering terhadap para pemberontak Kuba tepat sebelum Perang Amerika Spanyol tahun 1898. Kapal yang berlayar bersama dia didalamnya, tenggelam setelah sebuah ledakan di ruang mesin nya, dan ia menghabiskan waktu yang lama yang mencekam selama tiga puluh jam dalam sebuah perahu ukuran sepuluh kaki sebelum mencapai pantai. Dia menulis peristiwa ini dalam surat kabar yang kemudian diceritakan kembali dalam bentuk cerita pendek.*

*Selanjutnya dalam cerita ini penulis mengakhiri dengan mengatakan bahwa manusia mengakui kekuatan alam yang besar dan dominan, sehingga mereka rentan terhadap serangan alam. Manusia menyadari dan mengakui bahwa mereka tidak berdaya melawan alam, namun suatu cara di mana manusia bisa membentuk persaudaraan untuk sama-sama mengatasi ketakutan mereka terhadap kematian yang disebabkan kekuatan alam yang tak dapat disangkal.*

*Kata kunci: boat, nature, survival*

## 1. Background of the Study

Literary work cannot be separated from human life. The expression of literary form is language. Literature is an act of language, it is inseparable from life because it presents and describes the events that can happen in real life in society. Through literary work, which usually reflects our life, we can experience through our imagination and also we learn about human being.

A literary work is created based on the imagination of the writer and it generally reflects the social condition, which uses the social surrounding as the foundation. Wellek and Warren ( 1973:39 ) state that the works of literature themselves justify all our interests in the life of an author, in this social environment and the whole process of literature.

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

In this study, the short story entitled *The Open Boat* was chosen to be analysed. And why is was short story chosen? It is chosen because a short story has various themes such as: love, murder, humanity, death, cruelty and many other.

Stephen Crane was one of the American short story writers. He was born on November 1, 1871 in Newark, New Jersey. He was the last fourteen children of a Methodist minister Reverend Jonathan Townley Crane and Mary Helen Peck Crane. He lost his father in the age of eight and it made him move numerous times with his family before settling in Asbury Park, New Jersey.

In *The Open Boat*, Crane states that men realize that they are powerless against nature; however, they find that a way to endure the force of nature is through comradeship.

Based on the background mentioned above, the focus of this study is limited to the following questions:

1. Why are men powerless against the nature and how they find a way to endure the force of nature in *The Open Boat*?
2. What message does the writer want to show to the readers?

### **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 short story in order to get better understanding of Stephen Crane's work entitled *The Open Boat*.

Meanwhile the specific aim of this writing is to find out what message the writer actually wants to say.

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 in literary analysis.

### **3. Research Method**

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

#### **4.1. Data Source**

The data were collected from the story entitled *The Open Boat* by Stephen Crane cited in <http://public.wsu.edu/~campbelld/crane/open.htm>

#### **4.2. Method and Technique of Collecting Data**

The data were collected through reading the story intensively and make note all the information relevant to the discussion in this study and then the data were

identified in accordance with their types and descriptively presented. They are several types of collecting data :

1. Reading the story carefully, selecting and taking notes at the selected items based on the related topic.
2. Finding out why men are powerless against the nature and how they find a way to endure the force of nature in *The Open Boat*? And what message the writer wants to convey to the readers?

### 4.3. Method and Technique of Analysing Data

The analysis correlates to the problems that are formulated. The method for analyzing the data is descriptive. The data were collected from the data source and through the data collection, they are analyzed using the theory of William Kenney. 1978. *How to Analyze Fiction*, theory of Warren and Wellek. 1962. *Theory of Literature*, and other supporting theory of Knicbocker and Reninger. 1963. *Interpreting Literature*.

## 5 Analysis

The Characters of The Open Boat:

- The Captain - The captain of the ship, injured when the ship floods. The captain is calm and quiet, talking for the most part only to give directions and lead the crew to shore
- The Cook - The ship's cook, who maintains a positive, even naïve, outlook on the men's rescue. The cook is the first to suggest the presence of a lifesaving station and cannot help. Although he is not fit enough to help with the rowing, the cook makes himself useful by bailing water.
- The correspondent - the observers and thinkers. As his profession as a reporter suggests, the correspondent functions as the eyes and voice of the story.
- The Oiler (Billie) - The only refugee from the ship to die in the final attempt at reaching land. Before the ship sank, the oiler worked a double watch in the engine room, and he is most likely to be exhausted in the dinghy. The oiler is staunch, obedient to the captain, and generous and polite to the correspondent whenever he is asked to row. The oiler also seems to be the most realistic of the men, never losing sight of the task at hand or the slim chance they have of surviving.

*The Open Boat* is a short story by American author Stephen Crane. It first published in 1897, and was based on Crane's experience of having survived a shipwreck off the coast of Florida earlier that year while traveling to Cuba to work as a newspaper correspondent. Crane was stranded at sea for thirty hours when his ship, the SS Commodore, sank after hitting a sandbar. He and three other men were forced to navigate their way to shore in a small boat; one of the men, an oiler named Billie Higgins, drowned. Crane's personal account of the shipwreck and the men's survival, entitled "Stephen Crane's Own Story", was first published a few days after his rescue.

This chapter discusses about how the writer, Crane tells the readers that men, on the sea, have formed a brotherhood where they depend on each other to survive, and they find comfort in being together. In the outcome of the story, the realization of the power of nature also helps the men overcome their fear of death. When one of the men dies, the surviving men come to accept their comrade's death because they know that they had no control over who perished. The story suggests that the proper human response to what the men realize about nature is to form a brotherhood for comfort and to aid in survival, and to be fearless in the face of death.

The idea that individual characters have a direct influence on their lives is replaced by their fate or nature. Crane makes the reader believe that the fate of the men have been predetermined by certain factors, especially environmental factors and he can do nothing to change it or to avoid it.

In this story, it can be seen that the power of the nature in this case the wind and wave influence the fate of the men on the boat. If the wind and wave become strong they cannot get ashore.

**Struggle:**

The wind slowly goes away. The cook and the correspondent do not need now to hold high the oar. But the waves continue beating the little craft, no longer under way, they have to struggle over the waves. They have to make a try to get shore as fast as possible. If they stay out in the sea too long, none of them will have strength left to swim after the boat swamps.

They sat together in the same seat, and each rows an oar. They row and row. The man in the stern slides his hand along the thwart and moves with care, then the man in the rowing seat slides his hand along the other thwart. It is all done with very care. And so the oiler, who is at the oars, turns the boat straight for the shore. There is a sudden tightening of muscle. There is some thinking.

The men in the boat do many things to get the shore. They row the boat and try to swim across the waves. They take the risk of the struggle in order they can be safe in land.

Although they try to save their life by the small boat and run away from the wave and wind, the fate tells different. The boat cannot hold out for more than three minute if they do not get to the shore. It is a fact there is not a life-saving station. They have tried to get a help but there is nobody giving a life-saving. Their hope cannot become true. It is caused there is no one who sees them. They have tried to row the boat and get a help but it is useless.

As the boat is being rowed, the captain gives the passengers some whisky-and-water, and this keeps the chills out of them.

The captain gives whisky to survive from the chill. The water is icy. The weather is so cool. It is the way of the men to avoid the cool weather. They try to survive in the boat.

### **Dilemma**

If no help is coming, it is better for them to try a run through the boat right away. If they stay out in the boat much longer they will be too weak to do anything for themselves at all.

They have to choose the right decision. They cannot stay in the boat forever. They can die if they are still in the boat. They also cannot swim because the waves are strong. They decide to swim to get shore. It is the only hope even though the possibility is small.

### **Destiny**

The way the men act as comrades throughout the story upholds the idea that they realize and admit that nature is mighty, but their friendship undoubtedly helps them cope with their situation.

In response to their realization about the power of nature, the men act by forming a brotherhood, it gives them comfort and strength, and allows them to tolerate nature's power. It is difficult to describe the brotherhood of men that is established on the seas. Adrift in the boat, the men were friends in a more curiously iron-bound degree than may be common. They are brought together by the severity of the situation that they are in, but the friendship that they form helps them to survive nature's onslaught. The oiler, however, does not continue the brotherhood and drowns.

In the shallows, face downward, lies the oiler. His forehead touches sand between each wave, clear of the sea. The oiler lies down. The oiler is not safe.

Finally they can get the shore. The correspondent can alive while the captain and the cook who continue as comrades in the water, live.

## **6. Conclusion**

In this final chapter, Crane's *The Open Boat* can be concluded as follows, They are brought together by the severity of the situation that they are in, but the friendship that they form helps them to survive nature's onslaught. For example, when the correspondent is the only one up at night and sights a shark, he wished one of his companions to awake by chance and keep him company with it. The sighting of the shark is symbolic of nature itself, threatening man's existence. The correspondent's reaction to the sighting of the shark is part of a feeling that runs throughout the story; companionship can provide comfort from the feeling of helplessness in the face of nature's power

The way the men act as comrades throughout the story upholds the idea that they realize and admit that nature is very powerful, but their friendship undoubtedly helps them to face the situation and condition. In the outcome of the story, the cook, correspondent, and captain, all names beginning with the letter "c," for comradeship, maintain the brotherhood, while the oiler does not, swimming ahead of everyone else. While in the water, the captain is helping the cook and correspondent make their way ashore. The captain yells to the cook, "Turn over on your back, cook! Turn over on your back and use the oar." The captain also calls out to the correspondent,

"Come to the boat!" The oiler, however, does not continue the brotherhood and drowns, while the three other men, who continue as comrades in the water, live. Also, the men's action of swimming towards land without fear of death, and the calmness with which the men handle the death of the oiler, both support the idea that the men accept the power of nature as dominant, and thus they are vulnerable to nature's assault. The way in which the men form a brotherhood and overcome their fear of death is the proper human response given their experience with nature's undeniable force.

Finally it can be said that the captain represents the leaders; the cook the followers; the oiler, the good, working men; and the correspondent, the observers and thinkers.

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