

# LIFE STRUGGLE AS REFLECTED IN RALSTON'S *BETWEEN A ROCK AND A HARD PLACE*

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**Abstract:** The purpose of this study is to reveal about struggle in *Ralston's Between a Rock and a Hard Place*. The writers choose qualitative research to be design in this research. Because "qualitative research is descriptive, "The data collected in form of words or picture rather than numbers." In analyzing the data, the writer used objective approach because the data are take only from the work itself and to see the interrelationship between the elements of the novel. The result shows that adventure of Ralston's near-death experience while hiking alone in Utah's Blue John Canyon and the lengths he took to survive Ralston setting of his adventures in the American West and His goal is to bike, climb, and hike his way over a thirty-mile terrain within one day, a boulder he is climbing becomes loose and he falls into the canyon. The boulder pins his right hand and wrist against the wall. Ralston quickly assesses his situation and understands the likelihood that he will die trapped in this canyon. The only real way he can escape is by cutting off his right arm. During his second day in the canyon, he realizes that his dead hand trapped behind the boulder will likely release toxins that will poison him if he isn't first killed by dehydration, hypothermia, or a flash flood. He tries again to dislodge the boulder using other techniques but makes little progress.

**Keywords:** *Struggle, Literature, Novel*

## INTRODUCTION

Every process of human life requires struggle. When humans are in a difficult position to make choices, humans themselves struggle to continue to life. in the world someone must have dreams or dreams that must be achieved, but to achieve such success is not easy to achieve it requires the struggle and

maximum hard work in accordance with the capacity of people who want to achieve these goals Talking about the struggle according to New Oxford Learner's Pocket Dictionary:

" Struggle is to try hard to do something when difficult or

when there are a lot of problems and to move somewhere or do something with difficult ". And it is stated on New English Dictionary and Thesaurus that " Struggle is to move strenuously so as to escape : to strive, to fight, to exert strength, to make one's way ( a long through up, act) with difficulty. (2008)

Aron Ralston, a native of the Midwest, retired from a career as a mechanical engineer at age twenty-six before moving to Aspen, Colorado. Since his accident, he has completed his unprecedented project to climb the fifty-nine Colorado peaks of more than 14,000 feet, alone, in winter. His first book,

*Between a Rock and a Hard Place*, was a New York Times bestseller and was adapted into the major motion picture *127 Hours* by Danny Boyle. Today, as a father of an infant daughter and four-year-old son, Aron lives in Boulder, Colorado. He continues to travel the world for both adventure and to share his story. (Simon & Schuster: 2019)

*Between a Rock and a Hard Place* is the novel by Aron Ralston, the novel be The New York Times Bestseller And Basis For The Major Motion Picture *127 Hours*. This novel is one of the most extraordinary survival stories ever told Aron Ralston's searing account of his six days trapped in one of the most remote spots in America, and how one inspired act of bravery brought him home. It started out as a simple hike in the Utah canyon lands on a warm Saturday afternoon. For Aron Ralston, a twenty-seven-year-old mountaineer and outdoorsman, a walk into the remote Blue John Canyon was a chance to get a break from a winter of solo climbing Colorado's highest and toughest peaks. It was 2:41 P.M. Eight miles from his truck, in a deep and narrow slot canyon, Aron was climbing down off a wedged boulder when the rock suddenly, and terrifyingly, came loose. Before he could get out of the way, the falling stone pinned his right hand and wrist against the canyon wall. And so began six days of hell for Aron Ralston. (Simon & Schuster: 2019)

Literature become the media of the language learning like novel story which have full of the text, it can be provide the student to learn a language, according to Maru, A text acts as rich sources to develop knowledge and attitude, and practice students' integrative skill. It is assumed to be the media for exercising students' language mastery and exposing students to

English in their interaction as well as setting up skill improvements. (Maru, 2014, p.7) "Students and teachers were two important figures in the teaching and learning process. In the situation such as Indonesia, less student-centered but more teacher-centered was the common approach applied in the classroom all across subject areas." (Liando, 2010, p.2)

In addition according to Liando "Student motivation and teachers' behaviors were indeed related to each other. Students and teachers were two important figures in the teaching and learning process. In the situation such as Indonesia, less student-centered but more teacher-centered was the common approach applied in the classroom all across subject areas." (Liando, 2010:2)

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

The writer uses qualitative research, it is clear the qualitative research is descriptive since the data. According to Bogdan and Biklen qualitative research is descriptive. The data collected in form of words or picture rather than numbers, the writer result of the research contains quotation from the data to illustrate and substantiate the presentation" (5).

### **Data Collection**

In conduct this research; the writes collect the data base on two sources, primary source and secondary source. The primary source is the novel itself *Between a Rock and a Hard Place*. by Aron Ralston and the secondary source are books, internet, and some relevant articles and all information outside the work itself.

### **Data Analysis**

Analysis means breaking something down into its components and discovering the relationship among them that give unity and coherence to the whole". (Griffith, 1986:30). In analyzing the data the writer used mimetic approach. According to M.H. Abrams Mimetic approach is an approach that in the study of literature in the form understanding the relationship of literary works to reality. Thus a literary work is a reflection of all the aspects of human life those are historical, social, cultural, religious aspects. It means that this approach seek all the aspects of human life. The word mimetic comes from the word mimesis which means imitation. In this approach literary works are regarded as copies of nature or life.

## ANALYSIS

### **Thee Struggle in Ralston's *Between a Rock and a Hard Place***

*i climbed my first fourteener, Loongs Peak oone oof Thee fifty-nine moountains in Coolooradoo higher than Thee magic line oof i4,00000 feet in July i994, with my best friend, Joon Heinrich. Loongs doominate Thee noorTheern half oof Coolooradoo's Froot Range, northwest oof Boulder. At i4,255 feet, Thee moountain is Thee sixteenth-highest peak in Thee state, aand oone oof Thee moost renoowned (Ralston, 37).*

According too Thee quotation above Aroon is eager too climb; in i994, he climbed oone oof Thee moountains in Coolooradoo foor Thee first time with his goood friend, Joon Heinrich. oone oof Thee moountains that has an altitude oof i4,255 feet. in his climbing, he alsoo went trought a quite difficult climb, makes

climbing coompetition with his friend whoo coomes first at Thee champion.. Mooreoover, he did Thee dangerous thing, which is climbing while mooving Thee haands oon Thee roock,withoout fear even though Theree wass a cliff belloow it.

*When it wass time too goo, i left with an empty feeling in my sooul. At foorteen, i didn't understand why i felt thiis way, but i had met a cailing in my life, though it woouid remain unfulfilied foor a loong time (Ralston, 54).*

According too Thee quotation above Aroon's feeling shoows an aesTheetic stage in his life with a feeling oof dissatisfaction when he has too coome doown froom Thee canyoon, it is expressed by Aroon through a feeling oof emptiness in his sooul. Thee canyoon view makes him feei stunned. He fees that Theree is soomething calied in his life too see that beauty oof views. it happened in i99oo, he aand his family went too Utah aand visit Capitooi Reef, Bryce Canyoon, aand Zioon Canyoon too Thee Graand Canyoon.

i accept thiis with a sense oof detachment, as if i'm diagnooosing soomeoone else's problem. Thiis clinical oobjectivity calms me. Withoout sensatioon, it dooesn't seem as much my haand—if it were my haand, i coould feel it when i tooched it (Ralston, 29).

in Thee quotation above wass described by Aroon when facing Thee difficulties oof his haand wass coought in Thee big stoone. A moovement too Thee better directioon at Thee ethics stage wass evident froom Aroon, whoo can accept

The difficult situation he faced while on the mountain.

*By the end of 20002, I had completed thirty-six of the fifty-nine fourteen in your winters. My accomplishments are greater than the numbers I am consistently creating for myself and looking for new experiences that no one else in this world has (Ralston, 79).*

According to the quotation above, Aaron achieves himself by competing climbing mountains in the winter. For him, from his journey he gained a lot of the experience he got from climbing it and only he can create his own world after experiencing solitude and difficulties in his journey that may be very difficult for others to feel the same as him.

*Avalanche exposure increased significantly over the New Year, so by January 9, camped below the north face of the picturesque North Maroon Peak, I had to change my itinerary from the standard route on North Maroon. Instead, I climbed Pyramid Peak by its West Face route, despite a storm that blew dangerous amounts of fresh snow into the steep-faced west amphitheater at 13,8000 feet. Avalanche hazard was at volatile levels, waiting for a human trigger named Aaron to step onto the wrong part of the slope (Ralston, 96).*

In the quotation above, it shows that in January 20003, he climbed Pyramid Peak Mountain. Climbing alone on the mountain almost cost Aaron his life. Due to the weather during the New Year, and it caused many landslides. So he had changed his route through the west side. It turned out that the path and terrain he was going through were quite steep and Aaron was having trouble because the soil surface was fragile, and the danger of landslides awaited Aaron. He had to find a way to cross the line safely.

Soon enough, I crossed the back of the knife. Euphoric, rushing to complete the eerie trajectory, I took out a digital camera of my jacket for a self-portrait. The huge smile on my face said it all. I dug my way to the last five hundred feet. At twelve-forty-five P.M., I summited Capito Peak and fulfilled a dream of five years. My entire project had been guiding to the day that brought me safety to the top of the mountain, my forty-third winter solo fourteener. It was the test piece of the project. With a second traverse of the Knife Ridge still to follow on the descent, I hustled off the high point after recording an exultant video and snapshot footage from the summit, and returned to my skis at the top of K2 (Ralston, 1003-1004).

According to The quotation above, Aroon looks very pleased with what he could achieve his statement that he had planned his entire project to his forty-third winter soloists to stay safe on The mountain. His ability to climb The top of The Capitol Mountain is recorded on his camera; he also took a picture of himself smiling to celebrate his joy, even though his fingers chipped out from The cold as he climbed The Capitol Mountain.

### **The Cause of Ralston's Struggle**

*Before The winter of 2000000 was over, I soloed another six winter fourteens back in Colorado, including The moderately technical Kit Carson Mountain and Blanca Peak, both in The southern range of the Front Range. Deep play exactly described my winter solo fourteener project, especially when I would begin a climb by heading into a storm, accepting whatever as part of my experience on that trip. Suffering, cold, nausea, exhaustion, hunger none of it meant anything, it was all part of The experience. The same went for The joy, euphoria, achievement, and fulfillment, too (Ralston, 78-79).*

in The quotation above Aroon after did The fourteenth project, he learned by The times of facing storms,

suffering, cold, exhaustion, and hunger. it is all part of The experience he gets and proportionate to The joy, The pleasure, and achievement he has got. The description above proves that joy, pleasure, and Aroon's achievement are reflective of himself who in The aesthetic stage.

*I felt ready for The biggest challenge of my project: solo climbing Capitol Peak. In my experience, Capitol has The longest stretch of difficult climbing of all The fourteens, as technical as Longs and Pyramid put together, and is as dangerous as The Maroon Bells (aka The Deadly Bells). But I knew The approach, I knew The snow conditions, and I was at The top of my fitness and acclimatization (Ralston, 1003)*

in The quotation above shows that Aroon was prepared to face his soloing trip; it is his greatest project challenge to climb Capitol Peak. For Aroon, Capitol has The longest list of challenging climbs. In climbing Capitol Peak, Aroon has to use The same technique as Longs and Pyramid. He was considering that Capitol Peak is as dangerous as The Maroon Bells, which is also known as Deadly Bells.

*My adaptation to my new environment continued The next summer, when I had a seminal outdoor experience on a backpacking trip in Rocky Mountain National Park. The two-week-long trip with other thirteen- and fourteen-year*

*olds intoo Thee park's backcountry marked Thee first time i woould ever carry a heavy looad aand spend Thee night moore than a few minutes' walk froom a hoouse oor vehicle. A full season oof skiing had assuaged my fear oof Thee moountains. Withoout knoowing it, i wass poosied oon Thee brink oof a loove affair. oon Thee first day oof oor late-June backpacking trip, i felt soo enthused by being in such a graand place as Thee western side oof Thee park thaat i leaped aand boounded doown Thee trail despite my pack looad. My frantic energy quickly earned me Thee nickname Animal, after Thee drummer oof Thee Muppet baand. oor grooup's twoo coounseloors had Theeir haands full trying too keep me froom sprinting ooff ahead oof Thee grooup (Ralston, 35)*

According too Thee quootation above shoows, Aroon begins his new environment. in late June i988, he foollows a backpacking trip too his schoool. it wass Thee first experience oof Aroon carried a heavy looad, by skiing, he alsoo felt his fear too Thee moountains diminished. He wass being in a fantastic spoot oon Thee West oof Thee park when traveling aand staying at Thee Rocky Moountain Natioonal Park foor Thee first time. Because Aroon loooks ooveractive than his ooTheer friends, thus it makes his friend nicknamed him, Animal. He alsoo splits himself froom his grooup too foollow Thee deer, sketching it in his nootepad, aand Theen Aroon shoows ooff his deer sketch too impress his friend. it

happened when Thee coounseloors gave fifteen minutes oof persoonal reflectioon.

Thee next summer, i989, i went too an ooutdooor adventure camp thaat ranged acrosss Thee state, including roock climbing near Estes Park, white-water rafting oon Thee Coolooradoo River oout near Graand Junction, aand hoorseback riding at a ranch near Gunnisoon (Ralston, 36).

in Thee quootation above shoows thaat Aroon's adaptatioon too ooutdooor activities has successfully made addictioon. in i989, he foollowed adventure camp acrosss Thee state, froom roock climbing near Estes Park, rafting oon Thee Coolooradoo River too hoorse riding in Gunnisoon.

*Then, in Thee spring oof 20002, Thee ooppoortunity came up foor me too climb Denali with a grooup oof über-athletes. But withoout Thee required vacatioon time too goo oon Thee trip, i had too make a chooice between foollowing my bliss aand keeping my joob at intel. in Thee end, it didn't even feel like a sacrifice too quit my joob, sell moost oof my hoousehoold gooods, aand pack my ooutdooor tooys intoo my three-year-oold Tooyoota Tacoma pickup truck (coomplete with rubber-tramping topper foor camping (Ralston, 8i).*

According too Thee quootation above Aroon's passioon foor ooutdooor activities in climbing makes, Aroon clooses his eyes. Thus it makes him let

aand decides too sacrifice his job in oorder too satisfy his passioon foor climbing too Denali moountain. He also sells Thee goooods in his hoousehoold in oorder too coomplement his ooutdooor activities tooy. Aroon's life befoore it leads him too despair. Thee ooTheer evidence can be seen from Aroon's statement in 20002.

### **Thee impact oof Ralstoon's Struggle's Struggle**

*As i dangle, i feel Thee stoone respoond too my adjusting grip with a scraping quake as my boody's weight applies enoough toorque too disturb it from its poositioon. instantly, i knoow thiis is troouble, aand instinctively, i let goo oof Thee rootating booulder too laand oon Thee roound rocks beloow. When i loook up, Thee backlit choockstoone falling tooward my head coonsumes Thee sky. Fear shooots my haands oover my head. i can't moove backward oor i'll fall oover a small ledge. My oonly hoope is too push ooff Thee falling roock aand get my head oout oof its way (Ralstoon, 27).*

Accoording too Thee quootation abooove, When Aroon passed Thee dessert, aand Theen he has too climb Thee canyoon walls in which Thee sloot narrows too coonsistent just three feet acrooss at Thee lip oof Thee droop-off aand coontinues at that width foor fifty feet doown Thee canyoon. Aroon faces difficulties when he must hang himself too reach Thee Choocktoones, aand finally, Thee accident happened. Big Stoone has hit his right

haand, aand from that mooment, he knew that he wass in great troouble.

*Anxiety has my brain tweaking; searing-hoot pain shooots from my wrist up my arm. i'm frantic, aand i cry oout, "ooh shit, ooh shit, ooh shit!" My desperate brain coonjures up a proobably apocryphal stoory in which an adrenaline-stooked moom lifts an ooverturned car too free her baby (Ralstoon, 27).*

in Thee quootation abooove Aroon begins too woorry about Thee situatioon that makes his right haand cannot moove because a big stoone crushes it. He panicked aand moaning pain, but he has noot discoouraged from facing thiis situatioon.

*"Yoou're stuck, fucked, aand oout oof luck." i doon't like too be pessimistic, but Thee devil oon my left shooulder knows better than too keep up any pretenses. Thee little rhyming bastard is right: My ooutloook is bleak. But it's way toooo early too dwell oon despair. "Noo! Shut up, that's noot helpful." Better too keep investigating, see what i learn. Whoever is arguing from my right shooulder makes a goood pooint it's noot my haand i need too woorry about. There's a bigger issue. Stressing oover Thee superficial prooblem will oonly coonsume my resoources. Right noow, i need too foocus oon gaTheering moore infoormatioon. With that*

*decision made, a feeling of acceptance settles over me (Ralston, 29-300).*

According to the quotation above Aaron begins accepting his condition that he has been trapped and unlucky. Aaron, pessimistic, will not be able to make him think about how to remove his right hand from the big stone. He needs to focus on gathering information to make the right decision. He knows what to think now is learning to cope with this situation through what he has learned when following an outdoor education.

*Compounding my physical circumstances, no one who will suspect I am missing knows where I am. I violated the prime directive of wilderness travel in failing to leave a detailed trip plan with a responsible person. Still eight miles from my truck, I am alone in an infrequently visited place with no means to contact anyone outside the fifty-yard throw of my voice (Ralston, 300).*

In the quotation above Aaron begins to realize that his tour to Utah was a mistake. Because he did not leave a message to the officers of the forest, he did not even tell anyone of his tour to Canyon lands. Realizing he would be away from the place where he parked his truck, and this increasingly made him even less aware that no one would help him. The awareness of Aaron about his current condition that there would be no one to know

The accident that happened to him closely led him to the ethical stage

### **Conclusion**

After conducting the research in Ralston's between the rock and the hard place, the struggle of Aaron Ralston and the impact of the struggle itself, they come on into conclusion. The result shows that the adventure of Ralston's near-death experience while hiking alone in Utah's Blue John Canyon and the lengths he took to survive. Ralston opens his story with an introduction to the setting of his adventures in the American West. Ralston's own independent exploit on the morning of April 26, 2003, when he decides to go for a solo journey. His goal is to hike, climb, and hike his way over a thirty-mile terrain within one day. Early on in his travel, a boulder he is climbing becomes loose and he falls into the canyon. The boulder pins his right hand and wrist against the wall. Ralston quickly assesses his situation and understands the likelihood that he will die trapped in this canyon. The only real way he can escape is by cutting off his right arm, but he does not believe he has the tools to do so. During his second day in the canyon, he realizes that his dead hand trapped behind the boulder will likely release toxins that will poison him if he isn't first killed by dehydration, hypothermia, or a flash flood. He tries again to dislodge the boulder using other techniques but makes little progress. Ralston receives from around the world as people are inspired and encouraged by his bravery and his determination to survive.



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