

ERNEST HEMINGWAY'S *A CLEAN, WELL-LIGHTED PLACE* : AN ANALYSIS ON ITS STRUCTURE AS A MEANS OF COMMUNICATION WITH THE READER

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Abstract : This writing aims at finding the mental evidences from a short story written by Ernest Hemingway entitled *A Clean, Well-Lighted Place*. The writer of this paper wants to show readers that reading a literary work means a communication process between the text and its readers. Reading is an activity that is guided by the text, this must be processed by the reader, who is then, in turn, affected by what he has processed.

The interpretation as the result of one reading-act; arises from the structure of interpersonal experience. Theoretically speaking, literary works are believed as a portrait of human's experience. So, in the discussion, the writer of this article will guide readers how the short story communicates the values as our mirror to view ourselves and conclude the universality of the text.

A successful relationship between the text and the reader can only come about through changes in the reader's projections. Thus the text provokes continually changing views in the reader. The imbalance between text and reader, however, is undefined, and it is this very indeterminacy that increases the variety of communication possible. If this possibility is fulfilled, and if the communication between text and reader is to be successful, clearly, the reader's activity must be controlled in some way by the text.

The conclusion of this writing will sum up the previous analysis of the short story; and yet show readers that the asymmetry between text and reader stimulates a constitutive activity on the part of the reader. This is given a specific structure by the blanks and the negations arising out of the text, and the structure controls the process of interaction.

Key-words : literary text, communication process

INTRODUCTION

The literary work was neither a vehicle for ideas, a reflection of social reality nor the incarnation of some transcendental truth : it was a material fact, whose functioning could be analyzed rather as one could examine a machine. It was made of words, not of objects of feelings, & it was a mistake to see it as the expression of an uthor's mind. (Terry Eagleton, 1983 : 3) To paraphrase this quotation, this paper believes that *A Clean, Well-Lighted Place* can play a role as a means of communication through

its structure – words that are arranged by Ernest Hemingway and let our perception as readers lays. We will dig interpersonal experience with the text as the proof of interaction process with the text.

Content was merely the motivation of form, an occasion or convenience for a particular kind of formal exercise. The character is just a device for holding together different kinds of narrative technique. (3) The analysis of this article will examine the protagonist of the short story and gives perception on how its writer narrates the theme of his work. Iser

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(1987 : 67) said that the reader's communication with the text is a dynamic process of self-correction, as he formulates signifieds which must then continually modify. The dynamic interaction between text and reader has the character of an event, which helps to create the impression that we are involved in something real. After reading the short story, the writers of this research try to find something real through the characters involved.

Ernest Hemingway (1899 – 1961) liked to portray people whose courage and honesty are set against the brutal ways of modern society, and who in this confrontation lose hope and faith. Hemingway's apparently coarse, crude, vulgar and unsentimental style and manners appeared equally shocking to many people outside his family. On the other hand, this style was precisely the reason why a great many other people liked his work. A myth, exaggerating those features, was to born.

Most of Hemingway's works reveal and stress a complexity that may cause bewilderment or relief, depending on what perspective one adopts. On his biographical note, Ernest Hemingway has a sensitive and vulnerable mind that was full of contradictions. The style of his work is a focus on facts. Since literature should be defined according to value as well as form (Lieberman & Foster, 1968 : 65), it can be said that the analysis of this writing will give the details how the structure of the text communicate its values to readers.

In the discussion, the writer of this paper will present the mental evidences from the short story as clues from Ernest Hemingway to arise a communication process with readers. This writing combines a literary analysis and the theory of interaction from Wolfgang Iser.

DISCUSSION

It is generally known that literature always plays with symbols. Iser (1987 : 64) said that symbols enable us to perceive the given world because they do not embody any of the qualities or properties of the existing reality. The symbols of literary language do not represent any empirical reality, but they do have a representative function. The writer of this paper believes that the function is communicating the values of the literary work to its readers through mental evidences found inside the text. Mental evidences here mean characters, setting, point of view, etc that sometimes are symbolically presented.

Another thing is, fictional language provides instructions for the building of a situation & so far the production of an imaginary object. Referring to the title of this research, the process of reading act through the short story done aims at examining that structure. Thus, the analysis begins with finding the hidden symbols from the dictions used or the phrases through dialogues presented by the characters involved. Those speech-acts may lead to a clue of determining the universality of the text or the values of the short story. The writer of this paper also believes that recognizing the values of a literary work means not only learning the literary style of the author but also learning about people and the universe, how we, as human survive and struggle. Why it says so; because in literary theory, any literary work stands as a minor to manor; a small entity reflects the big one or in other words, literature is like a portrait of human's experience. Through *A Clean, Well-Lighted Place*, readers will examine a protagonist in certain place at the certain time handling his circumstances thus receiving responses from his closest environment. We can draw that phenomenon in our life that we are facing various situations, both

pressure and leisure things thus we interact with how people respond our behavior.

In any text, one can always describe an indefinite number of structures, both concerning language and content (Stein Haugom Olsen, 1978:23). The analysis of this paper will examine the structures of language used by Hemingway in applying the function of delivering the literary content. To paraphrase the above quotation, readers must be careful in reading the lines, learning the style of language, the use of dictions and so on where at the same time see the content as a whole.

Later, Olsen suggested that discoveries concerning the unconscious mental structures underlying literature can no more help critics and readers in their interpretative tasks than a similar discovery about language that can help the speaker of that language to decide whether a sentence is correct, incorrect, clumsy or unsuitable. To paraphrase the above quotation, readers of literary works are familiar with different structure lays in a text; or we can say that they can sense the literariness of a text which differentiate it with an ordinary text or non-literary.

Olsen (23) said that literary theory must be directed towards the foundation of a rational basis for literary judgements, and not towards something beyond which is indifferent to literary practice. On the analysis, this research paper will try to apply this quotation where the interpretation written is held to rational judgement as a result of communication process with the text.

When we are reading a literary work, many times we find something that is hard to make sense. Referring to this, we can apply another statement from Olsen (16) who said that when a reader is faced with

a literary work, he knows that certain judgements are appropriate to this text because it is a literary work. He knows that ambiguity in a literary work is likely to have a function & tries to determine what secondary meanings of a word or a sentence fit appropriately in a context. The writer of this study finds another related statement from Iser (24) : "Although it is clear that acts of comprehension are guided by the structures of the text, the latter can never exercise complete control, and this is where one might sense a touch of arbitrariness." As an effort to show the significance of this quotation, in the following, the analysis of the short story will discuss how the implied reader can interpret the ambiguities found inside *A Clean, Well-Lighted Place*; since the implied reader is as a concept who has his roots firmly planted in the structure of the text.

Based on the theory of Interaction from Iser, there is an asymmetry between text and reader. In this context, the study focuses mainly on the two partners of communication process : the text and the reader. When we are reading a literary work, in this case a sort story, without us realizing; we are trying to have a communication with the text. The story itself is trying to communicate its ideas to the reader. The reading-act itself may produce different perception, logically speaking, for different readers. From psychoanalytical research, it is said that pure perception is the result of interpretation (Iser:165).

A text cannot adapt itself to each reader with whom it comes in contact. The reader, however, can never learn from the text how accurate or inaccurate are his views of it. There is no such frame of reference governing the text-reader relationship; on the contrary the codes which might regulate this interaction are fragmented in the text and must first be resembled or,

in most cases, restructured before any frame of reference can be established.

It is the gaps, the fundamental asymmetry between text and reader, that give rise to communication in the reading process; the lack of a common situation and a common frame of reference corresponds to the contingency and the “no-thing” which bring about the interaction between persons. Now as the blank gives rise to the reader’s projections, but the text itself cannot change, it follows that a successful relationship between text and reader can only come about through changes in the reader’s projections.

Thus the text provokes continually changing the views in the reader, and it is through these that the asymmetry begins to give way to the common ground of a situation. But through the complexity of the textual structure, it is difficult for this situation to be definitely formulated by the reader’s projections. If communication between text and reader is to be successful, clearly, the reader’s activity must be controlled in some way by the text.

The text is a whole system of such processes, and so, clearly, there must be a place within this system for the person who is to perform the reconstituting. This place is marked by the gaps in the text. It consists in the blanks which the reader is to fill in. Whenever the reader bridges the gaps, communication begins. The gaps function as a kind of pivot on which the whole text-reader relationship resolves. Hence the structured blanks of the text stimulate the process of ideation to be performed by the reader on terms set by the text.

Blanks and negations both control the process of communication in their own different ways. The blanks leave open the connections between

perspectives in the text. In other words, they induce the reader to perform basic operations within the text. To sum up, the asymmetry between text and reader stimulates a constitutive activity on the part of the reader. This is given a specific structure by the blanks and the negations arising out of the text. This structure controls the process of interaction.

Now the writer of this article will describe how the ambiguity of the text drives the secondary meanings of words and sentences. The opening paragraph of *A Clean, Well-Lighted Place* presents a sense of ambiguity : “. . . . *In the day time the street was dusty, but at night the dew settled the dust and the old man liked to sit late because he was deaf and now at night it was quiet and he felt the difference.* (page 110). This study gives the interpretation of the above quotation : we feel the ambiguity of the sentence *he was deaf and now at night it was quiet and he felt the difference*. The diction *deaf* inserts a logical and lexical meaning that the old man cannot hear anything so that the part of the sentence saying *now it was quiet and he felt the difference* drives the secondary meaning. We as readers have a question at once; how can a deaf person feel the atmosphere of the night ? Logically speaking, from our hearing ability, other senses will bring the response of it to feel our nearest circumstances. Our interpretation as readers can use the clue to answer the ambiguity from the previous part of the quotation : *In the daytime the street was dusty* The old man uses the ability of his eyesight; remembering the dusty air and at night he always sees the contrary of it where the dew replaces the dirt.

Another example of ambiguity from the last page of the short short story : . . . *It was nothing*

that he knew too well. It was all a nothing and a man was nothing too. The ambiguity lays on the interpreted meaning of how can an old man who has assumed as a nothing but he knew too well ? The nothingness versus an ability of knowing something too well. So, we can say that the choice of words in the quotation drive the secondary meanings. The interpretation goes like this : despite of people's assumption that he was just nothing, the old man seems to show the dignity or the strength of his well-being. The mental evidence for this interpretation is taken from page 112 of the short short story : . . . "Not always. This old man is clean. He drinks without spilling. Even now, drunk. Look at him." This quotation communicates to its readers that despite of being old and at the time spoken being drunk; he can drink without spilling the liquid. We can say that the dictions insert the secondary meaning where Hemingway communicates the character of the protagonist. Another sentence which is also a supporting evidence : . . . "The waiter watched him go down the street, a very old man walking unsteadily but with dignity." This quotation communicates the same information to its readers that the protagonist has a strong body. To correlate with a basic theory that a literary work has a strong influence from the background of the writer; it is said that Ernest Hemingway drives a case of identity in his work. One idea of Hemingway which is also inserted in *A Clean, Well-Lighted Place* : "we are all losers, defeated by death." In the story, the protagonist (the old man) tried to commit suicide. A quotation from page 110 : "Last week he tried to commit suicide," one waiter said. The further clue from page 111 : "What did he want to kill himself for ?" "Why did they do it ?" "Fear for his soul." We may interpret a similarity of the despair of the old man

with the above statement that Hemingway as a writer believes that as human, we are defeated by death.

Referring the inserted information which stands as secondary meanings towards the diction used, the following are another related mental evidence from the text : "He must be eighty years old." "Anyway I should say he was eighty."

The proof is, the conversation between two waiters below :

"I wouldn't want to be that old. An old man is a nasty thing."

"Not always. This old man is clean. He drinks without spilling. Even now, drunk. Look at him."

This article wants to present another mental evidence from the text to show how the ambiguity of the text drives the secondary meanings. See the following quotation about the protagonist :

"I don't want to look at him. I wish he would go home. He has no regard for those who must work." The old man looked from his glass across the square, then over at the waiters. "Another brandy," he said, pointing to his glass. The waiter who was in a hurry came over. "Finished," he said, speaking with that omission of syntax stupid people employ when talking to drunken people or foreigners. "No more tonight. Close now." "Another," said the old man. "No. Finished." The waiter wiped the edge of the table with a towel and shook his head. The old man stood up, slowly counted the saucers, took a leather coin purse from his pocket and paid for the drinks, leaving half a peseta tip.

The interesting thing from the above quotation is that despite of a very old age and a general assumption that an old man is a nasty thing; the protagonist is able to communicate by giving a response to leave the favorite place to drink at night.

He obeys the waiter, seems that he can hear all the words, contrary to the fact that he is deaf. So, what can readers grab from this explanation? The ambiguity of responses showed by the old man has inserted Hemingway's secondary meanings to us. The message could be like this : sometimes we cannot predict accurately the psychological condition of somebody from just evaluating physical appearance. The interpretation can be strengthened by a quotation from Wolfgang Iser (1967) who said that "the imbalance between text and reader, however, is undefined, and it is this very indeterminacy that increases the variety of communication possible."

"The text is a whole system of such processes, and so, clearly, there must be a place within this system for the person who is to perform the reconstituting. This place is marked by the gaps in the text——it consists in the blanks which the reader is to fill in." (Iser : 1969). This study has filled the blanks by mentioning the interpretation of the secondary meanings of the diction Hemingway wish to communicate to. The next discussion will state rational bases for interpretative responses through the text.

The writer of this paper believes that the protagonist, the old man in *A Clean, Well-Lighted Place* is in a confrontation to lose hope and faith. This assumption is taken from the previous conversation between the waiters that in his 80-year-old, the old man had tried to commit suicide. Why we can say that the old man confronts two extraordinary different things : lose and faith. Lose hope because he ever tried to end his life. To lose faith because he ever denied the faith he ever owned : to be in dignity even now in a very old age. Remember this quotation : "*The waiter watched him go down the street, a*

very old man walking unsteadily but with dignity." If the old man walks on this way, then why he wants to end his life? This writing would like to find another rational bases from the text to present interpretative responses through this literary work. Let's now analyze the following quotation

"Why didn't you let him stay and drink?" the unhurried waiter asked. They were putting up the shutters. "It is not half-past two."

"I want to go home to bed."

"What is an hour?"

"More to me than to him."

"An hour is the same."

"You talk like an old man yourself. He can buy a bottle and drink at home."

"It's not the same."

"No, it is not," agreed the waiter with a wife. He did not wish to be unjust. He was only in a hurry.

"And you? You have no fear of going home before your usual hour?"

"Are you trying to insult me?"

"No hombre, only to make a joke."

"No," the waiter who was in a hurry said, rising from pulling down the metal shutters. "I have confidence. I am all confidence."

"You have youth, confidence, and a job," the older waiter said. "You have everything."

"And what do you lack?"

"Everything but work."

"You have everything I have."

"No. I have never had confidence and I am not young."

"Come on. Stop talking nonsense and lock up."

Seeing the conversation above, Hemingway put the older waiter as a representative of the old man himself. As a human, along his personal experience in life, in its struggle, many times he lost hope and faith. Another quotation :

“I am of those who like to stay late at the cafe” the older waiter said. “With all those who do not want to go to bed. With all those who need a light for the night.”

“We are two different kinds, “ the older waiter said. He as now dressed to go home. “It is not only a question of youth and confidence although those things are very beautiful. Each night I am reluctant to close up because there may be someone who needs the cafe.” (p.113)

The story talks about the fate of a very old man and the related information is gathered through the intense conversation between two waiters – a younger and an older waiter. The writer of this paper believes that the setting of time symbolizes the age of the protagonist. The tone of the story also symbolizes the psychological conflict of the old man. Several feelings or manners showed by the protagonist are also presented by the older waiter. It seems that Hemingways creates a dialogue about his fear of soul with the media of two waiters in a cafe. Being unstable in a very old age is represented by being a drunk person in the story. Even the text informs the reader that the old man drunks every night. But there is an interesting thing from his presence, every night for the waiters who serve him impatiently, sometimes. The mental image of the old man is presented here. As a rule, the presentation of facts in literary texts is of interest only in relation to their function : the extreme age of the old man; 80 years ols, is of no significance until it is connected to other facts of situations; presenting old age for its own sake would be pointless.

But when the age of the man has a specific function, the reader’s imagination will animate the connection between text and function. This writing believes that Hemingway uses the intense conversation between the two waiters to communicate another thing of the old man. Another interpretative function.

As an effort to correlate the first and the second part of this chapter, the writer of this article applies the quotation from Iser (p.24) : “Although it is clear that acts of comprehension are guided by the structures of the text, the latter can never exercise complete control, and this is where one might sense a touch of arbitrariness. On the previous part of this writing, its writer has elaborated the ambiguity or the arbitrariness to interpret the secondary meanings. And on the second part gives its rational bases to present the interpretative responses. The two discussion are provided by mental evidences taken from the text.

It is the turn now for the writer of this writing to tell how the secondary meanings send values to readers. If the reader and the literary text are partners in a process of communication, and if what is communicated is to be of any value, our prime concern will no longer be the meaning of that text but its effect. This part of writing will see the effectiveness of fiction as a mean of communication.

About literary works, some object-theories stress the connection with the human mind (the emotive theory), while others tend to look upon the work as an independent entity (the semantic theory). In *A Clean, Well-Lighted Place*, Hemingway sends the secondary meanings of human ming through the ccreated characters. Words and phrases in a frame of intense conversation are used to give a clue for its readers to catch the value, the essence of the work.

This article believes that in our reality, not only an old man; many times a young man faces a similar conflict with the protagonist : lose hope and faith eventhough another perseon views him as having everything in life. The conclusion is, everyone must have rational bases for his conduct or misconduct from others point of view. The events, characters and objects described in a literary work can be invested with multiple relatedness only by use of the secondary levels of meaning. The writer of this article also believes that the secondary meanings here equals the value conveyed by the short short story being discussed.

When a reader is faced with a literary work, he knows that certain judgements are appropriate to this text because it is a literary work. He knows that ambiguity in a literary work is likely to have a function and tries to determine what secondary meanings of a word or a sentence fit appropriately in a context. This paper concludes that Hemingway uses both setting of time and place inside the story to help readers comprehend the secondary level of meanings. The ambiguity lays in several contrary traits of the protagonist. Another is several hidden symbolic manner of the older waiter to present the common senses of the story : in the journey, every human must always pass complete struggle of emotions of fear, happiness, lost, overwhelmed, and many more. In certain situation, age differs nothing. Meaning that both young and older people confront the same irritating emotions. Since literary works are as portrait of human's experience, this study will draw a value here that it is very natural that we live to prepare our last destination – the fate, our death, a true we cannot avoid.

Another explanation to show how the rational bases of readers give a proof communication process between text and reader : “The literary text performs its function, not through a ruinous comparison with reality, but by communicating a reality which it has organized itself. Literary text gives insight into the reality it stimulates. As a structure of communication, it is identical neither with the reality it refers to, nor with the disposition of its possible recipients. And it is precisely because it is not identical to world or reader that is able to communicate.” (Iser : 181). Referring to this quotation, *A Clean, Well-Lighted Place* emphasizes the setting of the cafe as a means of communication with its readers. The most attractice aspect of the place, to be compared with most bars – the cleanliness and the light stand as a bridge for readers to find its message. Such ordinary conversation between two waiters by the time before closing the cafe guide the imagination of the reader to rise a question in mind; how can we relate it to a reality ? What special to be an old man ? What kind of despair that may arouse somebody to end his life tragically ? This paper believes that in this case, Hemingway is success in provoking the reader's mind to be curious, to think critically why in the opening paragraph we are told a failed effort of comiting suicide done by a wealthy old man ?

Only by short phrases framed in rather long conversation, the short short story is able to provide the processes for readers to elaborate their rational bases in interpreting the story, in getting the value, in finding a proof that yet, we see together that a literary work can be seen as a mean of communication. The dynamic interaction between text and reader has the character of an event, which helps to create the impression that we are involved in something real. The event exposed in *A Clean, Well-Lighted Place*

is a moment of a silence and peace when the old man sit in his favorite cafe, drinking brandy. This study would like to give the argument that the time when Hemingway wrote the story, he was influenced by the World War. We find the evidence in the opening lines that a soldier frequently passed the cafe. Reading Hemingway's personal background, we can say that the protagonist shares his anxiety about the war plus its negative impact for a retired / deserter- soldier like the old man in the story. Hemingway himself was almost killed in Italy during World War I in Italy. We know that most of his experiences are put as core ideas in his literary works.

CONCLUSION

The above discussion shows us clearly that the structure of a short story is able to be a means of communication between the author and its readers. Theoretically speaking, we can always find a common sense from literary works. By reading carefully the conversation between the two waiters, readers can conclude the conflict faced by the protagonist, an old man. The essence of the story as the most important thing in one reading-act; is that we, may experience the same condition with that old man. Many times we lose hope and faith, we face up and down in life. Despite of the old age, sometimes younger people are possibly feel loney and hopeless.

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