

STRUGGLE AS SEEN IN OWENS' *WHERE THE CRAWDADS SING*

FIONNY I GUSTAMAN, IMELDA S. LOLOWANG

*English Education Departement
Faculty of Language and Art
Universitas Negeri Manado
Tondano, Indonesia*

Email: gustamanfionny@gmail.com

Abstract : The purpose of this study is to reveal the struggles in the novel *Where The Crawdads Sing* by Delia Owens (2019). In conducting the study, the writers delimit only in analysing the struggles of the main character in the novel. The design of this study is qualitative method because all of the data are in the form of words and quotations rather than numbers and the approach used *Reader-Response*, It focuses on the process of struggles of the main character that produces the result. The writers find that three forms of struggle. They accept the facts of life, achieve the goals, and get affection. The implication of this study is to enrich the knowledge of the writers and the readers about the main character's struggles that reflected in Owens' *Where The Crawdads Sing*. Moreover, it can be a reference for the students of English Department who are attracted to observe the similar research. Therefore, this research can conclude the novel, *Where The Crawdads Sing*, to show the forms of the struggle of the main character.

Keywords : *Struggle, Owen, Reader-Response*

INTRODUCTION

Literature always reflects about the social and cultural phenomenon happened in society. Whether it is personal or social phenomenon literature always presents it in an interesting way (Sabudu, 2020:1). Life is beautiful, this sentence is usually said by young people as they hardly find problems in their life. However, we know that life is

not only full of beautiful things and happy moments but also difficulties. People as human beings cannot avoid them. There are so many problems that exist in our life and we need to struggle to overcome our problems so that we can survive. We cannot avoid our destiny. However once we have problems in life, we still must continue our path. Such a condition can also be found in a work of literature such as novel.

The expression of life through the medium of language. It can be regarded as something essential since it portrays real life, experiences, people, thoughts and people's feeling about life (Hudson, 1910: 10). One of the authors who tries to portray human's life experiences, Delia Owens with her novel entitled *Where the Crawdads Sing*. Kya who is the main character of this novel, is a young girl who has abandoned by her entire family and left her alone in a marsh in North Carolina. Because of that abandonment, it makes her to struggle so she can survive by her own self.

This novel is very interesting to be discussed because this novel written by a nature writing. The term 'nature writing' has usually been reserved for a brand of nature representation that is deemed literary, written in the speculative personal voice, and presented in the form of the nonfiction essay. Such nature writing is frequently pastoral or romantic in its philosophical assumptions, tends to be modern or even ecological in its sensibility, and is often in service to an explicit or implicit preservationist agenda (Wallace, 2001). This novel tells about a young girl named Kya who is growing up in the marsh but she could adapt. Delia Owens wants to write a novel by a nature writing who spent as much time as she can in the wilderness. Like Owens stated in Reese's Book Club:

"I longed to write a novel immersed in nature writing which would examine how our behavior today is influenced by ancient genes. I wanted to write a mystery that didn't just ask the question who done it, but why the culprit behaved as they did. To explore human nature with nature writing." (Owens, 2018).

The researchers are very interested to the main character and this novel is

beautifully written, contains poetry and vivid description of the Marsh. Kya's journey spans years, the reader present from her childhood into maturity. This story deals to wilderness and Mother Earth with all of her glorious wonder, her instinctual need to nurture and protect. Based on this story, the s would like to explore deeper on the matter of the main character's struggle in *Where the Crawdads Sing*.

The title of the novel, *Where the Crawdads Sing* is taken from a phrase Owens' mother used to encouraging her tomboy daughter to take the woods around their rural Georgia home and listen to what those woods had to say. Owens stated in CBS News, I learned from a book that crawdads don't really sing. But I learned from my mother that if you go far enough into the wilderness by yourself, and there's nothing but you and nature, you will hear the crawdads sing (CBS News, 2019).

Every youngster in a family wants to be loved and protected by their own family, as we all know. However, there is a female in this novel who is having the opposite experience. *Where the Crawdads Sing* tells about a story of struggle, of what depth of loneliness feels like when a young girl named Kya is abandoned first by her mother, then her four siblings. They leaves from their father's meanness, his abuse and his drinking. They leaves her behind with her father but she remains alone since her father comes and goes until he does not come back. Heartbreaking how she is neglected and abandoned, tries to figure out a way to eat. She has been abandoned by her parents, siblings, school system, and the entire town surrounding her and what ultimately feels like life itself. She has to survive for years alone in a marsh that she calls home. This story reflects the struggle of the main character in Owens' *Where the Crawdads Sing*.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is qualitative research, That means the data is deal with word and quotation as opposed to number, figures or calculation. According to Bogdan and Biklen :

“Qualitative research is descriptive. The data collected are in form of words or picture rather than numbers. The written result of the research contains quotations from data to illustrate and substantiate the presentation” (1992 : 30).

According to the preceding assertion, the researchers should gather data as well as a few books on the subject. This study is classified as a library research because the data was obtained from the novel and other similar works.

The analysis data are words, definition, quotations, observation, or dialogues that can be use to support this study. The primary and secondary source use in the study are primary and secondary source, respectively. The novel itself is the primary source, while related literature is the secondary source.

Technique of Collecting the Data

The researcher follow some steps in collecting the data for this research as follows :

1. Reading the where the *crowdads sing* novel from the beginning to the end to find out the characters exist in the story.
2. Determining the characters that be analyzed
3. Collecting the description of characterization of the sentences and dialogues the describe characterization of the characters.

4. Selecting and categorizing the data to be analyzed.

5. Analyzing the data.

Data collection

The researchers use many types of source in this study. These are the primary and secondary sources, respectively for a literature essay, there are two types of proof: primary source evidence and secondary source evidence, which include facts and opinions from outside the text. It is in line with Griffith assumption (1986: 132). The Novel *Where The Crowdads Sing* is the primary source, while secondary source includes books and internet references that may be useful in this study.

Data analysis

The writers use analysis suggested by Griffith. *“Analysis means breaking something down into its components and discovering relationships among them that give unity and coherence to the whole”* (Griffith, 1986: 30). As a result, analysis is a particularly useful tool for gaining a through understanding of literary works.

“The reader response approach is based on the assumption that a literary work takes place in a mutual relationship between the reader and the text when the reader demystifies literature and links it to his/her individual experience. Emotional reactions that grow out of this reciprocal bond can consolidate classroom instruction” (Bleich, 1975 : 21).

The definition implies that the reader-response approach use to highlight the main character’s struggle, which is reflected in the novel. Based on theory above this analysis is concentrated on the literary work itself. In sense, the researchers focus reader’s and novel’s mutual relationship. The method

used to assist the researchers in arriving at a complete response to the study's objectives.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Forms of struggle Accept the facts of life

As a human being, we must face every difficult truth is absolute thing that everyone must accept. Life isn't always as lovely as we imagine or plan. A fact of life one's limitations necessitates a struggle in order to accept them with patience and sincerity. It seen in the following quotation : *"She knew it is Chase she mourn, but a life defined by rejections. As the sky and clouds struggled overhead, she said out loud, I have to do life alone. But I knew this. I've known a long time that people don't stay"*(Owens, 2019:23).

The quotation above explains that she remembered Chase, who was special in her life, but he was killed in an accident. She realized the true meaning of life after recalling the memories where she always called his name. Everyone around her, including family, friends, and people she care about, could leave everytime. The reality of life does not always go as planned. It is seen in the following quotation:

"Ma had always said the autumn moon showed up for her birthday So even though she couldn't remember the date of her birth, one evening when the moon rose swollen and golden from the lagoon, Kya said to herself, I reckon I'm seven. Pa never mentioned it; certainly there was no cake. He didn't say anything about her going to school either, and she, not knowing much about it, was too afraid to bring it up". (Owens, 2019:56).

The quotation above shows when Autumn Moon reminds Ma of her birthday, but she doesn't remember the exact date, and Pa never mentioned it either. She was supposed to guess her own age. There was no cake or birthday celebration, as it customary on one's birthday. That's the reality not everyone has a perfect life, there are some things that must be accepted in this life. It is seen in the following quotation :

"The teacher walked back to the front and said, Catherine, please stand and tell the class your full name. Her stomach churned. Come now, dear, don't be shy. Kya stood. Miss Catherine Danielle Clark, she said, because that was what Ma once said was her whole name. Can you spell dog for us? Staring at the floor, Kya stood silent. Jodie and Ma had taught her some letters. But she'd never spelled a word aloud for anybody. Nerves stirred in her stomach; still, she tried. G-o-d. Laughter let loose up and down the rows". (Owens, 2019:34).

The quotation above describes she was humiliated when she started her first school and her teacher asked her to stand up and introduce her self in front of the class. The teacher asked her to spell a word, but she was nervous and the classroom laughed at her. The reality not always perfect and smooth, It seen in the following quotation :

"Kya couldn't remember how to pray. Was it how you held your hands or how hard you squinted your eyes that mattered? Maybe if I pray, Ma and Jodie will come home. Even with all the shouting

and fussing, that life was better than this lumpy-grits”(Owens, 2019:76).

The quotation above depicts that she tried to prayer but couldn't remember the way, She hoped Jodie and ma would comeback and see her again, But after all that she realized whatever she did, it wouldn't happen, the truth of she was abandoned of her entire family, However she had to survive without anybody in her life. In this life none wont to be abandoned by whole family. It seen in the following quotation :

“I guess some things can't be explained, only forgiven or not. I don't know the answer. Maybe there isn't one. I'm sorry to bring you this bad news. I've had no family, no news of family for most of my life. Now within a few minutes I've found a brother and lost my mother. I'm so sorry, Kya. Don't be. Actually, I lost Ma years ago, and now you're back, Jodie. I can't tell you how much I wanted to see you again. This is one of the happiest and yet saddest days of my life. She touched his arm with her fingers, and he already knew her enough to know this was rare”. (Owens, 2019:197).

The quotation above explains that she feelings happy and sad at the same time, because Jodie came to see her after a long time and told her that Ma had died. But she had actually lost ma years before. Living alone in Marsh with no news of her entire family.

Achieve a goals

Everyone has goals in life that they want to achieve. But achieving that level of

success is not easy, it necessitates struggle and hard work in accordance with the capacity of those who wish to achieve it. It is seen in the following quotation : *“Slowly, she unraveled each word of the sentence there are some who can live without wild things, and some who cannot. Oh, she said. Oh. You can read, Kya. There will never be a time again when you can't read. It ain't just that. She spoke almost in a whisper I wadn't aware that words could hold so much. I didn't know a sentence could be so full. He smiled. That's a very good sentence. Not all words hold that much”* (Owens, 2019:67).

The quotation above shows Tate taught her to read and unravelled each word of the sentence. She attempted to understand every word spoken by Tate. She wasn't fluent in reading because her life had been accustomed to the wild nature, but she did if well. The eagerness to learn new things is big. It seen in the following quotation :

“She handed Mrs. Hines, the librarian, a list of college textbooks. Could you please help me find The Principles of Organic Chemistry by Geissman, Invertebrate Zoology of the Coastal Marsh by Jones, and Fundamentals of Ecology by Odum . . . She'd seen these titles referenced in the last of the books Tate had given before he left her for college. Oh, my. I see. We'll have to get a library loan from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill for these books.” (Owens, 2019:50).

The quotation above depicts when she went to the library and found some books about the species in Marsh she has read, since she became friends with Tate. She

was able to read every word of the sentences.

(Owens, 2019:65)

“Come in, she said, and led him into the small living room chock-full with her specimens. Oh, he said. Yes, then. I saw your book, Kya. I didn’t know for sure if it was you, but yes, now I can see it was. It’s amazing. He walked around looking at her collections, also examining the room with its new furniture, glancing down the halls to the bedrooms. Not wanting to snoop, but taking it all in. Do you want coffee, tea? She didn’t know if he’d come for a visit or to stay. What did he want after all these years? Coffee would be great. Thank you”. (Owens, 2019:62)

The quotation above shows she was very welcoming to Jodie, who had left her because couldn’t stay with their abusive father.

To get an affection

Affection means different things to different people. For some, affection or love can be purely romantic, for others real love truly exists only between family members, and for some love is everywhere and can concern anything.

Nonetheless it seems inevitable that love is one of the most beautiful and strongest feelings in the world. It seen in the following quotation :

“Why, Tate, why? She mumbled into the sheets, “You were supposed to be different. To stay. You said you loved me, but there is no such thing. There is no one on Earth you can count on . From somewhere very deep, she made herself a promise never to trust or love anyone again.”

The quotation above explains Tate is the first man she loved, but he left her for college, she she never wanted to trust or love anybody. Love was not always about the beautiful things but the painful though, But those are the consequences of loving. It seen in the following quotation:

“She wanted him, all of him, and her body pushed against his. But seconds later, she put her hand on his. C’mom, Kya, he said. Please. We’ve waited forever. I’ve been pretty patient, don’t ya think? Chase, you promised. Damn it, Kya. What’re we waiting for? He sat up. Surely, I showed ya I care for you. Why not? Sitting up, she pulled down her T-shirt. What happens next? How do I know you won’t leave me? How does anybody ever know? But, Kya, I’m not going. anywhere. I’m falling in love with you. I want to be with you all the time. What else can I do to show you?”

(Owens, 2019:95)

The quotation above explains after Tate left her for college. Kya met Chase Andrew, a handsome and popular guy at Brakeley Cove. As time went by they were always spent time together, finally there was a mutual feelings of each other. Chase declared his feelings to her, but she had to confronted by difficult choices which is having someone, because she was always abandoned by people she loved. He convinced her of his feelings and promised to stayed forever. Sometimes in life there are always difficult choices, especially to make decisions to trust again. It seen in the following quotation:

“Stayed by me! What does that mean? Leave me alone. Kya tucked the knapsack under her arm and walked toward the boat, but he grabbed her arm, holding hard. Kya, there’ll never be anybody else like ya, never. And I know ya love me. She ripped her arm from his hands. You’re wrong! I’m not sure I ever loved you. But you talked to me about marriage, remember? You talked about building a house for you and me. Instead I found out about your engagement to somebody else in the newspaper. Why’d you do that? Why, Chase!” (Owens, 2019:101)

The quotation above shows the quarrel of the both, she was betrayed by Chase the man she trusted. A broken promise to marriage her stayed forever. The fact that he was engaged to another woman made her so upset and never wanted to see him again. The consequences of loving were reality to get hurt, but it shows that it wasn’t the one.

It would be the time to found someone who loved with sincerity. It seen in the following quotation :

“He was her first love, but he had dropped her when he went to college, left her waiting on the lagoon shore. So it had ended. How long ago was that? Jodie asked. About seven years, I guess. When he first went to Chapel Hill. Did you ever see him again? He came back to apologize; said he still loved me. He was the one who suggested I publish reference books. It’s nice to see him now and then in the marsh, but I’d never get involved again. Kya, that was seven years ago. He was just a boy, first time away from home, hundreds of pretty girls around. If he came back

and apologized and says he loves you, maybe you should cut him a little slack”. (Owens, 2019:205)

The quotation above points out that when Jodie her sister came to visited after a long time, and asked her about the relationship with Tate her first love. She had forgiven him and was very happy to meet him after seven years, however he was always be the first to her. The man who encouraged her passion to learned about the Marsh.

The result of the struggles

In this part the writers result the data analysis found in the novel *Where The Crawdads Sing* by Owens, the writers identify forms of struggle of the main character in the novel.

Accept the facts of life

As a human being, we must face every difficult truth is absolute things that everyone must accept. Life is not always beautiful, we have to struggle to be able accept it with patience and a sincere heart.

Based on data 1, She was devastated when chase left, but she had to accept that everyone in her life could leave at any time and she had to accept that.

In the data 2, she is attempting to adjust of the new circle. But it is not as simple as one might think. Many things in life require more effort at times.

In the same way, data 3 explains the reality is not always as prefect and smooth as we had hoped or imagined, but we must face it.

Based on data 4, she had been abandoned by her entire family, so she had to survive without anyone In the same way, in data 5 that her brother returned to see her after a seven year absence. Told her that Ma was gone, which made her sad, because her

mother had abandoned her for a longtime, facing her to struggle for survival in the marsh.

Achieve a goals

In this life, everyone has her goals to be achieved. But to achieve that kind of success is not easy, it takes the struggle and hard work in accordance with the capacity of people who want to achieve that goal.

Based on data 1, Tate taught her how to unravel each word of the sentence, and she was able to do so fluently. The eagerness to learn new things is important.

In the same way, in data 2 that she was so interested in books that she went to a local library to look for some.

In the data 3, finally, with all of her desire, she wrote her own books about the species in Marsh. The passion of learning new things is revealed.

To get an affection

Affection or love means different things to everyone. Other people's love can be family, friends or even God. Love is the most beautiful and strongest feelings in the world.

Based on data 1, she is broken because the man she loved has abandoned her and broken the promise. Love is not always about the beautiful things, but it was about the painful feeling. Which are the result of loving.

In the same way, in data 2, she meets chase, a handsome man who expresses his feelings for her, but she is still afraid to trust anyone again.

In the data 3, she was so upset because he was engaged to another woman, so that she never want to see him again. The consequences of loving are reality to get

hurt, but it shows that it is not the one there will be the time to found true love.

Based on data 4, she has been forgiven Tate and reestablished a positive relationship with him. Tate is a man who is always there for her.

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