

ALIENATION IN THE MAIN CHARACTER IN CHRIS CLEAVE'S *THE OTHER HAND* NOVEL

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ABSTRACT

This study discussed about the alienation in the main character in Chris Cleave's *The Other Hand* novel. The purposes of this study were to identify the alienation in Little Bee and describe the alienation in Little Bee. Psychological approach is used in this research to find the alienation in the main character. This study focused on analyzing the Little Bee's experiences which leads her into alienation. To achieve the aims of this study employed a library study and applied psychological approach to identify Little Bee's alienation. The study used Seeman's theory about five variants of alienation and theory characterization by Rimmon Kenan. Qualitative methodology is used in this study. The result of this research shows that Little Bee's experiences lead her into alienation. The researcher found all variants of alienation were experienced by the main character there are, powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, social isolation, and self-estrangement. Data are represented mostly through indirect characterization (action, speech, external appearance, and environment). As the conclusion, the researcher concluded that the main character in this novel is an alienated character.

Keywords: Character, Characterization, Alienation, Seeman's theory of Alienation

ABSTRAK

Kata alienasi belakangan digunakan untuk menjelaskan perasaan terpisah di dalam kelompok manusia. Dalam karya sastra, alienasi dapat di alami oleh karakter. Penelitian ini berdiskusi tentang alienation dalam diri karakter utama dalam novel Chris Cleave berjudul *The Other Hand*. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah mengidentifikasi alienasi pada Little Bee dan mendeskripsikan bagaimana a cara si penulis mengkarakterisasikan alienasi tersebut terhadap Little Bee. Penelitian ini berfokus kepada pengalaman teralienasi yang dialami Little Bee. Untuk mendapatkan tujuan dari penelitian ini, melakukan penelitian pustaka dan menggunakan pendekatan psikologi untuk mengidentifikasi alienasi dalam diri Little Bee. Penelitian ini menggunakan teori tentang lima varian alienasi oleh Melvin Seeman dan teori karakterisasi oleh Rimmon Kenan. Hasil dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa pengalaman Little Bee menuntun dirinya mengalami alienasi. Peneliti menemukan semua varian alienasi dialami oleh karakter utama, ketidakberdayaan, tiada berarti, tidak ada norma, terisolasi secara social, dan

keterasingan diri. Data banyak digambarkan melalui karakterisasi secara tidak langsung (perbuatan, perkataan, penampilan, dan lingkungan). Sebagai kesimpulan dari penelitian ini, peneliti menyimpulkan bahwa karakter utama adalah karakter yang teralienasi.

Kata Kunci: Karakter, Karakterisasi, Alienasi, Teori Alienasi Seeman

A. INTRODUCTION

Literature cannot be separated from the society, like Wellek and Warren state that literature represents life, life is social reality, and this world becomes the object of literary imitation (98). In 2008, Chris Cleave wrote a novel *The Other Hand*. The story follows a teenage Nigerian as her life intertwines with Sarah Summers. Cleave imagines a singular scene on the beach in Nigeria that unites Little Bee to the O'Rourke's-Summers family.

Keniston states that the problems of alienation are both seen as a personality style and as a social phenomenon (Keniston in Mogar 133). Human can be accepted by the society or even be alienated and human beings can experience alienation in their environment. Alienation can happen in schools, offices, and neighborhood or even in the family. The concept of alienation has developed time by time. As Geyer explains, alienation is also strongly influenced by Melvin Seeman (1959). He is an American social psychologist and emeritus professor of sociology at the University of California. Seeman divides alienation into five distinct versions of study of alienation, powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, social isolation and self-estrangement (21). He believes alienation not only happen in the work place, from the upper class to the lower class and in capitalism but also in the society in human life every day.

The focus of this research is what alienation that is experienced in the main character and how the alienation is represented in the novel. Which then those alienation revealed will be identified using Seeman's theory of alienation and characterization by Rimmon Kenan. In doing so, this study is meaningful to understand the novel, about the alienation, and in giving future researcher ideas for new researches.

B. RELATED LITERATURE

1. Alienation

The word alienation, originated from a Latin noun *alienatio* which in turn is derived from a Latin verb *alienare* meaning to 'take away', 'remove', or 'cause a separation to occur', was initially popularized in theological writings (Sarfraz 45). The term of "alienation" is commonly characterized in our life nowadays. Alienation is a term which most people understand in terms of their acquaintance

with the writings of certain philosophers, psychologists and sociologist whose uses of the term are most significant. Alienation experience by people in their life and can be defined is a feeling of powerlessness, estrangement and being alienated, from other people or even from oneself.

2. Seeman's theory of alienation

a. Powerlessness

Powerlessness is the first variant of alienation mentioned by Seeman that refers to "the expectancy or probability held by the individual that his own behavior cannot determine the occurrence of the outcomes, or reinforcements, he seeks" (Seeman in Senekal 20). At its root, powerlessness is a feeling of drift or helplessness (Mackey 220). A person suffers from alienation in the form of 'powerlessness' when she is conscious of the gap between what she would like to do and what she feels capable of doing (Kalekin-Fishman in Senekal 97).

Senekal suggests that in literature, the character who personifies powerlessness is the antihero. This kind of character usually goes through an unwilling situation so then leads them to take drastic alternatives (25). In short, powerlessness is a feeling on being unable to select from choices and to take any action as an alternative way.

b. Meaninglessness

The second type of Seeman's nation of alienation (1959) is 'Meaninglessness'. According to Seeman, meaninglessness refers to a person's ability to make sense of events in which he engaged (Seeman in Senekal 25). Sarfraz also says that meaninglessness happened when the individual is unclear as to what ought to believe when the individual's minimal standards for clarity in decision-making are not met (Sarfraz 52-53). Meaninglessness is the perception by the adolescent that he cannot predict what will happen because he lacks adequate knowledge, and, furthermore, that it is impossible for him to acquire that knowledge because the world is so complex. Seeman assumes that to resolve meaninglessness, adolescents often adopt simplistic solutions to life problems (Seeman in Mackey 221). In other words, meaninglessness is mental condition of a person whose life is profoundly afflicted by the sense of loss, futility, and emptiness when the person is fail to fulfill the willing to meaning the life.

c. Normlessness

Taken from Seeman's terminology, normlessness is characterized as 'a high expectancy that socially unapproved means are necessary to achieve given goals' (Seeman in Geyer 22). Seeman states that normlessness is the situation in which

social norms regulating individual conduct have broken down or no longer affective as rules of behavior (Seeman in Sarfraz 52). Normlessness first time was mentioned by Durkheim with the word 'anomie' and was used to describe when the laws of a country fail to be carried out because the society cannot fulfill those standard known as 'anomie' (Sarfraz 52). Therefore, normlessness is a situation in which the individual feels the previously approved social norms no longer effective in guiding his behavior for the achievement of culturally defined or personal goals.

d. Social Isolation

The fourth type of alienation refers to social isolation. Social isolation refers to the individual's detachment from a community because their rules are not meaningful or efficient for the individual. Besides, the person does not feel a sense of belonging to that community either. Although it might seem a similar definition to "normlessness", social alienation could be defined as the moment in which society as a unit is not sufficient for a human being to be considered part of it and consequently, it can lead to powerlessness, meaningless and normlessness (Senekal 43). In addition, social isolation refers to "the feeling of being segregated from one's community" (Kalekin-Fishman in Senekal 43).

e. Self-estrangement

Self-estrangement is most extensively used by Fromm in *The Sane Society*, 'By alienation is meant a mode of experience in which the person experiences himself as an alien. He has become, one might say, estranged from himself' (Fromm in Sarfraz 54). Furthermore, this is the psychological state of denying one's own interests of seeking out extrinsically satisfying, rather than intrinsically satisfying activities (Kalekin-Fishman in Senekal 49). Seeman admits, "What is being postulated here is some ideal human condition from which the individual is estranged" (Seeman in Senekal 49).

3. Characterization

Characterization is a literary device that an author uses to reveal a character's personality, such as appearance, acting, dialogue and motivation. These characterizations helps to identified and differentiate each character. Characterization is the process by which the writer reveals the personality of a character. Characterization is revealed through direct characterization and indirect characterization. There are two basic types of textual indicators of character: direct definition and indirect presentation (Kenan 59). Kenan divides characterization into two ways both direct and indirect characterization (action, speech, external appearance, and environment).

C. RESEARCH METHOD

The research is done by using the qualitative methodology. The main object of this study is the novel *The Other Hand* (2008), and therefore this research is a library research..

The data source is the novel by Chris Cleave's entitled *The Other Hand* novel. Furthermore, the data has two kind, primary data (words, phrase, sentence, and paragraph) and secondary data (books, journals, articles).

In collecting data, a close reading to the novel was executed while underlining and making notes next to the data. After that, the analysis of the data was executed in several steps, there are: read comprehensive, identify the description or event, classify the event, and wrote down all of the data.

This research used two theories, they are: Seeman's theory of alienation that have five variants of alienation and theory of characterization by Rimmon Kenan to explain how the alienation is represented.

D. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

1. Alienation in the Main Character

a. Powerlessness

Two years, I lived in that detention centre, I was fourteen years of age when I came to your country but I did not have any papers to prove it and so they put me in the same detention centre as the adults. The trouble was, there were men and women locked up together in that place (Cleave 9).

As a refugee who does not have any papers, Little Bee felt helplessness and powerlessness, no one could help her to explain or prove to the officer that she is still teenager. This feeling lead her to the alienation. She could not be placed in the same cell with adults because she is a teenager that should be treated differentially.

b. Meaninglessness

So, I am a refugee, and I get very lonely.... I am here to tell you a real story. I did not come to talk about the bright African colours. I am a born-again citizen of the developing world, and I will prove to you that the colour of my life is grey (Cleave 12).

Little Bee experiences many unhappy situations when she was in Nigeria. The men hunted her and her sister Nkiruka. Color grey represents the color of Little Bee's life, full of sorrow, emptiness and loss. The loneliness feeling that is experienced by the main character prove that she faced alienated.

c. Normlessness

"it's bloody typical of this government," he said. "I don't give a damn if you legal or illegal. But how can release you without papers?" (Cleave 88).

Norms guide people on how they are expected to behave. Norms are social rules rather than written and formal rules. Living in a country as a refugee or illegal immigrant is a huge problem. People will not allow you to stay if you are an illegal.

d. Social Isolation

Truly, this is the one thing that people from your country and people from my country agree on. They say, That refugee girl is not one of us. That girl does not belong. That girl is a haffling, a child of an unnatural mating, an unfamiliar face in the moon (Cleave 11).

Social isolation is feeling that someone is not belonging to the one community or society. In this case, Little Bee faces a feeling of ignoring from England. She knows that she is isolated and she is not accepted in England.

e. Self-estrangement

Nothing natural. Nothing like this. I felt that if I took one step forward, the earth itself would rise up and reject me. There nothing about me now (Cleave 28).

Self-estrangement leads Little Bee for seeking the natural of her life. Two years living in a detention centre make her forget about herself. She forgets how living herself when she is released. She feels strange to herself after release from the detention center. She feels insecure for crossing the door to the bright sky, she cannot do that. She is afraid.

2. The Representation of Alienation

a. The Representation of Powerlessness

Two years, I lived in that detention centre, I was fourteen years of age when I came to your country but I did not have any papers to prove it and so they put me in the same detention centre as the adults. The trouble was, there were men and women locked up together in that place (Cleave 9).

From the data above shows that the action of the officer in the detention centre leads Little Bee to the powerlessness feeling. The alienation is represented through indirect characterization.

b. The Representation of Meaninglessness

So, I am a refugee, and I get very lonely.... I am here to tell you a real story. I did not come to talk about the bright African colours. I am a born-again citizen of the developing world, and I will prove to you that the colour of my life is grey (Cleave 12).

Through the direct characterization, Little Bee characterizes meaninglessness that she experienced in detention centre. The characterization of her life is meaningless is through presenting that she is a refugee and the color grey as a proof that her life is full of sorrow.

c. The Representation of Normlessness

“it’s bloody typical of this government,” he said. “I don’t give a damn if you legal or illegal. But how can release you without papers?” (Cleave 88).

The normlessness is represented through indirect characterization which is the conversation particularly from Mr. Ayres's speech about the government which characterizes normlessness that had been through by Little Bee and the other girls. Little Bee experiences the normlessness as being a refugee in England.

d. The Representation of Social Isolation

Truly, this is the one thing that people from your country and people from my country agree on. They say, That refugee girl is not one of us. That girl does not belong. That girl is a haffling, a child of an unnatural mating, an unfamiliar face in the moon (Cleave 11).

The data above is characterized through speech by Little Bee. She describes how she feels isolation from her country and also from England. She is about to walk out from detention centre when she got released and she explains what she knows in her country and in England that refugee s a stranger that cannot be part at one country.

e. The Representation of Self-estrangement

Nothing natural. Nothing like this. I felt that if I took one step forward, the earth itself would rise up and reject me. There nothing about me now (Cleave 28).

She describes that she is not like she used to be. The line that shows the self-estrangement in the main character Little Bee is *There nothing about me now* and this line is represented through direct characterization by Little Bee.

3. Discussions

The first variant of alienation that is experienced by the main character is powerlessness. Little Bee faced powerlessness in detention centre in England from the officers who put her in the same cell with adults. In other cases, Little Bee and the other girls from detention centre faced powerlessness in England in Mr. Ayres's land. Mr. Ayres asked 'are they legal?' Furthermore, Little Bee experienced powerlessness when she asked Yvette for the released paper. The same situation when Little Bee realized that she was unable to live if she did not have the released paper and still being an illegal immigrant in England. The powerlessness is experienced by the main character is when Little Bee asked help for the British couple on the beach in Nigeria, but the guard was mad at her. Little Bee was explaining how the officers forced her to do something that she did not want to. The powerlessness that is experienced by the main character is mostly is represented through the indirect characterization (speech and action).

The second variant of alienation is meaninglessness. Little Bee as the refugee felt so lonely when she was in the detention centre. Little Bee lived for two years in the detention centre, and she started to think how to kill herself in there. Not once. But several times, she thought really hard how to kill in the best way. Living in the detention centre made Little Bee would be happy if she joined people who already dead. The meaninglessness mostly characterized through the indirect characterization.

Normlessness is experienced by Little Bee as well when she was in England. The government did not provide the good service to the refugee. In fact, Little

Bee and the other girl released without the released paper. In other cases, the function of the stuff that was sent by England was no longer affective for Little Bee's goal. The normlessness is represented through indirect characterization (speech and environment).

The social isolation also experienced by the main character. Little Bee expressed how England refused her, she tried to entertain by saying jokes to the England driver but she get rejected. The other cases Little Bee was presumed dead by Sarah who was very shock. On the way to Nigeria, she got alienated by the officer. The social isolation mostly is represented through the indirect characterization, they are external appearance and speech.

The last variant of alienation is also experienced by the main character in the novel is the self-estrangement. Little Bee had the feeling nothing with herself. She did not find something special like she used to be. The kind of alienation is represented through direct characterization.

E. CONCLUSION

Having analyzed the novel and referring to the title of this undergraduate final paper, the researcher concludes that Little Bee, the main character in Chris Cleave's *The Other Hand* novel is an alienated character. The analyzes of the descriptions of Little Bee as a main character in the novel reveals that Little Bee has many experiences in her life such as, powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, social isolation, and self-estrangement.

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