

The Mimesis of Three Phases of Human Existence Found at Suna No Onna Novel

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Abstract

The writer of this thesis is going to analyze the theory of the pioneer in Existentialism; Soren Kierkegaard's the three phases of Human Existence (aesthetic phase, ethic phase and religious phase) This research indicates how the main characters Niki Jumpei at Suna No Onna novel are entrapped by society and nature. Their conditions are meaningless, powerless, nothingness and a sense of death. Yet, in the end, both of the protagonist characters recognize their meaning for their absurd life. By means using Descriptive Qualitative research, this research is focuses on describing the way of the main characters in Suna No Onna or *Women in the Dunes* provide the meaning of their life.

Key words: Three Phases of Human Existence, Suna No Onna, Niki Jumpei

A. Introduction

Literature is a work of art as a medium to express feeling, experiences, and ideas. Hudson (Hardiana, 2005) states that literature as an expression of what the people said, did, thought, and felt about the side of life is an expression of life in the form of language. Literature is also as rhetoric engaging the human senses, desires and emotion, conveying ideologies and ideological message. Besides, Koesnosoebroto says that literature gives us something more than pleasure that is not only enjoyment, but also understanding. (Koesnosoebroto, 1998) It means that literature not only makes us enjoy, but also it makes us understand everything all inside.

Koesnosoebroto classified literature into two forms, they are; oral and written literature. Oral literatures for examples are singing, storytelling, and so on. While written literatures are poetry, novel, short story, and so on. There are two sources of literature; direct and indirect. Directly, the sources of literature are author's idea, personal experience, feeling and desire. Indirectly, the resources of literature are ideologies, culture and society, historical circumstances, patronage, human aims, aspiration and desire (Fajardo-Acosta, 2001)

Connoly (Koesnosoebroto, 1998) mentions characteristics and kinds of literature. There are three characteristics of literature. The first, literature has power. It means that literature may create a powerful emotional impact in the reader's mind. The second, literature is vivid. By enjoying literature, it makes the reader hearing, feeling, and seeing. The third, language of literature is clear.

According to Laurence there are three perspectives related to the existence of literature. The first perspective is the view that literature is a social document containing of situation when literary work created. The second perspective is an assumption reflected to the writer's social condition. Moreover, the last is the model that used by the work as manifestation of social culture, condition or historical event (Fanani, 1989).

Literary works has written intentionally to spread out among the society, so there is no literary work written without any social aim. Literature has close relation with the society. A certain society in which an author lives tends to produce a certain kind of literary work. And of course the social condition and sphere where the authors live will influence their work.

The reality brings the fact that human lives in a society where influences them regarding their ideas, thought, attitudes, and behaviors in which they catch from the phenomena in the society where they living. They express the ideas creating characters in the novels and talk about their ideas through the character by delivering speech and actions. Their ideas reflect the society, economic, philosophy, religion, history, and politic of the society (Wellek, 1963)

This idea is taking on the assumption that a society has rules that should obey, so that relation of human determined or at least influenced by the rules. Therefore, the view attitudes and values of anyone in society including the man of letter is gained from the rules of society. In this case, the society determined what has written, how to write it, for whom and for what purpose (Hardiana, 2005)

The common approach to see the relation between literature and society is to learn literary works as a social document, as a portrait of social reality (Wellek R. a., 1993). The literary work especially the novel called as the social document. This assertion is sometimes true but does not mean that every novel directly used as document like a journalist report.

However, literature reflects only the author's concept of reality, so whether this reality is historically true or not, one has to seek further. Bramsted in Wellek's theory of literary states that only a person who has knowledge of the structure of society from other sources than purely literary one is able to find out it, and how far certain social types and their behavior are reproduced in novel. What are pure fancy, what realistic observation, and only an expression of the desires of the author must be separate in each case in a subtle manner (Wellek R. a., 1993).

In the discussion, whether the literature has relationship with society or not we have two basic theories of how literary works made. Those theories called as *Creatio* and *Mimesis*. According to *Creatio* theory the work of art is essentially new, genuine and the real creature. While according to the *mimesis* theory, the work of art is essentially a reflection of imitation (Teeuw, 1988).

Society that is they reflect and to which literary works addressed. However, it is indispensable to hold an analysis about a certain novel was influenced by the life of it's author, as it influenced the readers, the people who lived in the era, and the society that the author was intending to change. As stated by Taine in Sapardi that literature was not only creating as private imagination but also as the reporting of that period, the reality of certain thinking. The example of it is a novel. It is a mirror, that is very suitable to decide all aspects of life and nature.

Hippolyte Adolphe Taine as the founder of this term uses the words *race*, *milieu*, and *moment* in French *race, milieu et moment*; the terms which define as "Nation", "Environment" or "Situation", and "Time". Taine argued that literature is largely the

product of the author's environment and that environment could yield a perfect understanding of the work of literature, though with important differences that called race. Milieu is the particular circumstances that distorted or developed the dispositions of a particular person. The moment is the accumulated experiences of that person, which Taine expressed frequently as momentum. (Thomas, 1735)

Woman in the Dunes or in Japanese known as *Suna no Onna* novel was written by Abe Kobo in Japan, and he is a Japanese people. In this case, In Japan, when Kanji's writing began to develop and produce a Hiragana and Katakana in the Heian Period (9th century) there are many emerging literary works of literature in Japanese literature, ones of that are the works of Murasaki Shikibu *Genji Monogatari*, it's considered as a masterpiece or a great work of literature in Japan at the Heian Period. Japanese literature had been developed and started to get the world's attention by the existence of two Japanese writers who get Nobel Prize in literature. Japanese literarian who received the Nobel Prize in first time in 1968 was Kawabata Yasunari. Another works of Kawabata Yasunari such as *Izu no Odoriko*, *Yukiguni* and so on. His speech when he received the Nobel Prize entitled *Utsukushii Nihon no Watashi Sono Josetsu* explains the beauty of traditional Japanese literature. Then in 1994 a Japanese writer awarded the Nobel Prize in literature is *Kenzaburo Oe*. With the two major Japanese Literarians who received the Nobel Prize in literature, Japanese Literature makes the world's attention intensely.

In the history of Japanese literature, the novel and the author of *Woman in the Dunes* was included in postwar literature. Postwar literature is literature in Japan after World War II. Literature *Daiichiji Sengoha* (The First Stream Postwar) stems from the novel *Kurai E* (The Dark Painting), published in 1946, *Noma Hiroshi's* work. Literary group which emerged in the 1950s called *Dainiji Sengoha*. In the turbulent state of society emerges Author of Postwar Force II, among others, *Abe Kobo*, *Ooka Shohei*, *Shimao Toshio*, and *Hotta Yoshie* (Mandah, 1992)

The novel as the object of this research is entitled *Woman in the Dunes*. This novel was a translated novel entitled *Suna no Onna*, first published by Shichousha Publisher at June 1962, and got a *Yomiuri prize* at 1963. After that *Teshigahara Hiroshi* make this novel as a film and won the Prize in Cannes Movie Festival at 1964. *Suna no Onna* firstly translated into English by *E dale Sauders* in 1964. After being translated into English, *Woman in the Dunes* becomes the outstanding novel, well published and translated into twenty languages such as Czechoslovakia, Finland, Denmark, Russia and many others. Based on those brief explanatin, the researchr tend to ask about how the main characters in *Women in the Dunes* find their existence based on Soren Kiekegaard's three phases of Human Existence.

Soren Kiekegaard's Three Phases of Human Existence;

Soren Kierkegaard was a religious man. Kierkegaard's philosophy appeared as a reaction of Hegel's opinions that supposed human as passive creature, passive observer, and just have a role as a movie goer which Kierkegaard strongly disagree with. Kierkegaard divides Human Existence into three phases (Kierkegaard, 1983), they are; *aesthetic phase*, *ethic phase*, and *religious phase*.

As a philosopher and theologian Soren Kierkegaard have many works that influenced many others philosophers. Such as Martin Heidegger, Sartre, and even the

twentieth century theologian, they are Karl Barth, Rudolf Bultmann, Paul Tillich, and Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Here are some of Kierkegaard's phenomenal works; *The Concept of Irony with Constant Reference to Socrates* (1841), *Either/Or* (1843), *Fear and Trembling* (1842), *The Concept of Dread* (1844), *Stages on Life's Way* (1844), *Philosophical Fragments* (1844), *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to the Philosophical Fragments* (1846), and a number of Edifying Discourses.

Soren Kierkegaard was a religious man. Actually, Kierkegaard's philosophy appeared as a reaction of Hegel's opinions that supposed human as passive creature, passive observer, and just have a role as a moviegoer. Kierkegaard strongly disagrees with. Kierkegaard divides Human Existence into three phases, they are; aesthetic phase, ethic phase and religious phase.

The Aesthetic Phase

Zainal Abidin (Abidin, 2002) states, the aesthetic phase is the phase that human's orientation of life is headed for getting pleasure in total. At this phase, human always dominated or controlled by his sexual instinct, hedonism, and it is also marked by mood. Furthermore, the aesthetic man usually lives for himself, contentment, and life for his self interest. Beside that, aesthetic man is a man that lives with no soul, no future, and life with no substance. In this world, he tends to be follower, and in his life he depends much on public trend that currently developed. Even though, those behaviors are not based on any passion, except only exactly to know and try.

Whenever, we can find aesthetic man, because he can be materialized to anybody as far as he has no enthusiasm, commitment, and no passion of life. It is including of philosophers and scientists. The aesthetic man only has a role as "moviegoer" of life. Moreover, he only has a role as a passive observer and acts without offers compelled to engage in. In this case, Kierkegaard takes Don Juan, as an example of human aesthetic, due to Don Juan has no commitment and passion in his life. Furthermore, he has no love and willingness to binding agreement of marriage with any girl. Don Juan thinks that, love and marriage are barriers for his freedom, so that it can be abridged his enjoyment (Abidin, 2002) In his book *Either/Or*, Kierkegaard says:

"Don Juan is an image which constantly appears, but does not gain form and substance, an individual who is constantly being formed, but is never finished of whose life history one can form no more definite impression than one can by listening to the tumult of the waves" (Kierkegaard, 1983)

Above illustration is describing the aesthetic existence with an uncertain condition. On the other word, the aesthetic man has not stabilized yet. As mentioned before, in this phase human being always consider the important of life pleasure and pursue happiness with unlimited things, as if it can let him be happy. But, indeed he feels spiritual emptiness and his live is always in saturation condition

The authentic manner of aesthetic existence is marked by disparagement of moral norms. There is a willingness only to enjoy the entire experiences of emotional and sexual desires. Therefore, he always opened with them and he much tends to hate all of limitedness that forced him to choose. However, he will arrive to the awareness, that everything has its limit. Finally, then he must determine and choose, is he still in despair or move to the higher phase through the free action choice and self-commitment. The free

choices will fill the freedom up, and it is just exactly on account as a mean of existence (Kierkegaard, 1983) That is why, Kierkegaard emphasized that human being has to choose, one either has to live aesthetically or one has to live ethically, or across it (the ethical sphere) into the religious (Kierkegaard, 1983)

“...every aesthetic view of life is despair, and that everyone who lives aesthetically is in despair, whether he knows it or not. But when one knows it...a higher form of existence is an imperative requirement” (Kierkegaard, 1983)

If a man lives with hedonism and has no passion or enthusiasm, so then what actually happened in their soul? Despair! On the other hand, the aesthetic man has no guide and orientation in this real life. Aesthetic man does not know what his goal in his life is, due to, as explain above, his life depends much on the public trend that currently develop in the society. As Kierkegaard says, the aesthetic man is a man can not determine his choice of life, because there are so many alternatives of life that offers in the society. In this case, when he can not decide his choice, there are only two possibilities, those are; kill his self and the second is move in to the higher phase of life, that is ethic phase.

The Ethic Phase

Here, it is like “repented” from the aesthetic phase, that the ethic man will take moral values as a guide of life, and then choose it as way of life. Whereas, hedonism will be avoided and today he received moral values, humanism values, comprehend fully. In this phase, there is passion of life based on humanism values that he chose freely. In the relationship on marriage, he thinks that marriage itself is the first step to change from the aesthetic phase to the ethic phase. Kierkegaard (Panjaitan, 1992) says, the movement from the aesthetic phase to the ethic phase is like people who left the temporal sexual desire, and he come into marriage status with all of its duties. Because marriage is an ethic institution and it is an expression of universal principle. In this phase, most of people think that the glorious idea of lives is the supreme happiness.

“Therefore, only when one regards life ethically does it acquire beauty, truth, significance, firm consistence; only when a man lives ethically does his life acquire beauty, truth, significance, security; and only in the ethical life view are the auto pathetic doubt and the sympathetic doubt set at rest” (Kierkegaard, 1983)

Beside that, the ethic man does not only live for his self, but also for humanism values. The ethic man’s soul has been formed, so that his own life does not depend on the public trend anymore. The basic of his personality is going to be formed very strong and honesty. Moreover, the basic of his life is based on his own soul, and his compass’s life is universal humanism values. So then, briefly and confidently, he says “no” to the every public trend that developed in the society.

Kierkegaard (Abidin, 2002) takes Socrates as the example ethic man. Socrates emphasized his self trough drunk of poison for the sake of defending his conviction for the glorious humanism values. He was the person who refused on domination power system that contradiction with the universal humanism values.

But the fact, Socrates does not arrived at the real existence phase yet. So then, he felt guilt cause of his limitedness, furthermore he failed to fulfil his humanism summons successfully. He has not arrived at the higher phase, that is religious phase, where God is the most important for everyone, and failure is same with “sin”. For this condition, the ethic

man will soon recognize both of his lacking and sin. Finally, he has to choose one, whether still in ethic phase or refuse it, and move to higher phase that is the religious phase. In this way, religious man will tie up together without any necessary living with God (Theo Huijibers, 1982) Hence, Kierkegaard thinks that the ethical phase is only as a transitional stadium to the religious phase.

The Religious Phase

According to Kierkegaard he says that ethic phase is a transitional stadium to the higher phase. Here, the final phase is religious phase. In this phase, human being appears with all of his authentically, and as a single entity to face God. There is difference between ethic phase and religious phase. On the ethic phase, the characters of humanism values are still objective and universal. So that, whoever can receive its ideas, either rationally or commonly sense. Whereas on the religious phase, the values itself is very subjective, so it feel so difficult for everyone to receive it as a rational ideas. It is not surprising if some people labelled religious man as “irrational man, eccentric, strange people, and even crazy”.

According to Kierkegaard, the ideal religious man here was Abraham. Purportedly, Abraham sacrificed his son cause of his self-belief that God asked him. Although people and his humanism morality evaluate such act objectively was “wrong” and inhumane, but he believed that he would “be sinful” if he did not do it. In brief, behalf on God whatever religious man will do it. Living in God means living in transcendent subjectivity without rationality and inhumane. Due to the religious man does not influenced by the universal of humanism values, even less he follows public trend that currently developed as we found in the ethic man

At least, there are two kinds of challenges that will be faced by the religious man, they are; *first*, paradoxical of God. Kierkegaard says, God and all of His Commandments are paradox. The paradox might be seen at one of attributes of God, for example; if God is Very Good, but why there is crime or crime victim in this world?. To explain these God’s paradox, there is no rational explanatory material; due to it is not thought rationally. However, the only way to receive such kinds of God’s paradox the religious man should have subjective-belief that based on the true faith (Abidin, 2002).

The second paradox for individual who involved in this phase is anxiety that can be trembled and anxious. It is difference with frightened, anxiety itself is metaphysical. It means that anxiety refers to unreal something, uncertain, unsure and incoherent. That is why, before coming to the religious phase everyone feels worried with a dibble. It is because most of people suppose that living in God is despair and an escape from the fact.

Therefore, only people who has the true faith, power of belief and strong personality that can survive in religious phase. Moreover, in this religious existence these people feel safe and happy, because they belief that they will end their live with an eternal peaceful.

B. Methods

The researcher consider the research as qualitative approach, it’s an approach that is used to get descriptive data observable written and spoken words from people and the action or behavior (Bogdan, 1988.). The researcher uses qualitative approach because the data cannot be analyzed using statistical formula and the data are in the form of words,

phrases, clauses, sentences, quotations, and dialogues or monologues which descriptively to answer the research problems.

Based on the studies above the researcher assumed that the suitable research design applied in this study is descriptive qualitative research. Since the data that used by the researcher focuses on literary works and aims to find meaning behind the author through events, plots, objects, characters, themes, and symbols in the story, so, this qualitative research consider as phenomenology perspective. Phenomenology perspective is a method of research that used to understand the meaning of the events and human interactions in certain situation. It gives serious intention to subjective aspect of each individual, and the researcher try to enter into the conceptual world of their subjects to understand how and what the meaning which the subjects construct into the serial events of their life (Semi, 1993).

C. Result and Discussion

Kierkegaard divides Human Existence into three phases, they are; aesthetic phase, ethic phase and religious phase. This three phases applies in main character Niki J. and discuss below.

The Aesthetic Phase

Woman in the Dunes by Abe Kobo was a novel who has major character was Niki Jumpei, a schoolteacher who is on an expedition to collect insects as a decoy of his routine in the city which is meaningless, flat and absurd.

He choose to escape his absurd, monotonous, meaningless and by escaping his routine, and go finding a new species of insect. The character of this novel has the same element of with the first phases of Human Existence by Kierkegaard

The man intended to collect insects that lived in the dunes.

Of course, dune insects are small and soberly colored. But he was a dedicated collector, and his eye was not tempted by anything like butterflies or dragonflies. Such collectors do not aspire to decking out their specimen boxes with gaudy samples, nor are they particularly interested in classification or in raw materials for Chinese medicines.

The true entomologist's pleasure is much simpler, more direct: that of discovering a new type. When this happens, the discovers name appears in the illustrated encyclopedias of entomology appended to the technical Latin name of the newly found insect; and there, perhaps, it is preserved for something less than eternity. His efforts are crowned with success if his name is perpetuated in the memory of his fellow men by being associated with an insect. (Kobo, 2006)

Yet, his motive behind his journey of finding the insect was a decoy. He tries to escape with his bored life, as a quotation in the novels:

In fact; his involvement with sand and his insect collecting were, after all, simply ways to escape, however temporarily, from his obligations and the inactivity of his life. (Kobo, 2006)

Saturation condition (Absurd):

...The sand would never allow them any rest. The man was completely disoriented. He was confused, as if he had casually stepped on the tail of a snake he had thought small, yet was in fact unexpectedly large, and, before he realized it, its head was already behind him. "But, if that is the case, it is exactly as if you live only to clear away sand, isn't it?"

...Suddenly anger boiled up within him. He was angry at that which bound the woman, and he was angry at the woman who was bound. "...I can't understand this at all... This is ridiculous! I give up! I quit! Of all the... I have no sympathy for you!" (Kobo, 2006)

The Ethic Phase

The main character, Niki's life does not depend on the public trend anymore. The basic of his personality is going to be formed very strong and honest. It proved when the villagers give in to his request on the condition that he allows them to watch him make public rape to the woman from the top of the cliff.

Full of the desire for freedom, he publically throws his body over the woman, and thus submits to the savage suggestion of public rape: "There was no need to distinguish between watcher and watched. There might still be some differences between them, but this little ceremony would be enough to make it vanish" (Kobo, 2006)

Niki start to realize his limit of being human, he start to stop struggle, submit to the fate and asking for helps to the widow. And finally fall in love with her and made herself useful by making a tool to trap a crow. Niki having this kind of transitional phase that categorized in the third until the fifth element of Bigelow's Six Primes of Existentialism.

Alienation, is the process or the transitional stadium which produced Fear and Trembling of Anxiety, and by the time he realize that he is nobody in this world or its called Nothingness. Those process are the Trans process to the final form; freedom.

The Religious Phase

For this phase, *Woman in the Dunes* is in the shape of the second paradox: in the first condition, Niki who involved in this phase is anxiety; sexual intercourse with his ex-girlfriend in the city. He always uses a condom. In unreal, uncertain, unsure and incoherent about his past who has a venereal disease. But the Doctor was confirm that he was fully healed, even if Niki still a little bit pain when he is in urinate condition, but the doctor says that it's the psychological illness that Niki has.

Yet, the condition was changed when Niki has been prisoned in the hole of dunes with the widow. He loves the widow even more and Niki felt in himself has sexual attraction to women. Even, Niki do not need to feel worried about having to use a condom. Niki can enjoy being with her in the hole. Niki does not need to be troubled by a sexual intercourse when he having sex with women from the outside world. The longer he feels affection for him. Affection felt by looks at successful exit from the hole and he was on his escape. Niki tells himself that if he managed to get out of the village, he promised to send a radio for the woman.

Nikki started to change when he found himself standing in the top tower even in the first time he feels like in the jail hole of dunes because he is able to make a tool of water maker. Niki resigns himself to his fate. And start to find his meaning to life. Through his

persistent effort to trap a crow as a messenger; he discovers a way to draw water from the damp sand at night. He thus becomes absorbed in the task of perfecting his technology and adapts to his "trapped" life.

In the first time, he feels ignored by his family and society because there is no news about him that is lost, but now, he is different, he found his new Niki. As a quote:

"..Such changes at the same time there is a change to it. Along with he found the water on the sand, he may find himself a new." (Kobo, 2006)

At the end of the story there is a note that says Niki Jumpei and reported as a missing person by her mother, Niki Shino. There was also a death certificate stating Niki because it has more than seven years of its existence is unknown. The new Niki can be seen from the free of their daily lives which are boring. For Niki's freedom she is looking for, it is the freedom of self physically, but now he felt that such freedom was no longer necessary. Freedom that he got a freedom to determine his own decision what he took without the intervention of others.

Changes in attitudes toward women who live with him in the hole was also a form of identity that he was able to get Niki. Niki, in relation to the woman that Niki is, now free from feelings of helpless and impotent as he felt used by her former lover, because of the psychological condition. Niki did a tough journey away into himself and find himself as "someone" (Kimball, 1973)

During his stay in the hole, Niki get to know him. Niki who had been living with a full routine was bored and wanted to get them from the world as it is. Then he made his hobby of looking for insects as an escape. The purpose of his life turned into an inventor sands of new insect species in the hope of eternal name will be remembered by people. Then while in the sandy village Niki experience many changes in him. Niki found a way to generate water in the desert areas, with unintentional discovery that Niki finds himself as a new one.

Niki's discovery has been made to live in the village with more vigor and free from boring routine. Relationship with a woman who lived with him in the hole was also bringing changes to Niki. Previously Niki did not care and could not sympathy for the woman, but now can understand the difficulties and Niki has suffering experienced by the woman. Besides their relationship by instinct makes, Niki freed from feelings of helplessness and impotent due to a psychological condition he suffered when he associated with a former lover in the city. Additionally Niki has managed to find himself again and he has freedom to determine what kind of way of life will live.

D. Conclusion

First, Aesthetic Phase is a willingness of enjoying the entire experiences of emotional and sexual desires. Therefore, he always opened with them and he much tends to hate all of limitedness that forced him to choose. As Kierkegaard says, the aesthetic man is a man can not determine his choice of life. In this phase, Niki tend to act as his or her own desire such as hate because of their very routine life.

Second, the movement from the aesthetic phase to the ethic phase is like people who left the temporal platonic desire and he come into the real love with all of its duties. That is

an ethic institution and it is an expression of universal principle. In this phase, most of people think that the glorious idea of lives is the supreme happiness. Beside that, the ethic man does not only live for his self, but also for humanism values. The ethic man's soul has been formed, so that his own life does not depend on the public trend anymore. The basic of his personality is going to be formed very strong and honesty. Moreover, the basic of his life is based on his own soul, and his compass's life is an universal humanism values. Niki are having the same expression concerning this second phases, they choose to ignore the society and begins to understand their existence of life or it can be the transition to the next phase, the religious phase.

Third, Religious phase, this phase, there are two kinds of challenges that will be faced by the religious people; they are; *first*, paradoxical of God. The second paradox for individual who involved in this phase is anxiety that can be trembled and anxious. Niki who involved in this phase is anxiety; sexual intercourse with his ex-girlfriend in the city. He always uses a condom with. In unreal, uncertain, unsure and incoherent about his past that has a venereal disease, yet, the condition was changed when Niki has been prisioned in the hole of dunes with the widow. He loves the widow even more and Niki felt in him has sexual attraction to women. Even, Niki do not need to feel worried about having to use a condom.

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