STRUGGLE FOR LIFE REFLECTED IN DAVE PELZER’S
AUTOBIOGRAPHY A CHILD CALLED “IT”: ONE CHILD’S
COURAGE TO SURVIVE (1999):
AN INDIVIDUAL PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACH

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Abstract

This study is about struggle for life. The problem of this study is to reveal how the struggle in major character during the abusive is reflected in A Child Called “It” autobiography created by Dave Pelzer published in 1999. There are two objectives: the first is to analyze the novel in term of structural elements and the second is to analyze the novel based on Individual Psychological Approach.

The object of the study is A Child Called “It” Autobiography by Dave Pelzer. The research used individual psychological approach. This study belongs to qualitative research. In this research, there are two types of data, namely primary and secondary data source. The primary data source is the novel while the secondary data is other materials related to the study. Both data are collected through library research and analyzed by descriptive analysis.

The result of the study shows the following conclusions. First, based on the structural analysis it can be found that in the A Child Called “it” Autobiography, Dave Pelzer delivers message that struggle for life is important in everyone’s life because it is absolutely required to reach a good life. Second, based on the individual psychological approach the result shows that the most influential aspect in the struggle for life is being adaptable person.

Keywords: struggle for life, A Child Called “it”, Individual Psychological Approach
A. Introduction

People live in the world have a goal, which can motivate someone to survive in the world. They must work hard and struggle to get better. They have the same opportunity to get their happiness.

*A Child Called “It”* (published in 1995). *A Child Call “it”: One Child’s Courage to survive* written by Dave Pelzer in September 1, 1995. It is the story of Dave Pelzer, who was brutally beaten by his emotionally unstable, alcoholic mother. His mother is a mother who played tortuous, unpredictable games that left him nearly dead. He had to learn how to play his mother's games in order to survive because she no longer considered him a son, but a slave and no longer as a boy, but an “it”.

Based on the story of novel *A Child Called “it”* has a lot of value that teach us much of life aspect. There are four reason that make the researcher interest to analyze this novel. First reason is this story is true story from David James Pelzer who never give up to get a better life, even he everyday get a hit from his mother just for some cereal to eat in the morning. And now he become a better man having family and get a good job as a researcher. The second reason is this novel has ability to portray the human spirit in order to overcome remarkable odds. David’s mother progressively treats him worse and he becomes stronger and eventually survives from the abusive game. The third reason is this novel is inspirative. Because this novel tell to the reader about human spirit to overcome remarkable odds. The last reason is, the writter is interested with the story.

"A Child Called "It"" is the story of terrible abuse experienced by the author, Dave Pelzer, when he was a child. and with his spirit to overcome remarkable odds and become a free man and having family and happy life. To guide this study, the researcher found some previuos study from the internet.
Firts, A Study on Premature Adulthood of the Main Character in Dave Pelzer’s A Child Called ‘It’ by Marshella Olivia Rumengan (2008). She focuses on the main character of the story from the Psychological aspect.

Second is Alcoholism on Roerva in Pelzer’s “A Child Called It” by Lucy Irawati Anwar (2012). She focuses on Dave mother, Roerva Pelzer who is becoming alcoholic. She tells that the causes of alcoholism on Roerva, can be divided into; several psychological factors, including: a need to relief for anxiety, ongoing depression, unresolved problem and low self-esteem, and social factor, including: social acceptance of alcohol, availability of alcohol, and stressful lifestyle.

In this research, the researcher will limit the object of the study with focuses on Dave Pelzer as the main character in A Child Called “It” novel by Dave Pelzer on 1999 and will analyzed using Individual Psychological Approach. Based on the title and the background of the study, the problem is “How is Struggle for life reflected in Dave Pelzer’s Autobiography A Child Called “It”: One Child’s Courage to Survive?” The objective of the study is to analyze the novel on the structural elements and to analyze the novel with Individual psychological approach.

There are two benefits in this study, they are theoretical and practical benefit. Theoretical benefits give contributions to the development of the larger body of knowledge, especially in the study of A Child Called “It” novel and the aspects of psychological study. Practical benefit of the study is expected to enrich the knowledge and experience of the researcher and other students at Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta or other Universities interested in Literary Studies.
In this study, the researcher uses some underlying theory which taken from the book that is related with the study to support the data and help the researcher in order to analyze *A Child Called “it” Autobiography*. In this study, the researcher tries to apply individual psychological consisting of the notion of struggle, as well as struggle for life.

Alfred Adler is the founder of individual psychological theory. He postulated a single “drive” or motivating force behind all human behavior and experience. By the time, his theory had gelled into its most mature form the tailed that motivating forces the striving for perception. It is the desire people have to fulfill their potentials, to come closer and closer to their ideal. Striving for perception is not the first phrase Adler used to refer to his single motivating force. His earliest phrase is the aggression drive, referring to the reaction we have when other drives, such as our need to eat, be sexual are satisfied. If the drives are not fulfilled, the person will be frustrated. Individual psychology depicts the human being as single, invisible, self-consistent and unified (in Hjelle and Ziegler, 1992: 139).

The basic assumption of individual psychology can be divided into six general headings. They are inferiority feeling and compensation, striving for superiority, fictional finalism, style of life, social interest, and creative power.

Struggle for life as quoted by (Hazrat Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan, 2010 : 1) is “the object of a human being in this world is to attain to the perfection of humanity, and therefore it is necessary that man should go through”. As soon as a man loses the courage to go through the struggle of life, the burden of the whole world falls on his head. But he who goes on struggling through life, he alone makes his way. One must study the nature of life, one must understand the
psychology of this struggle. In order to understand this struggle one must see that there are three sides to it. Struggle with one-self, struggle with others and struggle with circumstances.

In this study, the researcher applies qualitative research. There are two data sources that are needed to do this research. They are primary data source and secondary data source. The primary data source is *A Child Called “It”* autobiography created by Dave Pelzer. While the secondary data is taken from other data required to complete the research. The secondary data must also be related to the study.

The object of the study is a novel *A Child Called “It”: One Child’s Courage To Survive* by Dave Pelzer and was written in 1999 by: Health Communications, Incorporated California. There are two types of data, namely primary and secondary data. Primary Data are the primary data source is the novel *A Child Called “It”: One Child’s Courage To Survive* by Dave Pelzer and was written in 1999 by: Health Communications, Incorporated California. And the secondary Data are The secondary data source are books or any materials related to the works of “Struggle For Life Reflected in Dave Pelzer’s Autobiography A Child Called “It” : One Child’s Courage To Survive” that support the Individual Psychological Approach.

The method the researcher uses to collect data is both documentation by collecting and recording the primary and secondary source, library research by summarizing, paraphrasing and wording. The researcher uses note taking as technique of data collecting.

In analyzing the data, the researcher applies a descriptive approach. The steps taken by the researcher in analyzing the data are as follows : the first is analyzing the data based on its structural elements. Focus will be paid on the structural analysis of the novel. The second step is analyzing the data based on individual psychological approach.
Focus will be paid on the meaning on struggle for life of the main author Dave.

B. Research Finding and Discussion

In this research finding, the researcher determines some points to analyze *A Child Called “it” (1999)* as follows:

The first is based on the structural elements of the novel, the researcher analyze the characters and characterization, setting, plot, point of view, style, and theme.

Based on the analysis of the character and characterization of the major and minor character in the novel, it shows that the major character, physically of Dave is not to exposed in this autobiography. Dave just have the slash like marks on his face, and old scar on his stomach. Mentally, Dave is a smart and strong willed boy that gets abused by his mother. Dave also make a plan to steal some bread from the local grocery and collect some information in the morning when he goes to school. Socially, Dave Pelzer is a kid who is disliked by all of fifth grade student, because he is very smell and dirt. Dave also covered all of his mother do to him in front of all teacher or other people. Morally, David becomes a bad boy to fulfill his stomach. He begin to steal food from his friend and from the grocery shop near his school.

“I always stole food before school began, while my classmates were playing outside the building. I would sneak to the wall, right outside my homeroom, drop my lunch pail by another pail and kneel down so nobody could see me hunting through their lunches.” (ACCI p.21)

Based on the analysis of the setting, it is divided into two parts. They are setting of place and setting of time. Based on the setting of place *A Child Called “it”* autobiography is place in United State of America.
It’s mentioned such as in Daly City, California and in the Chinatown. Based on the information from the autobiography of A Child Called “it”. there is setting of time occur in the story. The setting is a flashback in the morning on March 5, 1973 in Daly City, California.

Based on the analysis of the plot, it can divide into four parts. They are exposition, complication, climax, and resolution. In the exposition, In the introduction of this book, we will learn about the main character named David. He live in the Daly City with his parents and two brother. David live is great, but slowly changed into bad. The complication has two part of conflict. There are internal conflict and external conflict. The internal conflict is occur with Dave Pelzer itself and the external conflict is between Dave and another. The external conflict is the major conflict of this story between David and his mother. There are obvious physical conflicts between them, which consist of mother hurting David and David trying to survive. There also more subtle psychological conflict between the two in which Mother is trying to reduce David to as little as possible and David is trying to maintain and shred of dignity. The climax occurs when Dave mother began to change radically. She sent Dave into “corner” punishment. The resolution happens when the story comes to an end. First, the resolution is when all of Dave teacher concern about Dave and take away from his mother by called police.

Based on the point of view A Child Called It is a first person narrative. This means that this is a story that is told through the experience of one person commenting on what is going on around him. Dave Pelzer as the author and the main character use “I” to describe themselves in this book.

Based on style, A Child Called “it” autobiography uses standard grammatical structure in narrative and Dave uses standard and non – standard grammatical structure in dialog. In sentence construction Dave Pelzer applies long narrative to describe someone or something. Dave Pelzer also applies short narrative in the dialog.
Dave Pelzer’s A Child Called “it” have many themes. But the researcher pick one major theme who have correlated with the approach. The major theme is “Survive”. Survive itself is basically needed by human to face the world. It is vital to this theme because it makes this a story of survival, since we know Dave has survived. Dave is a helpless child, and many times he knows what it means to be in despair and to feel hopeless. This is most conspicuous in that the entire story is one of Dave’s surviving remarkable odd. That this survival was the ability of his spirit. Dave struggle to survive and it becomes another spirit to get a good life.

From the explanation above, it can be seen if all of the structural element are correlated to one discussion. Character and characterization, plot, point of view and style are integrated to one unity.

The second research finding is based on the individual psychological analysis and struggle for life. The researcher wants to analyze the major character Dave Pelzer through an individual psychological approach. It divided into sixs namely: Inferiority feeling and compensation, striving for superiority, fictional finalism, style of life, social interest, and creative power.

The inferiority feeling is when David late go to school and he must finish his morning chores, his mother get upset and beat David. In school David also didn’t prepare for speeling test because his condition in his home. David ussualy best in class but when his mother began abusive, David became weak in class.

David striving for superiority is when he beat by mother. He tell to himself if his mother can beat him just for food. In order to survive David use his idea to fill his stomach. Dave also steal some foods from launchbox in school to fill his stomach. He also planned to steal food from local grocery, he planned very well to stole the food. David realize if he weak in get food, so he stole the food.
Fiction finalism or goal of life reflected in this autobiography is to get out from his house and survive from abusive. In the story tell if David want to fly away from the mad house, and at the end of story David dream become true when school staff rescued him by sending him to foster care and separate David with his mother.

David style of life is avoiding type. The avoiding type is person who tries to isolate themselves to avoiding defeat. David usually tries to didn’t make mistake in home or in school to avoiding mother beat.

The social interest is shown when David tried to lies to people about his bruise and what happened in home. David lied to covered his family reputation. In school.

And then the creative power drives him to struggle to survive from mother abusive game. He used all of his idea to get some food to fill his stomach and doing all chores. David also planned to steal the food from lunchbox and local grocery.

David struggle for life is reflected when he feel hungry, but his mother never feed him. David uses all idea, power and tactics to steal food from launch box and at local grocery. Also when Dave burned at stove by his mother, he tried to ask his mom to slow the time, he knows if his brother will come home. By asking a whining question Dave survives from mother burned game.

C. Conclusion

Based on previous chapter, the researcher can take some conclusion. As it has been discussed above, the researcher uses the individual psychological approach to analyze the data of research.

The first is based on structural elements of Dave Pelzer autobiography A Child Called “it”. Dave Pelzer wants to deliver a message that After analyzing the structural element, the researcher want to relate all of the structural element to one discussion. From the theme of the book is “Survival”. Survive itself basically is needed by human. The character is
divided into two major characters that show by Dave Pelzer in the autobiography; Dave Pelzer itself and his mother Catherine. Also minor character Mr Ziegler, Miss Moss, Mr Hansen. The real setting of place is generally taking in California; the first place is in Daly City and the second is in Chinatown. The plot is chronologically that make the autobiography is look good, real, interesting to read.

The second is based on an individual psychological analysis this novel reflected David Pelzer struggle for life that minimize his inferiority feeling and maximize his striving for superiority. David is avoiding type person, person with that lifestyle usually tries to isolate themselves to avoiding defeat. David ususally tries to didn’t make mistake in home or in school to avoiding mother beat. His ultimate goal is life happy and free from his mother. He use all of his idea, effort, ability and responsible to get what he want. The thing make David become strong boy to survive and get his ultimate goal of life.

Autobiography is the literary works not only read and entertain the readers, but also it represents the reality of the world and the reality of the personality about the human.

The researcher realizes that this study is far from perfect, which is resulted from the limitation of the researcher's knowledge and understanding about literature. It can be researched relating Personality Development of Dave Pelzer using psychoanalytic. Finally, the researcher hopes that this study can be useful for the readers and other researcher in widening the knowledge of literary studies.
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