

SINERGY OF INTRINSIC ELEMENTS OF THE SHORT STORY MEMAHAT CINTA DI RINJANI

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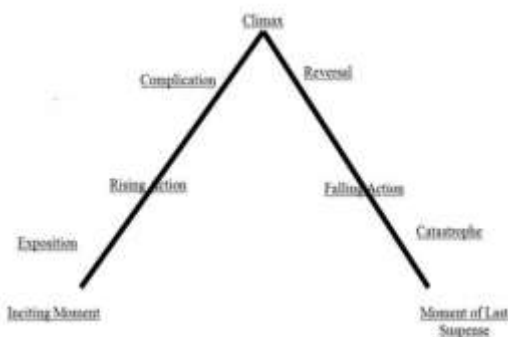
Plot, Characterization,
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Abstract: *This research aims to see the intrinsic elements of the short story, Memahat Cinta di Rinjani by Lina W. Sasmita. By focusing on studying four intrinsic elements; plot, characterization, setting and theme, as well as other supporting elements, utilizing qualitative descriptive research methods and point of view from theories regarding the analysis of intrinsic elements of literary works, this research seeks to answer two research questions, namely whether there are the accuracy of the arrangement of the four intrinsic elements and the synergy between the three elements to support the entire story. The findings of the reserch show that the four elements are arranged correctly and the synergy between the four elements is mutually attached and it supports the aesthetics of the stories*

INTRODUCTION

Short stories are a prose genre which is part of three types of classification of literary works, namely poetry, drama and prose. A good short story is structured based on the important elements or factors that make it up

After getting a story idea, the plot is one of the initial elements that a short story writer must pay attention to. Carter (2020) analigizes the plot to a sequence of events that function as the framework of the story. Some writers use a plot that has a simple pattern, namely exposition - conflict - climax - resolution, some others can choose to use a more complex plot such as Gustav Freytag's pyramid pattern plot by adding more detailed stages of the plot (Kessler, 2010).



Picture 1. Freytag's Pyramid

The storyline must be told with the right narrative technique. The two most popular storytelling techniques are, first, the linear storytelling technique (ab ovo), which is a

chronological storytelling technique, and second, the storytelling technique that does not start from the beginning of the series of events (in medias res). When choosing either the ab ovo or in medias res technique, the story can also be made to jump back with a flashback or move to the future with a jump forward or foreshadow. Hanley (2008) added that a short story writer should pay attention to keep his or her plot stay on the right track. A writer should tighten the structure, streamline the flow, highlight the characters, and help the plot stay on track and be careful not to add any unnecessary sub-plots.

An interesting storyline must be given the right place and time, so the background or setting elements must also be a concern for short story writers. The setting is not just about choosing the right time and place. Writers must also pay attention to other things including objects and weather. Kessler (2010) reinforces this:

When considering setting, remember that it is not only a place and time. It can also involve weather, geology, political climate, social tension or technological environment.

The flow of a series of events that form the story of a short story can be told by a character from a point of view chosen by the short story writer. There are several types of points of view used by prose writers (novels or short stories), but the most commonly used are two: first person and third person. The first person limited point of view, which uses the storyteller "I", "me" or "we". Usually the story flows only from the point of view of the the first person narrator "I". Bell (2019) said that with this point of view, readers get story material from events experienced by the first person storyteller.

The point of view that is also often used by short story writers is the third person omniscient point of view, which uses the speakers "he", "she" and "they". This point of view is also often called the God's Eye point of view because it can capture various events and can move around in the story quickly. Bell (2019) terms this point of view as an all-knowing and all-seeing god who has the freedom to move anywhere, including the outside and inside of the characters in the story.

Another strong point that can be added when a writer builds his or her plot is plot twist. A plot twist in a short story is an unexpected change in the direction or outcome of the short story. Plot twist can surprise the readers and often change their understanding of the story. It usually occurs near the end and redefines key elements, characters, or the central conflict, making the story more impactful or thought-provoking. Cleland (2018) says the key of successful plot twist is for the writer to filling your stories with unexpected twists and turns. By integrating plot pists, plot reversals, and moments of heightened danger at crucial points, a writer can captivate his or her readers with and "I-can't-wait-to-see-what-happens-next intrigue".

Another thing that should not escape the attention of short story writers is the issue of how they create story characters and how to depict them (character and characterization). Choosing the right characters and how to depict interesting characters can impress short story readers and make them enjoy the story they are reading even more.

In terms of the portion of the presentation, characters in short stories can be divided into important characters (major characters) including protagonists and antagonists and less important characters (minor characters). The way the characters are depicted in short stories

is called characterization. Characterization is very important because it is the key to building an emotional relationship between the reader and the short story they are reading, because all the storylines flow following the rhythm of the characters' lives.

Bell (2008) even provides details of points that short story writers should pay attention to. According to him, short story writers must prepare a description of gender, age, occupation, habits, physical descriptions and how the character views their physical description, their strengths and weaknesses including where their weak points are and many other aspects.

The characterization of a character can be conveyed in several ways; from what he says and thinks, from what other characters say and think about him, from his actions, and so on. Regarding the characterization of character, books on fiction writing techniques almost always mention the importance of the Show Don't Tell writing technique.. Show Don't Tell (SDT) in characterization refers to the physical description, feelings, character and actions of a character through description, not through direct statements with words or sentences.

Instead of stating, for example, "Jessica is a beautiful student", the writer can directly describe her face shape, hair, ideal height or a description of her male college friends on campus who really want Jessica to be their girlfriend. The SDT technique can also be used to explain other elements of a literary work besides characterization. To describe a story setting, for example, the writer can avoid writing "the garden is beautiful" by simply describing neatly arranged pots with colorful flowers on a yard planted with the best type of grass and so on. George (2004) said that short story writers should only write the environment or context of what will be said, leaving the rest for the reader to interpret. Gerth (2016) reminds fiction writers that the SDT technique makes readers actively involved in what they read:

...telling distances readers from the events in the story and from the characters and makes them passive recipients of information, showing involves readers in the story and makes them active participants...

Another element in the making of great short Story is setting. In a short story, the setting refers to the time (historical), place (geographical) and things (artificial) that establish the context and atmosphere of the events in the story. Bell (2019) states that it is very important that a writer makes the setting felt by the characters. The place and items in the story should be filtered through the point-of-view character. The writer should make the character feels the setting. Imagine what the character might hear, smell, touch, or even taste.

Morrell (2006) also emphasizes the importance of setting, that it more than just a backdrop for the actions of the characters, as it can influence the characters, plot and mood of the story:

...it is an interactive aspect of your fictional world that saturates the story with mood, meaning, and thematic connotations. Broadly defined, setting is the location of the plot, including the region, geography, climate, neighborhood, buildings, and interiors. Setting, along with pacing, also suggests passage of time.

Schirova (2006) added that setting is the total environment for the action of a fictional work. It includes place (physical, sensuous world), time in which the action takes place – "the where and when of the story", social environment (moral values that govern the characters' society, manners, customs etc.) and atmosphere.

Last but not least, theme is also an important element of a literary work, including short stories. Theme refers to the main idea or message that is intentionally or unintentionally conveyed from a literary work. Themes usually convey the essence of human life values, both in a personal context and in relation to interactions with society, therefore the theme of a short story is often related to problems faced by humans such as love, betrayal, searching for identity, the struggle to find happiness, etc. Mittelmark & Newman (2008) emphasize that writers should not underestimate the existence of themes in their works.

If, for example, the author presents the theme of a husband's betrayal to his wife by having an affair with his child's nanny, the author must also think about its relation to all aspects of the lives of his characters, because an act of infidelity will certainly have an impact on his career, his marriage, his children's future and so on because the readers will also relate the short story they read to aspects of their lives. In addition to the plot, setting and point of view, there are still several elements that must be the attention of the short story writer, such as style, tone, diction or word choice, etc. (style, tone, diction, etc.). A short story that is categorized as good is usually caused by the author's ability to build synergy between the intrinsic elements that build it.

One of many short stories that successfully develops the synergy among their intrinsic elements is an Indonesian short story entitled "Memahat Cinta di Rinjani (Sculpting Love in Rinjani)" by Lina W. Sasmita (in Wardani et al, 2013).

This short story tells the love story of a mountain climber girl named Savanna, where she experiences a big test in her romantic relationship with Ben, who is also a mountain climber. Savanna, who had always believed that Ben was the right choice to be her life partner, is shocked when the man breaks off their romantic relationship via an email. Peppered with a series of tensions, it turns out that at the end of the story the actual events are very different from what Savanna thought all along.

METHOD

This research was conducted using a qualitative descriptive method, which is a research approach that aims to describe a phenomenon or event in a deep and detailed manner, with a focus on understanding the meaning in the context of a situation or event, in this case used to understand the qualitative aspects of the phenomenon, as depicted in the short story *Memahat Cinta di Rinjani*. Therefore, this study attempts to see how the author of the short story *Memahat Cinta di Rinjani* combines its intrinsic elements synergistically, especially the elements of plot, characterization, setting and theme.

Data collection is carried out by analyzing the content of short stories by reviewing intrinsic elements, which are in the stages of plot, character selection and how the characters are depicted (character and characterization) in this short story, as well as the setting and the theme or message conveyed both explicitly and implicitly in this short story.

The two research questions that this study tries to answer are; first, are the intrinsic elements, namely the plot, characterization, setting and theme arranged

appropriately/proportionally in this short story? Second, are the four elements synergistic or mutually supportive in building the aesthetics of this short story? The findings and discussions will provide a contribution, especially for novice writers who are starting to dare to write prose works, especially short stories.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The plot of the short story *Memahat Cinta di Rinjani* (MCDR) is actually quite simple. Lina W. Sasmita, the writer, uses an ab ovo narrative technique, namely a linear storytelling technique, although in some parts she uses flashbacks to explain the connections between the past and the present.

MCDR opens with an exposition that tells the story of the main character, Savanna, reminiscing about the good times with her boyfriend, Ben, before an email arrived three months ago which shocked her because it contained a statement that Ben had ended their love relationship. Savanna certainly felt shaken by the contents of the email. The following parts of the short story are tightly constructed. Flash black tells the story of Savanna and Ben's initial meeting when they were both climbing Mount Kerinci.

The plot stage, namely the inciting moment, has of course been felt since the reader is presented with the detailed contents of Ben's email to Savanna, regarding the termination of their romantic relationship. Rising action occurs when the intensity of Savanna's feelings of tension increases due to her curiosity about the real reason why Ben broke up with her. A big question arises; Is it true, as the contents of the email say, that Ben has another girl he loves more than Savanna.

The main conflict is more a conflict within Savanna, the protagonist herself. In this case, in MCDR the conflict refers to an internal conflict, where Savanna struggles with her heart which has two opposing desires, her disbelief that Ben would not have the heart to hurt her and the fact that Ben had not clarified what happened yet and this conflict creates more tension within Savanna's mind. The tension grows stronger when Inggit gave her a poem to be read when Savanna has reached the peak of Mount Rinjani as the content of the poem really relates to Savanna's sadness.

Savanna's other friend, Kris, has actually offered to be a good listener for the problems Savanna was facing, but Savanna refuses and seems confident that she can solve the problem herself. When Kris invites Savanna to move from their current location on the Mount Rinjani climb due to the weather there getting worse, Savanna even refuses on the grounds that Ben had promised her a year ago at Mount Kerinci to come to that place and climb with him. The severity of the conflict that occurred within Savanna can be seen when she can't hold back her tears because the person she loves so much decided to break up with her.

The complication stage occurs when Savanna finally actually meets Ben. Savanna becomes increasingly convinced that Ben no longer loves her because at that time Ben comes with a woman named Ria.

The complication stage becomes even more complicated because before Ben has time to explain anything, Ben's friends immediately calls him because the woman who comes with Ben is fainting and should be carried down to the post where she can be taken care of. Savanna's jealousy and anger towards Ben is getting stronger. Even though she is angry, Savanna does not hesitate to help Ria when Ria has arrived at the Plawangan Sembalun Post.

When Ria regains her consciousness, the tension of Savanna's inner conflict escalates because Ria admits that she has been in love with Ben since high school and considers that Ben and Savanna's relationship is a betrayal. Savanna, who is now even more devastated by Ria's statement, then apologizes to Ria for disrupting Ben and Ria's relationship.

Savanna's disappointment and anger towards Ben increases when the next afternoon she finds Ben in a tent and Ben's back is being massaged by a beautiful girl who turns out to be not Ria. Savanna immediately concludes that Ben not only betrayed her, but also betrayed Ria.

The climax of this short story is presented with a plot twist with accurate timing, namely when Ben chases Savanna and then explains that the girl who massaged him is his sister, Indri. Ben also explains that for a long time he has not been able to contact Savanna because all his contacts on his cellphone have been deleted by Ria and Ben's email has also been hacked by Ria, who claims that Ben is her boyfriend while it is not true. Ben actually wants to take action, but he is afraid and confused because Ria often threatens to commit suicide. The falling action and resolution parts of this short story are not presented in full. The author only ends this short story with Ben's explanation that Ria insists on climbing Mount Rinjani, and now even has to be immediately taken to the hospital because she overdosed. It is clear that Ria has quite serious mental problems. Savanna finally believes Ben's explanation, especially when Ben convinced Savanna that his true love is only for Savanna.

The characterization of MCDR strongly supports the previously explained plot. Good characterization in a short story happens when the story feels plausible and the characters feel believable and well-rounded, achieved through a combination of actions, words or dialogs, clear motivations, distinct personality traits, allowing readers to empathize and connect with them on a deeper level; essentially, using the Show Don't Tell technique, where the description of characters are described through their dialogue, interactions with others, and reactions to situations. These criteria are fulfilled by MCDR.

The Point of view chosen by the writer of the short story is First Person Limited, which is an excellent tool for delving into a character's psyche, motivations, and emotions. This point of view gives the readers a direct display of the character's thoughts and feelings, and this helps presenting the characters in a Show Don't Tell narrative method.

Readers can immediately see and feel the description of Savanna's character. Savanna's sensitive personality and quick feelings of guilt are depicted very clearly in the expression of her feelings; Savanna feels devastated to find out who really made Ben break up with her. Savanna thinks the woman is indeed more beautiful than her, her skin is white, her eyes are round, and she has a sharp nose, while she thinks that she does not have those points. She then concludes that it is no wonder Ben decided to break her up for that woman. Even though Inggit said Savanna was still prettier than Ria, Savanna's heart still held an incredible feeling of jealousy. Savanna thinks that maybe Inggit said that because she wanted to cheer her up. There is an increasing pain that Savanna feels and directly concludes that only time that can heal the wound. Savanna's being too sensitive and easily jumps to conclusion can also be shown in the way she immediately runs away from the tent in which Ben was massaged by his sister, Indri.

The presence of foils or supporting characters, namely Savanna's friends, actually

adds to Savanna's anxiety. For example, Inggit sent him a poem to read at the top of Mount Rinjani. This poem actually makes Savanna unable to forget her sadness:

*Just want to stand by your side
Until I feel the bitterness of the wound
I often try to survive in cold storms
With the rest of the tired confidence
Because simple desires always follow
Lurking among the pine valleys and the mystery of the mist*

*I whispered that desire for the highest peak
The lonely expression of a dreamer in this season
I left my diary on the stones
With a jumble of souls that I weave into a living dance*

*I don't want to fly alone
In the form of a bedtime story,
Before the poems become obsolete
In one long despair*

Savanna's other friend, Kris, also does not do much to ease her friend's anxiety, except for offering Savanna to share her story with her, which Savanna rejects. The presence of Ria who is possessive and claims to be Ben's girlfriend adds to the intensity of Savanna's confusion and sadness. The portrayal of Ria's character is interesting because it can convince Savanna that Savanna is the one who was guilty of snatching Ben from Ria's arms. Last but not least, the presence of Ben, who is too indifferent to do something instead of doing nothing after his email was hacked and the contact numbers in his cellphone were erased by Ria, worsens the intensity of Savanna's worrying mode.

The setting of the story helps add the atmosphere of Savanna's sadness and anxious mode. The writer describes that Mount Rinjani spreads the vibes of that relate to how Savanna feels. At the beginning of the short story, the weather, especially the fog, depicts how Savanna feels about her relationship with Ben:

The fog was getting thicker around me with great uncertainty. Will I stop this step? Meanwhile, the storm was getting louder, rumbling against the steep cliff walls. Echoing turmoil into the heart as the heart's rhythm beats increasingly fast. The sweat was no longer flowing because it was absorbed by the freezing cold air.

The other parts of the setting also support the vibes of Savanna's anxiety when she describes it that it feels like she is stumbling around in the harsh sandy terrain of Rinjani and it does not bring hope and happiness, but rather brings wounds and pain that she deliberately wants to surrender to the embrace of nature. What she wants to hang on to are the high mountains and steep cliffs so that all this sadness will no longer be a burden that disturbs her future.

Finally the theme or the underlying message that the writer wants to say is "true love

requires trust and throwing away prejudices or the habit of jumping to conclusions". This theme is conveyed without any impression of being patronizing. Readers of this short story can draw their own conclusions simply by getting involved in the MCDR storyline.

CONCLUSION

The short story *Memahat Cinta di Rinjani* by Lina W. Sasmita presents a strong attraction for readers because of its success in processing its four intrinsic elements, namely plot, characterization, setting and theme very well. The two research questions above were answered thoroughly in the way each of the above mentioned elements strongly supports each other proportionally and the writer is able to arrange the four elements into a synergy.

The plot of the short story MCDR is structured linearly and melodramatically so that the intensity of the anxiety of the protagonist, Savanna, experiences increases constantly. The characterization is appropriate by placing the protagonist in the midst of the challenges and temptations within herself and intensified by the influence of other characters and the geographical setting. With the plot and characterization as above, the theme "true love requires trust and throwing away prejudices or the habit of jumping to conclusions" can be better portrayed and reflected.

With this style of depiction, the four intrinsic elements are; The plot, characterization, setting and theme feel synergistic, fully supporting each other and producing an aesthetic that has great potential to provide enjoyment for the readers.

An interesting prospect is that further research can be carried out on this short story, namely on its linguistic aspects, which have style, diction, figures of speech, tone and linguistic elements of the short story.

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