CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL REVIEW

II.1 LITERATURE

Literature is one of the greatest creative and universal means of communicating the emotional, spiritual or intellectual concerns of mankind. Taylor (1981:1) states in his book, *Understanding the Elements of Literature* that literature is essentially an imaginative act, which is an act of the writer’s imagination in selection ordering and interpreting life experience. So, it means that literature also presents the real life. Literature provides a portrayal of human life in writing form, which reflects the human actual experiences and contains philosophical and moral concerns.

Literature can be classified into 3 general divisions. They are poetry, prose and drama. Prose has 2 categories, they are fiction prose and non fiction prose. Fiction prose includes myths, parables, romances, short stories and novels. Taylor (1981:46) states that novel, the most widely form of literature, might be defined as a fiction prose of book length which characters and actions are presented in a plot as if representing persons and events in real life. He says:

A novel is a great art, touching the life of everyone, every where and using not only description but also dialogue that make it more dramatic. It is the form in literature, which has explored more fully the life of ordinary man and found it worthy of portrayal.

The present of novel is performed in further details, rather than other forms of literature such as poetry or play. It also provides additional information of the story; its nature of time, place, or events. The combinations of these details are performed in written text, which picture the human life in detailed narrative
writing. Peck and Martin Coyle (1984:103) in their book, *Literary Terms and Criticism* state this:

“Novels, however, are long works with a great amount of detail in every page. They thus present all the complicating facts that need to be taken into account before we can reach any sort judgment. The effect of this detail is that we can to recognize the complex reality of a character on event in the story.”

### II.1.1 LITERATURE AND IDEAS

The concept of literature was developing into a specific term. It is not aimed for entertaining purposes only but also concerning the matter of physiological, social, historical, and idea of human beings. The concern of these elements brings literary study to be a scientific knowledge or learning. According to Welleck (1962:15), there is a slight difference between literature and literary study.

We must first make a distinction between literature and literary study. The two are distinct activities: one is creative, an art; the other, if not precisely a science, is a species of knowledge or of learning.

Every literary work contains ideas. Ideas represent the thought of author. And it is conveyed to readers as message. After analyzing the ideas of literature, it will deliver readers a message, or known as leading ideas. This message is commonly recognized as philosophy which conveys the essence of literature. Wellek (1962:110) states that, “*Literature is thought of as form of philosophy, as ‘ideas’ wrapped in form; and it is analyzed to yield a ‘leading ideas’.‘” This statement is also supported by Grebstein (1968:161) who states that a great literature is not only the matter of writing form or style but it is determined by the ideas. Great literatures appear because they have to. *No great literary work with a low message.*
The Old Man and the Sea also provides ideas to the readers. The ideas represent the thought of Ernest Hemingway about life. The ideas of literature will be analyzed to achieve message, and in case of leading ideas it will survive as global universal value.

It is quite interesting that Hemingway used literature to convey his idea of life. The way of Hemingway in viewing life is formulated into a great novel. The Old Man and the Sea contains Hemingway’s ideas about life; hopes, ideal dream, responsibility, freedom, struggle, and human belief. By performing Santiago as the main character, Hemingway shows the characteristics of human being who stands in existence. The characteristics are subjectivity, the conscious being in the world, contingency, anti materialism, humanity and faith. Santiago’s fulfillment of these characteristics is the representation of human existence. This becomes the philosophical idea of this literary work which is Human Existence.
II.2 A BRIEF DISCUSSION ABOUT HUMAN EXISTENCE

II.2.1 DEFINITION

Existence comes from ‘exist’ or ‘to exist’. It means the state of being…. In French, it comes from “existo” which are ‘ex’ and ‘sisto’. It means ‘to stand’. So, human existence is state or fact of being real of human life.

The study of human existence is discussed by existentialism. Existentialism is a philosophy that emphasizes the uniqueness and isolation of the individual experience in a hostile or indifferent universe, regards human existence as unexplainable, and stresses freedom of choice and responsibility for the consequence of one’s acts. This doctrine formulates human existence into field of study.” As it will be a holistic idea, the existentialist formulates the idea of human existence into concepts. Here are some of them:


Existentialism is a general orientation in philosophy with no set common principle. Among the theme stressed are the following: the importance of personal existence rather than abstract theorizing; the encounter with freedom and necessity of choosing; the denial of any fixed human nature and of universal moral codes; the desirability of authentic lifestyle; the encounter with death and meaningless (Woodhouse/1975:154)

Descartes formulates the human existence into well-known concept: “Cogito Ergo Sum” which means I think, therefore I exist..

The fundamental truth of existentialism is in Descartes formula “I think, therefore I exist” (Harmon/ 2000:203)

For Kierkegaard, the concept human existence refers to personal existence. It is exist for every person and existence depends on the quality of man. Wenina (2005:14), in her thesis, quotes the perspective of Kierkegaard. It can be seen from quotation below:
“...the term existence was reserved for individual human being. To exist, he said, implies being a certain kind of individual, an individual who strives, who considers alternatives, who chooses, who decides and who above all commits himself....existence must refer to a quality in the individual, namely his conscious participation in an act...Truth, said Kierkegaard, is subjectivity”

We can also see the concepts of human existence from several existentialists. Solomon (1987:283), in his book, *From Hegel to Existentialism*, states that:

“...Existentialism is not a simply philosophy or philosophical revolt. Existentialist philosophy is the explicit conceptual manifestation of an existential attitude – a spirit of “the present age”. It is a philosophical realization of self consciousness living in a “broken world” (Marcel), an “ambiguous world” (de Beauvoir), a “dislocated world” (Merleau-Ponty), a world into which we are “thrown” and “condemned” yet “abandoned” and “free” (Heidegger and Sartre), a world which appears to be indifferent or even “absurd” (Camus).”

From the brief quotations above, it is clear that existentialism as the study of human existence has varied vast concepts. These concepts were formulated into the idea of human existence. In order to make a comprehend analysis; the writer decides to use the characteristics of human existence as the scope of analysis.

**II.2.2 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF HUMAN EXISTENCE**

Since there are a lot of discussions about human existence, it is important to make a clear limitation about it. The writer takes a certain theory, being made by Muzairi (2002) in his book, *Eksistensialime Jean Paul Sartre*, who formulates the concept of human existence into several characteristics. The characteristics of human existence are subjectivity, conscious being in the world, contingency, anti materialism, humanity, and faith. The Muzairi’s formulated theory is supported by the ideas of former existentialists and the writer tries to apply this theory to *The Old Man and the Sea* novel which contains ideas of Hemingway’s idea about life.
The result is hopefully expected to reveals Hemingway’s ideas which show the Human Existence.

**Here are the characteristics of human existence:**

1. **Subjectivity**

   Subjectivity is judgment based on *individual* personal impressions and feelings and opinion rather than external facts.

   The definition of subjectivity leads us to an understanding that human existence is emphasized individually as a personal existence. Muzairi (2002:46) says that: “*Human existence is always particular and individual- always- my existence, your existence, his existence*” Subjectivity is the representation of personal existence and it becomes one of the characteristics of human existence. It exists for every person and always depends on the individual quality of a man.

   To give a further understanding about subjectivity, we can see the concept of human existence “Existence precedes Essence”. The understanding of subjectivity is similar to this concept. Sartre formulates this concept from *Essay Existence precedes Essence*. Wenina (2005:11), in her thesis, quotes Sartre conception:

   “…There is at least one being in whom existence precedes essence, a being who exist before he can be defined by any concept…. What is meant here by saying that *existence precedes essence*? It means that, the first of all, man exist, turns up, appears on scene, and only afterwards define himself…. Man is nothing else but what he makes himself. Such is the first principle of existentialism. It is also what is called subjectivity…”

   Sartre emphasizes the subjectivity as first principle of existentialism. Subjectivity which represents a personal existence means a first move of human
existence. The first move of human existence is to exist first. How? By having their own subjectivity. That is called Existence precedes Essence.

We also can see the concept of ‘Existence precedes Essence’ from the example of manufacturing item: a paper cutter. A paper cutter is an object that has been created by someone who gets inspiration and makes it into reality. Sartre (2002:43) states that:

The artist knows what a paper cutter is and what it is used for. So, that he knows recently a paper cutter has to be produced in a certain way, because it has specific use. Thus the presence of a paper cutter in front of us is determined. It has a technical view in its definite process.

The existentialists claim that we can not explain the nature of man in the same way we explain manufacture. The reason is the whole process of manufacture (eq. a paper cutter) states Essence precedes Existence, which differentiates a man from object. But an object can not exist as man does, who exist, emerge in the world and define himself. It is caused by the characteristic of man’s conscious being in the world while an object dispossesses it. Conscious being in the world will be further explained in next characteristic.

It is always interesting to discuss the concept of subjectivity from Kierkegaard perspective. As Kierkegaard says: ‘Truth is subjectivity’, it becomes a concerning question whether human existence is also a subjective truth? Does human existence become a neither subjective, nor objective truth? We can see this hesitancy from the quotations below:
Solomon (1987:72) in his book, *From Hegel to Existentialism* states this:

Indeed, the whole Kierkegaard career might be partially construed as an attack on the notion of “objective truth” – truth that is common, true for anyone and everyone. Kierkegaard had little regard for such a promiscuous theory of truth, and he came to have contempt for much that was defended under the banner of objectivity and rationality, philosophy and theology in particular. He would make no such claims for his own philosophy. It was enough that his truths were true for *him*—and for an undetermined legion of individual reader.

Karl and Leo Hamalian (1987:17) also concern this term in his book, *Existential Imagination* as follow:

Existentialism frequently becomes trapped by its own virtues: for if everyone is motivated ethically by his own subjectivity, then there is not only chaos, but potential immorality.

From the quotations above, it is clear that the concept of Kierkegaard’s subjectivity emphasizes the individual truth. For him, subjectivity is the matter of personal existence. It can be seen from his famous thesis, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*: “Truth is subjectivity doesn’t refer to any theory of knowledge, but to a person’s mode existence. (Muzairi/2002:36). Human existence is truth and Truth is Subjectivity. Answering the claim of subjective truth, Kierkegaard in Salomon (1987:74) shows the subjective truth is true; even what is believed is objectively false.

When the question of truth is raised in an objective manner, reflection is directed objectively to the truth as an object to which the knower is related. Reflection is not focused on the relationship, however, but upon the question whether the truth to which knower is related. If only the object to which is related is truth, the subject is accounted to be in the truth…..

When subjectivity, inwardness, is truth, the truth becomes objectively a paradox; and the fact that the true is objectively a paradox shows in its turns that subjectivity is the truth.
Furthermore, Kierkegaard shows the human existence is not only the matter of subjective or objective. Although he emphasizes the personal existence as first act, it doesn’t mean that everything works subjectively, being consequently as potential chaos and immorality. That’s why; Kierkegaard also states the importance of individual quality of a man. The quality of a man is determined by an individual who strives, who consider alternatives, who chooses, who decides and who above all commits himself. These are making the human existence.

“…the term existence was reserved for individual human being. To exist, he said, implies being a certain kind of individual, an individual who strives, who considers alternatives, who chooses, who decides and who above all commits himself….existence must refer to a quality in the individual, namely his conscious participation in an act…Truth, said Kierkegaard, is subjectivity” (Wenina/2005:14)

So, it is clear that subjectivity as one of the characteristics of human existence has a clear concept. The concept states that subjectivity is the first principle of human existence, as ‘Existence precedes Essence’ (Sartre) and subjectivity is always individual. It exists for every person and depends on individual quality (Kierkegaard).

2. Conscious Being in the World

Conscious being in the world is the state of being able to use senses and mental power to understand what is happening in the world.

Realizing the subjectivity, it will take human being into the conscious being in the world. The conscious being in the world means realizing the uniqueness of every individual being. Muzairi (2002:46) says that:

“Individu itu unik, bukan objek dan bukan umum…Karena ia unik, ia adalah --yang berada secara sadar dalam dunia--.
“An individual is unique, not an object or general...Because of his / her uniqueness, human beings are – individual who exists in a conscious being in the world--”

It is such a dilemma for human being in understanding his/her existence. Since realizing the subjectivity and knowing that every individual being is unique and exist, it doesn’t enough to realize this uniqueness, only. It needs responsibility to respond this uniqueness in stepping for the human existence. This responsibility is a compulsory for the state of conscious being in the world as Sartre says: “I am thus responsible for my self and for all men...” (Muziri/2002:211). Human being must have consciousness as the responsibility towards his / her existence. The conscious being in the world becomes a moving factor in proving human existence. It states human responsibility and responsibility motivates individual to prove the human existence.

“...that self consciousness is neither a subject aware nor an awareness of an object (the self) so much as it is a motivation, an attitude that illuminates the world as well as the individual in the world” (Solomon/1987:243)

The conscious being in the world contains the sense of responsibility and the power of motivation to prove human existence. But, as dilemma above, self consciousness also encounters rejection from outer world. The rejection comes from dissimilarity of every individual conscious being in the world, as well as the fact of personal existence (subjectivity).

This rejection brings the conscious being in the world into an alienated individual. The person who realizes his / her self-consciousness (of being exist) is dealt with a self alienation. The sense of alienation can be viewed from the quotation below:
“The existential attitude is first of all an attitude of self consciousness. What is self consciousness? According to some recent existentialist, there is no self as such. And what is consciousness? “It is nothing” Sartre tells us, “To be conscious is to be embarrassed, to be ill at ease”. One feels himself separated from the world, from other people. In isolation, one feels threatened, insignificant, meaningless, and in responsible demands significant through a bloated view of self. (Solomon/1987:242)

From explanations above, it is clear that conscious being in the world is realizing the subjectivity of human being as a personal existence. This consciousness attitude needs responsibility to prove the human existence.

3. Contingency

Contingency is the effective experience of human being in actual world. Human existence is resulted by effective experience in the world. Human beings declare the existence by fulfilling the contingency. It means that human existence is always a process and it is the process of being a real man in actual world.

Muzairi states that:

“Bahwa keberadaan manusia itu bukan observasi, akan tetapi kontingensi; yakni pengalaman efektif dalam hubungannya dengan dunia” (Muzairi/2002:47)

“Indeed, the existence of human being is not an observation but contingency; which is the effective experience in the world”.

“Jadi eksitensialisme betul betul mengungkapkan manusia utuh sebagai eksistensi—eksistensi yang mendahului essensi—sebab eksistensi manusia itu bukanlah selesai mantap, akan tetapi sebaliknya, terus mengada” (Muzairi/2002:42)

“Thus, existentialism is definitely trying to reveal whole human as existence—existence precedes essence—because human existence is not stable finish but on the contrary, always exist”

In applying human existence, it is not only the matter of concept. It is not sum of letters in a paper or speeches on the table. The concept of human existence
should be applied in reality and it is a must. Human existence is always requiring the actual experience of real life in the world.

Jean Paul Sartre concerns the contingency as he states: “When existentialist talk of existence, they are talking of human existence. Human existence is actual not conceptual” (Muzairi/2002:42) He also states the everlasting process of human existence as he states: “I am condemned to exist forever beyond my essence, beyond the causes and motives of my act” (Muzairi/2002:30)

Furthermore, the importance of contingency as representation of action in actual world is highly appreciated by Sartre. He emphasizes it for multiple times:

“Man is nothing else but that which he makes of himself. Man defines himself by his act...He is nothing else but the sum of his actions, nothing else but what his life is” (Muzairi/2002:182-183).

So, it is clear that human existence is really determined by human contingency. Contingency means the real actions of human beings in actual world.

4. Anti-Materialism

Anti-Materialism is the doctrine which refuses the judgment based on materialistic values, only.

This doctrine contradicts the essence of human being against materialism value. Materialism regards human being as the result of materialistic process, that body, soul, passion and life of man represent the material. While anti materialism regards the existence of human being is quite considerable. It is something called existence beyond the material itself.

J.O. de la Mettrie (1709-1775) in his book “L’ Homme Machine” (Manusia sebagai Mesin) describes man as the machine, and human soul is
equaled with the function of a machine. Anti materialism denies this perspective that human being can not be equaled with the object or thing. We can’t compare the existence of human being to the existence of an object because man’s existence precedes essence while an object doesn’t. This becomes the source of anti materialism.

5. Humanity

Humanity is the value that affirms the dignity and worth of all people, based on the ability to determine right and wrong by appeal to universal human qualities.

Humanity is dealing with condition of human being in the life. It concerns the values of lives which determine the existence of human being in the world. When the term of humanity being related with individual being, it will discover the fact of human existence, which is can be understood by fully accepting the human condition.

Only human beings are known to ask themselves questions relating to the purpose of life beyond the base need for survival, or the nature of existence beyond that which is empirically apparent: What is the meaning of existence? Why was I born? Why am I here? Where will I go when I die? The human struggle to find answers to these questions — and the very fact that we can conceive them and ask them — is what defines the human condition in this sense of the term.(Wikipedia/Humanity)

The concept of humanity always emphasizes the dignity of man as a man. It means that there is sense of recognition of equality of all people. This recognition proves the characteristic of human existence which admits the truth of every individual being as a personal existence. Humanity is a sense of recognition of all human beings, respectfully.

In accordance with human recognition, humanity is also delivers care for every individual. Since it recognizes all human being, it shows the care and love
in life. This feeling can be seen from affection towards all human being and it is clear that humanity is needed to declare the human existence.

6. Faith

Faith is a belief or commitment towards the values of life.

The conception of faith becomes a debating problem of existentialism. This debate brings the study of human existence into 2 sides, religious existentialists and non religious (atheist) existentialists. The concept of faith is defined by the question of God’s existence and the answer of the question separates these sides, contradictory.

Formal usage of the word "faith" is usually reserved for concepts of religion, as in theology, where it almost universally refers to a trusting belief in a transcendent reality (ergo a belief in a spiritual nature and in spiritual immortality), or else in a Supreme Being and said being's role in the order of transcendent, spiritual things. (Wikipedia/Faith)

a. Religious existentialists

The religious existentialists believe God as the source of all existence. Faith becomes the representation of God existence and it is manifested into religions. The study of former existentialism can’t be separated from the Christianity which affected most of existentialists. Some of them are Gabriel Marcel (Roman Catholic), Nicolai Berdyaev (Orthodox) and Martin Buber (Jew). According to them, faith is the commitment towards God, as the source of values and it is represented in religion.

Personalisasi agama sebagai suatu keyakinan; bahwa tidak ada kekuasaan argument rasionil yang dapat mengambil tempat dari commitment atau “ultimate concern” sebagai syarat memahami agama. (Muzairi/2002:53)
The personalization of religion as a faith; that there is no rational argument dominance which able to replace the commitment or “ultimate concern” as the first rule in understanding the religion.

b. Non religious or atheist existentialists

The non religious existentialist rejects the perspective above, that their belief is the existence of human being only. Some of them are Jean Paul Sartre, Heidegger, Camus, and Maurice M. Ponty. According to them, man is dealing with himself in an absolute freedom, planning his own future and creating his own values. Sartre, in his book *Being and Nothingness*, states that:

“Aku ini dihukum bebas, maka Aku bebas….Hanya tinggal pilih, manusia yang bebas atau mengakui Tuhan sebagai sumber nilai…manusia tidak bisa menjadi budak dan pada saat yang sama bebas, dia bebas selamanya atau tidak bebas sama sekali”

(Muzairi/2002:83)

“I am condemned to be free, then I am free (Je suis condamne a etre libre)...It is only to choose, a free man or admit God as the source of values….man can’t be a slave while simultaneously he is free, he is free forever or not at all”

This is the conception of faith. It reveals the different view of human being in dealing with existence. It is clear that human being lives by faith, although it differentiates them into different perspective