

# MORAL LESSONS IN TORTUGA'S DREAM IN *TORTUGA* BY RUDOLFO ANAYA

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## Abstract

Penelitian yang berjudul *Moral Lessons in Tortugas's Dream in Tortuga By Rudolfo Anaya* membahas penderitaan Tortuga dan beberapa anak yang mengalami kelumpuhan. Mereka dirawat di sebuah rumah sakit terletak di sekitar gunung "Tortuga". Tokoh utama novel ini bernama Tortuga yang artinya kura-kura. Novel ini menggambarkan pentingnya penyembuhan secara spiritual melalui penghayatan terhadap alam, selain pengobatan medis. Data dari penelitian ini adalah mimpi Tortuga ketika bertemu dengan Salomon. Anaya, si pengarang banyak menggunakan teknik *Stream of Consciousness* (teknik Arus Kesadaran) untuk menggambarkan pikiran, perasaan, penderitaan dan harapan para tokoh. Teknik Arus Kesadaran adalah kekacauan pikiran yang berkepanjangan dan mengalir sebagai sebuah proses dari tokoh fiktional dalam novel. *Stream of consciousness* adalah teknik karakterisasi yang tampil dari kesadaran atau alam bawah sadar dari mental dan pola pikir yang mencakup: pikiran, persepsi, perasaan, dan asosiasi yang mengalir sedemikian berupa dan menggambarkan kekacauan pikiran yang berkepanjangan (Pickering dan Hooper, 1981:55). Metode Penelitian yang digunakan untuk penelitian ini adalah *Content Analysis* dengan teknik Hermeneutika (teori interpretasi). Temuan dari penelitian ini adalah Anaya menyampaikan ajaran moral melalui teknik pencerita senandika (*soliloquy*) untuk mengungkapkan cara tokoh mengatasi penderitaan. Tokoh menggali semangat sembuh dan harapan hidupnya melalui penghayatan terhadap alam dengan cara mengapresiasi fenomena dan keindahan alam. Kesimpulan dari penelitian ini adalah ajaran moral dengan penghayatan terhadap alam membangkitkan semangat hidup melalui perjuangan spiritual demi kesembuhan jasmani dan rohani.

Kata Kunci: *moral lessons, soliloquy, Content Analysis, Hermeneutika.*

## A. INTRODUCTION

Rudolfo Anaya is an American writer and educator who was born on October 30, 1937, in Pastura, New Mexico. Anaya taught high school and college courses while writing novels

with groundbreaking Chicano themes about the human condition. He received acclaim for *Bless Me, Ultima* (1972), *Heart of Aztlán* (1976) and *Tortuga* (1979). His most recent works of fiction include *Randy Lopez Goes Home: A Novel* (2011), and "*The Old Man's Love Story*" (2013). In 2013, *Bless Me, Ultima* was adapted as a full-length film. The author has greatly influenced the landscape of Chicano literature and continues to write while garnering literary awards. In 2015, he was awarded a National Humanities Medal by President Barack Obama (<https://www.biography.com/people/rudolfo-a-anaya-39694>).

*Tortuga* was written by Rudolfo Anaya (passed away in June 2020). The novel tells us a story of crippled children and are hospitalized in some village close to the mountain of Tortuga. The main character in this novel named *Tortuga*. The story is based on Anaya's swimming accident. He explores the significance of pain and suffering in a young boy's life and the importance of spiritual recovery as well as medical. "Tortuga" or turtle is the name of the oddly shaped mountain near the hospital, but Tortuga also points toward the rigid cast that encases the young hero's body. *Tortuga* is a novel about a young character, afflicted by paralysis, goes to the hospital in the middle of the desert where he is forced to confront the pain of his own suffering as well as others. Throughout the novel, this character, named Tortuga after his resemblance to the oddly shaped mountain nearby, struggles to make meaning of the suffering he sees in himself and around him. As the boy discovers courage and personal strength in such a context, one can't help but gain a great sense of hope and faith. The message of the novel seems to move it toward a universal meaning as all people from every culture and society deal with the issue of pain and suffering ([legacy.earlham.edu/~sampees/anaya4htm](http://legacy.earlham.edu/~sampees/anaya4htm)).

An adolescent boy enters a hospital for crippled children. His initiation into institutional life is painful. At first he wants nothing more than isolation and protection from patients he regards as "freaks." But as alliances form and the subtleties of ward life become clearer, he learns new methods of self-identification that have more to do with the peculiar structures of this confined world than with the world outside. Home becomes an increasingly remote reference point and the camaraderie of suffering in exile the dominant source of affirmation ([medhum.med.nyu.edu/view/798](http://medhum.med.nyu.edu/view/798)). The story is a coming of age tale intensified by burdens beyond what adolescence is normally required to bear. A boy becomes not only a man, but in some sense an old man before his time, and returns to youth "outside" both scarred and gifted with what suffering has taught him, and with a new sense of who are his "brothers and sisters."

To lead into the discussion of a metaphorical reading and meaning of the novel, one should first understand the significance of this novel in relation to Anaya's preceding works. In an interview with Anaya, John Crawford suggests that *Bless Me Ultima*, *Heart of Aztlán*, and *Tortuga* all carry a thread of continuity and in a sense create a loose trilogy. As Anaya affirms this suggestion, one is left thinking about the connections between the three novels and how *Tortuga* successfully ends this trilogy. The three seem to work together in the context of the metaphorical interpretation of *Tortuga* that speaks to cultural transformation and the return of the Chicano/a to his/her land, culture, and sense of belonging ([legacy.earlham.edu/~sampees/anaya4htm](http://legacy.earlham.edu/~sampees/anaya4htm)). *Tortuga* contains natural objects and events as the images of human beings.

## **B. MATERIAL AND METHOD**

The materials used in this research are primary and secondary resources. The Primary resource is a novel, *Tortuga*. The Secondary resource is the reference that consists of some relevant sources of website. The Primary resource is Tortugas' dream when he met Filomon, his best friend (page 42-43). The method used in this research is content analysis and technique of hermeneutics. Content analysis is used to explore the ideas expressed by the author in the forms of statements, questions, and dialogues of the characters. The method of interpretation used in this research is the techniques of Hermeneutics (theory of interpretation).

The method of content analysis is to uncover, understand, and grasp the message of literary works. A researcher is doing this by building a concept associated with the literature. Aspects that are outside the literary aesthetics, explored, internalized, and discussed in detail. Elements were highlighted in the content analysis include, among others, the problem of moral ethics, things didactic, psychological problems, and philosophical values. The procedures relating to procurement data and determine the unit of analysis. Conclusion and analysis process include understanding of the symbolic meaning of a literary work. The paradigm of this study is a qualitative approach (Creswell,1994:21). The use of a qualitative study with the conceptual realm, to get the message that a comprehensive literature include: the validity of semantics, understanding the symbolic meaning inherent in context; while reliability is used for adjustment between the results of the review of the research literature that has been formulated (Endraswara,2008:162).

The technique of hermeneutics is the process of interpretation. Language is a medium without borders, which brings something in it - not only understood culture through language,



but also everything that is contained in the field of understanding (Sumaryono,1993:28). According to Prof. Dr. Abdul Hadi W.M., hermeneutical interpretation is a theory in understanding the meaning of the text, especially in literature. Modern Hermeneutics, as presented by Paul Ricoeur, stating that the language is a container of meanings, when someone reads a text, the intention to understand its contents is through interpretation. A researcher is able to reach the deepest meaning because a researcher has a complete knowledge of the culture, religion and history, not just knowledge of language, literature, and aesthetics.

According to Ricoeur, hermeneutics is the best strategy to interpret the texts of philosophy and literature. The study design was the interpretation of deep understanding expressed in stream of consciousness. Coherence is to understand the meaning of the element structure, internal relations to integrate all the elements to get the deepest meaning, analogy is the observation of meaning and values, and describe their results through analysis by using some theories, in this context. First, the text read very carefully by interpreting the expressions of the characters. Secondly, the text is interpreted to understand the elements of stream of consciousness that contain the idea of the author. Lastly, is to understand the text in the form of some elements belong to the concepts of stream of consciousness that show the main idea of the author.

#### **A. THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK**

The theory being used to analyze these literary works is the stream of consciousness, omniscient description, and soliloquy (Humphrey, 1954:23).The Stream of Consciousness technique was first introduced by William James in his book *The Principles of Psychology* (1890). The novel of the stream of consciousness (*Stream of Consciousness*) is a type of fiction that emphasizes the exploration of awareness on the disclosure of the inner state of the characters (Humphrey, 1954: 1-2). These mental states include: sensations, illusions, imaginations, symbols, feelings, hopes, memories, desires, images, and so on. The *Stream of Consciousness* novel, simply put, is a technique used by novelists to represent the minds, souls, mental attitudes of the characters through conventional narrative and description methods. ....

The use of descriptions by an omniscient writer or author or narrator to represent the character's flowing awareness may be carried out with many variations and styles (Humphrey, 1954: 33-35). The author or writer uses a character as a narrator whose monologue and content usually jumps from one problem to another according to the narrator/character's

stream of consciousness. Therefore, the reader or researcher is tasked with reconstructing the inner expression of the narrator or character by categorizing the main points of the inner expression. Some of these inner expressions are aimed at other characters or they can be addressed to readers or drama viewers as general criticism or moral teachings, and so on.

There are four basic techniques in presenting the stream of consciousness, some of them: Storyteller's Commentary or Description Author or omniscient description(*Komentar Pencerita*), and soliloquy (Humphrey, 1954: 23), (*senandika*, Jawa = *Ngunandiko*).

Soliloquy or Senandika (soliloquy) is usually found in conscious-stream dramas or novels. Senandika is the character's inner conversation with himself (Humphrey, 1954: 36). Techniques represent the psychic content or inner state or inner conflict of the character that is conveyed directly by the character or the "me" in front of the audience or reader. This technique has no other narrator except the "me". The "I" is as if talking to the audience or readers. Senandika example: "I'm confused, why do I question the existence of an almighty, maybe I have sinned. Can I still ask Him for forgiveness?"

The mind-stream technique most familiar to novel readers is the Narrator's Commentary or Description of the omniscient Author or the omniscient description. Actually, a Storyteller's Commentary or Author's Description or omniscient description is the same as the Third Person Omniscient, namely the "Know-to-Know" Storytelling technique (Cuddon, 1979: 415-416).

### **C. BENEFIT OF THE RESEARCH**

This research might be beneficial for those who are interested in the field of Literature, Culture, and Philosophy mainly for students who are dealing with this knowledge (stream of consciousness). In addition, this research may be useful for those who wish to explore the thoughts and views of Rudolfo Anaya, who is known as a Latin American writer.

### **D. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

In his dream, Tortuga meets a friend named Salomon who is also a patient with paralysis and he is hospitalized in the same hospital as Tortuga. Salomon's physical condition was terrible, thin, weak, and looked helpless. Tortuga heard the complaints, feelings, hopes, and optimism expressed by Salomon. Salomon, who seemed helpless, actually raised Tortuga's spirit when he experienced this suffering. Salomon's remarks gave Tortuga a new insight into life (Anaya,1979:41-43)

- Salomon thought that humans did not need to question the existence of a creator. The most important thing is that humans must live life as it is: *Why question the ways of creation. Know only that every man, in one way or another, must cross the desert.*
- Life is really very difficult and always changes: *Life is such a thin ribbon, so fragile, so easily transformed.*
- Nature teaches people how to live life. When humans succeed in passing it, the suffering will disappear, and new hope and life will emerge: *But as we teach you to sing and to walk on the path of the sun the despair of the paralysis will lift, and you will make from what you've seen a new life, a new purpose ...*
- Salomon could understand Tortuga's suffering. It is true that the life that Tortuga feels is very tiring and painful, but all of this is the essence of life that is experienced by everyone: *I know your journey was long, and the weight of the shell is tiresome ... but know this, every person bears that weight in one way or another. It is the same with all of us.*
- We often ask, why did all this happen? Then we get angry with the creator because he punished humans. This is a condition that makes the human condition worse and ends in emptiness: *First we question why? Then we curse the gods that send the punishment ... then the despair enters and there is only the chaos of nothingness left ...*
- Tortuga really felt tormented so he started cursing all because he thought they had done evil to humanity and it is really sad ... He cursed his father and mother why he should be born into the world but suffer like this. Why did they give him a life ... a cruel life, this is strange! .. death is better than this kind of waiting, nothing changes. He prayed for death ... he gave up his last wish, let the darkness surround, and begged death:  
*I cursed them as you have cursed them, and I cursed their who could practice such cruelty on pitiful men ... I cursed the sperm of my father and the marrow of my mother for giving me life ... Life, what a cruel joke it had become ... better death than this suspension in a plane where there was no movement, no meaning ... so I prayed for death... I gave up the last of my will, let the darkness surround, and begged for death.*
- We are forever immersed in emptiness. Life is lonely and lonely, all creation has left people. This is just the end of life, a form that is quite unknown: *... a void in which we sink*



*eternally, a plane of life so still and lonely that we think all the creation has abandoned us ... and still, it's but a station of life, a form we cannot see.*

- Tortuga recalls the moment of despair engulfing his mind. He cannot bear the burden of this suffering, he cannot bear the pain of paralysis. He wants to end his life. However, he feels sorry. Why should he despair, while doctors and nurses trying to cure his illness in various ways, they want Tortuga to stay alive::

*Let me tell you that long ago I came with Filomon across the desert ... crucified to suffer the paralysis forever, I cursed God and prayed for death. I had the will to kill myself and end the meaningless suffering, but I did not have the strength. ... When my lungs collapsed they placed me in the iron lung and forced the air to make me live.*

- One day Tortuga opens his eyes, and still feels empty because of the hatred and anger that surrounds him. That mild summer morning, he is enjoying the beautiful air, the smell of the fresh hay being cut in the fields there: *But it was not to be. One day I opened my eyes, and felt that I was empty for the hate and rage which had filled me. It was a soft summer day. I remember the air was sweet with the fragrance of the fresh cut hay in the field below.*
- Tortuga enjoys the beauty of nature, the cotton floating in the air in a relaxed, warm and calm, the freshly mowed meadow singing songs. All life seems touched by the energy which fills everything with constancy: *Cotton from the cottonwoods drifted lazily in the warm, still air, the meadowlark warbled their song across the fresh mown fields, all the life seemed touched by an energy which charged everything with its electric acid.*
- Tortuga begins to rest in peace, bathing his frail and tired body under the warm sunshine. Suddenly a miracle changes the view of his life that appears from behind the window. He watches a large butterfly enter through the open window: *Even Tortuga rested calmly, bathing his old and tired body in the pleasant sun. Then the miracle which changed my life forever appeared at the window. I looked closely and saw a giant butterfly enter through the open window.*
- Tortuga holds his breath in surprise. That day his eyes are opened to enjoy the beauty and magic of the creator. That day he feels a strand of gold, a bond that holds all creation

together in an extraordinary being ... as he feels a strange calm and security of being rescued in his soul. Spiritual power arises within him in the appreciation of nature, mountains, sky, and water that are united in the sunshine:

*I held my breath in wonder. That day my eyes were opened to the beauty and wonder of the creation. That day I felt the golden strands of light which unite all of the creation gather in that marvelous creature ... and I sensed a strange salvation working its way into my soul. The numinous soul of the mountain and the sky and the water gathered in the light of the sun..*

- He observes a butterfly flying gracefully while perching on a cotton ball and makes him very fascinated. He thinks the butterfly would pass away if he doesn't find a white rose ... but no, he knows what he's doing. Natural phenomena provides moral teachings to humans in order to survive: *The large butterfly fluttered over me then gracefully landed on the ball of cotton which covered the opening to my throat. I thought it would fly away when it didn't find a white rose ... but no, it knew what I was doing.*
- Salomon voiced, "Yes, Tortuga, it is a rare thing ... love returns when I think all love has died". Natural phenomena provide freshness and fortitude to humans who almost give up hope. Nature spreads love and tenderness to people who are willing to accept it ... the love it brings from the flowers that grow along the mountainside and in the desert, the love of the beauty of nature: ... *Yes, Tortuga, it was a rare thing ... a love returning when I thought all love had died. Its round, butterfly eyes caressed me with their love ... a love it had brought from the flowers which grew along the slopes of the mountain and in the desert...*
- For the first time since the paralysis, a new atmosphere of life has touched Tortuga's mind ... just as humans have been touched by Filomon and Ismelda ... and like all of us will be touched by the power of the universe and all the life that resides over it. Tortuga cries with joy as he feels a new life form has touched him, as we are touched by those who love us. The feeling of happiness penetrates his soul and wraps it gently transmitting a feeling of calm and comfort. He wants to scream for the first time when he feels the beautiful secret in life ...:

*For the first time since the paralysis another form of life had come to touch me .. as you have been touched by Filomon and Ismelda ... and as you will be touched by the mountain and all the forms of life that live at its feet. I cried with joy as the tiny eggs burrowed into my blood and wrapped themselves in soft, chrysalis to sleep. I wanted to shout for first time that I had felt the secret of all life ...*



- New life seems to emerge from within him, like a withered flower reborn in its own fruit. He feels a pressure trying to escape in search of freedom: *But inside I felt a new life growing, like the flower which wilts is born again in its own fruit, I felt the little drysalises ripening, gnawing through their shells and rising to to my throat to seek their freedom.*
- ... Life is something very sacred, even amidst the difficulties faced by humans, life is sacred. ...: *... life is sacred, yes, even in the middle of this wasteland and in the darkness of our wards, life is sacred...*
- Tortuga seems to hear a voice: "They are my children, Tortuga ... they are the cry and whisper of the soul". Day by day purify all the lives we have to live. ... Humans must fight for life regardless of the risks they will face. Humans must find solutions to various obstacles in life and humans must be able to find the light of life. When it comes time that life will tire and recede, we will feel calm and happy facing it with love and beauty::

*They are my children, Tortuga ... they are the cries and whispers of my sould. They say the sun sanctifies all life, an it is his path of light that we should walk. ... We must search the path of light and when we find it we must walk on it. And when the time is ripe the crippled, fragile shells will fly out across the desert to pollinate new flowers with love and beauty.*

## **E. CONCLUSION**

The suffering felt by Tortuga and his friends can be experienced and felt by many people. Those who are impatient and easily to give up will hinder healing. Those who are patient and have a great zeal for life will struggle with all their effort and in various ways. For Tortuga, his contemplation and appreciation of the greatness, beauty, and uniqueness of natural phenomena provided extraordinary inspiration that made him realize that patience, determination, and sincerity are sources of optimism that give rise to the spirit of life.

This novel does not show Tortuga's efforts to ask God for help. The distinctive feature of Rudolfo Anaya's literary works shows that the main characters are closer to the forces of

nature than to God. *Tortuga's* novel shows Tortuga's criticism of Denny's character, whom he deems too fanatical and unreasonable in understanding divinity.

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