

TYPES OF PLOTS IN KHALED HOSSEINI'S THE KITE RUNNER

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ABSTRACT

This study discusses the types of plot used by Khaled Hosseini in his novel "The Kite Runner". Plot is an element in a novel which is necessary in order to understand the storyline of the novel. The study was a descriptive study. The results showed that the plots found in The Kite Runner included maturation, escape, rescue, love, revenge, the riddle, quest, underdog, sacrifice, ascension and rivalry.

KEYWORDS: *Novel Analysis, Plots, The Kite Runner.*

INTRODUCTION

Human's life cannot be separated from literature because it is related to the real life (Marsh, 2002) in which literature can help "wake up our senses, enrich our feelings, and deepen our thoughts" (Hake, 2001, p. 10). Literature can be found in any types of writing such as storybooks and poems (Trisnawati, Sarair, Rahmi, 2016). Literature is the "compositions that tell stories, dramatize situations, express emotions, and analyze and advocate ideas" (Robert & Jacobs 1987 as cited in Marpaung, 2010). However, literature has a different language from what we normally use in daily life (Eagleton, 1996).

Commonly, there are five genres of literature, those are: poetry, drama, prose, fiction, and non-fiction ("Genre", n.d.). They are organized as imaginative literature which have different characteristics. The object under study here, novel, is part of fictional prose. Novel is defined as "a story long enough to fill a complete book, in which the characters and events are usually imaginary" ("Novel", n.d.). The stories within novels can be derived from real life stories or based on the imagination of the authors.

There are several elements that are needed in writing a novel, including theme, point of view, character, plot, and setting. In this case, the study focused on the plots contained in the novel written by Khaled Hosseini titled "The Kite Runner". Plot is a

necessary ingredient in the novel in order to engage readers in reading the novel. This study aimed to describe the plots used by Khaled Hosseini in *The Kite Runner* along with the cited dialogues in the novel.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Djasi (2001) states that a novel contains a story which describes the events of human life at a certain time. A novel is capable of giving a message to the readers about the past, present and future conditions of the human life because it is often based on the imagination of the authors, which connect to real experiences. The elements of a novel include setting, theme, characterization, style, point of view, and plot (Huck, Kiefer, Hepler, & Hickman, 2004).


Plot is one of the most important elements in the novel which can determine whether a story in the novel is good or bad. Plot is utilized to depict the events in the novel so that the story can occur, and the events connect to one another creating a sequence (Herron, 2020; "Plot", n.d.) Tobias (1993) describe 20 plots that are commonly used in a novel.

The types of plots according to Tobias (1993) and their descriptions:

- 1) Quest is meant a long search for something. Usually, in a story, there is a hero that searches for something, someone, or somewhere. Probably in real life, the one is searching for him/herself. However, the greatest hero qualities in a story are contrast in reality.
- 2) Adventure is meant an unusual, exiting or dangerous experience, journey or series of events. In this case, the protagonist character in a story likes seeking an adventure. It is almost similarly to a quest but the goal aims to a personal development of the hero. In the adventure story plot, it has more actions.
- 3) Pursuit is meant an action of looking for something or trying to find something. Here, the character is chasing something or someone. It can be one person chasing another one or a group of people or another thing.
- 4) Rescue is meant to save somebody or something from a dangerous or harmful situation. This plot tries to depict that somebody is captured or stuck in a situation and need to be saved by a hero or heroes. There may be a triangle formation between the protagonist, the antagonist and the victim. There will be a fighting between the protagonist and the antagonist to release the victim.
- 5) Escape is meant to get away from a place where you have been kept as a prisoner or not allowed to leave. Different from rescue, someone needs to get away from a dangerous situation with or without helps from others. In

this plot, the elements of capture and unjust imprisonment may exist here. Maybe the character will be chased after the escape.

- 6) Revenge is meant something that you do in order to make somebody suffer because they have made you suffer. In the revenge plot, somebody has been betrayed physically or emotionally by a person or an organization. The character can have sympathy from the audience, but it can be meant for the person or team that have betrayed in the previous game.
- 7) The riddle is meant a question that is difficult to understand and it has a surprising answer or a mysterious even or situation that could not be explained. This plot can entertain the readers and develop the feeling of curiosity. Usually, the readers are dragged to guess the solution of the story before the hero does. The hero will uncover clues and hence the final solution steadily and carefully. Probably the story will get more tension with more horrifying effects if the story does not have solution yet.
- 8) Rivalry is meant a competition between two people or groups that are competing for the same things. In the rivalry plot, there will be a competition between two people or groups that can be enemies. Usually, at the end of the story, rivals will lose the game after competing one and another to win the things.
- 9) Underdog is meant a weaker feeling that a person, a team, or a country has than others. In the beginning, it seems that the character has less advantage and often be expected to lose the game. However, the character can pop up and take over the game when (usually a hero) might be in a bad situation or almost lost. This plot usually wins the game when there is an opportunity or a help from others.
- 10) Temptation is meant a desirable feeling to do or have something bad or wrong. In the temptation plot, somebody or something often teases a person. It can have terrible effects if it is done or taken. This will somehow diminish the person in the story, often morally. Sometimes, there is a battle in the internal when the inner voices fight against the character to succumb.
- 11) Metamorphosis is meant a process in which somebody or something changes completely into something or somebody different. This is a great plot where the protagonist physically turns from small to big, or from a child to a man. The character will be a hero through the time because of some great act of love.
- 12) Transformation is meant a thorough or dramatic change in form or appearance. The transformation plot usually experiences something bad in the past and that leads a person changing in some ways such as unexpected circumstance or event. The change occurs through a bad experience that turns a person to be somebody better.

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- 13) Maturation is meant the process of becoming or being made mature or it is also meant the process of becoming adult. It is almost close to metamorphosis but here, the maturation is transformed psychologically or emotionally. The person will grow up and learn through a process. Thus, this plot describes someone becoming wiser and having a good purpose.
 - 14) Love is meant a special feeling that a person has toward somebody or something else.
 - 15) Forbidden love is meant a love that should not be done or felt. Usually, the lovers will hide their relationship until others discover it. It also happens because there is no approval which is causing conflicts and consequences in the story.
 - 16) Sacrifice is meant the fact of giving up for something which is considering important or in the other words something that makes a person giving up in this way. In sacrifice, someone that has a kind of the human spirit character would give much more than most people would give. The person can be unintentional hero in the story because the person does not start to do it at first. Sometimes it happens naturally.
 - 17) Discovery is meant the process of finding somebody or something or learning of something that was not known before. The discovery plot will be done by a hero whether it is bad or good. The hero should make a difficult choice. This plot will be found at the end of the story, usually the answers of all questions.
 - 18) Wretched excess is meant, in story of wretched excess, the protagonist tries to do something beyond unusual thing or normal behavior. The person tries to make justice for people in society that are not getting the justice itself. However, the person will walk on the right path and seek the grace of God goal.
 - 19) Ascension is meant the act of rising to an important position or a higher level. In the ascension plot, the fact, the protagonist is afraid but tries to convince him/herself to have a gut. At first the gut that the person has is just in the virtual. Then, the plot leads the character to become a better person by showing the real gut. Thus, the character achieves a heroic status.
 - 20) Descension is the reversal to ascension, a person initially has a big gut but the fact he/she has a scared feeling or strongly fragile. This happens because the person has moral turpitude or perhaps she/he is unable to handle stress.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study used descriptive analysis method to examine the plots available in *The Kite Runner*. Further, the study used Tobias (1993) classification of plots as a reference in

determining the types of plots used in the novel. Before analyzing the novel, we read the novel carefully to comprehend the story. Then, we focused on the ideas, names, and events that described the plots of the novel, and tried to find the dialogues that had a connection with the plots described by Tobias (1993).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The following is the results of the analysis of *The Kite Runner* based on Tobias (1993) plot classification:

Maturation

"A sadness came over me. Returning to Kabul was like running into an old, forgotten friend and seeing that life hadn't been good to him, that he'd become homeless and destitute." (Chapter 20, p. 133).

The context here is that Amir saw the changed landscape. He sought children all the way in a sad condition. Some of them were begging while others were playing. He found out the lack of adult men there because of the war. Amir still remembered how he and Hassan played together in the city. Now the city looked just like a death city.

Here, throughout the story, Amir finds the meanings of some events in his life. His mind is going mature. He is able to think perfectly. Amir grows up to be an adult.

Rivalry

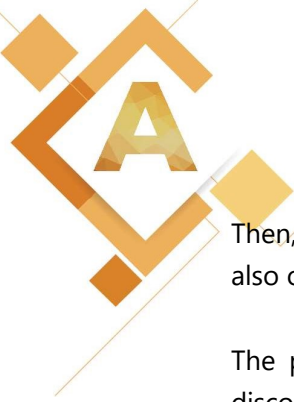
"He tipped his chin to Hassan. "Hey, Flat-Nose," he said. "How is Babalu?" (Chapter 5, p. 21).

In above dialogue, Assef and his friends taunt Hassan about his ethnicity. In this case, there is a rivalry between Assef and Hasan. As a rival of Hasan, Assef often competes for something that he considers worthy whether it is bad or good. Here, Assef shows rival feelings to Hasan with his attitude.

Underdog

"I probably stood there for under a minute, but, to this day, it was one of the longest minutes of my life. Seconds plodded by, each separated from the next by an eternity. Air grew heavy damp, almost solid. I was breathing bricks. Baba went on staring me down, and didn't offer to read." (Chapter 4, p. 17)

Here, Amir wrote a story for the first time and showed it to his father. However, the story was not read by his father as he thought that saw writing stories was useless.



Then, his father's friend, Rahim Kahn read Amir's writing, and he encouraged Amir and also offered support for Amir in the future.

The plot tells about the feeling of being an underdog, suggesting that Amir was discouraged and had no advantage over his father.

Escape

"Baba loved the idea of America." (Chapter 11, p. 68)

In this context, Amir and his father, Baba escaped from Afghanistan to America because of war, and had then a new life in America.

Ascension

His hand trembled with the strain of the pulled elastic band and beads of sweat had erupted on his brow.

"Please leave us alone, Agha," Hassan said in a flat tone. He'd referred to Assef as "Agha," and I wondered briefly what it must be like to live with such an ingrained sense of one's place in a hierarchy." (Chapter 5, p. 23)

The quotation above explains that Hassan was afraid to face Assef and his friend but he did not show it. He wanted to make Assef and his friends let them go. Hassan had to be brave and protected Amir and himself.

The character shows his ascension to become a better person or a person who wants to protect himself and others.

Love

"LYING AWAKE IN BED that night, I thought of Soraya Taheri's sickle-shaped birthmark, her gently hooked nose, and the way her luminous eyes had fleetingly held mine. My heart stuttered at the thought of her. Soraya Taheri. My swap meets a princess." (Chapter 11, p. 77)

Amir could not forget Soraya's face. He kept remembering her, and he admired her.

From all statements above, the construction of the love plot is: Amir and Soraya loved each other and their love was very big. All Amir wanted to do in his life was to spend the rest of his time with someone who loved him too.



The love story happens in an affair of two people. They may separate in some ways and come together at last of the story. From the text, it can be concluded that a love plot happens in the story.

Rescue

"The slingshot made a thwiiiiit sound when Sohrab released the cup. Then Assef was screaming. He put his hand where his left eye had been just a moment ago. Blood oozed between his fingers. Blood and something else, something white and gel-like. That's called vitreous fluid, I thought with clarity. I've read that somewhere. Vitreous fluid." (Chapter 22, page 159)

Here, in Assef's house or the headquarters of Taliban, Amir fought Assef. Assef defeated Amir, but Sohrab rescued Amir with his slingshot. Sohrab shot Assef on his left eye. In this case, the characters rescued each other from the pursuit of Taliban. Sohrab rescued Amir from Assef who was the official of Taliban.

Revenge

"We have some unfinished business, you and I," Assef said. "You remember, don't you?" (Chapter 22, p. 156)

Here, Assef still remembered how Hassan defended Amir from him. Assef also did not like when Pashtuns played with Hazara. He saw Amir and Hassan played together all the time. Amir just ignored Assef's words. He wanted to revenge Amir when they were still kids.

From above statements, the revenge plot is shown by how Assef hated Amir since he preferred to play with Hassan to him. He took revenge on Amir when they met again in Afghanistan.

Sacrifice

"But before you sacrifice yourself for him, think about this:

"Amir agha and I are friends," Hassan said. He looked flushed." (Chapter 7, p. 40)

In the story, Hassan was a very loyal servant. He would sacrifice himself to his master, Amir. He was willing to die for Amir.

From the statement above, the sacrifice plot is due to the willingness of Hassan to sacrifice himself to his master, Amir.



The Riddle

"How could I have been so blind? The signs had been there for me to see all along; they came flying back at me now: Baba hiring Dr. Kumar to fix Hassan's harelip. Baba never missing Hassan's birthday. I remembered the day we were planting tulips, when I had asked Baba if he'd ever consider getting new servants. Hassan's not going anywhere, he'd barked. He's staying right here with us, where he belongs. This is his home and we're his family. He had wept, wept, when Ali announced he and Hassan were leaving us." (Chapter 18, p. 121)

In this novel, Amir realized that he could figure out his father inside Hassan. Hassan was a strong boy who liked to run kites and play boy games. His father also loved Hassan very much who never missed his birthday, and his father cried when Ali and Hassan decided to leave from Amir's home. Here, the readers could find the answer and the truth.

The Riddle plot here is that Amir could not believe that his father and Hassan's mother had a special relationship. He and Hassan were in fact half-brothers. They shared the same father. Amir was confused with his father acts at first. His father was very good with Ali and Hassan who were just Hazara. However, Amir's father never missed Hassan's birthday. Additionally, the most shocking thing was when he saw his father crying when Hassan and Ali decided to leave Amir's house.

It is clear that all statements above that tell us about unanswered questions in the storyline. It tries to entertain and challenge the readers to find the solutions, which will be found along the story.

Quest

"Salaam alaykum," I said. I showed him the Polaroid. "We're searching for this boy." (Chapter 20, p. 136)

In the story, in the orphanage, Amir looked for Sohra with a help of somebody. He described the boy with a slingshot. The director of the place gave them all information that they needed. He also explained how the children were often taken by Taliban officials, usually a young girl, for their lustful interest. He told them that an official took Sohrab a month ago. The man who took Sohrab could be found at a football match in the next day.

From all statements above, the construction of the quest plot is shown by how Amir wanted to save Sohrab and brought him along to go to America. Amir used the clues and information to find where Sohrab was. In the story, Amir who was helped by Farid

took a journey to find Sohrab, Hassan's son. Quest orders the characters to find something or someone related to them.


In this study, the findings showed that there are 11 plots used in *The Kite Runner*. They are Maturation, Rivalry, Underdog, Escape, Ascension, Love, Rescue, Revenge, Sacrifice, the Riddle, and Quest.

CONCLUSIONS

Plots play an important role in the flow of a novel, to describe a sequence of events or things that happen in the story. Using Tobias (1993) plot categories, the study concludes that the novel "*The Kite Runner*" has eleven plots in it. They are maturation, rivalry, underdog, escape, ascension, love, rescue, revenge, sacrifice, the riddle and quest. These plots are classified based on the actions that the characters do, the sentences spoken by the characters, the physical acts described by the author, the characters consideration, and from the detailed explanations by the author as well.

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