

**THE IMPACTS OF AFGHAN CONFLICTS AS REFLECTED IN
THE KITE RUNNER BY KHALED HOSSEINI**

A THESIS

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ABSTRAK

Skripsi ini membahas tentang dampak konflik Afghanistan sejak akhir tahun 1970-an sampai tahun 2000-an. Melalui novel karangan Khaled Hosseini yang berjudul The Kite Runner, penulis menjelaskan dampak dari konflik Afghanistan sejak zaman Kudeta Daoud Khan, Invasi Soviet, Perang Saudara Afghanistan, dan Rezim Taliban. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan mimetik yang membandingkan antara kejadian yang sebenarnya dengan apa yang ditemukan di dalam novel. Dalam menganalisis novel ini, penulis menggunakan teori sosiologi sastra oleh Alan Swingewood, perspektif pertama yang menganggap karya sastra sebagai dokumentasi sejarah pada saat karya sastra itu dibuat. Kemudian penulis menggunakan metode kualitatif, dimana hasil penelitian akan dijabarkan secara deskriptif atau berupa kata-kata atau kutipan dari novel dan sumber-sumber lain yang berkaitan dengan konflik Afghanistan. Dari penelitian ini, penulis memperoleh kesimpulan bahwa dampak dari konflik Afghanistan adalah 1) Masyarakat Afghanistan kehilangan anggota keluarga mereka, baik karena terpisah maupun karena tewas dalam konflik. 2) Mereka hidup dalam kemiskinan disebabkan harta dan rumah mereka telah hancur selama konflik berlangsung. 3) Trauma disebabkan tertekan selama konflik. 4) Terjadinya alterasi budaya setelah ataupun selama konflik berlangsung. 5) Pengungsian ke negara tetangga sebagai upaya untuk mencari tempat yang lebih aman.

Kata kunci: Sosiologi Sastra, Konflik Afghanistan, Dampak Konflik.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Background of the Study

Literature portrays human life and present social problems that happen in a society. It transforms social fact into a text and offers the world into words as desired by the author. Damono in his book Sosiologi Sastra: Sebuah Pengantar Ringkas states that “Sastra menampilkan gambaran kehidupan, dan kehidupan itu sendiri adalah suatu kenyataan sosial” (1). In other words, literature portrays life, and the life itself is a social fact. It means that literature is an artistic portrait of social environment. Literature is not limited to the imaginative world only, but through literary work the author also presents the fact of social condition in the creative process when it is written.

The portraits of life in literary work exist as experience and knowledge of the author and mix with his imagination. As a tool to share human experience, literary work can also represent the real situation when the literary work is produced. As Alan Swingewood describes “Literature is a direct reflection of various facets of social structure, family relationships, class conflict, and possibly divorce trends and population composition.” (13). The quotation shows that literary work is influenced by several aspects such as culture, author, reader and also the society. Literature cannot be separated from sociocultural that cause the work to be created. If the literary work created in conflict period, the author will communicate the situation and condition of the conflict in his work. In this case, it

can be found in Khaled Hosseini's novel entitled The Kite Runner where the story presents the social life of Afghanistan people when their nation is in conflict.

The Kite Runner is one of literary work that presents the social life of Afghan people in each political era of Afghanistan: the first is the Daoud Khan Coup, the second is Soviet or Communist government, then the Afghan Civil War, and finally the Taliban regime. The reader can learn the effects of different condition in each era through first-person narration. The effects to the Afghanistan people emerge in Rahim Khan's, Farid's, and Hassan's accounts for Afghan life in the period between the late 1970s and the early 2000s.

The Kite Runner is written by Khaled Hosseini and it is published in 2003. The Kite Runner is one of the first fiction works which was published after the September 11, 2001 attack in the United States within the span of its narrative. In the aftermath of September 11 attack, Afghanistan was portrayed in popular media as a country where the government allowed a terrorist organization to operate within its borders and committed human rights abuses against its own people. Through a detailed personal narrative, the novel re-focuses the attention of Afghanistan through a different lens, correcting the narrow view of Afghanistan that has a fascinating history.

There are several reasons why the writer chooses to analyze Khaled Hosseini's The Kite Runner. First of all, as the first novel written in English by an Afghan writer, the novel can vividly portrays the detail of Afghanistan social condition during the conflicts. The impacts of conflicts are presented to the reader by using the plot of the story. The story of the novel becomes the representation of Afghanistan social life. Second, the novel also tells about the richness of Afghan

culture as experienced by the young Amir and Hassan in Kabul. It informs the reader through the story. Detail descriptions treat the reader to understand the events, such as a large extended-family outing to a lake and the annual winter kite tournament of Kabul. Third, The Kite Runner is one of best seller novels in the world.

The writer is interested in analyzing the impacts of the conflicts in Afghanistan by observing the description in the novel. The writer considers that he would like to analyze the novel The Kite Runner as reflection of social life in Afghan society in 1970's until early 2000's, with a title The Impacts of Afghan Conflicts as Reflected in The Kite Runner by Khaled Hosseini.

1.2 Identification of the Problem

The Kite Runner novel is one of great novels which represents the description of Afghanistan situation in 1970's - 2000's. The novel also represents the impacts of conflicts that happen in Afghanistan during Daoud Khan Coup, Soviet Invasion, Afghan Civil War until the Taliban regime. In this research, the writer focuses on the impacts of Afghan conflicts as reflected in The Kite Runner by Kholed Hosseini.

1.3 The Scope of the Research

In limiting the discussion, the writer concentrates on the following questions:

1. How is the condition of Afghan society's life during the Afghan conflicts?

2. What are the impacts of Afghan conflicts as reflected in The Kite Runner?

1.4 The Objectives of the Research

The aim of this research is to describe the condition of Afghanistan during the conflicts. The writer assumes that the theory of Sociology of literature is applicable to Khaled Hosseini's novel The Kite Runner. He analyzes the impacts of Afghan conflicts as reflected in Khaled Hosseini's novel The Kite Runner. The writer also hopes this analysis enrich information for everyone who is interested to study about the Afghan society.

1.5 The Review of Previous Researches

The writer does some library and internet researches. He finds several researches that analyze and criticize The Kite Runner and also other analysis related to this research. The first research has been conducted by Rosy Marini Seputri, a student of English Department Faculty of Letters, Andalas University with her thesis entitled "The Impassive Meaning of Afghan's Religiosity in Khaled Hosseini's The Kite Runner: A Deconstructive Reading". She analyses the meaning that is delivered by the author through character's utterance or monologue that deeds in the novel The Kite Runner which reveal about Islam. Then she concludes that the religiosity of Afghans does not seem as its cover (2009).

Secondly, Donna Apriani, her thesis entitled "The Characteristics of English society in Early 19th Century as Reflected in Pride and Prejudice by Jane

Austin”. In her analysis, she uses Sociology of Literature by Alan Swingewood. The writer uses first perspective that the researcher views a literary work as a social documentation of social condition and situation when the literary work was written. She concludes that Jane Austen really described the condition of English society in early 19th century, especially in English society characteristics relate to social class, attitude and religion. (2009)

Thirdly, Zilvita Zainal in her thesis entitled “The Materialism Ambition on British Society during the Industrial Revolution as reflected in Jane Austen’s Pride and Prejudice” that uses sociological approach to express the background of social condition that constantly changes and to see the social condition when the novel was written. In her analyses, she concerns with two kinds of ambitions presented in Pride and Prejudice, they are the ambition for getting property and position. (2001)

Meanwhile the previous studies that are written above have similarity on work and concept of theory, the writer has different analysis with that of those researches. Within this research the writer applies Sociology of Literature theory by Alan Swingewood especially the first perspective of his theory. Furthermore the writer focuses his analysis to the impacts of Afghan conflicts in The Kite Runner.

1.6 The Theoretical Frameworks

In conducting his research, the writer uses some theories which support each other. Firstly, the writer uses the theory which is proposed by M.H. Abrams called mimetic theory. The writer sees that a literary work is not only an actual text itself but it also relates to social life and society. According to Abrams,

“Mimetic orientation – the explanation of art as essentially an imitation of aspects of the universe....” (8). It means the universe can be reflected by literary work. Universe is a universal term, including the social life. The theory compares the story in the novel with actual events in life.

Literature cannot be free from human social condition where the novel represents the situation of social condition that appears in literary work. Harry Levin states that “...the relation between literature and society are reciprocal. Literature is not only the effect of social cause, it is also the cause of social effect” (qtd. In Scott, 126). From the quotation above we could see that between literary work and social condition have a close relation. The literature is not only consequence of social cause, but also outcome of social effect.

To build the analysis of the impacts of Afghanistan conflicts, the writer applies Sociology of Literature theory by Alan Swingewood. He states that there are three perspectives in the sociology of literature. The first, “literature is a direct reflection of various facets of social structure, family relationships, class conflict, and possibly divorce trends and population composition.” (13). It means that literature is considered as a portrayal of social condition, which truly happens in the real life. The second, “moves away from the emphasis on the work of literature itself to the production side, and especially to the social situation of the writer” (17). It means that the cost of production became the center of discussion on this perspective. There is correlation between historical background and the development of literature constitute. And the third “attempts to trace the ways in which a work literature is actually received by a particular society at a specific

historical moment” (21). It means that literature implies deep insights into human and the social condition on a specific historical moment.

In this case, the writer chooses the first perspective which states that the researcher views a literary work as a social documentation of social condition and situation when the literary work is written. As Laurensen and Swingewood stated “The most popular perspective adopts the documentary aspect of literature, arguing that it provides a mirror of the age.” (13). It means that researcher analyses a literary work as a reflection of society and social life. Therefore, by using this perspective the writer can connect the story on the novel with the accurate events in the real life. It is also related to the literary work as a social documentation as well as mirror, which reflects society. Related to the novel, the writer will analyze the impacts of Afghan Conflicts as reflected in The Kite Runner. The writer believes that the novel represents the situation of Afghan society during Afghan conflicts period.

1.7 The Methods of the Research

In conducting this research, the writer applies several methods.

1.7.1 Collecting the Data

In collecting the data, the writer uses library research to find the supporting data for the research. Then the data are divided into two: primary and secondary data. The primary data is the novel The Kite Runner by Khaled Hussein. The secondary data is taken from some books and internet sources which support writer’s analysis that are related to this topic, the first is The Cost of War: Afghan Experiences of Conflict, 1978-2009 written by Ashley Jackson,

the second is Nations in Transition: Afghanistan written by Steven Otfinoski, the third is A Brief History of Afghanistan written by Shaista Wahab, and My Life with the Taliban written by Abdul Salam Zaeef, the writer also used several data from scholar website and any other sources to support the analysis.

1.7.2 Analyzing the Data

In analyzing the data, the writer starts to analyze Khaled Hussein's novel The Kite Runner by reading and understanding it. Afterward, the data that have been taken from The Kite Runner are used as primarily data. The data are analyzed by using sociology of literature theory by Alan Swingewood.

The writer also needs information about social life of Afghan people. The data of Afghan social life is got from several sources such as the research report and books about Afghanistan. The information will be compared with the data from The Kite Runner to prove whether the social lives in fictional data are occurred in the factual data.

In analyzing, the writer uses descriptive analysis method. As Nyoman Kutha Ratna states "metode deskriptif analitik dilakukan dengan cara mendeskripsikan fakta-fakta yang kemudian disusul dengan analisis" (53). It means that descriptive method is used by the researcher to describe the facts before analyze the data. The writer starts the research by presenting the fact which is found in the primary and secondary data, and the next step the writer will analyze the data by using theory from experts.

1.7.3 Presenting the Data

Since this research is qualitative in nature, the result of the analysis is presented by using descriptive method. As Bodgan stated "Qualitative research is

descriptive. The data are collected in forms or words or picture rather than number. The writing result of the research contain quotations from the data of illustrate and substantiate the presentation.” (28). The quotation above states that qualitative method presents the research in form of word or picture but not in form of number. Then qualitative method will be clarified as descriptive. In other word, the data from The Kite Runner are collected in quotation form. Then, those quotations are interpreted by using the writer’s own sentences and explanation. In presenting the result of this analysis, it will be described by taking some quotations from the novel and some expert’s statements to help and support writer’s analysis.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Having analyzed the impacts of Afghanistan conflicts as reflected on The Kite Runner by Khaled Hosseini, the writer concludes that the novel describes the impacts of Afghanistan conflicts relation to the real fact of Afghanistan life and how changes the life of Afghanistan people. Besides the novel fulfills the sociological literature approach which is considered as imitation of life condition of Afghanistan people in Afghanistan War.

The conflicts bring many impacts for Afghan people. Here, the writer finds five impacts of Afghan conflicts. Concerning on the analysis of this thesis, the writer can finally conclude several impacts of Afghan conflicts that change life of Afghan people. First, losing their family. It is known that Afghan conflicts have resulted many victims and actually it have made the Afghan people lose their members of family. Second, living in poverty. During Afghanistan conflicts many of Afghanistan people live in the condition of being limited for the basic necessities of life like food, clothes and also shelter. Third, getting trauma. It was the abnormal condition that happened in Afghanistan during Afghan conflicts. While before Afghan conflicts they live in peaceful situation, but after Afghan conflicts they have to face bad, difficult and cruel condition. They have to get life in abnormal situation that has made many of Afghan people get trauma. Fourth, cultural alteration. Conflicts on Afghanistan change or make different the old culture and then emerge the new or different culture between before, during and after conflicts happen. And the fifth, Escape. War is undoubtedly brought torture

for the people in colonized country. In order to avoid any suffering that is caused by war, many Afghanistan people then try to escape from their country.

After analyzing this novel, the writer concludes that The Kite Runner gives the imitation of social life condition of Afghanistan people during Afghan conflicts. This novel reflects the phenomena of the impacts of the Afghan conflicts for the author combines his imagination and the real fact in the society.

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