

KHALED HOSSEINI'S DIASPORIC LIFE REFLECTED IN HIS WORK ENTITLED *THE KITE RUNNER*
(KAJIAN TERHADAP KEHIDUPAN DIASPORA KHALED HOSSEINI YANG DIREFLEKSIKAN KE DALAM KARYANYA YANG BERJUDUL *THE KITE RUNNER*)

Surya Dewi, Ayu Sutarto, Imam Basuki,
 English Department, Faculty of Letters, Jember University
 Jln. Kalimantan 37, Jember 68121
 E-Mail: ayuayusus@yahoo.com

Abstract

The Kite Runner is Khaled Hosseini's first novel published in 2003. The novel reflects the author's diasporic life. It depicts how Khaled Hosseini deals with diasporic life in the United States and reflects it through the main character in his novel. There are four problems to discuss in this study. Firstly, the discussion draws attention to Khaled Hosseini's memory of childhood reflected on the character of Amir. Secondly, it focuses on Khaled Hosseini's reason coming to the United States expressed to Amir. Next, it examines Khaled Hosseini's life in the United States reflected by Amir's character. Lastly, it discusses the development of Khaled Hosseini's diasporic life portrayed in his novel. The problems are analyzed by using the expressive theory by Abrams. Expressive theory is used in this study to analyze the data related to the problems of the reflection of the author's diasporic life in the novel. The result of this study proves that Khaled Hosseini has a diasporic life and depicts it through the character of Amir in *The Kite Runner*

Keywords: memory, diasporic life, expressive theory

Abstrak

The Kite Runner adalah novel perdana karya Khaled Hosseini, yang diterbitkan pada tahun 2003. Novel ini merefleksikan kehidupan diaspora penulis. Novel ini menggambarkan bagaimana Khaled Hosseini mengalami kehidupan diaspora di Amerika dan merefleksikannya melalui tokoh utama di dalam novelnya. Ada empat pertanyaan di dalam novel ini. Pertama, memori masa kecil Khaled Hosseini yang direfleksikan melalui karakter Amir. Kedua, alasan Khaled Hosseini datang ke Amerika yang diekspresikan kepada Amir. Ketiga, membahas kehidupan Khaled Hosseini di Amerika yang direfleksikan kepada Amir. Yang terakhir adalah perkembangan kehidupan diaspora Khaled Hosseini yang tergambar di dalam cerita. Permasalahan di dalam novel akan diuraikan menggunakan teori ekspresi milik Abram. Teori ekspresi digunakan di dalam pembahasan ini untuk menganalisis data yang berhubungan dengan pertanyaan mengenai refleksi kehidupan diaspora penulis di dalam novel. Hasil penelitian ini membuktikan bahwa Khaled Hosseini mengalami kehidupan diaspora dan merefleksikannya melalui karakter Amir di dalam *The Kite Runner*.

Kata kunci: memori, kehidupan diaspora, teori ekspresi

Introduction

The Kite Runner is the first novel of Khaled Hosseini. The novel was published in 2003. the story tells about Amir as the main character who reflects the author's diasporic life. Diasporic life is a person who lives in diaspora. Diaspora describes the movement of people, goods, information, language, or culture from their original homeland to another country (Dufoix, 2008:32)

In addition, this researcher is interested to use Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* as the object of discussion because the novel explores the point of view of how people live in another country and express a deep longing to their homeland. The problems are analyzed through the theory of expressive theory by Abrams. This

theory is applicable to the topic of discussion that are used to analyze the relationship of the literary work to its author.

Research Methodology

This research uses qualitative research. The qualitative research is the manner to collect the data. As Blaxter et al., (2010:65) stated that qualitative research is a type of research that deals with collecting and analyzing information in a form of non-numeric. The qualitative may be in a form of text, photograph or images, videos and so on. There are two types of data; primary and secondary data. In the research, Khaled Hosseini's novel *The Kite Runner* is a primary data and Abrams's book *The Mirror and The Lamp*

is the main source. The secondary data are taken from books such as journals, dictionary, articles about the novel, reviews of research that contain the terms about diasporic life. And other publications from the internet which contain the factual information of supporting sources for doing the research.

Result

Based on the data which have been analyzed in this research, it is found that the main character name Amir is the reflection of the author personality. The author creates his own figure to be the main character in his work *The Kite Runner*. Moreover, he explores his own life experience through Amir. He creates the story that reflect his own life including the conflict he had experienced. The total analysis explains the author's concept that the Amir's character and the story are totally reflection the author's life.

Discussion

The Kite Runner is the novel portrayed the author's diasporic life related fiction and reality in literary work. The author named Khaled Hosseini was born in Afghanistan and spent the first years of his childhood in the capital city, Kabul. His family lived in the affluent Wazir Akbar Khan district of the city, in a cultivated, cosmopolitan atmosphere, where women lived and worked as equals with men. In this section, there is the description of the author outmost conciousnes of his past childhood which returns as the creative process. The author conveys his romantic feeling of his childhood through this chapter.

The reflection of Khaled Hosseini's life on Amir is shown in the novel. Amir is economically from a rich family. He lives and has a luxurius life in Wazir Akbar Khan. This statement shows that there are same points between Amir and Hosseini in the background of family who his father as a diplomat, and his mother a teacher.

"Everyone agreed that my father, my Baba, had built the most beautiful house in the Wazir Akbar Khan district, a new and affluent neighborhood in the northern part of Kabul. Some thought it was the prettiest house in all of Kabul. A broad entryway flanked by rosebushes led to the sprawling house of marble floors and wide windows. Intricate mosaic tiles, handpicked by Baba in Isfa-han, covered the floors of the four bathrooms. Gold-stitched tap-estries, which Baba had bought in Calcutta, lined the walls; a crystal chandelier hung from the vaulted ceiling."

(Hosseini, 2003: 4)

As the author, Khaled Hosseini loved to read as a kid. In fact, he was raised in a household where classic Persian literature and poetry was revered and prized. In fact as a kid, he grew up around the likes of Saadi and Hafez and Omar Khayyam and Rumi and people like that. He discovered his

novels at a local little bookshop in Kabul, and it was there that he read his first novels. Amir in the story also read several verses of books

"I read everything, Rumi, Hāfez, Saadi, Victor Hugo, Jules Verne, Mark Twain, Ian Fleming. When I had finished my mother's books, I was never much into those, I started spending my allowance on books. I bought one a week from the bookstore near Cinema Park, and stored them in cardboard boxes when I ran out of shelf room."

(Hosseini, 2003:19)

Khaled Hosseini has a very fond memories of childhood in peaceful pre-Soviet era Afghanistan. He also has personal experiences with Afghanistan's Hazara people named Hossein Khan. He worked for the Hosseinis when they were living in Iran. This matter is also experienced by Amir in the story. He has closest friend named Hassan, his father's young Hazara servant. When Khaled Hosseini was in third grade, he taught Khan to read and write. His imagination was also fired by movies from India and the United States, and he enjoyed the sport of kite fighting. This fact proves us that Amir is the character in the novel reflected as Khaled Hosseini's life because it was also done by Amir in the story. Amir read Hasan stories because he couldn't read for himself. He read him poems and stories and sometimes riddles. They sat for hours under that tree, sat there until the sun faded in the west, and still Hassan insisted we had enough daylight for one more story, one more chapter.

"After school, Hasan and I climbed its branches and snatched its bloodred pome-granates. After we'd eaten the fruit and wiped our hands on the grass, I would read to Hassan. Sitting cross-legged, sunlight and shadows of pomegranate leaves dancing on his face, Hassan absently plucked blades of grass from the ground as I read him stories he couldn't read for himself."

(Hosseini, 2003:27)

From the quotation above, we can get the reflection of Khaled Hosseini on the character of Amir. The experiences of Khaled's childhood is also experienced by Amir in the story. They have personal experience with a Hazara who works for his family. They also had the same memories when they were a child.

In *The Kite Runner*, Hosseini describes Amir as the best Kite fighter in story. He can win the kite tournament easily in Afghanistan. Surprisingly it was also happened to Khaled Hosseini when he was child. He enjoyed the sport of kite fighting.

"In Kabul, fighting kites was a little like going to war. As with any war, you had to ready yourself for battle. For a while, Hassan and I

used to build our own kites. We saved our weekly allowances in the fall, dropped the money in a little porce-lain horse Baba had brought one time from Herat.”

(Hosseini, 2003: 49-50)

The kite-fighting tournament was an old winter tradition in Afghanistan. It started early in the morning on the day of the contest and didn't end until only the winning kite flew in the sky. Amir was a good kite fighter.

“I was a good kite fighter. Actually, a very good one.”

(Hosseini, 2003: 56)

According to this matter, it proves that the character of Amir is the reflection of the author's life experiences. Especially in the childhood. Homesickness and nostalgia are still the prominent issue. The situation of the writer as first person narrator is clearly noticed that he longs for his past. He renders in the beginning of chapter one in *The Kite Runner*:

“I remember the precise moment, crouching behind a crumbling mud wall, peeking into the alley near the frozen creek. That was a long time ago, but it's wrong what they say about the past. I've learned about how you can bury it because the past claws its way out. Looking back now, I realize I have been peeking into that deserted alley for the last twenty-six years.”

(Hosseini, 2003: 1)

The quotation above indicates the longing of Khaled Hosseini about his past depicted on Amir. As a writer, being far away from his motherland, Hosseini's memory of his nation and writing back to visualise his past is certainly what we seek in diaspora.

As an Afghan, Khaled Hosseini hoped that the readers would see Afghanistan, therefore he show the habit of Afghan especially when he was young. He tells that districts in Kabul held a kite-fighting tournament every winter. The day of the tournament was undeniably the highlight of the cold season. A boy in Kabul, never slept the night before the tournament. In Kabul, fighting kites was a little like going to war.

“The kite-fighting tournament was an old winter tradition in Afghanistan. It started early in the morning on the day of the contest and didn't end until only the winning kite flew in the sky—I remember one year the tournament outlasted daylight. People gathered on sidewalks and roofs to cheer for their kids. The streets filled with kite fighters, jerking and tugging on their lines, squinting up to the sky, trying to gain position to cut the oppo-nent's line. Every kite

fighter had an assistant—in my case, Has-san—who held the spool and fed the line.”

(Hosseini, 2003:51)

From the novel, the author tries to tell the history of Afghanistan. He explains about the situation of Kabul when it changes from constitutional monarchy into republic. The author wants the reader know every cases that happen in Afghanistan.

“For the next couple of years, the words *economic development* and *reform* danced on a lot of lips in Kabul. The constitutional monarchy had been abolished, replaced by a republic, led by a president of the republic. For a while, a sense of rejuvenation and purpose swept across the land. People spoke of women's rights and modern technology. And for the most part, even though a new leader lived in *Arg*— the royal palace in Kabul—life went on as before. People went to work Saturday through Thursday and gathered for picnics on Fridays in parks, on the banks of Ghargha Lake, in the gardens of Paghman. Multicolored buses and lorries filled with passengers rolled through the narrow streets of Kabul, led by the constant shouts of the driver assistants who straddled the vehicles' rear bumpers and yelped directions to the driver in their thick Kabuli accent. On *Eid*, the three days of celebration after the holy month of Ramadan, Kabulis dressed in their best and newest clothes and visited their families. People hugged and kissed and greeted each other with “*Eid Mubarak*.” Happy Eid. Children opened gifts and played with dyed hard-boiled eggs.”

(Hosseini, 2003: 43-44)

From the quotation above, the author has very modest hopes initially. He hopes a few people would actually read it. He realizes that a lot of people didn't know about Afghanistan and maybe even didn't care much about. Therefore, he gives more information about the country through his novel.

Diasporic people usually make a community in their new place. Afghan people in America also do this case. They keep their relationships with other communities in the diaspora. They still maintain the traditions and customs, including language. They still use their language when meeting with their fellow. Therefore, Khaled Hosseini as the diasporic author shows some of Afghan's language in his novel. He shows it by giving some conversation and give terms with Afghan's language.

“Amir jan,
I enjoyed your story very much. *Mashallah*, God has granted you a special talent. It is now your duty to hone

that talent, because a person who wastes his God-given talents is a donkey.”

(Hosseini, 2003:32)

For Khaled Hosseini, homesickness is inevitable. The consequence of residing distant from his homeland and the people he knows is something he must sincerely accept. He longs for everything about his homeland. He expresses this situation through Amir. He depicts that Amir always has a strong thought of his homeland. Everyday he thinks of all those things. He feels homesick for a person, things, place and everything in his homeland.

“I thought about Hassan. Thought about Baba. Ali. Kabul. I thought of the life I had lived until the winter of 1975 came along and changed everything. And made me what I am today.”

(Hosseini, 2003: 2)

The quotation above proves that Amir tries hard to accept the fact that he is in the United States already. The consequence of residing distant from his homeland is something he must sincerely accept. He longs for his family, home, and everything about his homeland. Everyday he thinks of all those things. He tries hard to comfort himself. He thinks that he must find a way to muffle her feeling of longing. This situation in the story proves that it is the reflection of the author's life, because this situation was also experienced by Khaled Hosseini in the real life.

Conclusion

The Kite Runner is a novel written by Khaled Hosseini which was published in 2003. The novel represents the condition of the author's diasporic life. In the novel the author wants to describe his personality toward the main character named Amir as diasporic person and also describe the similar condition. In the similar condition, the author named Khaled Hosseini and Amir's character experience nostalgia and homesickness in this country when they move in the United State. Therefore, the novel Khaled Hosseini's expression about this homesickness on his homeland.

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