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Resumo

Este estudo tem como objetivo analisar o tema principal do romance *The Kite Runner*, de Khaled Hosseini. Alinhado com o problema de pesquisa anterior, o objetivo é descobrir e descrever o processo de análise dos principais temas do romance. Esta pesquisa foi conduzida com base em pesquisas de desenvolvimento. Esta pesquisa é qualitativa e empregou documentação como coleta de dados. Nesta análise, o escritor encontrou vários temas principais, a saber, amizade (pais e filhos); traição e culpa; redenção e amizade. Em todo conflito, há uma escolha fácil e depois a escolha certa. Esta é uma história de redenção, na qual um garoto segue o caminho mais fácil e, paga por ele, até que finalmente possa se tornar um homem e corrigir o que errou.

Palavras-chave: Temas principais; O romance “The Kite Runner”; Literatura; Análise literária.

Abstract

This study aims to analyze the major theme in *The Kite Runner* novel, by Khaled Hosseini. In line with the previous research problem, the objective is to find out and describe the process of major themes analysis in the novel. This research was conducted based on developmental research. This research is qualitative research which employed documentation as the data collection. In this analysis the writer found several major themes, namely, friendship (fathers and sons); betrayal and guilt; redemption and friendship. In every conflict there’s an easy choice, and then there’s the right choice. This is a story of redemption where a boy takes the easy path, and pays for it, until he can finally become a man and right what he has wronged.

Keywords: Major themes; “The Kite Runner” novel; Literature; Literature analysis.

Resumen

Este estudio tiene como objetivo analizar el tema principal en la novela *The Kite Runner*, de Khaled Hosseini. En línea con el problema de investigación anterior, el objetivo es descubrir y describir el proceso de análisis de temas principales en la novela. Esta investigación fue una conducta basada en la investigación del desarrollo. Esta investigación es investigación cualitativa que empleó documentación como la recopilación de datos. En este análisis, el escritor encontró varios temas principales, a saber, la amistad (padres e hijos); traición y culpa; redención y amistad. En cada conflicto hay una elección fácil, y luego está la elección correcta. Esta es una historia de redención en la que un niño toma el camino fácil y lo paga, hasta que finalmente puede convertirse en un hombre y corregir lo que ha hecho mal.

Palabras clave: Temas principales; La novela “*The Kite Runner*”; Literatura; Análisis literario.

1. Introduction

Literature can't be separated from human life, while human life consists of various aspects. According to Rene Wellek and Austin Warren in their book ‘*Theory of Literature*’ (1995) : “Literature represent life, and life is, in large measure, a social reality, even though the natural world and the inner of subjective world of the individual has also been object of literary imitation”

Thus, literature concern with all aspects of human life and the universe in its entirely sphere including relationship between individual and environment. In general literature can be divided into three kinds which are known as “genre” they are: Poetry, Drama and Prose. Here the writer wants to analyze about the Major Theme of Khaled Hosseini’s novel, “*The Kite Runner*”. Theme is one of the elements of Novel. Novel is a part of Prose. There are various elements in novel, such as, Theme, Characterization, Plot, Setting, Symbolism and Point of view. It is common that an analysis of a novel is focused on one of those elements, such as Theme or Plot and etc. The analysis of theme may cover various perspectives because theme is related to ideas. The ideas might be related to economic, life of people, political condition of a country, or religious doctrines. Here the writer would like to analyze about the major themes in *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini. The author of the *Kite Runner*, Khaled Hosseini was born in Kabul, Afghanistan and moved to the United States in 1980. His novels *The Kite Runner* and *A Thousand Splendid Suns* were International bestsellers, published in thirty-four countries.

This story talks about Afghanistan, 1975, twelve – year- old Amir desperate to win the local kite-fighting to tournament and his loyal friend Hassan promises to help him. But neither of the boys can foresee what will happen to Hassan that afternoon, an event that is to shatter their lives. After the Russians invade and the family is forced to flee to America, Amir realizes that one day he must return to Afghanistan under Taliban rule to find the one thing that his new world cannot grant him: redemption (Yuan-Yuan, 2018).

Novel is one of literary works. The word novel comes from the Italian Novella, Spanish Novella, and French Novella. According to Sinha, Manindranath, M.A, 1997, A Hand Book of the Study of Literature, Behrampore: Prakash Book Depot. “Novel is as a fictitious prose narrative of considerable length, which portrays character and actions represented of real life in a continuous plot.” Novel is a kind imaginative literature which belongs to narrative fiction. The literature of imaginative is always present experience by a fiction presentation of persons, ideas, and events.

In a novel we find a close imitation of man manners, the very web and texture of society as it really exists. Like the other artist the novelist is a maker the makes an imitation of the life of man earth, and make certain conclusion about it, the conclusion which are expressed in the characters the creates and the situation in which the characters are placed. Novel has a complex plot, many characters, complex theme, various atmosphere and setting. It means that novel has broad dimension which includes a lot of characters, scene, episodes, a complex plot, and having more than 100.000 words and also has various setting. However, it is not a must sometimes just one element of novels that has a broad dimension. In a novel always tell a story.

There are the aspects of novel:

1. Theme is main idea, basic of the story which used create basic, and theme also is result of general and abstract thinking. Theme is vital to an understanding and appreciation of literature.

2. Character is a soul characteristic, a distinctive mark, a letter, figure, or symbol. Character refers to verbal representation of human beings.

3. Plot is the sequence of events that make up story. Plot a reflection of motivation and causation. Conflict is a major element of plot because it arouses curiosity causes doubt, creates tension, and produces interest.

4. Setting is the states of the environment in which situation exist or a work’s natural, manufactured, political, cultural and temporal environment, including everything that

character known and own (place, time, object)

5. Symbolism is the representation of something in symbolic form or the attribution of symbolic meaning of character to something. Symbol creates a direct, meaningful equation between a specific object, scene, character or action, ideas, values, persons or ways of life.

When you are talking about literature, one of the most important things you need to discuss is the “Central Theme” of the text. The Theme refers to the central idea or underlying message of the text. The Theme is rarely stated in the text –instead, the reader must usually consider the plot, characters, and setting to infer the theme. Theme is often confused with other literary elements such as Plot or Topic (or Subject) According to Perrine Laurence in the book, *Literature, Structure, Sound, and Sense*, 1983. However, the Theme of a piece of literature is a message about people, life, and the world we live in that the author wants the reader to understand (Vaismoradi and Snelgrove, 2019).. The Topic, on the other hand, is the main idea or gist of the story. For example, think about the Topic and Theme of the classic story Cinderella. If you are describing the topic, you might say it is a story about a poor girl who marries a prince. But if you are describing the THEME, it could be described as an example of karma or good things happening to good people. Similarly, somebody might describe the “theme” of *Pink and Say* or *Mercedes and the Chocolate Pilot* as stories about war. But in these cases, war is the setting—it influences the theme, but it is not the theme. Both of these books deal with themes of friendship and philanthropy in a time of war. The theme can also be described in terms of a moral, or message, or lesson that the reader can gain from the piece of literature. *The Tortoise and the Hare* is a lesson in perseverance.

Theme is the most abstract of these basic elements (Djojuroto, 2005). Theme is, essentially, what the story is about. This is not to suggest that all stories are about only one thing or that once you have figured out the theme of a story you have somehow cracked a code or solved a problem. Themes can be complex and the important thing when analyzing literature is not what the themes are but how they are created and developed. Theme is not to be confused with moral--some stories have morals, but many do not. All stories have themes. Themes can include death, redemption, challenging gender roles, overcoming fears, prejudice, hatred or the shortcomings of language. Most stories can be shown to have more than one theme (Helen, 2019). *The Concept of Guilt and Redemption and the Resonances of Biblical, Mythological and Literary Characters in The Kite Runner*. *Language in India*, 19(2), 275-81.. In this paper, the writer is interested in analyzing the theme in *The Kite Runner* novel, by Khaled Hosseini. The problem to be analyzed is, “What is the Major Themes in *The Kite*

Runner by Khaled Hosseini?” In line with the previous research problem, the objective is to find out the Major Themes in The Kite Runner by Khaled Hosseini.

2. Methodology

Research is a process of steps used to collect and analyze information to increase our understanding of a topic or issue. This research was conducted based on developmental research. That is a qualitative one focused on the process rather than result (Creswell, 2008). The qualitative research has the following characteristics: 1. It has natural setting, 2. It is descriptive, 3. It is concerned with process rather than simply the outcomes or products, 4. It analyses the data inductively, and 5. Meaning are essential concern (Bogdan & Biklen, 1994). In this case the writer presents a description of the process of analyzing the major themes of The Kite Runner by Khaled Hosseini’s novel. In this research, the writer uses Documentation. A document is valuable information in qualitative research. These sources provide valuable information in helping the writer of to understand the central phenomena in qualitative research. With documentation the writer identified and analyzed the major themes of The Kite Runner novel by Khaled Hosseini.

3. Results and Discussion

This research analyzed the major themes in Khaled Hosseini’s novel “ The Kite Runner”. Theme is the central idea of the story. In this analysis the writer found several major themes, namely :

1. Friendship (Fathers and Sons)
2. Betrayal and Guilt
3. Redemption
4. Friendship

3.1. Friendship (Fathers and Sons)

Amir and Hassan, grow up as inseparable playmates, despite their difference in caste, even as Baba and Ali had done a generation before. Amir is the son of Baba, wealthy and respected business leader in Kabul, while Hassan is the son of their servant, Ali. Amir's

mother dies at his birth; Hassan's mother runs off five days after he is born. Hassan is both the kite runner of the book's title and Amir's alter ego. Hassan believes in Amir and forgives all his pettiness, believing he will one day be a great writer. Despite the tricks Amir plays on Hassan, such as reading the wrong words from books to the illiterate boy, Hassan cannot be corrupted or discouraged. He continues to love Amir even after they have been separated for years. He tells only good things about Amir to his son, Sohrab. Hassan's first word as a baby was "Amir," and whenever he does anything for Amir he exclaims, see the quotation below :

"For you, a thousand times over. Hassan the harelippd kite runner."

"I sat on a park bench near a willow tree. I thought about something Rahim Khan said just before he hung up, almost as an after thought. There is away to be good again. I looked up at those twin kites. I thought about Hasan. Thought of the life I had lived until the winter of 1975 came along and changed everything. And made me what I am today."

(Khaled Hosseini The Kite Runner, chpt. 1, p : 2)

And

"Because the truth of it was, I always felt like Baba hated me a little. And why not? After all, I had killed his beloved wife, his beautiful princess, hadn't I? The least I could have done was to have had the decency to have turned out a little more like him. But I hadn't turned out like him." (Khaled Hosseini The Kite Runner, chpt. 3, p : 2)

and

"The curious thing was, I never thought of Hassan and me as friends either... Never mind that we spent entire winters flying kites, running kites. Never mind that to me, the face of Afghanistan is that of a boy with a thin-boned frame... a boy with Chinese doll face perpetually lit by a harelippd smile. Never mind any of these things. Because history isn't easy to overcome. Neither is religion. In the end, I was a Pashtun and he was a Hazara, I was Sunni and he was Shi'a, and nothing was ever going to change that." (Khaled Hosseini The Kite Runner, chpt. 4, p : 24)

and

"But before you sacrifice yourself for him, think about this: Would he do the same for you? Have you ever wondered why he never includes you in games when he has

guests? Why he only plays with you when no one else is around? I'll tell you why, Hazara. Because to him, you're nothing but an ugly pet..."

"Amir agha and I are friends," Hassan said.

(Khaled Hosseini The Kite Runner, chpt. 7, p : 2)

His devotion never ceases, even when Amir manages to have him sent away. The friendship of the two is demonstrated by their partnership in kite fighting. Amir controls the kite, while Hassan feeds him the string. When Amir downs a kite, Hassan is his kite runner to retrieve the opponent's kite as a trophy. Hassan also encourages Amir's writing, listening to his stories and genuinely appreciating them. As a servant he waits on Amir, which begins to spoil their comradeship as Amir grows older and understands that Hassan cannot read or go to school. Though Hassan defends Amir if anyone tries to bully him, Amir sees Hassan's persecution as a minority Hazara by the Pashtun boys and does nothing to intervene. The older the friends get, the more social divisions separate them. Friendship is stronger than prejudice and violence, however, for finally Amir risks his own life to save Hassan's son from the Taliban.

See the quotation below:

"When we were children, Hasan and I used to climb the poplar trees in the driveway of father's house and annoy our neighbours by reflecting sunlight into their homes with shard of mirror. We would sit across from each other on a pair of high branches, our naked feet dangling, our trouser pockets filled with dried mulberries and walnuts. We took turns with the mirror as we ate mulberries, pelted each other with them, giggling, laughing.

(Khaled Hosseini The Kite Runner, chpt.2,p : 3)

and

"When I ate and complained about homework, Hassan made my bed, polished my shoes, ironed my outfit for the day, packed my books and pencils"

(Khaled Hosseini The Kite Runner, chpt.4,p : 26)

And

"I was going to win, and I was going to run that last kite. Then I'd bring it home and show it to Baba. Show him once and for all that his son was worthy."

(Khaled Hosseini The Kite Runner, chpt.6, p : 52)

And

“I loved him because he was my friend, but also because he was a good man, maybe even a great man. And this is what I want you to understand, that good, real good, was born out of your father’s remorse. Sometimes, I think everything he did, feeding the poor on the streets, building the orphanage, giving money to friends in need, it was all his way of redeeming himself. And that, I believe, is what true redemption is, Amir jan, when guilt leads to good”

(Khaled Hosseini The Kite Runner, chpt. 23, p : 277).

3.2 Betrayal and Guilt

Amir's insecurity and jealousy of Hassan lead to Amir’s betrayal of his friendship. Amir knows Hassan is more worthy of Baba’s admiration than he is and feels deficient in the presence of Hassan’s goodness. Though Hassan is of lower caste, he is morally superior. The betrayal begins with petty acts against the servant boy, such as contempt for his inability to read and changing the words of the text as he reads to him. Hassan is aware of Amir’s tricks but does not blame him or accuse him except silently. He is after all a servant and a Hazara, a minority, dependent on Amir’s family. Right before the tragedy, which changes both their lives, Amir begins taunting Hassan who had said he would eat dirt before lying to Amir. Amir asks if he would actually eat dirt if he asked him to. They look knowingly at one another.

See the quotation below :

“Suddenly I decided to toy with him a little. “I don’t know, would you?”

“I’d sooner eat dirt,” he said with a look of indignation. “Really? You’d do that?”

He threw me a puzzled look. “Do what?”

“Eat dirt if I told you to,” I said. I knew I was being cruel, like when I’d taunt him if he didn’t know some big word. But there was something fascinating- albeit in a sick way- about teasing Hassan.”

(Khaled Hosseini The Kite Runner, chpt.6,p : 50)

and

“If I was going to toy with him and challenge his loyalty, then he’d toy with me, test my integrity”

(Khaled Hosseini The Kite Runner, chpt. 6, p : 51)

and

What was the old saying about the bad penny? My past was like that, always turning up. His name rose from the deep and I didn't want to say it, as if uttering it might conjure him. But he was already here, in the flesh, sitting less than ten feet from me, after all these years. His name escaped my lips: "Assef."

(Khaled Hosseini *The Kite Runner*, chpt. 22, p : 51)

The turning point comes when Amir witnesses Assef's attack on Hassan in the alley and does nothing to help his friend. At this time he is a young teenager and is well aware of the caste difference. He does not jeopardize his own safety or social standing for a Hazara. There is also his fear of physical pain, as it can be seen in this quotation, below :

"I ran because I was a coward. I was afraid of Assef and what he would do to me. I was afraid of getting hurt. That's what I told myself as I turned my back to the alley, to Hasan. That's what I made myself believe. I actually aspired to cowardice, because the alternative, the real reason I was running, was that Assef was right: Nothing was free in this world. May be Hasan was the price I had to pay, the lamb I had to slay to win Baba. Was it a fair price? The answer floated to my conscious mind before I could thwart it: He was just a Hazara, wasn't he?"

(Khaled Hosseini *The Kite Runner*. chpt 7, p : 72-73)

Hassan has protected Amir many times, but Amir does not protect his friend in turn, and this leads to so much guilt that Amir plots to have Hassan sent away. Hassan has been sexually assaulted by Assef and needs love and understanding, but Amir is too young to know how to deal with this atrocity. As is often the case, the victim is blamed. He hates Hassan for letting himself be defiled. Amir becomes the cause of disrupting the entire delicate balance of the household by falsely accusing Ali and Hassan of taking money. Baba is beside himself with grief when Ali says they must leave, and only when Amir sees his father cry does he understand how much damage he has done. Baba is separated from Ali, his own childhood friend, and from his own son, Hassan. Both Baba and Amir suffer lifelong guilt for their betrayals of their Hazara friends. Amir, Hassan and Ali, masters and servants, are all victims of the caste system, their true love for each other unable to survive human weakness and the brutality of the world.

See quotation below:

“Because the truth of it was, I always felt like Baba hated me a little. And why not? After all, I had killed his beloved wife, his beautiful princess, hadn’t I? The least I could have done was to have had the decency to have turned out a little more like him. But I hadn’t turned out like him.” (Khaled Hosseini *The Kite Runner*, chpt. 3, p : 18)

and

“As it turned out, Baba and I were more alike than I’d ever known. We had both betrayed the people who would have given their lives for us. And with that came this realization: that Rahim Khan had summoned me here to atone not just for my sins but for Baba’s too.” (Khaled Hosseini *The Kite Runner*, chpt. 18, p : 209)

and

“I looked at Hassan, showing those two missing teeth, sunlight slanting on his face. Baba’s other half. The unentitled, unprivileged half. The half who had inherited what had been pure and noble in Baba. The half that, maybe, in the most secret recesses of his heart, Baba had thought of as his true son... Then I realized something: That last thought had brought no sting with it... I wondered if that was how forgiveness budded, not with the fanfare of epiphany, but with pain gathering its things, packing up, and slipping away unannounced in the middle of the night.”

(Khaled Hosseini *The Kite Runner*, chpt. 25, p :336)

3.3 Redemption

The *Kite Runner* is a novel of sin and redemption, with Amir trying to redeem his own sin and his father’s as well. He returns to Kabul twenty years later, called by Rahim Khan, who is now dying, to save the boy Sohrab from the Taliban. Rahim Khan is the only character who knows everyone’s secrets. As a stand-in for his friend Baba, he has been taking care of the house in Kabul, and he even goes to Hazarajat to bring back Baba’s illegitimate son, Hassan, and his bride Farzana to live with him. They become an extended family, along with Hassan’s mother, Sanaubar, who returns. This new family with the Pashtun Rahim Khan sheltering the Hazara servants centers around the care and raising of Sohrab, Baba’s grandson and Amir’s nephew. Rahim Khan’s action of reconciliation has both good and bad effects. If he had left Hassan in his mud hut in Hazarajat, he might have stayed alive. In Kabul, Hassan’s family becomes a victim to the ethnic cleansing of the Taliban. Hassan and Farzana are taken into the street and shot, and their son becomes an orphan for sale at the orphanage.

See the quotation below:

“My suspicions had been right all those years. He knew about Assef, the kite, the money, the watch with the lightning bolt hands. He had always known. Come. There is a way to be good again, Rahim Khan had said on the phone just before hanging up.”
(Khaled Hosseini *The Kite Runner*, chpt. 14, p : 177)

and

“As it turned out, Baba and I were more alike than I’d ever known. We had both betrayed the people who would have given their lives for us. And with that came this realization: that Rahim Khan had summoned me here to atone not just for my sins but for Baba’s too.” (Khaled Hosseini *The Kite Runner*, chpt. 18, p : 209)

and

“Another rib snapped, this time lower. What was so funny was that, for the first time since the winter of 1975, I felt at peace. I laughed because I saw that, in some hidden nook in the corner of my mind, I’d even been looking forward to this... My body was broken – just how badly I wouldn’t find out until later – but I felt healed.” (Khaled Hosseini *The Kite Runner*, chpt. 22, p : 265)

After Amir learns of Baba’s betrayal of Ali, Amir realizes that Baba was probably trying to redeem his adultery through his many charitable activities and strong principles in later life. Amir is also able to find a kind of redemption in his bloody fight with Assef (Hassan’s rapist), and his adoption of Sohrab. Hosseini subtly connects these personal quests for redemption to Afghanistan itself. Despite its violent and corrupted past, Hosseini hopes for a redemption for his country someday.

“Sohrab, I can’t give you your old life back, I wish to God I could. But I can take you with me. That was what I was coming in the bathroom to tell you. You have a visa to go to America, to live with me and my wife. It’s true. I promise.”
(Khaled Hosseini *The Kite Runner*, chpt. 25, p : 325)

and

“I envied her. Her secret was out. Spoken. Dealt with. I opened my mouth and almost told her how I’d betrayed Hassan, lied, driven him out, and destroyed a forty-year relationship between Baba and Ali. But I didn’t.” (Khaled Hosseini *The Kite Runner*, chpt. 12, p : 152)

and

If someone were to ask me today whether the story of Hassan, Sohrab, and me ends with happiness, I wouldn't know what to say. Does anybody's?

(Khaled Hosseini *The Kite Runner*, chpt. 25, p : 152)

and

“Do you want me to run that kite for you?” His Adam's apple rose and fell as he swallowed... I thought I saw him nod. “For you, a thousand times over,” I heard myself say. Then I turned and ran, it was only a smile, nothing more... A tiny thing... But I'll take it. With open arms. Because when spring comes, it melts the snow one flake at a time, and maybe I just witnessed the first flake melting.” (Khaled Hosseini *The Kite Runner*, chpt. 25,

In every conflict there's an easy choice, and then there's the right choice. This is a story of redemption where a boy takes the easy path, and pays for it, until he can finally become a man and right what he has wronged. The story is told from the first person perspective by the main character, Amir. Most of the novel is told as a frame-story of Amir's past which contributes greatly to the themes in the book because it allows the reader to understand all the aspects of Amir's life. The reader learns about Amir's fears, ambitions, personality, guilt, and most importantly, his past. The writing style allows the reader to grow close to Amir, sharing in his ups and his downs. The reader is able to read exactly what is going through Amir's head, all the emotions and feelings that contribute to the themes within the novel. After understanding Amir, the reader can grasp the important themes within the novel: The love and tension between fathers and sons, the search for redemption, and the persistence of the past. The point of view in the story is important because it allows the reader to understand Amir, and only by understanding Amir, can the reader understand the underlying themes in the novel.

Families function in all sorts of different ways. They have ups and downs, but what makes them a family is they can always get through it. Truly there is no relationship more special than the one between father and son. In the novel *Kite Runner*, the relationships between kin are explored in great detail: the relationships between Amir, Hassan and Baba, Hassan and Sohrab, and between Amir and Sohrab. Amir's relationship with his father is a very complex one. While he's a small child Amir loves his Baba, but he feels that Baba rarely loves him back. He always just wanted his father's approval and for him to be proud of his son. Amir constantly strives to win his father's love; however, Baba never fully shows his love for Amir. Amir begins to resent his father for this and even hate him. In conclusion, *Kite*

Runner is a coming-of-age story that teaches the reader about many different themes portrayed in the novel. It enlightens the reader about the complexity of the father son relationship, teaches how redemption is the only way to truly atone for one's wrongdoings, and demonstrates that the past can never be buried. Those privileged enough to read this novel will have taken these lessons into account and will know that when the time comes, making the right decision, is better than making the easy one.

4. Final Considerations

The objectives of the study has been achieved eventually as it is aimed to answer the question, "What is the Major Themes in The Kite Runner by Khaled Hosseini?" The result of the study is in line with the research problem in which it further explores the major theme of the novel. All stories have been embedded with themes. Themes can embrace death, redemption, challenging gender roles, overcoming fears, prejudice, hatred or the shortcomings of language. Many novels or stories can be presented with more than one theme. In this paper, the major themes in The Kite Runner novel, by Khaled Hosseini are consist of some themes, namely; friendship (fathers and sons), betrayal and guilt, redemption, friendship. Some suggestions that can be given include the fact that novel can be a worthy instruments for students to get exposed to not only literature or language but also world views and culture. Teachers can bring this novel to the classroom as novel such as The Kite Runner is a coming-of-age novel that teaches many life lessons to those privileged enough to read it. Many inspiring takeaways can be acquired by students from reading this novel. Ultimately, The Kite Runner is a novel about relationships — specifically the relationships between Amir and Hassan, Baba, Rahim Khan, Soraya, and Sohrab — and how the complex relationships in our lives overlap and connect to make us the people we are. Other researchers who are interested in this kind of analysis can also explore other major themes in novels written by different authors from many parts of the world in order to give better cultural insights and perspective.

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