

THE MAIN CHARACTER'S STRUGGLE OF ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON *KIDNAPPED*

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Abstract

This study analyzes the forms of struggle of the main character in the novel Kidnapped by Robert Louis Stevenson. Using a qualitative content analysis method with the approach of Badio's struggle theory (2022), this study identifies and classifies the various types of struggles experienced by David Balfour. The results of the study show that there are 28 valid forms of struggle, divided into four main categories: (1) 7 heroic struggles, (2) 11 never-give-up struggles, (3) 2 family-related struggles, and (4) 8 selflessness struggles. Interesting findings show the absence of elements of nationalism-based struggle in the story narrative. This study provides a new perspective on character development through life challenges in classic literary works.

Keywords: Kidnapped, Novel, Struggle

Abstrak

Penelitian ini menganalisis bentuk-bentuk perjuangan tokoh utama dalam novel Kidnapped karya Robert Louis Stevenson. Menggunakan metode analisis konten kualitatif dengan pendekatan teori perjuangan Badio (2022), studi ini mengidentifikasi dan mengklasifikasikan berbagai jenis perjuangan yang dialami David Balfour. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan terdapat 28 bentuk perjuangan yang valid, terbagi dalam empat kategori utama: (1) 7 perjuangan jenis heroisme, (2) 11 perjuangan jenis pantang menyerah, (3) 2 perjuangan terkait keluarga, dan (4) 8 perjuangan jenis ketidakegoisan. Temuan menarik menunjukkan tidak adanya unsur perjuangan berbasis nasionalisme dalam narasi cerita. Penelitian ini memberikan perspektif baru tentang perkembangan karakter melalui tantangan hidup dalam karya sastra klasik.

Kata kunci: Kidnapped, Novel, Perjuangan

1. INTRODUCTION

Literary works are a form of human creativity expressed in interesting language, aimed at describing experiences, imagination, or ideas, and often conveying life messages. (Abrams, 2009) asserts that “Literary works are a form of art that uses language as its medium, characterized by imagination, creativity, and aesthetic value that aims to provide a meaningful experience for the reader.”. Meanwhile, In the view of (Rahman, 2022), “Literary works are a form of human thought that can create a sense of beauty for those who read or feel it”. As a form of literary expression, novels are a means for writers to pour out their imaginations, reflections, and life experiences in a series of stories that are rich in complexity. Not just a time-filling read, novels are actually reflections of the reality of life that are full of hidden meanings - from subtle satire on social issues to the inner struggles of the characters. A novel is a literary work in prose that is usually long and complex. As (Iriany, 2020) posits, “a novel as an imaginative work expresses deep aspects of humanity and subtly presents them”. Meanwhile, In the view of (Pulungan, 2022), “a novel usually tells about human life in interacting with the environment and others”.

Novels often tell the life journeys of their characters that are full of obstacles. This story describes a person's struggle in facing various conflicts, both from within and from outside. This struggle is an effort made by a person to overcome the difficulties of life, whether it is a personal problem or a problem that comes from the surrounding environment. In the story, usually, the characters will struggle to face the obstacles they face. According to (Iriany, 2020), “the aspect of struggle in the novel includes the soul, real actions, and spirit shown by the main character in facing experiences, challenges, and problems in life “. Meanwhile (Rasyid, 2021) highlights, “struggle in the novel reflects the tension between the main character and various external factors such as social, political, or natural forces. This struggle describes how the character struggles to survive or achieve certain goals despite facing great difficulties”.

The novel *Kidnapped* by Robert Louis Stevenson depicts the theme of struggle through the adventures of David Balfour, the main character who is trapped in a series of events that test his physical and mental resilience. Since the beginning of the story, David has to face various tough challenges after being kidnapped and taken to a foreign place. His struggle is not only to free himself from his kidnappers, but also in finding his identity and understanding the meaning of his life which is full of uncertainty. The external conflict between David and his kidnappers, as well as the internal conflict in finding his identity, create a complex dynamic of struggle. This is the core of the storyline that describes human efforts to survive and adapt to unexpected life difficulties. From the many struggles that

David went through, of course there are many difficulties faced by readers when reading the storyline, so This research is limited to the analysis of the types of struggles found in Robert Louis Stevenson's novel *Kidnapped*. The main focus of this study is to identify and describe the various forms of experienced struggle by the main character, David Balfour, throughout the story.

2. METHODOLOGY

In conducting a research, a structured method approach is absolutely necessary to ensure that the research process runs effectively and produces findings that can be accounted for. The research method acts as a systematic framework that regulates the procedures for data collection, information processing, and drawing scientific conclusions. (Creswell, 2018) asserts that “qualitative methods involve the collection of non-numerical data such as in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomena being studied. This approach emphasizes a holistic understanding of the context and situation faced by the research subjects, as well as the interaction between researchers and participants”. Meanwhile, (Sugiyono, 2017) “argues that a research method is a scientific way to obtain data for a specific purpose. Research methods include the approach used to collect, analyze, and interpret data to answer research questions”. So this research will fully use qualitative research methods.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter presents the results of the analysis of the struggles experienced by the main character, namely David, in the novel *Kidnapped* by Robert Louis Stevenson (2019), also the results of the analysis of David's character changes after going through various struggles. (Badio, 2022) emphasizes “In the novel, the struggles of the characters can be categorized into several types, including heroism, nationalism, never giving up, family, and selflessness”.

A. Heroism

“Heroism includes being alert to the enemy, defending the people, defending the truth, being selfless, not afraid to die, being responsible, and having the authority to lead troops.” (Badio, 2022)

“I bent low on my knees and flung myself forth, with that kind of anger of despair that has sometimes stood me instead of courage... Alan seized me, first by the hair, then by the collar, and with a great strain dragged me into safety.” (Stevenson, 2019, p. 199)

The text quote above is a Heroism struggle. David Balfour faces a moment of intense heroism when he forces himself to jump across a dangerous and fast-flowing river, despite

his deep fear, this brave act perfectly represents "being selfless, ready to die" because David completely disregards his own safety in order to continue running with Alan, and "defending the truth" because by surviving, he tries to prove their innocence from the murder of Colin Roy Campbell.

B. Nationalism

"Nationalism includes love for one's flag, loyalty to the leader, thinking about the safety of the country, supporting the struggle to defend the country, and participating in defending the country." (Badio, 2022). Robert Louis Stevenson's *Kidnapped* does not feature a strong nationalist struggle because its main conflict is personal. The story focuses on David Balfour's struggle for survival and claim to inheritance, not political movements. Although set against the backdrop of Scottish-English tensions following the Jacobite Rebellion of 1745, political conflict is only a backdrop, not a central theme. Alan Breck Stewart, although a Jacobite sympathizer, is portrayed more as an adventurer than a nationalist. The novel is more of an individual adventure story than an allegory of national struggle.

C. Never Giving Up

"Never giving up is shown by fighting to the death and believing in one's abilities." (Badio, 2022)

"I was dead weary, deadly sick and full of pains and shiverings... but I held on." (Stevenson, 2019, p. 249)

The text quote above is a Never Giving Up struggle. This quote shows David's very valid physical struggle as a form of "never giving up" according to Badio's theory. As David survives despite being "dead weary, deadly sick and full of pains and shiverings", it perfectly reflects Badio's definition of "fighting to the death and believing in one's abilities". The context of it taking place in the middle of a dangerous escape through the moors strengthens its validity - David is truly pushed beyond his human limits. This physical struggle is the turning point in David's character from weak child to tough, and is consistently depicted through his detailed physical reactions such as "the stitch in my side was like a sword for sharpness". Its validity is further strengthened by the climax where David finally collapses, proving that he truly endured to the last.

D. Family

"Family is reflected in values such as willingness to sacrifice, unity, respect, patience, an unyielding spirit, and cooperation." (Badio, 2022)

"The estate is yours beyond a doubt... It matters nothing what your father signed, you are the heir of entail." (Stevenson, 2019, p. 295)

The text quote above is a Family struggle. When Rankeillor affirms that "the estate is yours

beyond a doubt", David enters a quieter yet more devastating battlefield. It is no longer swords or bullets that he faces, but the long shadow of a family feud that undermines his identity as Balfour. This is not just a fight for inherited land, but an attempt to stitch back together the family's torn honor. What hits him most is the double burden that must be borne: the legacy of his father-uncle's grudge, and the bitter choice at the crossroads - to burn in anger or open the door to forgiveness. This is where we see the real David: no longer a boy who runs away from problems, but a man who dares to face the ghosts of his family with open eyes. The hardest test comes after victory - when what is needed is not the courage to swing the sword, but the breadth of heart to forgive.

E. Selflessness

"Selflessness struggle is characterized by not expecting respect and not expecting a position." (Badio, 2022)

"I am Alan's friend, and if I can be helpful to friends of his, I will not stumble at the risk." (Stevenson, 2019, p. 195)

The text quote above is a Selflessness struggle. David Balfour demonstrates a profound struggle of selflessness when he steadfastly chooses to remain with Alan Breck despite the great risk of capture by the army or even the death penalty. This struggle is further complicated when David must face a moral dilemma between loyalty to his friend and his principles as a subject of King George, but he still chooses loyalty to Alan even though it could endanger his life. His decision not to leave Alan even when threatened.

This is the overall result of the researcher's findings :

No.	Types of Struggle	Amount
1.	Heroism	7
2.	Nationalism	-
3.	Never Giving Up	11
4.	Family	2
5.	Selflessness	8

David Balfour's journey in *Kidnapped* is an inner transformation from innocence to manhood. He begins as naive and trusting, but betrayal, atrocities on the Covenant, and adventures with Alan Breck Stewart hone his character into a shrewd, courageous, and resilient individual. Each obstacle—from the brutal voyage to the Scottish highlands serves as a whetstone that shapes his determination and wisdom. When he finally reunites with Ebenezer, David has transformed from a fearful orphan into a determined man, reflecting the maturity gained through bitter experience. His is not just a physical adventure, but a spiritual metamorphosis of a man forged by the rigors of life.

4. CONCLUSIONS

This study analyzes the Struggle of the Main Character in the Novel Kidnapped by Robert Louis Stevenson, focusing on: (1) The types of struggles experienced by David Balfour, and (2) David's character changes after facing various complex challenges. The results of the analysis show that David experiences 28 valid forms of struggle based on Badio's theory, classified into 7 Heroism-type struggles, 11 Never Give Up-type struggles, 2 related to Family, and 8 Selflessness-type struggles. Additional findings confirm the absence of elements of nationalism-based struggle in his character's journey. Overall, this study successfully identifies the dynamics of David's struggle as the core of his character development in the novel.

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