

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

It is stated in Understanding Unseens that ‘Horror/Thriller novel always relates with monster, supernatural powers (especially about evil), or places and buildings where strange and frightening happening occur.’ (Murphy, 1972:128). In Webster New World Dictionary, thriller is defined as ‘a person or thing that thrills; or else a suspenseful novel, play, film, et cetera dealing with crime and detection.’(Webster New World Dictionary, 1988: 1394). Based on these definitions, I consider Outbreak a thriller novel because the story relates to a crime, and the crime is a conspiracy to spread a deadly disease which threatens human life. This novel is different from other thriller novels which usually deal with murders, robberies, or kidnappings because this novel gives us a new insight into the medical world that tells us about the Ebola disease.

Outbreak is a novel based on true facts about the Ebola disease. It is about the investigation of the spread of the Ebola virus in U.S.. There are many events in the novel that make the readers feel surprised and curious about what happens next in the story.

According to Laurence Perrine in Literature Structure, Sound and Sense, plot is

‘the sequence of incidents or events of which a story is composed. It may include what a character says or thinks, as well as what he does.’(Perrine, 1974: 42, 43). There are three elements of plot, namely suspense, surprise and artistic unity. Suspense is ‘greatest when the readers’ curiosity is combined with anxiety about the fate of some sympathetic characters. Moreover, this element is created by the questions in the readers’ mind and it makes the readers eager to discover what happen next and how it will end.’ (Perrine, 1974: 44). Suspense also impels the readers to read on to find the answers to these questions. Surprise is ‘the proportional to the unexpectedness of what happens in the development of a plot. It becomes pronounced when the story departs radically from our expectation.’ (Perrine, 1974: 46). The readers are surprised by the story which they have never suspected before. Finally, Perrine states that artistic unity links the story in a chain of cause and effect. As a result, this third element of plot makes the story more realistic or logical. That is why artistic unity is ‘essential to a good plot.’ (Perrine, 1974: 48). In my opinion, the three elements of plot are the main part of the story that can affect the readers’ feelings. In addition, they make the readers feel involved in the story. The readers can feel what the author wants them to feel through these elements of plot. Therefore, when reading the novel, the readers do not feel bored but they are eager to read the novel to the end. Moreover, these elements of plot are the main part of the story that makes the readers able to judge whether the novel is a good one or a bad one.

I choose to analyse the elements of plot in my thesis because suspense, surprise, and artistic unity are the most dominant elements in a thriller story. These elements of plot keep the readers continue reading until the end of the story and they make the story more interesting to read. In analysing these elements of plot in my thesis, I use intrinsic approach.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

After reading Outbreak, I state the problems as follows:

1. Which parts of the story reveal the element of suspense?
2. What events display the element of surprise?
3. What events show artistic unity?
4. What effects do these elements of plot have on the readers?

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The study is done in order to:

1. present the parts of the story which reveal the element of suspense.
2. show the events which display the element of surprise.
3. present the events which show artistic unity.
4. show the effects these elements of plot have on the readers.

METHOD OF RESEARCH

The method of research applied in my thesis is the library research. First, I read the novel so that I can understand the story well. Then, I make a study of the related theories from some reference books and the Internet. After that, I analyse the elements of plot in the novel and the effects those elements of plot have on the readers by using the related theories. Finally, I draw the conclusion based on the analysis and write the thesis.

ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS

I divide my thesis into three chapters. Chapter One contains the Background of

the Study, the Statement of the Problem, the Purpose of the Study, the Method of Research, and the Organization of the Thesis. Chapter Two is the Discussion on the Elements of Plot in Robin Cook's Outbreak. Chapter Three is the Conclusion of the analysis. The thesis ends with the Bibliography and the Appendices, which consist of the Synopsis of Outbreak and the Biography of Robin Cook.