



TEACHING CHARACTER EDUCATION THROUGH PLOT ANALYSIS IN GUY MAUPASSANT'S *THE STORY OF A FARM GIRL*

Eva Agustina Rahma, E. Ngestirosa Endang Woro Kasih²

Universitas Teknokrat Indonesia

rahma.evaagustina@gmail.com¹, ngestirosa@teknokrat.ac.id²

Abstract

This research aims to integrate character education by comprehending the plot in Guy Maupassant's *The Story of a Farm Girl*. Through an analysis and discussion of the novel's narrative, it becomes evident that the story follows a progressive plot structure. The stages, commencing with exposition and culminating in resolution, vividly illustrate this progression. In the exposition phase, characters and impending conflicts are introduced, while rising tensions materialize as Jacques breaks his promise to Rose upon discovering her pregnancy, subsequently fleeing. As Rose's pregnancy becomes conspicuous, her fears escalate, prompting her to remain hidden until childbirth. Although Rose weds her master, he remains unaware of her child. Ultimately, Rose reveals her concealed truths to Mr. Valin. Employing a descriptive analysis methodology, this research underscores the implications of plot analysis in *The Story of a Farm Girl* for character education in schools. It emphasizes the scrutiny of content and language, thereby fostering ethical growth alongside literary comprehension.

Keywords: *education, literature, message plot, teaching*

To cite this article:

Rahma, Eva Agustina and Kasih, E. Ngestirosa Endang Woro. (2023). Teaching Character Education through Plot Analysis in Guy Maupassant's *The Story of A Farm Girl*. *Journal of Research on Language Education*, 4(2), 35-41.

INTRODUCTION

A literary work is the result of a creative process carried out by an author, enriched by imaginative power, and then embodied in the form of a literary work. This imaginative output can be written or oral literary works. This creation does not appear out of thin air but is a product of the absorption of the reality of human experience (Siswanto, 2004). In addition, literary works also serve as valuable teaching tools. The teaching of literature involves the conveyance and transmission of knowledge derived from the creative process, using language as its medium. In this context, literary teaching includes three main forms: fiction, poetry, and drama. When introducing these diverse literary forms, teachers are encouraged to do so in an appreciative way. For this reason, literature in the form of productive literary works becomes more meaningful when used as part of class activities with some specific purpose.

The goal of learning literature for high school students is to enable them to appreciate, understand, and use literary works for personal development, enhanced communication aesthetics, broader perspectives on life, and better language skills. Bohlin (2006) states that literature learning focuses on two main aspects: increasing the ability to appreciate, understand, and interact with literary works, and strengthening courage and creative skills to express ideas, experiences, and emotions through various forms of literature, both orally and in writing. Intrinsic elements become the foundation of the literary work itself, contributing to its essence and identity. Readers experience these factual elements during their interaction with literature. In a novel, intrinsic elements play an active role in constructing the narrative, and the cohesive integration of these elements forms the concrete essence of the novel. These elements include story events, plot, characterization, themes, settings, points of view, and language or style (Nurgiyantoro, 2014). The elements of these literary works have various meanings in teaching character to students. In full the elements of a literary work can be elaborated further.

The intrinsic elements of literature can be divided into several categories. Character refers to the individuals portrayed within a literary work, while characterization involves the techniques used to shape these characters (Klarer, 2004). Setting encompasses the physical locations where characters exist, as well as the societal context

they inhabit, including aspects like their familial, social, and cultural surroundings. It also encompasses the specific places where events occur, along with the atmosphere, mood, and overall ambiance that these elements collectively create (Klarer, 2004). Point of view pertains to the narrative perspective adopted by the author to present the story within a work of fiction to the readers (Abrams, 2011). On the other hand, plot refers to the sequential chain of events that unfold in a story, each event influencing or resulting from the preceding ones. The theme, in contrast, encompasses broader concepts or doctrines, whether implicit or explicit, that a work of fiction aims to engage and persuade readers with.

This study delves into the intricacies of storytelling by focusing on the plot – the sequence of events that follow a logical order in a story. The plot evolves through cause-and-effect links, with events smoothly transitioning between different circumstances. Conflict, a pivotal aspect, imparts meaning to characters' encounters, frequently encompassing difficult choices they wish to evade. The climax, the pinnacle of conflict, fosters intensified tension and transformation within the narrative (Burroway, 2000). To simplify, this research examines how stories are crafted, how events interrelate, how challenges emerge, and how narratives build toward their most impactful and crucial junctures. By examining the action-oriented components of short stories, students acquire a structured framework for comprehending fictional narratives. This framework serves as a roadmap, enabling them to anticipate narrative developments, establish connections between different stories, and succinctly summarize their readings.

Additionally, it facilitates the integration of other essential story elements. The plot structure encompasses the sequence of events, including character relationships, settings, predicaments, resolutions, and themes. As students become acquainted with the core plot components, they cultivate the ability to identify analogous story structures across diverse texts (Bohlin, 2005). Given the prevalence of a standard plot framework in most fictional works, a strong understanding of plot elements significantly enhances students' engagement with fictional literature.

Literature Review

Previous Related Studies

In their study *Teaching Literature in A Doll's House Drama*, Rahman et al. (2021) underscore the importance of literature instruction for nurturing students' character development. Through a descriptive qualitative approach, the research delves into the character analysis of Nora Helmer, situated in the Victorian era of female powerlessness, within Henrik Ibsen's "A Doll's House." The study aims to provide descriptive insights into Nora's traits, serving as character development lessons. The findings illuminate Nora's embodiment of loyalty, love, compassion, obedience, care, helpfulness, patience, spirit, responsibility, and bravery. Despite challenges, Nora's determination to improve her family's situation demonstrates the potential for students to enhance positive qualities through language learning.

Shifting focus, Wibowo and Lestari (2019) center their analysis on *An Analysis of the Plot in James W. Ellison's 'Akeelah and the Bee'*. Their study examines the plot structure of Ellison's novel. Using descriptive analysis, the research identifies a Flashback Plot, marked by conflict, multiple expositions, climaxes, and resolution. This aligns with theoretical frameworks, offering educators deeper insights into intrinsic story elements for teaching literature. Similarly, students can glean enhanced comprehension of plot dynamics within narratives.

Additionally, Rahmijati (2020) analyzes the Japanese thriller drama "Confession," spotlighting character education techniques and values. Employing descriptive qualitative content analysis, the study draws from scenes to elucidate character education principles. The findings encompass techniques like promoting core values and being friends with students. Values identified include honesty, tolerance, discipline, hard work, creativity, democracy, patriotism, appreciation, peacefulness, and social care. The study underscores the movie's utility as a tool for character education, enriching students' understanding of values through storyline themes, messages, and advice.

In a study by Putro, Priyatmi, and Pratiwi (2020), they looked at how stories that promote peace can help young people become more understanding and tolerant. They found that when students learn to write stories that show tolerance, it helps them develop a peaceful and accepting attitude. The study aimed to create teaching materials for these kinds of stories to teach students about peace and also boost their creativity, which is important for succeeding in the modern world. They used a research method by Borg & Gall to create these materials, and tests showed that they are good for teaching. The materials help students be more creative and also teach them about being peaceful, understanding, and kind to others.

Synopsis of the Short Story

This study is about a girl named Rose, who works every day on a farm. She had a lover named Jacques, one of the farmhands from Picardy. Jacques promises Rose to marry her. But one day Jacques disappeared without

a word. Misery and fear came to Rose every day. She gave birth to her son at 7 months of gestation. She left her son with neighbors there who promised to take good care of him and she returned to the farm. Her master called his room. Spoke stiffly and then her master asked her to marry him, but Rose was scared and refused. Finally, she married her master. She didn't say that she had children with Jacques. She was used to her life now. One day her husband adopted a child without Rose's consent. One night they had a big fight that choked Rose. At that time Rose admitted her lie, she said that she already had a child with Jacques and Jacques left her without keeping his promise. Vallin could only stay silent and tried to get a clear answer from Rose. Even though her son is already six years old, Vallin is not angry with Rose. He wanted a child, he was very happy.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed descriptive qualitative research, utilizing methods of interpretation to describe and interpret natural data. The focus was on the plot structure analysis of *The Story of a Farm Girl*. Data collection involved techniques such as observation and literature study with a specific emphasis on critically analyzing the short story's plot structures, characterizations, and background (Kasih, 2022). The research aimed to comprehend and describe the underlying meaning within the data source. The primary approach involved reading the entire short story to gain an understanding of its plot structure, followed by careful reading and marking of key sections for data extraction. Subsequently, the collected data was analyzed and described.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This research focuses on plot analysis which is helpful in exploring implied experiences and is needed to convey messages. Literature teaching is meant to look for the messages that appear behind the text. The message analyzed in this discussion comes from the plot in Guy Maupassant's short story.

Plot Analysis

Exposition

This story begins with Rose who is pregnant and demands accountability from Jacques who promises to marry Rose, but suddenly he disappears without any words which makes Rose tormented, afraid, and anxious. Finally she gave birth one day after her mother's death. Her child was born who was only seven months old in her womb. She left his son with her neighbor there, and he returned to the farm.

By degrees, however, Jacques seemed to grow tired of her: he avoided her; scarcely spoke to her, and did not try any longer to meet her alone, which made her sad and anxious, especially when she found that she was pregnant.

One day, however, she saw another man come in at dinner time, and so she said: "Has Jacques left?"

"Yes," the man replied; "I have got his place."

In the exposition, the passage introduces Jacques and Rose, highlighting their once-close emotional connection that gradually shifts as Jacques begins to avoid her and withdraw from their relationship. This change in dynamics sets the stage for conflict, as Rose becomes increasingly sad and anxious, especially upon realizing her pregnancy. The introduction of another man during dinner time adds intrigue, leading to Rose's inquiry about Jacques's departure, revealing that he has left and been replaced. This initial setup establishes the evolving relationship, emotional turmoil, and departure of Jacques, foreshadowing further complications and conflicts to come in the narrative.

Rising Action

This part of the story begins to develop the conflict(s). A building of interest or suspense occurs. One day his master wanted to marry Rose. But Rose strongly refused, Mr. Valin still forced him and gave Rose time to think. She tried to kill herself, but was unable to because she was saved by someone nearby where she wanted to kill herself. Mr. Valin again asked why she couldn't accept whether there was someone she loved or not. All the men on the farm were mentioned until Jacques' name came out of Mr. Valin's mouth, but Rose still said no, she kept lying and couldn't say anything else. Until finally Rose accepted, but she still hid about her child and all of her past.

"By George! It is Jacques, the man who was here last year. They used to say that you were always talking together and that you thought about getting married."

*Rose was choking, and she grew scarlet, while her tears suddenly stopped, and dried up on her cheeks, like drops of water on hot iron, and she exclaimed: "No, it is not he, it is not he!" "Is that really a fact?" asked the cunning farmer, who partly guessed the truth, and she replied hastily:
"I will swear it; I will swear it to you."*

In the rising action, the dialogue *"By George! It is Jacques, the man who was here last year. They used to say that you were always talking together, and that you thought about getting married,"* spoken by the cunning farmer, unveils a hidden past relationship between Rose and Jacques, infusing the narrative with tension and mystery. Rose's physical and emotional reactions emphasize the significance of this revelation, while the farmer's probing question suggests suspicion and foreshadows potential conflict. The scene's portrayal of the farmer's perceptiveness, Rose's distress, and her hasty promise to swear the truth collectively hint at impending confrontations and revelations, setting the stage for deeper character exploration and emotional stakes.

Climax

This pivotal juncture marks the story's climax, a moment that dramatically alters its course. Typically, the protagonist confronts a defining conflict, a trial that spurs personal evolution.

Rose and Vallin had a big fight one night, because Vallin wanted a child. Rose was beaten, tortured until she was powerless. Finally Rose reveals that Rose has a child with Jacques who is six years old. Jacques didn't believe it and confirmed the answer from Rose. Rose said honestly and Vallin couldn't say anything else.

Rose and Vallin experience a significant clash on a fateful night, triggered by Vallin's desire to become a parent. This disagreement escalates into a distressing confrontation, leaving Rose physically and emotionally battered. Deprived of her authority, Rose ultimately reveals a surprising revelation. She has a child, a six-year-old, from her past involvement with Jacques. Initially doubtful, Jacques seeks confirmation from Rose, who firmly asserts the truth with honesty. Vallin, silenced by the gravity of this truth, finds himself with no alternative course of action.

Falling Action

All loose ends of the plot are tied up. The conflict(s) and climax are taken care of. Mr. Valin couldn't say anything else, he was just silent and confused by what Rose said. Rose just cried and said the reason why she didn't want to marry Mr Valin was because she already had children and had a dark past.

"You won me by force, as I suppose you know. I did not want to marry you," she said, still sobbing.

As a falling action, the dialogue *"You won me by force, as I suppose you know. I did not want to marry you,"* spoken by Rose amid tears, adds complexity to the narrative, revisiting a past conflict and exposing vulnerability. This moment of confession prompts character reflection and growth, potentially leading to the resolution of internal conflicts within Rose and offering insight into Vallin's response and development. Realism is heightened as the story delves into the imperfect nature of relationships, while the revelation sets the scene for future character dynamics and further exploration of their journey.

Resolution

The story comes to a reasonable ending or the end of the story. After a moment of silence Vallin laughed warmly and was very surprised. She told Rose to pick up her child right away. He was very happy because she really wanted to have a child and wanted to adopt from Cure. Vallin kissed his wife's cheek nervously and said "Come along, mother, we will go and see whether there is any soup left; I should not mind a plateful.". He felt so happy that he couldn't say anything else.

She put on her petticoat, and they went downstairs; and while she was kneeling in front of the fireplace, and lighting the fire under the saucepan, he continued to walk up and down the kitchen with long strides, and said: "Well, I am really glad at this; I am not saying it for form's sake, but I am glad, I am really very glad."

In this concluding resolution, Rose's symbolic act of putting on her petticoat and their descent downstairs reflects a fresh beginning, while Vallin's nervous pacing juxtaposed with his heartfelt words, "*I am really glad at this; I am not saying it for form's sake, but I am glad, I am really very glad,*" underscores his genuine happiness about their decision to adopt from cure, offering closure to the tension built earlier and illuminating his character's emotional depth. The domestic kitchen setting enhances the cozy atmosphere where their authentic emotions unfold, solidifying the message of the rewards that stem from honesty and connection.

Character Education From Plot Analysis in *The Story of Farm Girl* ***Self Sufficiency***

The exposition plot in the short story reveals some messages for the reader and it has some important lessons in character education. In the quoted passage's exposition plot, the character Jeanne embodies character education values, particularly self-sufficiency. Her resilient attitude underscores the importance of perseverance in adversity, while her decision to care for herself and her child reflects the independence demanded in tough situations. Her vigilant demeanor underscores the value of environmental awareness, and her emotional responses emphasize the significance of emotional intelligence in character development. Through Jeanne's character, readers glean the core essence of self-sufficiency in navigating life's complexities. This is evident as the passage describes how Jacques gradually distances himself from her, leaving Jeanne feeling sad and anxious, particularly when she discovers her pregnancy. Yet, her encounter with another man signals her eventual question, "*Has Jacques left?*" This segment underscores Jeanne's progression towards self-sufficiency, encapsulating the essence of the narrative's theme.

Embracing Diversity

Embracing diversity is highly important in education. It means welcoming people from different backgrounds, cultures, and beliefs. This enriches our learning by giving us varied perspectives and experiences. It prepares us to thrive in a diverse world. The quote "*By George! It is Jacques, the man who was here last year. They used to say that you were always talking together, and that you thought about getting married*" adds a surprising element to the story. This makes Rose react strongly. The story is about understanding and accepting differences, and Rose's reactions and interactions show this. When Jacques unexpectedly returns, Rose is shocked and confused. She shows her bravery by firmly denying it and swearing. The clever farmer's questions also make the story more complicated. Rose's feelings and what happens next give readers a glimpse into her emotions and character. This shows how important it is to understand differences when we interact with others and how we feel about ourselves.

Embracing Truth

Embracing truth in character education is crucial. It involves always being honest, which helps build trust and self-esteem. Truthfulness guides us in making good choices and solving problems. It's like laying a strong foundation for being a good person and improving the world. At the climax, characters undergo pivotal transformation driven by confrontation, revealing hidden truths and sparking personal growth. This turning point between Rose and Vallin serves as a catalyst for education, as Vallin's desire for parenthood uncovers underlying relationship tensions and Rose's revelation of a child with Jacques alters dynamics. A moment of honesty from Rose, mirrored by Jacques' skepticism, challenges Vallin to reassess. This climax offers a lesson in confronting secrets, embracing transparency, and acknowledging mistakes, propelling characters toward evolution and reconciliation, shaping the story's resolution.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Guy de Maupassant's *The Story of a Farm Girl* effectively depicts the interconnectedness of teaching literature, plot, and character education. Through its poignant narrative, the reader witness Louise, a young farm girl, undergoing changes as she navigates love, societal expectations, and personal growth. The story imparts lessons about societal boundaries, personal development, and character values through the main character's journey. In doing so, it not only enhances literary comprehension but also prompts reflections on timeless themes relevant across cultures and generations.

REFERENCES

- Abrams, M. H., & Harpham, G. G. (2012). *A Glossary of Literary Terms*: Tenth Edition. Boston: Wadsworth.
- Bohlin, K.E. (2005). *Teaching Character Education through Literature*. London: Routledge.
- Burroway, Janet. (2000). *Writing Fiction: A Guide to Narrative Craft*. New York: Harper Collin.
- Carter, D. (2006). *Literary Theory*. Harpender: Cox and Wyman.

- Kasih, E.N.E.W. (2018). Redefining Hybridity of Chicano Literature in Jimenez's Fictions. *The International Journal of Diaspora & Cultural Criticism, The Center for Asia and Diaspora*, 8(2), 293-319.
- Klarer, Mario. (2004). *An Introduction to Literary Studies Second Edition*. London : Routledge
- Putro, A., Priyatni, E. T., Pratiwi, Y. (2020). Developing Learning Materials of Peaceful Short Story Writing To Increase The Students' Creativity For The Eleventh Graders Of Senior High School. *The 3rd International Conference on Techonolgy, Education, and Social Science 2020 (The 3rd ICTESS 2020)*,(p. 297-306)
- Rahman, I., Mustofa, M., Putra, I., & Moueed, A. (2021). Teaching Literature in A Doll's House Drama. *Interaction: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa*, 8(1), 73-82. <https://doi.org/10.36232/jurnalpendidikanbahasa.v8i1.962>
- Rahmijati, C. (2020). An analysis of teaching character education technique and values found in 'Confession' directed by Tetsuya Nakashima. *Journal of Advanced Multidiciplinary Research*, 1(1), 1Pratiwi0-21.
- Siswanto. (2016). *Metode dan Penelitian Sastra: Analisis Struktur Puisi*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar
- Wibowo, A., & Lestari, A. (2019). An Analysis of Plots in James W. Ellison 'Akeelah and The Bee'. *INTERACTION: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa*, 6(1), 65-78. [//doi.org/10https:36232/jurnalpendidikanbahasa.v6i1.281](https://doi.org/10.36232/jurnalpendidikanbahasa.v6i1.281)