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## AN ANALYSIS OF PLOT ERROR BASED ON TIME TRAVEL PARADOX IN SOUTH KOREAN THRILLER MOVIE “THE CALL”

By

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### Abstract

The existence of the plot in the film makes a big contribution in the form of success in delivering the story content of the film. This is what can make the film more interesting because of the plot in a film. The Call is a 2020 South Korean thriller film directed by Lee Chung-hyun, starring Park Shin-hye and Jeon Jong-seo. Based on the 2011 British and Puerto Rican film The Caller, two women live in different times. Seo-Yeon (Park Shin-Hye) lives in the present day and Young-Sook (Jun Jong-Seo) lives in the past. They connect with one phone call. Researchers are interested in researching this film because it has an interesting and quite complex plot line and this film provides an ending that invites the audience to think. Thus, this study aims to analyze the plot contained in the film the call and also to analyze the plot errors that exist in this film. This research method uses qualitative analysis with a descriptive approach, aims to describe and explain the phenomenon of the object of research to obtain results and conclusions. The data of this research are in the form of sentences, dialogues, and pictures in the film The Call. The results of this study indicate that the plot used in this film is a forward plot. Also, this film uses the "Butterfly Effect paradox" and "Grandfather paradox". Researchers also found plot errors in this film, namely this film can change the past that has been recorded in the future. And the past antagonist can communicate with her future self at the same time. The author hopes that the results of this study will be useful for further researchers who are interested in literary works in the form of films, especially in the plot.

**Keywords:** Analysis, Errors, Film, Paradox, Plot

### INTRODUCTION

Fiction is a fictitious story or story whose background comes from imagination. In other words, stories that are not based on history or facts. Fiction can be expressed in a variety of formats, including writing, live shows, films, television shows, animation, video games, and role-playing games. Fiction is created for entertainment purposes, or to express the ideas of the author. One of the formats of fiction is movie.

According to (Hornby, 2006) movie means a series of moving picture recorded with sound that tells a story, shown at cinema/movie. Movie or film is a term that encompassed individual motion pictures, the field of movie as an art form, and the motion pictures industry. Movies are produced by recording

images from the world with cameras, or by creating images using animation techniques or special effects. In making fiction films or movie, it takes a storyline that can make the film's storyline connect, and the meaning of the film or movie can be understood. However, the plot sometimes makes the audience confused in guessing what plot is used in the film or movie, especially if the film or movie is a fictional movie or film based on imagination. Audiences have to play with their imaginations to be able to understand the storyline in a fictional film or movie.

One of the movies that has a confusing plot is a movie from South Korea entitled The Call which was released in 2020. This movie carries the concept of a time traveler which is slightly different from the usual time traveler

movie. In this movie there are also some plot errors that make the storyline a bit awkward, and this movie seems to use a grandfather paradox which makes the storyline more interesting.

The intrinsic element is one of the elements that build a literary work. (Pradopo, 2002) intrinsic elements of a literary work have concrete characteristics, these characteristics include the type of literature (genre), thoughts, feelings, language style, storytelling style, and the structure of literary works. Furthermore, the analysis of the intrinsic elements by experts is referred to as a structural approach or structuralism. Structuralism is a discipline that views literary works as a structure consisting of several interrelated elements (Sangidu, 2004).

A literary work that uses structural theory according to Ratna (2014: 197) includes themes, characters, language styles, plots, and so on. Emzir and Rohma (2015: 40) state how structural theory works, namely by dismantling or unraveling the intrinsic elements. The same opinion is expressed by Sehandi (2014:106) that the theory of structuralism emphasizes the analysis of the elements of literary works. Intrinsic elements include plot, characterization, setting, theme, message, point of view, and style of language.

#### • **Theme**

According to Hartoko and Rahmanto in Ismawati (2013, p. 72) 'theme is a general basic idea that supports a literary work and is contained in the text as a semantic structure and which involves similarities or differences'.

#### • **Setting**

According to Tarigan (2015, p. 136) "Setting is the physical background, elements of place and space, in a story". Setting provides a concrete and clear footing for the story in order to give the reader the impression of reality, creating a place or event that seems to exist.

#### • **Characters and Characterization**

According to Aminuddin (2013, p. 79) "Characters are actors who carry out events in

fictional stories so that events are able to weave a story called characters". And "Characterization is the way the author presents a character or actor".

#### • **Point of View**

"The point of view is essentially a strategy, technique, tactic, which is deliberately chosen by the author to convey ideas and stories. Everything that is stated in a fiction story belongs to the author, which includes a view of life and its interpretation of life" (Nurgiyantoro, 2013, p. 338).

#### • **Plot**

Plot is an important element of fiction. (Stanton, 1965) The plot is a story that contains a sequence of events, but each event is only connected by cause and effect, one event is caused by the occurrence of another. The events of the story are shown through the actions, behavior, and attitudes of the main characters of the story. Foster in (Nurgiyantoro, Teori Pengkajian Fiksi, 2013) suggests that the demands of the plot in a fictional text are higher and complex than the story. In addition to containing an element of mystery, the plot requires an element of intelligence. This shows that the plot is not just a temporal sequence, but demands clarity between events.

Tasrif in (Nurgiyantoro, Teori Pengkajian Fiksi, 2002) distinguishes the stages of the plot into five parts, namely:

- a. Situation stage, this stage contains the description and introduction of the situation and the characters of the story.
- b. Generating circumstances stage, this stage contains the problems and events that sparked the conflict began to appear.
- c. Rising action stage, this stage means the conflict that arose in the previous stage is growing.
- d. Climax stage, this stage contains conflicts or contradictions that occur in the story characters when they reach the peak point.
- e. Denouement stage, this stage contains adjustments to the ongoing conflict.

The plot in the story will form a story that occurs in a time sequence. According to (Nurgiyantoro, 2007), in the time sequence there are three types of grooves, namely, forward plot, flashback plot, and mixed or combined plot.

- a. Forward plot, Forward plot is when the author in ordering the events uses forward time sequence to the future. It is characterized by starting with problem identification and ending with problem solving.
- b. Flashback plot, the plots is backwards, that is, when the author sequences the events, it does not start from the initial event. It is marked by starting from the middle or end event.
- c. Mixed plot, Mixed plot is when the story runs chronologically but there are often past scenes.

### **Grandfather Paradox**

The most well-known example of the impossibility of traveling in time is the grandfather paradox or self-infanticide argument: (Horwich, 1987) a person who travels in the past and kills his own grandfather, thus preventing the existence of one of his parents and thus his own existence. A philosophical response to this paradox would be the impossibility of changing the past, (Swartz: 2001) like Novikov self-consistency principle (if an event exists that would cause a paradox or any "change" to the past whatsoever, then the probability of that event is zero, thus it would be impossible to create time paradoxes). The paradox involves any action that changes the past. (Smith, 2016).

Grandfather paradox is presented in many ways: physicist John Garrison presents a variation with an electronic circuit that sends a signal through a time machine that decays alone and receives the signal before sending it, (Garrison, 1998) and the self-infanticide paradox involves returning to time and killing one's own person while he was a child. (Horwich, 1987). From a logical point of view,

the paradox is a logical contradiction: if an event has taken place in some way, there is no possibility that the event has occurred otherwise. (Swartz: 2001) Bradley Dowden argues that the possibility of creating a contradiction excludes travel in the past.

An approach to this paradox is a parallel universe: when the time traveler kills his grandfather, he kills in fact a parallel version of his grandfather, and the original universe of the time traveler is unchanged; in other variants, the time traveler tries but fails to kill his grandfather.

### **Butterfly Effect Paradox**

Butterfly Effect Paradox is one of the paradox effects created from time travel. The consequences of time travel and actions taken while in the past alone can have large-scale effects in the future. Which means that the butterfly effect can change past events that continue to the future, so that events that have occurred in the future can suddenly change due to the influence of the past. And that can eventually lead to great effects in the future.

Based on this background, the formulation of the problem in this study is as follows:

1. How is the plot in the Movie "The Call" (2020)?
2. What is the "Grandfather paradox", and in which scene is the grandfather paradox found?
3. What plot errors are found in The Call movie?

The purpose of this research is to find out what plot is used in The Call movie, introduce and find out the use of grandfather paradox in The Call Movie storyline, and analyze plot errors that occur in The Call movie.

### **RESEARCH METHOD**

This type of research is descriptive qualitative, this type of research aims to describe systematically, factually and accurately from certain objects. Researchers describe the reality that is happening, based on

the conceptual framework that has been explained by previous researchers (Kriyantono, 2010) Qualitative is a type of research that aims to explain the phenomenon in depth, through data collection, and does not prioritize the number of populations or sampling. In qualitative research, it focuses on the depth of the data and not the amount of data obtained (Kriyantono, 2010).

This study uses sampling from the film *The Call*, the reason the researcher uses the film *The Call* as sampling is that there are several scenes that make the storyline confusing. By using the content analysis method, the researchers chose scenes with dialogues translated from Korean in the film *The Call* according to the categorization that had been determined. The data collected in this study uses primary data, namely data obtained directly in the form of soft files for the film *The Call*, scenes in the film that are considered to have a confusing plot according to what the researchers have categorized. Researchers collected data by taking screenshots of the confusing plot, then analyzing what the plot meant by that scene.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### The Plot Used in The Movie "The Call"

In making this film, the director deliberately invites the audience to guess how the story line. Scenes are designed in such a way as to leave plenty of clues for the audience to connect and guess at the ending. In the film "The Call", there are 2 girls the same age, named Seo-Yeon and Yong-sook who live at different times. Seo-Yeon is in the 2019 timeline and Yong-sook is in 1999.



*Data 1: Oh Yong Sook (1999)*



*Data 2: Seo-Yeon (2019)*

This film uses the concept of time travel indirectly. This is marked by the existence of a telephone that can make calls to the previous decade (10 years ago). The call allowed Yong-Sook who was in 1999 to make calls with Seo-yeon in 2019.



*Data 3: Phone Ringing*

The phone was originally used to share information about the situation in 2019 and 1999. Yong-Sook, who was in 1999, helped save Seo-Yeon's father in the same year, before his father's accident occurred. As a result, Yong-Sook managed to save her and suddenly Se-Yeon's life in 2019 changed suddenly.

### Adapting Forward Plot Type

After watching this film, the writer concludes that the plot used is a forward plot. The forward plot is a storyline with events that start from the beginning to the end. Although this film uses the concept of time travel, indirectly, the life of the main character, Se-Yeon, continues to move forward. Many changes were deliberately made in the past by these two people, but they only caused life in 2019 to change. This is indicated by several evidences including:

1. Seo-Yeon's father came back to life in 2019 after being rescued by Yong-sook in 1999

Before receiving any calls, Seo-Yeon lost her father due to the gas stove explosion incident at her home which killed her father instantly. After receiving the phone call, Seo-Yeon's family visited Yong-Sook's house to see how the house was before they moved.



*Data 4: Seo-Yeon's family visits Yong-Sook's residence*

At that time, Seo-Yeon was still a child and her father had not died. Yong-Sook also had time to meet and get acquainted with little Seo-Yeon.



*Data 5: Yong-Sook met little Seo-Yeon in 1999*

Then, the first reason why this film uses a forward plot is because Seo-Yeon's life after Yong-Sook managed to save her father continues to move forward. This is marked by the appearance of Seo-Yeon's father who is aging and his family continues to live life as usual as if nothing happened.



*Data 6: Se-Yeon meets her father back in the future*

2. Seo-Yeon's life continues to move forward only the supporting characters who interact with her have changed.

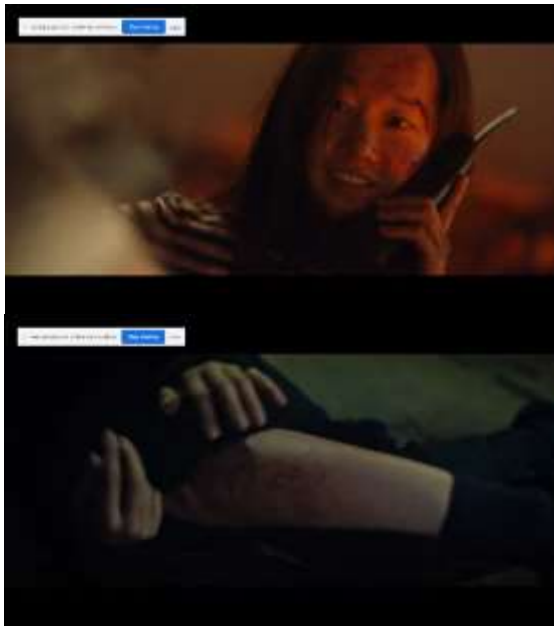
This can be seen from how Seo-Yeon's life continues to move forward without returning to the past. Another proof is that only the characters he interacted with appeared and disappeared, after he received the summons.

3. The storyline keeps moving forward and in-a-row because Yong-Sook holds Seo-Yeon's life.

After receiving a call from the past, it's as if the future life is being held by Yong-Sook. It can be seen from how Seo-Yeon's life depends on Yong-Sook's actions in the past when she threatened the future Seo-Yeon by throwing hot water on her little Seo-Yeon in the past.







*Data 7: Yong-Sook watered little Seo-Yeon in the past and impacted Seo-Yeon in the future*

### Plot Error in The Movie “The Call”

Although interesting and unique, this film has a few irregularities in the storyline. For information, the director adapted 2 paradoxes, namely "Grandfather Paradox" and "Butterfly Effect Paradox".

1. The future Yong-sook contacted herself in the past

The fact that Yong-Sook and Se-Yeon communicated by phone at different times might still be acceptable due to the passage of time. But it is impossible for a person to be able to interact with himself in the past. This means, if Yong-Sook 2019 can communicate and give advice to Yong-Sook 1999, it's the same thing that Yong-Sook is actually 2 different people.

2. “The Call” combines and tinkers with 2 different timelines, the past and the present.

Referring to the film Avengers: End Game which also uses the concept of Time Travel, supposedly, someone who is in the future cannot change the past. In grandfather's paradox, anything that is done to change the future through the past will be in vain. You

see, the past that they visit is a past that is actually different from their own past.

3. The beginning of the story is still ambiguous and not explained enough

At the beginning of the story, there is a scene where Yong-Sook should have called the Sun-Hee Store number, but instead connected to his own house number in 2019, which was picked up by Seo-Yeon. This is still very confusing and ambiguous, because the exact reason why the call is wrong is not explained.



*Data 8: When Yong-Sook called his own house*

### CONCLUSION

Interesting stories are usually able to bind the reader to always want to know the continuation of what happened, able to arouse curiosity, able to evoke suspense/tension of something that is very important in a fiction story. The level of suspense/tension for each story is of course not the same. However, a story that cannot satisfy the curiosity of the reader can be said to have failed with its mission of conveying a story. The story and the plot are two elements of fiction that are very closely related so that they are actually impossible to separate. Even more than that, the object of the story and the plot can be said to be the same, namely events. Both the story and the plot are based on a series of events as presented in a work. Therefore, it can actually also be said that the basis for talking about stories is plot, and the basis for talking about plots is story. Based on the opinions that have been described above, it can be concluded that the plot is a trajectory of the sequence of events in a literary work that causes other events to occur in a series to produce a story.

The series of events in a story is likened to an interconnected chain. Because an event is basically a cause or effect of another event. From the results of the research, it was found that in the film *The Call* uses a forward plot. The forward plot has a climax in the middle of the story. Events that run regularly and sequentially according to the time sequence of events from beginning to end. The plot errors contained in this film are how someone in the future can change the past, then the antagonist's interaction with herself from the past and the future at the same time. And The beginning of the story is still ambiguous and not explained enough. This film also uses Grandfather paradox and the Butterfly Effect Paradox. Time-traveling is the concept of moving a material/entity to several different points in space and time, either in the past or in the future. The time travel paradox is a theory which states that the same two entities cannot be found in a different space and time.

### Suggestion

With research on plot analysis and plot errors according to researchers in the film *The Call* (2020) it is hoped that it can add insight into plot analysis based on a review of time criteria and can be a reference for further research on plots in other literary forms. This research is still limited regarding the plot structure. Therefore, it is recommended that further research be carried out, able to reach an explanation of plot aspects and examine the rules of internal structure in general and more specifically, in the field of literature. This research is not perfect. Therefore, the next researcher can research specifically and more deeply so as to get more comprehensive research results.

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