

Meaningful Life in *Sawitri dan Tujuh Pohon Kelahiran*: Psychology of Literature Study

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Abstract-Individual's desire to get the meaningful life is pointed toward meaningful activity. Victor Frankl is one of psychologist who study about meaningful life called logotherapy. According to Frankl [1], there are three ways individual can do to give the meaning for his/her life. First, giving the life to the living thing around. Second, taking the lesson through experience. Third is attitude toward the misery life. Novel is kind of literature that gives the whole picture of human life living. We can learn and take the wisdom through it. This paper is investigate the meaning of life in *Sawitri dan Tujuh Pohon Kelahiran*: Psychology of Literature Study. This study is using qualitative descriptive, with the psychology of literature approach. The data of this study is analyzed using the structure of literature called structural method. The result of this study is all the character in *Sawitri dan Tujuh Pohon Kelahiran* novel try to fulfill their life by doing meaningful thing to both society and nature.

Keyword: meaningful life, logotherapy, literature psychology

I. INTRODUCTION

The desire to live in a meaningful life directs human to a life that full of activities and meaningful, so human become valuable and meaningful people [2]. The psychologist who studied the meaning of life is Victor Frankl. Frankl termed the meaningfulness of life as logotherapy. The three ways that can do by human to give meaning to their lives are by giving to the world through creation which takes wisdom through experience and the chosen attitude towards suffering [1]. The experience world that can activate the meaningfulness of life (logotherapy) can be constructed through reading and understanding literary works. Literary work is a social documentation written based on the author's perspective. Literary works cover the complex human phenomena. In is full of meaning that can be explained through indepth research [3]. Through the fiction literary work namely a novel, a person can learn a value.

The problems that are stated in the literary works through character and characterization written by the author, will implicitly provide a description of the character, soul, and values of the characters in the novel as an expression in the author's writings. In accordance with this, there are literary works (novels) that tell the life of the characters in trying to live a meaningful life. The novel entitled *Sawitri dan Tujuh Pohon Kelahiran* describes the complexity of married life, hope, and the values of life that are carried out to accept destiny and live in a meaningful life.

This paper tries to describe the life portrait which is lived by the characters in *Sawitri dan Tujuh Pohon Kelahiran* novel. The meaningfulness life portraits are closely related to the characters in the novel. Related to this matter, several studies that relevant to this paper are as follows. Some of these studies are researchs that were conducted by Arifin[4], Romadi, et al. [5], and Rahayu [6]. First, a research that was written by Arifin [4]. The results of Arifin's research was published in the Journal of Literacy. In his journal article entitled "Moral Value of Literary Work as an Alternative in Character Education (*Amuk Wisanggeni* Novel by Suwito Sarjono)" Arifin used sociological approach to literature. From the results of his research in the novel of *Amuk Wisanggeni*, Suwito Sarjono's work described [1] leadership moral, [2] religious morality, and [3] social morality. From these morals, it is possibly to be used as one of alternatives in character education.

Second, the research result of Romadi, et al. [5] that was published in the *Basastra* Journal. The title of the research is "*Dua Ibu* Novel by Arswendo Atmowiloto: Anthropological Study of Literature, Character Education Values, and its Relevance as a Teaching Material for Literature in Senior High School." The results of this study showed that elements of mythology, philosophy, and Javanese culture can be used as references to educators, especially in Central Java. This was conducted as an approach in strengthening the value of the character of students as well as character that appropriate with Javanese culture.

Third, Rahayu [6] entitled "Literary Psychology Study and Character Education Values of Sekolah Pohon Novel by Eko Kusumawijaya Karya School and its Relevance as Indonesian Language Teaching Material in Senior High School." Based on the results of the study, there were 15 values of character education in Sekolah Pohon Novel by Eko Kusumawijaya and the dominates value is religious character education, hard work, independent, communicative, and social care; and it is relevant as literary teaching material in senior high school because it is in accordance with the curriculum and the level of students ability.

The three studies above have similarities with the research that was conducted by the author, namely analyzing a literary work with the qualitative description analysis method and referring to the hypothesis and

conclusions of literary works that can be used as character education alternative media. The differences are in the object and the focus of the study. The object that was studied by the author is *Sawitridan Tujuh Pohon Kelahiran* novel by Mashdar Zainal. The focus study of the life meaningfulness portraits in the *Sawitridan Tujuh Pohon Kelahiran* novel can be found in the novel.

II. METHODOLOGY

This research is a qualitative description research. The research uses psychological approach to literary. It means that the author uses psychological help to analyze the meaning in the literary works. The data source of this research is the *Sawitri dan Tujuh Pohon Kelahiran* novel by Mashdar Zainal. The data are in the form of sentences that show a portrait of the meaningfulness of life in the novel. The method in the data analysis uses structural method. The author analyzed the section/ structure on the literary works which is a portrait of the meaningfulness of life in the *Sawitridan Tujuh Pohon Kehidupan* novel. Technically, the author looked for sentences that describe a portrait of the life meaningfulness in a novel. Then, the author gave an interpretation with the help of psychological theories that are related to logotherapy/ life meaningfulness.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The desire to live meaningfully is the desire of all of human being in their life, both meaningful to their self, to other people, to nature and everything in it, or to life in the hereafter. The desire to live means directing humans to a life that is full of meaningful activities, so that humans become valuable and meaningful individuals [2]

A. Doing Activities that are Meaningful to the Environment

Some parts of the *Sawitri dan Tujuh Pohon Kelahiran* novel show the meaningful life activities. The author told about Syajari's childhood. From childhood, Syajari loved trees. It made him get a lot of ridicule from his friends because the tree-planting loves preferences were more identical to women's activities. One day, Syajari's father joked about it, then the mother defended Syajari as follows.

"Don't listen to your father's joke, your father and your mother are quite happy that you have good attention to the tree. It makes you learn. After all, we survive of life is because of tree." (Zainal 2018: 30) [7]

In this situation, the childhood of Syajari already had the desire to be meaningful to the environment, namely the trees. This meaningful desire gained reinforcement from his mother, that caring for plants is one way to get the meaning of life. When caring for trees, we are useful for them to grow, and because of the tree as a food source so that we can survive.

The desire to have a meaningful life encourages people to fill their lives with meaningful activities. It is revealed by Syajari which began with his fondness for trees, encourages to care for the trees continuously. According to

them, caring for trees is the same as giving life. Syajari's tenacity in caring for trees can be seen from his loyal attitude to plant and care although they will get reproach. Syajari does not burden with the ridicules that exists. They are consistent in their actions. Apparently, he learned from the attitude of his parents in treating trees and plants.

"Planting gives life, and takes care of everything you plant and then sees it grows like witnessing miracles. My father and mother are diligent vegetable farmers. They plant carrot, cabbage, and broccoli. From that fields and vegetables, we can survive. And because of that, I love green creatures that are entrenched from the ground. Isn't the land also another miracle?" (Zainal 2018: 33) [7]

Since childhood, Syajari saw his father and his mother working on the fields diligently. When the trees are cared for diligently and resiliently, they can thrive and even produce something beneficial for the family. The results of these fields can be used as a source of Syajari family's livelihood. From that situation, Syajari felt that he wanted to be meaningful to nature and encouraged him to be resilient in treating plants. Syajari also shows his appreciation towards nature until adulthood. The more Syajari experiences in caring for trees, the more he loves nature and everything in it. Even Syajari considers that plants and land are a miracle. This assumption is not affected by the ridicule of other people who tend to consider the deed not in accordance with Syajari's gender. In addition, Syajari also never felt bored against what he was done (caring for plants). This is in accordance with one of the characteristics of humans who have achieved the meaning of life according to Maslow's formula [1] that is having a fresh appreciation. Humans always appreciate experiences no matter how often the experience repeats, with a feeling of pleasure that is fresh, fascinated, and amazed, and not bored with the various life experiences that were experienced by them.

Doing meaningful activities can encourage people to become valuable and meaningful individuals. As stated by Frankl [8] that the meaning of life can be found through creative value. Through the work and the effort of humans can find the meaning in life and experience the life meaningfully. However, the work is only a media that provides an opportunity to discover and develop the meaning of life. Thus, the point meaning of life does not in work but depends on attitudes and ways of working that reflect personal commitment to the work [8]. In *Sawitri dan Tujuh Pohon Kelahiran* novel, another figure who has a meaningful life is Sumaiyah. He showed a work attitude that showed a personal commitment in a job.

"When he was working on something, Sumaiyah could not be stopped, he was like a drunk person, as if tomorrow was the last day for him so that everything had to be completed today. Wasting time, even if it is only for a second, it is haram for Sumaiyah. For Sumaiyah, everything that messed and drenched is a sin, and sin must be solved." (Zainal 2018: 6) [7]

In this situation, the Mango tree that marks the birth of Sumaiyah describes how the owner's attitudes. Sumaiyah is described as someone who is diligent in

carrying out his activities. Sumaiyah always finishes his job well without postponing the time. It is including in caring for the mango tree, diligent, passionate, and wholehearted. It can be said that Sumaiyah has a creative value, namely by caring for the tree wholeheartedly. Sumaiyah can find the meaning of life and appreciate life. It had an effect on Sumaiyah's life in the adult phase. As the first child, part of Sumaiyah's salary was sent to his parents for the school fees of his younger sibling. He took part in the education of his younger sibling. Until his younger brother graduated of his undergraduate, master's degree, and there was also his younger brother who went on to study in the Netherlands (Zainal 2018: 56-60) [7]

B. Taking Wisdom from Experience and Taking the Right Attitude for Suffering

Understand the life means also accepting all of the facts both of pleasant and unpleasant. Being able to accept yourself, other people, and the natural world as it is one of the characteristics of individuals who have achieved the meaning of life (Maslow) [1]. *Sawitri dan Tujuh Pohon Kelahiran* novel also teaches the acceptance through the characters, one of them is Syajari. It can be seen in the Syajari's childhood began to realize the nature of plant growth.

"The seeds are not like eggs, some of them hatch and some of them rot. Some of the grains that I plant during childhood have grown, some have died, and some have died after growing. Like a world with various phenomenon. Maybe life is like that. Fragile and little power. One beat of life will require several other lives. Like some trees those survival is embedded in the hands of humans." (Zainal 2018: 38) [7]

In that situation, Syajari finally realized that not all seeds could flourish and bear fruit. Syajari can also interest the wisdom that human life is the same as the seeds of the plant, which requires the help of other people, some of them live, and some of them die. This appreciation and acceptance were obtained by Syajari from his father's advice who was understood along with the experience that he had gained by himself. Syajari's father said as follows.

"Some of the seeds are dead, you should know that, growing a seed is not as easy as it sounds, melon seeds that are planted and fertilized well can sometimes not grow well, moreover the seeds that you have saved in cans for months, years, without sunlight." (Zainal 2018: 36) [7]

When you can comprehend the life, humans will be realistically oriented. An individual does not look the world just as they want or need, but look it as it really is (Maslow)[1]. It can be said that Syajari can take meaning from his life experience. Syajari's skill in taking a meaning is also obtained from the learning and the parenting of parents. That experience made his life meaningful. The meaning of life can also be found through hope. Hope is the belief in the occurrence of something good or a good change in the future. Although a hope is not always a reality, it can provide new opportunities and solutions as

well as new goals that can create enthusiasm and optimism [8]. In *Sawitri dan Tujuh Pohon Kelahiran* Novel reflects hope as a reinforcement of meaningful activity. One of them is Syajari's hope to be blessed with a child.

"I see, some couples who get married and then don't get blessed with children, they are like living in an empty space. Perhaps their feelings will be the same as the feeling of a tree that towers but produces no flowers or fruit. I often pray to God who grows seeds and trees, even if I am like a tree, I want to be a fruitful tree and grow many benefits and happiness." (Zainal 2018: 39)(7)

In this situation, Sawitri and Syajari have not been blessed with a child after one year of marriage. In correlation with this, Syajari and Sawitri hope that in their lives they can have a beneficial role, namely caring for children. It made Syajari upset because he felt he did not have the power as a father. It also happened to Sawitri who feel sad because he felt ineffective as a mother, after becoming a wife. Nevertheless, the attitude that Syajari took to continue the hope and pray was the right attitude in facing of sadness that did not yet have children. This attitude shows a cooperative attitude with God's destiny. Not angry, not criticizing, but accepting and continuing hope by praying. Hope that is what makes Syajari and Sawitri be optimistic in living the household life even though their wishes have not been achieved so that the household is intact and harmonious.

IV. CONCLUSION

The meaningfulness of life shown by the characters in the *Sawitri dan Tujuh Pohon Kelahiran* novel is to carry out activities that are meaningful to the environment, take wisdom from experience, and take the right attitude to suffering. Meaningful activities for the environment were shown by Syajari and Sumayah who were painstakingly caring for trees. Taking wisdom from Syajari's experience when he realized that not all seeds can grow and bear fruit. Then, he correlates it with life so he gets a realistic orientation. In correlation with the meaning of life, Syajari and Sawitri take the right attitude for the sad thing (they are not yet blessed with children) namely by accepting the situation at that time while continuing to hope to have children in the future. The acceptance caused his family to remain intact and harmonious. The meaningfulness of life encourages people to respond to life positively. By living a meaningful life, humans will be able to maximize their existence both for themselves, the social environment, and nature. By living a meaningful life, humans are more vulnerable to stress. The acceptance and hope happen together at the same time.

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