

Absurdity in Amar Putra's of *Old Man of Kusumpur*

Prayogo Hadi Sulistio¹, Zuriyati², Saifur Rohman³

^{1,2,3}Universitas Negeri Jakarta

¹prayogo_9906922007@mhs.unj.ac.id, ²zuriyati@unj.ac.id,

³saifurrohman@unj.ac.id

Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui penyajian absurditas dalam novel *Old Man of Kusumpur* karya Amar Putra. Penelitian ini menganalisis cerita pendek dengan menggunakan studi kepustakaan. Peneliti menggunakan ide absurditas Camus untuk menganalisis karakter utama dan karakter minor lainnya. Dalam menganalisis data, peneliti mengikuti beberapa langkah, sebagai berikut: 1) membaca cerita pendek; 2) mengidentifikasi tokoh utama dan tokoh minor; 3) menghubungkan situasi dan kondisi yang dihadapi tokoh dengan konsep absurditas; 4) menarik kesimpulan tentang absurditas dalam cerita pendek. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa karakter utama mendefinisikan makna hidup dengan mencari bantuan dari karakter lain dalam hal ini karakter yang dianggap sebagai dewa penolong bernama Big Man. Tokoh-tokoh dalam cerita memilih untuk tidak menyerah sehingga mereka berusaha mencari bantuan dari orang lain. Meskipun demikian, Fakirchand menemukan bahwa Big Man telah meninggal akibat banjir besar saat bencana alam melanda sebagian besar desa tempat Big Man tinggal.

Kata kunci: Absurditas; Penelitian Perpustakaan; Cerita pendek

Abstract: This study was aimed at investigating presentation of absurdity in Amar Putra's of *Old Man of Kusumpur*. This study analyzed a short story using library research. Researchers used Camus' idea of absurdity to analyze the main character and other minor characters. In analyzing the data, researchers follow some steps, as follow: 1) read the short story; 2) identify the main character and minor characters; 3) relate the situation and condition faced by the characters with the concept of absurdity; 4) draw conclusion regarding the absurdity in the short story. The finding shows that the main character defines the meaning of life by looking for help from other character in this case a Godlike character named Big Man. The characters in the story choose not to surrender so that they try to seek for help from others. Even though, Fakirchand found the Big Man has already been death due to big flood as natural disaster swept majority of the village where Big Man lived.

Keywords: Absurdity; Library Research; Short Story

INTRODUCTION

Literary work becomes an important media to communicate the idea of author to the reader. Nurhamidah, et al. (2019) explains that the communication between reader and author can be in the form of interpretation of idea. Furthermore, Endraswara (2011) explains that characters in literary work were reflected by psyche aspects which can be seen from the whole content of the literary works. Besides, literary work becomes a media to learn beside it can be read for entertainment. In line with this, Taufik & M. (2017) explain that literary work becomes very interesting to read because they can learn many things related to the content and various aspects embedded in the literary work produced by author. Reader can learn about the experience, the adventure, the love, the struggle to survive of the main character. Thus, readers can learn especially the main character represents absurdity in a way of thinking and in a way of life.

Absurdity shares similar concept with existentialism especially related to questioning human existence. It is said that to become human being, human should lose his / her senses. Woodhouse (1994) explains that conditions like throwing away freedom, becoming passive automatons, and overlooking the deeper were understood as human condition. In line with this, Hasan (1967) the term existentialism itself is not effortlessly characterized in a single settled meaning since each thinker has their possess hypothesis based on their specific points of view. Thus, human are like not other entities conscious with their existence which represents the superiority of human among other creatures.

Albert Camus was a French novelist and essay writer who was born in Algeria. He was a pioneer who proposed the concept of absurdity. Audi (1995) explains that the concept of absurdity proposed by Camus related to the confrontation of ourselves with demand of rationality and justice. Furthermore, Camus (1955) explains that human being in the state of longing happiness and reason become the point of the absurdity was born by conflict between human need and unreasonable state of world silence. So that, absurdity concept was born within the development of the existentialism or the logic of presence, is expressed as a conflict, a restriction, a strife, or a "divorce" between two beliefs.

The Old Man of Kusumpur with its main character provide absurdity through the situation and condition of an old man. This short story gives an image of an ordinary lonely old man in India. This work was published by Anchor Books Original in 2022 along with other short stories which won The O. Henry Prize Winners. The story was translated into English by Anish Gupta. *The Old Man of Kusumpur* sets a story in Kusumpur, India. The short story tells about the journey of Fakirchand to seek a Big Man. In the journey, Fakirchand

convince other minor characters to believe and do not lose hope for better condition that they can meet Big Man to ask for help like him. Somehow, the future is so unpredictable that Big Man has long gone due to flood swept the village where he lived.

Various researches conducted related to the absurdity in literary work. Salsabila and Tjahjani (2019) explain that the recurring events of death surrounding the main character becomes main hint of connection between absurdity and death in the concept of Camus' absurdity. Furthermore, the death in the circle of main character become one of main reason of the main character to become Absurd Man which live with the reality of accepting death and continuing to live in the absurd live. Chesca (2013) explains that Absurdity becomes one of major mainstream in theater after World War II. Playwrights like Samuel Beckett, Eugent Ionescu, Adamov, Pinter and Albee represented the character being made in the background of the death. Suffering and dying become natural for human being so that even death is a tragic event but it is very act of living. There is little known about absurdity in short story especially short story which win literature award like The O. Henry Prize Winners. Thus, this study formulates research problem, as follow: 1) How does the absurdity being presented in Amar Putra's of Old Man of Kusumpur?

METHOD

Library research is being used to analyze the absurdity in the short story entitled "Old Man of Kusumpur" written by Amar Putra. Nazir (2003) explains that library research is used to collect the data from books, manuscripts, or magazines related to the topic being analyzed. In line with this, Zed (2004) explains that library research is synonym with literature research. It is an activity to collect data of literature through reading, recording, and other relevant written research materials.

The study was conducted from September to October 2022. In analyzing the data, researchers follow some steps, as follow: 1) read the short story; 2) identify the main character and minor characters; 3) relate the situation and condition faced by the characters with the concept of absurdity; 4) draw conclusion regarding the absurdity in the short story.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The portrait of human being can be depicted in the story of The Old Man of Kusumpur written by Amar Mitra. The story tells about the condition of an old man named Fakirchand who seeks help in a ray of hope. The old man does not choose to surrender with the condition. Fakirchand experienced a hardship of life. His wife was long gone because of death and his only son neglected him to go to another city. His disappointment with family life

accumulates the feeling of lifeless to Fakirchand. He used to get mad to his only son because the son chose to leave him alone. Thus, he felt that he was alone in this world.

Camus (1995) said that in a universe abruptly stripped of figments and lights, man feels outsider, a stranger. His banish is without cure since he is denied of the memory of the misplaced domestic or the trust of a guaranteed arrive. This separate between man and his life, the performing artist and his setting, is appropriately the feeling of absurdity.

Furthermore, Fakirchand's health condition was getting worse day by day. He had cataract to be removed. Also, he is getting old where he felt that his body can no longer support him. He seeks traditional shaman as he called him as Big Man. He wanted to seek help from the Big Man. He did not want to die because he wanted to protect his land from people who want to own his land after his death. He knows that if he keeps silent and do nothing, his death will come faster, he needs to seek Big Man as he knew as a doctor. He wanted to become health again and able to do regular activities again. Even though, he realized that he will be death soon or later, he does not want to give up easily with the condition. He shoes to live than die easily. It indicates that Fakirchand does want to go along with the condition even his condition is so bitter. Fakirchand tries to believe that that Big Man can heal his condition. He put it in his mind that Big Man is a Godlike for him. Big Man is believed to possess many miracles that the Fakirchand need to heal his condition. Besides, the old man also tries to convince other minor characters he met in the journey to meet Big Man to believe in him that Big Man can help them from problems they face. It seems that the old man becomes ray of hope for other minor characters not to choose surrender with the condition they suffer.

The situation is related to Camus (1995) that explain when one suffers monotonous life, he seeks an answer for the purposes of life. At the end, some people can understand the purposes but the other do not. Furthermore, man also is aware with a matter of time. He realizes about his health condition, future and even his death (Camus, 1955). Thus, Camus (1955) proposed two notions about the condition of realizing death is coming soon or later. Either man can do suicide or hope dealing with the absurdity of life. In the story, Fakirchand choose to live on and do his best to survive even though the story does not end happily for the main character. The current finding is in line with Salsabila and Tjahjani (2019) that sadness makes the main character to become absurd character. However, the main character of the story chooses not to surrender and get along with the situation do his best to seek for help to solve problem faced by Fakirchand The Old Man.

CONCLUSION

As one of winning short stories in The O. Henry Prize Winner, Old Man of Kusumpur written by Amar Putra is successful to portray the main character in the story named Fakirchand experienced absurdity as one main issue of the story. Harsh condition faced by the Fakirchand and other characters do not make them to choose surrender. The main character defines the meaning of life by seeking help from others in this matter a Godlike character named Big Man. Even though, Fakirchand found the Big Man has already been death due to big flood as natural disaster swept majority of the village where Big Man lived.

Old Man of Kusumpur becomes a symbol of hope in despair situation. The image of seeking for help to relieve the pains and solve the problems proves that there is always a better future in the imagination of the character. The minor characters are aware that they are running out of time so that they rely their hope to the main character. However, the ending of the story gives sad ending in which the main character has gone and other minor characters wait for him.

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