

The Existence of the Female Character Meutia in the Novel *Gadis yang Menulis Surat Setiap Malam* by Arafat Nur

¹Siti Musdalifatul Mukallalah¹, Istiqomah², Mulyanto³, Sucipto⁴, Ni Nyoman Sarmi⁵

^{1'2'3'4'5} Universitas Dr. Soetomo

Corresponding Author: sitimusdalifatulmukallalah@gmail.com

Abstract

*Existential female characters are the existence of female characters in literary texts. The existence of existentialism in psychology encourages human self-awareness of their existence. In researching the novel *Gadis yang Menulis Surat Setiap Malam*, the aim is to describe the structure of the characters' experiences. The theory used is Rollo May's existentialist psychological theory. Existential psychology is an attempt to understand humans who experience and who are the targets of experience. Descriptive qualitative methods were used in this research with data analysis techniques in the form of listening, reading, taking notes. Then, content analysis uses the content of the quoted text data. The findings include the structure of the characters' experiences regarding: (i) death; (ii) emptiness (loneliness and isolation); (iii) anxiety; (iv) feelings of guilt; (v) togetherness; (vi) spatiality, (vii) temporalis; and (viii) body.*

Keywords: *Existential; Female Figure; Experience Structure*

Article history

Received:
14-03-2024

Revised:
30-03-2024

Accepted:
31-03-2024

Published:
02-04-2024

Introduction

In this way, to analyze the existential of the female character Meutia in the object of this research using appropriate literary theories and approaches. Researchers use the psychological theory of existentialism as the main theory, approach and understanding. Then, it is assisted by three approaches, namely phenomenological, literary psychology and mimetic approaches. This theory and several approaches will be used together in the data analysis process. The aim is to obtain maximum study results by revealing the phenomenology of consciousness and existential psychology (Rahmasari, 2012: 142).

Existentialist psychology developed from philosophical movements, namely phenomenology and existentialism (Misiak and Virginia, 2009: 117). Existential psychology acts as a new theory and approach that tries to complement other tendencies found in psychology. The target or object in this approach is to understand humans in their comprehensive existential reality, especially their subjective relationships with themselves, each other and the world. This psychology uses the phenomenological method as one of the most appropriate methods for analyzing individual inner experiences (Ayu, et al, 2023: 2).

Works flavored with existentialism, such as the writings of Husserl, Heidegger, Buber, Marcel, Paul Tillich, Ortega y Gasset, Jaspers, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, Camus, and other

intellectuals. Their work writes a lot about and expresses human emotions and sentiments, as well as using human experiences as references written in literary works, such as novels, dramas and poetry.

The tendency that appears in psychology is eclecticism, namely the filtering of elements with other theories. The hali outline the basic elements of existentialism and provide an evaluation. Pervin stated that existentialism and existential analysis are useful and deserve attention and investigation (Aryani, 2022: 163). Therefore, existentialist psychology for Pervin is a continuation of psychological studies (Misiak and Virginia, 2009: 114). Existential matters, for Wolff, are conflicts between individuals who realize freedom, have to decide, and assume responsibility. Rollo May in his book *Existential Psychology* (1969) (Misiak and Virginia, 2009: 110), views the existential approach as understanding human behavior and experience in the framework of postulates surrounding the description of humans. Existential psychology is an attempt to understand humans who experience and who are the targets of experience. More broadly, psychology covers human nature and the nature of experience, as well as guiding and giving meaning to the empirical data obtained by psychology.

Existentialism is a study that specifically describes human experience and existence using a phenomenological approach (Lathief, 2010:33). Phenomenology is used to understand the symptoms that occur in humans, so it can be said that existentialists are phenomenologists who analyze situations of human existence through direct observation and investigation of human experience. According to Husserl, the relationship between phenomenology, existentialism and psychology is used within the framework of psychotherapy or therapeutic activities. The influence of phenomenology on psychology continues to grow as it focuses on human life.

According to Merleau-Ponty through the books *Phenomenology of Perception* (1962) and *The Structure of Behavior* (1965), human behavior is seen through three stages, namely physical, vital and psychological stages. Human experience arises from behavioral manifestations that have been given and a phenomenon that is attempted to be called experience. Such as experiences of: (i) death; (ii) emptiness (loneliness and isolation); (iii) anxiety; (iv) feelings of guilt; (v) togetherness; (vi) spatiality, (vii) temporalis; and (viii) body (Lathief, 2010:63-82). The eight human experiences above are present and manifest themselves, experienced as conscious, active and process subjects.

In existentialist psychology, these experiences or events are studied and researched using phenomenological analysis methods in the context of understanding humans existentially. This method describes experiences using experiential language (Lathief, 2010:63). The language of experience is concrete; not abstract, the terms used are everyday idioms in life. This discussion about the structure of human experience arises from various manifestations of human behavior that are given (givenness) and all the symptoms that are tried to explain are understood experiences, such as experiences of death, emptiness, loneliness, alienation, anxiety, togetherness, free will, space and time. , feelings of guilt and personal experiences. Human existence is a measure of human non-existence. According to Sartre, from the perspective of existentialism, the ways or forms of human existence are categorized into being-for-itself and being-for-itself. Consciousness in existentialism is emphasized individually. Because humans are in the midst of other lives that are determined by humans themselves. Existentialist psychology encourages humans to be aware of the world as a physical and natural world (*umwelt*), a world inhabited with other people (*mitwelt*), and a world that is a place for oneself (*eigenwelt*).

The reasons why researchers are interested in researching the object of this research through the study of existentialist psychology are as follows. First, the novel is thick with social phenomena that touch on phenomenological power. Second, the novel through female characters shows the psychological impact of a social phenomenon. Third, the novel is interesting for analyzing the existential psychology of the character Meutia. Fourth, novels increase insight, knowledge and historical horizons from reading novels. And, fifth, it encourages forms and ways of making peace with the past.

Through the reasons above, the researcher is increasingly confident in taking the research object *Gadis yang Menulis Surat Setiap Malam* by Arafat Nur. The behavior and life experiences of the main female character encourage existential psychological analysis. According to researchers, this novel is different from Arafat's previous works. Because, taking the story of a 19 year old girl. Previously, the novel Arafat Nur told the story through the characters of a boy, a teenage boy, a Koran teacher, a grandfather, an adult woman, and others.

The work steps in novel research use the psychological theory of existentialism, including (1) first attention is focused on the object of analysis, namely the structure of human experience in the literary work being studied; (2) examining terminology as human consciousness, namely a set of norms for a particular collectivity that is implemented by every literary work; (3) the subject is no longer understood as a passive means of supra-individual structures, but as a force that acts and interacts with other structures; (4) the study of existential psychology in literature is associated with human psychology as a psychotherapist. Through the four steps of existentialist psychology, it is hoped that it can be used as a guidepost in analysis. In order to approach and discover the psychology and existence of the characters in the novel, it can be traced from the things they experienced as a result of trauma.

Previous research was conducted by Aryani and Muhammad Abdalah (2022) from Pamulang University, Banten, Indonesia. The research is published in the journal *Pustaka Indonesia*, 2(3), December 2022: 162-173. The research is entitled *Existential Psychology of the Character Ancika in the Novel Ancika* by Pidi Baiq. The aim of the research is to discuss Rollo May's existential psychology through the character Ancika in the research object of the novel. The formulation of the problem, namely the form of freedom of Ancika's character, the form of courage, and the concern, love and will of Ancika's character. Qualitative descriptive methods and literature studies were used in the research. The results of the research show the existence of existential courage and essential freedom in the character Ancika.

The similarity between the research above and this thesis lies in the theory used, namely existential psychology and the target is the female character in the novel text. Then, the method used is both descriptive qualitative and literature study. The difference lies in the topic and results of the study, namely the existential courage and essential freedom of the character Ancika.

Furthermore, research entitled *Personality of Alina's Character in the Novel Hati Sutina* by Khilma Anis (Psychological Study of Behaviorism), is published in the journal *Enggang: Journal of Education, Language, Literature, Arts and Culture*, 3(2), June 2023. This research was conducted by Siti Nurkhalimah Fatmawati, Susi Darihastining, and Akhmad Sauqi Ahya (2023) from STKIP PGRI Jombang. The aim of the research is to discuss the stimulus of the main character in the novel *Hati Suhita* by Khilma Anis. This research uses behavioral psychology theory with descriptive qualitative research methods. The results of the research show that there is a form of stimulus that occurs in the character Alina Suhita.

The similarities and differences between the research above and this thesis lie in the research object being a novel, however the title is different. Then, the theories used are both psychology, but the direction or target is different, namely behaviorism and existentialism. The similarities lie in the methods and techniques used in the analysis. Another difference lies in the formulation of the problem. The problem formulation in this thesis is broader and more detailed, so it can be an advantage of this research.

Method

Existential Research on the Female Character Meutia in the Novel *Gadis yang Menulis Surat Setiap Malam* by Arafat Nur, with the object of a work of fiction novel written by Arafat Nur. The research method used is descriptive qualitative. Data collected such as words, sentences and paragraph quotes. The procedure for determining the type of research has been adapted to the research problem and research objectives. Data collection uses reading, listening and note-taking techniques.

The steps are: (i) collect and record various data; (ii) grouping data accompanied by brief reflection; (iii) categorize and enter data according to the instrument; (iv) enter data according to the problem formulation; (v) interpret data and consider data relationships to find comprehensive analysis; (vi) linking interpretation to theory, both inductively and deductively. Content analysis uses (i) description techniques, and (ii) content analysis techniques. Description techniques are used to describe data findings in the text. The steps in data analysis, namely data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions.

Discussion

Existential is a topic about human existence in the world. In literary texts, it means the existence of the characters in their environment. The novel *Gadis yang Menulis Surat Setiap Malam* by Arafat Nur will encourage readers to explore the existential experiences of the characters based on the characters' life experiences. The experience includes both mental and physical. Experience taking the story in the 1990s in Aceh. The following is an analysis of the experience structure that researchers have found.

1. Death

Death is a scary, terrible and most avoided moment for every human being. In the eyes of existentialism, death is the peak of the absurdity of human existence (Lathief, 2010:64). In the literary text of the novel *Gadis yang Menulis Surat Setiap Malam* by Arafat Nur tells the story of the rebellion during President Soeharto's reign. During that time, there were many murder tragedies in various regions in Indonesia. One of them is in Aceh, which is used as the setting for the author to tell his story. The object of this research is located in Aceh, specifically in Sigli and Lamlhok. Drawn into the psychology of existentialism regarding the structure of the human experience of death, of course the novel alludes to the death of the victims of the GAM rebellion.

Namun, dia menyaksikan suatu kenyataan lain dari negeri ini. Tanah ini seperti tidak pernah damai. Orang-orang saling membunuh satu sama lain. Setiap hari ada saja yang jatuh korban. Jika tidak dari prajurit pemerintah, pasti pejuang, dan yang lebih banyak adalah rakyat jelata yang tidak mengerti apa-apa. Rakyat jelata yang terbunuh itu selalu dikatakan terkena peluru nyasar, padahal memang disengajakan supaya peluru itu kesar ke tubuh-tubuh petani yang tidak berdosa (GMS, 2021:16).

Reading the excerpt from the novel text above describes the situation and conditions of the Acehnese people. The 'she' in the quote is the character Meutia. Meutia as the main character tells the story of Aceh's life in the 1990s until the character is now an adult aged 19 years. Understanding the quote above, the author through the character Meutia tells the story as if Indonesians have never been peaceful; kill each other. In Aceh, the victims fell not only from Acehnese fighters but also from the Acehnese people who had no sin whatsoever. They are an outlet for government soldiers. The soldier's alibi of targeting bullets is just an excuse. They don't want to be blamed and prosecuted for killing someone who is innocent.

The character Meutia experienced and saw the experience of death in real life. Meutia witnessed victims falling every day. We can imagine that hundreds of soldiers who were sent to Aceh every day were guerrillas and shooting, killing the people of Aceh. It was this experience of death that horrified Meutia. In contrast, in other parts of the region, war continues with seven to dozens of victims falling every day. Guerrilla fighters never gave up even though hundreds of thousands of soldiers continued to be sent from Jakarta. People who die in vain continue to increase and the population of Aceh continues to decrease every day. This war gave the impression, as if the Jakarta government wanted to eliminate all the Acehnese people so that they could exploit all the abundant wealth of this land.

Darah dan air mata terus mengalir. Kekejian dan kemaksiatan merajalela. Penculikan dan pembunuhan terjadi di mana-mana... (GMS, 2021:17).

In the quote above, the character Meutia compares the conditions in Sigli and Lamlehok. In the war in Sigli, Meutia's homeland, many people died for no reason. The author, through Meutia, views the arrival of the soldiers as if they wanted to wipe out the people of Aceh. They wiped out the Acehnese and then freely took all the wealth. In the second quote, it is written that blood and tears continued to flow because they saw the behavior of the soldiers. Soldiers do not have a human heart or conscience. Murder continues to be carried out in various places and on anyone.

The experience of death observing social situations is a recording of the memory of Meutia's character. It is completely narrated through the character Meutia about government soldiers, Acehnese soldiers, Acehnese victims, and so on.

Ketika pergi maupun pulang sekolah, Meutia sering menjumpai mayat di jalanan kampungnya sendiri. Lebih menyayat hatinya ketika melihat orang-orang yang jadi mayat itu pernah menyapanya semasa hidup, pernah memberikannya senyuman, atau pernah memberikannya pertolongan. Bahkan, terkadang dia tidak sanggup tahan, karena tubuh yang menjadi mayat itu adalah tetangga, saudara, bahkan ayah dan ibunya sendiri (GMS, 2021:27).

Because the blood and tears that Meutia saw left sad and terrible memories. Meutia witnessed the murder victims firsthand. Meutia's experience of death has been witnessed since she was a teenager. On roads, rivers, markets, shopping centers, and everywhere you can almost find the bodies of the dead. The thing that made Meutia sad was none other than her siblings, neighbors, and even her own parents. Both of Meutia's parents were killed because it was suspected that her father was a GAM accomplice.

Thus, an analysis of the structure of the human experience of death in the text of the novel *Gadis yang Menulis Surat Setiap Malam* by Arafat Nur. In conclusion, there is an experience of death in the character Meutia regarding her siblings, neighbors and even her parents. The character Meutia saw and experienced this death experience directly, so the character could be said to be experiencing mental disorders. In order to heal themselves and build self-awareness, the characters carry out self-therapy by telling stories through written media. It is through letters that characters talk freely about their lives, dreams and future.

2. Emptiness (Loneliness and Isolation)

The experience of emptiness which includes feelings of loneliness and isolation is an individual experience. Vacant means devoid of content, empty, lack of passion. Psychologically, this type of mental problem is experienced individually, not as a group. In literary texts this is also the case, one character and another character do not necessarily feel the same soul. The emptiness that the character Meutia feels in the novel *Gadis yang Menulis Surat Setiap Malam* is felt by Meutia herself. Even though the characters Makcik Munah, Lailan, and Intan are under the same roof, they do not feel the emptiness experienced by the character Meutia.

Throughout the reading of the literary text, the character Meutia experiences an experience of emptiness before the birth of her existence as a normal human being. Meutia has experienced emptiness since the murder of her parents until she lived and settled in her aunt's house. Meutia is like a character who has no hope for her life and future.

Atas berbagai runtutan peristiwa dan kenyataan itu, jiwa Meutia terguncang. Terkadang dia tidak yakin apa yang dihadapinya itu suatu kenyataan. Hidupnya harus luntang-luntung berlari dan bersembunyi. Dia berputar-putar dalam lingkaran tiada akhir. Sementara kenyataan hidup lain yang keras menantinya di depan.

Kini dia harus hidup dan berjuang sendiri. Tidak ada lagi orang yang bisa masuk ke dalam dirinya. Juga perkawinan yang ditawarkan Makcik Munah bukanlah jalan keluar. Meutia belum sanggup melupakan semua peristiwa yang dialaminya. Peristiwa itu begitu parah mengimpit dirinya. Apalagi musuh-musuh ayahnya tidak akan membiarkannya terus hidup (GMS, 2021:14).

Reading with an understanding of the quote above, it is very clear that the character's psychology and existence are shaken. The quote above was told by a contemporary character when Meutia was living with her aunt. Meutia is full of emptiness caused by the traumatic effects within her. Through this quote, Meutia shows that her psychology is shaken. The character has no passion for life. His life is not peaceful because he is afraid of excessive anxiety. The character tries to accept the reality of life but the reality is too bitter for him. In the end, due to the problems she experienced, Meutia had to be able to live and fight to show her existence.

Struggling against feelings within oneself is a form of self-existence. The emptiness experienced by the character is an experience that is lived due to factors in the character's life journey. By reading the novel completely, the events experienced by Meutia can be said to be sad, horrifying and sad. Through the quote above, the author shows the experience of emptiness in a vague style. The second paragraph describes Meutia's life today. The marriage offered by Makcik Munah was not a cure for Meutia's traumatic experience. Living with other people will actually add new pressure for Meutia. Here Meutia tries to make peace with her past by accepting it.

Segala keluh-kesah dia tumpahnya di kertas dengan tulisan hitam di atas penerangan lampu tempel di kamarnya. Meutia curahkan semua perasaan, kegusaran, resah, ketakutan, kekecewaan, kepasrahan, dan penyerahan dirinya yang paling menyeluruh. Semuanya berbaur riwayat dan mimpi-mimpi yang menyatu menjadi bentuk yang menakutkan. Di lembaran-lembaran kertas putih itu tertumpah semua lika-liku hidupnya, dari sejumlah kebahagiaan maupun limpahan penderitaan. Sudah lebih tiga bulan kebiasaan itu dilakukan Meutia. Setelah dia tidak bisa berbuat lain dan juga segala harapan telah kandas. Tidak seorang pun didekatnya yang mampu menambal beban luka dan penderitaan jiwanya. Dia tidak mungkin mencurahkan keluhan jiwanya pada Nurul, Bang Lailan, ataupun Makcik Munah. Mereka adalah manusia yang hanya mengerti soal hidup secara sederhana dan selalu sibuk memikirkan bagaimana hidup bisa terus berlangsung, dan mereka melakukannya dengan kerja keras (GMS, 2021:24-25).

The character Meutia experiences the most dominant experience of emptiness after reading the novel completely. The emptiness experienced by other people is shown only as colors. The author's focus is on the main character, Meutia. Meutia's journey in the novel seems to end Meutia's beautiful dreams. As the author wrote in the quote above. Meutia's dreams can only be written without being able to make them come true. Meutia has become a quiet person, no longer expecting much about things in her life. To fill the emptiness in his heart, the character tries to entertain himself by telling stories on paper.

Sebelumnya dia akan melaksanakan salat sunat istikharah. Dia harus berdoa dan memohon surat itu sampai kepada Tuhan. Dia lega karena surat-surat itu sudah rampung ditulis. Keadaan ini membuatnya tampak lebih baik dibandingkan hari-hari sebelumnya. Ada kepuasan batin setelah dia menyelesaikan lembaran-lembaran itu. Surat itu tidak lain adalah cerita tentang dirinya dan keluarganya sendiri. Juga keluhan-keluhan dan kegelisahan jiwanya. Dia tidak peduli dengan penilaian Nurul ataupun Intan yang secara diam-diam menganggapnya aneh. Biarlah orang-orang di

sekelilingnya menganggap dia tidak waras. Orang waras pun sering melakukan hal-hal gila. Lantas, apa bedanya dengan dia? Meutia semakin yakin dengan tindakannya. Hanya Allah-lah yang pantas untuk tempat mengadu dan menyerahkan diri. Tempat dia berkeluh-kesah dan mencurahkan segala isi hatinya (GMS, 2021:41).

Meutia feels inner satisfaction after writing letters every night. Only on the page is the character telling the story. Because the story is too heartbreaking to tell other people. Meutia experienced loneliness. The character cannot tell his new family in detail about the events in his life. The story becomes a secret character. The character doesn't care if other people think he's crazy or strange. Apart from the letter, the remedy for the events experienced by Meutia was when the character studied at Dayah for three years. In that place, the character begins to accept his life by organizing his own existence.

The results of the analysis of the experience of emptiness, including (i) the experience of emptiness experienced by the characters Meutia, Teungku Muaz, and Makcik Munah, (ii) the effort to fill the void with positive activities, (iii) the process of self-awareness to rise for the future, and (iv) build self-confidence by being willing to socialize with the environment.

3. Worry

Reading the novel *Gadis yang Menulis Surat Setiap Malam*, researchers found psychological experiences in the form of anxiety. This experience of anxiety appears through the characters Meutia and Teungku Muaz. Both characters experience the pressures of life—the life they dream of is not as they imagine it to be. Due to not meeting the desired target, feelings of anxiety arise. There must be a reason for this feeling of anxiety, so that someone feels anxious.

Beda dengan di dayah—pesantren tradisional di Aceh—dia berasa dalam ruangan, berteman Alquran dan kitab-kitab Arab. Namun, Pakcik Leman yang pernah menyelamatkannya dari incaran serdadu Jakarta, tidak sanggup membiayai hidupnya di pesantren. Bukan soal uang iuran, tetapi kebutuhan belanjanya sehari-hari lebih besar. Untuk biaya bulanan pengajian di dayah Cuma beberapa ribu. Namun, biaya hidup mencapai ratusan ribu. Bagi Pakcik Leman, perihal itu sungguh memberatkan. Hanya tiga tahun Meutia bertahan di dayah. Selepas itu dia juga tidak punya minat menyambung sekolah. Semua itu hanya akan menyusahkan orang lain. Pakcik Leman, teman ayahnya itu, lalu mengantar Meutia ke rumah bibinya, Makcik Munah yang tinggal di Lamlhok. Makcik Munah adalah adik kandung ibunya. Waktu itu Makcik Munah yang tinggal di wilayah kampung pesisir sedang mengalami musibah. Pakcik Mail, suaminya, tenggelam di laut bersama perahu mesinnya saat mencari ikan (GMS, 2021:11-12).

The quote above is a piece of Meutia's unpleasant life story. The quote above is set after a disaster that happened to his family. After the murder of Meutia's family, Meutia herself studied at Dayah, a traditional Islamic boarding school in Aceh. The background to the narrative above is Meutia's daydreaming, who at that time was living at the house of her aunt, Makcik Munah in Lamholk. Meutia daydreamed about her experience studying at Dayah. Meutia had the desire to continue her studies, but this desire was quickly suppressed because she did not want to bother other people. In the end, Meutia stopped going to school. Uncle Leman took Meutia to her aunt's house in Lamholk.

The desire to continue school and ultimately not continuing due to personal, family and economic circumstances is an experience of anxiety that Meutia feels. Meutia is worried about herself and her future. Dreams and high aspirations, disappear along the way. Human conditions cannot be prevented except by God. Meutia studied at Dayah for three years. The

anxiety that Meutia feels is multi-layered. Worried about himself and his future, then also worried about his family. After moving to Lamholk, Meutia still feels afraid because she is a wanted soldier. The most terrifying thing that Meutia ever imagined was that she would be discovered by soldiers. Meutia was arrested, and ultimately killed or taken hostage as happened to her older sister, Kasah.

Hingga kini Meutia masih hati-hati terhadap orang asing, kalau-kalau orang suruhan tentara masih mengincarnya. Jangan-jangan musuh ayahnya itu sudah tahu keberadaan Meutia sekarang. Lantas, diam-diam menyusup di biliknya pada malam hari. Meutia begitu ketakutan ketika membayangkannya. Dia sendiri tidak tahu kenapa musuh-musuh ayahnya—yang merupakan kaki-tangan serdadu-serdadu itu—menginginkan dia mati. Lantas bagaimana abangnya? (GMS, 2021:13).

Writing is Meutia's self-medication. Meutia uses writing as mental therapy. Through the letters written, the characters are able to release all their tired thoughts and mental turmoil. The character diverts all his soul's feelings by writing letters every night. Writing can indeed be used as psychological therapy. Naning Pranoto has even written the book *Writing for Therapy*. There is also another book, *24 Hours Understanding Creative Writing*. The book *Writing for Therapy* can be used as an inspiration to try to treat self-pain by writing. The book tells the story of his experiences in the world of literacy.

Meutia coba meneguhkan diri dalam menghadapi dunia yang mengerikan ini. Beribu persoalan terbentang luas di depan matanya. Walau terpukul dan terguncang dia tetap menjalani kehidupan yang wajar. Memang ada sisi tersembunyi darinya sebagai terapi yang membuatnya tidak menjadi gila. Orang-orang melihatnya tidak wajar. Namun, Meutia tidak ambil pusing. Dia mengalihkan semua beban masalahnya dengan menulis surat-surat setiap malam. Dia menuliskan surat untuk Tuhan (GMS, 2021:17-18).

Conclusions from the analysis of anxiety, including (i) anxiety that arises from the mind due to past trauma, (ii) anxiety and the mental therapy methods carried out by the character Meutia, (iii) anxiety and the process of returning to self-existence, (iv) Anxiety has a big influence on the character's mentality, (v) repeated events can awaken the character's trauma.

4. Feelings of Guilt

Feelings of guilt in the structure of human experience due to individual rejection or failure in actualizing potential and possibilities will give rise to feelings of existential guilt as punishment for human existence itself (Lathief, 2010: 72). In the text of the novel *Gadis yang Menulis Surat Setiap Malam* tells the story of Meutia's unpleasant life. The fate he received created a burden for his brother. Due to events in the past, the character now lives with his brother Makcik Munah and Uncle Mail. The family is said to be lacking in various aspects. One of them is related to the economy and livelihoods. Meutia's presence in their family adds to the burden. Feelings of guilt emerged within Meutia.

Pakcik Leman adalah perantara sebagai tangan Tuhan yang menyelamatkannya dari mara bahaya pembunuhan beruntun. Demi keamanannya, Meutia terpaksa meninggalkan bangku kuliah, kemudian masuk ke dayah. Di sanalah Meutia mempelajari hidup. Hidup yang sesungguhnya. Kadang dia bisa menerima kalau itu semua sudah kehendak Allah. Dia tidak bisa untuk tidak bersedih atas nasib malangnya ini.

Tempat dia menumpang sekarang juga jauh daripada apa yang dibayangkan. Makcik Munah yang kehilangan suaminya terpaksa menanggung beban hidup keluarga, dan sekarang ditambah lagi dirinya. Makcik terpaksa menghidupi diri dan keluarganya dengan usaha pengolahan ikan asin. Jika dulu dia bisa berharap dari hasil tangkapan suaminya, sekarang tidak lagi.

Lailan, putra Makcik Munah, tidak punya keberanian untuk melaut, terlebih setelah ayahnya tenggelam. Dan dia tidak memiliki pekerjaan lain. Di tengah suasana negeri yang sedang dilanda huru-hara perang, pekerjaan sangat sulit didapat. Mereka tidak memiliki harapan apa-apa, selain yang bisa dikerjakan di depan mata. Tidak juga memiliki kekayaan benda. Satu-satunya harta kekayaan keluarga berupa perahumesin turut lenyap bersama jasad ayahnya (GMS, 2021:14-15).

Read the quote above Meutia as a storyteller. Meutia tells about her life experiences. Thanks to Uncle Leman, now Meutia can continue her life. The character studies until college. At that moment, Meutia began to be sincere about the life she had received. Meutia thought everything was God's will. Now Meutia has a new family. Unfortunately, his new family was also affected by the death of Uncle Mail. Their livelihood as fishermen is their family's job. The fish catch is used as a salted fish processing business. Since Uncle Mail died, that livelihood has failed. Lailan, his son, did not have the courage to go to sea. Psychotraumatic attacks hit Lailan's psyche.

Meutia tries to help their family with her abilities. This is seen as in the following quote. Facing such difficult family circumstances, like it or not, Meutia has to work hard to help her aunt.

Apa yang dikerjakan Makcik Munah merupakan pekerjaan dia juga. Sementara gadis itu harus melupakan kepedihan masa lalunya, karena kenyataan yang dihadapi sekarang menuntutnya untuk terus bekerja dan bertahan. Betapa berat perjuangan batinnya menghadapi semua itu (GMS, 2021:15).

Livelihood is the main thing to support a person's living needs. When someone does not have a job, it is certain that they will have difficulty meeting their daily needs. Work was a conflict between Makcik Munah's family after the death of Uncle Mail. The finding from the topic of analysis is the emergence of the character Meutia's feeling of guilt over her presence in Makcik Munah's family. From feeling guilty to being a burden, Meutia's character becomes self-aware to help help her aunt's economy. The character helps his aunt's work as best he can. The work that her aunt does, Meutia's character also does. In this way, the character repays his aunt's kindness.

5. Togetherness

The human experience of togetherness has a broad perspective. Together means things together, not alone. The structure of the human experience of togetherness is of course that every human being has moments together. In literary texts, the characters' experiences of togetherness can be marked by interactions with opposing characters. Interaction is two-way communication that occurs at a moment, time and event. Say the meeting between the female main character and the male character and the two of them chatting can be categorized as a togetherness experience. Because in this event a sign of event and time appears.

Reading the literary text of the novel *Gadis yang Menulis Surat Setiap Malam*, many researchers encounter experiences of togetherness from each of the characters. The characters experience this togetherness to build a harmonious social world. Starting from family, society, co-workers, and a wider scope, namely social society. The experience of togetherness is interesting to analyze because it contains aromas of harmony in it.

Meutia, Nurul, and Makcik Munah are busy collecting dried anchovies and salted fish. Meanwhile, Lailan checked the marlin—a rectangular wooden-framed net for drying fish—after the three women had emptied the contents. Dozens of marlin were piled up on the right side of the page. If there are no obstacles, tomorrow they can sell the anchovies and fish to the fish tax.

Matahari bergitu terik. Peluh membasahi tubuh dan wajah mereka. Kulit Meutia yang kuning langsung berubah kemerahan tersengat matahari. Memang cukup menyiksa. Namun, gadis bertubuh semampai itu membiarkan saja panas membakarnya. Jadi

orang susah tidak boleh manja. Hidup memang harus bersusah-payah. Itu sudah lumrah karena keluarganya berasal dari kalangan orang bawah yang harus berjuang menghadapi hidup yang keras ini (GMS, 2021:10-11).

Reading the quote above, the researcher will show the experience of togetherness that exists between the characters Meutia, Nurul, Lailan and Makcik Munah. The author tells that the three characters are working together to collect anchovies and dried salted fish. Meanwhile, another character named Lailan takes care of the marlin where the fish are dried. This activity is carried out so that tomorrow the anchovies and salted fish can be sold. The setting for the quote above is at home during the day. The afternoon is marked by the heat of the sun. The four figures don't care about the heat of the sun. They continue to work to collect money from selling salted fish and anchovies. The characters above are shown by the lower classes of society who have to work to earn money.

Even though it was still raining, Makcik Munah managed to set up a simple shop. The terrace of the house was transformed into a small shop. This cannot be separated from Lailan's hard work as a craftsman. Makcik Munah as designer. Meutia helped, and Nurul, who looked healthy, also interfered.

Seminggu kemudian warung kecil Makcik Munah mulai ramai dikunjungi orang. Meutia dan Nurul ikut sibuk mengupas pisang, memotong tahu dan tempe. Sedangkan Makcik Munah di bagian minuman. Lailan bertugas sebagai pencari bahan baku. Pagi-pagi dia sudah ke pasar membeli pisang, tempe, tahu, dan sukun. Kemudian minyak makan, minyak tanah, gula, teh, kopi, dan sebagainya (GMS, 2021:98).

Reading the quote above, the researcher is shown the activities of the figures working together to set up a stall and fill the stall with various things that can be sold. The setting for the quote is on the terrace of Makcik Munah's house. The author shows cooperation through the activities of the characters: (i) All the characters participate in setting up the stall, the character Lailan is the handyman; (ii) the characters Meutia and Nurul are in the kitchen peeling bananas, cutting tofu and tempeh; (iii) the character Makcik Munah makes a drink; and (iv) the character Lailan goes shopping looking for raw materials to sell.

The quote above shows the togetherness that is reflected in the family environment. Makcik Munah's family works together to achieve a goal for the family's economic sustainability. Their togetherness shows good cooperation. Each other helps each other with the aim of completing all the work. Cooperation is really needed in situations like the text quote above. One person cannot do everything. Even if someone could, someone would definitely be overwhelmed. With cooperation and mutual cooperation, work will be completed quickly, precisely, neatly and orderly.

Conclusions from the findings and analysis above include: (i) experiences of togetherness with family; (ii) experience of togetherness with the community; (iii) experiences of togetherness with other figures of the same age; (iv) experiences of togetherness with people of different backgrounds and social status, (v) experiences of togetherness with people from different environments, and (iv) experiences of togetherness related to the past and present.

6. Spatiality

Reading the novel until the structure of the characters' experiences regarding spatiality or space or place emerges. In the intrinsic structure of literary works, it is characterized by a setting which includes the setting of place, setting of atmosphere and setting of events. Literary texts as social representations are characterized by the attachment of a place setting. The setting of the place is used as a key or sign of movement in the story, as well as changes in events. Each setting with different characters will tell a different story. Vice versa, characters from different backgrounds will show different events.

In this research object, storytelling is always filled with space or place. Each event reveals who the character is, where the event occurs, and what the event is. Let's look at the following quote.

Para tetangga pun tidak tahu alasan Meutia tinggal di rumah bibinya. Padahal sepengetahuan penduduk, Makcik Munah—bibi Meutia itu—kesulitan keuangan. Apalagi kedatangan gadis asal Sigli itu saat keluarga mereka sedang ditimpa musibah. Suami perempuan empat puluhan itu hilang di tengah laut. Kata para nelayan, Pakcik Mail tenggelam bersama perahu mesinnya (GMS, 2021:7).

The structure of the character's experience of space or place in the quote above can be seen from the attachment of the name of the place, namely Sigli. Sigli is Meutia's birthplace before the character moves to her aunt's house in Lamholk. Reading the quote above the author tells of Meutia's current whereabouts in Lamholk. Meutia lives at her aunt's house. This quote also tells about the condition of Makcik Munah's family when Meutia arrived. Namely, he was struck by the loss and death of Uncle Mail while working. This character disappeared while at sea with forty people. Carefully, this experience presents three spatialities, namely at Makcik Munah's house, Sigli, and the middle of the sea. Each place has its own events.

Places or settings in literary texts are markers of events. The existence or emergence of events is marked by the presence of different places and characters. Even though the story is in the character's mind, it can still be said to be an experience of spatiality.

Sebutlah tokoh Meutia membayangkan kejadian, apabila bagian dari masa lalu dan ditandai dengan adanya tempat maka dapat disebutkan pengalaman spasialitas. Sekarang Nurul yang bingung. Apakah segampang itu mengirimkan surat untuk Tuhan? Sebagaimana yang dikatakan teungku pandai agama, urusan Tuhan itu masalah gaib. Hubungan manusia dengan Allah juga hubungan gaib. Hubungan spiritual hanya bisa dirasakan dengan hati. Kalau sudah menyangkut tauhid, maka tidak semua bisa terjangkau logika. Namun, kenyataannya jelas ada. "Berarti malaikat yang mengirimkannya," ketus Nurul (GMS, 2021:8).

Furthermore, apart from the character Meutia, other characters also have experiences of spatiality. The character Muaz in the novel *Gadis yang Menulis Surat Setiap Malam* has experiences from her past. Almost similar to Meutia is an unpleasant experience but the conflict is different. Meutia is about family and murder. Meanwhile, Teungku Muaz is about family, education, and also love stories. However, the author tells more stories of romance and education, namely teaching. Below, let's look at an excerpt from the novel.

Teungku Muaz could devote more time to his older students. He has only been leading religious studies there for two months, and his progress can already be seen rapidly. Not only because of his good looks but the way he teaches makes people happy. Apart from that, he made data collection in the form of a list of students and wrote everything in the hall's documentation book. He kept the money from the recitation community which was donated by the community separately. He felt there was no need to use the money, his salary from teaching at school was enough for his daily needs.

Saat mengajar, Teungku Muaz suka menebarkan senyum, mengeluarkan kata-kata lembut dan arif... (GMS, 2021:66-67).

The author's quote above tells about teungku Muaz's spatial experience. Through the quote above, the author refers to the character's past events, namely when he was teaching. Many characters smile and say polite words to their interlocutors. The way the characters are taught is done in a way that is more mature than their age. Many people enjoy being taught by Tengku Muaz. Apart from teaching at the study hall, the figure also teaches at school. The friendly, fun teaching style, teungku Muaz's appearance often makes students and other people excited.

The spatial experience that is visible from the quote above is the study hall and school. In the study hall, figures teach religious knowledge to village children and the social community. Meanwhile at school, Teungku Muaz taught religion to the students. These are the two places where figures share knowledge. The rest, when on the street, in food stalls and in other places. In these two places the author talks a lot about. In the mosque, when giving sermons, it is also used as a place to share religious knowledge for figures.

The conclusions in this analysis include: (i) the past experience of Meutia's character while in Sigli, (ii) the present experience of Meutia's character while in Lamholk, (iii) the inner experience of Meutia's character regarding the letter sent to God, (iv) experience Muaz's character's past starting from his family, education, teaching place, and others, (v) Muaz's character's present experience starting from the new teaching place in Lamholk, at the recitation hall, and the mosque which is used as a place to teach and rest, (vi) experiences the experiences of other characters are marked by the setting of the place.

7. Temporalis

Temporalism in the study of existentialist psychology is related to the structure of the experience of human existence. In the analysis of literary texts, the temporal structure of human experience can be seen from the time of the characters' existence: past, present and future. The most essential structure of human experience is the most shocking experiences of the characters in literary texts.

The temporal structure of experience experienced by the character Meutia is very visible in its impact in the present. The image of soldiers who will kill him makes the character always feel anxious and afraid. More than that, not only his parents. Since the character was eight years old, the soldiers have lived in Sigli. They killed, shot and wreaked havoc on their homeland. Psychological experiences since childhood were very sad, almost giving rise to phobias towards the characters. Regarding what the soldiers did, the researcher will present it based on the temporalist-based structure of Meutia's experience.

Bagi Meutia tidak begitu. Apa yang dialaminya adalah pengecualiaan. Dia tidak bisa merelakan begitu saja apa yang telah dialaminya. Kenyataan yang dihadapinya begitu pahit, pedih, dan kelam. Sebuah kebiadaban sejarah yang telah merenggut seluruh kebahagiaan dari hidupnya. Sebagian hidupnya telah mati, yang tinggal kini hanya diri yang masih mengemban napas. Hidup yang dirasakannya tidak lain sebetulnya ritual takdir dengan pasrah dan kerelaan yang niscaya.

Peristiwa yang menimpa Meutia terjadi secara berkesinambungan dan terus menerus. Dimulai sejak tahun 1990, saat pemerintah Jakarta yang kejam di bawah kekuasaan Presiden Soeharto mengirimkan ratusan ribu serdadu ke Aceh dengan alasan menumpaskan pemberontak. Bagaimana banyaknya serdadu yang berkelirisan di Aceh itu, jika dibandingkan dengan lembu milik peternak yang berkelirisan di jalan-jalan, masih lebih banyak jumlah tentara.

Waktu itu Meutia baru berusia delapan tahun. Belum mengerti betul kenapa pemerintah mengirimkan pembunuh ke Aceh dan kenapa orang-orang yang menuntut kemerdekaan harus dibinasakan semua. Bahkan, kelakuan prajurit-prajurit itu sangat beringas (GMS, 2021:26).

The events experienced by Meutia's character are similar to those of Nazir and Saidul in other Arafat Nur novels. The character Nazir in the novel Lolong Anjiing di Bulan, then the character Saidul in the novel Bayang Suram Pelangi. These three novels are set between teenagers and adults. The three figures witnessed firsthand how the soldiers behaved towards the people of Aceh. In fact, it is said that Nazir's parents, grandfather, grandfather-in-law, uncle, father and brother were victims of the brutality of the soldiers. However, the author does not tell about the character's psychological turmoil. The character is depicted as a strong, rebellious man. When he grew up, Nazir joined the GAM group.

For Meutia's character, past events for her were life experiences that really shook her psychology. Researchers said it was shocking because the impact of this psychological experience took away his teenage years. Say that Meutia doesn't want to go to school, Meutia is afraid of meeting strangers, Meutia doesn't want to leave the house and socialize. The experience of Meutia's existence in the past is the cause of what the character is experiencing in the present.

Atas berbagai runtutan peristiwa dan kenyataan itu, jiwa Meutia terguncang. Terkadang dia tidak yakin apa yang dihadapinya itu suatu kenyataan. Hidupnya harus luntang-lintang berlari dan bersembunyi. Dia berputar-putar dalam lingkaran tiada akhir. Sementara kenyataan hidup lain yang keras menantinya di depan (GMS, 2021:13).

Reading the quote above through the structure of human experience regarding temporalis, it appears as a result of the character Meutia's past. The author narrates the current situation of the character Meutia. The life experiences of those who are not old enough to be accepted must be swallowed and felt truly. The murder incident was very real, witnessed by Meutia's eyes. Psychological studies related to experience encourage depictions of bad experiences in the lives of characters. Bad experience of being left by parents due to a tragic event. Today, Meutia is nineteen years old. Therefore, it can be said that this incident occurred when Meutia was seventeen or eighteen years old.

The findings that researchers have produced and discussed include: (i) past experiences of figures, such as Meutia, Teungku Muaz, and Abu Chik, (ii) present experiences of figures, such as Meutia, Teungku Muaz, and Abu Chik, (iii) the individual existence of each character regarding the awakening of the most essential event, (iv) the existence of Makcik Munah's family for their less fortunate life, and (v) the awareness of the Lamholk community regarding events that have occurred and are repeated.

8. Body

Analysis of the structure of human experience regarding the body means relating to the human physical condition. Starting from the top of the head to the toes. The novel *Gadis yang Menulis Surat Setiap Malam* tells the story of the complicated history of Aceh during the rebellion between GAM and the TNI. The novel is told through Meutia about death, murder, looting of crops, shootings and so on. Bodyhood in existential psychology analysis leads to human awareness of experiencing their bodies, as well as the bodies of other people (Lathief, 2010: 82).

Darah dan air mata terus mengalir. Kekejian dan kemaksiatan merajalela. Penculikan dan pembunuhan terjadi di mana-mana. Dan banyak perempuan yang diperkosa serdadu. Serdadu-serdadu yang gagal menemukan dan menangkap pejuang, mereka kerap membakar rumah penduduk, memperkosa setiap perempuan yang mereka temukan, dan memukuli setiap lelaki yang tidak bersalah hingga cidera, bahkan meninggal (GMS, 2021:17).

Reading the quote above using the lens of existential psychology is Meutia's character's experience of events that the character has seen and felt. Through the quote above we are presented with the memory of Meutia's character about the Sigli people who were affected by the rebellion. The author tells expressive sentences, describing the conditions and situations in the 1990s. About the people of Sigli who were killed, raped and beaten by soldiers. Three forms of abuse against society indicate an experience of need. The detailed and descriptive narrative encourages readers to also research the halls of life at that time.

Rape, related to the body. This means that someone who experiences rape feels pain in their body. Because the character or victim receives coercion from the rapist. Using the diction raped means emphasizing violence, attacks on objects. Likewise, the attitude of killing

and beating means violence perpetrated by someone against another person. This violence takes the form of physical violence that directly affects and injures bodily objects. Killing means killing someone in some way so that someone dies.

Waktu itu Meutia baru berusia delapan tahun. Belum mengerti betul kenapa pemerintah mengirimkan pembunuh ke Aceh dan kenapa orang-orang yang menuntut kemerdekaan harus dibinasakan semua. Bahkan, kelakuan prajurit-prajurit itu sangat beringas. Mereka mencekik, memukul, menusuk, menikam, dan menembak siapa saja yang tidak mereka sukai. Sehingga korban pembunuhan dan pembantaian lebih banyak jatuh dari rakyat biasa yang tidak ada kaitannya dengan pemberontak (GMS, 2021:26).

As the researcher stated at the beginning, there were forms of physical violence carried out by the government against the people of Aceh, namely strangling, stabbing, stabbing, hitting and shooting. Soldiers through the novel will carry out these actions against anyone, especially men. Without any reason or reason, this behavior is carried out to express frustration. The 'violent' diction in the quote above further clarifies the inhumanity of the group of soldiers. For this reason, many innocent and guilty victims are affected. The terrible thing was, the victim was dead, the soldiers continued to slaughter him until his body was destroyed. As told in Arafat's previous novels.

Conclusions from the analysis above: (i) there is a depiction of how a person's body acts as an object or subject, (ii) there is an imagination about the body based on a person's experience as an observer, (iii) there is a psychological impact on a person because they know about a terrible physical event, and (vi) psychological experiences have an impact on a person's individual existence.

Conclusion

This research resulted in a large and extensive study. The existential female character in the research object is a visualization of the existential experience of the character Meutia who rises to have awareness of the essence and existence of the individual. Life experiences that intersect mental and physical experiences are treated through writing letters and living in social communities. Existence encourages characters to live like society in general. The conclusions from this research show that there is an existential experience inherent in the characters, especially the character Meutia. These experiences include experiences of: (i) death; (ii) emptiness (loneliness and isolation); (iii) anxiety; (iv) feelings of guilt; (v) togetherness; (vi) spatiality, (vii) temporalis; and (viii) body.

References

- Armariena, Dian Nuzulia. 2017. Penulisan Cerpen Berbasis Kearifan Lokal Sumatera Selatan Dengan Metode Image Streaming Dalam Proses Kreatif Mahasiswa. *Jurnal PAMBAHSI*, 7(1).
- Aryani. 2022. Psikologi Eksistensial Tokoh Ancika dalam Novel Ancika karya Pidi Baiq. *Jurnal Pustaka Indonesia*, 2(3), 162-173.
- Ayu, Widya Resti Gusti, dkk. 2023. Kajian Kebenaran Psikologi Eksistensial Rollo May Dalam Dunia Klinis. *Psikobuletin: Buletin Ilmiah Psikologi*, 4(1), 1-10).
- Lathief, Supaat. 2010. *Psikologi Fenomenologi Eksistensialisme*. Lamongan: Pustaka Pujangga.
- Misiak, Henryk dan Virginia Staudt Sexton. 2009. *Psikologi Fenomenologi, Eksistensial dan Humanistik: Suatu Survei Historis*. Bandung: Refika Aditama.
- Nur, Arafat. 2021. *Gadis yang Menulis Surat Setiap Malam*. Yogyakarta: BASABASI.
- Rahmasawi, Diana. 2012. Peran Filsafat Eksistensialisme Terhadap Terapi Eksistensial-Humanistik Untuk Mengatasi Frustrasi Eksistensial. *Jurnal Psikologi: Teori dan Terapan*, 2(2).
- Wellek Dan Austin. 1989. *Teori Kesusastraan*. Jakarta: Gramedia.
-