

The Interaction of The Main Character with God, as a Survival Strategy in a *Surat Kecil Untuk Tuhan* by Agnes Davonar

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Abstract—This research aims to understand the form of interaction between characters and God in the novel Surat Kecil Untuk Tuhan and the theory used is literary theory and religiosity. The method used is a qualitative descriptive method which sources data from the novel Surat Kecil Untuk Tuhan by Agnes Davonar. The results of this study are the characters in the novel Surat Kecil Untuk Tuhan still perform prayers even though in a physical condition that does not improve, so he expresses and expresses himself to God because he realizes he will be called whenever God wants. However, with increasingly worsening conditions, he continued to draw close to God to ask for guidance in his life and improve his charity and morals.

Keywords—literature, interaction, strategy, survival.

I. Introduction

Novel Surat Kecil Untuk Tuhan is one of the works of Agnes Davonar which describes the fortitude and sincerity of the main character who has rhabdomyosarcoma cancer in medical science, this disease is considered malignant and can kill patients within five days. This cancer can be taken at any time. Steadfastness makes the character strong to continue to struggle to maintain his life even though he must be accompanied by cancer. The figures have confidence that whatever happened now is a test from God. The figure believed that what he experienced was a form of God's love for him so that the character was always willing to live it because the character believed God was always there in every pain.

The phenomena of children with physical illness attract the attention of writers to imitate the realities that appear and occur in real life in their work. One of the literary works which contain this is the novel *Surat Kecil Untuk Tuhan* by Agnes Davonar. Writers can only imitate and imagine things that appear so that they stand under the reality itself in the hierarchy. But this does not mean that literature altogether loses value. Because, even though literature is tied to a lower level than the reality that is without, literature is really trying to overcome everyday reality.

Novel *Surat Kecil Untuk Tuhan* the point of departure of the true story makes the reader feel carried away and as if the reader was involved in the events that occurred. Small Letter Novel For God which was published in 2012 and became a best seller, until it sold more than 200,000 EXP. The novel by Agnes Davonar was also appointed by the

glass screen and became Box Office in 2012 and received the award of the best Bali international script film festival in 2011. This is proof that the novel was so hypnotic to readers with the events that took place in it.

The story in the novel Surat Kecil Untuk Tuhan is a manifestation of the sensitivity of the author to the structure of society which is portrayed through characters in his novel. Especially the interaction between the character and God through his letter as if it were a personal matter. The answer to the problem, in this case, erupted with sincerity through the novel's discourse. With all commitments, it appears that the discourse was voiced notification to the audience or the reader that life should be sincere and patient in undergoing the ordeal of the Lord, as an example and limit the possibility of man as creator. The assumption is not only found in the western art theory in the Middle Ages. For the Arabs was a poet not a creator in an absolute sense; for them, the poet is bound to the creation of God which is a perfect model; while in the Qur'an the truth is given in terms of the use of language that is not resolved again. On the other hand, in Chinese poetry, generally the mimetic aspect is emphasized: art, literature must emulate the universe, the truth of truth and truth of humanity [1].

Therefore, motivated from aforementioned explanation, this paper explores the interaction of the main character with god, as a survival strategi in a *Surat Kecil Untuk Tuhan* by Agnes Davonar.

The rest of this paper is organized as follow: Section II describes the the theoretical background about novel. Section III presents proposed method. Section IV presents obtained results and following by discussion. Finally, Section V concludes this work.

II. RUDIMENTARY

The novel is a literary work that contains psychological conflicts, human behavior, and physiology. psychology of human behavior is divided into two, namely reflexive and non-reflexive behavior. Reflexive behavior occurs spontaneously, such as blinking of the eye when it is exposed to light, motion of the knee if hit by a hammer, pulling a finger if exposed to fire, and so on. Reflexive behavior occurs by itself. In this case the stimulus received by the individual does not reach the center of the nervous



system or brain, as a center of consciousness or the center of controlling human behavior [2].

The depiction of events in the *Surat Kecil Untuk Tuhan* is illustrated by information based on real stories in society. Like, the names of characters, events, and place names. In general, this fact is the names of characters, place names (toponyms), events, monuments, and so on. [3]. In fiction, there are often events and problems that are told, because the author's shrewdness and imagination ability seem concrete and like really exists and occurs [4].

The Surat Kecil Untuk Tuhan describes a female figure who experiences a physical disease of cancer. At a glance, cancer may appear as a purely biological disease, but the importance of biological factors is quickly apparent. The Surat Kecil Untuk Tuhan novel depicts a woman who physical experiences illness, malignant cancer Rabdomiosarkoma, which lodges in her face and makes her anxious and depressed and tired of her physical state. It is not surprising that cancer sufferers are often anxious or depressed, and usually experience cancer-related fatigue. Physical / health code and the level of welfare of the character. From this depiction, the character is a strong figure, sometimes weak, relatively happy, calm or sometimes rude.

In the end the characters in the novel Surat Kecil Untuk Tuhan surrender to the cancer they suffered and draw closer to the creator to ask for strength in fighting diseases that have changed their physicality. A religious approach can help psychological strength which also contributes to physical endurance. Through good worship, someone will get help to deal with the disease that is experienced. Cancer can produce several physical and physiological problems, including fear of surgery, the need to survive and look back on the meaning of life [5]. Novel Surat Kecil Untuk Tuhan attracts attention because it is an inspirational novel. In addition, what is also interesting to study is the subject of female characters, the attraction in the novel Surat Kecil Untuk Tuhan lies in the steadfastness and sincerity of the character in living his life with cancer, which underlies his behavior and behavior. To be able to better understand the contents of the novel that contains need to do serious reading anyway [6].

From the world of Islamic literature that is rich, from Andalusia, Spain to India, Pakistan, and continues to Indonesia, surely the element of limitation makes the writer unable to serve satisfying examples and studies. However, if I can narrow the area of discussion only in the framework of the Arab renaissance and the world of wealth around the Middle East Ocean to the Kaspi Ocean, Armenia, Iran, Turkey, Egypt, Lebanon, Syria and Saudi Arabia itself, look there is an evaluation as happened in our homeland. From the pristine or feudal literary phase, the phase of the encounter with colonial Western literature, to the point of one (Arabic: awakening) is synthetic and traditional with themes and forms of modern literature [7].

Human attitudes, even though they are known, will be carried on continuously, but still goes on fighting they are religious. Because of that, he signifies that he has hope, he sees the glow of light, which, though far away, makes him determined to live on and seize life. And that hope can only

be inferred based on trust, that there really is a final truth, a final justice. So that the whole struggle still has a meaning, but it is worth the price of the victim. Willingness to live and hope, even though failure around is as if not giving hope or breath, that will to live, which at the same time supports another human being, not the world of leaders and servants, not an empty paradise of mirage, but real reality [7].

The word survival, in its lexical sense, means survival. What is meant by survival is the ability of a person to survive in unfavorable circumstances around him. Human willingness and ability to survive in the environment is a human instinct. This is a manifestation of the power of thought of a perfect being. Instincts like this grow and develop themselves [8].

Now the question arises when is there survival? The definite answer is since humans existed. In principle, the ancient human ancestor or always do the survival of the state of treacherous terrain, animal interference, and so on. It's just technique or method survival continues to develop. If you pay attention to rural tribes or villagers, usually you can still see their intelligence and skills in using nature based on their ancestors' instructions. These experiences are made important treasury and knowledge. For example, in Pasundan land, residents are very familiar with leaves that can be used as food known as lab. This is a characteristic and a knowledge derived from ancestors, especially in the Pasundan land. Knowledge of these leaves if studied will support survival knowledge [8].

Adiyuwono in [8] explains the abbreviation for the word Survival which consists of eight letters having its own meaning. Survival definition contained in the eighth abbreviation of the letter, is as a sentence. S = conscious in an emergency. U = try to be calm and steadfast. R = fear and despair are removed. V = enhanced vitality. I = want to stay alive and survive the goal. V = natural variations can be used. A = from understanding, practicing, and knowing how. L = lancer, slaman, slumun, slamet.

The meaning of all the abbreviations above the letter L, can certainly be understood then what is meant by the abbreviation L? the last L meaning is actually an emphasis, namely the need for prayer as an inner reinforcement. This will be very useful for strength and heart needs. All efforts will be in vain if someone is desperate. Therefore, to foster optimism and enthusiasm should always pray and remember God Almighty. The importance of debriefing for fortitude and inner strength [8].

Adiyuwono in [8] revealed that in survival, a person must have an attitude or mental support. This is needed to add determination, willingness, and high fighting spirit to get out of the difficulties and obstacles faced. Rarely, softminded people can overcome this situation. Therefore, someone needs to have the following attitudes. (1) The spirit to stay alive. Without enthusiasm to stay alive, everything that is done for survival will be in vain. With this spirit will grow the strength of abstinence in any difficult situation. It is this motivation that will always foster hope with positive qualities and courage. (2) self-confidence. Self-confidence is a potential force that must be maintained and explored. With self-confidence will arise the power to carry out everything



with full confidence. Believe in yourself with the motto that I can get out of trouble, as faced by thousands or even millions of people who can survive and get out of trouble. 3) common sense. In a strong and steady physical state, a person can experience a psychological / spiritual disorder. Especially this is often experienced what if panic, depressed in a state of continuous torture to cause stress, and in a state of mental imbalance. If this has happened, survival means losing experience because it is difficult to think carefully and rationally to make sound decisions. Everything is done haphazardly without calculation. Though common sense is needed in terms of survival strategies. The point of course is taking the initiative and alternatives in solving the difficulties faced.

Surviving life is a human nature to continue the survival of a better life under any circumstances whatsoever. The advantages of survival are mainly the benefits of memory for words. These words are often chosen from unrelated categories to limit the suitability between scenarios and stimuli. Nairne, *et al.*, [9], determine that memory is best for the survival process. There is no difference in performance in all conditions. Gu & Zeng, in [10] Health is a multidimensional concept consisting of physical, mental, and social dimension.

Confidence and continue daily creativity can also affect survival, not only physical but also psychological, with a diminished sense of stress can also help survive. Klumb & Maier in [11] shows that other daily activities, such as meeting friends, shopping, and doing voluntary work, are associated with a longer life. Goldberg & Elliot in [12], In addition to physical influences, psychosocial effects are considered to operate. Involvement in complex activities such as solving puzzles and reading novels gives learning and pleasure.

III. PROPOSED METHOD

The method used in this research is a qualitative descriptive method, the data needed in this research is qualitative data Ratna in [3] reveals qualitative methods give attention to natural data, data in relation to the context of its existence: (1) Data collection techniques in this study are by reading and recording techniques (read note). Readings on the novel Surat Kecil Untuk Tuhan by Agnes Davonar. First, a careful reading of all of Agnes Davonar's novels is done. The reading process is carried out intensively and repeatedly to get valid information in accordance with the research problem. Work understand more intensively on specific parts related to the focus of research. Intensive understanding is needed in this activity, in order to obtain valid data based on research problems. Third, analysis of the parts of the story that has something to do with the research problem. This step aims to interpret the data that has been obtained from novel reading activities. Fourth, make a description of the data. This activity aims to obtain data based on the research focus; (2) Research instruments.

Appropriately in other qualitative research data, collection instruments used in this study are self-explanatory (human instruments). Researchers function as planners, implementers, analysts, interpreters, and reporters of the results of the research. As an instrument of research,

researchers have characteristics that include responsiveness, can adapt, summarize, and take advantage of opportunities to find unusual responses [13].

A. Validity of Data

The purpose of checking the validity of the data (documents) in this study is to use the theory of triangulation theory. The validity of this technique assumes that the facts cannot be checked the degree of trust in with one theory or more. With this triangulation technique, it can also recheck its findings by comparing it with various sources, methods and or theories [13].

B. Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis techniques used in this study are qualitative descriptive analysis. Where this method is effort continues, r be repeated and persistent among performing data description, categorization, inference, and presentation of data. Following the presentation of the four stages i.e.: (1) Description of data Describes the data that has been collected by the stages of data collection before the data is classified; (2) Categorization, Formulate and maintain data that has been compiled so that it remains in the rules that have been determined; (3) Inference (conclusion)

At this stage, conclusions are drawn about the results of the data obtained from the beginning of the study. This conclusion still requires verification (re-research about the truth of the report) so that the results obtained are truly valid; the components are interrelated and carried out continuously starting from the beginning, when the research takes place, until the end of the report; (4) Presentation of data, in this step, the data that has been prepared then organized on a regular basis and detailed to be easily understood. The data is then analyzed so that a description of the focus and problems of the research is analyzed.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the obtained results and following by discussion.

A. Interaction of Figures with God

The shop in the novel *Surat Kecil Untuk Tuhan* by Agnes Davonar interacts with God through letters, a small letter containing his complaints about what he feels. The characters in the novel poured out their hearts through a small letter which he wrote as seen in the following quote. Maintaining the Integrity of the Specifications.

Surat Kecil Untuk Tuhan
Tuhan
Andai aku bisa kembali
Aku tidak ingin ada tangisan di dunia ini.
Tuhan
Andai aku bisa kembali
Aku berharap tidak ada lagi hal yang sama terjadi padaku,
Terjadi pada orang lain.
Tuhan
Bolehkan aku menulis surat kecil untukmu?
Tuhan
Bolehkan aku memohon satu hal kecil darimu?



Biarkan aku bisa melihat dengan mataku untuk memandang langit dan bulan setiap hari

Tuhan

Ijinkanlah rabutku kembali tumbuh, agar aku bisa menjadi wanita seutuhnya.

Tuhan

Bolehkan aku tersenyum lebih lama lagi Agar aku bisa memberikan kebahagiaan kepada ayah dan sahabat-sahabatku.

Tuhan

Berikanlah aku kekuatan untuk menjadi dewasa Agar aku bisa memberikan arti hidupku Kepada siapapun yang mengenalku. Tuhan Surta kecilku ini

Adalah surat terakhir dalam hidupku Andai aku bisa kembali Ke dunia yang kau berikan padaku, [14].

The quote above describes a dialogue or interaction between a character and God through a small letter he wrote for God. The person in the quote above wrote his desire or desire to be told to God. The character asked God to return so that there would be no more tears in this world. Through the little latter he wrote, stores begged God to be given a long life so that he could see the sky and the moon every day, because of cancer he had experienced until all his hair fell out and he asked God to regrow his hair so he could become a woman. The character also asked for strength so that he became an adult to accept the trials he experienced and gave meaning to life for other people with diseases in his body.

B. Religious

Religion reflects a commendable attitude or submissive attitude in worship in accordance with the religion he adheres to. Religion is very important in human life and becomes an attitude of life in a prohibited order and attitude that has been set in his religion. Religious meant here that obedience characters in the novel *Surat Kecil Untuk Tuhan*, obedient to the commands of religion, though ill these figures keep praying and always closer to the almighty creator to for guidance to be given road settlement on the problems encountered visible in the following quote.

Aku meminta maaf kepada Tuhan yang telahku salahkan. Dan malam itu akupun sholat untuk meminta petunjuk dari yang kuasa dan bersyukur atas segala yang Tuhan berikan padaku walau dengan penyakit seperti ini [14].

Sebelum menjalani proses kemoterapi itu, aku pun banyak melakukan doa dan sholat untuk memuluskan iman dan tagwaku kepada Tuhan [14].

The above quote illustrates the communication of the Keke with God through prayer and prayer. This is as a form of Keke figure's strategy to increase the coffers of the power to face cancer that has changed his life, even though in any circumstances even though he is sick. Keke's character continues to pray and pray as a thanksgiving in life, because God has shown his power in Keke against his illness, even though he must live with his lawyer.

The second quote also shows Keke's character doing the same thing as in the first quote, namely by praying and praying for guidance from God. The strategy was carried out by Keke's figure to increase faith and piety in undergoing the next treatment. Praying and undergoing prayer is also one way to show obedience to God, because only to Him Keke surrender and ask for salvation.

Mereka membaca ayat-ayat Al-quran setiap hari di sampingku. Dari wajah mereka terlihat ketakutan akan kehilangan aku. Suara-suara ayat suci itu ternyata berhasil membuatku terbangun.

Aku bangkit dan melihat mereka dengan perasaan bingung. Mereka menangis di sampingku. Aku masih merasakan perih diwajah ku ketika bangun. Ayah mencium dan memelukku, bersyukur karena aku tersadar dari komaku. Di antara kebingungan semua ini, aku sadar mereka datang untuk membuatku bahagia. Aku tidak boleh ikut menangis bila melihat mereka menangis. Kalau aku menangis itu sama saja aku bersedih dan itu akan mebuat mereka berhenti menangis. Aku pun tersenyum pada meraka

Lalau berkata..

Kalian semua jangan menangis, kan Keke tidak apa-apa. Kalau kalian nangis, Keke jadi mau tidur lagi aja...hehehe. Ujarku becanda

Dan mereka juga ikut tertawa dan lepas dari tangis mereka.

Aku sadar mereka begitu mencintaiku. Aku sadar, aku tidak sendirian menghadapi duniaku. Aku percaya Tuhan membuat semua ini. walau aku tertidur 48 jam lamanya, tapi aku tidur dengan tenang bersama ayat-ayat suci yang keluar dari mulut mereka yang berdoa untukku. Tuhan membuat kami menjadi lebih dekat [14].

Semua berkumpul disisiku, kemudian berkumandang ayat-ayat Al-quran. Di kamarku seperti rumah ibadah dadakan. Entah mengapa ketika itu aku seperti mendengar ajakan sholat dari mulut Ayah yang dibisikan ke telingaku. Tanganku terangkat secara tiba-tiba walau aku dalam keadaan koma. Semua orang yang berdoaan di sampingku bersemangat melihat aku mulai mendapat reaksi dari ayat-ayat indah tersebut [14].

In the quotation above it is clearly illustrated that the verses of the Qur'an are able to become natural therapeutic drugs for people who are in a coma and become part of a supportive strategy because these verses can have a positive impact on the Keke character who is currently in a state of unconsciousness. The religious therapy became a real help in the life of Keke, who survived, and realized from such a long coma.

The second quote also illustrates the same thing, namely the power of God through the father-holy verse that is sung by the family. The scriptures that are read by the family give a picture of God's miracles, respond to prayers performed by the family. Communication carried out by the family with God paid off with the awareness of Keke's character from a long coma. Reading the verses of the Koran by the family, is a way for families to communicate with God to ask for strength to the Keke figure who is in a coma.

Belum aku merebahkan tubuhku, adzan magrib pun berkumandan. Langsung saja aku bangkit dari tempat tidurku dan menuju kamar mandi untuk mengambil air wudhu. Setelah aku merasa bersih, langsung saja kuambil mukena, dilanjutkan dengan sholat. Setelah selesai sholat, aku berdoa kepada Allah agar jalan hidupku dimudahkan. Aku berdoa pula semoga yang selama ini aku khawatirkan tidak terjadi.

Semoga kanker itu tidak pernah kembali lagi padaku [14].



The above quote illustrates the communication of Keke's character with God to ask for convenience in his life. Obedience in worship to draw closer to God and remember the power of God, that is only to Him a place to surrender and pray, with His power, guidance, and miracles because only God can provide health and sickness, then to Him too a place to return to ask for help and healing. The strategy of praying as communication with God has delivered Keke to healing and returning to live like other normal children.

Keesokan harinya aku terbangun dari tidur. Entah mengapa aku jadi merenungi kembali, mengingat apa yang dikatakan Ayah pada malam itu. Aku sadar kini aku mulai berserah diri pada tuhan untuk menjalani sisah hidupku. Aku mulai berpikir tidak ingin membuat siapapun yang selama ini mendukungku untuk tentap tegar dalam menjalani hidup ini menjadi sedih dan kecewa. Tapi satu hal yang ku takuktkan dalam hidupku saat ini adalah kehilangan orang yang aku sayangi saat aku di Singapura [14].

Submitting to God is a way of believing that human beings have something that the characters do in the quote above. Although surrendering to God but he did not want to make anyone sad with the conditions experienced, especially for people who always support him to be strong in accepting reality. But there are other fears, that is the loss of loved ones when they must go abroad. The closest people give support until he can survive in his suffering.

Ayah sering merenung di kamarnya sambil menangis. Entah sudah berapa banyak airmata yang Ayah habiskan. Aku melihatnya sholat tahajud di malam hari sambil menangis tersedu-sedu, berdoa pada Tuhan untuk memohon petunjuk. Entah petunjuk apa yang sedang dia harapkan terhadap situasi yang tidak aku mengerti ini [14].

In the above quote illustrates the way a character communicates with God through evening prayer and prayers to ask for directions. Figure Father realized only to Him that he could ask for instructions and prayers, to resolve problems faced in his family. Doing night prayers is a natural therapy for someone who is in trouble, because night prayer is believed to be a way to get closer to God and ask for instructions in solving problems in his family, especially for children who are experiencing cancer.

Dengan mengucapkan syukur dengan nawaitul lalu berdoa bismillah tawakaltu alallah, kami memutuskan untuk kembali sekolah. Ternyata doa kami terkabulkan [14].

Allah memang maha adil, dan ini yang membuat aku ingin memperdalam ajaran Agama. Terkadang aku sering membuka Al-quran, sambil mencari-cari makna dari hidupku dan pernah aku membaca salah satu ayat Al-quran yang artinya. "sesuatu yang baik menurutmu belum tentu baik dimata Allah" [14].

In the above quote illustrated prayer as a way of communicating characters with God. Prayer is a bridge to the characters in the above quote to voice his heart to God. It is not uncommon for people to do this if they are in trouble. This method is a force for sufferers or anyone in trouble, because praying is a way or strategy to ask for

directions to life and the power to get out of adversity. That's how the characters in the quote above do.

The second quote also describes the communication of Keke figures through the Holy Qur'an. This method can also have a positive effect on Keke's character, because the Qur'an provides peace when reading the verses contained in it, also shows the meaning of life which means if studied properly.

V. CONCLUSION

From the results of the data analysis above, it can be concluded that the characters in the novel *Surat Kecil Untuk Tuhan* show obedience in religion and continue to carry out their obligations even though they are sick. His physical illness did not prevent him from continuing to carry out his obligations and was always willing to accept and live life with trials in his life. The character in the novel realizes that whenever God can hold him, even so, the character in the novel Little Letter to God continues to spin and fix his charity while he can breathe. By continuing to pray and read the holy verses of the Koran can have a positive effect on the person who is experiencing a long coma. This signifies the holy verses of the Koran to be a natural human therapy for survival.

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