

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Previous Study

Previous research is an effort by researchers to find comparisons and then to find new inspiration for further research. The purpose of selecting previous research is to find out new perspectives on research that uses Jean Paul Sartre's existentialism theory. Through the thinking of several studies, the author tries to automate the synchronization in several existing writings, especially on Sartre's application theory in modern literary works. The following are several previous studies that the author uses to help this research process.

The first research is a journal article was conducted Elijah Akinbode from the Department of Philosophy, Ekiti State University, Nigeria with the title “Jean-Paul Sartre's Existential Freedom: A Critical Analysis”. In this article the author discusses several things proposed by Alvin Plantinga regarding Sartre's philosophy of freedom. This paper also provides Sartre's ideas about freedom and responsibility and reveals their incompatibility with universal morality. Therefore critically Sartre's concept of existential freedom, this analysis aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the concept of existentialist philosophy and stimulate further dialogue regarding the nature and essence of human freedom.

The second research is a thesis was conducted by by Mu'ammam Hasan from Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University Yogyakarta in 2014, the title is “Existentialism

Analysis, Joker's Resistance in Jostein Gaarder's Solitaire Mystery Novel". The Solitaire Mystery novel tells of the rebellion committed by the Joker against Frode, this is based on the Joker's revenge for wanting to regain his freedom. In this novel there are several interesting things that can be discussed, namely about existence. In this thesis, the authors conclude that the joker gets its existence through several processes. The process in question is the joker's observation, the joker's questions and the joker's denial of the creator.

The Third research is a thesis compiled by Sri Susanti from Alauddin State Islamic University Makassar in 2020 with the title "Existentialism in the Novel the Fault in Our Stars by John Green" This research discusses the concept of existentialism reflected in the main characters, namely Hazel and August, who face life challenges due to cancer. Using Kierkegaard's existentialism theory, the author analyzes elements such as existence that precedes essence, freedom, anxiety, alienation, and emptiness in the behavior and thoughts of the characters. This study concludes that Hazel and Augustus find the meaning of their existence through the struggle against physical limitations and anxiety, while also showing how their existential decisions shape their outlook on life.

The fourth research is a journal article was conducted by Lea Mardiani, M.Natsir, and Nasrullah from Mulawarman University in 2021 with the research title "Sartre's Existentialism in Hermann Hesse's Demian: The Story of Emil Sinclair's Youth Novel". In this article the author tries to find the characteristics of Sartre's existentialism in Hesse's work which aims to examine the characteristics of Sartre's

existentialism in the novel and how existentialism is represented in the main character of the novel. The results of this research show that there are three conceptions of Sartre's existentialism found in the main character, Emil Sinclair, such as Abandonment by God, Despair and Suffering.

The fifth research is journal article was conducted by Putri Oktavianti, Nina Farlina, and Hasnul Isnani Djohar from Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University in 2022 with the research title is “Existentialism in the Worst Person in the World Movie”. In this article, the author analyzes, and describes the concept of existentialism reflected in the main characters in the world of film. This study uses the theory of existentialism from famous philosophers such as Jean Paul Sartre, Soren Kierkegaard and Albert Camus, which highlights several things such as emphasizing that existence precedes essence, highlighting the importance of freedom, and the concept of absurdity and rebellion in the face of a meaningless life. In the study, the author also uses a qualitative descriptive method by observing and analyzing the words and behavior of the main characters in the film.

Some of the articles and thesis that the author uses above provide an overview of how to handle each case that occurs to the main character in the web novel. And this research can provide a relevant research basis for looking at Sartre's existentialism in the main character in the web novel *Under the Oak Tree*. This can help in developing an appropriate theoretical framework and research methods to answer the questions in this research.

2.2 Philosophical Approach

A philosophical approach is a perspective that aims to explain the essence or wisdom of something behind an object. This approach indirectly explains what is behind something visible. The philosophical approach intended is to look at a problem from philosophical point of view and seeks to answer and solve the problem using speculative analysis methods (Muhaimin, 2007:13). Philosophy is usually associated with abstract and complicated things (Hasan, Abddin, Yew, 2013). Everyone has a philosophical view on everything, without realizing it, humans often philosophize in everyday life. Philosophy is a process of thinking that is based on systematic thinking with the aim of seeking the truth and gaining new knowledge (Tajul, 1993).

In literature, a philosophical approach is a method and perspective used to understand or analyze existing phenomena. This approach explores the meaning, values, and nature of various aspects of the characters' lives in web novels. The author uses a philosophical approach to explore and see a broader and more critical perspective. By using Sartre's existentialism theory, the author can explain more clearly why Maxi often feels trapped or anxious because this reflects the existential dilemma experienced by humans in real life. Thus, the philosophical approach in this study is expected to open new insights into understanding how modern literary works can be an effective medium for exploring and expressing existential issues. Therefore, with this philosophical approach, the author tries to develop critical thinking skills that involve the ability to argue and a clearer and deeper understanding of this novel rather than just looking at the story.

2.3 Sartre's Existentialism

Jean Paul Sartre is one of the most famous and influential philosophers of the 20th century, an existentialist philosopher who has made quite a lot of contributions (Norris, 2018). According to Sartre, humans initially exist and then define themselves, unlike objects created for a specific purpose. The concept known as “existence before essence” is that we need to understand that life has no real meaning and is absurd, then understand the meaning of complete freedom, therefore, start making choices (Sabagh, 2021). Existentialism emphasizes the freedom that humans have to make choices, but this freedom is accompanied by the burden of responsibility and anxiety in making decisions without outside guidance. In other words, existentialism is the practice of philosophy as “self-care”, which focuses on the right way to act rather than on a series of abstract theoretical truths (Flynn, 2006: 1).

Existentialism is a doctrine that enables human life and also asserts that every truth and every action implied the environment and human subjectivity (Sartre, 2007:18). This emphasizes that every individual has absolute freedom in determining a choice and is fully responsible for that choice. Every decision taken by a person not only reflects personal desires but also moral responsibility towards himself and others. With this freedom, humans are faced with anxiety that arises from an awareness of the responsibility that bears it. All existentialists emphasize human freedom of choice. We find ourselves in a world confronted with great questions. Why are we here? Is there a creator? What is the purpose of my life?

Throughout history, people have argued that these questions can be resolved once and for all. Through recourse to either religious belief, authority, or the power of reason, these are questions whose answers, once understood, are there for us to receive.

In the web novel *Under the Oak Tree* by Suji Kim, it is explained about the struggle of the main character to gain freedom, identity, choice in facing society's expectations, efforts to achieve personal happiness, and responsibility for the things he determines. Some of the things mentioned above are aspects that are the main objectives of the author in analyzing this web novel. Therefore, by using Sartre's existentialism framework, the author can analyze the characters and themes in *Under the Oak Tree* in more depth.

2.3.1 Freedom and Responsibility

The concepts of freedom and responsibility are two interrelated things. Humans are free creatures, but with that freedom comes responsibility, as well as the ability of humans to choose and determine for themselves. Freedom is an exciting theme in human history and has deep meaning in various philosophies (Akinbonde, 2023). Freedom is related to self-determination. Thus, responsibility here is in line with the implementation of human freedom. This can happen because when humans are free to make their choices, humans must also be ready to be responsible for their choices.

This theme will be very relevant when the author begins to explore how the characters in the novel handle their responsibilities, especially in certain challenging situations. Their choices in facing these challenges reflect their struggles and show how these choices align with Sartre's existentialist philosophy. Freedom can be seen when characters face a difficult choice, such as choosing between personal interests and responsibilities to others. A responsibility can be identified through the consequences of these choices. According to Sartre, individuals are not only responsible for their actions but also their impact on others. Thus, the exploration of decisions and actions reflected by the characters in the web novel *Under the Oak Tree* by Suji Kim can provide a new perspective on applying the concept of responsibility and freedom, according to Sartre.

2.3.2 Alienation

In philosophy, the term alienation is usually used as a concept that indicates the existence of an element of separation of two things by seeking doubt and disappointment (Anjum, 2019). In another sense, alienation is implied as a unique scientific term relating to some special separation aspects. Alienation is the possibility of being exploited for the benefit of others, subject to the will of others, and being judged (Beaver, 2012). More clearly, human alienation is what it is; humans are born into the world as foreign beings, alone, hostile, physically and mentally poor. Humans are creatures with all the alienation they have. Alienation is a condition when humans distance themselves from something, be it fellow humans, nature, culture, God, or even themselves. This happens because humans have a feeling of losing the meaning of life.

In Sartre's view, alienation is a central theme in existentialism. According to Sartre, alienation occurs because humans feel “Thrown” into the world. In other words, no one considers themselves in the world; this feeling arises when someone begins to feel alienated by their environment, even their family. In this world, humans must create meaning in life as individuals. In Sartre's work, Sartre describes the emptiness and alienation that arises when someone realizes that freedom from themselves is absolute. Humans often feel alienated because they are in a space where they cannot understand and control the world around them. This causes them to be isolated from others and their environment. The depiction of alienation in the web novel *Under the Oak Tree* can be seen in the relationship between Maximilian and her father (Duke Croix). At the beginning of the story, Maxi's father never considers Maximilian as his daughter because of her shortcomings. Therefore, the aspect of alienation is presented at the beginning of the story of the web novel *Under the Oak Tree* by Suji Kim.

2.3.3 Meaning of Life

According to Sartre, human existence is the result of a coincidence. Existentialism causes humans to seek their identity, improve their abilities, and find the meaning of their lives through their existence (Tambunan, 2023). There is no meaning or purpose in life other than that created by their freedom; therefore, a person must rely on themselves. The meaning of life is considered necessary, giving it value to a person. If a person gets it, he will feel valuable and happy as a side effect (Hasbiansyah, 2002). Humans can also find meaning in everything by using the

conscious mind (Tambunan, 2016). The meaning of life cannot be given directly but must be created by humans through their actions and decisions. With his consciousness, he can ask about anything and try to find an explanation.

Humans first “exist” and then define themselves through freedom and responsibility for their decisions. In solitude and absence, a person needs to make projects and plans for the future she wants to achieve, which gives meaning to life. Because humans have freedom, we are responsible for creating meaning in life. No God or any entity determines the meaning of human life; humans must choose, act, and be accountable for their existence. By looking at Sartre's view of the meaning of life, the author can conclude that human life is a constantly changing project where the identity and purpose of life never end. Humans must realize that in their freedom, they are also involved in self-creation that never stops. Every choice in life is a step in an endless journey.