



The Absurdity of Human Life in Sampar Novel by Albert Camus

Marleen Marion A.F.Q. Sumampouw

Universitas Negeri Manado, Indonesia

<http://dx.doi.org/10.18415/ijmmu.v8i6.2756>

Abstract

Absurdity experienced by humans in various fields of life, including its representation in the field of literature. The representation of Absurdity in literary works, especially translation literature, is widely known and has even been used as teaching material for students. The absurd literature of the translation, especially Albert Camus' Sampar novel, the authors chose to study and reveal the absurdist approach. This novel has become a material for teaching literature in Indonesian universities, so the results of this study can be used as reference material for teaching. The problem in studying an absurd novel is whether the feeling of Absurdity is only felt by the individual or the community in which the event occurred. In the novel Sampar, a collective absurdity will be described, which has not been revealed in Albert Camus's novel studies. The qualitative research methods are used with content analysis seen from existentialism philosophy. The most prominent consequence felt by the Oran community was the closure of the city door so that the Oran people experienced a sudden separation from people they loved without preparation. Sampar itself is a representation of collective Absurdity. The existence of sampar itself is also bizarre, weird, and irrational. Albert Camus shows his thoughts about human existence more thoroughly than other novels, acknowledging solidarity, friendship, and togetherness. According to Albert Camus, the absurd existence of humans is experienced at both individual and collective levels. There is no room for rationality, values, and moral-religious beliefs. These values have been devastated by the plague of world war, the crime of humanity that brought people to fear and despair. In the Sampar novel, there are individual absurdities felt by the leaders and the collective Absurdity felt by the people of Oran as a sense of solidarity with fellow human beings. High student learning motivation will affect better learning achievement. An understanding of human history after World War II and its absurd conditions can attract students to study absurd literary works.

Keywords: *Absurdity; Collective; Irrational*

Introduction

The fundamental problem in studying an absurd novel is whether Absurdity is only felt by the individual character or the community in which the incident occurred. This study aimed to explore and describe the collective Absurdity of the people of Oran city, which was hit by the plague. The reason for

choosing the novel *Sampar* as a study material in this study is because the novel *Sampar* is the basis of Albert Camus' thought.

The benefit of this collective absurdity study is to complement teaching reference materials and literary studies in Higher Education at the Faculty of Languages and Letters.

Humans experience Absurdity in various fields of life, including their representation in the literary field. The representation of Absurdity in literary works, especially translated literature, is widely known and has even been used as teaching material for students. One of Albert Camus' famous literary works is the novel *Sampar*. However, the study conducted focuses on structural studies. In contrast, studies seen from the existentialism philosophy of absurdism have not yet been studied. The results of this study can be used as a reference in teaching and literary studies.

The Absurdity presented in the novel *Sampar* reflects Albert Camus's thought that is broader than his previous thoughts. If in the previous work the absurd feeling was only experienced by a character as an individual like in the Sisyphus myth, the only one who felt an absurdity was Sisyphus, who had to do a vein job pushing a rock to the top of a hill. (Albert Camus, 1999: 156-157). Furthermore, in Meursault's novel *The Stranger*, he senses an absurdity because of the mechanical routine in his life. Meursault is indifferent to his own life in the face of the death penalty; in fact, he hopes that many people will watch and greet him with insults when the death sentence is carried out (Albert Camus, 2014: 124). In new thought, Camus stated: "Now there is an awareness of human solidarity. According to Camus, now man is no longer alone as in his previous works because now there is more respect for friendship, for the unity of fellow human beings." (Vincent Martin, 2001: 66). With this in mind, the disaster that befell the city of Oran is felt by individual figures, as stated by Albert Camus in previous literary works and by the entire community of Oran city. The Absurdity felt by the people of the city of Oran is called a collective absurdity. Collective Absurdity is a shared feeling experienced by humans as a unity of fellow human beings.

Camus stated that pestilence and war always attack humans without preparation. Doctor Rieux was also unprepared, as were the residents because it is believed that the pestilence has disappeared as a colleague said: No way! Everyone knows that the disease has disappeared in the western world! Yes, everyone knows, for years, this disease has disappeared in countries with temperate climates! " (Albert Camus, 2013, p 43). The plague caused fear. "They were frightened," said the Prefek and declared a pestilence emergency and an order to close the city doors (Albert Camus, 2013, p77). This incident is something absurd, an impossibility. The most profound result of closing the city doors is the sudden separation experienced by people without preparation. Camus said: "... the first violent attack of the disease when the decision was carried out ... we realized that we were in a corner, that words like manageable, special assistance and exclusion had no meaning." (Albert Camus, 2013, pp 81-82). The fear became even and deep in the city of Oran; the people started to realize their plight. (Albert Camus, 2013, p 123). Camus's statement suggests that the Oran people are starting to feel suffering. Then Camus affirmed, "There it is! What pestilence brought to our townspeople first was a feeling of exclusion". He could tell on behalf of all the townspeople because he experienced it with them. that feeling of isolation was the emptiness that always weighed on us. That one emotion, the will that does not make sense (Albert Camus, 2013, pp 86-87).

The meaning of "he" is Dr. Rieux, who recounts experiencing the plague in the city of Oran as written as follows. "Doctor Rieux has decided to compile an essay that will end here. By writing this, he became a person who did not want silence, but who became a witness on the side of the plague victims" (Albert Camus, 2013, p 385). Camus also stated that the misfortune from outside that befell the entire city must have brought only unjust suffering, which offended us. Adversity also causes us to surrender to depression. So is the pestilence, distracting attention so that it is confusing. Besides, it was at the height of

the solitude that no one could look to the neighbors for help. Each one endured his troubles. Thus, during the pestilence epidemic, they maintain a helpful indifference, considered a single calm. (Albert Camus, 2013, pp 91-93). Camus concludes that the most comprehensive suffering is separation and isolation, including the fear and rebellion that these two causes the violent acts of the living in the city, the burial of those who died, and the suffering of separated lovers (Albert Camus, 2013, p 205). The suffering continued; the victim's body was no longer buried but burned. "Pestilence victims had to be brought there to burn ... every night pestilence devoured their offerings. It results from the epidemic at its most devastating peak (Albert Camus, 2013, pp 218-219). The explanation shows that the absurd feelings caused by the pestilence disaster are isolation, separation, and suffering.

Literature Review

Absurdity

The Concept of Absurdity

Although it is recognized that Albert Camus was not the inventor of Absurdity, it was Camus who popularized it through his works. It is confirmed by Bertrand Poirot Delpech (Albert Camus, 2013, p xii), who states: "Camus is not the inventor of Absurdity. What is absurd is an intuition that has appeared before our century. Nietzsche has recognized the intuition, then Kierkegaard, Husserl, Jasper. " In Vincent Martin (2001, p 54), it is written: "I say that this world is absurd, but I am too reckless. The world itself was unthinkable, that was all that could be said. But what is Absurdity? It is the contradiction of this irrationality with the wild longing to clear something that resonates in the human heart. The Absurdity depends as much on humans as it is on the world. It is emphasized again in (Albert Camus, 1999, p. 25): "But what is absurd is the confrontation between this irrational state and the unstoppable desire for clarity that resonates in the deepest recesses of the human heart. This absurd depends both on humans and on the world.

" The absurd is born out of the confrontation between human vocation and the absurd silence of the world. " (Albert Camus, 1999, p 33). The feeling of Absurdity at any turn of the road can happen to anyone (Albert Camus, 1999, p12). Sartre stated that many absurdities manifest in human life, namely responsibility and feelings of anxiety, various frustration. (Vincent Martin, 2001, p 43). Dr. Rieux feels Absurdity because of his responsibility as a doctor who must save humans from pain. Pastor Paneloux, because he was concerned for his people who suffer plague, Tarrou and Rambert are absurd about their responsibility towards humanity. This absurd state must be lived out. Thus, it can be understood that a situation or condition of human life is in an absurd situation, where people cannot explain rationally, like the plague that suddenly attacks the city of Oran is absurd because the plague has been missing from European countries for decades. The pestilence causes various forms of Absurdity, separation, exclusion, suffering, pain, death, loss of respect for the dead, Etc.

The Emergence of an Absurd Feeling

According to Vincent Martin (2001, p 52), Absurdity can occur when a person suddenly becomes aware of boredom, mechanical fatigue from his daily existence. Returns from work, have lunch, work back home, sleep, return to work, eat afternoon, work again, week after week, year after year. The Absurdity of his life made him stop at the height of his disgust. This routine mechanical life is depicted in the Sisyphus Myth. The gods punished Sisyphus, he had to push the stone up the hill, but after the rock reached him, the stone rolled and fell. Sisyphus looked at the rock that slid down for a moment, to where he had to return to bring it up to the top; he came back down. Sisyphus did this futile work. At the moment of that pause, there arises awareness of its Absurdity. (Albert Camus, 1999, p. 156). That

situation is almost the same as in the novel *Orang Using* (Albert Camus, 2014), the character Meursault feels his life is absurd because of the routine of life. He did not care about the death sentence imposed on him. Instead, he hoped that many spectators would come on the day of his execution and that they would greet him by shouting slurs - insult (Albert Camus, 2014, p 124). For Camus, this feeling of Absurdity arises from the encounter between nature and the human mind. Absurdity depends on the human mind as it depends on the conditions of nature. Absurdity arises because humans seek a complete understanding of a world that cannot be understood. Therefore, the feeling of Absurdity is something related to the meeting between the world and the mind (Vincent Martin, 2001, p 53).

The Absurd Novel

Understanding Novel

According to Reeve (2014: 260), a novel describes real-life and behavior when the novel was written. Novels are realistic and develop from non-fiction narrative forms such as letters, journals, memoirs, biographies, chronicles, or history. However, stylistically, the novel emphasizes the importance of detail and is mimetic. Furthermore, Abrams (2012: 252) also explains, the novel is now applied to a great variety of writings that have in common only the attribute of being extended works of fiction written prose. The novel is distinguished from the short story, and moderate length called the novelette as an extended narrative. Its magnitude permits an aggregate variety of characters, greater plot complexity, ampler development of milieu, and more sustained exploration of characters and motives than shorter, more concentrated modes.

According to Kuiper (2012: xiii-xv), the novel is the most pervasive genre of literature. It has a characteristic form and is composed of several elements. It has a plot, meaning that something happens. It also requires characters and happens somewhere. In this case, the novel is a persuasive literary genre, has a character form, and consists of several elements. The novel has a plot, the meaning of an event. Novels also deal with characters and settings. Furthermore, Kuiper (2012: 1) defines novels as follows: "Novel is an invented process narrative of considerable length and a certain complexity that deals imaginatively with human experience, usually through a connected sequence of events involving a group of persons in a specific setting. "

Based on the description above, it can be said that novels and romances have the same meaning. Namely, fictional stories tell about the lives of characters and their values in fictional prose in a wide range of sizes. In this case, stories with complex plots, characters There are many complex themes, various atmosphere, and story settings based on the perspective of imagination, experiences, and even problems the author faces. That contains the value of human life in an organized and integrated manner in real life. Novels are also a medium for casting thoughts, feelings, and ideas.

Absurd Novels

Until now, there has not been a unified definition of the absurd novel. Suppose absurd fiction is defined as a genre of fictional narrative in the form of a novel that depicts the life experience of an author who fails to find inherent meaning in life and a rational answer to the truth while the world remains silent. In that case, the experience is manifested into various attitudes and actions, and events. The author connects the story between the imagination and the experience that Camus had (Vincent Martin, 2001, p.15).

The feeling of Absurdity arises because humans seek a complete understanding of the incomprehensible world humans seek clarity, while the world is still a mystery". The meaning of absurd itself is defined as something that is felt to be an absurd, unreasonable, and irrational impossibility. Stanton (2007.p.114) states that absurd fiction is referred to as existentialist fiction as fiction that deals

with issues. That becomes the subject of essentialist philosophy. The absurd novel ignores conventions about the existentialist-absurdist philosophical view of the Absurdity of Human Life, manifested in the absurd life of the characters and their attitudes and society. An absurd novel does not have a storyline about the character's life, but an "object" that symbolizes the Absurdity of structures, plots, themes, even about the setting of certain characters and regular time (Sudjiman, 2000, p. 22).

If you look at the creation of the novel *Sampar*, it is clear that Camus wrote a novel during the French occupation of Nazi Germany, where he experienced real absurd life. Experiencing suffering, exclusion or exile, separation from his family, the pain and death he witnessed. The French people also experience this experience. The sudden war that swept through France was irrational to him.

Camus took part in an underground movement to fight or rebel through writing in his newspaper (*Combat*), and he moved out of Paris to avoid being captured by Nazi German soldiers. In this absurd novel, *Sampar* symbolizes the cruel German occupation that caused suffering, exclusion or exile, separation and suicide, and death. Therefore, to describe the impact of colonialism, Camus made it happen in a novel.

Methods

The object of study in this study is a literary work, namely the novel *Sampar*. Therefore, the appropriate method to use is qualitative. Content analysis was used to analyze the content. What was studied was the Absurdity of the people of Oran, which was reflected or manifested in the story. The analytical technique used for the study of the Absurdity with the philosophical approach of essentialism.

Sartre said that "Man is nothing but that he creates himself. Man exists first as a thing but then becomes a real man when he freely chooses the desired morality." (Vincent Martin, 2001, p. 31).

The research steps or procedures carried out by the researcher;

1. Determine the object to be analyzed and examine the novel cover by Albert Camus by identifying paragraphs that contain the concept of Absurdity.
2. Compare and match with sources containing the Camus absurdity concept and research results on Absurdity.
3. Examining and examining the concepts and images of absurdities that appear in the Novel *Sampar*
4. To validate the concept of Absurdity, the researcher compares the concepts that have been written and described in the previous novels written by Albert Camus, namely the novel *Orang Asing* and *Myte Sisifus*.

Results and Discussion

Result

The collective Absurdity is the same absurd feeling that the Oran people experience, as shown by:

- (1) *Sampar* is a collective absurd feeling. The plague that comes suddenly is something beyond the reason of the people of Oran. This city is usually quiet in a short period of chaos; suddenly, panic occurs with the death of rats everywhere by the number of thousands. (Albert Camus, 2013, p. 18)

- (2) The impact of pestilence felt by the Oran people was a feeling of exclusion. Here Camus believes that he can tell on behalf of all the city inhabitants because he experienced it together with them (Albert Camus, 2013, pp 86-87).
- (3) Give up in facing destiny. That even feeling of resignation. Where no one can expect the help of the neighbors, each one endures his troubles. (Albert Camus, 2013, pp. 91-92).
- (4) (4). Calm anxiety. "Nevertheless, and this is most important, however painful the anxieties are, however heavy the heart is empty, it can still be said that the people who were isolated in the early days of the epidemic were lucky ones." (Albert Camus, 2013, p. 93).
- (5) People's views on religion. The residents participated in prayer together, not because the sudden sense of faith had inspired them, but because of the closure of the city and port so that they could no longer bathe in the sea. The second cause is that the population feels different from the others, namely the result of the heinous incident that befell them. Although in their hearts, no one wants to confess. "Sampar has caused residents to view religion, as well as other problems, with their thoughts. Not indifference, but not excitement. Like the Chinese beating a tambourine in front of the pestilence god statue, to solve this problem, one must determine whether the pestilence god exists (Albert Camus, 2013, pp. 113-114). They preferred to wear the necklace of Saint Roch's talisman instead of attending mass. So, this superstition replaced religion for the inhabitants of the city of Oran (Albert Camus, 2013, pp. 272-274)
- (6) Residents must vote. "The people of our city who at that time risked their lives had to decide whether they were in a pestilence epidemic or not. Moreover, whether they should fight against it or not. Many new moralists go everywhere in our city saying that nothing can be done about the disaster and that we must surrender to our knees (Albert Camus, 2013.p.163).
- (7) Suffer the inhabitants of Oran. "The most comprehensive suffering is separation and isolation, including the fear and rebellion that these two things result. For example, for example the acts of violence of the city dwellers who are still alive, the burial of those who died, and the suffering of separated lovers. " (Albert Camus, 2013, p. 205)
- (8) Feelings of the population. "Yet before pestilence reached the point of multiplicity, the inhabitants who were separated from their loved ones insisted on setting aside their suffering from collective misery, and now they accept union with the whole city. Without memories, without hope, they are settled in the present day. " Truly everything "now" is still there for them. It cannot be denied; indeed, pestilence has destroyed the power of love and even the sense of solidarity of the population. Because love takes a little time to come, whereas we only have a moment to moment. " (Albert Camus, 2013, p. 223)
- (9) The population surrenders. "They were so surrendered to pestilence that some of them only wish for a good night's sleep for all eternity. Suddenly realized he was thinking: quickly get swollen and then die! " (Albert Camus, 2013. p.224)
- (10) Sampar eliminates the trust of the population. "Sampar has instilled a sense of disbelief in the hearts of the inhabitants, so that they cannot free themselves from this trait. With ingrained doubts, they were not at all have hope again. " (Albert Camus, 2013, p. 337)

The description above shows that Camus' original opinion was that Absurdity was only felt by an individual; in Novel Sampar, it was also felt by the community collectively. Therefore, Novel Sampar is a development of Camus' thought. Vincent Martin (2001.h.66) said: "According to Camus, now humans are no longer alone as in his previous works because now there is more respect for friendship and the unity of fellow human beings. Therefore, Novel Sampar by Sindhunata & A. Sudiarja (Basis.no.11-12.2010. h.4) states that Novel Sampar is the most "formulating," thought and most determines its position as the winner of the 1957 Nobel Prize.

Discussion

Absurdity can be experienced by anyone when facing an event that does not make sense, and humans feel that there is a conflict between the thoughts and the reality they are facing. In the novel pestilence, it is described that pestilence is something that does not make sense because it is believed to have disappeared from a temperate country. Nevertheless, it happened. This caused the people of Oran City to experience unexpected suffering. The doors of the city are closed, they feel like a prison in their city, and they feel isolated, isolated from the outside world.

Furthermore, illness until itself causes pain and death, as well as separation from loved ones. Patients must be quarantined. Sampar ravaged life, social, economic, and cultural, even penetrating the sphere of religion. In this novel, Albert Camus wants to convey the message that in this absurd world, humans are helpless but still have to struggle to overcome their absurdities. The absurd life in the pestilence novel is felt individually and collectively because humans do not only live alone. Friendship, solidarity, and unity among human beings should promote their existence in social life. The novel sampar presents Albert Camus' intact thoughts on the concept of Absurdity, absurd feelings not only felt by individuals but also by many people in a community where one lives together.

Conclusion and Implication

Conclusion

In the novel Sampar, Albert Camus shows his thoughts about human existence more fully, in which he acknowledges the existence of solidarity, friendship, and togetherness. According to Camus, the good life he had was good for others. Human existence is no longer individual but also human solidarity. As a result of this change in thinking, Camus formulated the collective Absurdity to complement the individual Absurdity as formulated in previous novels. Therefore, in the novel Sampar, there is an individual absurdity felt by the characters and a collective absurdity that the people of Oran city feel like a sense of solidarity with fellow humans. Collective Absurdity is the same absurd feeling that the Oran people experience. The pestilence that came suddenly was beyond the community's reasoning, a disaster for the Oran people. The pestilence that is felt by society is feelings of exclusion, isolation and suffering, and failure. Some residents gave up on destiny out of desperation. People's views on religion. The pestilence has caused residents to view religion, like any other problem, according to their thoughts. Sampar eliminates the people's trust. The pestilence had instilled a sense of distrust in the people's hearts, so they could not free themselves from it. The description above shows that Camus' original opinion was that an individual only felt Absurdity, but in Novel Sampar it was also felt by the community collectively.

Implications

Implications for language teaching, especially literature, students must be accustomed to understanding and taking the author's values. In absurd novels, the implied meaning is more meaningful than what is expressed. The value of solidarity, friendship, and unity among human beings conveyed by Albert Camus, in the face of a disaster, raises an everyday awareness to help those who experience suffering. Human existence is manifested in social life, primarily when the same absurd feeling arises in the face of a disaster. For Indonesia, which is located in the circle of volcanoes and other natural disasters, it is very relevant to instill the value of togetherness and solidarity in dealing with disasters.

Acknowledgments

A thousand thanks to the writer to the honored Prof. Dr. Emzir, M.Pd as the Promoter and Prof. Dr. Aceng Rachmat, MPd as the co-promoter who has guided with patience and provides valuable advice

for writers in dissertation writing and as a provision for the future in developing careers in the field of language education. Also, classmates and colleagues, especially Yuri Lolita and Orestis Soidi, discuss various matters related to the completion of the dissertation.

Bibliography

- Abrams, M. H. dan Geoffrey Galt Harpham. 2012. *A Glossary of Literary Terms Tenth Edition*. USA: Wadsworth.
- Camus, Albert. 1999. *Mite Sisifus Pergulatan dengan Absurditas*, Penerjemah Apsanti D, cetakan II. Jakarta: PT. Gramedia Pustaka Utama.
- Camus, Albert. 2013. *Sampar* diterjemahkan NH. Dini, ed.3. Jakarta: Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia.
- Camus, Albert. 2014. *Orang Asing, Penerjemah Apsanti Djokosujatno, Cetakan III*. Jakarta: Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia.
- Kuiper, Kathleen. 2012. *Prose, Literary Terms and Concepts*. New York: Britannica Educational Publishing.
- Martin, Vincent. 2001. *Filsafat Ekstensialisme: Kierkegaard, Sartre, Camus*. (Penerjemah Taufiqurrohman). Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar.
- Sindhunata, A. dan Sudiardja. 1983. "La Peste: Suatu Penampilan Absurditas dan Pemberontakan Camus" dalam M, Sastrapratedja, *Manusia Multi Dimensional: Sebuah Renungan Filsafat*. Jakarta : Gramedia.
- Stanton, Robert. 2007. *Teori Fiksi Robert Staton*, Penerjemah Sugihastuti. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar Offset.
- Sudjiman, Panuti. 1991. *Memahami Cerita Rekaan*. Jakarta: Pustaka Jaya.
- Wellek, Rene and Austin Warren. 1990. *Theory of Literature*. England.
- Wellek, Rene and Austin Warren. 2014. *Teori Kesusastraan*. Di Indonesiakan oleh Melani Budianta. Jakarta: PT. Gramedia.

Copyrights

Copyright for this article is retained by the author(s), with first publication rights granted to the journal.

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).