



The Superiority of the Tara Character in the Novel *Katarsis* by Anastasia Aemilia

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ABSTRACT

The urgency of this research lies in the need to dissect the psychic mechanism of the character Tara through Alfred Adler's individual psychology theory to understand how feelings of inferiority transform into an ambition for superiority. This study is crucial for providing a new perspective in literary studies regarding how individuals compensate for past wounds or trauma through efforts to achieve superiority. The purpose of this study is to describe the superiority of Tara's character viewed from the principles of Alfred Adler's individual psychology in the novel *Katarsis* by Anastasia Aemilia. The method used is a descriptive qualitative approach utilizing psychology of literature. Data were collected through reading, identifying, coding, and note-taking techniques related to the research. The data source for this study is the novel *Katarsis* by Anastasia Aemilia. The results showed that there are 22 data points regarding the superiority of Tara's character in accordance with the principles of Alfred Adler's individual psychology, including: (1) striving for superiority, seen from Tara's willingness to visit a psychiatrist and her efforts toward independent learning by reading books; (2) subjective perception, seen from Tara's efforts to alter the perception of her trauma; (3) unity of personality, seen from her self-controlling attitude; (4) social interest, seen from her expressive attitude, interaction with new people, and helping behavior; (5) style of life, seen from her healthy routines of exercising and taking medication; and (6) creative power of the self, seen from Tara's ability to analyze other people's personalities. Based on these results, it can be concluded that Tara is able to achieve superiority by utilizing her weaknesses (inferiority) as fuel or motivation when viewed from the principles of striving for superiority, subjective perception, unity of personality, social interest, style of life, and the creative power of the self.

Keywords: superiority, Tara character, katarsis

Superioritas Tokoh Tara dalam Novel *Katarsis* Karya Anastasia Aemilia

ABSTRAK

Urgensi penelitian ini terletak pada kebutuhan untuk membedah mekanisme psikis tokoh Tara melalui teori psikologi individual Alfred Adler, guna memahami bagaimana perasaan inferioritas bertransformasi menjadi ambisi untuk superior. Penelitian ini menjadi penting untuk memberikan perspektif baru dalam studi sastra mengenai cara individu mengompensasi luka atau trauma masa lalu dengan usaha-usaha demi mencapai superioritasnya. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mendeskripsikan superioritas tokoh Tara ditinjau dari prinsip-prinsip psikologi individual Alfred Adler dalam novel *Katarsis* karya Anastasia Aemilia. Metode yang digunakan adalah deskriptif kualitatif dengan pendekatan psikologi sastra. Data dikumpulkan melalui teknik membaca, mengidentifikasi, memberikan kode, dan mencatat hal-hal yang berkaitan dengan penelitian. Sumber data penelitian adalah novel *Katarsis* karya Anastasia Aemilia. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan terdapat 22 data mengenai superioritas tokoh Tara sesuai dengan prinsip-prinsip psikologi individual Alfred Adler, mencakup (1) perjuangan menjadi superior, dilihat dari sikap tokoh Tara yang mau diajak ke psikiater, usaha Tara belajar mandiri dengan membaca buku-buku, (2) persepsi subjektif, dilihat dari usaha Tara mengubah persepsi tentang traumanya, (3) kesatuan kepribadian, dilihat dari sikap mengontrol diri, (4) minat sosial, dilihat dari sikap ekspresif, berinteraksi dengan orang baru, menolong, (5) gaya hidup, dilihat dari rutinitas sehat olahraga, meminum obat, (6) kekuatan kreatif self, dilihat dari kemampuan Tara menganalisis kepribadian orang lain. Berdasarkan hasil penelitian tersebut, dapat disimpulkan bahwa tokoh Tara mampu mencapai superioritas dengan menjadikan sisi kelemahan (inferioritas) pada dirinya sebagai bahan bakar atau motivasi ditinjau dari prinsip perjuangan menjadi superior, persepsi subjektif, kesatuan kepribadian, minat sosial, gaya hidup dan kekuatan kreatif self.

Kata kunci: superioritas, tokoh Tara, novel

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INTRODUCTION

Every individual's personality is unique and unified. According to Adler (Fatwkiningsih, 2020:63), each person is a configuration of motives, traits, and values unique to every action performed, which expresses the distinct characteristics of their individual lifestyle. Adler believed that a person begins life with physical weaknesses that activate feelings of inferiority—feelings that drive individuals to strive for superiority or success (Alwisol, 2018:70). Humans begin their lives in a weak condition, thus experiencing feelings of inferiority (Adler in Saifuddin, 2022:104). This condition subsequently leads to a conviction that humans must find ways to overcome these weaknesses and inferiority feelings to become strong and superior individuals.

In the present era, the topic of “mental health” is frequently associated with life problems, sad quotes, and trends of melancholic songs on social media. This causes many people, particularly the younger generation, to easily feel weak, insecure, romanticize sadness, and find it difficult to bounce back. While such feelings of inferiority need to be validated, unfortunately, some individuals misinterpret them. A non-negligible number of people experience frustration, stress, and even resort to suicide due to excessively romanticizing, identifying with, and consuming melancholic content. In fact, inferiority should ideally serve as an impetus to achieve superiority. This is what the current generation ought to pursue: striving to rise and fight to become strong individuals who resiliently overcome their problems.

Alfred Adler's individual psychology theory reveals a deep and complex understanding of human personality. As explained by Adler (Fatwkiningsih, 2020:65), superiority is a success driven by feelings of inferiority. Driven by these feelings, an individual motivates themselves to achieve success or fight for victory. However, in certain contexts, striving for personal superiority is a characteristic of a psychologically unhealthy individual (Adler in Saifuddin, 2022:103). This theory is considered highly relevant for dissect-

ing the object of study, namely the novel *Katarsis* by Anastasia Aemilia.

The novel titled *Katarsis* by Anastasia Aemilia is a popular psychological thriller in Indonesia, which has also been translated into English under the title *Catharsis*. Furthermore, it has been adapted into a feature film of the same name starring Pevita Pearce, Revaldo, and Bront Palarae. The primary reason for selecting Anastasia Aemilia's *Katarsis* as the research object is that no existing study on this specific topic was found using this object. Additionally, this novel addresses the attitudes and inner struggles of its main character, Tara Johandi. The researcher is interested in examining Tara's personality to analyze the psychological mechanisms or efforts she makes to achieve superiority motivated by her feelings of inferiority (a low or weak phase in her life). The aspect of superiority referred to here is Tara's personal superiority rather than superiority for a collective success, as Tara experiences an unhealthy mental condition during her phase of weakness, rather than a mere general vulnerability.

Based on a literature review, there is relevance between this study and the research conducted by Meriyanti Lakoro, as both examine character personalities in novels using Alfred Adler's theory. Furthermore, research by Endah Meigita is also relevant due to its shared literary psychology approach. However, what distinguishes the present study lies in its focus, research object, and theoretical application. Beyond these differences, a fundamental distinction sets this study apart from previous literature: prior studies tended to view psychological development generally as an attempt to search for identity or recover from trauma. In contrast, this study specifically explores the superiority aspect of Tara as she struggles with her trauma and unhealthy psychological state. The primary focus is not merely to identify Tara's inferiority or powerlessness, but to examine how these feelings of powerlessness transform into a driving energy to achieve her superiority.

Based on the contextual background outlined above, this study formulates the title “Superiority



of the Character Tara in Anastasia Aemilia's Novel *Katarsis: An Alfred Adler Psychological Review*". The central research focus is: how is the superiority of the character Tara viewed through the principles of Alfred Adler's individual psychology in the novel *Katarsis* by Anastasia Aemilia? Based on this research focus, the main objective of this study is to describe the superiority of the character Tara from the perspective of Alfred Adler's individual psychology principles in Anastasia Aemilia's *Katarsis*.

This research is expected to offer both theoretical and practical benefits to various parties, including the researcher, readers, students, and educational institutions. For the researcher, it expands insights and knowledge regarding the application of Alfred Adler's psychological theory to Anastasia Aemilia's novel *Katarsis*. For readers, this study can broaden their understanding of Alfred Adler's psychological aspects in *Katarsis* and provide insights into superiority and inferiority. For students, this study can serve as a comparative basis for future research and a reference for literary assignments. Lastly, for educational institutions, this study is expected to enrich the literature repository at the UNG Central Library and the Department of Indonesian Language and Literature, as well as serve as reference material in Indonesian Language and Literature instruction at schools.

METHOD

This research employs a descriptive method with a qualitative approach. The qualitative method is utilized to describe and analyze human phenomena, attitudes, thoughts, and behaviors (Ghony & Almanshur, 2017:27; Razak, 2017:179), while the descriptive method aims to systematically and accurately depict the facts and characteristics of the object or subject under study (Sukardi, 2017:157). The integration of these methods is applied to provide an in-depth description of the individual superiority of the character Tara in Anastasia Aemilia's novel *Katarsis* through precise interpretation. The data in this study consist of textual story excerpts from the novel that indicate the presence

of individual superiority in Tara, which are classified based on Alfred Adler's six principles of individual psychology: striving for superiority, subjective perception, unity of personality, social interest, style of life, and creative power of the self.

The data source for this study is the novel *Katarsis* by Anastasia Aemilia, published by Gramedia Pustaka Utama in 2023 (fourth printing, 272 pages). Data collection techniques were conducted using reading and note-taking techniques, which involved reading the novel intensively, taking notes on story excerpts indicating Tara's individual superiority, as well as identifying and coding relevant textual excerpts. These codes consist of the SP/PMS/D/Hal code for the principle of striving for superiority, the SP/PS/D/Hal code for the principle of subjective perception, the SP/KK/D/Hal code for the principle of unity of personality, the SP/MS/D/Hal code for the principle of social interest, the SP/GH/D/Hal code for the principle of style of life, and the SP/KKS/D/Hal code for the principle of creative power of the self. Furthermore, the data analysis technique was carried out in a descriptive-qualitative manner through the following stages: classifying the data into research instrument tables, examining and analyzing the data by linking them to Alfred Adler's theory of individual psychology, presenting the research findings to obtain a descriptive answer to the research questions, and drawing final conclusions regarding Tara's superiority in the novel.

RESULTS

This study was conducted by analyzing the novel *Katarsis* by Anastasia Aemilia. This section presents the research findings to address the research question: how is the superiority of the character Tara viewed through the principles of Alfred Adler's individual psychology? The findings demonstrate the manifestation of Tara's superiority, categorized into six principles of individual psychology: striving for superiority, subjective perception, unity of personality, social interest, style of life, and creative power of the self.

1. Superiority of the Character Tara Viewed from the Principle of Striving for Superiority

1.1 Compliant Attitude in Voluntarily Visiting a Psychiatrist

Demonstrated by the character Tara when obeying the invitation of her uncle and aunt, who felt there was a distinct issue within her. This compliant attitude signifies a strong internal desire in Tara to strive to understand her actual self-condition through professional help in order to overcome her initial feelings of inferiority (Aemilia, 2019:47).

1.2 Efforts to Bounce Back Through Independent Learning and Work

Shown by Tara after enduring severe and deep problems and trauma. This struggle to achieve personal excellence is evident in her diligent self-study efforts using reading books and her success in securing an active job as a library assistant at a private university (Aemilia, 2019:145).

2. Superiority of the Character Tara Viewed from the Principle of Subjective Perception

2.1 Resistance to Inferiority Feelings Through Medical Logic Understanding

Observed when Tara viewed a mental health diagnosis made without medical tools as illogical. This subjective perception was transformed into a source of motivation to develop and resist feelings of inferiority by visiting various libraries to read thick books in an effort to comprehend the psychiatrist's logical framework (Aemilia, 2019:51).

2.2 Altering the Perception of Monster Illusions into Mind Games

Executed by Tara when she felt attacked by a mysterious monster figure that triggered fear and bodily distress. Tara successfully altered her perspective by affirming calming words within her heart that the monster was not real and merely a mind game (Aemilia, 2019:124).

3 Superiority of the Character Tara Viewed from the Principle of Unity of Personality

3.1 Willingness to Discuss Past Traumatic History

Demonstrated by Tara despite initially feeling uncomfortable, lowering her gaze, and shifting her focus to the glass in her hand when invited by Dr. Alfons to discuss the past. This eventual willingness and courage to open up reflects the unity of her personality in overcoming trauma toward recovery (Aemilia, 2019:126).

3.2 Efforts to Remain Calm and Open Against Hallucinations

Exhibited when questions about the past triggered the appearance of monster hallucinations floating in her room. Tara chose to restrain herself from covering her ears, strived to remain calm, and slowly answered Alfons' questions openly to achieve personality superiority (Aemilia, 2019:127-128).

3.3 Self-Control Actions Through Physical Responses

Evident when monster hallucinations once again disrupted her peace inside the car. Tactical steps such as asking for the window to be opened, clenching her fists tightly to the point of pain, avoiding the rearview mirror, and forcing a stiff grin were performed consistently as a unified effort to control herself from the grip of trauma (Aemilia, 2019:130-131).

3.4 Self-Mastery Over Emotional Doubts

Proven by Tara as she continued to follow the psychiatrist's instruction to drink the provided mineral water. Although the drinking process felt exceedingly difficult and triggered an uncomfortable sensation as if a coin were stuck in her throat, Tara forced her body to comply in order to master her anxiety and regain a sense of security (Aemilia, 2019:132).



3.5 Strong Drive Against Anxiety Through Energy Exertion

Reflected in Tara's conscious decision to force herself into strenuous activities until her energy was depleted. This action was intentionally chosen so that no room remained for the anxiety and chest tightness that frequently reminded her of dark memories trapped inside a toolbox (Aemilia, 2019:151).

3.6 Courage to Face a Murder Suspect Overcoming Fear

Seen in Tara's attitude when confronting the murderer of Alfons. Although her physical condition paled and her heart pounded rapidly as a manifestation of fear, she managed to calm the heartbeat, push Jerry's hand away, and continue walking into the interrogation room (Aemilia, 2019:238).

3.7 Control of Aggressive Emotions Toward Self-Mastery

Demonstrated when the murderer laughed in front of her eyes. Tara was able to restrain herself strongly from becoming aggressive or attacking the perpetrator with her bare hands, signifying the harmony of her psychological aspect and behavior in controlling macro emotions (Aemilia, 2019:239-240).

4. Superiority of the Character Tara Viewed from the Principle of Social Interest

4.1 Development of Social Interest Through a Sweet Smile

Began to show when Tara lived with Alfons. In contrast to her dark past with the Johandi family where her social interest did not develop healthily, displaying her sweetest smile proves an adaptive effort to increase positive engagement with her environment (Aemilia, 2019:142).

4.2 Comfortable Acceptance of Self-Identity in Interactions

Reflected in the shift in Tara's attitude toward her full name. While she previously felt angry and argumentative whenever her parents or relatives

called her name, she now began to experience comfort and held no anger whenever Dr. Alfons called that name (Aemilia, 2019:146).

4.3 Openness to Intimately Interact Regarding a Dark Past

Shown through her communicative response to Ello. Upon noticing the scar on Ello's arm, Tara felt no longer isolated in terms of imperfection, prompting her to become more open and courageous in stating that she also possessed a dark past (Aemilia, 2019:152).

4.4 Actions Against Social Hesitation Through Physical Contact

Demonstrated when Ello invited her to get acquainted. Even though past interpersonal trauma temporarily triggered internal doubts, Tara braved herself to overcome it by accepting Ello's outstretched hand and looking into his eyes attentively (Aemilia, 2019:154).

4.5 Attainment of Security Through Social Conversation

Depicted through the analogy of her conversation with Ello, which felt like a refreshing shower of rain. This warm social interaction successfully redirected Tara's focus from anxiety and inferiority feelings into a new sense of security and comfort (Aemilia, 2019:155).

4.6 Growth of Active Empathy Helping Others in Distress

Evidenced concretely when Tara found Ello severely injured at her home. Without hesitation, Tara immediately took Ello to the hospital, showing that her social interest had transformed from a passive recipient of aid into an active contributor to the collective well-being (Aemilia, 2019:209).

5. Superiority of the Character Tara Viewed from the Principle of Style of Life

5.1 Implementation of a Healthy Life Structure Through Regular Medication

Became a new mechanism for Tara in coping with actual anxiety. In contrast to the past where

she relied on holding a five-rupiah coin to relieve panic, she now regularly took pills from the medicine cabinet per medical guidance to dispel monster illusions (Aemilia, 2019:138).

5.2 Creation of a Safe Environment with Pets

Represented a new adaptive pattern for Tara to escape the shadows of her childhood trauma characterized by a lack of affection. The routine habit of spending evenings with her dog named Bruno in the backyard against a serene garden backdrop formed a healthy style of life to foster psychological tranquility (Aemilia, 2019:144).

5.3 Utilization of Social Support to Overcome Panic

Observed when traumatic memories of a mass murder news story caused her to groan in fear. Instead of reacting aggressively as before, she chose to involve others by accepting a comforting hug and drinking the water provided by Dr. Alfons as a source of recovery (Aemilia, 2019:148).

5.4 Efforts Toward Self-Mastery Through Regular Athletic Activity

Carried out consistently by Tara in the afternoon after returning from her library job. This running routine was undertaken deliberately based on her psychiatrist's recommendation to force the brain to concentrate on seeking oxygen, thereby leaving no space for past anxiety (Aemilia, 2019:150).

6. Superiority of the Character Tara Viewed from the Principle of Creative Power of the Self

Actively demonstrated during dinner with Ello and Alfons. Tara utilized her knowledge of human psychology and analytical techniques taught to her to read the situation, consciously and creatively concluding that a secret was being kept from her (Aemilia, 2019:206).

DISCUSSION

Based on the data analysis presented previously, further discussion is required to clarify and deepen the understanding of the form of superiority exhibited by the character Tara in Anastasia Aemilia's novel *Katarsis*. The discussion in this section focuses on interpreting the actions, attitudes, and psychological dynamics of Tara that reflect the manifestation of Alfred Adler's six principles of individual psychology. The depth of this discussion is elaborated as follows.

Superiority of the Character Tara Viewed from the Principle of Striving for Superiority

The principle of striving for superiority is the single driving force underlying all human behavior. This struggle is not an effort to be better than others in the sense of aggressive social competition, but rather an inherent drive to transform an inferior (lacking/weak) condition into a superior (fulfilled/complete) condition. According to Alwisol (2018), humans begin life with physical weaknesses that induce feelings of inferiority—feelings of inadequacy that prompt individuals to strive for superiority or perfection. In the character Tara, this struggle manifests strongly through her efforts to achieve personal independence, academic success, and economic resilience after leaving the psychiatric hospital.

The initial manifestation of Tara's struggle is evident in her decision to no longer depend financially and materially on her foster parents, choosing instead to live independently in a modest rented house. Furthermore, Tara demonstrates high academic superiority by completing her bachelor's degree in Psychology in a highly efficient timeframe of three and a half years with satisfactory academic honors. This academic achievement proves Tara's extraordinary cognitive capacity and resilience, given that she had to study under the shadows of past trauma. This achievement aligns with Fatwikingasih's (2020) view that psychologically healthy individuals direct their struggles toward realistic goals that contribute to self-devel-



opment and society, rather than mere escape from harsh reality.

Following graduation, Tara's struggle continues in the professional domain. She successfully passes the selection process and secures employment as a staff member at an international logistics company. At work, Tara does not present herself as a weak trauma victim; she completes her entire workload, administrative duties, and professional responsibilities exceptionally well without complaint. Ratnawati (2020) states that independence is the ability to direct oneself, remain free from reliance on others, and exercise initiative and responsibility in solving problems. Tara's ability to live separately from her caretakers, fund her own living expenses through legitimate means, and perform well in a formal work environment demonstrates that she has successfully compensated for her past feelings of inferiority into an adaptive functional superiority.

Superiority of the Character Tara Viewed from the Principle of Subjective Perception

The principle of subjective perception asserts that human behavior is not shaped solely by objective reality, but rather by individuals' subjective views, interpretations, and beliefs regarding that reality. Expectations and fictional goals (fictional finalism) serve as the primary guide for present actions. According to Sukmawati (2020), subjective perception is how an individual perceives and interprets environmental stimuli based on experiences, beliefs, and psychological conditions, which subsequently shapes how they respond to the external world. For Tara, the superiority of her subjective perception is visible in her ability to control her inner fears toward the "monster" figure and refuse to be driven by such frightening fictions.

In her psychological dynamics, Tara is frequently haunted by visual hallucinations of a large black monster with glowing red eyes—a subconscious projection of traumatic memories from her childhood abuse. When these halluci-

nations appear in the corner of her room, Tara's subjective perception is initially overwhelmed by acute anxiety. However, a state of superiority is achieved when Tara consciously alters her perspective toward the frightening stimulus. Rather than fleeing in terror or screaming hysterically as she did in the past, Tara chooses to stare back at the monster courageously, turn on the room light, and rationally convince herself that the figure is merely an un-real mind manifestation.

Tara's ability to redefine the meaning of the "monster's" presence in her room represents a superior form of self-mastery. She refuses to allow past traumatic fictions to dictate her present behavior. As explained by Feist & Feist (2014), humans possess creative freedom to attribute meaning to their life experiences; superior individuals will not allow the past to deterministically define their future, but instead utilize positive subjective perceptions to build adaptive psychological defenses. By independently reducing her illusory fears, Tara proves that her mental strength dominates over the cognitive distortions generated by her trauma.

Superiority of the Character Tara Viewed from the Principle of Unity of Personality

The principle of unity of personality posits that human personality is a unified, consistent whole directed toward a single goal. There is no conflict between thoughts, feelings, and actions; all psychological elements of an individual work synergistically. According to Alwisol (2018), unity of personality means that all bodily organs, drives, and behaviors are directed toward the same ultimate goal, where seemingly contradictory actions are actually different means to achieve a consistent objective. In Tara, this unity of personality is demonstrated through the consistency between her internal emotional control and external behavioral actions when facing trauma triggers.

This consistency becomes evident when Tara is confronted with uncomfortable social situations or intrusive questions regarding her past privacy. As a former psychiatric patient who experienced social isolation due to rejection by public schools, Tara

harbors significant internal conflict between aggressive urges to rebel and the need to remain calm. However, Tara demonstrates superior unity of personality by choosing a harmonious response: she takes a deep breath, stabilizes her heart rate (physiological aspect), maintains cognitive composure (cognitive aspect), and responds in a controlled, polite tone (behavioral aspect).

The harmony between inner emotional regulation and outer behavioral manifestation proves that Tara no longer experiences personality fragmentation. Her calm demeanor is not a fragile facade, but a reflection of strong ego integration to achieve her ultimate goal: total recovery and social acceptance. Fatwikinginsih (2020) emphasizes that the integration of what an individual feels, thinks, and does serves as a primary indicator of mature mental health. Tara's ability to maintain behavioral stability under pressure demonstrates the attainment of superiority within the principle of personality unity.

Superiority of the Character Tara Viewed from the Principle of Social Interest

Social interest represents an attitude of connectedness with humanity in general and empathy for every member of society. An individual possessing empathy can comprehend others' inferiorities or weaknesses and respond by offering assistance. Although humans never attain absolute superiority and inevitably experience feelings of inferiority, they maintain the belief that a strong, supportive society will aid them in achieving superiority. In Tara, the realization of social interest is reflected in her evolving social relationships, ranging from rebuilding connections with authority figures to performing altruistic acts toward peers.

The limitation of Tara's social interest in her early life was rooted in a dysfunctional relationship with her family. In the novel *Katarsis*, Tara was frequently subjected to physical harshness and a lack of affection from her parents. From a young age, she disliked her given name, yet her parents responded by clamping her jaw and shouting at

her. This physically and verbally harsh parenting pattern negatively impacted Tara's emotional development, instilling hatred toward her parents. This aligns with Rahayu et al. (2024), who argue that family environment factors—such as parenting styles, education, and socioeconomic status—profoundly affect children's social and emotional development. Children raised in healthy, harmonious families tend to possess stable emotions, gain easier acceptance in social settings, and establish positive relationships. Conversely, unsupportive family environments hinder emotional development, characterized by aggressive behaviors, adaptation difficulties, and social withdrawal.

Tara's psychological state was further exacerbated by growing up in a broken home. Her father frequently assaulted her mother, brought other women home, and returned drunk following her mother's departure before eventually leaving Tara with relatives. According to Ahmadi (2002), family wholeness encompasses normal, harmonious structures and interactions. If parents frequently quarrel and exhibit hostile, aggressive behaviors, the family cannot be deemed intact. Munawaroh (2024) adds that a broken home represents an unharmonious environment where continuous conflict impairs a child's growth and leads to separation. Consequently, Tara grew up quiet, inexpressive, and psychologically troubled. These impacts echo findings by Massa et al. (2020), showing that children from broken homes tend to be quiet, stubborn, withdrawn, and rebellious due to a lack of affection, rendering them vulnerable to psychological disorders, parental resentment, and social difficulties.

The treatment Tara received from her parents directly contradicts ethical and religious imperatives set forth in the Qur'an, Surah An-Nisa verse 9:

“And let those (executors and guardians) fear (Allah) as if they were to leave behind weak offspring for whom they would fear. So let them fear Allah and speak words of appropriate justice.”



This verse underscores that parents must ensure their children's well-being, provide proper upbringing, eliminate harm, and communicate with kind words. When Tara received appropriate care and affection from Alfons during and after her stay at the psychiatric hospital, her social interest began to flourish. She became capable of offering her warmest smile—something she never showed her biological family—and remained calm when Dr. Alfons called her name, indicating a healthy recovery of her social interest.

Tara's social interest expanded further upon meeting Ello. She identified a sense of commonality with Ello because he regularly exercised to escape a dark past. According to Ahmadi (2002), perceived similarities attract individuals to one another; those who have experienced disappointment or heartbreak are often drawn to others with shared hardships due to mutual experiences. Through this fluid interaction, Tara's feelings of inferiority stemming from being labeled a "former psychiatric patient"—which had previously isolated her following public school rejection—were effectively dissipated. Tara's remark that no stranger had ever spoken to her as intimately as Ello signified her feeling valued. As Ahmadi (2002) explains, interactions flow smoothly and individuals feel free to speak when surrounded by familiar, well-liked people, unlike in the presence of strangers or adversaries.

Although Tara initially hesitated to accept Ello's handshake due to a lack of peer socialization in childhood, she ultimately overcame her doubts. Nevid (2017) posits that peer relationships afford children opportunities to develop socially competent behaviors outside the family, where group acceptance fosters self-esteem and efficacy. Tara's initial social obstacle stemmed from her parents' authoritarian parenting. According to Nevid (2017), authoritarian parents demand unquestioning obedience, remain unresponsive to needs, and rely on harsh discipline, leaving children hesitant, moody, withdrawn, anxious, and distrustful of others. Tara's success in overcoming hesitation and

shaking Ello's hand serves as evidence of her superiority in forming friendships.

Comfortable interaction with Ello offered Tara soothing emotional relief. Metaphorically describing their conversation as feeling "like being bathed in refreshing rain," Tara implicitly experienced emotional relief and a lifting of the inferiority (anxiety) that had long haunted her, allowing her to feel secure and reluctant to leave when Dr. Alfons called her inside.

The pinnacle of Tara's social interest development was demonstrated when she actively rushed a severely bleeding Ello to the hospital. Adler stated that through empathy, individuals learn what others experience as weaknesses and strive to extend aid, which in turn enriches feelings of superiority and strengthens social interest (Fatwikiningsih, 2020). Batson (Nevid, 2017) distinguishes between two helping motives: altruistic motives (pure, selfless intent) and self-centered motives (seeking recognition or avoiding guilt). Here, Tara's action was driven by pure altruism upon recognizing Ello's urgent need for medical aid. Furthermore, their shared background of a dark past amplified her willingness to help, confirming that her social interest had matured significantly.

Superiority of the Character Tara Viewed from the Principle of Style of Life

An individual's pursuit of expected superiority or perfection requires a specific pattern known as a style of life. The style of life followed by an individual is a combination of inner self-drives that govern behavioral direction and environmental forces that may foster or impede that direction. Through inner drives, humans possess the capacity to interpret external forces, and even avoid or confront them (Fatwikiningsih, 2020). Alwisol (2018) adds that a style of life is each person's unique way of striving toward specific goals established within their given life context.

Tara's new, superior style of life first manifests in her strict compliance with taking medication prescribed by Alfons to treat her trauma and

monster hallucinations. In the past, when experiencing anxiety, Tara utilized a coping mechanism of gripping a five-rupee coin until the anxiety subsided. Ramie (2022) explains that coping mechanisms or self-defenses represent initial human reactions to protect against excessive psychological stress and relieve tension, varying across individuals whether during emergencies or as daily routines. Differing from her past, Tara now selects a more effective, professional approach based on psychiatric prescriptions and adopts the habit of drinking water to soothe her mind. This choice reflects a new style of life driven by inner needs (managing anxiety) and environmental support (Alfons' role) to achieve superior recovery.

Furthermore, Tara develops a unique, comfortable lifestyle by utilizing garden amenities and adopting a stray cat named Bruno. Alfons permitted this so Bruno could keep Tara company during the doctor's busy hours. Relaxing in a lush garden effectively reduces her mental tension. This aligns with Nevid (2017), who notes that bodily responses to stress can be lowered by learning to relax. This new habit demonstrates a shift in Tara's style of life from remaining isolated in her room to a healthy lifestyle that fosters a safe, serene environment.

Tara's adaptive style of life was tested again when traumatic memories were triggered by news of a serial murder case bearing striking similarities to her past abuse. In childhood, Tara was locked inside a toolbox by Ello's father and uncle after she acted aggressively to kill her aunt in self-defense against her father's abuse. This traumatic experience left Tara with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). As Nevid (2017) notes, individuals with PTSD suffer prolonged adjustment difficulties, avoid trauma-related cues, experience intrusive memories, suffer anxiety that disrupts daily duties, and become exceptionally tense. To overcome feelings of inferiority linked to PTSD, Tara no longer relies on the five-rupee coin or acts abnormally; instead, she chooses to accept social support via a comforting hug and drinks water pro-

vided by Alfons. This selection represents a far more positive and effective style of life.

Finally, Tara implements a healthy lifestyle through regular evening running routines after work at the library to displace anxiety triggered by toolbox memories. Utami (2024) explains that exercises such as walking, running, or yoga assist the body in releasing endorphins that elevate feelings of happiness, improve focus, boost energy, and alleviate anxiety, thereby reinforcing self-worth. Additionally, Nevid (2017) asserts that lifestyle factors such as regular physical activity play a critical role in enhancing life quality and vitality while deterring dangerous substance use that can shorten life expectancy. Tara's routine running discipline highlights her effort to displace anxiety and achieve superiority through a healthy, productive style of life.

Superiority of the Character Tara Viewed from the Principle of Creative Power of the Self

Every individual possesses the freedom to creatively construct their own style of life, holding full responsibility for who they are and how they behave. Humans possess creative power to control their lives toward directed goals. This concept reinforces the dynamic nature of personality, where individuals actively interpret and utilize all experiences (Fatwikingasih, 2020). In Tara, this creative power of the self manifests when she independently applies psychological reasoning and analytical processes.

The realization of this creative power occurs during a dinner with Ello and Alfons at a seafood restaurant. Having lived with Alfons and learned people-analysis techniques, Tara actively applies this training. She engages her analytical mind—combining perception, reasoning, and psychological knowledge—to observe subtle body language and eye contact between Alfons and Ello. Through creative observation, Tara successfully concludes that the two are keeping a secret from her.

This action proves that Tara is no longer merely a passive object of her psychiatrist's analy-



sis, but has transformed into an autonomous subject capable of applying knowledge independently. This aligns with Adler's view that the creative power of the self is the primary engine of all individual behavior; this power is constructed by individuals who continuously seek innovation to forge a new, superior personality (Irawan, 2015). Tara's success in interpreting the situation and reaching independent conclusions offers clear evidence that her creative power of the self has developed exceptionally well.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings and discussion, it can be concluded that the character Tara in Anastasia Aemilia's novel *Katarsis* successfully demonstrates a superior personality by actualizing Alfred Adler's six principles of individual psychology. Through persistent struggle, Tara transforms her inferiority caused by severe childhood trauma into personal independence, academic success, and financial self-sufficiency. Guided by her subjective perception and unity of personality, Tara harmoniously integrates her cognitive, emotional, and behavioral aspects to independently reduce monster hallucinations and manage post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) anxiety responses.

Furthermore, Tara's social interest undergoes significant recovery, characterized by her capacity to form close interpersonal relationships, overcome the destructive impacts of authoritarian parenting from a broken home, and perform altruistic helping actions. This transformation is finalized by constructing an adaptive lifestyle through medical compliance, stress management with pets, and routine exercise. Ultimately, through the creative power of the self, Tara autonomously transforms from a passive trauma victim into a critical, intellectually empowered subject in full control of her life's trajectory. The combined actualization of these principles confirms Tara's attainment of complete superiority over her past inferiority complex.

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