



CONCEPTUAL SHIFTS AND EXISTENTIAL STRUGGLES IN ETGAR KERET'S SHORT STORY PINEAPPLE CRUSH

PERGESERAN KONSEPTUAL DAN PERGULATAN EKSISTENSIAL DALAM CERPEN PINEAPPLE CRUSH KARYA ETGAR KERET

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Abstract

Cognitive metaphor theory is essential for understanding abstract concepts such as life, which is widely conceptualized as a journey within human experience. This metaphor—“life is a journey”—pervades diverse cultural and literary contexts. In Etgar Keret's short story “Pineapple Crush”, this traditional metaphor is deconstructed, resulting in conceptual shifts in the meaning of life. This study employs close reading and content analysis to discover and examine conceptual shifts in the meaning of life and to evaluate their influence on the narrative. The results indicate that life is conceptualized as an ugly low table in a living room, abandoned by its former inhabitant. Moreover, life is conceptualized as an infinite journey, contesting the conventional meaning of life. These multiple conceptualizations challenge the traditional metaphor of life and provoke an existential struggle that constitutes the narrative's underlying tension, propelling the plot forward.

Keywords: conceptual metaphor; conceptual shift; life; existentialism; literary criticism; short story

Abstrak

Teori metafora kognitif sangat berguna dalam membantu manusia memahami konsep abstrak. Salah satu konsep abstrak itu adalah hidup yang secara universal dipahami lewat pengalaman manusia melakukan perjalanan. Hidup adalah perjalanan muncul dalam berbagai konteks, tidak terkecuali dalam karya sastra. Namun, dalam cerpen Etgar Keret berjudul “Pineapple Crush”, konsep ini ditantang sehingga menghasilkan pergeseran konseptual pada ranah kognitif. Dengan menggunakan pembacaan dekat yang disertai analisis isi, penelitian ini berupaya menemukan pergeseran konseptual dari makna hidup dan menguji bagaimana pergeseran itu berpengaruh pada struktur naratif cerpen ini. Hasil penelitian memperlihatkan hidup dikonseptualisasikan sebagai meja kecil jelek di ruang tamu yang ditinggalkan penghuni sebelumnya. Selain itu, hidup juga dikonseptualisasikan dalam perjalanan tanpa akhir. Kedua konsep ini tidak hanya menantang makna konvensional tentang hidup, tetapi juga menghasilkan pergulatan

eksistensial. Dalam cerpen ini pergeseran konseptual itu menjadi fondasi dasar struktur naratif yang menggerakkan plot ceritanya.

Kata kunci: metafora konseptual; pergeseran konseptual; hidup; eksistensialisme; kritik sastra; cerpen

1. Introduction

In several languages, life is conceptualized through human experiences of undertaking a journey. This metaphor appears to be universally applicable, as the framework of a journey—comprising a beginning, an endpoint, and intermediary phases—is readily comprehensible to people and may be utilized in many contexts such as job advancement, aging, or personal growth. The notion of journey is profoundly embedded in the human psyche, serving as a potent metaphor for traversing life's obstacles and upheavals (Abdulmoneim, 2006).

The use of metaphors to describe life is widespread across various historical and cultural contexts (Kövecses, 2010; Moser, 2007). Life is conceptualized as an abstract notion, which humans understand through tangible experiences. This process of understanding abstract concepts via concrete experiences is known as a conceptual metaphor (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Such metaphors are then expressed linguistically. For example, in bahasa Indonesia, the phrase *“dia telah tiba di akhir perjalanannya”* (he has reached the end of his journey) commonly refers to a person's death, derived from the metaphor of life as a journey.

In English, expressions such as “come a long way” and “on the right path” similarly align life with a physical journey. Other metaphors commonly used to represent life include viewing it as a narrative (I'm writing a new chapter), a conflict (Every day is a battle), a competition (I can see the finish line), and a structure (Her life was in ruins) (Landau, 2018). In Spanish, expressions such as *“el camino de la vida”* (the route of life) and *“seguir adelante”* (to keep moving forward) illustrate the life-as-journey metaphor. The life as journey metaphor is also evident in Mandarin. For instance, individuals frequently employ expressions such as “人生的道路” (the road of life) or “一步一步来” (step by step) to articulate the course of life. In Arabic, phrases such as “طريق الحياة” (way of life) and “سير الحياة” (course of life) embody the life-as-journey metaphor.

The life-as-journey metaphor is commonly used in ordinary conversation. People use this concept to make sense of their experiences and navigate through challenges. Despite the widespread use of this metaphor, it remains a simplification of the intricacies of human existence. More recently, literary works have challenged this simplistic view, pushing the boundaries of the life-as-journey metaphor. One such work is Etgar Keret's short story, "Pineapple Crush", which belongs to a collection of short stories entitled *Fly Already*. This book has been translated into bahasa Indonesia, *Galat di Ujung Galaksi* (Keret, 2021). In this short story life is not presented as a linear trajectory but as a series of fragmented, interconnected moments that reflect the complexity of the human experience. This shift in perspective from life as a journey to life as an intricate web of experiences calls into question the limitations of traditional metaphors and opens up new avenues for interpreting the meaning of existence.

As a journey, life has a neutral tone. The nature of life's journey remains uncertain; it may be favorable, unfavorable, intense, pleasurable, or profoundly joyous. Yet, when we read Etgar Keret's short story, "Pineapple Crush", we no longer felt life has a neutral tone. In this short story the narrative centers on an encounter recounted from a first-person perspective. The narrator is a young man who detests his employment yet feels compelled to continue working. Consequently, each evening, he smokes marijuana near the beach while seeing the sunset often the severity of reality. There, he encounters an unfamiliar woman who requests the marijuana he is smoking. She subsequently requests that he supply a joint for them to smoke together.

The narrator's perspective on life introduces a range of new viewpoints, which collectively enhance the text's ambiguity. This ambiguity plays a crucial role in the narrative. Steen (1994: 231) suggests that a certain degree of ambiguity or vagueness serves to heighten reader engagement attention. On the surface, the story appears to explore the development of a fleeting romantic encounter. However, a deeper reading reveals a pervasive cynicism in the narrator's tone—a reflection of his disillusionment with life. This shift in tone—where life, traditionally seen as neutral, becomes cynical—raises crucial questions about how conceptual metaphors shape our understanding of existence. While shifts in are well-documented in translation studies (Catford, 1965), they are often viewed through the lens of linguistic, operated at the levels of words, phrases, or sentence structures. Shifts also transpire at the level of meaning. Aliurridha

and Setiawan (2019) found shifts that appear at the deep level of conceptual meaning. At the conceptual level, shifts may involve changes in cultural references or nuances that are specific to a particular language or context.

Previous research has focused largely on shifts at the linguistic level, but the deep-level shifts in conceptual meaning, as seen in Keret's short story, require further investigation. This research aims to fill this gap by examining how shifts in the conceptual metaphor of life in "Pineapple Crush" contribute to the cynical tone of the narrative. The study will investigate how the narrator's perspective on life, shaped by conceptual metaphors, shifts from a neutral journey to a more complex, cynical view. This research is important because it not only enhances our understanding of metaphor theory but also provides deeper insight into how literary texts employ conceptual shifts to evoke emotional responses from readers. The primary objective is to explore how these conceptual shifts impact the tone and meaning of the short story, shedding light on the broader implications of metaphor use in literature.

2. Theoretical Basis

Metaphors are crucial in literature, particularly due to the genre's emphasis on concise and evocative language. Writers frequently employ metaphors to move beyond literal meanings, thereby creating layers of nuanced interpretations. Literary metaphors also encourage creative, ad-hoc emergence and necessitate what Steen (1994: 207) describes as "polyvalent processing." Arcilla Jr. (2024) asserts that metaphor in literature produces a multitude of interpretations, encouraging readers to partake in a deeper and more contemplative reading experience. Metaphors enrich the emotional and aesthetic experience of readers in reading literature by converting abstract emotions and concepts into concrete imagery. The study of metaphors in short stories is profoundly interdisciplinary, integrating linguistics and literary studies. Metaphors can be examined linguistically to comprehend their structure, function, and cognitive implications. Literary criticism studies metaphors to reveal their contribution to the thematic and aesthetic aspects of a literary work such as poetry (Blasko & Merski, 1998). This dual approach enhances our understanding of the functioning of metaphors in both language and literary contexts.

The study of metaphor has progressed from classical rhetoric to modern cognitive research (Putri et al., 2024). Ancient philosophers such as Aristotle regarded metaphor as a rhetorical instrument employed for persuasive and decorative functions (Pyatunina, 2021). In *Poetics*, Aristotle considers metaphor as a means of giving new names to things, thus enhancing the vividness and efficacy of language. This classical perspective established the foundation for the conventional rhetorical study of metaphors in literature.

The study of metaphor experienced a substantial transition in the 20th century due to the emergence of structuralism and post-structuralism. Structuralist theorists such as Roman Jakobson and Claude Lévi-Strauss examined the functioning of metaphors within the frameworks of language and myth (Keck, 2019). Post-structuralists, such as Jacques Derrida and Roland Barthes, deconstructed metaphors to expose the instability of meaning in language (Anger in Putri et al., 2024).

The cognitive revolution of the late 20th century, spearheaded by scholars like as Lakoff and Johnson, established a novel paradigm in the study of metaphors. This cognitive linguistic perspective asserts that metaphors are not simply language adornments but essential to human cognition (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Lakoff & Turner, 1989). Their study emphasized the systematic characteristics of conceptual metaphors and their influence on our comprehension of abstract concepts via more tangible experiences.

Conceptual metaphors, as introduced by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson in their work, *Metaphor We Live By* (1980), contest the traditional view of metaphor, which regarded it as a novel or poetic linguistic expression wherein terms for a concept are employed beyond their standard meanings to convey a “similar” concept. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) elucidated that metaphors extend beyond mere poetic expressions; they are relevant to everyday language, and their essence resides not in language itself but in the manner in which humans view one cognitive domain through the lens of another. Metaphor is an instrument so ordinary that we employ unconsciously and instinctively. It is indispensable because metaphor enables us to comprehend ourselves and our environment in ways that no other cognitive frameworks can (Lakoff & Turner, 1989). This perspective posits that metaphors are not merely language tools but essential to human comprehension and experience of the surrounding reality.

Metaphors, by contextualizing abstract concepts in terms of more concrete ones, significantly alter our perceptions and profoundly influence our thoughts and behaviors.

We have to separate between metaphorical concepts, which are restructured metaphorically, and metaphorical expressions, which originate from the metaphorical concept. The phrase “Life is a journey” exemplifies a metaphorical concept, whereas “He must be well aware in the Soviet Union along the private that the people need reassurance if they are to travel along the road of reform” and “...following road of economic reform” serve as metaphorical expressions that embody aspects of the aforementioned metaphorical concept (Deignan in Abdumoneim, 2006). Lakoff and Johnson (1980) have drawn a clear cut distinction between metaphors as concepts and metaphors as linguistic expressions. Nonetheless, some scholars remain perplexed in differentiating between metaphor as a concept and metaphor as a product, namely in its language representation (Aliurridha and Efendi, 2021: 133). Sukarno (2017) can not comprehend the distinction between metaphor as a conceptual structure and metaphor as a linguistic representation. He exemplifies the verbal form of the metaphor “argument is war,” derived from Lakoff and Johnson's conceptual metaphor (1980). Sukarno interprets this conceptual metaphor and exemplifies his misunderstanding that metaphor functions as a notion governing the human brain system, rather than merely a linguistic expression.

In addition distinguishing between metaphor as a conceptual structure and metaphor as language expressions, Lakoff and Johnson (1980) also differentiate between conventional metaphors and inventive metaphors. The initial category of metaphors is classified into living and dead metaphors, whilst the subsequent category is categorized into live and novel metaphors. Live conventional metaphors are the used components of a metaphorical concept. Consequently, “...following the Soviet Union along the road of economic reform” exemplifies the metaphorical concept “life is a journey” and serves as an illustration of a live conventional metaphor. Dead conventional metaphors are expressions that have lost their metaphorical relevance and become everyday languages such as “time flies”. These metaphors, once vibrant, have become so conventional through frequent usage that they have diminished in impact (Kövecses, 2010: xi).

Conversely, inventive metaphors symbolize a novel cognitive approach. As noted by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), a novel inventive metaphor is a metaphor that is not used to organize an aspect of our conventional conceptual system but as an innovative viewpoint on a subject. We separate inventive metaphors into two categories: live inventive metaphors and novel inventive metaphors. Live inventive metaphors are either (i) evidence of the underutilized aspect of the literal metaphor or (ii) expansions of the utilized portion of a metaphor (Lakoff & Johnson 1980: 53). Returning to the initial conceptual metaphor “life is a journey,” the linguistic expression “he had many obstacles on his road to fame” exemplifies the unused part of this conceptual metaphor, highlighting the unused correspondence that “life has the option of difficult roads.” On the other hand, novel inventive metaphors are metaphor that represents an entirely new way of thinking. perspective of life. For example, when expressing the abstract notion of life, if the linguistic expression is not derived from the already used conceptual metaphor of life, such life as a journey, but instead offers a completely new perspective, it may be categorized as a novel inventive metaphor rather than a live inventive metaphor. The shift in this conceptual system, enrich the emotional and aesthetic experience of the literature work.

3. Research Method

This study represents qualitative research by applying close reading to Etgar Keret's short story “Pineapple Crush.” Close reading has been fundamental to literary practice long before literary studies engaged in critical methodological discourse on the subject from the 1920s onward (Ohrvik, 2024: 241). Close reading is a kind of “constructive attention” (Bialostosky, 2006), characterized by Berthoff (in Ohrvik, 2024: 241) as a technique for examining the connection between words and meaning. Close reading necessitates that readers meticulously examine the particular strengths of a literary work to comprehend its functioning and the impact it generates at the most granular level. Close reading enables writers to explore the fundamental components of a literary work, examining its linguistic features and challenging established theoretical frameworks (Aliurridha & Widya Ikomah, 2025).

The data collection for this study was conducted by reading the material object. The material object of this study is a short story entitled “Pineapple Crush,” featured in

the anthology *Galat di Ujung Galaksi* (Keret, 2021). This anthology of short stories comprises Indonesian translations released by Anagram, translated by Ninus D. Andarnuswari from the English edition named *Fly Already*. The data were examined utilizing close reading methods in conjunction with content analysis (Krippendorff, 2004). Content analysis was employed to facilitate the coding of linguistic expressions and the examination of the conceptual metaphors that inform those expressions. Close reading and content analysis were employed to investigate the consistency and alterations in the narrator's perspective, as well as to ascertain whether these changes influence the narrative's flow. These two analytical methodologies are anticipated to address the aforementioned research problems. Close reading allows for a granular exploration of the text's linguistic and literary elements, while content analysis offers a systematic means of coding these elements, especially focusing on the conceptual metaphors that emerge within the narrative. By examining the linguistic expressions used in the story, content analysis aids in identifying patterns and shifts in meaning that close reading alone might not fully capture.

4. Discussion

This study presents a novel perspective concept of life, as articulated through the narrator's worldview. This short story contests the conventional view of life as a journey, presenting it in a fundamentally different perspective. Instead of perceiving life as a meaningful journey, the tale compares it to an ugly low table in a living room, abandoned by its former inhabitant. This novel perspective encourages readers to perceive life not as a purposeful journey, but as an endless journey—one that continuously repeats without attaining a conclusive endpoint. The metaphor of the ugly low table in the living room functions as the key symbol of the narrative, greatly amplifying the story's poetic resonance.

4.1. Life Is An Ugly Low Table in The Living Room

In addition to providing solace, reading a short story entails uncovering a novel perspective on a subject. A novel perspective can arise from numerous sources, one of which is conceptual metaphors. In most cultures, life is assumed to be purposeful, implying that individuals are anticipated to possess aims. This idea has been explored

by Lakoff and Turner (1989: 3-4), who examine the relationship between the domain of travel and the domain of life goals. They identify several mappings that illustrate how these two domains are interconnected: (i) the person leading a life is a traveler; (ii) his purposes are destinations; (iii) the means for achieving purposes are routes; (iv) difficulties in life are impediments to travel; (v) counselors are guides; (vi) progress is the distance traveled; (vii) Things you gauge your progress by are landmarks; (viii) choices in life are crossroads; (ix) material resources and talents are provisions.

To further elucidate these correspondences, the “life as a journey” metaphor can be viewed as a mapping between the source domain of “journey” and the target domain of “life” as follows.

Table 1 Cross Domain Mapping Life-As-Journey

Source: Journey	Target: Life
The travelers	The people who are alive
The vehicle	Life itself
The journey	Events in life and the moving from birth to death
The distance covered	The age of a person
Obstacles encountered	General impediments, e.g. illness
Decisions about where to go	Career choices etc
The ultimate destination	Death

In the life-as-journey metaphor, purposes are destinations, and purposeful action represents self-directed movement towards these goals (Abdulmoneim, 2006). This metaphorical framework suggests that life’s purpose is similar to a journey, where the individual is a traveler moving toward various destinations or goals. Individuals are typically expected to have goals that guide their actions and decisions throughout their lives, as these goals provide meaning in life. The perception of meaning in life has been shown to positively predict various indicators of well-being and social functioning, such as relationship satisfaction (Baumeister, 1991; Steger et al., 2006; Zika & Chamberlain, 1992). In contrast, a chronic sense of meaninglessness is often linked to diminished life satisfaction and may even lead to pathological conditions (Schnell, 2009). Thus, when a person thinks he’s lost his sense of direction, it is an indication that he lost his purpose in life. He is uncertain about his direction in life. This scenario

is illustrated in Etgar Keret's short story named "Pineapple Crush", beginning from the story's outset.

Giting yang pertama dalam sehari itu ibarat kawan sekolah, cinta pertama, iklan tentang hidup. Tapi bukan hidup itu sendiri—hidup adalah sesuatu yang, kalau bisa kumiliki, sudah bakal kukembalikan ke asalnya dari dulu. Dalam iklannya, hidup siap dipesan, semua sudah termasuk di dalamnya, nikmatnya bukan main, dan bebas. Setelah yang pertama, giting beberapa kali lagi membantuku melunakkan realitas, dan hari jadi lebih bisa dijalani meski rasanya tidak akan sama lagi seperti yang pertama. (The first hit of the day is like a childhood friend, a first love, a commercial for life. But it's different from life itself, which is something that, if I could have, I would have returned to the store ages ago. In the commercial it's made-to-order, all-inclusive, fingerlicking, carefree living. After that first one, more hits will come along to help you soften reality and make the day tolerable, but they won't feel the same) (Keret, 2021: 179).

Life is fundamentally perceived as a journey with a neutral connotation. The nature of life's path remains uncertain—whether it be favorable, unfavorable, passionate, joyous, or blissful. However, the narrator in this short story perceives life through a distinctly gloomy perspective. He said that if he were able to return his life, he would have already done it. This gloomy expression arises from the perplexity and absurdity of life. Life seems this absurd in the narrator's mind. Camus (in Fadillah, 2022: 152) characterizes the absurd as an abrupt epiphany, an awakening of mental acuity that perceives life as a chaos resistant to rationality, a recognition of the world's complexity and peculiarity. This chaos resistant contribute the gloomy feeling when reading this short story. The narator's gloomy perspective on life is further amplified by this metaphorical expression:

Hidup itu ibaratnya meja pendek jelek yang ditinggalkan di ruang tamu oleh penyewa sebelumnya. Hampir sepanjang waktu kita awas dan berhati-hati, kita ingat benda itu ada di sana. Tapi kadang-kadang kita lupa lalu ujungnya yang runcing membentur tulang kering atau tempurung lutut, dan rasanya sakit sekali. Dan hampir selalu meninggalkan bekas luka. Saat kita nyimeng, meja rendah itu memang tetap ada di sana. Tidak ada selain kematian yang bisa membuatnya hilang. Tapi seisan saja bisa menghaluskan sudut-sudut itu, menumpulkannya sedikit. Dan bila kita sedang melayang, sakitnya jadi jauh lebih ringan. (Life is like an ugly low table left in your living room by the previous tenants. Most of the time you notice it and you're careful,

you remember it's there, but sometimes you forget and then you get the pointy corner right in your shin or your kneecap, and it hurts. And it almost always leaves a scar. When you smoke, it doesn't make that low table disappear. Nothing except death can make it disappear. But a good puff can file down the corners, round them off a little. And then when you get whacked, it hurts a lot less) (Keret, 2021: 180-181).

Through this expression, we learn how the narrator views life, which is no different from an ugly low table abandoned by its former inhabitants. The narrator contests the ubiquitous conceptual metaphor found in nearly all cultures and generally neutral in tone, by transforming it into a negative portrayal. Instead of the traditional metaphor of "life is a journey," the narrator introduces a novel and inventive metaphor—comparing life to an ugly, abandoned table in a living room. This pessimistic perspective challenges readers to reflect on the underlying issues that may be affecting them, thereby enhancing the poetic quality of the short story and enriching the reader's experience.

In addition to be viewed as as an ugly low table in the living room, life also viewed as an endless journey, similar to the endless journey of a jellyfish, lack of meaning and purpose. This view exacerbates the gloomy atmosphere of the short story.

4.2. Life Is Journey That Has No Ending

The narrator's cynical tone in viewing life arises from his frustration with its monotony. This short story depicts life as an exceedingly monotonous activity. The narrator in the short story appears to have a lack sense of purpose in life, and seemingly does not possess one. He lacks of ambition. He is uncertain about his future plans. He does not seek happiness as most individuals do, which often manifests through material possessions or careers. Daily, he engages solely in monotonous activities, lacking any vision for an improved future. His existence resembles a voyage devoid of a final destination. This impression is firmly entrenched in the reader. Towards the conclusion of the narrative, this perception is further amplified by his contemplations on life upon his initial experience with a substance that he smokes known as Pineapple Crush. The narrator of this short story narrates, "*Lalu aku memikirkan Raviv lagi, menua lalu menjadi bayi lagi seperti ubur-ubur mini itu* (Then I think about Raviv some more, growing old and then becoming a baby again like that dwarf jellyfish) (Keret, 2021: 179: 212)".

Picture 1 Life Is Journey That Has No Ending



In this context, life conceptualized into a never-ending cycle, similar to jellyfish that not succumb to death with age but instead reverts to its juvenile form. Thus, life is perceived as an unending journey, one that evokes a sense of monotonous repetition. This sense of ennui brings to mind the myth of Sisyphus, condemned to eternally roll a stone up a mountain, only for it to roll back down each time he reaches the summit. Aware of the futility of his task, Sisyphus nevertheless continues, knowing well that he is trapped in an endless, purposeless endeavor (Camus, 1965; Gloag, 2020). Such a portrayal appears preposterous and absurd, reflecting the narrator's existential perspective, which undeniably aligns with the absurdity inherent in the human condition. This depiction mirrors the narrator's existential viewpoint, which aligns with the absurdity inherent in the human condition.

The recognition of existence's absurdity leads to a profound sense of alienation, incomprehensibility, and struggle (Arinze & Onwuatuegwu, 2020; Gloag, 2020). The awareness of such absurdity often results in disappointment, which is palpable in the narrator's tone throughout the narrative. When hearing his niece's discussion of a species of dwarf jellyfish and the potential for immortality through research on their genetic makeup, which allows them to revert to a juvenile state instead of aging, the narrator reacted with absence of interest.

Naomi sekarang tujuh belas tahun, gadis yang cantik dan tinggi seperti ibunya. Walaupun memakai kewan gigi, sedikit pun dia tak terlihat atau terdengar seperti anak kecil. Saat makan malam, dia bercerita penuh semangat spesies ubur-ubur mini yang hidup selamanya. Ubur-ubur ini tumbuh dewasa, kawin-mawin, lalu menjadi bayi lagi, dan seterusnya seperti itu, ad infinitum. "Nggak akan pernah mati!" sergahnya.

Gabungan antusiasme dan kawat gigi membuat ludahnya muncrat pada sedikit padaku dan Hagai. “Bayangkan—kalau kita pelajari seluruh komposisi genetisnya, mungkin kita juga akan bisa hidup selamanya.” (Naomi’s seventeen now, a beautiful, tall girl, like her late mother, and even though she has braces, she doesn’t look or sound like a child for even a second. At dinner she tells us excitedly about a species of dwarf jellyfish that lives forever. This jellyfish matures, mates, then becomes a baby again, and it goes on like that ad infinitum. “It’ll never die!” Naomi gushes, and the mixture of enthusiasm and braces makes her spit on Hagai and me a little bit. “Think about it—if we can study its genetic composition thoroughly, then maybe we’ll be able to live forever, too.” *Aku nyengir ke arahnya. “Jujur ya, enam puluh atau tujuh puluh tahun saja buatku kayaknya sudah kelamaan.”* (I grin at her. “To tell you the truth, even sixty or seventy years sounds like too long to me.”) (Keret, 2021: 191).

This little dialogue reveals the narrator's perspective on life, particularly his own existence. He did not regard life with the same worth as the majority, who cherish it to the extent of desiring its prolongation. For him, life constituted a tragedy that subjected humanity to pain, similar to Sisyphus doomed to elevate a boulder up a mountain, only to subsequently descend it once more.

The stone in *The Myth of Sisyphus* serves as a metaphor symbolizing a tragic destiny (Camus in Fadillah, 2022). Like Sisyphus, the narrator of this short story suffers the monotony of an unwanted occupation merely to make ends meet, alongside his position as a subordinate individual residing in his mother's house, an elderly widow whose sustenance is provided by her eldest son, the narrator's older brother. The conceptual metaphor of life in this short story engages a shift in meaning, evolving from a purposeful journey with a conclusion to an unending journey. An unending journey, under the absurd perspective of existential, equates to perpetual misery, which is precisely what happen in this story. The narrator in this short story suffers from the relentless mockery of his financially successful older brother, a miserable job, and a life he wishes could be returned to the one who put it upon him. He relies solely on smoking marijuana to soften the reality. However, this a never-ending cycle seems to meet an ends when he meets with Akirov.

4.3. Life Return to Its Conventional Meaning

Following the narrator's encounter with Akirov, a distinguished lawyer who is older than him, the narrative takes a more engaging turn. This interaction reawakens a sense of purpose in the narrator's life, transforming his existence from one of despair to one of meaning. It evokes a metaphorical liberation, akin to Sisyphus being freed from his eternal torment. The tone of the story shifts subtly as a result, with the pervasive bitterness that initially defines the narrative beginning to diminish, however little. The narrator's life, though still loaded with difficulties, becomes slightly bearable. However, this minor development is notably substantial, considering the pervasive bitterness that has previously characterised his life.

Akirov's character possesses a compelling aura of mystery, captivating the reader's curiosity and driving the narrative forward. The author effectively enhances this curiosity by progressively revealing fragments of information regarding Akirov. From her apparent indifference to her short-term memory loss to her readiness to violate the law, these details further entice the reader to explore the depths of her character. Moreover, Keret employs a strategic delay technique, withholding crucial information about Akirov's impending disappearance in three weeks, which serves to heighten the suspense. When the narrator questions the rationale behind her departure, When the narrator inquires about the reason for her departure, Akirov responds enigmatically, "*Akan kuceritakan.... Janji. Tapi nggak hari ini* (I'll tell you.... I promise. But not today)" (Keret, 2021: 202). The mystery intensifies when Akirov reveals fragments of her personal life while maintaining ambiguity. For instance, when the narrator asks, "*Apakah Oded suaminya?* (If Oded is her husband?)". Akirov ambiguously replies, "*Kurasa sekarang aku nggak terlalu yakin bahwa dia suamiku* (I guess now I feel a little less sure that he's my husband)" (Keret, 2021: 208). This response only adds layers to the mystery surrounding Akirov's character, maintaining the reader's curiosity.

The narrative development in this short story is relatively predictable, with no significant plot twists that significantly alter the course of events dramatically. Nevertheless, the story is not devoid in the elements of surprise. As the story approaches the end, an unexpected disclosure occurs when Akirov reveals her involvement in legal concerns that have developed unexpectedly. She uncovers a bribery scandal that escalates beyond her initial understanding, including numerous influential figures in

her nation. This corruption compels her to escape, entering the witness protection program, thereby abandoning her former identity and life to adopt a new one in an undisclosed place. Akirov's husband declines to accompany her, citing his strong familial obligations. In a moment of unforeseen determination, the narrator, who had previously lacked purpose in life, says, “*Aku akan ikut denganmu, ke mana pun itu. Aku suka kejutan* (I’ll come with you, wherever it is. I love surprises)” (Keret, 2021: 213). His words, spoken with newfound confidence, suggest a profound realization of purpose, as if he has discovered the reason for his existence. The neutral tone of the life-journey metaphor returns, signaling a shift in tone. Life, previously view as an ugly low table, a monotonous and perpetual endeavour, is now return into the universal cultural metaphor: life is a journey. The reemergence lif-as-journey metaphor conclude this story. When Akirov finally departed, prompting the narrator to contemplate:

Kedengarannya seperti awal—atau mungkin akhir—kisah sebuah dongeng. Aku percaya dia akan bahagia di sana, di mana pun itu, bahkan tanpa bersamaku. Akan ada orang lain yang memetikkan kelapa untuknya. Atau dia akan memetikinya sendiri. Ke mana pun mereka mengirimnya, kuharap tempat itu hangat. Setiap kali kuoper lintinganku dan tangan kami bersentuhan, jari-jarinya selalu terasa dingin. (It sounds like the beginning—or maybe the end—of a fairy tale. I believe she’ll be happy there, wherever it may be, even if it’s without me. Someone else will pick coconuts for her. Or she’ll pick them herself. Wherever they send her, I hope it’s somewhere warm. Every time I passed her a joint and our hands touched, her fingers felt cold) (Keret, 2021: 214).

The short story culminates in a striking and profound conclusion. The narrator’s previously cynical and pessimistic view of life, which stands in contrast to the conventional metaphors widely accepted in many cultures, is gradually transformed by the story’s end. Life is no longer perceived as an ugly low table in a living room or as a monotonous, unending journey. Instead, it is reimagined as a journey filled with mystery and possibility. Although the narrator expresses confidence in Akirov's future, stating that she will be fine, the reader is left with a lingering sense of uncertainty. This creates a subtle dissonance between the narrator’s words and the reader’s perception, a deliberate ambiguity that enhances the narrative’s depth. This ambiguity, rather than being a flaw, serves an important function. As Steen (1994: 231) suggests, ambiguity

is essential in fostering greater reader engagement, encouraging active participation in the process of interpretation.

5. Closing

The use of conceptual metaphor in Etgar Keret's short story "Pineapple Crush" not only enriches the reader's understanding of life but also serves as a driving force within the narrative itself. These metaphors extend beyond the conceptual realm and are embedded in the linguistic and structure of the story. In this sense, the story's very structure is shaped by its conceptual metaphors. The narrator in "Pineapple Crush" initially views life through a perceives of cynicism and pessimism, conceptualizing it as an ugly low table in living room, abandoned by its previous tenant. The narrator perceives life as without value, desiring to revert it to its initial state, as it consistently fails to meet his expectations. This viewpoint is further solidified by a metaphor comparing life to to endless suffering, much like Sisyphus, who is condemned to endlessly repeat the same fruitless endeavor with no option but to endure.

The narrator's bitter perspective on life begins to shift only upon encountering Akirov. Life is re-conceptualized into a more universally accepted metaphor: life is a journey. However, this re-conceptualized of meaning does not necessarily translate into an optimistic outlook. At the story's conclusion, when the narrator confidently asserts, "Akirov, wherever she may be, she will be happy," there remains an inherent contradiction between his words and the tone in which they are delivered. The conflict between the narrator's statement and the manner in which it is expressed creates a sense of ambivalence. Despite the metaphor of life as a journey, this perspective does not render life any more hopeful than the previously envisioned "ugly low table" or the endless labor of Sisyphus. Life, though conceptualized as a journey, is still riddled with uncertainty. The destination may be defined, but whether the traveler will ever reach it remains uncertain, adding an element of mystery and doubt to the narrative's resolution.

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