

RATIONALITY VALUE IN JOSTEIN GAARDER'S *SOPHIE'S WORLD*

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to find the rationality value as seen in Sophie Amundsen's character and to know how that rationality value defines her character. This study is categorized as a descriptive qualitative design. The source of data is taken from the *Sophie's World* novel by Jostein Gaarder. This study used rationality theory from the rationalist such as Socrates, Plato, and Descartes, with the addition from Suwardi Endraswara and Ranjabar. The result of this research showed that the rationality values found in *Sophie's World* novel are reasoning, doubting, and finding the agreement. The most appear rationality value is Sophie's reasoning. When Sophie accept her lesson about philosophy, she shows her reasoning in case of receive her philosophical lesson. From her reasoning, Sophie's character changed. Philosophy taught her about thinking rationally, logically, systematic, and critical. Thus, we can see that Sophie Amundsen is a dynamic character. From those three rationality values, Sophie Amundsen becomes thoughtful, skeptic, and has an understanding to others opinion that make her become wiser.

Key words: rationality, philosophy, reasoning, doubting, agreement.

Abstrak

Tujuan penelitian ini adalah menemukan nilai rasionalitas dalam novel Dunia Sophie, serta mengetahui bagaimana nilai rasionalitas tersebut mendefinisikan karakter Sophie Amundsen. Penelitian ini dikategorikan sebagai penelitian kualitatif. Data-data dalam penelitian ini diperoleh dari novel Sophie's World karya Jostein Gaarder. Penelitian ini menggunakan teori rasionalitas yang diambil dari beberapa filsuf rasionalis seperti Socrates, Plato, dan Descartes, dengan beberapa tambahan dari Suwardi Endraswara dan Ranjabar. Hasil dari penelitian ini menunjukkan nilai rasionalitas yang ditemukan dalam novel Sophie's World adalah penalaran, keraguan, dan persetujuan. Nilai rasionalitas yang dominan adalah penalaran yang dilakukan oleh Sophie. Ketika Sophie menerima pelajaran tentang filsafat, ia menunjukkan proses penalaran dalam hal menyerap pelajarannya tersebut. Dari penalaran yang sering dilakukannya, karakter Sophie mengalami perubahan. Filsafat menjadikan Sophie dapat berpikir rasional, logis, sistematis, dan kritis, sehingga dapat kita lihat bahwa Sophie Amundsen adalah karakter yang dinamis. Dari tiga nilai rasionalitas tersebut, Sophie Amundsen menjadi seorang

yang penuh pemikiran, skeptis, dan dapat mengerti pendapat orang lain sehingga menjadikannya seorang karakter yang bijak.

Kata kunci: rasionalitas, filsafat, penalaran, keraguan, persetujuan,

A. INTRODUCTION

Sophie's World is a novel written by Jostein Gaarder in 1991 under the title *Sofies Verden* in Norwegian. Jostein Gaarder was born in Oslo, Norway, in 1952. He taught highschool philosophy for several years before publishing a collection of short stories in 1986. Shortly thereafter, his first novel, *Sophie's World*, has been translated into fifty-three language. *Sophie World's* originally published in English in 1994(FSG Classics, *Sophie's World*). This novel is about a 14-years-old girl who realized how wonderful the philosophy is. Philosophy has opened her eyes to the basic questions of life, such as 'who am I?' and 'where does the world come from?'. Alberto Knox, a mysterious philosopher, reached her at first by sent some letters. Through successive letters, Sophie enrolls in a course about western philosophy.

Endraswara in his book *Metode Penelitian Filsafat Sastra* argued that both of literature and philosophy have a very thin boundary. As an illustration of human thought, literature usually offers many wisdom of life. The wisdom of life is the essence of philosophy (95). Jostein Gaarder in this case summarizes the history of western philosophy in a unique novel, which tells about the experience of 14-years-old girl in learning the philosophy. Philosophy that seems abstract and complex for most people, becomes very interesting and easy to understand. Philosophy and literature collaborate miraculously in this novel. Moreover, reading a novel and interpret a story can be said as activity of thinking that involves ratio. Through literature, we think to write something and interpret a text. We enjoy a fiction by our mind, and it certainly involves a rational thought for writing and interpretation. Every reader of a literary work is using the ratio to interpret it. With rationality, they have reasons regarding their opinions about literature.

Sophie's World mainly tells about Sophie's experience in learning about western philosophy. Western philosophy is a line of related philosophical thinking, beginning in Ancient Greece, including Europe and its former colonies up to the present day (Importance of Philosophy, "Western Philosophy") The study of philosophy, or philosophical thinking, is formulating problems carefully or logically, and also did with experimentation and careful observation. Then, the philosopher composes arguments and solution, makes counter-arguments to their arguments, until they engage in a conversation about those greatest ideas such as the big questions of life, just like Sophie Amundsend got from the mysterious letter in *Sophie's World* novel. Through her philosophy lessons, Sophie learned about many philosopher ideas in the search for truth and explanation about life. In her learning process, there are some rationality values that be the factor of her character development.

From the explanation above, the researcher is interested to find rationality value which is reflected in Sophie's character, because Sophie is the main character of the novel so the data can be easily found because this novel is mainly tells about Sophie. Then, the

theme of this novel is about philosophy, and rationality is one of major characteristics in philosophy. Furthermore, philosophy also has a very thin boundary with literature. Rationality is the habit of acting by reason, which means in accordance with the facts of reality. Rationality is in your self-interest because the only way to achieve desired outcomes is to act according to reality. Rationality does not mean being a perfectionist in one's thoughts and ideas. It does not require you to spend enormous amounts of time evaluating every idea (Importance of Philosophy, "Rationality"). Rene Descartes as a major rationalist in 17th century is also has big contribution in modern philosophy through his skepticism method in questioning everything to get the truth and knowledge. The researcher sees that philosophy, rationality, and literature have connection to each other and it interested to be the object in literature research. To sum up, in this research, the researcher wants to find the rationality value in *Sophie's World* novel, and how that rationality value defines Sophie Amundsend character.

B. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Philosophy and Literature

The 'Philosophy' term comes from Greek language *Philosophia*. *Philos* means love, and *Sophos* means wisdom. So, Philosophy means 'Love of Wisdom' (Maksum 15). It was not enough just to know the origin and meaning of the terms used, but also understanding the concepts and definitions by the philosophers according to their way of thinking. In case of understanding about philosophy, we can begin by questioning about 'who are we?', 'where does the world come from?', 'what the meaning of life?'. But the questions did not arise from a scientific curiosity. These questions arise in everyday life to anyone who began to astonish about their existence.

Philosophy is a field that has a relationship with literature. According to Endraswara (2012), both of literature and philosophy have a very thin boundary. As an illustration of human thought, literature usually offers many wisdom of life. The wisdom of life is the essence of philosophy (95). Literature is a "term used to describe written or spoken material. Broadly speaking, literature is used to describe anything from creative writing to more technical or scientific works, but the term is most commonly used to refer to works of the creative imagination, including works of poetry, drama, fiction, and nonfiction" (Lombardi par 1). Therefore, literature is used to express something in verbal or written. Our lives and all subjects related to our life can be the elements of literature. Both philosophy and literature begins from the experience of living the life, about human and their life. What differs it is philosophy wants to reveal about the life with the help of questions such as "who am I?" and "what does the world come from?" while literature wants to reveal the life directly without making it becomes systematic like philosophy does. Literature uses language, written or verbal, to express the human thought. According to Anindito (2012), literature begins with what is in reality and then processed through the imagination; to make it more beautiful. Then, as we know that philosophy begins from abstracted reality. So we can see here that literature and philosophy have the "reality" as a same foundation.

No matter how much the difference between philosophy and literature, both of them begin with the same thing, which is human and their life. Mahayana (2008) stated that

philosophy and literature are the reflection of human living. Since human knows myth, there are so many philosophical things written in literature. This is the way philosophy reaching the society with all of enlightenment in it. Thus, we can understand that in this case, literature is the way philosophy reaching the society.

2.2. Character

In fiction, a character may be defined as a verbal representation of a human being. Through action, speech, description, and commentary, authors portray character that are worth caring about, rooting for, and even loving, although there are also characters you may laugh at, dislike, or even hate. The main character in a story is generally known as protagonist, the character who opposes him is the antagonist. Hallet in *Elements of Fiction* wrote that there are also four types of character; round, flat, dynamic, and static.

2.3. Characterization

Characterization is the methods that an author of a novel uses to present and reveal a character's value, feelings, goals, etc to the readers ("Literary Elements Characterization" 3). Characterization includes both descriptions of a character's physical attributes as well as the character's personality. The way that characters act, think, and speak also adds to their characterization. Peterson wrote that there are two kinds of characterization, they are direct and indirect characterization (1).

1. Direct Characterization

Direct characterization is when an author conveys information about a character by telling the information directly to the readers.

2. Indirect Characterization

Indirect characterization occurs when the author shows the character in section, and makes the readers interpret what these actions revealed about the character. There are a number of tools that an author will use to impact personality traits to their character. It depends to the readers to correctly interpret the information in order to have an accurate assesment of the character. There are tools include the following: character's name, character's looks, character's job, character's home, character's habits/action, character's dialog, character's thought.

So, characterization is the way authors give information about the development character. By correctly interpreting the characterization tools used by an author, readers can arrive at clear understanding of what characters in the stories are like. It is important to have a good understanding of a character because of the personality of character contributes greatly to the conflict in novel.

2.4. Rationality

In the nature of human thinking or human's consciousness, all activities related to philosophical and scientific thinking are all obtained through *logos* or rationality (Maksum 29). The essence of rationality is argument of views or ideas that have been generated. Therefore, the philosophers especially Plato and Aristotle understood rationality as "a

power to make a decision and contains reasons or the fundamental argumentation for the decision that already made.”

“The virtue of *Rationality* means the recognition and acceptance of reason as one’s only source of knowledge, one’s only judge of values and one’s only guide to action. . . It means a commitment to the principle that all of one’s convictions, values, goals, desires and actions must be based on, derived from, chosen and validated by a process of thought.” (Importance of Philosophy, “Rationality”)

According to Maksum (2011), think rationally is about logical, systematic, and critical thinking. Logical thinking is not merely reaching notions that can be accepted by common sense, but to be able to draw conclusions and make the right decisions based on the premises used. Think logically also requires a systematic thinking. Systematic thinking is a series of thoughts that relate to one another and logically interrelated (30). We can not get the truth without thinking logical, systematic, and coherent.

Critical thinking can be said as a willingness to continually evaluate the true claimed arguments. A critical thinking will not easily grasp the truth before it was questioned and thoroughly tested (30). So, thinking logically, systematically, and critical is the main characteristic of rational thinking.

2.4.1. Reasoning

Ranjabar argued that thinking / reasoning in the field of logic means the activity of human mind. "Thinking" is a sense activity to "cultivate" the knowledge through the senses to reach the truth. Thus the term "thinking" is a mind activity which typical and directed (54). In simple terms, it can be said that thinking is talking to ourselves in the mind; consider, analyze, reflect on, prove something, shows the reasons, draw conclusions, analyze, and discuss a reality (51).

"Logical" is a right way of thinking and accordance with the standards as presented in the logic. Thinking process to draw a conclusion called "reasoning". Reasoning as a thinking activities to finding a truth, have certain characteristics where every kind of reasoning has the respective criteria. So, think logically is drawing conclusions from a causal relation, it is called as reasoning.

2.4.2. Doubting

The theory of doubting here is derived from Rene Descartes. Descartes is a major rationalist in Western philosophy history. In *Discourse on Method*, Descartes reveal four principles that can be used to get the undoubted truth (57), such as:

- a. Never accepted anything as a truth unless you know clearly that it is really a truth. In other words, do not be too hurry in making a decision, and do not put anything in mind except what appears perfectly clear within the logical reason, so there would be no opportunity for doubt.
- b. Sorting out one by one the difficulties that will be reviewed into small parts as much as possible, to ease the settlement.
- c. Think coherently. It can be starting with the simplest and most recognizable object, and then increased gradually up to the most complex problems.
- d. Make specifics as completely as possible to be sure that nothing is forgotten.

2.4.3. Agreement

According to Endraswara (2012), human being is rational not because everything he says seriously reflect reality, but rather because they are always still be trying to communicate and understand each other's opinions even though it completely different. Communication has become the archetype of rationality which then led to an agreement. To find the 'truth', people use perceptibility. But the real perceptibility is used to move further in the search for truth. Looking for truth also means finding an agreement and mutual understanding(95). So the 'rationality' is better understood as reasonableness.

2.5. Review of Previous Study

The researcher found one previous study using Sophie's world novel as the object. The research is written by Catur Heni Probowati (2014) from Brawijaya University Malang in her graduating paper. The title is "*Sophie Amundsend's Search for Existence in Jostein Gaarder's Sophie's World*". In her research, she focuses on the main character of this novel, Sophie, who trying to find her existence. She used philosophical approach and Existentialism to get the understanding about Sophie's character. She also used qualitative approach to describe Sophie's action in gaining her existence and identity. Based of findings, Sophie's existence is just a character in that novel. To show her value, Sophie's character in that novel have struggles to give the meaning for her existence in the novel, at least her mind and thought did exist. The writer finds thatthese can be some additional references to her research, "*Rationality Value in Jostein Gaarder's Sophie's World*", since this previous study used Sophie's World novel as the object.

C. RESEARCH METHOD

3.1. Research Design

The design of the study is a descriptive qualitative. Descriptive qualitative is a type of research which result the descriptive data in the form of written and oral words from the observed object (Williams 67; vol. 5). This type of research is used to find out the rationality value in Jostein Gaarder's *Sophie's World*, in which researcher deals with a process data required, analyzing data, and finally interpreting the result of the analysis. The researcher used content analysis approach, which is a kind of descriptive study which used to characterize the content of popular books, work and art, and document as the subject (Williams 69; vol. 5).

3.2. Data and Data Source

Data are factual information which is taken from data source. Data source in this research is mainly from the novel *Sophie's World* by Jostein Gaarder's (1994), published by FSG Classics. The data in this research are dialogues of characters and narrations from *Jostein Gaarder's Sophie's World* which contains any characteristics of rationality such as reasoning, doubting, and agreement.

3.3. Research Instrument

The instrument for data collection and analysis is the researcher. The researcher did the data collection, analysis, identification, and classification the data directly. This research required the book entitled *Sophie's World* as an object.

3.4. Data Collection

To gain the data, the researcher did a close reading, by reading the novel repeatedly and carefully. Then, the researcher marked the important pages that be analyzed. After that, the researchersorted and classified the conversation and scenes in the novel, and made note for the datafrom *Sophie's World* novel which are included as rationality.

3.5. Data Analysis

To find the answer of the research question, the researcher analyzed the object of the study. This research described the rationality value in *Sophie's World* novel as seen in Sophie Amundsend character. Endraswara in *Metodologi Penelitian Sastra*, explains the steps to analyzing the data. The first step is collecting all data from the novel *Sophie's World* by Jostein Gaarder by reading it carefully and repeatedly, and taking notes to the data which obtained from paragraphs, phrases, words, and dialogues through novel. Then, the researcher identified which data represents rationality values such as reasoning, doubting, and agreement. Later, the data will be categorized for which data is supportive for the research and reduce the data which not related to the research. After collecting all the data that is needed, the researcher examined the right assumption of the analysis to find the result and conclusion.

D. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

4.1.1. Rationality Values in *Sophie's World* Novel as Seen in Sophie Amundsen's Character

Sophie Amundsen is a 14 years-old girl who learn philosophy after receiving the questions from mysterious philosopher, Alberto Knox. Those questions make Sophie 'opens' her eyes and starts to doubt about her existence and also the world. Doubting is one of the rationality values. The first Sophie's doubt happens since she received the first mysterious letter with mysterious question in it.

Who are you? She had no idea. She was Sophie Amundsen, of course, but who was that? She had no really figured that out—yet. (5)

After Sophie reads that question, she begins to question and doubt about herself. She begins to realize that all this time she has never been curious about herself.

Wasn't it odd that she didn't know she was? And she wasn't it unreasonable that she hadn't been allowed to have any say in what she would look like? Her looks had just been dumped on her. She could choose her own friends, but she certainly hadn't chosen herself. She had not even chosen to be a human being. What was a human being? (6)

From the quotation above, Sophie begins to question about herself. She realizes that all this time she has never think about it. She feels odd when she thinks that she did not know she was and she has never been allowed to choose what she would look like. She begins to question about living as a human being. Human being lives in this world, but not forever. It makes Sophie realizes that someday she will be gone.

As Sophie starts to learn about philosophy, she begins to know about mythological imagery that people did at the old times. Those myth stories amaze Sophie much. Then, Sophie also learns about earlier philosophers' thought. Those philosophers have different thought indeed. Tales said that everything is made from water, as well as Parmenides said that this world is full of gods. But the quotation below proves that Sophie uses her own common sense to think about that.

Sophie tried once again to use her own common sense, and not to think about what she had learned from others. (41)

After getting the explanation about the philosophers thought who attempted to find the explanation about life and nature process, Sophie begins to use her reason. She tries to be open-minded and not to stick with things she has been learned before. Sophie may disagree with the opinion that says earth is flat or everything is made from water. Here Sophie tries to think with her own reason to understand why the early philosophers think like that. Moreover, quotation below shows that Sophie realizes that philosophy is exciting.

Sophie found philosophy doubly exciting because she was able to follow all the ideas by using her own common sense--without having to remember everything she had learned at school. She decided that philosophy was not something you can learn, but perhaps you can learn to *think* philosophically. (42)

This is what makes Sophie interested to learn about philosophy, because she is getting to use her own reason and use her own belief without influenced by what she had learn in school. Sophie thinks that philosophy was not something that easy to learn, but we can learn to think philosophically. "Philosophically" here means that we have to think critically, systematically, and logically, about anything we just knew, about making a decision, and about looking for a truth. These points are showed in the quotation below.

Sophie knew that "modesty" was an old-fashioned word for shyness--for example, about being seen naked. But was it really natural to be embarrassed about that? If something was natural, she supposed, it was the same for everybody. In many parts of the world it was completely natural to be naked. So it must be *society* that decides what you can do and can't do. (60-61)

The quotation above shows how Sophie does the reasoning. Sophie thinks about is it really natural to be embarrassed about being naked, but in many parts of the world it is completely natural to be naked. Then, Sophie concludes that *society* one of the key to know what you can do and can not do.

Besides the reasoning, we can also see 'finding an agreement' as the next rationality value here. It is showed in the quotation below.

She was not sure Plato was right in everything he had said about the eternal patterns, but it was a beautiful thought that all living things were imperfect copies of the eternal forms in the world of ideas. (93)

Here we see Sophie's agreement about Plato's thought. Sophie is not sure about Plato's thought. But Sophie still understands about it, and she thinks that Plato's thought is beautiful. Then, in the quotation below Sophie does the question about her agreement with Plato's thought.

4.1.2. Sophie Amundsen's Character

In understanding her lessons, Sophie does the reasoning to think about what she reads and listens from her mentor. As we can see in a number of data found above, with reasoning she thinks critically, systematically, and logically.

“Would she work out some fantasy to explain where the snow went and why the sun rose in the morning? Yes, she definitely would. She began to make up a story... Sophie liked her beautiful story. If she had not known any other explanation for the changing seasons, she felt sure she would have come to believe her own story in the end.”(28-29)

After reading the explanation about Nordic mythology, Sophie then knows about how people believed in Thor rode across the sky in a chariot drawn by two goats. When he swung his hammer it made thunder and lightning. People worshipped Thor as the god of fertility. So, when there was no rain for a long time, people believed that Thor's hammer was stolen so he could not make the rainfall.

Sophie then understands why people at that time thinking like that. Because they did not know yet about rain process so they believed in myth. Sophie imagines what if she did not get the lesson about spring or about rising sun. She probably will create a story to answer her questions, like the earlier nations did to get the answer and explanation of the nature through the mythology they believe in. If Sophie grows up with her story, she probably believes in it, because she can not find other explanation about the nature process. From the data above we see that Sophie is thoughtful.

Further, in data below, we see Sophie just read about Plato. Then she begins to questioning Plato's thought about soul.

Could it be true that she had lived before? Had her soul existed before it got a body to move around in? And was it really true that she carried a little golden nugget inside her--a jewel that cannot be corroded by time, a soul that would live on when her own body grew old and died? (93)

Here Sophie questioning about the eternal soul. She is not sure about her soul existed before it got body to move around in, and she is not sure that her soul will live on when someday her body will grow old and die. Her doubt makes her become a skeptic person.

Then, in data below we also see how this agreement goes when Sophie tries to understand the idea about God who has power to decide something for human.

“Are you saying I cannot decide for myself?” ... “I see what you mean, but I still don't like the idea that I don't decide for myself.” (248-249)

Sophie thinks she can decide for herself so she does not need to mix God into it. However, she still understands about that. She tries to communicate with her mentor and then finding an agreement with that idea. This side is what makes Sophie becomes wise, because she has the understanding with others opinion.

So, from the data found above, Sophie Amundsen has three characters, which are thoughtful, skeptic, and has an understanding to others opinion that make her becomes wiser.

4.2. Discussion

In this research, the researcher finds the most appeared rationality value is reasoning, while doubting and agreement are the result of reasoning that Sophie Amundsen did. According to Ranjabar, reasoning is a thinking process to draw a conclusion (51). Besides, doubting as the continuance of reasoning is derived from Descartes' Method of Doubt which says that we need to doubt everything until we get the undoubted truth (347). Then, Endraswara stated that finding an agreement proves that human being is rational. It is not because everything they say reflects the reality, but rather because human being always trying to communicate and understand each other's opinion, even though they have different opinion (95).

From those three rationality values, the researcher finds that the most appeared rationality value is reasoning, because Sophie Amundsen does it every time she receives the lessons from her mentor, Alberto Knox. Sophie does the reasoning when she just read a new chapter about a philosopher's thought, when she gets the questions from her mentor to be more understand about the new chapter she learns, and when she discusses many ideas of philosophers with her mentor.

Further, in this research, the researcher also finds two more rationality values as a complement of the most appeared rationality value above. Doubting as the second rationality value from Descartes' Method of Doubt works on Sophie when she gets lot of new lessons. She begins to question about herself, about the world, and about the philosopher's ideas she just read. Thereafter, the third rationality value is finding agreement. When Sophie gets the philosophy lessons, Sophie does the reasoning and question a lot of things. From the explanation she gets, there are several things she can not agree with. Thus, she tries to communicate and understand others opinion even though she has her own opinion as the result of her reasoning and doubting.

Furthermore, in this research, the researcher also finds how those rationality values define Sophie Amundsen's character. Based on the Peterson's characterization theory (1), there are two kinds of characterization which are direct and indirect characterization. Here in *Sophie's World* novel, the researcher finds that indirect characterization is used to reveal Sophie Amundsen's character. In this research, character's thought is used as the tools to know how the rationality values that found above define Sophie's character. The researcher found that after learning about philosophy, the first rationality value that found in her is 'reasoning'. With reasoning, Sophie becomes a person who thinking about everything orderly and clearly with her own common sense. She changes into thoughtful person. Then, the second rationality value that found is 'doubting'. Sophie starts to question and doubt when she gets a new lesson. It makes Sophie becomes a skeptic person. Last, the third rationality value that found is 'agreement'. This is what makes Sophie becomes an understanding person who listen to others opinion. This side is what makes Sophie become wiser.

Thus, from the characterization above we see that Sophie's character is dynamic. According to Hallet, dynamic character is a character that changes during the course of the story (3). From what researcher found, Sophie's character changed after she learn about philosophy. The rationality values as the characteristic of philosophy found in her, and finally we can see that Sophie Amundsen is a dynamic character.

All in all, we can see there are three rationality values that found in Sophie Amundsen. Those are reasoning, doubting, and agreement. The most appear rationality value is reasoning, because Sophie does it every time she gets a new lesson, and after doing the reasoning, she begins to doubt and had some agreement to a number of philosopher's thought. Thus, we can see that Sophie Amundsen is a dynamic character. As a result of this rationality values, Sophie Amundsen becomes thoughtful, skeptic, and has an understanding to others opinion.

E. CONCLUSION

After having conducted the analysis, starting from the first question to the second research question, the researcher gained some points about this study. The rationality values that found in *Sophie's World* novel are reasoning, doubting, and finding the agreement. The most appear rationality value is Sophie's reasoning. When Sophie accept her lesson about philosophy, she shows her reasoning in case of receive her philosophical lesson. From her reasoning, Sophie's character changed. Philosophy taught her about thinking rationally, logically, systematic, and critical. Thus, we can see that Sophie Amundsen is a dynamic character. From those three rationality values, Sophie Amundsen becomes thoughtful, skeptic, and has an understanding to others opinion that make her become wiser.

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