



Authentic Happiness in the Poem *Thabat Biki Al-Ayyama Wa Frahtahu* by Ibrahim Naji: A Martin Seligman Perspective

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Zaqlul Ammar¹
Novia Fatma Azzahra²
M. Anwar Mas'adi³
Sulthan Naufal⁴

Email:¹ zaqlul.zulkifli@gmail.com, ²noviafatmaazzahra2@gmail.com
³2M2sady@bsa.uin-malang.ac.id, ⁴sulthannaufal29@gmail.com

^{1,2,3}Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang Indonesia

⁴Al-Azhar University Cairo Egypt

Abstract

This research aims to identify and describe the aspects of happiness in the poem “Thabat Biki Al-Ayyama Wa Frahtahu” by Ibrahim Naji based on Martin Seligman's Authentic Happiness theory. This research is a descriptive qualitative research. The data taken comes from the text of Ibrahim Naji's poems based on the positive psychology approach and were collected using a reading-and-note technique that involved intensive reading and textual analysis. The result of this research is that there are three dimensions of happiness: Pleasant Life, Good Life, and Meaningful Life, which are depicted through the struggle, love, and hope of the character “I”. The analysis found that the character “I” achieved authentic happiness through deep reflection, emotional management, and the search for the meaning of life. Although the poem appears melancholic, elements of happiness are explicitly and implicitly present, making it a complex yet positive emotional representation. This study confirms that happiness can be found through the integration of positive emotions with a deeper meaning of life, in accordance with the principles of positive psychology.

Keywords: Arabic Poetry, Authentic Happiness, Love, Martin Seligman, Positive Psychology.

Introduction

Poetry, as one of the literary works with the most dominant aesthetic function, is not only a medium for expressing beauty but also a means of conveying profound

messages¹. For example one of al-Busiri's works is *Qasidah Muhammadiyah*, a remarkable poem that beautifully expresses praise for the Prophet with eloquent style and deep emotion.² With carefully chosen and meaningful language, poetry reveals the soul and invites readers into a world of reflection and emotions that often transcend logic. On one hand, poetry often reflects social phenomena closely tied to human psychological experiences³.

In this regard, literary psychology does not only discuss linguistic structures in poetry but also the dynamics of emotion and personality reflected by the poet⁴. This close relationship makes literary works, including poetry, an effective medium for understanding human psychology⁵, as demonstrated in studies exploring emotional expressions and inner conflicts within literary works through a literary psychology approach⁶. However, many poems leave a negative impression through the exploration of emotions such as sadness, misery, or suffering. This creates the need to assess poetry through a more optimistic lens, as offered by positive psychology.

Positive psychology emphasizes positive emotions, character strengths, and life meaning as the main components in achieving authentic happiness⁷. In this theory, Martin Seligman identifies three main dimensions of happiness: Pleasant Life, Good Life, and Meaningful Life. These dimensions show that happiness does not only come from fleeting pleasures but also from managing character strengths and connecting with a larger meaning. This framework aims to foster a well-lived and fulfilling life⁸. Seligman also points out that aspects of forgiveness and optimism play an important role in helping humans overcome negative emotions such as anger, revenge, or envy⁹.

¹ Dewi Susilowati and Hidayah Budi Qur'ani, "ANALISIS PUISI 'TANAH AIR' KARYA MUHAMMAD YAMIN DENGAN PENDEKATAN STRUKTURAL," *Literasi : Jurnal Bahasa Dan Sastra Indonesia Serta Pembelajarannya* 5, no. 1 (April 17, 2021): 38–48.

² Yusuf Arisandi, "تغييرات الأوزان العروضية في القصيدة المحمدية للبوصيري," *Lughawiyat: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Dan Sastra Arab* 1, no. 2 (2018): 133–61, doi:10.38073/lughawiyat.v1i2.141.

³ Nurlaela Tussada, Teti Sobari, and Aditya Permana, "ANALISIS PUISI 'RAHASIA HUJAN' KARYA HERI ISNAINI DENGAN," *PENDEKATAN MIMETIK* 321 (2020): 2020.

⁴ Riztikha Khairani and Iin Suryaningsih, "ANALISIS KLASIFIKASI EMOSI CINTA TOKOH LAYLĀ DALAM NOVEL AL-ARWĀHU AL-MUTAMARRIDAH KARYA KHALIL GIBRAN," *Tsaqofiya : Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Dan Sastra Arab* 2, no. 2 (October 5, 2020): 1–14, doi:10.21154/TSAQOFIYA.V2I2.23.

⁵ Syaafira Zalfaa Azzah and Sri Israhayu Eko, "BENTUK EKSPRESI EMOSIONAL TOKOH UTAMA DALAM NOVEL LUKA CITA KARYA VALERIE PATKAR : KAJIAN PSIKOLOGI SASTRA," *PEMBAHSI* 14, no. 2 (2024), doi:10.31851/pembahsi.v14i2.

⁶ Eka Kurnia Firmansyah and Aulia Yolana Hufaza, "KONFLIK BATIN TOKOH UTAMA DALAM FILM FARHA KARYA DARIN J. SALLAM (KAJIAN PSIKOLOGI SASTRA)," *Jurnal Kajian Budaya Dan Humaniora* 6, no. 2 (2024): 93–102.

⁷ M. E. P. Seligman, *Authentic Happiness: Using The New Positive Psychology To Realize Your Potential For Lasting Fulfilment* (The Free Press., 2002).

⁸ Rania Mohamed Abdel Mageed, "The Pursuit of Happiness in Eat Pray Love by (2006) Faculty Of Arts Journal The Pursuit of Happiness in Eat Pray Love by (2006) by Elizabeth Gilbert in Relevance to Martin Seligman's Theory of Authentic Happiness," *Faculty Of Arts Journal*, 2020, 2605–31.

⁹ Ulin Nihayah et al., "Indonesian Journal of Counseling and Development Konsep Memaafkan Dalam Psikologi Positif" 3 (2021): 108–19, doi:10.32939/ijcd.v3i1.1031.

One of the poems rich in emotional value and reflections on life is “*Thabat Biki Al-Ayyama Wa Frahtahu*” by Ibrahim Naji, an Egyptian poet renowned for his romantic style. Another famous work by Ibrahim Naji is *Al-Atlal*, which became a celebrated song performed by Egyptian singer Umm Kulthum in 1966. The lyrics were adapted by Umm Kulthum and the melody composed by Riad Al Sunbati, two years after her first song composed by Mohamed Abdel Wahab, *Inta Omri*. Both works achieved great success¹⁰.

As a contemporary poet, Ibrahim Naji is known for his romantic and melancholic style; his poetry is considered to bring new color to the world of Arabic poetry. This is due to his poems being based on personal experiences, expressed through captivating diction and profound meaning¹¹. In this regard, “*Thabat Biki Al-Ayyama Wa Frahtahu*” is a relevant object of study. The poem is rich with themes of love, hope, and struggle, reflecting the poet’s emotional dynamics and how he perceives happiness. Just as human life is filled with complex stories and decisions¹², this poem represents an individual’s process of seeking balance between positive and negative emotions. Poets often use poetic language to convey deep emotional experiences, which, from the perspective of positive psychology, can reveal how authentic happiness is reflected in this work.

Martin Elias Peter Seligman is a psychologist, author, and pioneer of positive psychology¹³¹⁴, who founded the field a quarter-century ago¹⁵. His main goal as president of the APA was to advance various scientific fields and establish *happiness* as the ultimate goal. Achieving happiness is not an easy process but has been scientifically explored, resulting in various theories and concepts of individual happiness. Seligman produced numerous works in positive psychology, such as *Authentic Happiness: Using the new positive psychology to realize your potential for lasting fulfillment* and *Flourish: A Visionary New Understanding of Happiness and Well-Being*¹⁶. These books explain positive psychology and Seligman’s happiness concept, evolving from Authentic Happiness to the Well-Being Theory with the PERMA formula (Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning & Purpose, Accomplishment)¹⁷. Therefore, the main aim of positive psychology is not only to fix problems but also to guide individuals in

¹⁰ Virginia Danielson, “Listening to Umm Kulthūm,” *Middle East Studies Association Bulletin*, 30, No.2 (December 1996): 170–73.

¹¹ Lina Siti Safaah, “MAKNA PUISI AL-MANSURAH DALAM ANTOLOGI PUISI LAYALI AL-QAHIRAH KARYA IBRAHIM NAJI: ANALISIS SEMIOTIK” (Universitas Gadjah Mada, 2022).

¹² A.A Saleh, *Pengantar Psikologi* (Penerbit Aksara Timur., 2018).

¹³ S Sarmadi, *Psikologi Positif* (Tirta Surga., 2018).

¹⁴ Martin Seligman, Michał Łuczewski, and Piotr Czekierda, “Thou Shalt Not Be Overcome: Martin Seligman on Academia, Leadership, and God, in Conversation with Michał Łuczewski and Piotr Czekierda,” *Stan Rzeczy*, no. 1(24) (2024): 191–212, doi:10.51196/srz.24.10.

¹⁵ Shuting Liu, “Martin Seligman’s Theory in the Perspective of Positive Psychology,” *International Journal of Social Sciences and Public Administration* 3, no. 3 (July 21, 2024): 290–93, doi:10.62051/ijsspa.v3n3.35.

¹⁶ M. E. P. Seligman, *Flourish: A Visionary New Understanding of Happiness and Well-Being* (Simon and Schuster., 2011).

¹⁷ Bruce W. Smith et al., “The Effects of a Character Strength Focused Positive Psychology Course on Undergraduate Happiness and Well-Being,” *Journal of Happiness Studies* 22, no. 1 (January 1, 2021): 343–62, doi:10.1007/s10902-020-00233-9.

building their quality of life positively according to their personality, applicable in all social contexts or professional psychology¹⁸.

According to Seligman, pessimistic individuals tend to believe that bad events will last long and affect all aspects of their lives. This belief can damage productivity and influence the psychological state of the individual¹⁹. Conversely, optimistic people see misfortune as a temporary setback caused by specific circumstances, not spreading to other life areas. Seligman emphasizes that optimism is a positive mental attitude that reflects a bright outlook for the future, even in difficult times, supported by factors such as self-confidence, self-esteem, social support, and personal experience²⁰.

His theory of learned optimism suggests that an optimistic outlook can be developed through learning, leading to a greater success rate in achieving goals²¹.

Authentic Happiness:

1. Pleasant Life

A pleasant life can be achieved by filling life with positive emotions, divided into three parts: past, present, and future²². This involves realizing day-to-day pleasures that add joy and excitement to one's life²³.

Role of Positive Emotions:

Happiness is marked by psychological traits supported by high expressions of positive emotions and low negative emotions. In his book, Seligman explains that high positive emotions greatly influence one's life journey, even into old age. He cites the example of two nuns, Sister Cecillia and Sister Margeruite: "So it seems that a happy nun is a long-lived nun"²⁴. Positive emotions are often accompanied by fortunate conditions such as longevity, health, wide social circles, and optimism. Research in positive psychology courses also assesses the impact of character strengths on positive emotions and overall well-being²⁵.

Overcoming the Past:

Positive emotions for the past include feelings of satisfaction, self-esteem, and peace. This concept discusses someone who can understand and accept their

¹⁸ Alfin Siregar, "Positive Psychology in Islamic Counseling Perspective; Analysis of The Trilogy of Life Dimensions," *Al-Fikru: Jurnal Ilmiah* 16, no. 2 (December 30, 2022): 226–38, doi:10.51672/ALFIKRU.V16I2.114.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Silvia Mega Puspita et al., "Optimisme Menghadapi Masa Pensiun: Bagaimana Peranan Psychological Well-Being?," *INNER: Journal of Psychological Research* 3, no. 1 (2023): 77–87.

²¹ M. Aarthi Priya, "Optimist vs Pessimist: Indulging and Contextualizing Martin Seligman's Learned Optimism in 'Once Again' and 'Trisanku' by C.S. Lakshmi," *RUPAKTHA JOURNAL*, 2023, 1–8, doi:https://doi.org/10.21659/rupkatha.v15n5.07.

²² Seligman, *Authentic Happiness: Using The New Positive Psychology To Realize Your Potential For Lasting Fulfilment*.

²³ Mageed, "The Pursuit of Happiness in Eat Pray Love by (2006) Faculty Of Arts Journal The Pursuit of Happiness in Eat Pray Love by (2006) by Elizabeth Gilbert in Relevance to Martin Seligman's Theory of Authentic Happiness."

²⁴ Seligman, *Authentic Happiness: Using The New Positive Psychology To Realize Your Potential For Lasting Fulfilment*.

²⁵ Smith et al., "The Effects of a Character Strength Focused Positive Psychology Course on Undergraduate Happiness and Well-Being."

past, viewing it from a positive perspective. Gratitude and forgiveness play key roles in overcoming unhappiness. Gratitude is deeply rooted in Islamic teachings. states that gratitude therapy can be seen as spiritual intelligence and mental training in making full use of everything given by Allah SWT. We express gratitude for everything that happens and is beneficial, and forgive others' wrongdoings²⁶.

Happiness in the Present:

This dimension emphasizes satisfaction, both physical and deep. It concerns how a person feels happiness from physical pleasures such as food or fragrance and higher satisfaction through activities they enjoy, such as reading or dancing²⁷. Achieving true happiness also involves living free from negative emotions and living full of virtues²⁸.

Optimistic about the Future:

When discussing the future, a person is touched by feelings of trust, hope, confidence, and optimism. These foundations help one see the future positively. Believing in circumstances and avoiding negative assumptions are not easy but promise proportional results if one practices optimism in all situations²⁹. Optimistic personalities generally experience a higher success rate in achieving their goals³⁰.

2. Good Life

A good life can be achieved if one understands and develops their 24 character strengths and six core virtues³¹. This involves identifying and engaging one's unique strengths and virtues to enrich life³². These play an important role in how someone lives a good life. The virtues include: Wisdom and Knowledge (curiosity, love of learning, critical thinking, practical intelligence, emotional intelligence, perspective); Courage (bravery, persistence, integrity); Humanity and Love (kindness, generosity, capacity to love and be loved); Justice (loyalty,

²⁶ Mohammad Takdir, "Kekuatan Terapi Syukur Dalam Membentuk Pribadi Yang Altruis: Perspektif Psikologi Qur'ani Dan Psikologi Positif," *Jurnal Studia Insania* 5, no. 2 (November 28, 2017): 175–98, doi:10.18592/JSI.V5I2.1493.

²⁷ Maulana Muhammad Fikri et al., "AUTHENTIC HAPPINESS IN RAISSA ALMIRA'S ROMANCE POETRY: A POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY STUDY MARTIN SELIGMAN'S PERSPECTIVE AUTHENTIC HAPPINESS DALAM PUISI ROMANSA RAISSA ALMIRA : KAJIAN PSIKOLOGI POSITIF PERSPEKTIF MARTIN SELIGMAN," *Jurnal Kata : Penelitian Tentang Ilmu Bahasa Dan Sastra* 8, no. 1 (2024), doi:10.22216/kata.v8i1.2934.

²⁸ Rifanny Zahra Septiani and Syihabuddin, "KONSEP KEBAHAGIAAN SEJATI DARI PERSPEKTIF STOISISME DALAM FILM SEPATU DAHLAN (KAJIAN SEMIOTIKA)," *Estetika*, 2023, 38–51, doi:10.36379/estetika.v5i1.

²⁹ Fikri et al., "AUTHENTIC HAPPINESS IN RAISSA ALMIRA'S ROMANCE POETRY: A POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY STUDY MARTIN SELIGMAN'S PERSPECTIVE AUTHENTIC HAPPINESS DALAM PUISI ROMANSA RAISSA ALMIRA : KAJIAN PSIKOLOGI POSITIF PERSPEKTIF MARTIN SELIGMAN."

³⁰ Priya, "Optimist vs Pessimist: Indulging and Contextualizing Martin Seligman's Learned Optimism in 'Once Again' and 'Trisanku' by C.S. Lakshmi."

³¹ Seligman, *Authentic Happiness: Using The New Positive Psychology To Realize Your Potential For Lasting Fulfilment*.

³² Mageed, "The Pursuit of Happiness in Eat Pray Love by (2006) Faculty Of Arts Journal The Pursuit of Happiness in Eat Pray Love by (2006) by Elizabeth Gilbert in Relevance to Martin Seligman's Theory of Authentic Happiness."

teamwork, fairness, leadership); Temperance (self-control, prudence, humility); and Transcendence (appreciation of beauty, gratitude, hope and optimism, spirituality, forgiveness, humor, zest). Understanding and applying these enable one to create a meaningful and emotionally and spiritually balanced life ³³.

3. Meaningful Life

This dimension completes the journey toward authentic happiness by finding meaning in life and achieving *flow*. Beyond understanding one's strengths, one must also be aware of their position in life and start seeking its meaning. Seligman and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi expanded this with the concept of *flow* a state of complete absorption and fulfillment, involving all senses and focus, like a river flowing calmly, ultimately delivering satisfying results ³⁴. A meaningful life also involves a deep sense of satisfaction derived from using one's strengths and virtues to benefit others and improve the world³⁵.

The researcher identified several previous studies that support this research, including works that explore the concept of happiness from various philosophical and psychological perspectives³⁶. Fikri et al. (2024) explored authentic happiness in Raissa Almira's romantic poetry, showing how positive emotions appear even in expressions of sadness³⁷. Halimah et al. (2019) found a significant positive link between patience and authentic happiness among community members³⁸. Jaoharoh and Putri (2024) emphasized the role of positive psychology in citizenship education to foster resilience and intrinsic motivation³⁹. Saliha and Kurniawan (2021) described authentic happiness patterns among teenagers from broken homes⁴⁰. Harista et al. (2024) discussed the integration of positive psychology in appreciating Riau Malay poetry⁴¹. Lastly, Huriyanto et al.

³³ Fikri et al., "AUTHENTIC HAPPINESS IN RAISSA ALMIRA'S ROMANCE POETRY: A POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY STUDY MARTIN SELIGMAN'S PERSPECTIVE AUTHENTIC HAPPINESS DALAM PUISI ROMANSA RAISSA ALMIRA : KAJIAN PSIKOLOGI POSITIF PERSPEKTIF MARTIN SELIGMAN."

³⁴ Sarmadi, *Psikologi Positif*.

³⁵ Mageed, "The Pursuit of Happiness in Eat Pray Love by (2006) Faculty Of Arts Journal The Pursuit of Happiness in Eat Pray Love by (2006) by Elizabeth Gilbert in Relevance to Martin Seligman's Theory of Authentic Happiness."

³⁶ Nabila Naivatul Ulya, Nailatin Fauziyah, and Hamim Rosyidi, "Konsep Kebahagiaan Erbe Sentanu Dan Martin Seligman (Erbe Sentanu And Martin Seligman's Concept of Happiness)," *Happiness*, November 2024.

³⁷ Fikri et al., "AUTHENTIC HAPPINESS IN RAISSA ALMIRA'S ROMANCE POETRY: A POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY STUDY MARTIN SELIGMAN'S PERSPECTIVE AUTHENTIC HAPPINESS DALAM PUISI ROMANSA RAISSA ALMIRA : KAJIAN PSIKOLOGI POSITIF PERSPEKTIF MARTIN SELIGMAN."

³⁸ Lilim Halimah et al., *SABAR DAN AUTHENTIC HAPPINESS PADA ANGGOTA KOMUNITAS KHURUJ FISABILILLAH DI BANDUNG*, vol. 6, 2019.

³⁹ Dede Jaoharoh and Reni Kartika Putri, "Pendidikan Kewarganegaraan Berbasis Pendekatan Psikologi Positif Untuk Meningkatkan Kemampuan Belajar Siswa," *Jurnal Pendidikan Guru Sekolah Dasar* 1, no. 3 (May 31, 2024): 10–10, doi:10.47134/PGSD.V1I3.577.

⁴⁰ Gabriella Theri Christina Saliha and Afif Kurniawan, "Gambaran Authentic Happiness Pada Remaja Yang Memiliki Keluarga Broken Home," *Jurnal Syntax Admiration* 2, no. 12 (December 21, 2021): 2291–2302, doi:10.46799/jsa.v2i12.359.

⁴¹ Eva Harista, Chitra Fraghini, and Aisyah Pratiwi, "Positive Psychological Studies of Riau Malay Poem and Its Nntegration in Literary Appreciation Learning," *Multidisciplinary Science Journal* 6, no. 8 (March 15, 2024): 2024158–2024158, doi:10.31893/MULTISCIENCE.2024158.

(2023) outlined the creative process of Rusli Marzuki Saria's poetry, connecting it to literary psychology⁴². Together, these studies provide valuable insights and strengthen the perspective and framework of this research.

Based on the previous studies mentioned, it can be seen that none have specifically examined Arabic poetry using Martin Seligman's *Authentic Happiness* theory. Although there are studies that connect positive psychology with literary works, local poetry, and education, research that applies this psychological framework to Arabic romantic poetry remains very limited. This gap highlights the novelty of this study, which combines mimetic literary criticism with the perspective of *Authentic Happiness* to analyze how positive emotions, character strengths, and meaning in life are reflected in Arabic poetic expressions.

Therefore, this research aims to identify the forms of authentic happiness in Ibrahim Naji's poetry, analyze how they appear, and explain how the concept of authentic happiness is embodied in *Thabat Biki Al-Ayyama Wa Frahtahu*. By doing so, this study offers a fresh perspective on Arabic poetry and enriches the interdisciplinary discourse between literature and positive psychology..

Method

This research uses a qualitative descriptive method with a mimetic literary criticism approach. This method is designed to describe and explain phenomena arising from human creativity or scientific phenomena, emphasizing characteristics, qualities, and relationships among involved activities⁴³. The mimetic approach is based on the idea that literature, including poetry, represents or imitates nature and portrays human life and the world⁴⁴.

Positive psychology, first introduced in 1998, forms the main basis of this research. This theory provides deeper meaning to human life, both individually and in relation to their environment⁴⁵. Unlike traditional psychology that often focuses on human weaknesses, positive psychology emphasizes human strengths and potential, including exploring positive emotions like happiness, love, optimism, and humor⁴⁶. Amid the dominance of negative emotions in life, positive emotions are often neglected. Literature serves as a medium to be analyzed comprehensively to explore various character views emerging from the persona, author, or readers⁴⁷.

In this research, Martin Seligman's theory is used to explain happiness concepts and indicators, focusing on interpreting the meaning of Ibrahim Naji's

⁴² Soni Huriyanto, Eva Fitrianti, and Susanti Marisya, "PROSES KREATIF DALAM KUMPULAN PUISI ONE BY ONE, LINE BY LINE KARYA RUSLI MARZUKI SARIA: TINJAUAN PSIKOLOGI SASTRA," *Ekasakti Educational Scientific Journal* 1, no. 1 (May 1, 2023): 16–33.

⁴³ N.S Sukmadinata, *Metode Penelitian Pendidikan* (PT Remaja Rosdakarya., 2017).

⁴⁴ Rina Nurfalah et al., "ANALISIS PUISI 'SEMAKIN ERAT, SEMAKIN HILANG' KARYA KHOIRUL TRIAN DENGAN MENGGUNAKAN PENDEKATAN MIMETIK" 173 (2021): 2021.

⁴⁵ Sarmadi, *Psikologi Positif*.

⁴⁶ Junaidin Junaidin et al., "Gambaran Gratitude (Kebersyukuran) Pada Remaja Di Sumbawa (Perspektif Psikologi Positif)," *Innovative: Journal Of Social Science Research* 3, no. 6 (December 1, 2023): 2932–39.

⁴⁷ A Ahmadi, *Psikologi Sastra* (Unesa University Press., 2015).

poem “*Thabat Biki Al-Ayyama Wa Frahtahu*.” The main data source is the poem itself. The analysis includes two stages: an initial reading to capture the heuristic meaning and a subsequent holistic reading for a hermeneutic understanding.

Additional data sources include previous studies, related documents, Seligman’s works, and other Ibrahim Naji poems. Data collection uses a reading-and-note technique⁴⁸, involving intensive reading of the poem to identify elements of positive psychology from Seligman’s perspective. The collected data are then classified and analyzed using content interpretation techniques, focusing on the poem’s intrinsic elements without connecting them to the poet’s biography to examine the alignment between the poem’s content and positive psychology theory⁴⁹. This approach aims to uncover the poem’s meaning and how it aligns with Martin Seligman’s concept of happiness.

Results and Discussions

The analysis of Ibrahim Naji’s poem *Thabat Biki Al-Ayyama Wa Frahtahu* based on Martin Seligman’s Authentic Happiness theory shows that happiness is expressed through three main dimensions: Pleasant Life, Good Life, and Meaningful Life followed by an additional component known as the Happiness Recipe (S-C-V: Set Range, Circumstances, Voluntary Variables). Each dimension and component is supported by poetic evidence, interpretation, and theoretical linkage to positive psychology. To maintain systematic flow, the discussion begins with Pleasant Life, continues to Good Life and Meaningful Life, and then addresses the Happiness Recipe before presenting a summary table at the end of this section.

1. The Concept of Pleasant Life in the “I” Persona

According to Martin Seligman, this concept involves the entire process of filling life with positive emotions related to the past, present, and future⁵⁰.

1.1. How the “I” Persona Overcomes the Past

This poem contains several parts that show how the “I” persona overcomes the past through forgiveness and acceptance. The analysis focuses on positive emotions that help the “I” persona transcend the sorrow of the past.

”فليذهب الليل غفرا له # ما دام هذا الصبح عقي دجاه”⁵¹(Verse 3)

The line above reflects the persona’s act of forgiving the past, which is symbolized as the darkness of night. The phrase shows a conscious effort to forgive all the suffering that has passed. In the context of Martin Seligman’s

⁴⁸ Gaby Rostanawa, “Hirarki Kebutuhan Tokoh Utama Dalam Novel *Pulang Dan Laut* Bercerita Karya Leila S. Chudori (Kajian Psikologi Humanistik Abraham Maslow),” *ELite Journal: International Journal of Education, Language, and Literature* 1, no. 2 (May 24, 2019), doi:10.26740/ELITEJOURNAL.V1N2.P.

⁴⁹ Takdir, “Kekuatan Terapi Syukur Dalam Membentuk Pribadi Yang Altruis: Perspektif Psikologi Qur’ani Dan Psikologi Positif.”

⁵⁰ Seligman, *Authentic Happiness: Using The New Positive Psychology To Realize Your Potential For Lasting Fulfilment*.

⁵¹ Ibrahim Naji, “1923”, طابت بك الأيام وافرحتاه, <https://www.saqi.app/author/60b6a6ce-9090-43bf-a882-99696bac1219/poem/1b35c065-470f-44c1-8e10-ee652d0d810f>.

Authentic Happiness theory, forgiveness is one of the key positive emotions for achieving a pleasant life. By releasing the burden of negative emotions about the past, the “I” persona creates space to feel happiness in the present.

"أَيْنَ شَقَاءٍ صَاحِبٌ فِي دَمِي # جَرَّعَنِي الضَّنْكَ إِلَى مَنتهَاه" (Verse 9)⁵²

Here, the “I” persona reflects on past suffering that once overwhelmed him, but narrates it in a retrospective tone. This shows that the suffering is now in the past and can be told without letting it dominate his current emotions. This reflection is an example of how one can process past pain in a positive way.

"بَأَيِّ كَفٍّ طَعَنَتْ قَلْبَهُ # فَمَاتَ فِي قَلْبِي حَتَّى صَدَاه" (Verse 12)⁵³

In this verse, the “I” persona acknowledges that an old wound was so deep it silenced the echo of his own sorrow. This admission shows full acceptance of the past. Instead of continuing to feel the pain, the persona chooses to see it as something concluded. This is a form of emotional resolution relevant to the concept of making peace with the past.

"قَدْ هَذَا اللَّيْلُ وَرَأَى الْكَرَى # إِلَّا أَخَا سَهْدٍ يَغْنِي شَجَاه" (Verse 13)⁵⁴

This part shows how the “I” persona stays awake in the calm of the night, singing his sorrow as a way to cope with negative emotions. This indicates acceptance of the past and the transformation of emotion into something more constructive. In positive psychology, this act is an example of how one can manage negative emotions through art or creative expression.

1.2. The “I” Persona’s Happiness in the Present

This poem also illustrates how the “I” persona enjoys happiness in the present moment. This happiness comes from various elements such as love, beauty, and a sense of relief after releasing emotional burdens.

"طَابَتْ بِكَ الْأَيَّامُ وَافْرَحْتَاهُ # أَنْتِ الْأَمَانِي وَالْغَنَى وَالْحَيَاه" (Verse 1)⁵⁵

The phrase “طَابَتْ بِكَ الْأَيَّامُ وَافْرَحْتَاهُ” expresses the persona’s present happiness due to the presence of someone who becomes the center of hope, abundance, and life itself. The poet feels deep happiness by focusing on the presence of the beloved. In the *Pleasant Life* dimension, present happiness is often linked to positive experiences involving deep emotional bonds.

"جَمَالُكَ الطَّاهِرُ عِنْدِي لَهُ # إِيمَانُ قَلْبٍ فِي خُشُوعِ الصَّلَاةِ" (Verse 4)⁵⁶

The “I” persona describes the beauty he perceives as something equal to devout faith in prayer. This shows happiness that arises through appreciation of beauty and harmony, which is one source of positive emotion in the present.

"عِنْدَكَ قَدْ حَطَّ رَحَالُ الْمَنَى # وَفِي حِمَى حَسَنِكَ أَلْقَى عَصَاهُ" (Verse 8)⁵⁷

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

The phrase “وفي حمى حسنك ألقى عصاه” explains that the “I” persona feels safe and at ease in the beauty of the beloved. This expression illustrates happiness that arises because he finds a place where he can rest and feel protected. In the context of *Authentic Happiness*, this reflects positive emotions born from a sense of connection with someone or something meaningful.

"شكراً لذاتٍ هبطت من علٍ # تَحَدَّتِ النَحْسَ فشَلَّتْ يداها" (Verse 11)⁵⁸

The persona's expression of gratitude shows a sense of happiness for the presence of someone who brings change into his life. This gratitude is a key element in the *Pleasant Life*, as it enables a person to appreciate what they have and enjoy the present moment more fully.

"أَحْبَبْتُ الحُبَّ وِغْنَى بِهِ # عَفَّ الأَمَانِي والهوى والشفاه" (Verse 16)⁵⁹

The happiness of the “I” persona is also seen in how he celebrates love through song. This phrase shows that love is not only a source of happiness but also adds positive energy to his life. It illustrates how the experience of love brings deep happiness in the present.

1.3. The “I” Persona’s Optimism for the Future

This poem also radiates the “I” persona’s optimism for the future. The hope he places in love, beauty, and the changes he experiences reflects a belief that a better life awaits ahead.

"قَدْ وَجَدَ الضَّلِيلُ نَوْرَ الهُدَى # يَا حِلْمَهُ يَا نَجْمَهُ يَا سَنَاهُ" (Verse 2)⁶⁰

The phrase “يا حلمه يا نجمه يا سناه” likens the beloved to a star and light a symbol of hope and guidance for the future. The poet sees love as something that gives him strength to endure, as well as a goal that keeps motivating him towards happiness in the future.

"فليذهب الليل غفرنا له # ما دام هذا الصبح عقبى دجاءه" (Verse 3)⁶¹

The phrase “فليذهب الليل غفرنا له” shows the “I” persona’s belief that a bright morning will always follow a dark night. This optimism illustrates his belief in the transformation from darkness to light, from hardship to ease. In positive psychology, this reflects hope as a key element in building happiness and motivating individuals to keep moving forward.

"عِنْدَكَ قَدْ حَطَّ رَحَالُ المُنَى # وَفِي حِمَى حَسَنِكَ أَلْقَى عَصَاهُ" (Verse 8)⁶²

The phrase “عِنْدَكَ قَدْ حَطَّ رَحَالُ المُنَى” indicates that the “I” persona has reached a temporary destination in his journey but also implies the belief that this person will continue to be a harbor of hope and happiness in the future.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.

"وإنما الحبُّ حديثُ العلي # أنشودةُ الخلدِ ونحنُ الرواه" (Verse 17)⁶³

Love is likened to a noble narrative and a song of eternity. The "I" persona views love not only as a present experience but as something that will continue to provide meaning and direction in his life in the future. This reflects long-term optimism that love will always be a source of strength and happiness.

2. The Concept of Good Life in the "I" Persona

The concept of a good life, according to Seligman, involves understanding and developing one's virtues and strengths. This framework helps further explain the emotional and psychological journey depicted in the poem.

In this poem, the "I" persona demonstrates the development of virtues and strengths relevant to Seligman's *Good Life* concept. The *Good Life* is realized when a person is able to use their virtues and strengths to create a life that is meaningful, purposeful, and fulfilling. This analysis focuses on the development of virtues including wisdom, courage, love, and transcendence⁶⁴.

2.1. Virtue of Wisdom and Knowledge

This virtue includes curiosity, deep understanding, and appreciation of life experiences.

"نَقَلَ في الأيامِ أقدامَه # يبغى خيلاً ماثلاً في مُناه" (Verse 7)⁶⁵

The "I" persona shows great curiosity and a desire to understand the meaning of life through a long journey. He keeps moving forward, seeking the vision of hope that becomes his ideal. This reflects the virtues of *love of learning* and *curiosity*, in which the persona uses exploration as a way to discover his life's purpose.

"وإنما الحبُّ حديثُ العلي # أنشودةُ الخلدِ ونحنُ الرواه" (Verse 17)⁶⁶

This phrase reflects wisdom in understanding love as a noble and eternal narrative. The "I" persona sees love not merely as a feeling, but as a guiding principle for his life, demonstrating the virtue of *perspective* (the ability to see greater meaning).

2.2. Virtue of Courage

This virtue includes perseverance, resilience, and bravery in facing challenges.

"قد طَرَقَ البابَ فتىً متعبٌ # طَالَ به السَّيرُ وكَلَّتْ خطاه" (Verse 6)⁶⁷

This phrase portrays a young man who, though exhausted, still knocks on the door and continues his journey. The "I" persona embodies the virtues of *bravery* and *perseverance* by continuing to move forward despite physical and emotional obstacles.

"شكراً لذاتٍ هبطت من علٍ # تَحَدَّتِ النَحْسُ فشَلَّتْ يداه" (Verse 11)⁶⁸

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Seligman, *Authentic Happiness: Using The New Positive Psychology To Realize Your Potential For Lasting Fulfilment*.

⁶⁵ Najj, "طابت بك الأيام وافرحتاه".

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

The “I” persona shows courage in facing misfortune (النحس) that tries to dominate his life. With gratitude toward the one who helped him, he overcomes misfortune and gains new strength to keep going.

2.3. Virtue of Humanity and Love

This virtue includes the ability to love and to open oneself to being loved.

⁶⁹ (Verse 1) "طابت بك الأيام وافرحته # أنت الأمانى والغنى والحياه"

The line “أنت الأمانى والغنى والحياه” depicts the “I” persona placing love as a central element of his life. The presence of the beloved gives him hope, emotional richness, and life’s meaning. This reflects the virtue of *loving and allowing oneself to be loved*, where love becomes the main strength that enriches his life.

⁷⁰ (Verse 16) "أحبك الحبّ وغنى به # عفّ الأمانى والهوى والشفاه"

This phrase shows that love is not only felt but also celebrated through song. The “I” persona embraces sincere love, which brings him emotional wealth and deeply supports his life.

2.4. Virtue of Transcendence

This virtue includes appreciation of beauty, spirituality, and hope.

⁷¹ (Verse 3) "فليذهب الليل غفرنا له # ما دام هذا الصبح عقبى دجاه"

The phrase “ما دام هذا الصبح عقبى دجاه” depicts the “I” persona’s optimism for the coming of a bright morning, reflecting the virtue of *hope/optimism*, where he believes that every difficulty will surely be followed by happiness and enlightenment.

⁷² (Verse 4) "جمالك الطاهر عندي له # إيمان قلب في خشوع الصلاة"

The “I” persona sees beauty as something sacred, equal to devout faith in prayer. The virtue of *appreciation of beauty and excellence* is visible in how he regards beauty as a source of spiritual peace.

3. The Concept of Meaningful Life in the “I” Persona

Achieving a meaningful life involves searching for life’s purpose and experiencing the state of *flow*, as described by Seligman and Csikszentmihaly ⁷³. This final aspect of authentic happiness provides a deeper understanding of this poem.

In this poem, the “I” persona finds life’s meaning through love, spiritual connection, and a narrative greater than himself. The *Meaningful Life* dimension

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ M. E. P. Seligman, *Learned Optimism: How To Change Your Mind & Your Life*. (New York: Vintage Books, 2006).

according to Martin Seligman is realized when a person connects themselves to something larger, such as noble love, eternal beauty, or a transcendental mission⁷⁴.

3.1. Love as a Narrative of a Meaningful Life

⁷⁵ (Verse 16) "أحبك الحبّ وغنى به # عَفَّ الأمانى والهوى والشفاه"

This verse shows that the "I" persona not only experiences love but also gives it meaning and celebrates it through song. The love he feels brings him happiness and life's meaning, while also becoming an inspiration to express his feelings to the world.

⁷⁶ (Verse 17) "وإنما الحبُّ حديثُ العلى # أنشودةُ الخلدِ ونحنُ الرواه"

The "I" persona describes love as a "conversation of the exalted" and a "song of eternity." This phrase shows that love is something noble and eternal, providing direction and meaning for his life. By calling himself the *rāwī* (narrator), the "I" persona becomes not only a participant in love but also part of a greater, transcendental love story. This reflects connection with something larger than oneself, the essence of a *Meaningful Life*.

3.2. Connection with Beauty and Spirituality

⁷⁷ (Verse 3) "فليذهب الليلُ غفرنا له # ما دام هذا الصبحُ عقبى دجاء"

The phrase "ما دام هذا الصبحُ عقبى دجاء" illustrates the "I" persona's hope for a bright morning after a dark night, showing his faith in transformation and renewal. This optimism provides meaning, as the "I" persona sees every hardship as part of the journey toward a better life.

⁷⁸ (Verse 4) "جمالُك الطاهرُ عندي له إيمانُ قلبٍ في خشوع الصلاة"

The "I" persona sees beauty as something sacred and spiritual, equal to the devout faith of prayer. This relationship shows how beauty brings deep spiritual meaning to the "I" persona, strengthening his sense of connection to something greater than himself.

3.3. Sacrifice and Struggle as Sources of Meaning

⁷⁹ (Verse 6) "قد طرَقَ البابَ فتىً متعبٌ # طالَ به السيرُ وكلَّت خطاه"

The "I" persona depicts a young man who is exhausted but continues his journey. This struggle reflects sacrifice that gives deeper meaning to every step he takes, showing that hardships are part of a meaningful life narrative.

⁸⁰ (Verse 7) "نَقَلَ في الأيامِ أقدامه # يبغى خيالاً ماثلاً في مناه"

⁷⁴ Seligman, *Authentic Happiness: Using The New Positive Psychology To Realize Your Potential For Lasting Fulfilment*.

⁷⁵ Najj, "طابت بك الأيام وافرحتاه".

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

The journey to find a “shadow of hope” depicts a continuous search for purpose. For the “I” persona, life’s meaning lies in the effort to pursue something that may not always be tangible but becomes a source of hope and motivation.

4. Components of the Happiness Recipe

4.1. S = Set Range (Genetic Boundaries or Basic Tendencies)

This poem portrays the “I” persona as melancholic, reflective, and deeply immersed in his emotional experiences. He does not merely express happiness but also involves sadness and struggle in his life.

Example:

⁸¹ (Verse 6) “قد طَرَقَ البابَ فتىً متعبٌ # طَالَ به السَّيرُ وكَلَّتْ خطاهُ”

The above phrase illustrates a long, exhausting struggle. This shows the “I” persona’s basic tendency to involve deep emotions in every step of his journey.

4.2. C = Circumstances (Life Circumstances)

The life circumstances of the “I” persona are filled with the presence of someone who gives meaning and hope. This person is not only a source of happiness but also a symbol of hope and life itself. The emotional state, filled with love and hope, makes the “I” persona feel whole.

Examples:

⁸² (Verse 1) “طابت بك الأيامُ وافرحتهُ # أَنْتِ الأمانِي والغنى والحياهُ”

The verse above depicts someone who provides hope, emotional wealth, and life’s meaning.

⁸³ (Verse 8) “عِنْدَكَ قد حَطَّ رَحَالُ المني # وفي جَمِي حَسِنِكَ أَلْقَى عصاهُ”

This phrase shows that within the beloved’s beauty, the “I” persona finds protection and peace.

4.3. V = Voluntary Variables (Self-Controlled Variables)

The “I” persona consciously chooses to give meaning to every experience, whether in sadness, love, or forgiveness. The choice to forgive and to keep seeking hope shows high self-regulation. Happiness is achieved by forgiving the past and looking forward with optimism.

Example:

⁸⁴ (Verse 3) “فلينذهب الليلُ غفرنا له # ما دامَ هذا الصبحُ عَقِي دجَاهُ”

This phrase shows forgiveness for the darkness of night (the past), creating space for new happiness.

Table 1. Happiness Recipe Components

Component	Interpretation in the Poem	Poetic Example
S = Set Range	Melancholic and reflective,	the “طَالَ به السَّيرُ وكَلَّتْ خطاهُ” (<i>The</i>

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

Component	Interpretation in the Poem	Poetic Example
	poet shows an innate tendency to deeply experience emotions, both in sadness and happiness.	<i>human nature to keep moving forward despite exhaustion.</i>)
C Circumstances	The presence of someone who = provides hope, the beauty of nature, and conditions that support emotional reflection.	"أنتِ الأُماني والغنى والحياه" (A situation where the beloved figure gives hope and life's meaning.)
V = Voluntary Variables	The conscious choice to forgive the past, be grateful for small moments of happiness, and keep searching for life's meaning.	"فليذهب الليل غفرنا له" (The choice to forgive the darkness of the past for the sake of future happiness.)

Result: H (Happiness) is the combination of the poet's reflective nature, life circumstances filled with love and hope, and his conscious choices to manage emotions and seek meaning. The poet achieves *authentic happiness* despite being engaged in a complex emotional journey.

The conclusion of this analysis shows that happiness (H) in Ibrahim Naji's poem results from several key components. First, the reflective nature of the "I" persona involves deep emotions (*Set Range*). Second, the life circumstances are filled with love, hope, and the presence of a meaningful figure (*Circumstances*). Third, the conscious choice to manage emotions, forgive the past, and continuously seek life's meaning (*Voluntary Variables*). Although the poem appears melancholic, happiness is implied through deep reflection, forgiveness, and hope. This aligns with Seligman's happiness theory, which emphasizes that authentic happiness is not only derived from pleasant experiences but also from meaning and effective self-regulation.

This poem also aligns with Martin Seligman's three dimensions of happiness. The *Pleasant Life* dimension is embodied through the love and beauty described in the poem. The *Good Life* dimension emerges from the conscious choice to find meaning in struggle and emotional experiences. The *Meaningful Life* dimension is seen in reflections on hope and life's purpose. This argument is universal, highlighting that happiness lies in how we respond to life, regardless of the nature or depth of emotional experiences that surround it.

Table 2. Summary of Data Analysis

Dimension	Indicator	Poetic Evidence (Verse)	Interpretation
Pleasant Life	Overcoming the Past	"فليذهب الليل غفرنا له ما دام هذا الصبح عقيب دجاء" (Verse 3)	The "I" persona forgives the dark past (night) and welcomes the morning as a symbol of moving forward and letting go of negative emotions, aligning with Seligman's positive emotion principle.

Dimension	Indicator	Poetic Evidence (Verse)	Interpretation
	Overcoming the Past	<p>بأيّ كفّ طعنت قلبه فمات في قلبي ”(Verse 12) حتى صده</p>	Accepts deep old wounds; turning them into resolved memories, showing forgiveness and emotional healing.
	Positive Present Emotions	<p>طابت بك الأيام وافرحته أنت الأمانى ”والغنى والحياه ”(Verse 1)</p>	Expresses present happiness through love, hope, and the beloved's presence as the core source of joy and life itself.
	Positive Present Emotions	<p>جمالك الطاهر عندي له إيمان قلب ”في خشوع الصلاة ”(Verse 4)</p>	Beauty is equated to pure faith in prayer; shows deep appreciation for beauty as a source of positive emotion.
	Optimism about the Future	<p>قد وجد الضليل نور الهدى يا حلمه يا ”نجمه يا سنه ”(Verse 2)</p>	The beloved is symbolized as guiding light and star representing hope and optimism for the future.
Good Life	Wisdom & Knowledge	<p>نقل في الأيام أقدامه يبغى خيالاً ”ماثلاً في مناه ”(Verse 7)</p>	The “I” persona's curiosity and search for life's deeper meaning reflect the virtue of love of learning and perspective.
	Courage	<p>قد طرّق الباب فتى متعب طال به السير ”وكلت خطاه ”(Verse 6)</p>	Illustrates perseverance and bravery despite exhaustion, the “I” persona keeps moving forward to reach his purpose.
	Humanity & Love	<p>أحبك الحب و غنى به عفّ الأمانى ”والهوى والشفاه ”(Verse 16)</p>	Celebrates love openly, turning it into song shows the strength of loving and allowing oneself to be loved.
	Transcendence	<p>فليذهب الليل غفراً له ما دام هذا الصبح</p>	Optimism and gratitude transform darkness into hope connects daily life with spiritual transcendence.

Dimension	Indicator	Poetic Evidence (Verse)	Interpretation
Meaningful Life		”عقبى دجاه” (Verse 3)	
	Purpose & Transcendence	”وإنما الحبُّ حديثٌ العلی أنشودةُ الخلدِ ”ونحنُ الرواه (Verse 17)	Cinta dipandang sebagai “narrative of eternity” showing the “I” persona sees love as part of a larger transcendent meaning.
	Sacrifice & Flow	”قد طَرَقَ البابَ فتی” ”متعبٌ طالَ به السیرُ ”وكلَّت خطاه (Verse 6)	The continuous struggle despite weariness shows purpose, sacrifice, and “flow” as described by Csikszentmihalyi.
	Meaning through Hope & Beauty	”جمالُك الطاهرُ” ”عندي له إيمانٌ قلبٍ ”في خشوع الصلاة (Verse 4)	Beauty seen as sacred, equal to devout prayer, connects daily appreciation to spiritual depth and life meaning.
Happiness Recipe (S-C-V)	S = Set Range	”قد طَرَقَ البابَ فتی” ”متعبٌ طالَ به السیرُ ”وكلَّت خطاه (Verse 6)	The persona’s melancholic-reflective nature shows deep emotional tendencies as part of their innate ‘set range’.
	C = Circumstances	”طابت بك الأيامُ وافرحته أنت الأمانی ”والغنى والحياه (Verse 1)	The present life circumstances full of love and hope create fertile ground for authentic happiness.
	V = Voluntary Variables	”فليذهب الليل غفرنا” ”له ما دام هذا الصبح ”عقبى دجاه (Verse 3)	The conscious choice to forgive and hope for dawn shows self-directed emotional management, a key factor in attaining authentic happiness according to Seligman’s theory.

Conclusion

This study concludes that happiness in the poem “*Thabat Biki Al-Ayyama Wa Frahtahu*” by Ibrahim Naji can be comprehensively analyzed through Martin Seligman’s *Authentic Happiness* theory. The findings confirm that authentic

happiness in this poem is not only derived from pleasant emotions but also emerges from the “I” persona’s deep struggle, love, forgiveness, and hopeful reflection on life. The analysis demonstrates how the dimensions of *Pleasant Life* appear through gratitude and appreciation of love and beauty; *Good Life* is revealed through the poet’s courage, perseverance, and character strengths; and *Meaningful Life* is portrayed through the search for higher purpose, sacrifice, and spiritual transcendence.

The purpose of this research was to reveal how literary texts, especially Arabic romantic poetry, can serve as meaningful reflections of positive psychology, and to demonstrate that a melancholic poem can still carry strong elements of authentic happiness.

The results of this study can be applied in further literary studies, especially to integrate positive psychology approaches into poetry appreciation and literary learning, showing that literature can be a valuable medium to foster resilience, optimism, and character development among readers and students.

For future research, it is recommended to expand the scope of analysis to compare Ibrahim Naji’s other poems or different Arabic poets with diverse psychological frameworks. Furthermore, researchers could explore interdisciplinary studies combining positive psychology with cultural, educational, or therapeutic contexts to enrich the understanding of how literature can promote psychological well-being in wider audiences.

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