

The Influence of The Setting on the Character Development of the Central Characters in Kristin Hannah's *the Nightingale*

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***Abstract:** The main topic in this research is the influence of the setting on the character development of the central characters in Kristin Hannah's "The Nightingale". The research question pertains to how the setting of place, society, and time can influence the character development of the two central characters using a literary psychology approach. This research process encompasses the entire story, including intrinsic elements such as characters and characterizations, setting, and conflict, as well as extrinsic elements such as mental life level, personality dynamics, instincts as psychic energy, and concepts regarding women. The qualitative research is based on descriptive analysis methods and literature study techniques. The findings suggest that social, time, and place settings significantly shape a character's development. The central characters, Vianne and Isabelle, have contrasting personalities and undergo different changes and developments in their personalities by the story's conclusion*

***Keywords:** Character Development, Central characters, Women, Place Setting, Time Setting, Social Setting*

Abstrak: Topik utama dalam penelitian ini adalah pengaruh latar yang diteliti berdasarkan kajian terhadap tokoh sentral dalam Novel *The Nightingale* Karya Kristin Hannah. Dengan rumusan masalah yaitu bagaimana latar tempat, sosial, dan waktu dapat mempengaruhi perkembangan karakter dari dua tokoh sentral melalui pendekatan psikologi sastra. Proses penelitian ini melibatkan keseluruhan cerita, unsur intrinsik: tokoh dan penokohan, latar, dan konflik, serta unsur ekstrinsik: Tingkat kehidupan mental, Dinamika Kepribadian, Insting Sebagai Energi Psikis, dan Konsep Mengenai Perempuan. Penelitian kualitatif ini didukung dengan metode analisis deskriptif dan teknik studi pustaka yang menghasilkan temuan bahwa latar tempat, sosial, dan waktu dapat mempengaruhi perkembangan suatu karakter. Tokoh sentral Vianne dan Isabelle memiliki kepribadian yang bertolak belakang dan memiliki perkembangan dan perubahan yang berbeda pada kepribadiannya di akhir cerita.

Kata kunci: Perkembangan Karakter, Karakter Sentral, Tentang Wanita, Latar Tempat, Latar Waktu, Latar Sosial

BACKGROUND

Character is a set of qualities that have always been admired as signs of a person's goodness, virtue, and moral maturity. The term "character" etymologically comes from the Latin "character," which means characteristics, habits, mental attributes, morality, personality, and morals. The dictionary Kamus Lengkap Bahasa Indonesia (1997: 281), reveals that "character" is the mental, moral, or mental attributes that distinguish a person from others, habits, and character.

Dali Gulo, in the Dictionary of Psychology (1982: 29), describes the character as a personality evaluated from an ethical standpoint, for instance, the honesty of a person, which usually has a connection to a relatively stable trait. W.B. Saunders in *Karakter Pembeda Sifat Manusia* (1977: 126) explains that character is a real and distinct attribute shown by an individual, several attributes that can be observed in an individual. Wyne explained that character is the mark of how to apply the value of goodness through actions or behavior. Muchlas Samani, in *Konsep dan Model Pendidikan Karakter* (2011:43), explains that character can be conceived as the basic values that build a person's personality, formed either

by the influence of heredity or environmental influence, which distinguishes him from others, as well as embodied in his attitude and behavior in everyday life. In the process of such life experiences, the role of the human conscious mind is so dominant that the mind filters the information that enters through the human senses. The mindset and belief system of a mature individual will shape their distinct habits and character. In other words, every person possesses a unique belief system, self-image, and set of habits.

According to Dr. Antonius Atosokhi Gea, S.Th., MM, understanding what a character is can begin in a simple way. You can ask a few people in an organization or company about the qualities they consider to be good and what they expect from their colleagues, especially their superiors. According to the records they uncovered, a superior or effective leader is someone who is honest, open, disciplined, caring, responsible, has a vision, is loyal, stubborn, respects everyone, and does not show favoritism and so on. People often indirectly refer to a person's character through certain expressions. These expressions typically relate to the values that consistently manifest in a person in various situations. Character development is rooted in internalized values that become a person's permanent tendencies and life choices. These values are reflected in a person's attitudes and behaviors as the embodiment or expression of positive life values.

World War II was a global war that lasted from 1939 to 1945. (Encyclopedia Holocaust: World War II in Europe). This war involved so many nations in the world, including all the great powers that eventually formed two conflicting military alliances, the Allies and the Poros. It was the largest war in history involving more than 100 million people in various military forces. In a state of "total war", the great nations maximize all their economic, industrial, and scientific capabilities for the purposes of war, thus removing the gap between civilian and military resources. It was marked by a number of important events involving mass deaths of civilians. This war took 50 million to 70 million lives. This death toll made World War II the deadliest conflict in human history.

Germany began World War II by invading Poland on 1 September 1939. Britain and France responded by declaring war on Germany. German troops invade Western Europe in the spring of 1940. With support from Germany, the Soviet Union occupied the Baltic States in June 1940. Italy, a member of the Poros Bloc, joined the war on 10 June 1940. From July 10 to October 31, 1940, the Nazis engaged in a British air war.

This novel tells the story of Vianne (Rossignol) Mauriac and Isabelle Rossignol, two French sisters who lived under the Nazi occupation, and how each of them fights: one to protect their family and loved ones from harm, and the other for her beliefs and determination in life.

The problem began to arise when the Nazis invade France and made a base in Carriveau. Vianne, the eldest sister, is composed and avoids confrontation, even when oppressed, whereas Isabelle is a rebellious spirit, unafraid to speak her mind. Vianne chose to

follow the rules, even though it meant allowing a Nazi officer to stay in her house and harass her, as well as allowing the arrest of her Jewish neighbor. On the other hand, Isabelle refused to live passively under German authority, so she joined the French resistance movement and started helping Allied pilots escape from France after their plane was shot down. She adopted the code name “The Nightingale”.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research utilized qualitative methods with an objective approach, incorporating analytical techniques commonly known as Intrinsic Elements and literary psychological approaches. The analysis was based on a psychological perspective rooted in Abraham Maslow's humanistic personality theory, focusing on the novel “The Nightingale” by Kristin Hannah. The data is obtained from the primary source, which is the novel "The Nightingale" itself. The secondary sources include library research on books and articles focused on character analysis, literary theory, the theory of literary psychology, and the history of World War II in Europe. Additionally, the concept of women by Simone de Beauvoir and the Internet are also utilized as secondary sources for research

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The novel is set during World War II in a French fictional town called Carriveau. It tells the story of two sisters named Vianne (Rossignol) Mauriac and Isabelle Rossignol who have contrasting personalities. The story begins when Vianne's husband, Antoine, accepts military duty to war in France against the invading Germans, Vianne and their daughter, Sophie, try to continue a normal life in Carriveau without Antoine. Meanwhile, Isabelle was expelled from the French girls' school and sent home to her father Julien, in Paris. Julien reluctantly allowed her to stay with him, but he soon changed her mind when the Germans broke the French defense line and approached Paris.

Vianne (Rossignol) Mauriac and Isabelle Rossignol are the two central characters in this novel. During World War II, the status of women was still considered low and men could impose themselves on women without any consequences for themselves. The history from the Middle Ages to the eighteenth century in France describes the situation of women as they experienced significant oppression until they finally gained the opportunity to be free due to oppression at the end of the French Revolution. As a result of these factors, the characters of Vianne and Isabelle were forced to develop their personalities in order to survive.

Lagos Egri describes characterization in terms of three dimensions: physiological, psychological, and sociological. Physiologically, Vianne is depicted as the oldest with strawberry-blonde hair, porcelain-thin skin, and sea-blue eyes, while Isabelle is described as having beautiful hair, green eyes, and plump lips. Sociologically, Vianne works as a housewife, has a good husband and daughter, and has the financial means to meet their daily needs. On the other hand, Isabelle is a student who learned about etiquette and manners before the German invasion of France. Psychologically, Vianne has a weak personality and a

fragile mentality, making her reliant on others and indecisive. Conversely, Isabelle possesses strong courage, an open-minded personality, and is quick to engage in disputes with others.

The setting plays an important role in influencing character development, as evidenced by three distinct settings in the story. Firstly, the setting of the place is crucial, as the two central characters live in France in a fictional town called Carriveau, which was occupied by Nazi forces and significantly impacted their lives. Secondly, the social setting is significant, as the characters must navigate survival while fighting for their needs and identities amidst the threat and atrocities of the Nazi army. Lastly, the setting of time is noteworthy, as the characters lived in an era where women were undervalued and underestimated by men, making it challenging to change this prevailing view.

Vianne undergoes significant character development. Initially, she is portrayed as weak and someone who gives up easily due to challenging circumstances. However, as the story progresses, she transforms into a brave individual who is no longer quick to give up. She becomes willing to help others, even in difficult circumstances, after enduring the hardships of German colonization. On the other hand, Isabelle's character development is also noteworthy. Initially, she is depicted as an emotional person with no sense of responsibility. However, after joining the resistance group and fighting as "The Nightingale", she transforms into someone with a strong sense of responsibility and the ability to understand the feelings of those around her.

CONCLUSION

It can be deduced that the setting, social environment, and time period can significantly influence character development. The transformation of Vianne's character is evident, as she evolves from being weak and easily succumbing to circumstances, and only concerned about her family's safety due to her survival instincts, to becoming more courageous and resilient, willing to help others even while facing oppression. During the period in which she lived, women were not empowered, so the idea of standing up for herself rarely crossed her mind. The transformation in Vianne stemmed from her moral anxiety after witnessing the atrocities against Jews, leading her to become more courageous and willing to assist others.

The character development of Isabelle reflects an emotional transformation from a lack of responsibility, stemming from realistic anxiety, to a stronger sense of duty. Isabelle's change is influenced by the challenging circumstances faced by women at the time, as they struggled to balance their independence with societal expectations of femininity. The oppression and injustice she experiences prompt her transformation. She begins to consider her sister's family situation and adopts a sense of responsibility, earning the nickname "The Nightingale" as she joins the rebels against the Nazis. Through this journey, she realizes the beauty of life, the importance of family, and the value of love. Ultimately, she comes to terms with her mortality, embracing the concept of death as a natural instinct. From this, we can see

that women's personalities can develop even in oppressive social conditions, as well as in places and times that were not favorable or ideal for women at the time.

We can conclude that the evolution of both characters can be influenced by the setting, society, and time. The local environmental changes influence the growth and adaptation of the characters. These changes also impact the social structures, requiring the characters to pay attention to interactions with people around them, not just those closest to them. Additionally, both characters are women whose status at the time was considered low. The timing of events and occurrences during the Second World War also influenced changes in the environment and social structures, driving the development of both characters as they strive to survive these challenging times.

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