



CHARACTERS OF THE MAIN CHARACTERS IN THE NOVEL HILDA: CINTA, LUKA, DAN PERJUANGAN BY MUYASSAROTUL HAFIDZOH

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the characterization of the protagonist in the novel *Hilda: Cinta, Luka, dan Perjuangan* by Muyassarotul Hafidzoh through a literary psychology perspective. The novel portrays the life of a female protagonist who experiences sexual violence, social stigma, and gender-based injustice, resulting in complex psychological conflicts. This research employs a qualitative descriptive method with a library research design. The primary data source is the novel itself, while the data consist of textual excerpts in the form of narration, dialogue, and character behavior related to the protagonist's psychological condition. Data were collected through close reading and note-taking techniques and analyzed using a literary psychology approach that focuses on internal conflict, emotional responses, and character development. The findings reveal that Hilda is depicted as a dynamic character whose personality develops through stages of trauma, inner struggle, and resilience. Initially, she is portrayed as fragile, fearful, and oppressed due to the psychological impact of sexual violence and social ostracization. However, as the story progresses, Hilda demonstrates psychological endurance, responsibility, and self-awareness, indicating a gradual transformation into a stronger and more resilient individual. This character development reflects the interaction between personal trauma and external social pressures. This study concludes that the protagonist in *Hilda: Cinta, Luka, dan Perjuangan* represents a female character who is not merely a victim of violence and injustice but also an active subject who struggles to survive and reconstruct her identity. The research contributes to Indonesian literary studies by offering a deeper understanding of female protagonists through the integration of psychological dynamics and social context, and it also provides relevant insights for literature learning and character education.



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INTRODUCTION

Literary works serve as a medium for authors to express and represent human experiences—both individual and social—through imaginative and meaningful language. As a genre of prose, the novel possesses the power to depict the complexities of life in depth, particularly through internal conflict, social relations, and character development. Consequently, characters—specifically the protagonist—become the central element of a novel, as they are the vessels through which an author's ideas, values, and worldviews are conveyed to the reader. Research by Rahmi, Harliyana, and Rasyimah (2024) asserts that the characterization of a protagonist is generally built through a dominance of intense emotions and psychological conflicts, reflecting the complex state of the human psyche.

The study of a protagonist's character becomes increasingly relevant when linked to the psychology of literature approach. This perspective views literary works as a reflection of human psychological phenomena represented through the actions, dialogues, and attitudes of the characters. Rahmi et al. (2024) demonstrate that emotions such as sadness, pressure, anger, and love are dominant elements in shaping a protagonist; thus, character analysis cannot be separated from psychological aspects. Consequently, analyzing a protagonist serves not only to understand the plot but also to uncover the deeper psychological dynamics of the character.

The novel *Hilda: Cinta, Luka, dan Perjuangan* by Muyassarotul Hafidzoh presents a female protagonist facing complex psychological and social conflicts. The character Hilda is depicted as a woman who experiences sexual violence, pregnancy out of wedlock, and social pressure resulting from public stigma. These conditions place Hilda in a position where she faces not only physical suffering but also psychological burdens and structural injustice. Ayuning et al. (2023) explain that Hilda experiences various forms of gender injustice, such as marginalization, subordination, stereotyping, and violence, which directly affect her psychological state and character formation.

Beyond gender injustice, social pressure also plays a significant role in shaping the protagonist in this novel. Wulandari and Haryanti (2025) reveal that the female character in *Hilda: Cinta, Luka, dan Perjuangan* constantly receives negative perceptions from society, particularly regarding the stigma of a woman's social status. These perceptions impact the character's inner state and influence how she views herself and her environment. This indicates that Hilda's character is formed by the interaction between personal trauma and social pressure occurring simultaneously.

Previous studies show that the study of protagonists in Indonesian novels is often directed toward uncovering character values and morals. Rahmadhany et al. (2025) state that the protagonist can represent character education values such as honesty, responsibility, hard work, and social concern, reflected through their actions in facing life's conflicts. Similarly, Fitriani et al. (2025) explain that the moral dimension in a novel is generally manifested through the character's attitude in dealing with life problems related to themselves, others, and the social environment.

The study of female characters has also evolved through feminism and psychology, particularly in examining power relations and the search for self-existence. Novalisty and Nasrullah (2025) show that the female character in the novel *Cantik Itu Luka* experiences complex psychological dynamics as an effort to achieve self-existence within a patriarchal social structure, reflected through her attitudes, desires, and life choices. Furthermore, Risda et al. (2023) emphasize that internal conflict and social

pressure in the novel *Istri Kedua* shape the female character to be more dynamic and complex, both psychologically and morally.

Although various studies have examined *Hilda: Cinta, Luka, dan Perjuangan* from the perspectives of gender injustice and the sociology of literature, studies specifically focusing on the protagonist through the psychology of literature remain limited. The novelty of this research lies in its effort to integrate psychological conflict, social pressure, and character values in interpreting Hilda as a representation of a woman who experiences trauma yet continues to struggle to build her identity.

Based on the aforementioned context, this study aims to describe and analyze the character of the protagonist in Muyassarotul Hafidzoh's novel *Hilda: Cinta, Luka, dan Perjuangan* using a psychology of literature approach. This research is expected to provide a theoretical contribution to the development of Indonesian literary studies, particularly in the analysis of female protagonists, as well as a practical contribution as a literary learning resource capable of fostering empathy, gender justice, and psychological resilience.

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive research design. A qualitative approach was selected as this study aims to understand and describe in depth the character of the protagonist in the novel *Hilda: Cinta, Luka, dan Perjuangan* by Muyassarotul Hafidzoh, based on narrative text data. Descriptive research is used to systematically depict the facts and characteristics of the research object as they are, without data manipulation. The primary data source for this study is the novel *Hilda: Cinta, Luka, dan Perjuangan* by Muyassarotul Hafidzoh, which serves as the main object of study. The research data consists of textual excerpts, including dialogue, narration, and authorial descriptions that illustrate the protagonist's attitudes, actions, emotions, and internal conflicts. The analysis specifically focuses on Hilda as the protagonist who holds a central role and experiences the most dominant psychological conflicts in the narrative.

Data collection was conducted through reading and note-taking techniques. The researcher read the novel carefully and repeatedly to gain a comprehensive understanding of the story, subsequently noting relevant textual passages concerning the protagonist's character, particularly those related to psychological aspects, social pressures, and traumatic experiences. This technique ensures that the data obtained is accurate and aligned with the research focus. Furthermore, data analysis in this study utilizes a literary psychology approach to interpret the protagonist's character based on behaviors, dialogues, and internal conflicts presented in the text. The analysis process involves three stages: data reduction by selecting and categorizing relevant excerpts; data display by describing and interpreting the classified data; and conclusion drawing to formulate a character profile based on the overall analysis.

To ensure data validity, this study employs persistent observation, involving the repeated reading and analysis of data to ensure that interpretations accurately reflect the story's context. Additionally, the researcher utilizes theoretical references and relevant previous research findings as a foundation for interpretation, ensuring the analysis has a strong theoretical basis and scientific accountability. Through this systematic and profound methodology, the analysis of the protagonist in *Hilda: Cinta,*

Luka, dan Perjuangan is expected to comprehensively reveal the character's psychological dynamics in accordance with the research objectives.

FINDINGS

Based on the analysis of the novel *Hilda: Cinta, Luka, dan Perjuangan* by Muyassarotul Hafidzoh, it is found that the character of the protagonist, Hilda, is constructed through a series of complex psychological and social conflicts. Hilda is depicted as a woman who undergoes a gradual character transformation in response to the traumatic events she experiences. This characterization is reflected through her attitudes, emotions, actions, and the way she responds to environmental pressures.

Psychologically, at the beginning of the story, Hilda is portrayed as a fragile and oppressed individual. The trauma resulting from sexual violence causes her to experience fear, anxiety, and a loss of self-confidence. This condition is exacerbated by the social stigma she faces, leading Hilda to withdraw from her surroundings and deeply internalize her suffering. Guilt, shame, and helplessness are the dominant emotions that define her character during this phase.

As the narrative progresses, Hilda's character exhibits significant psychological dynamics. The continuous life pressures she endures—such as pregnancy out of wedlock, social ostracization, and the limited space to speak for herself—shape Hilda into a character undergoing prolonged internal conflict. However, beneath this suffering, Hilda is also depicted as having resilience and the will to survive. She strives to accept reality, takes responsibility for her life, and continues to move forward despite being in an unjust situation.

By the end of the story, Hilda's character evolves into a mentally stronger woman. She is no longer entirely trapped by fear and trauma; instead, she begins to build self-awareness and the courage to face life's realities. This transformation demonstrates that Hilda is not a static character, but a dynamic one who develops through a process of suffering and inner struggle.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study indicate that the character of the protagonist in the novel *Hilda: Cinta, Luka, dan Perjuangan* is shaped by the interaction between internal psychological factors and external social pressures. From the perspective of literary psychology, the trauma of sexual violence experienced by Hilda serves as the primary catalyst for her profound internal conflict. This finding aligns with the study by Rahmi et al. (2024), which states that protagonists in novels are often dominated by negative emotions such as sadness, depression, and anxiety due to traumatic events.

Social pressure in the form of stigma and community ostracization further exacerbates Hilda's psychological condition. The negative perception of her environment leaves the character feeling as though she has no safe space to express her suffering. This strengthens the argument made by Wulandari and Haryanti (2025) that societal perception significantly influences the character formation of women, particularly in the context of social stigma regarding their status and life experiences. In this novel, social pressure is not merely a background for conflict but plays an active role in shaping the character's attitude and self-perception.

From the perspective of gender injustice, Hilda's character represents women who fall victim to a patriarchal social system. The sexual violence, subordination, and

stereotypes she endures demonstrate that Hilda's suffering is not solely an individual issue but a structural one. This finding is consistent with the research by Ayuning et al. (2023), which concludes that Hilda experiences various forms of gender injustice that directly impact her psychological state and character development.

Nevertheless, Hilda's character is not constructed through suffering alone. The novel also portrays the resilience and psychological endurance of the protagonist. Despite being under extreme pressure, Hilda strives to take responsibility for her life and her unborn child. This attitude demonstrates the emergence of moral values and positive character traits as a response to adversity. This is in line with the views of Fitriani et al (2025), who suggest that internal conflicts in novels often give rise to moral values such as responsibility and firmness of character in female protagonists.

Furthermore, Hilda's character development can be understood as a quest for self-existence. Within her limitations and social constraints, Hilda attempts to find meaning in life and maintain her dignity as a woman. This process resonates with the findings of Novalisty and Nasrullah (2025), who explain that female characters in novels often undergo psychological struggles as a form of striving for self-existence within oppressive social structures.

In conclusion, this discussion demonstrates that the protagonist's character in the novel *Hilda: Cinta, Luka, dan Perjuangan* is complexly constructed through trauma, social pressure, and a process of inner reflection. Hilda represents women who endure psychological suffering due to gender injustice while simultaneously exhibiting mental resilience and the struggle to rise again. These findings reinforce the novel's position as a literary work that not only records women's suffering but also presents a profound reflection on psychological strength and humanity.

Based on a review of previous studies, it can be stated that research on the novel *Hilda: Cinta, Luka, dan Perjuangan* by Muyassarotul Hafidzoh generally focuses on aspects of gender injustice and societal perceptions of female characters. The study by Ayuning et al. (2023) emphasizes the analysis of forms of gender injustice experienced by Hilda, while Wulandari and Haryanti (2025) focus more on societal perceptions and stigma toward the female characters in the novel. While these studies contribute significantly to understanding the social and structural contexts surrounding the protagonist, they have not yet explored the character's psychological dynamics in depth from a literary psychology perspective.

On the other hand, research concerning protagonists in Indonesian novels—such as those conducted by Rahmi et al. (2024), Rahmadhany et al. (2025), and Fitriani et al. (2025)—shows that protagonists are frequently analyzed through emotions, moral values, and character education. Nevertheless, the subjects of these studies are different novels and have not specifically focused on female characters who are victims of sexual violence experiencing multilayered psychological trauma, as is the case with Hilda.

Consequently, the state of the art of this research lies at the intersection of protagonist character studies, literary psychology, and the representation of women in contemporary Indonesian novels. The research gap identified is the lack of a comprehensive study that integrates psychological conflict, social pressure, and character values in analyzing the protagonist, Hilda, using a literary psychology approach. This study fills that gap by centering on the psychological dynamics of the

protagonist as a survivor of sexual violence who not only endures suffering but also demonstrates psychological resilience and a struggle to construct her identity. Therefore, this research not only complements previous studies but also offers a new perspective in Indonesian literary studies, particularly in understanding female protagonists as active, dynamic, and resilient subjects in the face of trauma and social injustice.

Relevance Of Research Findings To School Learning

Literature learning in schools is crucial because literary works serve as a vehicle for writers to develop ideas, concepts, and various constructive thoughts. Therefore, education in schools is crucial. Furthermore, literature offers numerous benefits to those who read it, including increased knowledge and aesthetic appeal. Through literary works, people gain moral guidance, allowing their lives to be expressed through the crystallization of the values contained within them.

In literature learning, based on the 2013 curriculum for junior high school (SMP/MTS) students in the first semester, the basic competency is to find information in review texts about works (films, short stories, novels, and poetry about regional art) that they read or listen to. Therefore, the findings of this research can be used as educational resources in schools.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings and discussion, it can be concluded that the protagonist's character in the novel *Hilda: Cinta, Luka, dan Perjuangan* by Muyassarotul Hafidzoh is constructed through complex psychological dynamics resulting from personal trauma and social pressures. The character of Hilda is depicted as a woman enduring profound psychological suffering due to sexual violence, social stigma, and gender injustice, which are reflected through negative emotions such as fear, shame, anxiety, and inner oppression.

However, Hilda's character is not static. As the plot progresses, the protagonist demonstrates a significant transformation, evolving from a fragile individual into a more resilient person with a strong will to survive. This process indicates the presence of psychological resilience formed through the experiences of suffering and the life responsibilities she must face. Thus, Hilda represents a woman who is not merely a victim but also an active subject striving to maintain her dignity and build her identity amidst social limitations and injustice.

Through a literary psychology approach, this study reaffirms that a protagonist's character cannot be understood in isolation from the social context and traumatic experiences surrounding them. The novel *Hilda: Cinta, Luka, dan Perjuangan* does not only record the reality of women's suffering but also offers a profound reflection on psychological strength and humanity. Consequently, this research enriches the study of Indonesian literature, particularly in the analysis of female protagonists facing multi-layered psychological conflicts.

Suggestions

Based on the results of this study, the researcher proposes the following suggestions. For future researchers, it is recommended to expand the study of the novel

Hilda: Cinta, Luka, dan Perjuangan by employing other approaches, such as the sociology of literature, feminism, or trauma studies, to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the characters and the novel's social context. Further research could also broaden the scope of study by comparing the female characters in this novel with those in other contemporary Indonesian novels that address similar issues.

For educators and educational practitioners, the findings of this research can be utilized as teaching materials for literature in schools and universities, particularly in teaching novel appreciation and strengthening character education. The character of Hilda can serve as a medium for reflection to foster empathy, awareness of gender justice, and an understanding of the psychological impact of violence and social stigma.

For readers and the general public, this research is expected to raise critical awareness regarding the social realities faced by women victims of violence, and to encourage a more empathetic and just perspective toward women's life experiences. It is hoped that this novel and its study will not only serve as aesthetic consumption but also as a meaningful medium for social reflection.

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