



An Examination of The Protagonist in Pidi Baiq's Novel Dilan: Dia Adalah Dilanku 1991

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ABSTRACT

Novels are fictional stories that are created by human reflection on the environment and experiences. Within a novel, the author uses their aesthetic experience and creativity to arrange storylines and characters. Examining the characters within a contemporary novel can be intriguing as the main character may reflect the author's idealism and response to their own life. With this in mind, the researcher analyzes the novel "Dilan dia adalah Dilanku 1991" by Pidi Baiq, which has gained popularity among millennial youth. The novel follows the story of high school sweethearts, Dilan and Milea. The researcher focuses on the main characters, Dilan and Milea, and uses a descriptive qualitative method and content analysis to identify certain characteristics related to their characterizations. The study found that Dilan was a romantic, brave, stubborn yet intelligent male figure, while Milea was a loyal, loving, and firm woman.

KEYWORDS

Characters;
The Main Character;
Novel Dilan.

ABSTRAK

Novel merupakan cerita imajinatif yang terinspirasi dari refleksi manusia terhadap lingkungan dan pengalamannya. Dalam novel, penulis mengatur alur cerita dan karakter berdasarkan pengalaman estetika dan kreativitasnya. Kajian pada novel kontemporer menarik untuk mengevaluasi karakter dan tokoh utama dalam cerita fiksi. Karakter utama dalam sebuah cerita dapat mencerminkan idealisme dan pandangan penulis terhadap kehidupan yang dijalaninya. Oleh karena itu, penelitian dilakukan pada novel "Dilan: Dia Adalah Dilanku 1991" karya Pidi Baiq karena popularitasnya di kalangan remaja millennial. Novel ini menceritakan tentang pasangan kekasih, Dilan dan Milea, yang berawal dari SMA. Dalam analisis data, peneliti fokus pada karakter utama, Dilan dan Milea. Dengan menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif dan analisis isi, peneliti mengidentifikasi karakteristik tertentu yang berkaitan dengan penokohan dalam karya tersebut. Hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa Dilan adalah sosok laki-laki yang romantis, pemberani, bandel, tetapi cerdas. Sedangkan Milea adalah sosok perempuan yang setia, penyayang, dan tegas.

KATAKUNCI

Karakter;
Tokoh Utama;
Novel Dilan.

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1. Introduction

The function of literary works extends beyond being a means of communication between the author and reader, allowing for the author's creative imagination to be expressed through the depiction of thoughts and emotions related to stories and events in daily life. In addition to conveying messages, literary works can also provide entertainment for readers. The novel, a popular type of literary work, is a fictional story that draws on an author's aesthetic experiences and imaginative creativity. In Indonesia, the development of the novel was heavily influenced by the social and political conditions of the time, with the G 30 S PKI incident in 1965 having a significant impact on literary works (Salam, 2008). Despite external factors affecting the development of novels in that era, there has been a shift towards literature that highlights heroic values since the end of the new order (Salam, 2008).

The novel "Dilan: Dia adalah Dilanku 1990", authored by Baiq (2014), was published by Pastel Books in 2014 and has 332 pages. This novel has become one of the best-selling books in Indonesia, with 13 reprints. Moreover, when the novel was adapted into a film and released on January 25, 2018, it was widely popular and successfully attracted millions of moviegoers in cinemas across the country. In just 43 days, the film version of Dilan reached a massive audience of 6,276,000 viewers (Ulfa, 2018).

Pidi Baiq continued his writing after the success of his novel by producing the novel "Dilan: Dia adalah Dilanku 1990", which follows a similar storyline and serves as a continuation of the previous work. However, the author introduces new characters and plot elements in this novel, which has also proven to be popular among readers, particularly young people. The success of Pidi Baiq's work can be attributed to his use of a reverse chronological plot structure, which captures the interest of modern teenagers and also evokes nostalgia for adults. Although previous studies have examined the personality of the main character in similar novels, Septiani et al. (2022) focused on the character dimensions of Dilan specifically, while Triantokoa et al. (2021) studied the novel's adaptation to film. However, no study has yet fully analyzed the main characters in this particular novel, making it a fascinating area of literary research. Using a qualitative descriptive approach and content analysis, this research will focus on the two main characters, Dilan and Milea, and will examine their characteristics based on their actions and ideological beliefs.

1.1. Novel

The novel is a lengthy piece of prose that tells a person's life story with those around them, depicting the characters' traits and characteristics. According to Ramadhanti (2018), the novel focuses on life during a period of tension, with a strong emphasis on life itself. Additionally, a novel is a type of prose literature that contains various intrinsic elements, including the storyline, characters, problems, and their resolution (Dia, 2015; Ningrum et al., 2022). Ismail (2002) pointed out that the term "novel" comes from the Italian word "Novella", which means a fictional prose that is imaginatively composed and tends to have long, continuous stories. The novel is a type of fictional story that comprises several primary elements. Esten (2013) identified five elements that constitute the structure of a story: 1) plot, 2) characterizations, 3) setting, 4) focal

point of the story, and 5) language style. It is necessary to present these five elements in a narrative story to create a work that is not only beautiful but also in accordance with the prevailing linguistic structure. Works that are deemed respectable are those that have educational value, use good grammar, and avoid verbosity.

1.2. Main Figures and Psychological Dimensions

The protagonist is the character who drives the plot forward in a novel. As Wicaksono (2017) explains, the protagonist is the main character who is central to the story and whose actions and experiences are the primary focus of the narrative. Meanwhile, Nurgiyantoro (1995) argues that the novel is a medium for conveying ideas more freely and in greater detail by exploring complex problems.

When studying a literary work, three main elements should be considered: themes, facts, and literary techniques. Researchers typically focus on the factual aspects of the story, which include the characters or actors in the story. This is an essential element for analyzing the psychological dimensions and portrayal of characters in a fictional work (Stanton, 1965). According to Stanton (1965), the attitudes and psychological dimensions of story characters serve as a reflection of real people in the real world. Nurgiantoro (2019) maintains that fictional characters are imaginary personalities that represent figures found in the social realities of life. Thus, while they may be virtual, the attitudes, interests, desires, emotions, and moral principles of the characters in a fictional work refer to human nature that exists in the real world.

The purpose of character development in fiction is to create a sense of immersion for the reader, allowing them to become fully engaged in the story. This can have a psychological impact on the reader as they imagine the experiences and emotions of the characters. In fiction, the main character is typically given the most attention and appears more frequently than other characters. This character is considered the primary actor in the story and their decisions can greatly influence the plot, conflict, and resolution. Supporting characters are also present to assist the main character. Fictional characters can be categorized into different types based on their psychological dimensions. Protagonists are characters that represent truth and humanity, and are central to the story's development. Antagonists are characters that represent evil and are the source of conflict in the story. They often harm the protagonist. Finally, tritagonists are supporting characters who play a mediating role in the story.

2. Method

The research methodology employed in this study is a qualitative descriptive method, as the data gathered is in the form of written words. The purpose of this method is to provide a summary of the data analysis results, with data excerpts included in the research report to provide a comprehensive overview. This approach is consistent with Moleong's (2018) view that qualitative research involves producing descriptive data in written or spoken form based on observable individuals. The primary source of data for this study is the fictional novel "Dilan: Dia Adalah Dilanku 1991" by Pidi Baiq, which is published by Books Pastel and spans 344 pages, divided into 24 parts. The researcher applied total sampling to select the main characters, Dilan and Milea, who are the central figures in the story. To obtain a clear picture of the characters,

the researcher used various techniques, such as documentation techniques, accompanied by advanced techniques such as reading and note-taking. In the documentation technique, the researcher read the novel as an inventory stage to collect relevant data for analysis. Qualitative data analysis is a systematic process of collecting data that helps researchers draw conclusions. According to Miles et al. (2014), the analysis process includes collecting data, reducing data, reviewing data, and drawing conclusions and verification. Hence, this study utilized qualitative analysis techniques.

3. Results and Discussion

In this section, the findings from the data collection and analysis are presented, which includes quotes and the researcher's interpretations of the character traits depicted in the novel "Dilan: Dia Adalah Dilanku 1991". This novel tells the story of a high school student named Dilan who is a member of a well-known motorcycle gang in the city of Bandung. Although he may appear mischievous and difficult to handle at first glance, as the story progresses, it becomes clear that Dilan is actually the smartest student in his class. The arrival of a girl named Milea from another city in Dilan's class piques his interest, and the novel primarily focuses on Milea's perspective as she recounts her love story with Dilan. She is happy with Dilan's affection and romantic gestures, and is proud of his academic achievements despite his stubbornness. However, she also worries about Dilan's involvement in the gang and fears that it could lead to trouble. Despite her concerns, Dilan remains undeterred, even after having run-ins with the law.

Milea is extremely worried about losing Dilan, to the point where she threatens to end their relationship if he continues to be involved with the motorcycle gang. However, Dilan is a typical teenager who values his freedom, so he sees Milea's presence and threats as a burden. This causes Dilan to distance himself from Milea, leading to their eventual separation when Milea is forced to move to Jakarta for higher education. Despite this distance, Milea still has feelings for Dilan. Unfortunately, Dilan seems to have disappeared without a trace, and Milea tries to reach out to him but his family has moved. In the meantime, Milea meets Herdi, a senior from her school, and they eventually get married. However, deep down, Milea realizes that she still loves Dilan, even though she suspects that he is now with someone else.

3.1. Analysis of The Protagonist in The Novel "Dilan: Dia Adalah Dilanku 1991"

This section will present the results of a character analysis of Dilan and Milea, the two main characters in the novel "Dilan: Dia Adalah Dilanku 1991 by Pidi Baiq". The researcher considers them to be the main characters based on their frequency of appearances, the author's directions, and the title of the novel. Dilan and Milea play central roles in the story, driving conflicts and plot development. The author also indicates that they are the central figures. Furthermore, the fact that Dilan's name is used in the title confirms his status as the primary character, a common feature in other popular romance stories in Indonesia like *Lupus*.

Table 1. Analysis of The Protagonist in The Novel

No	Name	Characters	Explanation
1	Dilan	Romantic	Dilan's efforts to melt and please Milea show his romantic side.
		Daredevil	Dilan's appointment as the leader of a motorcycle gang shows his courage.
		Clever	Despite his wayward nature, Dilan is a smart student who excels in class.
		humorous	Dilan's ability to lighten the mood with his jokes shows his humorous side.
2	Milea	Caring	Dilan's strong opposition to Dilan's involvement in a motorcycle gang proves his affection for her.
		Loyal	Despite many men approaching her, Milea remains loyal to Dilan.
		Romantic	Dilan's actions and words towards Milea demonstrate his romantic nature.
		Firm	Dilan always prioritizes the truth, demonstrating his firmness.

3.1.1. Dilan's Specific Characters

Romantic

Dilan, a young man in the novel *Dilan Dia adalah Dilanku 1991* by Pidi Baiq, is portrayed as having a romantic personality, particularly when he expresses his emotions to Milea, the woman he likes. An example of this is evident in dialogue excerpt (1) on pages 65-66, where Dilan uses romantic words to praise and seduce Milea, hoping to win her affection. Dilan's romanticism is also shown in his poetry, where he often writes specifically for Milea, such as in the poem "KALAU" on page 30:

Quote 1. (Pages 65 - 66)

"Bukan_apa-apa. Aku takut saja ada yang_ngaku-ngaku Milea. Pas sudah_dirindukan_ternyata palsu. Pas meluk, gak tahunya dia beruang. Rugi_Bandar. Ha ha ha."

The analysis of the quote above shows that Dilan attempts to woo and compliment through romantic words. He is confident that these words would make Milea feel flattered. Dilan seems to be trying to win over the heart of the woman he likes. Dilan also frequently conveys his romantic attitude in his poetry dedicated to Milea, as seen in the following excerpt from his poem entitled "KALAU":

Quote 2. (Page 30).

"Jika_imun_menyegarkan, kamu_lebih. Jika_cokelat diisi kacang mente katanya enak sekali, tetapi kamu lebih. Atau ada roti yang berisikan ikan tuna dibumbui dengan daun kemangi, kamu lebih. Kamu lebih sehat dari buah-buahan. Tahu gak? Lebih berwarna dari pelangi. Lebih segar dari pagi. Jadi kamu harus mengerti, yah, aku menyukaimu sampai_tujuh_ratus_turunan, ditambah 500 turunan lagi."

Daredevil

Besides being romantic, Dilan also displays bravery in the novel. This is evident by the fact that he is the leader of a motorcycle gang in Bandung, despite being young and still a student. The following excerpt from the story illustrates this point:

Quote 3 (Page 17).

“Di sekolahnya, Dilan dikenal sebagai Panglima Tempur dari salah satu geng motor yang ada di Bandung. Ke mana-mana selalu memakai motor jenis CB Gelatik yang sudah dia modif.”

The following excerpt from the story is an indication of Dilan's courageous nature:

Quote 4. (Page 296)

“Besoknya, di sekolah, aku mendapat kabar dari Piyan, entah bagaimana Piyan tahu, katanya Dilan ditangkap oleh pihak kepolisian karena semalam bersama kawan-kawannya menyerang satu kelompok orang yang dia duga sebagai pelaku yang sudah menyebabkan Akew meninggal.”

Clever

Dilan is not only known for his involvement in a motorcycle gang and his frequent involvement in fights, but also for his academic excellence. He consistently ranks first in his class, demonstrating his intelligence. This is evident in the following story excerpt:

Quote 5. (Page 16).

“Mungkin, kamu juga sama seperti dia, tapi Dilan selalu mendapatkan ranking pertama atau minimal kedua di kelasnya. Berbeda dengan Si Zael, teman sekelasku, dia juga sama, bawa buku tulisnya cuman satu, tapi nilainya jeblok dan itu bagiku adalah kekonyolan yang tiada tara.”

Dilan's intelligence is further evidenced by his acceptance into a State University in Bandung, which is illustrated in the following story excerpt:

Quote 6. (Page 320).

“Kudengar kabar bahwa Dilan juga diterima di salah satu Perguruan Tinggi Negeri yang ada di Kota Bandung. Saat itu, sangat senang mendengarnya bahwa dia yang dulu selalu aku khawatirkan akan terbengkalai pendidikannya ternyata bisa diterima di perguruan tinggi yang dia mau.”

Humorous

In addition to being intelligent, brave, and romantic, Dilan has a humorous side that allows him to easily connect with his classmates, motorcycle gang members, and even Milea. Dilan is able to adapt to and socialize with his peers with ease. This is demonstrated in the dialogue excerpt below:

Quote 7 (Page 31).

“Aku bias saja memberhentikan hujan katanya, Caranya? pertanyaku pada saat setelah aku terdiam.”Bentar,”kata Dilan. Lalu dia berseru: Berhenti, hei, hujan!” Kemudian Dilan diam menunggu hasilnya. Aku juga diam. “Kok, gak berhenti?”kutanya. “Gak dengar dia.””Gak punya kuping?... Iya.”

Dilan's humorous nature is also displayed in his interactions with his girlfriend, Milea, as depicted in the following dialogue excerpt:

Quote 8 (Pages 32)

"Aku bisa berhentiin motor,"katanya. "Aku tahu caranya,"kataku. "Gimana?" "Rem aja," kataku. "Gampang kan?" "Kok tahu?" jawab Dilan. "Bayi juga tahu. "Bayi ajaib."Dia ketawa, aku juga..."

Dilan is the main character in the novel *Dilan, My Dilan* 1991 by Pidi Baiq, who is portrayed as a humorous person. He loves to joke around with his friends and can make up stories to amuse them. This trait of Dilan's is evident in the two dialogue quotes above, and it makes Milea love him even more. On the other hand, Milea is also one of the main characters in the novel, who has her unique personality.

3.1.2. Milea's Specific Character

Caring

As Dilan's girlfriend, Milea is depicted as a loving person who is deeply concerned about Dilan's safety. She even threatens to end their relationship if Dilan does not leave the motorcycle gang, as she does not want him to meet the same fate as his friend Akew. This is shown in the following dialogue excerpt:

Quote 9. (Page 311).

"Aku terpaksa mutusin kamu, biar kamu tahu aku serius kalau aku gak suka kamu ikut-ikutan geng motor!"..Waktu, Akew meninggal ..., kataku lagi dengan segrukan kecil di hidungku."Lia cemas, Bunda. Lia takut Dilan juga akan kayak Akew."

Quote 10 (Page 84).

"Sejak kejadian Dilan dikeroyok, aku mulai khawatir tentang apa yang akan terjadi kepadanya. Bagiku, dia adalah bagian besar dari hidupku dan sulit untuk membiarkan hal itu terjadi kepadanya."

Loyal

Besides being affectionate, Milea is also characterized as loyal to her lover. Despite receiving attention and love from handsome and wealthy men, she remains faithful to Dilan and only wants to give her love to him. This is evident in the following dialogue excerpt:

Quote (Page 62).

"Ingin rasanya aku ngomong ke Kang Adi bahwa Aku hanya ingin Dilan, meskipun semua orang akan bilang bodoh karena memilihnya tapi aku ingin bersama orang yang selalu bisa membuat aku merasa senang dengan apa yang dia katakana. Aku ingin bersama orang yang membuat aku suka dengan apa yang dia ucapkan! Aku ingin bersama dengan orang yang bisa membawa hal baru, yang lain dari umum dan menyenangkan."

Milea's loyalty towards Dilan is also apparent when she rejects her childhood friend Yugo's invitation to go for a walk. This is seen in the following story excerpt:

Quote 11 (Page 134)

"Walau tubuhku ada disitu, tetapi pikiranku terus mengembara ke Dilan. Sungguh, aku tidak pernah berfikir akan mencintai orang lain selain Dilan. Tidak pernah dalam pikiran terliarku bahwa aku ingin

berpacaran dengan Yugo. Aku tahu, ada begitu banyak orang keren di dunia tapi aku hanya ingin Dilan.”

The dialogue excerpt provided above reveals Milea's determination to maintain her relationship with Dilan, despite their arguments or disagreements. Milea's heart and soul belong only to Dilan, despite knowing many other men in her life.

Romantic

Milea also shares Dilan's romantic nature in their relationship. Whether at home, school, or on their travels, Milea expresses her love for Dilan in exciting ways:

Quote 12 (Page 24).

“Kata-katanya selalu akan bisa membuat perasaanku melambung. Kau bisa saja menganggap itu gombal, tetapi bagiku, hal macam itu perlu juga diungkapkan. Ya, cinta mungkin aneh, tapi dengan orang-orang seperti dia di dunia, menurut aku lebih asyik, kerasa lebih seru dan menyenangkan! Setiap aku bangun tidur, selalu ingin kupastikan bahwa ia masih ada di Bumi.”

Milea's romantic nature is further demonstrated when the couple takes a walk together and enjoy the evening air, as depicted in the novel:

Quote 13 (Page 29)

“Kupeluk Dilan bagai tak boleh ada yang ngambil selain diriku. Kupeluk Dilan sambil mengenang lagi saat pertama aku mulai mengenalnya. Aku tersenyum (kadang-kadang diiringi rasa bangga) bahwa Panglima Tempur itu, anak bandel itu, adalah yang kini jadi milikku, adalah yang bisa kuacak-acak rambutnya kalau aku sedang kesal kepadanya. Dan itu, rasanya, tak akan ada selain aku yang berani melakukannya.”

From the dialogues and novel excerpts above, it is evident that Milea possesses a romantic nature, and she cannot deny Dilan's unique qualities that set him apart from the other men she has known before.

Firm

Unlike most women, Milea is known for her strong will towards her boyfriend. She doesn't hesitate to criticize and forbid Dilan from doing things that could be deemed inappropriate or pose a threat to her safety. Milea is also strict with her school friends, as seen in the dialogue excerpt:

Quote 14 (Page 59).

“Yah, aku adalah Milea. Milea Adnan Hussain, pacar Dilan dan berhak melarang Dilan melakukan hal-hal yang akan beresiko buruk pada dirinya. Berhak melarang apa-apa yang Dilan lakukan yang akan menghancurkan masa depannya.”

Sikap tegas Milea juga ditunjukkan saat memutuskan untuk putus dengan orang yang dicintainya, Dilan. Meski baginya itu hal yang cukup berat namun ia tetap melakukannya. Seperti terlihat dalam kutipan cerita berikut ini:

Quote 15 (Page 299).

"Sungguh, aku tidak pernah berfikir bahwa aku benar-benar ingin putus dengan Dilan, tapi aku merasa itu harus aku lakukan (termasuk menamparnya) untuk memberi dia pelajaran bahwa aku tidak main-main."

The dialogue excerpt and story above reveal that Milea's firm nature is demonstrated when she ended her relationship with Dilan, despite it being a difficult decision. This aspect of her character, along with her loving and romantic nature, is evident throughout the novel. Dilan and Milea, the two main characters in the book, share similarities in their loving and romantic personalities, but differ in other ways. Dilan is also portrayed as intelligent and brave, while Milea is loyal and firm.

3.2. The Societal Influence and Dissemination of The Novel "Dilan: Dia adalah Dilanku 1991"

The way people communicate can be influenced by the discussions that are common in society. This is also true for the novel "Dilan: Dia adalah Dilanku 1991", especially after it was made into a movie. Anisa (2021) discovered that the showing of the movie Dilan 1990 had a positive effect on the communication attitudes of students. This is reflected in the social interactions of students who attempt to emulate the characters in the movie. They appear to be more amiable and courteous, and as a result, are more easily accepted in social circles. The admirable qualities of Dilan also inspire students to develop their own potential and to believe that everyone has equal opportunities to succeed academically. However, there are negative consequences as well, as some students imitate Dilan's aggressive behavior towards other groups. Moreover, the social example of Dilan and Milea, which may be somewhat suggestive for students of their age, is also utilized as a model for social interactions today, which is of concern to researchers.

Furthermore, the popularity of the novel and its film adaptation has given rise to a meme discourse, based on a dialogue from the novel, that has become a template for humorous memes such as "Don't miss. It's heavy. let me." This meme has been reproduced in various forms and has become assimilated into various adolescent and social issues.



Picture 1. Meme originating from the novel Dilan He Is My Dilan 1991

The above image is a meme based on a dialogue from the novel Dilan 1991. The image features a man smoking a cigarette, which is often associated with someone under pressure or trying to

relieve pressure. Semantically, the meme uses hyperbole to depict the exaggerated pressure of unemployed individuals on social expectations. Meanwhile, syntactically, the use of the non-standard word "unemployed" creates a familiar impression. This issue is common in the current era, especially for young graduates who are struggling to find jobs. Through the use of memes, the novel has gained attention in the online community and has attracted a significant number of viewers. Additionally, the appearance of the main characters in the novel has influenced the fashion trends among young people who attempt to emulate their styles. This has provided a marketing opportunity for the clothing industry to promote products that reflect the new idol of young people, Dilan (Tantri, 2019). Thus, the characters of a popular literary work can significantly impact language and social behavior in society. Therefore, it is crucial for writers to embed positive messages and moral values into their works in an honest and aesthetically pleasing manner.

4. Conclusion

The preceding chapter's analysis leads to the conclusion that the main characters Dilan and Milea in Pidi Baiq's novel *Dilan, She Is Dilanku Year 1991* have distinct personalities. Dilan is a romantic and brave leader of a motorcycle gang in Bandung who also excels academically and enjoys humor with his girlfriend Milea. Milea, on the other hand, has a loving, loyal, and firm character, as shown in her actions and decisions throughout the novel. These character traits bring the story to life and engage readers. Despite the findings, there are still limitations and gaps that require further exploration in this research. Firstly, the study did not provide a comprehensive explanation of how the characters' traits impact adolescent language patterns. Secondly, the researcher did not compare the reader's interpretations of the characters with their own interpretation or the author's intended portrayal. Lastly, there is a need to expand the scope of the study to examine the role of character development in shaping personality traits. As such, researchers are encouraged to delve into these aspects to enhance the understanding of this field.

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