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The Main Character's Personality in the Novel *Last Journey* by Kezia Evi Wiadji: A Literary Psychology Study

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Abstract

The novel is one of the most intriguing forms of literary works to study, as it contains various structural elements and representations of character personalities. This study aims to (1) describe the structural elements in the novel *Last Journey* by Kezia Evi Wiadji, and (2) analyze the main character's personality based on Heymans' personality theory. This research employs a descriptive method with a qualitative approach. The data consist of textual excerpts from the novel related to structural elements and the main character's personality. The primary data source is the novel *Last Journey* by Kezia Evi Wiadji. Data were collected using observation and note-taking techniques. The data were analyzed using objective and pragmatic approaches. The findings reveal that the novel contains four main structural elements: theme, character and characterization, plot, and setting. The main character, Erika Natalia, displays six personality traits: cold-hearted, persistent, obedient, restless, cheerful, and diligent in learning. Among these, the most dominant trait is restlessness, which reflects the character's inner turmoil in facing life's conflicts. These findings contribute to a deeper understanding of character construction in contemporary Indonesian literature and open further avenues for exploration in literary psychology studies.

Keywords: Last Journey novel, literary psychology, character personality, Kezia Evi Wiadji

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Abstrak

*Novel merupakan salah satu bentuk karya sastra yang menarik untuk dikaji karena mengandung berbagai unsur pembangun dan representasi kepribadian tokohnya. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk (1) mendeskripsikan unsur-unsur pembangun dalam novel *Last Journey* karya Kezia Evi Wiadji, dan (2) mendeskripsikan kepribadian tokoh utama berdasarkan teori kepribadian Heymans. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif dengan pendekatan kualitatif. Data penelitian berupa kutipan-kutipan teks dalam novel yang berkaitan dengan unsur pembangun dan kepribadian tokoh utama. Sumber data utama dalam penelitian ini adalah novel *Last Journey* karya Kezia Evi Wiadji. Teknik pengumpulan data dilakukan dengan metode simak dan catat. Analisis data dilakukan dengan pendekatan objektif dan pragmatis. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa novel ini memiliki empat unsur pembangun utama, yaitu tema, tokoh dan penokohan, alur, serta latar. Sementara itu, tokoh utama bernama Erika Natalia memiliki enam ciri kepribadian, yaitu berhati dingin, tidak mudah putus asa, penurut, tidak tenang, periang, dan tekun belajar. Dari keenam ciri tersebut, kepribadian yang paling dominan adalah sifat tidak tenang, yang mencerminkan dinamika batin tokoh dalam menghadapi konflik hidup. Temuan ini memberikan kontribusi terhadap pemahaman karakter dalam sastra Indonesia modern serta membuka ruang kajian lebih lanjut dalam bidang psikologi sastra.*

Kata kunci: *Novel Last Journey, psikologi sastra, kepribadian tokoh, Kezia Evi Wiadji*

Introduction

Literary works are expressions of the author's emotions conveyed through writing (Al-Ma'ruf et al., 2023, 2024; Wahyuningsih et al., 2023). This aligns with Faidah (2018) who states that literature is a manifestation of one's feelings expressed in written form or storytelling, presented in a way that captivates readers. Literary works emerge either from the author's personal experiences or from their imagination. A good literary work portrays human life and the various challenges faced by society (Pamungkas et al., 2022). Literature is closely related to the values derived from life experiences, such as religious values, psychological values, social values, cultural values, and moral values (Sukirman, 2021). Literary works are seen as a reflection of the complexity of the human soul, where the main character becomes a medium for exploring emotions, motivations, and personal development (Ahmadi, 2015; Azizah et al., 2019). Through literature, individuals can learn about the complexity of values, psychological dimensions, attitudes, and human behavior within their own society or in other societies (Nugraha, 2023). One form of literary work is the novel (Mutmainna et al., 2019). The novel is considered the dominant, normative genre for prose fiction, while the short story is often seen as a "marked" or dependent genre, defined in relation to the novel's length and completeness (Pratt, 1981; Sufanti et al., 2021).

Novels are one type of literary work that can be analyzed using literary psychology theory. Every author inevitably introduces characters in their work. The events or incidents in a literary work are brought to life by characters who play important roles in the story (Wandira et al., 2019). These characters are the author's imagination or fantasy, poured into beautiful literary works, reflecting the birth of works with characters with healthy or disturbed souls by incorporating psychological theories that he adheres to. Studying psychology means an effort to know humans; knowing means understanding, explaining, and describing human behavior and its aspects. The appeal of literary psychology is directed at problems that exist in humans and paints a portrait of the soul. Literature often serves as a mirror of psychological phenomena, displaying human emotions, cognition, and behavior in depth. Psychology helps understand character, inner conflict, and psychological dynamics in literary works (Dar, 2022; Kasimova & Urakova, 2024). Psychological studies focus more on the state of the human psyche and can be studied using personality psychology (Afriyani & Hermoyo, 2021). Literary personality psychology is an

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interesting topic of study because literature is not merely a boring textual analysis, but rather a subject that involves characterization/fictional characters, authors, and readers (Minderop, 2011).

The study of literary psychology is an interdisciplinary approach that combines literary studies and psychology to understand character, inner conflict, and personality dynamics in literary works. Through this approach, readers can explore the psychological processes that occur in the main characters, identify their motivations, internal conflicts, and the personality changes they experience throughout the story (Bagtayan & Lantowa, 2022)

One of the interesting novels to study is the novel *Last Journey* by Kezia Evi Wiadji. This novel was one of the winners of the adult fiction category in the Publisher Searching for Author #3 competition held by Grasindo in 2015. The theme of this competition was a manuscript with a South Korean flavor. This novel tells the story of a teenage girl who was diagnosed with chronic leukemia named Erika. Erika Natalia is a final year student majoring in International Relations at the University of Indonesia, she is a chronic leukemia sufferer. At first she felt angry, wondering why she had to experience all this, she is an only child, the only hope of her parents. The fate of life cannot be changed, Erika tries to be strong and think positively, she then travels to South Korea to relieve stress, find all the answers, a trip that may be the last in her life.

In addition, previous research confirms that literary works often reflect the complexity of the human soul, where the main character functions as a medium for exploring emotions, motivations, and personal growth (Mariana, 2023). This led researchers to analyze Kezia Evi Wiadji's novel, *Last Journey*, using a literary psychology approach. They wanted to understand Erika's personality as she faced chronic leukemia and ultimately decided to vacation in Korea to enjoy the rest of her life.

Method

This research is a descriptive study with a qualitative approach. Bogdan and Taylor (in Moelong, 2017) stated that qualitative research methods are research procedures that produce descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from people and observed behavior. The research data is in the form of texts related to the building elements and personality of the main character according to Heymans in the novel. The data source for this research is the novel *Last Journey* by Kezia Evi Wiadji (2015). The data collection technique used is the listening and note-taking technique. Mahsun (2019) explains that listening involves spoken and written language. The researcher listened to the novel text that describes the personality of the main character after which the researcher took notes. The data analysis technique in this study uses an objective approach and a pragmatic approach, which is carried out in the following ways: (1) describing the building elements of the novel (2) grouping data related to the personality of the main character, (3) interpreting the data, (4) concluding the results obtained, and (5) writing the research results. The data validity technique uses the theory triangulation technique. Theoretical triangulation techniques are used to validate data by using more than one perspective when discussing the research problem, so that more comprehensive analysis and conclusions can be drawn (Saputri & Laeliyah, 2020). Theoretical triangulation is carried out by checking the data with the theory used, in this case, the personality theory in literary psychology according to Heymans.

Result and Discussion

A. Structural Elements of the Novel *Last Journey* by Kezia Evi Wiadji

Robert Stanton (as cited in Al-Ma'ruf & Nugrahani, 2022) categorizes the structural elements of a novel into three components: theme, facts, and literary devices. The theme refers to the underlying idea of the story, which is closely related to various aspects of life, such as social, political, cultural, religious issues, as well as themes of love, death, and others. The factual elements of the story

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consist of characters, plot, and setting—three fictional components whose existence can be imagined within the narrative. The following section discusses the theme and factual elements in the novel *Last Journey* by Kezia Evi Wiadji.

1. Tema

The central theme explored in the novel *Last Journey* is vacation as a form of emotional healing and self-discovery. The narrative follows Erika's journey to South Korea, undertaken after she is diagnosed by a specialist with chronic leukemia. The vacation serves as a backdrop for Erika's emotional and psychological transformation as she seeks to make the most of her remaining time. Over the course of approximately one week, Erika immerses herself in the beauty and culture of South Korea, visiting numerous scenic locations that offer her both distraction and reflection.

Despite the joy of travel, Erika remains deeply aware of her illness, often experiencing emotional conflict and anxiety about her condition. However, the journey gradually becomes more than a mere escape—it evolves into a personal quest for meaning and acceptance. The experiences she gathers, the places she visits, and the people she encounters all contribute to a significant internal shift. One of the most profound lessons Erika gains from her trip is the strength to rise above despair.

This transformation becomes evident upon her return home. Erika appears more cheerful, emotionally resilient, and prepared to face each day with gratitude and hope, despite the bitter reality of her illness. Through this theme, the novel portrays how travel and meaningful experiences can offer psychological healing and a renewed outlook on life in the face of adversity.

2. Characters and Characterization

Characters play a crucial role in a literary work. This novel features nine distinct characters. The following is an analysis of the characterizations in Kezia Evi Wiadji's novel, *Last Journey*.

Table 1. Characters and Personality

Character Name	Role	Character
Erika Natalia	Main Character	Kind, obedient and intelligent
Theo	Erika's tour group mate who eventually becomes her boyfriend	Kind, friendly, helpful, and not easily discouraged.
Hary	Tour leader	Kind and patient
Papa	Erika's father	Kind, loving and tough
Mama	Erika's mother	Kind and loving
Melisa	Tour leader in South Korea	Kind and smart
Linda	Erika's tour group and Herman's wife	Kind, easy to get along with, and mischievous
Herman	Erika's tour group and Linda's husband	Kind, easy to get along with, and mischievous

3. Alur

The plot of *Last Journey* by Kezia Evi Wiadji follows a progressive (chronological) structure, in which events unfold sequentially from beginning to end in a clear and coherent manner. The story begins with the protagonist, Erika, being diagnosed by a specialist with chronic leukemia. Confronted with the emotional weight of this life-altering news, Erika decides to join a tour group traveling to South Korea as a way to find solace and meaning in her remaining time.

During the tour, Erika meets Theo, a fellow traveler in the same group. Initially, Erika finds Theo's presence bothersome, yet over time, a bond forms between them, leading to mutual

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affection. Their relationship gradually deepens, and they eventually begin dating. However, Erika hides the truth about her illness, fearing that her vulnerability might drive Theo away.

This internal conflict becomes a crucial turning point in the narrative. When Erika finally reveals her condition, Theo responds with compassion and unwavering support. He assures Erika that he will remain by her side and help her through the struggle. This moment of acceptance and emotional reassurance becomes transformative for Erika, helping her emerge from her despair and face life with renewed strength and hope.

Through this forward-moving narrative, the novel explores themes of acceptance, love, vulnerability, and emotional healing, illustrating how sincere relationships can provide courage in the face of terminal illness.

4. Background

There is a setting of place, time and atmosphere in the novel *Last Journey* by Kezia Evi Wiadji.

a) Setting

The setting indicates the location where an event occurs in a literary work. The settings in Kezia Evi Wiadji's novel, *Last Journey*, mostly take place in South Korea. These settings include Soekarno-Hatta Airport, Incheon Airport, Gimpo Airport, Jeju Island, Nami Island, Mt. Sorak, Everland, Seoul, a ski resort, Dongdaemun, Gyongbok Palace, the National Folk Museum, the Presidential Blue House, and the National Ginseng Outlet & Amethyst Showroom.

b) Time Setting

1) Evening

Our last night in South Korea ended with a shopping spree in Myeongdong, a city full of clothing, shoe, accessory, cosmetic, cafe, and restaurant stores (LJ, 107).

2) Morning

This morning, when I woke up from my restless sleep, I realized something surprising (LJ, 79)

3) Afternoon

After lunch, our tour group visited Lotte World Theme Park with our unlimited full-day passport (LJ, 94)

4) Evening

In the late afternoon, our tour group headed to Dongdaemun, which consists of 37 shopping malls (LJ, 95)

c) Mood

1) Exciting

Suddenly, my excitement surged, I was on the edge of Nami Island, the romantic island featured in my favorite Korean drama, *Winter Sonata* (LJ, 70)

2) Tense

The knot of tension inside me gradually disappeared (LJ, 82)

B. Main Personality of Erika Natalia in the Novel *Last Journey*

This study aims to reveal the personality of the main character, Erika Natalia, using the personality theory proposed by Heymans (1948). The main character occupies a central role in the novel, as she is consistently presented throughout the storyline (Abraham, 2017). In examining a psychological literary work, it is essential to understand the extent of the author's psychological involvement, as well as the author's ability to portray fictional characters who experience psychological issues (Setyorini, 2017). The following section presents the results of the personality analysis of Erika Natalia, a teenage girl diagnosed with chronic leukemia who decides to travel to South Korea in an effort to find peace of mind. During her trip, Erika meets Theo, a man who is

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part of the same tour group. In the novel, the main character exhibits various personality traits that influence her behavior and actions in facing the challenges of life.

Table 2. Erika Natalia's Personality

No	Personality	Mental Quality	Group
1.	Cool-hearted	Emotionality	The unemotional group
2.	Not easily discouraged	Accompanying Process	Groups whose accompaniment processes are strong
3.	Obedient	Accompanying Process	Groups whose accompaniment processes are strong
4.	Not restless	Accompanying Process	Groups whose accompaniment processes are weak
5.	Cheerful	Activity	Active group
6.	Diligent in learning	Activity	Active group

1. Cool-hearted

One of Erika's traits is her cold-heartedness. A cold-hearted person tends to sit like a rock when we pour out our hearts or talk to them. These cold-hearted people are usually unfriendly. Since childhood, Erika has been a good and obedient child, according to her family. When Erika was about to go on a tour to South Korea, Erika was surprised by the presence of a man she didn't know. The man's name was Theo. The following is an excerpt from the novel that describes Erika's cold-hearted personality towards Theo.

The excerpt from the novel illustrates Erika's initial personality as cold and emotionally distant, particularly toward unfamiliar individuals. This is evident in her response to Theo, whom she perceives as intruding on her personal space despite his seemingly friendly demeanor. Erika's refusal to engage with Theo and her increasing irritation in response to his friendliness reflect a personality type that aligns with Heymans' classification of apatheis, characterized by emotional rigidity and detachment.

Her indifference is highlighted in the quotation, "Even though that smile looked charming, I wasn't affected..." (LJ, 10), indicating that she is not easily moved by spontaneous social interactions. Even as Theo continues to seek her attention and initiates conversation, Erika persistently rejects him, reinforcing her need for privacy and emotional boundaries.

However, a shift in her character becomes apparent when Erika realizes that she and Theo are part of the same tour group. Theo's remark, "Don't be so cynical, we're in the same tour group, you know!" (LJ, 11), is an attempt to break the tension. Erika's initially cold attitude begins to diminish when she rationally considers that they will be spending the next week together. This change illustrates the presence of rational consideration in Erika's personality, suggesting that her cold demeanor is not absolute but rather situational and responsive to her social environment.

2. Don't give up easily

One of the most prominent traits of Erika's personality in *Last Journey* is her resilience and refusal to give up in the face of adversity. Although she has yet to fully accept her condition with peace of mind, Erika remains determined and does not succumb to despair after being diagnosed with chronic leukemia.

This is evident in the following excerpt:

"At that moment, my mother was crying, and my father tried to stay strong. Meanwhile, I didn't shed a single tear. I remained silent." (LJ, 10)

Erika's silence reflects her inner strength. Rather than reacting emotionally, she processes the painful truth in a calm and composed manner. Unlike individuals who typically fall into despair

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or depression under such circumstances, Erika maintains emotional control, revealing her strong will.

Her decision to join a tour to South Korea also serves as a symbolic act of resilience. Rather than retreating from life, she chooses to face it by making the most of her remaining time, showing that she still values and embraces life despite her diagnosis.

Further, Erika's perseverance is illustrated in the following passage:

"Who cares! A voice within me shouted. I deserve to be loved no matter what! It is unfair if two people who love each other cannot be together!" (LJ, 82)

Here, Erika challenges societal expectations and internal doubts. She asserts her worth and refuses to let her illness define her capacity to love or be loved. This perspective exemplifies her resistance against despair and her commitment to living a full emotional life.

Finally, her resilience is fully articulated in this quotation:

"My name is Erika Natalia. I suffer from chronic leukemia, but I am not devastated because I still believe in a bright and promising future." (LJ, 119)

This declaration confirms Erika's hopeful outlook. She places her trust in God, continues to pray for healing, and holds on to the words of Theo, who believes that where there is great love, there is always a miracle. Erika's character thus represents emotional strength, unwavering hope, and a refusal to surrender to hopelessness.

3. Obedient

One of the key traits of Erika Natalia's character in *Last Journey* is her obedience. Being obedient refers to an individual's willingness to comply with and respect parents or other authority figures. This trait is considered essential, especially in Eastern cultural values, where respect for elders is central to one's moral upbringing.

This is clearly expressed in the following excerpt:

"As far as I can remember, even though I was the only child and dearly loved by my parents and grandparents, I was considered a good and obedient child." (LJ, 9)

The excerpt, narrated from Erika's father's point of view, emphasizes that Erika had been obedient and well-behaved since childhood. Her obedience is not depicted as submission under pressure, but rather as a sincere reflection of her appreciation and respect for her family. This quality becomes a foundation for the deep affection that her family holds for her.

Erika's obedient nature also suggests that she was raised in a loving and nurturing family environment, which shaped her personality to be respectful and compliant. Even in the face of adversity, Erika does not display rebellious or defiant behavior, further reinforcing her identity as an obedient and considerate daughter.

4. Inner Restlessness

Restlessness is a prominent personality trait of Erika Natalia in the novel *Last Journey*. This emotional instability is a psychological consequence of the painful reality she faces—being diagnosed with chronic leukemia. Erika's life is marked by recurring feelings of unease, anxiety, and internal questioning, both in relation to herself and to others.

This is reflected in the following excerpt:

"What was my sin? What did I do wrong? These questions have been echoing in my mind ever since I was diagnosed with chronic leukemia about a month ago." (LJ, 9)

This quotation reveals Erika's spiritual unrest. Her repeated questions directed at God and herself indicate a refusal—or inability—to fully accept her diagnosis. Although she remains outwardly strong, these thoughts haunt her subconscious, even appearing in her dreams. This demonstrates the deep psychological distress she endures.

Another form of unrest is shown in her social anxiety:

"How annoying! Suddenly I became anxious. What if I had the misfortune of having to sit

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next to him for this entire long trip?” (LJ, 15)

In this instance, Erika’s restlessness is provoked by Theo’s presence. Rather than stemming from her illness, this anxiety arises from discomfort in social interactions. Erika is troubled by Theo’s persistent attempts to get close to her, indicating an internal conflict between her desire for solitude and the unavoidable social dynamics of the group.

Further along in the story, Erika's unrest shifts from irritation to emotional conflict:

“Three days into knowing Theo, I realized this man truly enjoys stirring up my emotions like this.” (LJ, 53)

Here, Erika feels emotionally unsettled due to her growing affection for Theo. Despite her feelings, she resists them—believing that someone like her, terminally ill, should not fall in love, especially if Theo already has someone else. This emotional conflict adds another layer to her internal instability.

The deepest manifestation of Erika’s restlessness is captured in the following:

“Fear started creeping into my mind. What if Theo finds out about my illness? His love might no longer be as simple as he claimed.” (LJ, 97)

This quote reveals that Erika chooses to conceal her illness out of fear that Theo would no longer love her if he knew the truth. Her internal conflict between honesty and fear of abandonment reflects an ongoing emotional turmoil. Despite the external appearance of strength, Erika continues to be dominated by feelings of doubt, insecurity, and guilt—highlighting the complexity of her restless character.

5. Cheerful Personality

Erika Natalia’s cheerful personality is also evident in the novel *Last Journey*. Although her chronic leukemia diagnosis has dimmed her joyful nature, it has not completely erased her innate ability to find happiness in small moments. A cheerful person is typically someone who can feel joy even from simple things, and Erika embodies this trait.

This is illustrated in the following excerpt:

“I cheered inwardly. Snow had begun to fall in Seoul. All the exhaustion and fatigue from the journey suddenly vanished, just from seeing the white landscape through the window.” (LJ, 25)

This quotation demonstrates Erika’s genuine delight at witnessing snowfall upon arrival in Seoul. Her spontaneous joy, even when viewed from a plane window, reflects her cheerful nature. Despite her illness, Erika is still able to feel excited and express enthusiasm. This moment of happiness briefly lifts the burden of her condition, allowing her to reconnect with the carefree part of herself.

Moreover, Erika’s decision to take pictures like a typical teenager further indicates the persistence of her youthful spirit. Such behavior signifies that her optimism and zest for life remain present, balancing her emotional struggles with moments of genuine joy. Erika’s cheerful personality not only reflects her resilience but also illustrates her desire to continue living life fully, despite the limitations imposed by her illness.

6. Diligent in Learning

One of Erika Natalia’s notable positive traits in *Last Journey* is her diligence in learning. Diligence refers to consistent and dedicated effort in acquiring knowledge, even in the face of challenges. Erika’s commitment to her education began in childhood and continued into her adulthood.

This trait is clearly reflected in the following excerpt:

“My academic performance was impressive, all the way through my final year at the

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University of Indonesia.” (LJ, 9)

The quote demonstrates Erika’s academic excellence and persistence in her studies. Being accepted into and graduating from the University of Indonesia, one of the country's most prestigious institutions, is a significant achievement—one that speaks to her discipline and diligence. Such success is rarely attained without serious effort and a strong work ethic.

Furthermore, Erika’s internship at the Dutch Embassy in Jakarta after graduating underscores that her perseverance extended beyond formal education into professional development. Despite the emotional and physical burden of her leukemia diagnosis, Erika remains committed to personal growth and continues to strive for excellence. This unwavering dedication highlights her identity as a diligent and resilient learner, embodying a lifelong commitment to education and self-improvement.

Conclusion

Based on the analysis of Kezia Evi Wiadji's novel "Last Journey," it was found that there are four main building blocks in the novel: theme, characters and characterization, plot, and setting. These four elements are interrelated and form a complete narrative structure and support the overall development of the story. In addition, the personality analysis of the main character, Erika Natalia, based on Heymans' personality theory shows that this character has six personality traits: cold-hearted, persistent, obedient, restless, cheerful, and diligent in learning. Of these six personality traits, restlessness is the most dominant. The dominance of this trait is consistently depicted in various situations and conflicts faced by the main character throughout the story. This reflects that Erika Natalia is a figure who experiences inner turmoil and emotional tension in facing the complex realities of life. These findings indicate that the depiction of the main character's personality not only strengthens the character's vitality but also contributes to a deeper understanding of the psychological dynamics in modern Indonesian literature.

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