

WOMEN STRUGGLE REVEALED IN KRISTIN HANNAH'S *THE GREAT ALONE*: POSITIONING GENDER IN LEGAL, ECONOMY, AND SOCIAL FIELDS

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ABSTRACT

The title of this research is “Women Struggle Revealed In Kristin Hannah’s *The Great Alone*: Positioning In Legal, Economy, and Social Fields”. *The Great Alone* novel by Kristin Hannah (2018) discusses the life of a female character, Lenora Allbright who can struggle with a different life than before. She is so patient to face the trials that are happening, the problem raised in this research is how is the issue of women struggle and how does the protagonist survive the problems of gender in legal, economy, and social fields in *The Great Alone* by Kristin Hannah (2018). The theory used in this research is existential feminism from Simone de Beauvoir (1949). The data analysis approach used by the researcher is descriptive qualitative. The result shows that there are kinds of struggle of women positioning gender in legal, economy, and social. Besides that, the protagonist survive the problems of gender in legal, economy, and social fields.

Keyword: *descriptive qualitative, existential feminism, gender, and women struggle.*

ABSTRAK

Judul penelitian ini adalah “Women Struggle Revealed In Kristin Hannah’s *The Great Alone*: Positioning In Legal, Economy, and Social Fields”. *The Great Alone* karya Kristin Hannah (2018) membahas tentang kehidupan tokoh perempuan, Lenora Allbright yang berjuang dengan kehidupan yang berbeda dari sebelumnya, ia begitu sabar menghaapi cobaan yang sedang terjadi. Masalah yang diangkat dalam penelitian ini adalah bagaimana isu perjuangan perempuan dan bagaimana protagnis bertahan menghadapi permasalahan gender dalam bidang hukum, ekonomi, dan sosial dalam *The Great Alone* karya Kristin Hannah (2018). Teori yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah feminisme eksistensial dari Simone de Beauvoir (1949). Hasil dari penelitian dalam novel *The Great Alone* by Kristin Hannah (2018), terdapat jenis perjuangan perempuan memposisikan gender dalam hukum, ekonomi, dan sosial. Selain itu, protagonist dapat bertahan dalam permasalahan gender di bidang hukum, ekonomi, dan sosial.

Kata kunci: *kualitatif deskriptif, feminisme eksistensial, gender, dan perjuangan wanita.*

INTRODUCTION

Survival is a condition in which a person/group or people from normal life (still as planned) either suddenly or consciously enters into an abnormal situation (outside the planned line) (Endro, 2012). Even though there are many obstacles in the problem that always come and must be overcome. People who do survival are called survivors. Therefore, those problems are going to become definitely have a solution to provide and achieve a longer and more appropriate (worthy) must strive to

survive. Besides, life requires a struggle for survival, and it can be concluded that a struggle is an effort made or real expression to find a good life. The struggle in this study effort is meant as a woman in order to defend the right and dignity of women who are fighting for life and choose their way. Meaning struggle is hard work and efforts in achieving a good thing as the key to success.

Women have the free choice to make themselves into any role because it's freedom for everyone. On the other hand, existential

feminism by Simone De Beauvoir is more inclined to fight directly in the domestic sphere, if there is unfair treatment. Therefore, women are free to exist in carrying out life from any aspect such as in fields of legality, economic, and social. For example in economic sector, the role and contribution of women in Indonesia national economy is one of the important factors in facing various challenges in efforts to recover, reform, and transform the economy.

As reported from Finance (2021), the role of Indonesian, women in the economy is increasingly significant. In the Ministry of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME), 53.76% are owned by women with 97% of the employees being women, and 61% of the contribution in the economy is in the investment sector. This illustrates that the existence of women in the economy has an important role and that women's literacy and capacity have started to think intelligently.

Every human being has a different choice for life. As well as a woman that should be herself. Seeing that the theory of feminism is a women's movement to reject anything that is marginalized and demeaned. Both in the field of legality, economy, and social life. *The Great Alone* novel tells about the protagonist character, Lenora Allbright who is thirteen years old with her father who is a former war soldier who was assigned to Vietnam and her mother who loves this little family. Alaska, 1974. Ernt Allbright, a former POW, came home from Vietnam a changed and volatile man. Experiencing post-traumatic stress disorder, where change occurs on him. Leni thought that her current father is different from the father she knew before. Irritable, unstable, and did not socialize with neighbors. Until finally, one day Leni's father got a letter from his dead friend, that Leni's father got the former home of his friend in Alaska. There, in a beautiful and remote corner of the state, the Allbrights found a fierce, generous community of homesteaders who helped the family learn to live off the land.

Based on the aspects above the writer observed and analyze *The Great Alone* by Kristin Hannah (2018). Based on that, the writer is interested in reviewing the struggles

of the protagonist character in the novel *The Great Alone* because of the opinion that woman in the novel is weak, lower than man. Therefore, this study discuss about women struggle in positioning and survive the problems on gender in legal, economy, and social fields. The writer has chosen aspects of the protagonist character struggle of a woman based on a variety of considerations that novels *The Great Alone* by Kristin Hannah (2018) have not been studied previously on this aspect.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The approach used in this study is qualitative. This is based on the information with developing explanations written in the essay forms. In relation to this, Creswell states that:

Qualitative research is an inquiry prose of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. The research builds complex, holistic pictures, analyzes words, reports, the tailed views of informants, and conducted the study in natural setting (Creswell, 2012, p. 15).

It is shown from the passage that qualitative research is the method of textual analysis because the data which were taken are texts or words. This method is considered the appropriate one since qualitative data can support and is easier to understand for the chronological flow of events. Moreover, it is based on the phenomena and the social problem.

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

The Protagonist's Efforts to Survive the Gender problems in Legal, Economy, and Social fields

According to the Drafting Team of the Ministry of National Education (2008:1787) in (Devi, 2014), "effort is an attempt, reason or endeavor to achieve a goal, solve problems, find solutions, and so on". Based on the description, it can be concluded that effort is an attempt to carried out with a specific

purpose so that all existing problems can be resolved properly and can achieve the expected goals. Besides that, as in the example of the case when Leni efforts to survive in Alaska with her parents. In addition, the father has post-traumatic stress disorder where he is anti-social towards the environment. The existence of a woman by the protagonist is illustrated through her efforts that always try to survive and accept the fact that she must be able to become a strong woman and be able to overcome all obstacles in this new environment. In *The Great Alone* novel, the protagonist's efforts can be seen from the events below:

The first Leni's efforts to survive gender issues in legal, economy, and social fields is when she goes to school with her father. She didn't want a problem to happen on her first day of school moreover she wanted to prove that he could adapt well in Alaska. This can be seen in the quote below.

One thing that was true of every school she'd been at was this: once you hit junior high, parents were to be absent. The chances of them embarrassing you were sky-high. "I'm thirteen and this is Alaska, where we're supposed to be though." Leni said "Come on, Dad. Pleecease." (Hannah, 2018, p. 65)

From the quotation above exposes how Leni has grown into a teenager and has a mature mind. The quotation above has described that Leni knows that she is no longer a child, especially since she has entered junior high school, where she does not need to be accompanied by her father to get to school. Moreover, it would be very embarrassing if she really would be escorted by her father to school. This shows that the protagonist character reveals herself than she can easily adapt to the new environment she understands, a new school in Alaska and survived a difficult situation in her life. Seen from her words "*I'm thirteen and this is Alaska, where we're supposed to be though.*" Leni indirectly thinks that living in Alaska requires a person to be tough and become independent woman.

The creation of an event or incident will have an influence that can change the

personality of a person who experiences the event. Therefore, it takes courage to face something that comes and maybe this effort can create hope to survive in a life that not easy. In 1978, the protagonist character is seventeen years old, she and her family have been in Alaska for four years. The influence experienced by the main character causes changes in her. Can be seen from the quotation below:

Seventeen-years-old Leni drove the snow machine with confidence in the falling snow. She was all alone in the vastness of winter. Following the glow of her headlights in the predawn dark, she turned onto the old mine road. (Hannah, 2018, p. 189)

In the quotation above, it can be concluded that the main character is familiar with the conditions in Alaska. She didn't have the fear to face something she was afraid of at first. This is the protagonist's effort to become an independent person. She is able to conquer situations by making herself strong in facing a place full of obstacles. Therefore, Leni's struggle to survive in Alaska is not in vain. She persisted in dealing with her father who has PTSD and struggles to always stay by her mother's side and protect her from his father's cruelty.

In this part, the protagonist's efforts to survive the gender problems in legal, economy, and social is reflected, it because Leni got a good news that she was accepted in to University of Alaska at Anchorage. On the other hand, it will be impossible to take the opportunity because her father would not give his permission. In other cases, Leni got advice from her mother, it is started in this following quotation.

"You think it's possible?" Leni let the amorphous dream turn solid enough that she could hold it in her hands, look at it from different angles.

"When do classes start?"

"Right, after Labor Day."

Mama nodded. "Okay. You'r going to be careful smart. Don't risk everything for

kiss. That kind of thing I would have one.” (Hannah, 2018, p. 297)

From the quotation above, it could be concluded that if Leni must continue to make her dreams come true, she is determined to continue choosing to go to college to be better prepared for the future. The existence of woman here is clear because as a woman she must be able to make a change for herself. Especially to choose something that aims to be better. This comes from the mother who fully agrees and even gives her opinion that Leni can easily be separated from her father and grasp. Mother's planning above means that Leni must have a bright future and did hard for her dreams. There is a mother message that says *“Don't risk everything for a kiss.”* Which means that she must focus on her education, in the bright future her mother did not want her daughter have an experience the same thing as her mother.

Falling love is something easy, anyone can do that because it's very simple. However, how if there is love that opposes or does not approve or even hates and it is because of the personal problem of the father who doesn't like the family she loves, Matthew. It is stated in this following below.

“I'm going to see him,” Leni said

Dad was sharpening his ulu. He stopped. “The hell you are.”

Leni didn't glance at him or flinch. “Mama. Tell him if he wants to stop me, he have to shoot me.” Seconds passed. Leni felt her father's anger and his uncertainty. She could feel the war waging with him. (Hannah, 2018, p. 359)

In the quotation above, Leni wanted to meet with Matthew is being treated. She knows that her dad won't allow her to meet Matthew but Leni didn't care about it. The quotation also depicts that she is quite stubborn towards her father, she becomes a rebellious daughter for the reason is knows that her father always treats her mother arbitrarily and didn't provide enough space for Leni to do not what

she wanted it. She felt that she had the right to love her lover. She cares about and she did right what she thought it was not wrong. Leni didn't afraid to die if her father still forbids her to meet Matthew. It views from what she said. *“Mama. Tell him if he wants to stop me he have to shoot me.”* This is an attempt to Leni that she doesn't play with his feelings especially if she doesn't make a mistake. From her words, describe her as well as a woman who dares to make a decision even though there is no obstacle. On the other hand, she knew that his father would not have the heart to do this to his daughter.

However, Leni had been a lot of things and it made her realize about love, compassion, loss and sincerity. This is implied in the quotation below.

She'd been talking about Matthew and sadness, but it was equally true for mothers and their children. This love she felt for her mother and her son and Matthew and people around her was a durable thing, as vast as this landscape, as immutable as the sea. Stronger than time itself. (Hannah, 2018, p. 496)

From the quotation above illustrated how Leni really loves the people around her, and vice versa. This all her efforts to keep her family intact was not in vain. Besides, Leni has gone through very gloomy times when she is with her father, but once she does not hate her father, she has learned various ways to survive in a tense place. The impact of all the survival she has gone through, has made Leni become an independent woman, understands what is good and bad, able to hold back her emotions and gave her the impetus to become a better human being. The quotation above also illustrates that this story has a happy ending where the main character found her true love and she can unite her son and father who are separated by conditions, space and time.

Expression of feelings for Leni has been spelled, feeling relieved as well as grateful for everything that has happened to her. She was going to survive so far. It could be seen from the quotation below:

For we few, she is sturdy, the strong, the dreamers, Alaska is home, always and forever, the song you hear when the world is still and quiet. You either belong here, wild and untamed yourself, or you don't. I belong. (Hannah, 2018, p. 499)

From the quotation above explained that Leni become a real Alaskan, she has become an independent and tough woman. Her existence as an independent woman is illustrated when she had proven to everyone that she keep what she has. She could continue her education until graduation and maintain her household with Matthew. No matter how much Leni experience this happiness, she never forgets her mother who has always been by her side, supporting her until she got to this point. Not to forget she is also grateful to have a father who taught her to always be a strong woman to survive even though this incident had happened to her family and gave her a very meaningful lesson for her life. This made Leni get a positive influence to continue her life and not waste her life.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

In this chapter, the researcher presents several conclusion and suggestion. The researcher had been analyzing the novel *The Great Alone* by Kristin Hannah (2018), the researcher makes some conclusion and suggestion as follows.

5.1 Conclusion

This study aims to uncover the issue of woman's struggle which is reflected in the selected novel from *The Great Alone* by Kristin Hannah and to analyze how the positioning gender in legal, economic, and social in the struggle of woman depicted in *The Great Alone* and to find out how does the protagonist survive the problems of gender in legal, economy, and social fields. Based on the analysis and discussion of the struggle above greatly affect the life of the main character to survive and become a strong woman because every change requires a struggle.

Based on the form of existence contained in the novel *The Great Alone* by Kristin Hannah. Simone de Beauvoir revealed that women who are aware of their freedom will be

able to freely determine their life path. After all, both men and women have the freedom to live their lives. *The Great Alone* novel has a connection with existential feminism because the woman here fights for very important things in life, to not easily giving up, and is able to accept the facts of life firmly. All of the struggles that the main character was played, was related to the existential feminism discussion by Simone de Beauvoir in legality, economy, and social fields. This is closely related to the struggles that she does during her life until finally gave her a positive influence on her life.

Thus, it can be concluded that the woman struggle in Leni can be passed even though it is a long process in her life. In addition, Leni has also proven that she to be able to fight for what she deserves. She has proven everything and not give up on circumstances.

5.2 Suggestion

This study is to analyse women struggle in positioning gender in legal, economy, and social fields. It only focus on existential feminism theory by Simone de Beauvoir. Therefore, it is suggested that those who are interest in studying about women struggle should use different theory or use the same theory but discuss at detail. It is also shows that how is the issue of women struggle and to described how the protagonist survive the problems of gender in legal, economy, and social fields in *The Great Alone* novel by Kristin Hannah (2018). There are still many mistakes and human shortcomings in explaining the women struggle, which makes this study is far from perfect.

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