

# The Mighty Women in Serial Story Entitled *Lastri* by Tien Kumalasari: A Study of Feminist Literary Criticism

Sumartini Sumartini  
Universitas Negeri Semarang, Indonesia  
[sumartini@mail.unnes.ac.id](mailto:sumartini@mail.unnes.ac.id)

Dyah Prabaningrum  
Universitas Negeri Semarang, Indonesia  
[dyah.praba91@gmail.com](mailto:dyah.praba91@gmail.com)

**Abstract**--Women have always been an interesting topic of all the time as subject for research and discussion. Many things could be studied and discussed related to women's issues. Not to mention, many organizations, institutions, or individuals also make women's issues as their subject or object of the discussion.

The women's issue nowadays is no longer about women who are considered as secondary beings. But it has shifted to other things that show the role and strength of women themselves. This could be seen from the rising number of highly educated women who even occupy strategic positions in various fields. Thus, women are not considered as inferior people who only work in the domestic sectors.

One of the literary works which brings up women's issues is serial story entitled *Lastri* by Tien Kumalasari. The women's issue presented in the novel has been the target of this study with the following formulation of the problem: What kind of potential that female character occupies to ignite her existence?

In line with the problem, the purpose of this study was to describe the existence of female character in serial story entitled *Lastri* by Tien Kumalasari and to elaborate the potentials of the female character so that she could ignite her existence. The researchers conducted feminist literary criticism approach in this study. The method of the study used was descriptive qualitative method.

From the data analysis, the following results were obtained. One of the female characters namely *Lastri* was an orphan from a mountainous area who later had been taken care of by Mrs. Marsudi's family. *Lastri* had grown into a woman of many talents. Although her education only reached high school level, she grew up to be a smart, literate, hard-working, and courageous woman. She was also good at cooking.

**Keywords:** existence, women's potential, feminist literary criticism

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Women have always been an interesting topic of all the time as subject for research and discussion. Many things could be studied and discussed related to women's issues. Not to mention, many organizations, institutions, or individuals also make women's issues as their subject or object of the discussion.

The women's issue nowadays is no longer about women who are considered as secondary beings. But it has shifted to other things that show the role and strength of women themselves. This

could be seen from the rising number of highly educated women who even occupy strategic positions in various fields. Thus, women are not considered as inferior people who only work in the domestic sectors. Many women become leaders of local government and are successful in carrying out their roles such as the governor of East Java, Khofifah Endar Parawangsa. Moreover, several countries in the world led by women have successfully handled Covid-19 problem which is becoming an epidemic in almost all countries in the world. For example, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Arden and several state leaders in Australia are women who have become successful leaders [1].

The success of women in taking part in the public sector could not be separated from the efforts of women to strive for getting equal opportunities and positions in various fields. Women try to develop their potential by learning.

Likewise, women's issues are revealed in some literary works. Currently, there are many literary works which the contents are no longer discredits women, both in literature that is considered serious and in popular literature. One of example of the literary works which brings up the women who has broad insight and a creative mindset, namely the serial story entitled *Lastri* by Tien Kumalasari. This is a novel about one of the characters namely *Lastri*, an uneducated little girl who lived in a mountain slope in Sarangan. She was then taken to the city and raised by Mr. Marsudi's family. Knowing that *Lastri* neither could read nor write, Mr. Marsudi sent her to school until she graduated from high school. She had grown up to be a simple beautiful girl but has extraordinary abilities. Once she returned to their village, together with the village chief, Mr. Mardi and Marni, her childhood friend, she succeeded in developing and changing the way of thinking the people in her village. *Lastri* also succeeded in empowering the people potential in her village, as well as motivating children to go to school. *Lastri* helped farmers to accommodate agricultural products in the form of fruits and vegetables, and after that sold it to the city with Marni. Soon, *Lastri* managed to become a famous fruit and vegetable merchant and became a distributor of fresh fruit and vegetables to various

markets in the city. Based on this description above, this serial story or novel is important to be studied so that it could be fully interpreted by the reader, especially from a feminist point of view. There are many things that could be studied, but the writers would only focus on the formulation of the following problem: What kind of potential that female character occupies to ignite her existence to become a strong and independent woman?

In the development of feminism, there have been many currents, one of which is Liberal Feminism. The basic assumption of Liberal Feminism is that freedom and balance are rooted in rationality and the separation between private and public world [2]. The basis of their struggle is equality and equal rights between men and women and equal opportunities for each individual, especially women. Basically, there is no difference between men and women, both of them are the same, that is, they are both rational beings. Justice will be obtained by women once they get freedom in all aspects of life and are equal to men. Men and women have similar in capacity to think and act rationally. The root of all women's oppression and under-development is caused by the woman herself. Therefore, in order to achieve the same position and degree as men, women must get the same education and opportunities as men.

## II. RESEARCH METHOD

This study used qualitative research that was aimed to explain the phenomenon in detail through data collection [3]. The data obtained were then analyzed and described in detail. The deeper and more detailed the data analysis, the better the quality of this qualitative research.

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Referring to Online KBBI (*Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia*), the meaning of potential is an ability that has the possibility to be developed. In addition, it is also interpreted as strength; ability; and power [4].

The potential of the female character in this serial story or novel entitled *Lastri* are: (1) smart, (2) diligent in studying and working, (3) good at cooking, and (4) courageous or brave. The following would elaborate in detail the potential owned by the female character.

### (1) Smart

The female character namely Lastri was a smart woman. Lastri's potential intelligence had been seen since she entered school. Before Mr. Marsudi's family sent her to school, she was barely able to read or write even though she was eleven years old. A few days before going to school, Mrs. Marsudi introduced letters and alphabets to her so that she would not find any difficulties when studying at school. After some days of entering school, she began to show her

ability to read and write. In just one week, Lastri was able to memorize the alphabets. She was not shy at all and she did not hesitate to ask questions when she was learning to spell words at home, at the school where she formally studied and or at the market when she was told to buy needs.

In the view of liberal feminist, Lastri is a woman who has the potential to grow and develop. She was able to develop her potential to become a smart woman when she got the same opportunity to go to school. Her intelligence was also recognized by Mr. Marsudi's family as in the following saying. "*Anak itu rajin dan pintar, juga cerdas, sayang dulu orang tuanya tidak sempat menyekolahkan... cerdas dia, cepat sekali menghafalnya.*" Translated to be: "That child is diligent and clever, she is smart too, unfortunately, her parents did not have time to send her to school... she is smart, she memorized it very quickly." [5].

### (2) Diligent in Studying and Working

Another potential that the character namely Lastri had was that she was diligent in studying and worked really hard. Since childhood, she was used to help her grandmother selling vegetables from her own farm. After her grandmother passed away, she was taken care of by Mr. Marsudi's family in the city. She diligently helped her adoptive parents' works. Every day, before leaving for school Lastri did various household chores: preparing breakfast, cleaning the house and doing the dishes. Coming home from school, Lastri also helped Mrs. Marsudi cleaning the house, shopping at the market, and doing other household chores.

Lastri's success in completing education to high school level was the result of her diligent in studying and working. Lastri realized that as an adopted child, she must be able to repay the family kindness that had given her home and sent her to high school. Lastri felt she had an obligation to be diligent in studying so that her learning outcomes would not disappoint her adoptive parents as well as to help the housework of her adoptive mother.

### (3) Good at Cooking

The next potential that the female character had was the ability to cook. Not all women are good at cooking. Lastri's cooking skills began to improve when she often helped Mrs. Marsudi cooked food. At first she only helped preparing the necessary ingredients and learned to cook various dishes served for Mr. Marsudi's family. By seeing and practicing

directly every day, it automatically honed Lastri's skills in the field of cooking.

Lastri's cooking ability could be compared equally with her adoptive mother's cooking. Mr. Marsudi's family members could barely tell the difference between Mrs. Marsudi's and Lastri's cooking. Lastri was good at cooking various home cooking menus that were usually served in the family. The taste of her cooking was the same as that of Mrs. Marsudi so that the family was very proud and dear to her.

#### (4) Courageous or Brave

Lastri was a brave girl. When Mr. Marsudi's family went to Surabaya, she stayed at home by herself. Someone came into Mr. Marsudi's house to do evil. Lastri knew that someone had trespassed, so she threw the person away by giving a loud yell, which shocked the suspicious guest. Lastri was not scared at all. She thought that she had to defend herself. Lastri's courageous caused the guest to be scared to commit crime but apologized to her.

According to the results of observations in some various relevant articles, there are several articles that have relevance to this journal. First, an article written by Herouach entitled *Liberal Feminism Impact on Moroccan Educated Women: Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences*. The article from Herouach's research described the reasons for women's limited movement and the role of women in reforming the marriage law to free them to work. As a result, after the law was reformed, the role of women and their movements became wider [6]. As for the relevance of our study, the changes in education experienced by women make the women's roles and movement wider. Women are able to play a role in various fields and develop their potential. Second, the article written by Choudhry et al. entitled *Theorizing feminist research in rural areas of the Punjab, Pakistan*. Choudhry discussed about the history and methods of feminism. For Choudhry, feminism has a pivotal role in developing Indian women. Feminism brings the spirit and ideas about equality and freedom of work, freedom to get education and hold political rights [7]. This study strengthened the writers' study in understanding the story about Lastri. The education, experience, and freedom that exist allow women to be independent. Third, an article written by K. Chandrakumar. Similar with the previous articles, K. Chandrakumar's article discussed about cultural reforms that needed to be carried out in stages. One of them is with education for the freedom of women's rights in work [8]. This strengthened the

writers' study that educated women have a tendency to be able to live independently.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

From the results of the discussion above, it could be concluded that the character of Lastri has a lot of potential so that she could ignite her existence as a woman. Lastri's potential could be potentially developed because she got the opportunity to get a proper education. After completing her education, she devoted herself to Mr. Marsudi's family and contributed her knowledge and thoughts to the people in her village.

#### REFERENCES

- [1] Herouach, S. (2019). Liberal Feminism Impact on Moroccan Educated Women: Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences, FLDM, as a Field Study. *Open Political Science*, 2(1), 128-152.
- [2] Choudhry, A. N., Abdul Mutalib, R., & Ismail, N. S. A. (2019). Theorizing feminist research in rural areas of the Punjab, Pakistan. *Asian Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies*, 7(10), 38-46.
- [3] K. Chandrakumar, "View of Feminism in Modern Politics," *J. Gujarat Res. Soc.*, vol. 21, no. 16, pp. 22-30, 2019.
- [4] Kriyantono, Rachmat. 2006. *Teknik Praktis Riset Komunikasi*. Jakarta: Prenada
- [5] Muslikhati S. 2004. *Feminisme dan Pemberdayaan Perempuan dalam Timbangan Islam*. Jakarta: Gema Insan
- [6] retrieved from <http://tienkumalasari22.blogspot.com/2020>
- [7] retrieved from <https://kbbi.kemdikbud.go.id/>
- [8] retrieved from <https://koran.tempo.co/edisi/7290/2020-04-22>