

Conference Paper

Female Personality in Hamka's *Merantau Ke Deli*

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ORCID:Pardi: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3025-3909>**Abstract**

This study demonstrates the female personality in Hamka's *Merantau Ke Deli* based on Pearson. *Merantau Ke Deli* is a novel which describes the conflict between a Javanese woman, Poniem, and a Minangkabaunese woman, Mariatun, who are Leman's first and second wives. They have very distinctive personalities that can be assumed as their personality in their own society. This is descriptive qualitative research using a sociological literary approach. The theory used in this study is feminism by Pearson with his scale item of femininity. The results show that the women in the novel have variative personalities. Poniem as a Javanese woman is portrayed as appreciative, helpful and considerate. However, she also has an emotional personality due to the provocation and insults from Mariatun. Mariatun herself is portrayed as an emotional woman. She always provokes Poniem by insulting her tribe.

Keywords: femininity, appreciativeness, emotion, helpfulness, consideration

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Published: 11 March 2021

Publishing services provided by
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Selection and Peer-review under the responsibility of the AICLL Conference Committee.

1. Introduction

Merantau Ke Deli is a novel written by Hamka in 1939. The novel tells about a young man from Minangkabau who goes to Tanah Deli, North Sumatra. *Merantau* is a tradition of Minangkabaunese. *Merantau* commonly is done by young man. It can be a result of the matrilineal system they adopt among the society. For matrilineal system, man has less power than woman especially in their position as a husband or a child. A husband has no powerful right to control his wife and his children and to control the family's wealth. Man is considered as *sumando* or a guest for his wife's family. As a child, man has no right to use his mother's wealth. The wealth will be inherited to his sisters.

The novel *Merantau ke Deli* also provides an overview of the traditions of Minang ethnic putting forward the matrilineal concept in their daily activities (Pardi, et.al, 2019: 562). Leman marries a young Javanese woman in Tanah Deli. This is considered as a betrayal to his tribal culture. The children born will not be considered Minangkabaunese.

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Matrilineal system tails the tribe on the woman lineage. However, Leman does not really care about that because he loves Poniem much. When they come back to Leman's village in Minangkabau, the people ask Leman to marry a Minangkabaunese woman. He then marries Mariatun as his second wife without divorcing Poniem, his first wife. The contrast attitudes are shown by Mariatun and Poniem when they stay in the same house. However, it is interesting to dig the contrast feminine items between the woman with different cultural background.

2. Literature Review

The issue discussed in this article is the stereotype of woman in a literary work based on views, thoughts, statements, and actions. Poniem in *Merantau Ke Deli* is reflecting a Javanese woman, modesty, hard work, and patience (Pardi & Hariani, 2017: 762). Mariatun characterizes a Minangkabaunese female figure who is conservative. Dja-janegara (2000) considers the stereotype of woman as an image of female characters in literary works. The stereotypes of the woman can be considered as a marker of the norms and values embraced by the community in which women live in a social environment. It can be concluded that stereotyping is a labeling of the functions and roles of women in life, both in the public and domestic environments in certain ways. For example, the stereotype of Poniem shows the culture of Indonesian society in Javanese, and the stereotype of Mariatun indicates the lives of the Minangkabau people in West Sumatra.

In portraying the stereotypes of the women in Hamka's *Merantau Ke Deli*, Poniem and Mariatun refer to the masculine and feminine natures proposed by Pearson (1985) in scale item. Based on Pearson (1985), femininity includes natures of being appreciative, considerate, contended, cooperative, dependent, emotional, excitable, fearful, feminine, fickle, forgiving, friendly, frivolous, helpful, jolly, modest, praising, sensitive, sentimental, sincere, submissive, sympathetic, talkative, timid, warm, and worrying. On the other hand, masculine characters consists of natures of being aggressive, arrogant, assertive, autocratic, conceiving, confident, cynical, deliberated, dominant, enterprising, forceful, foresighting, frank, handsome, sturdy, industrious, ingenious, inventive, opportunistic, outspoken, self-confident, sharp-witted, shrewd, stern, strong, tough, and vindictive. These all add to the stereotype of Poniem and Mariatun based on an analysis of the views, thoughts, statements, and actions of the two fictional characters.

This study uses the theory and method of feminist literary criticism. It is in line with Sugihastuti and Suhartono's view (2016) that a feminist literary criticism views the

character and awareness of female characters in literature related to culture, life, and situations that occur in the author and the people who influence it. One of the main points in this criticism is to describe the role and position of women in the novel with their cultures and views of life. The stereotypes of woman in social relations itself are grouped into two roles, namely domestic and public environments. Moreover, the stereotype of woman in their position in society is grouped into two perspectives, namely conservative/traditional and liberal/democratic perspectives.

3. Research Method

This article uses descriptive qualitative research method. Its focus is on the analysis of the woman characters, Poniem and Mariatun, in Hamka's *Merantau Ke Deli* tied to genetic structuralism. This approach is one of the methods of literary research that directs researchers to analyze the intrinsic elements of literary works, namely characterizations, plots, settings, themes, points of view, and others and the extrinsic elements. Literary work is considered as the portrayal of the life in the time the literary work created. However, Endraswara (2016) explains that literary can include literary relations according to place and time with cultural backgrounds.

Literary works are also considered autonomous in the meaning that the stories and characters are considered a certain reality designed by the wishes of the author. Some literary scholars regard the author's imagination as an imaginary reality in a fictional world. Aminuddin in Siswanto (2003) states that all acts and thoughts of fictional characters are a form of the author's wishes to be conveyed to the reader. This statement indicates that the author has autonomous rights to move the fictional character in various forms such as criticism, violence, advice, provocation, rebellion, oppression, and others.

4. Result and Discussion

4.1. Appreciative Personality

Appreciation is a kind of admiration and respect. Young people should appreciate everything especially their parents who have done a great care for them. Positive reviews are also appreciative, indicating that the critics like and appreciate the subjects of the review. Appreciative words and gestures are always positive and respectful.

Hamka in his novel, *Merantau ke Deli* creates two different women, Poniem, Javanese woman and Mariatun, Minangkabau woman. Appreciative personality exists on the two

women. Poniem is portrayed as a woman that always has appreciative personality about her husband. She appreciates her husband's decision concerning his *adat* matters. First she asks about her husband's family views on their wedding. Matriarchy rejects woman from different tribe to be a wife of Minangkabaunese man. The children they have will not be considered Minangkabaunese due to this system. Because of the *adat* law of Minangkabau, Leman gets floating. However, he does not let her wife involved in it. He does not want to trouble his wife, especially in matters of asking opinions. A wife should only get anything from her husband. See the quotation below.

“Why do you look so depressed? Why do you hide your problem from me?” asked Poniem immediately...“I know you are depressed now. You always hide it from me. Do you have another woman?. (Hamka, 1982: 27-28)

However, her appreciative personality also exists on her husband's second marriage matter. The matriarchy wants the man to marry a Minangkabaunese woman to build the *adat*. Although at the first time, Poniem gets angry, she finally lets her husband marry Marriatun as his second wife. She appreciates her husband's decision. The quotation below shows it.

She notices that her husband is very confused, and has no idea what to do. She knows that her husband is very sorry about his decision to marry Mariatun. He is not sure what to do. She considers that it is only a joke at the beginning. Then, she looks at her husband's face calmly. It is real. “You must go now, Honey. Why are you still here. Hurry up, people are waiting for you. Someone has come to pick you up”. (Hamka, 1982: 78)

4.2. Considerate Personality

Considerate personality can be said as an ability to become completely accustomed to and aware of other people, being humble and always appreciating others. One should look for diversity and clarify if he does not understand or agree. This is the ability to listen respectfully. This personality shows that a woman loves her husband very much. In Hamka's *Merantau ke Deli*, considerate personality is showed by Poniem. As a Javanese woman, Poniem shows the feature of Javanese woman. She is really considerate on many aspects of her married life. She knows about her husband's difficulties in trading. He has lost so much because of low capital in trading. She cannot let her husband get into depression. Poniem helps to solve the problem out by offering her husband to mortgage her jewelries. However, this solution is rejected by Leman at the beginning. It

is caused of the *adat*. Minangkabaunese men want their wives only to know about the result of the trading. They do not want the women to know about the process whether it is difficult or not. The considerate personality given by Poniem by arguing about the views makes Leman accept her solution. The quotation below shows it.

“My husband...! our commerce should be wider, we sell all these jewelries and make money. Use the money as the capital, we resolve our commerce. Don't tell me that you consider me as a woman from your village, who is happy because of having large farms and families. Let us make life.. both of us... believe me a hundred percent as i believe in you. Use these jewelries, mortgage them. They are yours now as I am yours. (Hamka, 1982: 31)

Poniem also shows her considerate personality when they want to *pulang kampung* (visit Leman's village). She shows how she must act as a woman of Leman. She buys some new clothes as souvenirs for Leman's family in the village. This makes Leman amused. Once again, she shows her considerate personality to her husband. She is never late to serve food for Leman. She knows how Leman works hard so she does not want to disturb him about little things in their marriage life. See the quotation below.

The day has been decided. After the payday, money obtained from the commerce will not be used to buy new stuffs. They told to the merchant from whom they get the stuffs about their plan that they would not pay the installment this month. The merchant told them, no problem. Poniem has been working hard since that time in providing the souvenirs for relatives in the village, a cloth for Uncu, a *sarong* for brother, scarf for young sister and some clothes for the children. Leman is so surprised and amused in seeing what Poniem has prepared. (Hamka, 1982: 43)

4.3. Helpful Personality

All people need a helping hand sometimes, and everyone is learning to build a reputation to be a reliable and helpful person. We have to anticipate the needs of others by listening carefully to what people say, and o share our time in the most helpful way. To be helpful means to provide assistance, or that is prone to providing aid. When someone gives us good and useful advice, this is an example of helpful advice. When a person is always asking what he can do to assist us, this is an example of a helpful person.

Helpful personality in Hamka's *Merantau ke Deli* is showed by Poniem. The writer seems strongly to show the personality of Mariatun as specific as possible in the novel. Helpful personalities are also shown by Poniem in her effort to help her husband, to help her husband's family and also to help other people. Poniem helps her husband's difficulties in his problem about the capital in trading. She really lets her jewelry go to be mortgaged by her husband to be made the capital. This solution makes them survived and rich. Poniem also helps his husband's family that comes from village in Minangkabau to find a job in their place. She never calculates the result, she only wants to help them. She also helps a Javanese young man, Suyono to work at their shop. See the quotation below.

Leman's family comes to Medan, one by one. One of them tells Leman that Leman is his *mamak* (mother's brother), one else says that Leman is a relative from the same tribe, and the other then say that they have blood relation... Because Poniem is happy to have many relatives. For those who have good at commerce, are given some money to run a business (Hamka, 1982: 36).

4.4. Emotional personality

A person with feelings like happiness or anger is considered to be emotional. Emotional personality could be due directly to work-related matters or to other problems either internal or external. In our culture, emotions are often seen as a nuisance, something to get rid of. Worse still, having emotions - apart from some positively related emotions - has been seen as a weakness, something we should be ashamed of and should try to hide. When being emotional, people are feeling lots of feelings, or emotions: happy, sad, afraid, lonely, mad. In Hamka's *Merantau ke Deli*, emotional feeling (mad) is shown by Poniem and Mariatun. The writer portrays Poniem as a patient woman at the beginning. She becomes emotional since she lives with her husband and Mariatun, her husband's second wife in the same house. Mariatun's personality has made her mad. Mariatun provokes her every time. She insults Poniem and her tribes. It makes Poniem so mad. See the quotation below.

"Who are you? You are only a guest here, aren't you? Where do you come from, you have to know it, right? Where your village is, don't you remember? Do you forget where you come from and how my husband takes care of you? I do what i want to do in this house, no one can get in my way. Leman is my husband, my legal husband. We married based on *adat*, known by *ninik-mamak*. Don't talk too much, don't get in my way and ask me to do something

as if you were the boss here. Don't you know that you are a guest here, Hi Javanese?? What a shame!" (Hamka, 1982: 96)

The dialogue above shows that Mariatun provokes and insults Poniem so much. She thinks that she is the one who is the boss because she comes from the same tribe with Leman. This makes Poniem emotional. The quotation below shows how Poniem gets mad.

"What a shamed, and please ask people around. Don't you know you were bought so that you could come here? Don't you know that all of Leman's wealth not coming from yours and even his old wealth? Don't you know that my jewelries were sold and mortgaged to enlarge this commerce? You humiliate this, Javanese? You cannot live, you will not have jewelry on your hands if it is not because of this Javanese woman... so arrogant!..." (Hamka, 1982: 98)

5. Conclusion

Hamka's novel *Merantau ke Deli* tells about the marriage between Minangkabaunese man, Leman and a Javanese woman, Poniem. Different culture they have makes Leman get married with another woman of his tribe, Mariatun. The personality between the women are really different. Poniem shows javanese woman personality. She has appreciative, considerate, and helpful personalities in her life. Mariatun has no these personalities shown in the novel. Mariatun has an emotional personality. She likes to provoke and insult Poniem. These make poniem become emotional woman.

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