

## Powerful Women in Anggy Umbara's Web Series: *Layangan Putus*

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### ABSTRACT

*Layangan Putus* is a web series adapted from a novel by Drh. Eka Nur Prasetya. In this article, I am analyzing this series because there is a hidden gem in these five female characters, which shows their power to fight for their rights and happiness. For that, I am interested in analyzing their power and what consequences they receive. In my analysis, I use the girl power theory based on the descriptions by Zaslow (2017), Inness (2004), and Bettis & Addams (2005) on girl power, which is independent, smart, and assertive. I analyze the way these five female characters exercise their power by being independent, smart, and assertive. As the consequences of exercising their power, they experience positive and negative results. For the positive result, they get what they want in life such as individual freedom, and for the negative one, they have to sacrifice important things such as their feelings, and personal relationships. In conclusion, in exercising their power, they gain self-growth and self-discovery.

**Keywords:** being assertive, being independent, being smart, powerful women

### INTRODUCTION

Web series is “a series of scripted videos, generally in serialized form, released on the internet or mobile phone, and part of the newly emerging medium called web television” (Alfajri et al., 2014, p. 27). The purpose of web series is to present stories that can entertain and attract people's attention. In Indonesia, many filmmakers have produced extraordinary web series. One web series that is very popular in Indonesia is *Layangan Putus* series. The series is based on the true story of Drh. Eka Nur Prasetya or known as Mommy ASF. According to Karibo (2016), *Layangan Putus* is directed by Anggy Umbara. Several of his films have also become Indonesian blockbuster films and get records as Indonesian films with the highest number of viewers throughout their screenings such as *Comic 8* (2014), *Comic 8: Casino Kings Part 1* (2015), *Suzzanna: Buried in Alive* (2018), and *Warkop DKI Reborn Jangkrik Boss Part 1* (2016). Not only that, Lesley Simpson, the Country Head of WeTV Original and Iflix Indonesia, reveals that the achievement of *Layangan Putus* becomes the most searched topic in WeTV Original, beating the number of searches for other impressions. *Layangan Putus* also set a fantastic record by being watched more than 15,000,000 million times in one day of its broadcast and becoming a trending show in 25 countries (Mario, 2022).

*Layangan Putus* tells the story about Kinan's perfect marriage to Aris which is being destroyed by Lidya. Despite the main issue, what interests me about analyzing *Layangan Putus* is that there is a hidden gem that comes from the 5 female characters in this series, namely, the existence of powerful female characters. These five female characters are portrayed as powerful and they appear in almost every episode. The first character female is Kinan. She is a wife who is cheated on by her husband but she is able to stand for herself and chooses a divorce over a polygamous marriage. Second, Lidya is the other woman who destroys Kinan's perfect marriage. She realizes her strong desire to be with Aris so she endures until she can make Aris hers, by legal way. Third, Miranda is emotionally independent and successful businesswoman. Last, Lola and Dita are described as career-oriented women living their happy single lives. Hence, in this paper, I want to analyze the way the five female characters exercise their power

that is by being independent, smart, and assertive and the positive and negative consequences they get after exercising their power.

I use the theory of girl power. According to Oxford Dictionary (2023), Girl Power is “the idea that women and girls should take control of their careers and lives and be independent and confident”. More specifically, I will use the theory of girl power as described by Zaslow (2017), Inness (2004), and Bettis & Adams (2005). From these sources, there are similarities in the descriptions of girl power which states that the main characteristics of girl power are independent, smart and assertive. By being independent it means that women can be independent at all levels. They live according to their principles and values, follow their own path, take responsibility for their life and make decisions. Being smart means that women are capable of making informed decisions and taking care of themselves without relying on others for support. They have the ability to learn quickly, solve problems effectively, and think critically. Last, by being assertive. Assertiveness is the ability to express thoughts and it can be expressing disagreement, feelings, and needs in a direct and honest way.

In addition, I will discuss the theory on consequences. According to Haines (2006) “the consequences of an action means everything the action brings about, including the action itself. In this context, it is understood that the actions done are the actions that are done deliberately or intentional actions that can be “morally right or wrong”. The action can be positive or negative. It is considered to be a good or positive consequence if it brings gain or happiness and bad or negative consequence if it results in loss or unhappiness. In the context of girl power, it also has its own consequences. According to Griffin (2004), the positive consequence of girl power is that it encourages women to “assert themselves, reject societal pressures, and focus on their goals”. The negative consequence of girl power is that they have to receive “criticism from society” (in Harris, 2004, p. 33). Based on this theory, I analyze the consequences that the five women have to experience when they exercise their power.

## **ANALYSYS**

### **Kinan's Ways of Exercising Her Power and Its Consequences**

Kinan's independence can be seen in the way she makes decisions in her life. According to Zaslow (2017), a woman is seen as independent if she acknowledges the girl power core in herself to resist oppression and is in control of her life. As a main character, Kinan shows her inner (girl) power in her way of thinking. Start from finding out about her husband's affair until her suspicion is correct. For that, when Aris asks Kinan to accept Lidya as a second wife, she refuses to be polygamous. Although Islamic teachings allow married men to be polygamous. According to Marzuki (2005), “a polygamous husband can act fairly, provide for his wives and children, and take good care of his wives and children” (p. 7). Even though Aris can provide a materially comfortable life for her, Aris fails in taking good care of his wife and children because, in the middle of exposing his affair, Kinan has a miscarriage, and Raya feels abandoned by Aris. From there, she knows that she will not be happy after accepting Lidya and realizes the possibility that Aris could have been unfair to her. Hence, she decides to divorce Aris because it is better to end her marriage than to stay in a relationship that hurts her and sacrifices her own happiness. From the explanation above, Kinan shows her way of thinking and understanding of her own desires in life. By prioritizing her own happiness, it can be seen as proof of Kinan being independent.

Kinan's smartness can be seen in the way she uses her own tactic to expose Aris's affair. According to Inness (2014), a woman's smartness is determined by her capability to use both her brain and brawn with equality. In the series, she is successful in finding out her husband's affair

because she always pays attention to the details of her husband's words or movements and writes all the details that she suspects are related to his husband's infidelity. Then, the most booming thing is she checks Aris's bank statement. From checking his bank statement, she finally knows Aris has bought Lidya an apartment worth 5 billion of Rupiah and transaction of airplane ticket to Cappadocia, Turkey the place that Kinan told Aris she wants to go to. Therefore, her tactic looks simple, but once she gets proof, it can help her become stronger to beat Aris in the trial later. She shows her tenacity to uncover evidence of her husband's infidelity and is sensitive to the situation by opening her eyes and ears to everything around her because she realizes how important it is to gather a lot of evidence.

Kinan's assertiveness can be seen in the way she expresses her disagreement about Aris's affair. According to Bettis & Addams (2005), defines an assertive woman as a person who is a rational thinker and in control of their lives. It means the ability to think logically, express her thoughts or opinions, and make decisions after considering various things. In the series, she shows her assertiveness when Lidya tries to persuade her to cancel a criminal lawsuit by bringing Raya's name into their case.

KINAN to LIDYA We both are women, right? I only hope that one day, I do not know when, you will understand that sometimes all we have as a woman, is pride. And the only thing I am fighting right now, is my pride. Not my husband, not even my marriage. So, if you say that all I have left from Aris left is Raya, do you think I care? I don't even care.

Through her dialogue, she shows her beliefs that that pride is something that she values as a woman because she does not force herself to keep her marriage or even her husband. Besides, Aris's infidelities and actions are intolerable and against her values. Therefore, when she knows that Aris has betrayed her that much, she stands up to fight for her rights. She sticks with her stance and does not allow anyone to change that. For that, her assertiveness makes her protect her own well-being.

In every action that Kinan does that shows her power, there are consequences that she must accept. According to Haines (2006), The outcome of an action can have both positive and negative consequences. A positive consequence is characterized by gains or happiness, while a negative consequence entails losses or unhappiness. For that, the negative consequence she gets is she has to lose her marriage and the sense of comfort of having her own family. When she makes the decision to divorce Aris, it shows that she thinks carefully about the possible outcomes that will come, including the loss of her previously comfortable life. However, her decision to divorce Aris shows her positive side because she is capable to stand up for what is right and prioritize her happiness and personal growth over any comfort she has ever had. Besides, Kinan does not show that she regrets her decision to free herself from Aris and Lidya. This new freedom makes her responsible for her life and decisions according to her will.

### **Lidya's Ways of Exercising Her Power and Its Consequences**

Lidya shows herself as financially independent because she has a good career. According to Zaslow (2017), she defines an independent woman as someone who is smart, able to support her financially and take control of her own future. This means, as an independent woman, she pursues her career success to support herself financially to shape her future. In her career, she is well-known as a child psychologist because she is good at dealing with children who suffer psychologically. Lidya's independence and professional competence shows through in her field, as she has gained a reputation for being reliable and capable in helping children and earning the trust of her patient and her success has led her to opportunities with brand.

Lidya shows herself as a smart woman because she knows how to take advantage of Aris's weakness. Inness (2004) suggests that being smart as a woman involves the ability to rely equally on both brain and physical strength. She also suggests that one of being smart involves being aggressive which is seen as desirable. Here, Lidya shows that she is smart because she understands her own assets, particularly her sexiness to tempt Aris. She uses her sexiness to charm Aris by being aggressive to make Aris hers. For that, her action is considered a smart move because she realizes Aris' weakness is in her appearance.

Not only smart, but Lidya also shows her assertiveness. According to Bettis & Addams (2005), they stated that women can be considered as assertive when they show their rational thinking and have control over their personal lives. It means women who have rational thinking can express their thoughts and opinions based on the facts they get. Lidya shows her assertiveness by expressing her opinion that she does like if Kinan dares to violate her boundaries.

LIDYA: She is stalking me first, so I did the same thing to her.

ARIS: So now it's a competition for you?

LIDYA: Isn't it? This has been a competition all along, don't you think? And I have always been the runner up because she always wins the first place. (*Layangan Putus* series, episode 6A, 05:08-05:44).

Her assertiveness can be seen in the way she braves to show herself in front of Aris and Kinan's house. She believes her action is right because she thinks Kinan is the first one to start all these and she is not afraid to confront the situation. Then, her dialogue also expresses her jealousy of Kinan because Kinan has always been number one in Aris' life, whereas she has always been number two. Her status as an affair makes her angry because she feels belittled by Kinan.

After exercising Lidya's power that is being independent, smart, and assertive, she has to get the consequences. According to Haines (2006), everyone will receive a consequence for every action they take. Each of these actions produces positive and negative consequences. If the consequence produces happiness, it can be considered positive. Otherwise, the action can be regarded as a negative consequence if it results in unhappiness. Therefore, the negative consequence after exercising her power is she has to lose her pride as a woman. In the series, she has determined her way of life to live with Aris. But her decision to keep Aris in her life has given her a negative image related to her actions as a woman who destroys other people's relationships. Therefore, her actions caused her to lose her self-esteem as a woman because she is known as a woman who cheated with another woman's husband. In the end, her persistence in fighting Aris also has a positive consequence because she finally succeeds in making Aris hers. Kinan and Aris's divorce gives her the freedom to openly have a relationship with Aris.

### **Miranda's Ways of Exercising Her Power and Its Consequences**

Miranda is shown as a financially independent woman because she is a successful businesswoman. According to Zaslow (2017), an independent woman is a woman who can make her own money, has the freedom to make her own choices and determine her path in life. Being financially independent gives them the power to control their destiny, to do things whatever they want, and make decisions. According to Moody (2011), an independent woman is "a woman who pays her own bills, buys her own things, and does not allow a man to affect her stability or self-confidence. She supports herself on her own entirely and is proud to be able to do so" (p. 187). In the series, Miranda proves that she

can support herself financially and be able to fulfill her own lifestyle and fashion style.

Miranda is also smart because she has a strategy to defend herself. According to Inness (2004), women today are smart enough that they are just as smart and strong enough to save themselves. This means that women no longer need support or help from anyone. Instead, they can rely on themselves to protect themselves from threats or injustice. Here, Miranda knows how to protect herself without needing help from anyone. In episode 4B, Miranda caught Aris and Lidya having sex in Aris' car. That is why Aris says something that makes Miranda feel threatened. However, Miranda knows how to respond smartly by emphasizing that she and Aris both know each other's secrets. She warns Aris that not only does he have control, but she can do so. If Aris seeks to uncover her secret, Miranda will not hesitate to retaliate by revealing Aris's secret back in return. Hence, Miranda's actions prove that she is smart because she can stick up for herself and refuses to be controlled by man.

Miranda is also showing her assertiveness by bravely expressing her feelings about her marriage to Kinan. Assertive woman is someone who knows how to think rationally and the capability of their minds (Bettis & Addams, 2005). It means they are honest with themselves and believe in their values. In the series, Miranda expresses her feelings that she does not want to keep her marriage because Eros has lost his passion and confidence as a man after he fails at everything he tries. Eros' despair makes Miranda lose her admiration for her husband because Miranda believes that men should have passion and self-confidence. But Eros chose to give up and no longer try. Therefore, the moment Miranda loses her faith in him marks a turning point where she feels that she has lost everything that mattered to her, which leads to their breakup and the sense of admiration she once felt before. For that, Miranda prefers to leave home and live her own life rather than having to live with a man who she no longer trusts.

In every action that Miranda does with her power, she gets consequences. When an action results in happiness, it can have favorable consequences, while if it leads to unhappiness, it can be perceived as having adverse outcomes (Haines, 2006). Here, after Miranda exercises her power that is by being independent, smart, and assertive, she gets the negative consequences that is she has to lose the custody of her son. In the series, Miranda is having an affair when her status is still Eros's wife. For that, her infidelity may be seen as a negative factor in determining custody arrangements. Therefore, Miranda realizes that her actions were detrimental to herself. Even if she has to lose her custody of her son, Miranda still gets the positive consequences. She still can determine her life after divorce. In the series, she says that she has sold her company and will move to another city. Miranda shows her willingness to start fresh and leave behind the memories in the past. She can make independent decisions and reorganize her finances by selling her company. This act proves her intelligence and ability to build a new life and seek new opportunities and happiness.

### **Lola and Dita Way of Exercising Their Power and Its Consequences**

Lola and Dita are shown as financially independent women. According to Zaslow (2017), an independent woman is a woman who can rely on herself to fulfill her needs and her future should be self-determined. It means she does not depend on others to meet her needs or to fulfill her desires. Instead, she can provide for herself, has the freedom to live her life, and has the right to shape her path in life. Here, Lola works as a lawyer and Dita works as a doctor. They are shown to be financially independent because they have good careers and they can earn money. By being financially independent means a person has enough income to cover expenses without needing assistance. They pride themselves on being able to fully support themselves and value their independence. In the series, Lola works as a lawyer, while Dita works as a doctor. By having stable, well-paid jobs, they can

cover their expenses and maintain a comfortable lifestyle. support.

Lola and Dita show that they are smart women. Inness (2004) defines a smart woman as someone who can equally use her muscles and brains to protect herself. Here, Lola and Dita show that they are smart women because they know that they are not easily deceived by other people. First, Lola shows her smartness by defending Kinan from Aris' lawyer. In the series, Aris's lawyer tries to scare Lola by saying all the evidence Kinan has gathered is not strong enough. However, Lola does not back down, instead she appears confident. She says his knowledge and understanding of the law must be caught up. So, her opinion gives Aris's affair a bit of a slap because, through her smartness, she can prove that he does not easily put her down. Secondly, Dita maintains distance from married men. In the series, she encounters a doctor named Dr. Wira who expresses interest in her. However, Dita knows that Dr. Wira already has a wife and children. Therefore, she rejects Dr. Wira's advances because she understands the importance of not interfering in other people's relationships, especially in marriage and maintains her reputation and self-esteem as a woman.

Lola and Dita also show their assertiveness by expressing their thoughts based on what they believe or what values they appreciate in women. Based on the findings of Bettis & Addams (2005), women can be said to be assertive if they show qualities of rational thinkers and have control over their bodies and personal lives. Here, they show that they are responsible for their bodies and their lives because they believe that these two things are the most valuable assets that women have. First, Lola shows her assertiveness after hearing inappropriate comments from a man she meets on the Tinder app. The man criticized Lola's body shape. In response, she chooses to assert her confidence and self-worth by ordering a lot of food. Her action is challenging societal expectations and beauty standards. From her action, she is showing that she is in charge of her bodies because she respects her body and is unaffected by beauty standards. She does not let anybody shame her because she knows her worth does not depend on her physical beauty. Therefore, this shows her assertiveness as she embraces ownership of her body. In addition, Dita shows her assertiveness during a conversation with Kinan. Dita expresses her opinion that she will not disagree if Kinan gives her blessing to Aris and Lidya. She wants Kinan to realize that if she agrees to Aris being polygamous, he will never be fair or bring her happiness. By this she asserts her stance by expressing her inability to witness Kinan's suffering any longer and makes it clear that she does not want Kinan to endure further pain. Therefore, how Dita expresses her concern and attitude reflects her power to support and protect other women.

In every action that Lola and Dita do with their power, they get a consequence. According to Haines (2006), he emphasizes that every action has its consequences and an action's result can be viewed as having positive consequences if it brings happiness and negative consequences if it causes unhappiness. Here, after Lola and Dita exercise their power, I can find from them that they are really careful in choosing partners. Even though they gave a chance to the man who approached them. However, they will refuse when they find out the man does not meet their standards or show behaviors that are incompatible with their values and desires. For that, the negative consequences that Lola and Dita get is they remain single. According to Adamczyk (2016), of the many reports from single adults, "they chose to be single as a personal choice and not meeting the right person or not meeting potential partners" (p. 890). In the series, Lola and Dita want to have an equal partner. They do not just choose a partner just to get temporary happiness. Therefore, they chose to stay single rather than have a relationship that they themselves know that it will not last. However, being single also has a positive side, like understanding more about what they want. They are free to try new things they want without any restrictions or pressure from people. They can focus on their careers and find fulfillment in their success and enjoy living their lives.

## CONCLUSION

The five female characters in *Layangan Putus* have proven their power by being independent, being smart, and being assertive. The power that the five female characters have, shows that power is not always positive but can also be negative and might hurt others. Lidya's power actually hurts another woman, that is Kinan whose marriage is destroyed. For the consequences, she will always be remembered as the woman who destroys Kinan's marriage. In addition, the power they have can also be considered to break patriarchal culture. *Patriarchal culture* is a culture that does not emphasize equality and balance (Karkono, 2020, p, 18). The absence of equality in a patriarchal culture makes the existence of women seen as unimportant and perceives that the position of women tends to be inferior. In contrast, the position of men is superior. *Layangan Putus* challenges and breaks the patriarchal culture that can be seen from the five female characters. They assert their independence, make choices in their own life and refuse to be confined by societal expectations or the control of men. By doing so, they have successful careers and the ability to support themselves. Then, Kinan and Miranda refuse to be trapped in an unhappy marriage and prioritize their own happiness and self-worth. For that, the power that a woman has, can lead to positive outcomes such as personal growth, self-discovery, becoming financially independent, smart, and assertive. They are able to shape their lives, pursue their desires, and communicate effectively, demonstrating the characters strength and determination. But the exercise of power also brings negative consequences such as losing their personal relationship, reputation, and sacrificing their feelings.

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