



Women's Oppression and Resistance in the Novel *Perempuan yang Menangis kepada Bulan Hitam* by Dian Purnomo

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe the forms of women's oppression, forms of women's resistance, and explain the relevance of the novel *Perempuan yang Menangis kepada Bulan Hitam* by Dian Purnomo as a literature teaching material in high school. The study uses a qualitative method with a descriptive analytical approach. Data were obtained from the novel *Perempuan yang Menangis kepada Bulan Hitam* and interviews with Indonesian language teachers of grade XII high school through documentation studies and semi-structured interviews. Data analysis uses the interactive model of Miles and Huberman which includes data reduction, data condensation, data presentation, and drawing conclusions, while the validity of the data is tested through triangulation of theory and investigators. The results of the study show that women's oppression includes subordination, marginalization, violence, and gender stereotypes, while women's resistance is manifested in the form of open and closed resistance. The results of the interviews indicate that this novel is relevant as a literature teaching material in high school because it is able to foster critical thinking skills, empathy, and awareness of gender equality and is in accordance with Indonesian language learning for grade XII based on the 2013 Curriculum.

Keywords: woman's oppression, resistance, novel

INTRODUCTION

Literary works are a form of human expression through language that depicts the author's reality, experiences, imagination, and perspectives. Beyond their aesthetic value, literary works embody life values that can be utilized in educational settings. Lizawati & Safitri (2023) state that novels represent social realities and human values, while Hartati (2019) emphasizes the role of literature in preserving cultural values and societal norms. Consequently, literature can serve as a medium to instill values of justice, humanity, and gender equality in learners.

One social issue frequently addressed in literature is gender injustice. In patriarchal

societies, women often face discrimination, subordination, marginalization, violence, and restrictions on their right to make life choices. These conditions are not merely social realities; they are also depicted in various literary works as a critique of patriarchal culture. Such injustices drive women to engage in various forms of resistance to defend their rights, dignity, and freedom.

This phenomenon is portrayed in the novel *Perempuan yang Menangis kepada Bulan Hitam* by Dian Purnomo. The novel highlights the practice of kawin tangkap (forced marriage by abduction, or piti rambang) in Sumba, a custom that places

Submitted
16/07/2026

Accepted
17/08/2026

Published
05/09/2026

Citation	Sari, N., Fitriani, F., & Uli, I. (2026). Women's Oppression and Resistance in the Novel <i>Perempuan yang Menangis kepada Bulan Hitam</i> by Dian Purnomo. <i>Jurnal Pembelajaran Bahasa dan Sastra</i> , Volume 5, Nomor 5, September 2026, 4019-4032. DOI: https://doi.org/10.55909/jpbs.v5i5.1804
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Publisher
Raja Zulkarnain Education Foundation

women at a disadvantage. Through the character Magi Diela, the author illustrates various forms of oppression such as subordination, marginalization, violence, and stereotyping while simultaneously showcasing women's struggles against patriarchal dominance.

Patriarchal culture positions men as the dominant group and women in a subordinate role, thereby triggering various forms of gender injustice (Halizah & Faralita, 2023). This situation compels women to resist as a means of challenging oppression, discrimination, and unfair treatment (Septiana, 2019; Afifah et al., 2025). According to Sartika & Pramulia (2023), women's resistance can manifest in either overt or covert forms in response to the subordination, marginalization, and violence they experience.

As a work of fictional prose, the novel represents various aspects of human life through characters, conflict, and setting (Ariska & Amelysa, 2020). The novel was selected as the object of this study because of its capacity to depict social realities including issues of gender injustice while serving as a medium to convey human values. Beyond its broad appeal to readers, the novel contributes to the development of literary studies and education by offering an in-depth portrayal of various life issues.

The novel *Perempuan yang Menangis kepada Bulan Hitam* by Dian Purnomo, published by Gramedia in 2020, explores the lives of women within the indigenous society of Sumba, where the tradition of *piti rambang* or "marriage by capture" persists. Through the character Magi Diela, the novel illustrates various forms of female oppression stemming from patriarchal culture, such as violence, the imposition of will, and marginalization. Furthermore, the novel depicts women's resistance manifested both openly and covertly as an effort to uphold their rights, dignity, and freedom. Thus, the novel serves as both a representation of social reality and a critique of gender injustice.

The urgency of this research lies in the importance of examining female oppression and

resistance within literary works that address social and educational issues. Patriarchal culture continues to give rise to various forms of gender injustice, including discrimination, violence, and the restriction of women's rights. Through the novel *Perempuan yang Menangis kepada Bulan Hitam*, this study reveals representations of oppression and women's struggles as a reflection of social reality. Additionally, the research contributes to literary education by utilizing the novel as teaching material to foster critical thinking, empathy, and student awareness regarding equality and social justice.

This study examines female oppression and resistance in the novel through a feminist lens, focusing on the representation of women, power relations, and patriarchal ideology within the literary work. A socialist-feminist approach is employed to view women as subjects possessing the consciousness and capacity to resist injustice, rather than merely as victims. Feminism is a movement that advocates for equal rights and opposes discrimination and the oppression of women (Abbas, 2020; Gaviota, 2021). Feminist thought evolved through the ideas of Mary Wollstonecraft in *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), and in Indonesia, it is reflected in R.A. Kartini's struggle for women's emancipation.

Extensive research has been conducted on the portrayal of women in literature using feminist approaches. A comparative literary study by Wulandari and Dewi (2024) reveals that the oppression of women in the films *Kartini* and *Kim Ji-young, Born 1982* is represented through various forms of discrimination stemming from patriarchal culture. Similarly, research by Padmasari et al. (2025) explains that in the novel *Cantik Itu Luka* (*Beauty Is a Wound*), women endure oppression linked to social and economic structures; the study also illustrates forms of resistance against this unjust system from a Marxist-feminist perspective. Meanwhile, research by Olivia and Indarti (2024) specifically examines the subordination of women in Dian Purnomo's novel *Perempuan yang Menangis kepada Bulan Hitam*, indicating that



women are relegated to an unequal position due to the dominance of patriarchal culture.

While previous studies have frequently explored issues concerning women in literature through feminist approaches, they generally focus on either oppression or resistance in isolation. Furthermore, research linking feminist analysis to the relevance of literary works as high school teaching materials remains limited. Therefore, this study was conducted to fill that gap by examining women's oppression and resistance in the novel *Perempuan yang Menangis kepada Bulan Hitam*, as well as its relevance to literature instruction.

The novelty of this research lies in an analysis that integrates forms of oppression, forms of female resistance, a feminist literary criticism perspective, and the novel's relevance as literary teaching material for high schools. Consequently, this study is expected to contribute to the development of feminist literary studies and Indonesian language education.

The research addresses the forms of female oppression, the forms of resistance exhibited by female characters, and the novel's relevance as literary teaching material in high schools. This study aims to describe and analyze female oppression and resistance in the novel *Perempuan yang Menangis kepada Bulan Hitam* using a feminist literary criticism approach, and to explain its relevance as teaching material to support critical literacy and gender-equality-based character education.

METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative method. The qualitative method was selected because the research focuses on describing and understanding the meaning of the data (Ahmadi, 2019). This method is used to analyze forms of women's oppression and resistance within the novel by examining narrative elements, dialogue, and events that depict women's experiences, without relying on statistical data.

The study utilizes a feminist approach. A feminist approach analyzes literary texts from a

gender perspective, focusing on the representation of women and issues of gender equality (Umam et al., 2025). This approach is used to examine forms of gender injustice such as oppression, marginalization, stereotyping, and violence as well as power dynamics between men and women within the novel. Furthermore, the feminist approach helps reveal women's experiences in confronting patriarchal culture and the various forms of resistance they undertake.

The data sources for this study consist of the novel *Perempuan yang Menangis kepada Bulan Hitam* by Dian Purnomo and a Grade XII high school Indonesian language teacher serving as an informant. The novel published by Gramedia Pustaka Utama in 2020 and spanning 320 pages serves as the source for data regarding narratives, dialogue, and events that illustrate women's oppression and resistance. Meanwhile, the Indonesian language teacher was selected to provide information gathered through interviews regarding the novel's relevance as literary teaching material, the values it contains, and its application in high school instruction.

Data collection techniques employed in this study include document analysis and semi-structured interviews. Document analysis involved examining Dian Purnomo's novel *Perempuan yang Menangis kepada Bulan Hitam* to extract data such as narratives, dialogue, and events that demonstrate women's oppression and resistance (Sugiyono, 2021). Additionally, semi-structured interviews were conducted with a high school Indonesian language teacher to assess the novel's relevance as literary teaching material, its alignment with the curriculum, and its potential to enhance critical literacy and understanding of gender equality (Nasution & Junaidi, 2024).

The researcher acts as the primary instrument (human instrument) responsible for collecting, identifying, interpreting, and analyzing the data. The analysis is conducted based on feminist categories, such as subordination, marginalization, gender-based violence, bodily objectification, and female agency. Supporting instruments include

direct communication, data cards, and interview guidelines. Data cards are used to classify novel excerpts, while interview guidelines facilitate the gathering of information relevant to the research objectives. The use of these instruments aims to generate systematic data that supports the research analysis.

The data analysis technique employed in this study follows the interactive analysis model proposed by Miles and Huberman (2014:12–14), comprising data reduction, data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification. Data reduction is carried out by selecting novel excerpts related to women's oppression and resistance. Subsequently, the data is condensed by grouping it according to the analysis categories. The grouped data is then presented in a descriptive format to ensure clarity. The final stage involves drawing conclusions based on the data interpretation to address the research problem. The analysis process is conducted iteratively until valid findings regarding women's oppression and resistance in the novel *Perempuan yang Menangis kepada Bulan Hitam* are obtained.

To verify the data in this study, a triangulation technique was employed a method for testing data validity by comparing the information obtained (Nasution & Junaidi, 2024). The triangulation methods utilized included theoretical triangulation and investigator triangulation. Theoretical triangulation involved comparing analysis results based on concepts of feminism and gender studies, while investigator triangulation was conducted through discussions with experts in the field of literature. This technique aimed to enhance the objectivity, credibility, and validity of the research findings regarding the oppression of and resistance by women in the novel *Perempuan yang Menangis kepada Bulan Hitam*. Through this process, the study is expected to yield a valid analysis of women's oppression and resistance in the novel and contribute to the development of feminist literary criticism and gender-equitable literature instruction at the high school level.

RESULTS

1. Forms of Women's Oppression

The oppression of women remains an issue across various aspects of social life. According to Rohmaniyah (2009), forms of gender injustice are shaped by societal social, economic, and cultural structures. Analysis of Dian Purnomo's *Perempuan yang Menangis kepada Bulan Hitam* reveals that the oppression of women manifests as subordination, marginalization, violence, and stereotyping. These four forms reflect the pervasive nature of patriarchal culture, which restricts women's rights and freedoms.

1.1 Women's Subordination

Data 1

"Some say that marriage by abduction can serve as a solution when the man's family fails to reach a customary agreement with the woman's family. If this is the case, the woman's family may indeed be unaware of the plan beforehand".

Data (1) indicates that the practice of marriage by abduction occurs when the formal proposal process fails to yield an agreement. In this practice, the woman is treated as an object, as decisions are made by the families without her consent. This situation reflects the subordination of women specifically, the loss of the right to make their own choices and determine their own futures.

Data 2

"The initial belief that Leba Ali was solely to blame gradually faded. Magi suspected that her father was also behind this forced marriage scheme. Almost every story she heard about marriage by abduction followed the same pattern: an agreement was reached between the abductor's family and the woman's family, without the woman herself being involved".

Data (2) shows that the woman does not participate in the decision-making process regarding the marriage, as the agreement is made exclusively between the man's family and the woman's family. This situation reveals that women



are viewed as objects lacking the power to determine their own destinies.

Data 3

“Work felt completely different after the kidnapping incident. Magi was no longer permitted to ride her own motorcycle; someone else always drove her to the office and picked her up afterward. Another change was her father’s new habit of checking her mobile phone”.

Data (3) indicates that Magi lost her freedom following the kidnapping. The ban on using a private vehicle, the requirement to be constantly accompanied, and the monitoring of her phone by her father reflect patriarchal dominance that restricts women’s mobility and independence under the guise of protection.

Data 4

“Just as Rega was allowed to choose not to attend school, Magi should also be free to choose whom she marries and how the marriage takes place”.

Data (4) highlights the demand for equal rights between men and women. The excerpt asserts that women should possess the same freedom as men in choosing a partner and a life path. This situation illustrates the presence of gender injustice within the novel.

1.2 Marginalization of Women

Data 1

“Magi now wonders whether she should simply give in, just as Ina Ade did. There is so much she would have to relinquish if she were to surrender and accept this forced marriage: her job, the possibility of returning to school, the chance to develop her father’s rice fields and gardens, and the opportunity to marry the man she loves. Yet, what saddens Magi the most is the prospect of losing her independence and her dignity”.

Data (1) indicates that forced marriage deprives Magi of the right to work, pursue further education, develop her potential, choose a partner, and determine her own future. This situation

reflects a form of marginalization that restricts women’s opportunities and rights across various aspects of life.

Data 2

“Before that, her days were spent entirely indoors moving between her room, the cooking hearth, and the bathroom with only occasional forays outside when the morning sun shone brightly enough”.

Data (2) shows that Magi spent most of her time inside the house and rarely ventured out. This reflects the restricted mobility of women due to social pressures, leading to their further marginalization and a loss of opportunities to participate in social life.

Data 3

“The next day, she said her goodbyes and left quickly before Leba Ali could wake up. At eleven in the morning, she received another message stating that, the following day, Leba Ali wanted Magi to prepare his coffee and breakfast before she left. He did not mind if the coffee and food went cold; he simply insisted that Magi be the one to attend to his morning needs”.

Data (3) reveals that Magi was required to prepare coffee and breakfast for Leba Ali every morning. This situation illustrates the marginalization of women, who are confined to domestic roles and positioned merely to serve men’s needs, while their own interests and rights are disregarded.

1.3 Violence Against Women

Data 1

“Magi could not fathom just how many animals would make up the belis (bride price) promised by Leba Ali. Even if it were a thousand head of livestock, Magi would still feel angry and humiliated. What enraged her most, however, was her own powerlessness her inability to confront her father and ask if her suspicions were true. She dared not even imagine the moment her father learned she had been raped; somehow, she was

certain that revelation would only make him more determined to proceed with the marriage”.

Data (1) illustrates violence against women through the *belis* custom and the sexual violence Magi endured. Women are treated as interchangeable objects in marriage traditions, while rape is used as a pretext to hasten the wedding. This situation reflects physical and psychological violence legitimized by patriarchal culture.

Data 2

“Dangu struggled to comprehend how Magi could have done such a thing; biting one’s own wrist is no easy feat. She should have used a shard of glass or anything else to ensure a quick end without prolonged suffering, if she was truly intent on dying rather than enduring an unjust life”.

“I’d rather die,” Magi sobbed softly, her weeping gradually escalating into a wail. She was no longer shedding silent tears; her crying intensified as she tried to pull out the needle embedded in the back of her right arm. “I’d rather die, Father”.

Data (2) reveals the psychological toll on Magi, leading to a desire to end her own life. The despair stemming from forced marriage and injustice demonstrates that violence not only inflicts physical harm but also destroys a woman’s mental health and dignity.

Data 3

“According to Magi, Leba Ali had been stealing glances at her and even occasionally touching her since long ago, back before she had even begun to develop breasts”.

“Magi kicked hard at the man, but in retaliation, she felt her breast being squeezed by a different man not the one she had kicked. After having her chest groped, another man grabbed her thigh in a repulsive manner. Magi tried to kick him away, but the man’s hand slid upward toward her groin”. “She had been raped while unconscious and was now being forced to marry her rapist”.

Data (3) indicates that Magi was subjected to sexual violence, ranging from harassment to rape. The severity of this violence was compounded by the fact that the victim was forced to marry the perpetrator, resulting in physical and psychological suffering while stripping her of her rights and dignity as a woman.

Data 4

“He gripped Magi’s neck, then shoved her backward pushing continuously until she fell flat on her back onto the wooden platform”.

“Leba Ali wiped his face, then yanked Magi’s hair even harder and delivered a punch to her left temple”.

“And then just as she had anticipated a punch, the hardest she had ever felt, landed on her jaw. Magi could taste the stinging pain and the metallic tang of blood in her mouth. Before the throbbing ache could even subside, another punch landed on her temple, dangerously close to her eye”.

“By the time Leba Ali entered the police station for questioning, a photo of Magi with her bruised face had already circulated, accompanied by the story of what she had endured over the past few years”.

Data (4) illustrates the physical violence Leba Ali inflicted upon Magi including punching, shoving, hair-pulling, and slapping resulting in injury. These actions reflect an unequal power dynamic in which women are targeted with violence to maintain male dominance.

Data 5

“You’re only going to be my whore! You’re a worthless woman! I’ll tell the whole world that you’re a whore!”.

Data (5) demonstrates verbal and psychological violence through insults and the negative labeling of women. This treatment aims to degrade the victim’s dignity, shatter her self-confidence, and reinforce the perpetrator’s dominance.



1.4 Gender Stereotypes

Data 1

“I won’t marry the man who abducted me.” Leba Ali’s mother sighed, then said something Magi would regret hearing for the rest of her life: “If you don’t want to marry Leba Ali, no other man will want you”.

Data (1) shows that Magi’s refusal of Leba Ali was met with pressure to accept a forced marriage. The statement that no other man would marry her reflects a gender stereotype that judges women based on marital status and male acceptance, thereby limiting a woman’s freedom to make her own life choices.

Data 2

“Leba Ali’s mother sighed, then said something Magi would regret hearing for the rest of her life”. “If you don’t want to marry Leba Ali, no other man will want you.”

“So be it,” Magi replied.

“You’re no longer a virgin.”

Data (2) reveals a stereotype that judges women based on their virginity status. Magi is deemed to have lost her value and to face difficulty finding a partner because she is no longer a virgin. This view reflects a double standard that burdens only women, whereas men are not held to the same moral yardstick.

Data 3

“If Tamo keeps fighting back, Tamo is the one who will suffer. We are women. Just give in. Even if we fight, we’ll lose,” said Magi Wara softly while handing a small towel to Magi”.

Data (3) illustrates a stereotype suggesting that women must be submissive and accept their situation, as they are perceived to lack the capacity to resist men or the prevailing system.

Data 4

“He is a middle-aged man known for being flirtatious with young women. Unfortunately, Leba Ali is also a highly respected figure in West Sumba.

He was an influential campaigner for the current elected regent. His influence extends everywhere, including the local police station where he was reported and subsequently summoned”.

“With the police report naming Leba Ali as the mastermind behind Magi’s abduction and rape being closed, the ban preventing the scoundrel from approaching Magi was also lifted. Magi heard directly from her father that the wedding plans would proceed; Ama Bobo could not bear the disgrace, nor did he want his family to be seen as bringing calamity upon the entire village by reneging on the agreement previously made between the two families. Magi was deeply distressed, yet her voice carried no weight in her own home much like the voices of other women within their large houses”.

Data (4) illustrates male dominance within the social order. Leba Ali’s opinion is valued more highly, while Magi’s voice is disregarded, despite her being the victim of abduction and rape. This situation reflects stereotypes that position men as more powerful than women.

Data 5

“Part of Magi felt relieved, yet another part felt angry and increasingly humiliated. It should have been Leba Ali’s family coming to apologize for the abduction and rape; instead, it was her own family that had to bow their heads and humble themselves to beg for forgiveness. Magi tried to understand her culture’s customs, but failed. A throbbing ache returned to her left thumb”.

“Manu said that their father would not be sending Manu to school. Manu could simply work as a mobile phone kiosk attendant or a clerk at Waikabubak’s only general store; the priority was simply to marry Manu off as soon as a suitable match was found. “Look, Miss. In our custom, refusing a marriage proposal is tantamount to throwing away one’s chance at a match. Your father and mother were afraid you wouldn’t find another partner—that you’d remain single until you died. Especially since the process back then was just

like that, you know: the man ‘captured’ you and brought you home. So...”.

“Magi instantly felt uneasy. A throbbing ache shot through her left thumb. Her bones ached, and she shivered”

“So, if I may offer a piece of advice: if another suitor comes along wanting to take you as his wife, just accept it”.

Data (5) illustrates the stereotype that women must accept their family’s decisions and marry promptly. A woman’s education, aspirations, and personal desires are deemed less important; consequently, their futures are shaped more by family interests and tradition than by personal choice.

Data 6

“Magi quickly got up from her mattress. She vividly recalled the advice given by almost everyone in her village: wake up early, help finish chores quickly, do tasks before being told, don’t be lazy, serve your husband well all the counsel that formed part of the compromise she had made regarding her father’s wishes. Despite her extreme fatigue, Magi got up and walked past Leba Ali. The man was snoring loudly. She carried a glass containing coffee grounds and some fishy-smelling dirty plates to the washing area. She washed them alongside the guest without saying much”.

“Mama Eli furrowed her brow. “You don’t like housework?”.

“Magi shook her head honestly. “Since I was little, I’ve preferred working in the garden. I love plants; that’s why I’m close to Ama Nano he likes to explain the benefits of different plants”.

“Her sister-in-law snorted. “Once you’re someone’s wife, you won’t have a choice. You should try learning to cook so your husband enjoys eating at home”.

Data (6) illustrates the stereotype of gender-based role division. Women are expected to manage household chores and serve their husbands, while their interests and abilities in other areas are disregarded. These domestic roles are

viewed as a woman’s inherent nature a duty she is obliged to fulfill.

2. Forms of Women’s Resistance

2.1 Open Resistance

Data 1

“Magi Diela attempts to invite death by biting her own wrist until the skin tears, hoping to sever an artery and let her blood drain away quickly”

“Magi struggles, trying to break free; she flails in all directions kicking, screaming, and biting at anything within reach of her mouth”.

“Magi kicks out hard at the man”.

“Magi tries to fend him off, but the hand holding her is immovable, and she has run out of strength”.

“Magi slaps Leba Ali across the face hard enough to catch him off guard”.

“Magi falls silent, gathering saliva in her mouth before spitting it directly into Leba Ali’s face”.

Data (1) illustrates the overt resistance Magi mounts against the violence inflicted upon her. She attempts to protect herself by struggling, striking, kicking, biting, slapping, and spitting at Leba Ali. These actions reflect a direct rejection of the violence and injustice she is experiencing.

Data 2

“Dangu, having lived outside Sumba during his university years, views the situation as a crime regardless of whether it was premeditated or not”

“Get Magi out of your house right now, or you die!” Dangu boldly threatens Leba Ali, even though he no longer holds a machete”.

“Who are you?”.

“Dangu Toda from Karang Village. Magi’s friend”.

“I’m stepping out for a moment,” Dangu says”.

“Where are you going?” asks Tara”.

“To the police station. We should have reported this to the police from the start,” Dangu replies”.

Data (2) demonstrates overt resistance through the pursuit of legal justice. Dangu regards the treatment of Magi as a crime, confronts the perpetrator, and takes the initiative to report the



matter to the police. These actions reflect a rejection of customary practices that harm women.

Data 3

“Several journalists and an NGO from Kupang called Gema Perempuan had contacted her to verify the incident. “We have a friend Mama Minawho attended the same training in Sumba, specifically in SBD. I’ll introduce you to her via WhatsApp later. The most important thing, Magi, is that you don’t feel alone and don’t hate yourself.”

“Dangu was fully clad in an ojek (motorcycle taxi) uniform a vest bearing the words “Official Sumba Ojek” and a mobile number at the bottom. To avoid recognition, he also wore a mask and helmet items rarely used by actual ojek drivers in that village. Dangu sped off on his borrowed motorcycle toward Elopada, to Mama Mina’s house. As planned with Mrs. Agustin, Mama Mina’s home would be the first stop in Magi’s escape”.

“Mama Mina’s younger sibling agreed to shelter Magi for two or three days”.

“Upon arriving in Kupang, Magi was picked up by Siti a volunteer from Gema Perempuan who would provide her with temporary safe housing on a motorcycle. Magi was taken straight to the Gema Perempuan office to change clothes and repeat a process that was painful for her: recounting her story”.

Data (3) illustrates open resistance through the support of an NGO and a women’s network. The assistance provided by Gema Perempuan, volunteers, and the safe house reflects a collective struggle to protect the victim and advocate for women’s rights.

Data 4

“There are customs worth preserving, and others we should probably discontinue,” Mrs. Agustin replied gently. “My father was also from Sumba; he was from Wewewa. He taught me to uphold dignity not through feasts and livestock, but by respecting others”.

“Moving away from writings on agriculture, Magi gradually shifted to other issues matters she had long kept bottled up, things that constantly haunted her. She wrote about women’s rights violated by the shackles of custom, including the practice of kawin tangkap (forced marriage by abduction). Magi consistently urges Gema Perempuan to conduct more outreach and to establish agreements with the police and other law enforcement agencies in Sumba”.

Data (4) illustrates open resistance through the rejection of customary practices that disadvantage women. The characters in the novel strive to drive change as part of the struggle against gender inequality through education, information dissemination, and collaboration with law enforcement officials.

Data 5

“Magi asks Dangu to marry her, as she does not want Leba Ali to be her husband”.

Data (5) highlights the struggle of the Magi people for the freedom to choose their own partners. Magi’s decision to select her own life partner represents a rejection of the marriage that had previously been forced upon her.

2.2 Covert Resistance

Data 1

“Magi Diela fell silent. She lifted her head as soon as she entered the village street”.

“She wanted to see the village for herself to take note of every house and every face so she would remember exactly whom she would curse through her prayers and supplications”.

“Magi focused her gaze intensely on Leba Ali”.

“Magi shook her head and met Leba Ali’s stare defiantly, even though her eyes were already welling up with tears”.

“Magi’s throat felt parched, yet she had already vowed not to consume any food or drink from this house or indeed, from this entire village”.

Data (1) illustrates a struggle manifested through hatred, internal rejection, and silence.

Magi rejects the practice of bride kidnapping by displaying anger and resistance toward Leba Ali, and by refusing food and drink as a symbolic act of defiance against the oppression she is enduring.

Data 2

“Once her tears had dried, Magi began to devise a plan to free herself”.

“Magi vowed that the moment she saw her father, she would unleash her anger and disappointment; the one man she believed would never intentionally hurt her was the very person who had handed her over to the wretched Leba Ali”.

“Her plan was set. If no one rescued her today, she would take a reckless step an act she might well come to regret”.

Data (2) shows that Magi refuses to give up; instead, she begins strategizing her escape. This attitude reflects her awareness and her courage in standing up against injustice.

Data 3

“After shaking out her hand weary from writing Magi began drafting her next letter. It was an open letter to the world. She intended to entrust these letters to Dangu, who possessed the most extensive network outside of Sumba”.

“All communication was currently conducted covertly via email, as it was the only application Ama Bobo did not understand. Magi neatly concealed the email application on her phone so that others could not access it”.

Data (3) illustrates resistance through covert communication. Magi wrote an open letter and used secret emails to seek support, attempting to find a way out of the pressure and constraints she faced.

Data 4

“Magi suppressed her tears and anger whenever she heard talk of her marriage a marriage she never wanted”.

“Magi strove to maintain her composure while at home. She smiled at things that infuriated her,

chuckled at things that offended her, and acted respectfully toward the very people she wanted to kill”.

“Occasionally, Magi would lower her gaze, but she made a concerted effort to look toward the camera more often, wearing her practiced, performative smile. She could not let anyone think she was unhappy that day”.

Data (4) demonstrates covert resistance through Magi’s ability to conceal her emotions and suffering. She suppressed her pain, feigned happiness, and used this demeanor as a survival strategy to keep her plans hidden from her oppressors.

Data 5

“Even with her eyes closed, Magi never lost even a shred of awareness. She was like a hawk, vigilantly watching a chick she intended to make her prey”.

“She minimized opportunities to be alone in a room with the man as much as possible, hoping no one would notice”.

Data (5) highlights Magi’s vigilance in the face of a threat. She sought to avoid dangerous situations involving Leba Ali as a form of self-protection and a rejection of the perpetrator’s dominance.

DISCUSSION

Research findings indicate that subordination, marginalization, violence, and gender stereotypes do not exist as isolated incidents; rather, they are interconnected in shaping power relations that relegate women to a subordinate position. The practice of bride kidnapping, for instance, not only strips women of the agency to choose their partners but also leads to restrictions on their mobility, education, employment, and freedom following the forced marriage. Thus, oppression within the novel operates through social and cultural mechanisms that prioritize the decisions of men and families over the will of women.



From a feminist perspective, this situation reveals that women are positioned as objects within the patriarchal structure. These findings align with Rohmaniyah's (2009) assertion that gender injustice is closely linked to social, economic, and cultural structures. Halizah & Faralita (2023) similarly emphasize that patriarchal culture positions men as the dominant party and women in a subordinate role. The common ground between these perspectives and the current study lies in the explanation that injustice stems not merely from individual behavior but is also perpetuated by social and cultural structures.

However, this study places specific emphasis on the interplay between customary practices, family decisions, and the experiences of the female characters. Olivia and Indarti (2024) analyzed the same novel using Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotics, focusing on female resistance. The present study expands upon this interpretation by linking forms of oppression and resistance to their relevance in literature education. These differences demonstrate that a single literary work can be analyzed from various angles, yielding complementary analytical insights.

The violence depicted in the novel encompasses not only physical and sexual abuse but also verbal and psychological violence. The sexual violence experienced by Magi is further exacerbated by the pressure to remain married to the perpetrator. This situation illustrates how violence intensifies when the social environment fails to provide victims with sufficient opportunity to make their own choices. Stereotypes dictating that women must yield, accept family decisions, maintain the household, and be judged based on their virginity further reinforce this subordinate position.

From the first perspective, these findings can be understood as gender-based violence, as women's bodies, life choices, and voices are controlled by those in power. From the second perspective, the stereotypes demonstrate that domination also operates through language and

social norms. Thus, oppression does not always manifest as physical acts; it can also occur through labeling, advice, family pressure, and preconceived notions regarding women's roles. These findings align with research by Wulandari & Dewi (2024), which shows that patriarchal culture can embody various forms of discrimination against women, as well as research by Padmasari et al. (2025), which identifies a link between social structures, discrimination, and women's resistance.

These findings also highlight the importance of distinguishing between *adat* (customary tradition) as a culture and specific customary practices that disadvantage women. The novel does not reject Sumba culture in its entirety; instead, it presents a character's voice that differentiates between customs worth preserving and practices that violate women's rights. Such an interpretation renders the critique more contextual, as it targets specific unjust practices rather than the community's cultural identity as a whole.

The resistance depicted in the novel demonstrates that female characters are not merely passive victims. Overt resistance manifests through direct actions such as self-protection, seeking legal aid, building support networks, rejecting practices detrimental to women, and exercising agency in choosing a life partner. Conversely, covert resistance is evident in strategic planning, confidential communication, the regulation of emotional expression, and constant vigilance. Both forms of resistance reflect the agency women exercise across various circumstances.

These findings align with Scott's (2000) concepts of overt and covert resistance. Overt resistance occurs when acts of defiance are directed straight at those in power, whereas covert resistance allows those in a subordinate position to safeguard their interests through strategies that are not always visible. Sartika and Pramulia (2022) similarly note that women's resistance can emerge as a response to gender-based injustice. Thus, this study reinforces the view that women's resistance

need not always take the form of grand or confrontational actions.

Furthermore, the results indicate that covert resistance does not equate to weak resistance. In Magi's case, concealing emotions, using email discreetly, and devising an escape strategy serve as vital means to ensure safety while simultaneously creating opportunities to break free from an oppressive situation. These varying forms of resistance illustrate that the strategies women employ are shaped by the level of risk, their scope of action, and the power dynamics they confront. The relevance of the novel as a teaching resource can be viewed from two perspectives. First, from the standpoint of literature education, the novel offers characters, conflicts, cultural settings, and social issues that can be analyzed to understand both intrinsic and extrinsic elements. This aligns with the views of Hariyadi & Ramaniyar (2021), who emphasize that literary teaching materials serve as tools to help students grasp the meaning and values within literary works. Second, regarding character education, the conflicts within the novel provide topics for discussion on courage, justice, empathy, human dignity, and gender equality.

CONCLUSION

Research findings indicate that the novel *Perempuan yang Menangis kepada Bulan Hitam* by Dian Purnomo depicts the oppression of women resulting from patriarchal culture, manifesting as subordination, marginalization, violence, and gender stereotyping. The novel also portrays women's resistance both overt, through the rejection of forced marriage and the pursuit of justice, and covert, through survival strategies and efforts to maintain personal freedom.

Based on the findings, it is recommended that Indonesian language teachers utilize *Perempuan yang Menangis kepada Bulan Hitam* as an alternative literary teaching resource in high schools, while taking student readiness into

account. The novel is expected to deepen students' understanding of literary works while fostering critical thinking and social awareness. For students, the novel serves as a medium to grasp values concerning humanity, courage, and gender equality. Meanwhile, future researchers could expand upon the study of this novel using different approaches to broaden the understanding of women's issues and social life within literary works.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author extends gratitude to all parties who provided support, assisted with data collection, and supplied the information necessary for this research—particularly the Indonesian language teachers who offered insights into the relevance of novels as literary teaching materials in high schools. Appreciation is also expressed to the supervisor for providing guidance, feedback, and motivation throughout the research process. May all such assistance and support be richly rewarded.

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