

Resistance of Female Characters Against Patriarchal Cultural Values in Dian Purnomo's Novel Perempuan yang Menunggu di Lorong Menuju Laut

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Abstract: This article examines the resistance of female characters against patriarchal cultural values in Dian Purnomo's novel *Perempuan yang Menunggu di Lorong Menuju Laut* through feminist literary criticism. The study applies a qualitative descriptive method by using the novel as the primary data source. Data were collected through close reading and note-taking, then classified according to patriarchal cultural values and three forms of female resistance: verbal, action, and psychological resistance. The results show that patriarchal culture in the novel is represented through male domination, restriction of women's freedom, gender stereotypes, domestic expectations, and social pressure that limits women's roles in family and society. Female characters respond to these pressures through critical utterances, slogans, speeches, demonstrations, sea actions, collective legal strategies, emotional endurance, and self-awareness. The discussion indicates that resistance in the novel is a continuous process: psychological awareness produces courage to speak, verbal resistance builds collective consciousness, and action resistance transforms awareness into social struggle. The novel therefore functions not only as a representation of women's suffering under patriarchal culture, but also as a literary space that affirms women as active subjects, agents of change, and bearers of cultural criticism.

Keywords: Female Resistance, Indonesian Novel, Literary Criticism, Patriarchal Culture, Women's Freedom

A. Introduction

Literature is not merely a form of entertainment. It is also a cultural field where human experience, social conflict, ideology, and identity are represented through language. A novel, as a long narrative form, provides wide space for the author to portray characters, conflicts, social structures, and values that shape human life. Through its narrative world, a novel can reveal how power operates in family, community, culture, and social institutions (Padavic et al., 2020). For this reason, literary analysis can be used to understand not only the aesthetic structure of a text, but also the social problems and ideological tensions contained in it.

One important issue frequently represented in modern Indonesian literature is the position of women in patriarchal culture. Patriarchal culture places men as the dominant authority in social and family relations, while women are often positioned as subordinate, obedient, and dependent. Such a system limits women's access to decision-making, restricts freedom of expression, and shapes social expectations about how women should behave. In literary texts, this unequal structure may appear through characterization, dialogue, conflict, setting, and narrative perspective (Graef et al., 2020).

Dian Purnomo's novel *Perempuan yang Menunggu di Lorong Menuju Laut* presents female characters who face cultural values that restrict their freedom and identity. The novel does not only portray women as individuals who experience pressure, but also as subjects who develop awareness and resistance. The female characters challenge social norms, reject injustice, and defend dignity in a cultural environment that tends to privilege male authority. Their resistance is not always expressed through open confrontation. It also appears in language, inner conflict, silent endurance, personal decisions, and collective actions (Kent & Dacin, 2025).

The research problem of this article arises from the need to understand how female resistance is represented in relation to patriarchal cultural values. Many discussions of feminism in literature focus on the suffering of women, while the dynamic process of resistance often requires deeper attention. Resistance in this article is understood as a process that involves psychological awareness, verbal articulation, and concrete action. These forms of resistance are important because they show that women in the novel are not passive objects of culture, but active subjects who interpret, question, and challenge cultural domination (Tlaiss & Khanin, 2024).

Based on this background, the study asks two main questions. First, how is the resistance of female characters against patriarchal cultural values represented in *Perempuan yang Menunggu di Lorong Menuju Laut*? Second, how are patriarchal cultural values represented in the novel? These questions are directed to describe the forms of resistance, the values being resisted, and the meaning of female struggle in the narrative. The article contributes to feminist literary studies by showing the relationship between patriarchal culture and women's agency in a contemporary Indonesian novel (Widarwati & Purnomo, 2025).

The significance of this study lies in its effort to connect literary representation with cultural criticism (Vieira et al., 2021). The novel is treated as a text that stores social memory and voices the experience of women who must negotiate with norms that are often presented as tradition. By reading the novel through feminism, the analysis is able to reveal how cultural values can produce inequality, but also how literature imagines alternative possibilities for women to speak, choose, and act.

The novelty of the article is found in the emphasis on resistance as a process rather than a single event. Female resistance in the novel is not only identified as open protest. It is traced from inner awareness, emotional endurance, critical language, and concrete action. This approach makes it possible to understand women's struggle more comprehensively because it considers the psychological, verbal, and social dimensions of resistance in one analytical framework (Balint, 2024).

Literature Review

Feminist literary criticism views literary texts as spaces where gender relations, power, identity, and social norms can be examined. In this perspective, characters are not only fictional figures, but also representations of cultural positions and ideological struggles. Female characters may represent obedience, marginalization, resistance, transformation, or negotiation with social structures. Therefore, feminist analysis pays attention to how women are described, how their voices are heard or silenced, and how their choices are shaped by cultural values (Nartey, 2024).

Patriarchal culture in literary works may be represented through various forms. It can appear as male control over family decisions, social expectations that limit women's roles, stereotypes that define women as weak or dependent, and cultural norms that demand women's obedience. Patriarchy does not only operate through direct violence. It also works through tradition, shame, family honor, social judgment, and inherited values that make inequality appear natural (Stromquist, 2023). Because of this, the analysis of patriarchal values requires attention to both explicit conflict and subtle narrative signs.

Resistance in feminist literary analysis is not limited to physical rebellion. It can be verbal, behavioral, psychological, symbolic, or ideological. Verbal resistance is expressed through words, statements, criticism, and protest. Action resistance appears through concrete behavior, direct involvement, collective struggle, and personal decisions that reject domination. Psychological resistance takes place in the inner world of the character, such as awareness, emotional strength, self-reflection, and refusal to accept inferiority. These forms of resistance are often connected and may develop gradually throughout the narrative (Palmquist et al., 2020).

In the context of *Perempuan yang Menunggu di Lorong Menuju Laut*, the framework of analysis places patriarchal cultural values and female resistance in a relational structure. Patriarchal values create pressure, limitation, and inequality. Female characters respond to those pressures through different strategies of resistance (Rollock, 2021). The meaning of resistance is then interpreted as a form of agency, dignity, identity defense, and social criticism. The following figure illustrates the analytical framework used in this article.

The framework also assumes that patriarchal power is maintained through repetition. When cultural expectations are repeated in family, community, and social interaction, they become accepted as common sense (Gede Agung et al., 2024). Literature can interrupt this repetition by presenting characters who experience contradiction and begin to question inherited norms. In this way, a feminist reading does not only identify what the text says about women, but also examines how the text opens space for women to reinterpret their lives.

The analytical emphasis on verbal, action, and psychological resistance is useful because each form reveals a different level of struggle (Humă et al., 2023). Verbal resistance shows the emergence of voice; action resistance shows the transformation of voice into social movement; psychological resistance shows the inner condition that makes both voice and action possible. These three forms are used as the main categories for organizing and interpreting the findings.

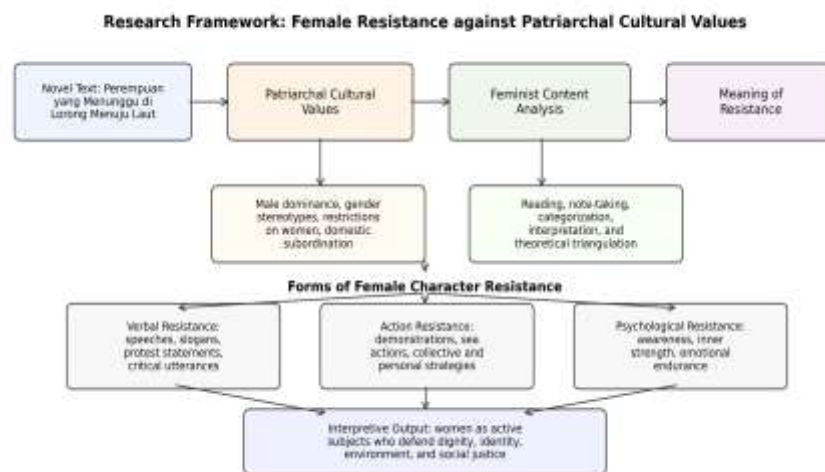


Figure 1. Framework of female resistance against patriarchal cultural values

B. Methods

This study used a qualitative descriptive method with a feminist literary criticism approach supported by sociology of literature. The qualitative design was chosen because the research aimed to interpret meaning, representation, and ideological relations in a literary text. The study did not measure variables statistically, but described and interpreted narrative evidence related to female characters, patriarchal cultural values, and forms of resistance (Oldac et al., 2025).

The primary data source was Dian Purnomo's novel *Perempuan yang Menunggu di Lorong Menuju Laut*. The data consisted of words, phrases, sentences, dialogues, narrative descriptions, conflicts, and events that showed patriarchal values and resistance of female characters. The object of analysis included the representation of female characters, cultural norms, gender relations, social pressure, and forms of opposition to patriarchal domination (Mensah, 2023).

Data were collected through reading and note-taking techniques. The researcher read the novel repeatedly to understand the story, identify relevant parts, and record narrative units related to the research focus. The collected data were then classified into categories: patriarchal cultural values, verbal resistance, action resistance, and psychological resistance. This classification helped the analysis move systematically from textual evidence to interpretation (Krugmann & Hartmann, 2024).

The data analysis technique used content analysis. The process included data selection, data classification, interpretation, and conclusion drawing (Kleinheksel et al., 2020). Data validity was strengthened through theoretical triangulation by comparing the interpretation with feminist concepts of patriarchy, gender inequality, and resistance. Through this process, the findings were expected to reflect both textual meaning and the broader cultural issues represented in the novel.

The analysis was conducted in several stages. First, the researcher identified narrative parts that contained gender relations, cultural pressure, and responses from female characters. Second, the selected data were grouped based on similarity of meaning. Third, each group was interpreted in relation to the research questions. Fourth, the interpretation was synthesized to explain how the novel constructs patriarchal values and how female characters resist those values. This procedure allowed the study to maintain a clear connection between textual evidence and analytical conclusion (Fife & Gossner, 2024).

C. Results and Discussion

The results of this study are presented separately from the discussion in order to distinguish textual findings from theoretical interpretation. The analysis of the novel *Perempuan yang Menunggu di Lorong Menuju Laut* produced two main findings. First, patriarchal cultural values are represented as social values that regulate women's position in family, community, and public life. Second, female characters respond to those values through three interrelated forms of resistance: verbal resistance, action resistance, and psychological resistance (Chioneso et al., 2020).

The data were obtained from narrative descriptions, dialogue, conflict, characterization, and events in the novel. After repeated reading and note-taking, the data were classified into four analytical categories: patriarchal cultural values, verbal resistance, action resistance, and psychological resistance. This classification follows the research focus of the study, which separates data on cultural values from data on female resistance (Koburtay et al., 2023).

Table 1. Research Focus, Data Sources, and Operational Indicators

Research Focus	Key Question	Data Source	Operational Indicator
Patriarchal cultural values	How are patriarchal values represented in the novel?	Narration, dialogue, conflict, characterization	Male domination, restriction of women's freedom, gender stereotypes, domestic expectations, social pressure
Verbal resistance	How do female characters resist through language?	Dialogue, protest statements, slogans, speeches	Critical utterances, rejection, demands for justice, awareness-building language
Action resistance	How do female characters resist through direct behavior?	Events, character actions, collective movements	Legal action, demonstration, sea action, open and hidden strategies
Psychological resistance	How do female characters resist inwardly?	Inner conflict, emotional response, narrative reflection	Awareness, mental endurance, courage, self-respect, refusal to accept subordination

1. Representation of patriarchal cultural values

The first finding shows that patriarchal culture in the novel is represented through male domination, marginalization of women, restriction of freedom, gender stereotypes, and inequality in decision-making. These values do not appear only as individual attitudes; they are narrated as a cultural system that shapes social expectations. Women are expected to remain patient, obedient, and responsible for domestic duties, while men and formal institutions are more often associated with authority, public decisions, and social power (Niner et al., 2024).

Patriarchal values also appear through the burden placed on women when social and environmental conflicts occur. The novel portrays women as figures who must continue caring for family, children, and household needs while also facing the direct impact of environmental exploitation (Ayeb-Karlsson et al., 2023). This double burden shows that patriarchal culture does not only limit women through explicit commands, but also through everyday expectations that make women responsible for survival while giving them limited access to power.

Another important representation is the stereotype that women should wait, endure, and remain silent. The symbolic image of waiting in the title suggests a cultural position in which women are expected to accept decisions made by others. However, the narrative gradually challenges this position by presenting female characters who no longer accept waiting as passivity. They reinterpret waiting as awareness, preparation, and eventually resistance.

2. Verbal resistance

The second finding shows that verbal resistance is expressed through critical statements, protest language, slogans, speeches, and rhetorical questions (Boyle, 2025). Shalom's statement, 'torang nyanda bisa seperti ini selamanya', becomes an early sign of refusal. The statement does not describe physical rebellion, but it shows that the female character has recognized an oppressive condition and begins to reject it through language.

Verbal resistance is also found in public speeches and collective slogans. The slogans 'Sangihe nimboleh ditambang' and 'Kembalikan torang pe Sangihe' show that language becomes a medium for expressing rejection, defending identity, and building solidarity. The call 'Tidak! Lawan!' after the question 'Apakah kita akan diam saja?' demonstrates that speech in the novel does not only express personal anger. It also mobilizes collective response and transforms individual anxiety into shared political awareness (Shah, 2022).

The speeches of Shalom and Ibu Agatha strengthen this finding. They use language to criticize injustice, question the position of government and security forces, motivate the community, and remind people about the future of children and the survival of Sangihe. Therefore, verbal resistance functions as a bridge between inner awareness and public action. Through speech, female characters name injustice, reject silence, and invite others to participate in resistance.

3. Action resistance

The third finding shows that female resistance develops into concrete action. The novel presents collective legal action, demonstrations, direct defense, strategic planning, and sea actions. One important example is the organization of forty-five Sangihe women who agree to challenge the company's environmental permit through the State Administrative Court. This finding shows that women enter a formal legal space and act as subjects who can make decisions, organize evidence, and defend communal interests (Bhatt et al., 2024).

Shalom's position as the main plaintiff also represents action resistance. Her willingness to become the public face of legal resistance demonstrates courage, responsibility, and strategic awareness. In this case, resistance is not spontaneous emotion, but a planned action that uses education, legal status, and collective trust as forms of social capital. The female character is not merely affected by conflict; she actively intervenes in the structure that produces injustice (Shahir et al., 2025).

Action resistance is also represented through sea action. The narrative explains that the community coordinates an action on the water because the sea is central to the life and identity of Sangihe people. Posters carrying messages such as 'Kembalikan torang

pe Sangihe' and 'Sangihe nimboleh ditambang' are used to show rejection in a public and symbolic form. This action proves that the resistance of women and the community is not limited to courtroom struggle, but also takes place in the cultural landscape that sustains their life.

The data also show that action resistance can be open or hidden. When legal and public actions face pressure, the characters consider more careful strategies to avoid criminalization. This finding indicates that resistance is adaptive. It changes according to the risk faced by the community, yet its purpose remains the same: to defend land, sea, dignity, and communal survival.

4. Psychological resistance

The fourth finding shows that psychological resistance becomes the inner foundation of verbal and action resistance. Female characters experience fear, anger, fatigue, anxiety, and uncertainty, but these emotions do not always lead to surrender (Al-Naamani et al., 2024). Instead, they become part of the process through which women build endurance and critical awareness. The expression of fear about losing the strength of Sangihe fighters shows that resistance also takes place in the emotional and mental sphere.

Psychological resistance is visible when the characters refuse to accept subordination as natural (Askanius, 2022). They begin to understand that injustice is not simply a personal misfortune, but the result of unequal power relations. This awareness allows them to question silence, obedience, and fear. In the novel, fear does not erase resistance; rather, the ability to face fear becomes a sign of inner strength.

The internal struggle of the characters also appears in anger that is not always spoken directly (Westera et al., 2020). Such anger reveals that resistance can begin before it becomes visible. A female character may not immediately act in public, but the refusal to accept injustice in her thoughts and emotions already marks the beginning of feminist consciousness. This finding is important because it shows that resistance is not always loud; it may first grow as self-awareness, emotional endurance, and a decision not to surrender.

5. Relationship among the forms of resistance

The findings show that verbal, action, and psychological resistance are not separate categories. They form a continuous process. Psychological resistance produces awareness; verbal resistance articulates awareness through speech; and action resistance transforms awareness into concrete struggle. The process then returns to the psychological level because every public action strengthens self-confidence, solidarity, and collective identity (Hibbs, 2022).

This relationship shows that the novel does not separate personal transformation from social transformation (Avelino, 2021). A change in consciousness leads to a change in language, and language can lead to collective action. At the same time, collective action strengthens emotional endurance. Therefore, female resistance in the novel is best understood as a dynamic movement from the inner self to public struggle.

Table 2. Summary of Main Findings

Aspect	Main Finding	Textual Indicator	Meaning
Patriarchal values	Patriarchy operates as cultural control	Domestic expectations, gender stereotypes, male authority, social pressure	Women are positioned as subordinate, but the pressure becomes the background of resistance
Verbal resistance	Women use language to reject injustice	Critical statements, speeches, slogans, rhetorical questions	Speech builds awareness and transforms silence into collective voice
Action resistance	Women take concrete and collective steps	Legal action, demonstrations, sea action, organized strategies	Women become active subjects who defend land, sea, community, and dignity
Psychological resistance	Women develop inner strength and self-awareness	Fear, anger, fatigue, reflection, refusal to surrender	Inner resistance becomes the foundation of verbal and public resistance
Overall finding	The three forms support one another	Awareness, speech, and action appear as a connected process	The novel represents resistance as continuous feminist agency

Discussion

The findings indicate that patriarchal culture in *Perempuan yang Menunggu di Lorong Menuju Laut* is not merely a background of the story. It functions as an ideological system that regulates how women are expected to speak, act, endure, and position themselves in society. In this sense, the novel supports the view that patriarchy works through both visible domination and subtle cultural control. Male authority, domestic expectations, and stereotypes become social mechanisms that restrict women's agency.

The representation of patriarchal values is consistent with feminist criticism, which views gender inequality as the product of social and cultural construction rather than natural difference. The female characters are not oppressed only by individuals, but by repeated norms that tell women to wait, obey, sacrifice, and protect family or communal honor. This confirms Fakih's argument that patriarchy positions men as dominant and women as subordinate within social structures. In the novel, this subordination becomes visible in family expectations, public decision-making, and the unequal distribution of responsibility during crisis (Waismel-Manor et al., 2021).

However, the novel does not present women as passive victims. The emergence of verbal resistance shows that language is an important instrument of agency. When Shalom, Ibu Agatha, and other women speak, they do more than express emotion. They create a public vocabulary of resistance. Their words identify injustice, expose the connection between environmental exploitation and social suffering, and encourage the community to reject silence. This finding strengthens the feminist idea that voice is central to the struggle against marginalization (Arthur-Holmes & Abrefa Busia, 2021).

Verbal resistance also demonstrates that speech can function as collective pedagogy. The speeches and slogans in the novel teach people how to interpret their situation: land is not only property, the sea is not only a resource, and environmental destruction is not only an ecological issue. It is also a threat to identity, memory, and future generations. Through language, women transform private fear into public consciousness. This is why verbal resistance becomes the first visible bridge between psychological awareness and organized action (Chioneso et al., 2020). Action resistance confirms that feminist agency in the novel moves beyond symbolic expression. The decision of women to file a legal challenge, organize witnesses, hold meetings, and conduct sea actions shows that they are able to enter public and institutional spaces (Speed et al., 2020). This finding is in line with Beauvoir's existential feminist idea that women must move from the position of the object to the position of the subject. Shalom's role as the main plaintiff is significant because she uses her legal maturity, education, and social trust to represent collective interests.

The action resistance in the novel also expands the meaning of feminist struggle. The female characters do not fight only for personal freedom (Wajiran & Apriyani, 2025). They also defend land, water, sea, cultural identity, and the future of the community. This broader orientation gives the novel an eco-social dimension. Women's resistance is connected to environmental justice because the destruction of nature directly affects everyday survival, domestic labor, livelihood, and communal continuity. Therefore, the resistance of female characters becomes both feminist and ecological.

Psychological resistance provides the deepest basis for the other forms of resistance. The characters' fear, exhaustion, anger, and anxiety reveal that resistance is not romanticized as an easy process. The novel shows that women must negotiate with emotional pressure while continuing to act. In feminist literary criticism, this inner struggle is important because domination often works by shaping how women see themselves (Diko, 2024). When the female characters refuse to internalize fear and inferiority, they begin to reclaim the right to define themselves. The connection among psychological, verbal, and action resistance shows that resistance is a process, not a single event (Humă et al., 2023). Psychological resistance produces critical awareness; verbal resistance articulates that awareness; and action resistance materializes it in social practice. This process also works in reverse because public action strengthens emotional endurance and collective identity. The novel therefore presents resistance

as circular and continuous. Compared with studies that focus mainly on women's suffering, this article emphasizes the development of women's agency (Karp et al., 2020). The female characters suffer from patriarchal and structural pressure, but the narrative does not stop at suffering. It shows how pressure produces awareness, how awareness produces speech, and how speech becomes the basis of collective action. This is the main contribution of the article: female resistance is analyzed as a gradual movement from inner recognition to social intervention.

The literary importance of the novel lies in its ability to make cultural domination visible. Values that may appear ordinary in daily life, such as obedience, patience, family honor, and waiting, are shown as potentially oppressive when they limit women's freedom (Christianson et al., 2021). By presenting women who question these values, the novel invites readers to reconsider patriarchal norms that are often accepted as tradition. The text therefore works as a form of cultural criticism.

In conclusion, the discussion confirms that the representation of resistance cannot be separated from the representation of patriarchal values. The stronger the cultural pressure placed on female characters, the clearer the need for resistance becomes. Through Shalom, Ibu Agatha, and other women, the novel imagines women as subjects who can think, speak, decide, organize, and lead. This makes *Perempuan yang Menunggu di Lorong Menuju Laut* an important contemporary Indonesian novel for feminist literary criticism.

D. Conclusions

This study concludes that *Perempuan yang Menunggu di Lorong Menuju Laut* represents female resistance as a complex and continuous response to patriarchal cultural values. Patriarchy in the novel is represented through male domination, restriction of women's freedom, gender stereotypes, domestic expectations, social pressure, marginalization, and inequality in decision-making. These values do not appear as isolated incidents, but as a cultural system that shapes relationships, choices, and the position of women in society. Against this cultural system, female characters develop three interconnected forms of resistance. Verbal resistance appears through critical expressions, protest statements, slogans, speeches, and rhetorical questions that challenge injustice and build collective awareness. Action resistance is shown through legal struggle, demonstrations, sea actions, direct defense, and organized strategies that transform awareness into concrete social movement. Psychological resistance becomes the inner foundation of both forms, reflected in courage, emotional endurance, self-awareness, anger, fear, and refusal to accept subordination. The findings show that resistance does not begin only in public action. It begins from the internal recognition that domination is unjust. Once this awareness is expressed through language, it can develop into collective action. Therefore, the novel does not portray women merely as victims of patriarchal culture. It positions them as active subjects who are able to think, speak, decide, organize, and lead. The

resistance of female characters also carries broader meaning because it is related to the defense of dignity, identity, environment, cultural memory, and social justice. This study suggests that feminist literary analysis should pay attention not only to forms of oppression, but also to the strategies, processes, and meanings of resistance. Future research may examine the novel through ecofeminism, sociology of literature, or postcolonial feminism to expand the discussion of women's agency, environmental justice, and local identity in contemporary Indonesian literature.

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