

IDENTITY NEGOTIATION AND RESISTANCE IN THE SHORT STORY 'ROSE IN THE TIGER CANAL': A REVIEW OF FEMINISM POSCOLONIAL

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the negotiation of identity and female resistance in the short story Mawar di Kanal Macan by Iksaka Banu, focusing on the dual oppression faced by women in colonial and postcolonial contexts. Using a descriptive-analytical method and a postcolonial feminist approach, the research explores how colonial and patriarchal power structures shape women's identities and incite resistance. Drawing on theories of identity, subalternity, and hybridity, the analysis investigates how women in subaltern positions negotiate their identities within dominant power structures. Furthermore, it examines how hybridity and intersectionality create spaces for resistance through both subtle and overt actions. The findings reveal that the main character, Adelheid Ewald, navigates complex identity negotiations due to the intersecting influences of colonial and patriarchal dominance, with resistance manifesting in legal and symbolic forms. These insights contribute to postcolonial feminist discourse in Indonesia, offering a deeper understanding of how women assert their agency despite operating within layered systems of oppression. The study suggests further exploration of other literary works that engage similar themes to expand discussions on identity and resistance in postcolonial societies.

KEYWORDS Hybridity, Identity, Intersectionality, Postcolonial Feminism, Subaltern Resistance



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INTRODUCTION

Colonialism not only conquered territories, but also shaped culture and power, leaving a profound impact on the lives of colonial people. After the colonial era ended, postcolonial societies were faced with the great challenge of breaking away from the legacy of colonialism and rebuilding their deprived identities. In this effort, the postcolonial approach emerged as a critical tool for unraveling and understanding the ongoing impact of colonialism. The postcolonial approach

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highlights how history is written from the perspective of rulers who tend to ignore and oppress marginalized groups (Imas & Garcia-Lorenzo (2022)). As expressed by major theorists such as Bhabha, Said, and Spivak—known as 'the holy trinity of colonial discourse analysis'—the colonial narrative not only created a social hierarchy that favored Western domination, but also continued to influence power structures in postcolonial societies (Yanti, 2009). Therefore, postcolonialism seeks to challenge and deconstruct this dominant narrative by rewriting history from the perspective of those who have been marginalized, while opening up space for previously silenced voices (Said, 1978).

As part of its critique of colonial legacy, the postcolonial approach also highlights how colonialism and patriarchy interact in creating the double oppression of women in former colonial countries (Rouabhia, 2022). These two systems of power do not stand alone; Instead, they reinforce and exacerbate the conditions of indigenous women, resulting in increasingly complex layers of oppression. As a workforce, indigenous women in the Dutch East Indies are often exploited and have very limited access to education and health (Afandi et al., 2020). This inequality becomes even more apparent when data shows that in 1930, only 2.4% of indigenous women had access to primary education, much lower compared to 15.6% of indigenous men (Behrendt, 2022; Vickers, 2005). This fact illustrates how colonialism and patriarchy work together to strengthen the subordination of women in various aspects of life, both in the public and domestic spheres.

During the colonial period, the oppression of women in Indonesia was reinforced by Dutch legal policies, which incorporated elements of patriarchal customary law such as forced marriage and restrictions on inheritance rights for women (Locher-Scholten, 2000). On the one hand, the policy reinforces inequality in the public sphere, on the other hand, it also limits their freedom in the domestic environment. As a result, women in post-colonial societies shaped perceptions of themselves and their roles based on these layers of oppression. To understand this condition in depth, an approach that considers the complex relationship between colonialism and patriarchy as well as the power dynamics involved is needed (Mcewan, 2001).

To further explore how women's identities are shaped in the post-colonial context, this study examines the interaction between colonial power and patriarchy. Previous studies have shown that the oppression resulting from these two powers plays a significant role in shaping women's identities as well as influencing the resistance strategies they develop (Freedman et al., 2019). In this case, Bambang Aris Kartika (2011) implies that women's identities in postcolonial societies are formed through power negotiations that involve pressure from colonialism and patriarchy. In addition, studies highlighting the traumatic impact of colonization on women's identity, as outlined by Visser (2011), show how past traumas continue to influence the dynamics of women's identity to the present day. While providing valuable insights, these studies generally lack to explore the variety of contexts in different postcolonial societies. For example, the research of Susanto (2020), Muftiandar (2021), and Alaudin (2022) has succeeded in identifying women's resistance in the postcolonial context, but has not fully accommodated the diversity of resistance strategies influenced by unique cultural and historical differences. This

gap hinders a deep understanding of the impact of colonial and patriarchal forces on women's identity and resistance in Indonesia's historical and cultural environment. Therefore, further research is needed to explore how women's identities are shaped and how resistance strategies are developed in different postcolonial societies that have different power dynamics and histories. This research is important to produce a more comprehensive picture of women's responses to oppression, so that it can contribute more broadly and deeply to understanding the diversity of forms of resistance in various contexts.

This research analyzes the negotiation of women's identity and resistance in the short story "Mawar di Kanal Macan" by Iksaka Banu through various theories. The figure of Adelheid Ewald, who was trapped in the colonial structure and patriarchy in colonial Batavia, was studied using the subaltern theory of Spivak (1988) to see how, as a European woman in the colony, defied patriarchal norms despite being in an oppressed group. Stuart Hall's identity theory (1990) explains that Adelheid's identity is constantly negotiated by social and cultural contexts, while Homi Bhabha's hybridity theory (1994) reveals the ambiguity of its position between the European and colonial worlds. In terms of resistance, Foucault's theory of power (1980) shows that Adelheid's resistance takes place through a covert strategy of power pressure, and Crenshaw's theory of intersectionality (1991) highlights how various factors—colonialism, patriarchy, and gender—interact with each other to shape Adelheid's complex experience. Thus, this research not only enriches the study of postcolonial and feminism in Indonesian literature, but also has the potential to open up broader insights and correct long-standing injustices, in order to create a more equal and gender-just society.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study applies a descriptive-analytical method with a literature approach as explained by Ratna (2004). This method was chosen because it provides a space for in-depth analysis of literary works, especially the short story *Mawar di Kanal Macan* from the collection *All for the Indies* by Iksaka Banu and is in line with the focus of research that explores identity negotiation and resistance in the context of colonialism and patriarchy, with the foundation of postcolonial feminist theory.

The research population includes literary works that highlight themes of identity and resistance. The main sample taken was the short story *Mawar di Kanal Macan*, which was selected based on its relevance to the research topic. This short story contains a rich narrative of power dynamics and forms of resistance in the context of colonialism and patriarchy.

The research began with the selection of Mawar's short story in the *Macan Canal* as the main object of study. Data collection was carried out through an in-depth critical reading of the text, with the aim of identifying the key elements that support the research theme. These elements include how women are represented in colonial narratives, their social roles, and how colonial power and patriarchy interact in shaping their identities. The collected data is then interpreted based on the study of postcolonial feminism to provide a comprehensive and comprehensive understanding.

This process involves coding, interpreting, and synthesizing data, all of which aim to explore the representation of women and the dynamics of power in the short story.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Identity Negotiation

In the context of colonial society, identity was always negotiated in complex power relations. Stuart Hall argues that identity is formed through the dynamic interaction between the individual and the social forces that surround him, such as power and social representation (Hall, 1996). This is reflected in the life of Adelheid, the main character in the short story *Mawar di Canal Macan*. As the wife of a colonial official, Adelheid was trapped in social expectations that forced her to take on the role of faithful wife, even though her marriage was far from harmonious and controlled by colonial power. "... Even though you have lived alone in your palace for seven years, you are still Mrs. Ewald" (Banu, 2014). This narrative suggests that although Adelheid had long lived apart from her husband, her identity in colonial society was still determined by her status as the wife of an official. Thus, Adelheid's identity is not formed through her personal choices, but through external powers that determine her values and roles based on her relationship with her husband. In colonial patriarchal societies, women like Adelheid were not seen as independent individuals, but as part of a social order that affirmed their status through the bonds of marriage and domestic roles.

This identity construction shows how the colonial and patriarchal systems are intertwined in defining women's positions. Women's status is not only limited by rigid gender norms, but also by colonial forces that place them in rigid social hierarchies. This identity negotiation occurs when Adelheid tries to negotiate a space of autonomy, but is constantly limited by social structures that force her to conform to a predetermined role. The identity of Adelheid reflects a social order that prioritizes women's relationships with men as the main determinant of women's position in society. In this case, Adelheid is constructed as part of a social structure that deprives women of personal autonomy and forces women to conform to expectations controlled by male power. Looking at the Adelheid identity through this perspective, it is clear that in the context of colonial society, women did not have the freedom to define themselves, which ultimately placed them in a subordinate position within the social structure.

Furthermore, this ever-negotiated identity became increasingly apparent as patriarchal and colonial powers collaborated to suppress women. Adelheid's husband, as part of the colonial system, was free to keep his mistress without any consequences, while Adelheid was forced to submit to strict social rules. This system shows how colonial structures not only gave greater freedom to men, but also actively reinforced patriarchal dominance through gender-biased rules. This

injustice is affirmed in the quote, "In the Indies, her husband has the freedom to keep concubines, while wives in the Netherlands who try to find entertainment, are threatened with the death penalty" (Banu, 2014). In this context, the Adelheid identity was shaped by patriarchal norms that not only limited her freedom, but also strengthened social control over the body and the role of women in colonial society.

The negotiation of Adelheid identity is even more complex when viewed through the perspective of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, who emphasizes the concept of subalterns as a group whose voice is difficult to hear in the domination of power (Spivak, 1988). Although Adelheid was a European woman in the colony lands, she remained in a *subaltern* position under patriarchal rule that silenced her expression. For example, when he wants to meet Lieutenant Dapper, he feels the need to go undercover. This disguise represents the limitations of women's agencies in the colonial context. The act of disguise not only confirms Adelheid's compulsion to confront patriarchal power, but also illustrates how *subaltern* women must hide behind other identities imposed by social norms to express their desires. The phrase, "This is not fair. It's very unfair," which she says in a gentle and depressed tone (Banu, 2014), emphasizing that although the female protagonist is aware of the injustice she has experienced, her space to express her rejection of the patriarchal system is very limited. Like other *subalterns*, Adelheid experienced structural silence that made it difficult for him to articulate his identity and agency in the midst of cultural and social dominance.

The negotiation of Adelheid identity was not only limited to patriarchal and colonial power, but also reflected the deeper tensions between the colonized and the colonized cultures. In colonial societies, identity is the result of a complex blend of various cultural forces. For Adelheid, this meant that his identity was not only constructed by Dutch patriarchal norms, but also by colonial dynamics in the East Indies. The presence of her husband's mistress and her brown child created disruption in her role as the wife of a colonial official as well as shaking the identity she had held so far. "Mijn God. The child and his mother are very... chocolate! And they slept on my embroidered pillowcase" (Banu, 2014), showing that Adelheid's identity was shaken by the mixing of cultures he faced. On the one hand, she sought to maintain her traditional role as a devout European wife, but on the other hand, she was forced to confront a colonial reality that blurred the boundaries of racial and gender identity.

The hybridity of the identity faced by Adelheid illustrates how colonial power not only dictated gender roles, but also created a tension between identities exercised by colonial norms and the realities of life in colonial lands. Hybrid identity, according to Bhabha (1994), not only produces disruption, but also opens up space for resistance. In the context of Adelheid, although he is under the strict

control of social and patriarchal norms, there are gaps through which his identity can be questioned, reconstructed, and negotiated (Putra, 2023). The uncertainty that arose from this hybrid identity, through her interaction with her husband's mistress and the colonial reality, provided an opportunity for Adelheid to reject the identity that had been established for her and, in some ways, begin to redefine herself. Although this process is difficult and hampered by rigid social norms, Adelheid's desire to achieve freedom from the norms that constrain him shows that his identity is the result of never-ending negotiations. Stuart Hall stated that identity is a process of *becoming*, with the intention that the individual is constantly in the process of self-formation under the influence of opposing social forces. In this case, Adelheid is not only subject to patriarchal and colonial power, but also struggles to redefine itself among ever-changing cultural and social boundaries (Tsai et al., 2022). The agency that Adelheid has, although limited, gives him space to negotiate with the norms that oppress him. In other words, identity, even though bound by external forces, remains fluid and constantly moving.

Resistance

The discussion of women's resistance in the context of postcolonial feminism highlights the repressive and productive dynamics of power. Foucault (1980) argues that power always involves resistance, both in explicit forms and subtle and covert. Adelheid's action in bringing his case to court to refuse to cut his family's assets for her husband's concubine severance pay is a form of explicit resistance that reflects the dynamics of patriarchal power. "With the help of a friend who is a legal expert, I brought this case to court. In essence, I refuse to cut my family's assets to be used as the severance pay of the mistress" (Banu, 2014). Adelheid's demands show that women in colonial societies are not only passive subjects, but also active agents capable of challenging the norms that oppress them.

Furthermore, Adelheid's demands also prove how patriarchal power is constructed to dominate women's rights, especially in economic and family aspects. In this context, the court is one of the arenas where women can make explicit resistance to male domination. Through the legal process, women in colonial lands like Adelheid had the opportunity to challenge adverse decisions while retaining their rights, which were traditionally controlled by men. The court, in this case, is an important space to break down patriarchal norms that have placed women in a subordinate position. The resistance shown through this legal channel not only questions the authority of the patriarchy, but also opens up the possibility of reconstructing a more just and equal social order, especially in terms of the distribution of power and access to women's rights.

In a review of Foucault's theory, Adelheid's actions reflect broader power

relations. In the context of this short story, the female protagonists use the available strategies to negotiate their position in a patriarchal social structure. This resistance is productive by creating space for women to reclaim control of their rights, despite being in a highly regulated and repressive environment. Such a perspective provides a critical affirmation of the feminist argument that

Women's resistance in the colonial and patriarchal context is an attempt to disrupt the hegemonic order that benefits men (Jabri, 2007).

In addition to explicit resistance, Adelheid also practiced a more subtle form of resistance through language and attitude. The irony he displays, accompanied by a smile when interacting with his interlocutor, serves as a symbolic strategy to resist authority without having to oppose it directly. For example, when he quipped, "I forgot, sometimes you can be very direct, rude, and wild. But I will not deny your opinion" (Banu, 2014). This insinuation implies subtle resistance that is not detected directly, without interfering with the authority of the interlocutor. According to Foucault, this type of resistance, although it does not look confrontational, still has the power to undermine power structures. Resistance is not always physical or legal to be effective; It can also be expressed through discourse and symbolism, which subtly challenges oppressive rules. Adelheid's ironic use of language shows how women can harness social elements, such as language and interaction, to maintain their authority, even in spaces where patriarchal power is dominant. Thus, subtle resistance is not limited to expressing dissatisfaction, but also a form of resistance that dismantles the imbalance of power without having to engage in open confrontation.

Women's resistance in colonial and patriarchal contexts can operate at various levels, both explicit and subtle (Lestari, 2023). Resistance does not always have to be confrontational, but it can come in a more subtle form, through the use of language, attitudes, and critical awareness of situations of oppression. This approach reinforces the postcolonial view of feminism that emphasizes the importance of understanding resistance as a complex negotiation process, in which women are not only trapped in power structures, but also play an active role in changing them. In this context, women's resistance, both in the form of legal action and the use of subtle language, is an effective strategy to challenge and redefine hegemonic power structures.

Kimberlé Crenshaw explores the complexity of women's resistance through an intersectionality approach, which reveals how the intersection of identities—such as gender, race, and class—shapes experiences of oppression while giving rise to a variety of resistance strategies. Crenshaw emphasizes that the oppression of women is multidimensional and occurs through the interaction of layered social factors. This perspective is important in understanding the character of Adelheid in the short story "Rose in the Tiger Canal,". As a European woman who occupies

a more privileged social position than indigenous women who are more marginalized, Adelheid remains a victim of patriarchal oppression that ignores her rights as a woman. He is subject to patriarchal norms that place men as rulers in the household and society. This is reflected in her experience when her husband decided to give severance pay to his mistress without considering Adelheid's rights. At this point, she experiences gender-based oppression imposed by patriarchal structures, Although he has a higher social status. Her actions brought the case to court, as stated, "With the help of a legal friend, I brought the case to court" (Banu, 2014) is an example of explicit resistance to patriarchal power, which shows that even though she has access to legal resources, she still has to fight for her rights as a woman under gender-biased rules.

From the perspective of intersectionality, Adelheid's experience differs from that of more racially and class-marginalized women, but remains relevant in understanding how different forms of oppression can operate simultaneously. Although she did not face racism like indigenous women, Adelheid still experienced significant gender-based oppression. In another conversation, Adelheid complained to Lieutenant Dapper about the injustice in gender relations, "In the Indies, honorable men like my husband were able to nurture, even marry one or two mistresses, while their wives in the lonely Netherlands ... threatened with the death penalty in the name of adultery" (Banu, 2014). His expression is not just a personal complaint, but a criticism of the social hypocrisy that oppresses women who are considered not entitled to equal freedom in marriage. The colonial system gave men the freedom to keep their mistresses, while women who did the same were threatened with the death penalty. There is a double standard that treats women and men unequally in terms of morality and sexual behavior in marriage.

The gender oppression experienced by Adelheid not only comes from her husband, but is also reinforced by legal and social structures that justify the subordination of women. When her husband was free to keep the mistress without social or legal consequences, Adelheid had to bear the emotional and social burden of the infidelity. She even realized that women in the Netherlands, part of the same patriarchal system, would be threatened with much harsher punishments. Adelheid Consciousness illustrates that gender oppression in these conversations is structural and maintained by social and legal norms that actively support male power. Thus, the resistance that Adelheid shows to this condition reflects not only her personal struggle against patriarchy, but also how women from dominant groups still have to face the power that limits their autonomy. Although Adelheids have greater access to resources such as legal pathways, the legal system itself is biased and tends to favor the interests of men. In other words, even though Adelheid came from the upper class, she was still trapped in a patriarchal dynamic that limited her rights as a woman.

This transition also reveals how the forms of resistance used by women from dominant social groups differ from the resistance that may be used by women from marginalized groups. In the case of Adelheid, resistance does not only arise in physical or confrontational forms, but also through legal and symbolic channels. She used legal avenues to challenge patriarchy, something women from lower social backgrounds may not be able to do, as they do not have equal access to legal resources. This action is important evidence of what Crenshaw expressed in the theory of intersectionality, which is that women face different challenges depending on their social position, and the forms of resistance that arise vary. As a woman from the upper class, Adelheid was able to claim her rights through the courts, even in a legal system that still discriminated against women.

In terms of intersectionality, Adelheid's resistance reveals two important findings, first, patriarchal power is cross-class and can constrain women from various backgrounds. Second, the oppression faced by women is complex and not always easy to unravel. Adelheid showed how women from even dominant groups have to struggle against the system that oppresses them, and the forms of resistance used can differ depending on their social position and resources. Thus, this analysis enriches our understanding of how women from different backgrounds have agents against oppression, not only through physical confrontation, but also through legal channels, discourse, and symbolism.

CONCLUSION

This research reveals that the short story "Mawar di Kanal Macan" by Iksana Banu deeply describes the dynamics of women's identity and resistance in colonial and post-colonial contexts. The figure of Adelheid Ewald is a representation of how women's identities are formed through complex negotiations between colonial and patriarchal power. The resistance displayed, both explicitly through legal action and substantially through everyday attitudes, shows women's efforts to articulate their rights and identity in the midst of an oppressive system.

This study makes a significant contribution to postcolonial feminist literature, particularly in the context of Indonesian literary studies, by highlighting the resistance strategies that women use to confront injustice. This analysis reinforces the understanding that women are able to affirm their identities and claim their agency, despite being within discriminatory and repressive power structures. Thus, this research not only enriches academic discourse, but also offers a new perspective in understanding the complexity of women's identities and struggles in the context of Indonesian history and culture.

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