



Gender Awareness and Critical Literacy through Literary Education: A Feminist Stylistic Analysis of *Perempuan yang Menangis Kepada Bulan Hitam*

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Abstract:

This study examines the construction of gender and the transformation of female positioning through language in Dian Purnomo's novel *Perempuan yang Menangis kepada Bulan Hitam* and identifies its pedagogical potential for developing gender awareness and critical literacy in literary education. The study employs a qualitative descriptive method with a feminist stylistic approach. The data consist of words, phrases, clauses, sentences, dialogues, and narrative passages representing gendered identity construction, regulation of women, silencing, control over the female body, agency, and resistance. The analysis primarily draws on Sara Mills's feminist stylistics, supported by Lakoff's account of language and gender, West and Zimmerman's concept of *doing gender*, and Butler's theory of gender performativity. The findings demonstrate that Magi's position is initially constructed through language that names, regulates, silences, and controls her body. However, this positioning is not fixed. Through verbal refusal, the naming of violence, and acts of self-determination, Magi gradually moves from being an object of discourse to becoming a subject with agency. These findings suggest that the novel has pedagogical potential as material for critical literacy because it enables students to examine the relationship between language, gender, and power. Since this study does not involve classroom intervention or empirical assessment, it does not claim that the novel directly increases gender awareness or critical literacy. Rather, it demonstrates the text's potential relevance for gender-conscious and critically oriented literary education.





Introduction (مقدمة)

Literary texts are not merely aesthetic objects but also cultural spaces in which identities, social relations, values, and power relations are constructed and negotiated. Through the representation of characters, social roles, interpersonal relations, and patterns of speech, literary works may reproduce dominant assumptions about gender while simultaneously providing opportunities to question them. This issue is particularly important in literary education because students encounter gender representations not only as narrative content but also through the linguistic choices and discursive structures through which characters are positioned. Research on educational and literary texts has demonstrated that representations of gender can reproduce stereotypes concerning social roles, interpersonal behavior, occupations, and expectations of masculinity and femininity (Crawford et al., 2024; Huang & Liu, 2024; Jehle et al., 2024). Consequently, examining gender representation in literature is relevant to educational efforts that seek to develop students' awareness of inequality, representation, and inclusion.

The relationship between language and gender has long been addressed in feminist linguistic and sociolinguistic scholarship. Lakoff (1973) demonstrates that linguistic practices can reflect unequal gender relations and culturally constructed expectations concerning women's speech. West and Zimmerman (1987), through the concept of "doing gender," further explain gender as an ongoing social accomplishment produced through interaction rather than simply a fixed individual attribute. Butler (1990) similarly conceptualizes gender as performative, emphasizing that gender identities are constituted through repeated social practices and norms. These perspectives are important for literary analysis because gender can be examined not only through what female characters experience but also through how language positions them as subjects, objects, speakers, or recipients of social authority.

Within literary studies, feminist stylistics provides a particularly useful framework for examining the relationship between linguistic form and gendered meaning. Mills (1995) argues that stylistic analysis informed by feminism can reveal how apparently ordinary linguistic choices participate in the construction of gendered identities and relations of power. A feminist stylistic approach therefore moves beyond identifying whether women are represented positively or negatively and examines the textual mechanisms through which such representations are produced. Attention can be directed to lexical choices, grammatical structures, transitivity, agency, naming, speech patterns, and the distribution of voices within a text. Such an approach is particularly relevant to narratives in which female characters experience social regulation and subsequently develop forms of resistance.

The educational significance of such textual analysis can be further understood through the perspective of critical literacy. Critical literacy views reading as an interpretive and social practice through which readers examine how texts construct meanings, identities, assumptions, and relations of power (Janks, 2019; Vasquez et al., 2019). Rather than treating texts as neutral objects containing fixed meanings, critical literacy encourages readers to read both with and against texts, question dominant representations, identify marginalized perspectives, and consider the social consequences of particular ways of representing the world. Mirra and Garcia (2021) similarly argue that contemporary literacy education requires learners to engage critically with texts and social realities rather than merely demonstrate the ability to extract information. In this context, literary interpretation can become a form of critical inquiry through which students examine how gender and other social identities are produced through discourse.

The intersection of critical literacy, gender, and literary education has received increasing attention in recent scholarship. Canett Castro et al. (2021) emphasize the importance of developing critical literacy with a gender perspective in literature education, demonstrating that literary texts can provide opportunities for learners to interrogate gendered representations. Setiawan and Nurbani (2023) likewise demonstrate the relevance of literary works for developing critical literacy among prospective teachers. Savitz et al. (2024) show how literature, dialogue, and inquiry can be combined to facilitate critical examination of gender labels, while Whitford (2024) demonstrates the pedagogical value of critical literacy practices for examining explicit and implicit gender stereotypes. Yeoh and Cheong (2023) further highlight the importance of engaging students and teachers in questioning gender stereotyping in children's literature. These studies indicate that literary education can function as a significant site for gender awareness when learners are encouraged to interrogate textual representations rather than receive them passively.

The pedagogical dimension of gender analysis is also connected to feminist pedagogy. Feminist pedagogy emphasizes participatory learning, reflexivity, the questioning of hierarchical relations, recognition of marginalized voices, and the creation of learning environments in which students can critically examine social inequalities (Almanssori, 2020; Currier, 2020). Recent research has continued to explore the application of feminist pedagogy in educational contexts. Granger (2024), for example, examines the implementation of feminist perspectives in secondary education, while Giffin et al. (2023) discuss emancipatory learning and feminist pedagogy in higher education. More recent work by Miller and Morrison (2025) and Wilkinson (2025) further demonstrates that feminist pedagogy remains relevant to contemporary educational debates concerning voice, vulnerability, participation, and institutional power. These perspectives suggest that teaching literature through a feminist lens is not simply a matter of introducing women's issues into the curriculum; it also involves creating interpretive practices through which learners can question normalized power relations.

Gender-responsive and inclusive education provide an additional educational context for this discussion. Recent studies have emphasized that gender-responsive education requires more than equal access to educational opportunities; it also involves attention to how pedagogical practices, classroom interactions, learning materials, and institutional structures may reproduce or challenge gender inequality (Flink et al., 2024; Rarieya et al., 2024). Miralles-Cardona (2025) particularly emphasizes the importance of gender equality in teacher education and the implementation of gender mainstreaming in educational practice. Such findings reinforce the relevance of literary texts as pedagogical resources because narratives can expose students to experiences of marginalization and enable them to examine the cultural assumptions underlying gender relations. In this sense, gender awareness can be developed through interpretive engagement with representations of inequality, provided that classroom activities encourage critical discussion rather than merely identify the presence of gender issues.

This orientation is also consistent with the broader demands of 21st-century learning, which increasingly emphasize critical thinking, communication, reflection, collaboration, and the ability to engage with complex social issues. Critical literacy provides an important connection between these competencies and literary education because students are required not only to understand what a text says but also to examine how and why meanings are constructed. Recent research on critical literacy in secondary English language arts, for example, demonstrates the potential of literature-based learning to engage students with questions of inequity and social representation (Larson & Yan, 2026). Thus, literary interpretation can contribute to 21st-century learning when students are positioned as active meaning-makers who question assumptions, compare perspectives, and relate textual representations to broader social contexts.

Within Indonesian literature, Dian Purnomo's *Perempuan yang Menangis kepada Bulan Hitam* provides a significant textual context for examining these issues. The novel narrates Magi Diela's experience within a cultural environment in which patriarchal norms, marriage arrangements, bodily control, and social expectations shape the possibilities available to women. The narrative presents several forms of gendered positioning, including naming, regulation, silencing, control over the female body, and the delegitimation of women's choices. At the same time, the novel represents Magi's gradual articulation of refusal, self-determination, and resistance. This movement makes the novel particularly productive for examining how linguistic choices participate in the transformation of a female character from an object positioned by others toward a subject capable of articulating her own will.

Previous studies have already demonstrated the importance of the novel as an object of feminist and stylistic inquiry. Wulandari and Triandana (2022) examine social protest style in the novel, while their subsequent study discusses genetic stylistics and the representation of sexual violence against women (Wulandari & Triandana, 2023). More directly, Savitri and Suyanto (2024) employ Sara Mills's critical discourse analysis to examine the representation of women in the novel. Rahayu and Rahayu (2026) likewise apply Sara Mills's feminist discourse framework to investigate gendered positioning in the text. These studies establish an important foundation for understanding the novel's gender politics and discursive construction. However, the present study approaches the text from a more specifically feminist-stylistic and pedagogical perspective. Rather than treating gender representation primarily as a static configuration of subject and object positions, this study traces the linguistic process through which Magi's positioning changes across the narrative, particularly from being named and regulated by others to articulating her own choices, identifying violence, and taking action.

This focus constitutes the central research gap addressed in the present study. Existing studies have established the novel's relevance to social protest, sexual violence, feminist discourse, and Sara Mills's framework, but less attention has been given to the processual relationship between linguistic construction, female agency, and the pedagogical possibilities of literary interpretation. The present study therefore extends previous scholarship by connecting feminist stylistic analysis with critical literacy and gender-aware literary education. The emphasis is not on claiming that reading the novel automatically produces greater gender awareness or critical literacy, since such an effect would require empirical classroom intervention and assessment. Instead, the study identifies the pedagogical potential of the textual features themselves as resources for critical discussion and interpretation.

Accordingly, this study has three objectives. First, it analyzes the linguistic forms through which female gender positioning is constructed in *Perempuan yang Menangis kepada Bulan Hitam*. Second, it explains the transformation of Magi from a character positioned primarily through the discourse of others toward an increasingly agentive subject who articulates refusal, identifies violence, and determines her own actions. Third, it examines the pedagogical potential of these textual dynamics for developing gender awareness and critical literacy in literary education. By bringing feminist stylistics into dialogue with critical literacy, feminist pedagogy, gender-responsive education, and 21st-century learning, this study seeks to demonstrate how literary analysis can become not only an interpretation of textual meaning but also a critical practice for reading language, identity, and power.



Method (منهج)

This study employs a qualitative descriptive method with a feminist stylistic approach. The approach was selected because the study focuses on the relationship between linguistic choices, gender representation, power relations, and the construction of female agency in a literary text.

Feminist stylistics makes it possible to examine gender not only as a thematic issue but also through concrete linguistic forms and their ideological and social functions (Mills, 1995).

The primary source of data is Dian Purnomo's *Perempuan yang Menangis kepada Bulan Hitam*, published by Gramedia Pustaka Utama in 2020. The data consist of words, phrases, clauses, sentences, dialogues, and narrative passages that reveal gender construction and transformations in the positioning of the female protagonist. Data were selected according to six analytical categories: (1) the language of naming, (2) the language of regulation or command, (3) the language of silencing, (4) the language of the body, (5) the language of agency, and (6) the language of resistance.

Data collection involved repeated reading of the novel, recording relevant textual passages, categorizing the data according to the analytical framework, and re-examining each passage within its narrative context. The data were subsequently analyzed by considering both their linguistic form and their social function. The analysis addressed not only what was said but also who spoke, to whom the utterance was directed, who was granted or denied authority, how actions were legitimized, and how the female protagonist responded to these constructions.

The primary analytical framework was Mills's (1995) feminist stylistics, particularly her attention to language, discourse, positioning, characterization, social roles, and agency. Lakoff's (1973) discussion of language and gender was used to strengthen the analysis of gendered linguistic positioning. West and Zimmerman's (1987) concept of *doing gender* was employed to understand gender as a social practice enacted through interaction, while Butler's (1990) theory of performativity was used selectively to explain how gender norms are reproduced through repeated practices and may subsequently be negotiated through acts that disrupt normative expectations.

The final stage of the analysis concerned the pedagogical relevance of the findings. The textual findings were not treated as empirical evidence that reading the novel increases gender awareness or critical literacy. The study did not involve classroom intervention, pre- and post-testing, interviews with students, or other forms of educational outcome measurement. Therefore, the educational contribution of this study is framed as **pedagogical potential**, namely the possibility of using the textual findings as a basis for designing literary learning that encourages critical engagement with gender and power relations. This position is consistent with critical literature pedagogy (Borsheim-Black et al., 2014), critical literacy (Vasquez, 2017), and critical literacy with a gender perspective in literature education (Canett Castro et al., 2021).

Result (نتائج)

1. The Woman Who Is Named: Language as the Construction of Gendered Identity

The construction of gender in the novel initially emerges through naming practices. At the beginning of the novel, Magi's identity is discussed by others through kinship and gendered categories:

"Ama punya anak nona, Magi Diela Talo, ada di kami punya rumah." (Purnomo, 2020, p. 18)

The expression "anak nona" does more than identify Magi as a woman; it positions her within a particular network of social relations. Her identity is initially constructed not through an articulation of her own desires but through the way others identify and describe her. The

possessive expression “punya” also contributes to a relational construction that may evoke notions of ownership and social claims over female identity and the female body.

A similar pattern appears in the statement:

“anak perempuan tak tahu menahu soal perjanjian kawin tangkap sebenarnya juga bukan hal baru.” (Purnomo, 2020, p. 21)

The phrase “anak perempuan” functions as a social category that simultaneously defines and constrains the protagonist’s position. Magi is not initially presented primarily as an autonomous individual with personal desires but as a member of a socially defined category associated with particular expectations. From a feminist stylistic perspective, such categorization is significant because language does not simply describe individuals; it can also shape how they are positioned within social structures (Mills, 1995).

This phenomenon can be interpreted through West and Zimmerman’s (1987) concept of *doing gender*. Gender is not simply located in biological identity but is continually enacted through social expectations and practices. When Magi is repeatedly categorized as an “anak perempuan,” the category becomes part of a social mechanism that determines how she is expected to behave. Butler’s (1990) perspective further suggests that repeated gender norms contribute to the production of identities that appear natural and stable.

Language as naming therefore constitutes an initial stage in the construction of gender. Before Magi is able to define herself, she is first positioned through categories produced by others.

2. The Woman Who Is Regulated: Language, Commands, and the Legitimation of Power

Gendered positioning becomes more explicit when language is used to determine a woman’s life choices. This is evident in the following statement:

“Perjanjian adat sudah dibuat. Magi akan dibelis dengan 50 atau 70 ekor binatang. Tara tidak tahu pasti.” (Purnomo, 2020, p. 32)

The construction “Magi akan dibelis” places Magi as the object of an action determined by others. Syntactically, Magi functions as the affected participant, while the agent responsible for the action is not explicitly identified. This omission is significant because the decision appears as an automatic consequence of the “perjanjian adat.”

Language therefore operates at two levels. First, Magi is positioned as the object of an action. Second, adat is represented as a legitimizing framework that makes the decision appear socially authorized rather than subject to individual consent. From a feminist perspective, such construction demonstrates how power may operate through language without necessarily appearing as an explicit command.

The situation also reveals the distinction between decisions made about women and decisions made by women. At this stage, the decision lies outside Magi. She is not the source of the action but its target. This finding is consistent with previous studies that identify women’s subordination and experiences of violence within the practice of *kawin tangkap* represented in the novel (Wulandari & Triandana, 2022).

From the perspective of gender awareness, this passage can provide an opportunity for students to identify linguistic constructions that might otherwise appear ordinary. Students can be asked who makes the decision, who receives it, why the agent of the action is omitted, and how the concept of adat functions as a legitimizing discourse. Such questions enable students to recognize not merely that Magi experiences injustice but also how that injustice is linguistically constructed.

3. The Silenced Woman: Voice without Discursive Authority

Magi's silencing does not mean that she has no voice. Rather, the novel demonstrates that she speaks, but her voice does not initially possess sufficient authority to determine the outcome. She states:

"Sa tidak mau kawin dengan mata keranjang itu, Ama..."
 "Sa lebih baik mati." (Purnomo, 2020, p. 35)

Magi explicitly articulates her wishes. Nevertheless, her statements do not automatically alter the decision. Silencing, therefore, is not necessarily the absence of speech; it may instead involve the absence of authority over one's own speech.

Mills (1995) emphasizes the importance of examining who is positioned as a speaker and how that position is recognized within discourse. In Magi's case, the female voice exists but encounters a social structure with greater authority. Power consequently determines not only who may speak but also whose speech is recognized as legitimate.

This distinction is particularly important for critical literacy education. Students can be encouraged to differentiate between "having a voice" and "being heard," as well as between "having an opinion" and "having the power to turn that opinion into a decision." Such distinctions allow students to recognize that gender inequality does not always manifest itself through explicit prohibitions against speaking.

4. The Female Body as a Site of Power

Gender construction becomes more concrete through the control of the female body. Following her abduction, Magi experiences violence and loses control over her own body. The narrative states:

"Demi para leluhur Magi tidak akan berdiam saja diperlakukan seperti binatang."
 (Purnomo, 2020, p. 44)

The expression "diperlakukan seperti binatang" represents a process of dehumanization. The female body is no longer positioned as a site of personal autonomy but as an object that can be moved, controlled, and treated according to decisions made by others.

The narrative also demonstrates that bodily experience cannot be separated from cultural structures and power relations. Magi experiences not merely individual violence but violence situated within a social system that provides particular forms of legitimacy to actions against women's bodies. Wulandari and Triandana (2022) similarly identify the use of stylistic features and imagery to represent sexual violence and the practice of *kawin tangkap*.

However, the novel does not leave the body solely within the domain of external control. A significant shift occurs when Magi begins to articulate her own rights over her body:

“Bukan keperawanan yang hilang Magi sesali... yang membuatnya marah adalah orang lain yang memberitahunya bahwa dia baru saja diperkosa.” (Purnomo, 2020, pp. 51–52)

This statement shifts the center of the problem from “virginity” to violence and consent. The shift is significant because it transforms the meaning of the female body. The body is no longer understood primarily through the social value assigned to female virginity but through the woman's right to determine what happens to her own body.

5. From “Having to Obey” to “Having the Right to Choose”

Magi's changing position becomes increasingly visible when she rejects the language previously used to regulate her. Leba Ali's family frames marriage as the woman's only viable option:

“Kalau ko tidak mau kawin deng Leba Ali, tidak ada laki-laki lain yang mau deng ko.” (Purnomo, 2020, pp. 51–52)

The statement constructs the idea that a woman's future depends upon male acceptance. Female value becomes associated with the possibility of marriage, even when the woman herself rejects the proposed relationship.

Magi responds:

“Biar saja.” (Purnomo, 2020, pp. 51–52)

This brief response has significant discursive force. Linguistically, “Biar saja” rejects the premise presented as a threat. If the social structure suggests that Magi must accept marriage because no other man will want her, her response rejects the assumption that her future must be determined by male acceptance.

Her position becomes even more explicit:

“Sa tidak akan kawin deng laki-laki yang kasih culik sa.” (Purnomo, 2020, pp. 51–52)

The sentence contains the first-person subject “Sa” and the future-negative construction “tidak akan.” This structure differs fundamentally from “Magi akan dibelis.” In the earlier construction, Magi is the object of an externally determined decision. Here, she becomes the source of the decision.

The shift can therefore be understood as a movement from a woman subjected to an action toward a woman articulating an action that she refuses to undertake. Within Mills's (1995) framework, this represents a shift in positioning and agency. From the perspective of West and Zimmerman (1987), Magi begins to enact gender identity through an action that rejects social expectations. Butler's (1990) theory further helps explain how such refusal disrupts the repetition of a norm previously presented as obligatory.

6. The Language of Resistance: Reclaiming Discursive Power

Magi's agency emerges not only in her refusal to marry but also in her ability to name the violence perpetrated against her. During the violent encounter, she says:

"Lepaskan saya, saya tidak mau jadi ko pung istri. lebih baik sa mati daripada jadi ko punya istri."

"Ko pengecut."

"Pemerkosanya!" (Purnomo, 2020, p. 53)

Three forms of linguistic action can be identified in this passage. First, "Lepaskan saya" functions as a command directed toward the perpetrator. Second, "saya tidak mau" explicitly articulates her will. Third, "Pemerkosanya!" names the act committed against her.

This transformation is significant because earlier Magi was the person being named and categorized by others. Here, she uses language to name the actions of another person. The function of language is therefore reversed: from a mechanism used to define the woman to a mechanism through which the woman defines the violence imposed upon her.

From a feminist stylistic perspective, this shift demonstrates that language is not merely an instrument for reproducing subordination but may also become a site for reclaiming agency (Mills, 1995). The utterance "Pemerkosanya!" constitutes a discursive act through which Magi moves from being an object of violent experience toward becoming a subject capable of interpreting and naming that experience.

This finding is also consistent with Wulandari and Triandana's (2023) observation that the novel employs representations of sexual violence as part of a broader stylistic strategy of social protest. Magi's resistance can therefore be understood not only as a narrative event but also as a transformation in the function of language.

7. From Others' Language to the Language of the Self: The Formation of Agency

The culmination of Magi's transformation occurs when she takes action by going to the police station:

"Tidak mudah untuk Magi bisa sampai di sana dengan selamat... Namun, Magi bertahan. Dia harus sampai di kantor polisi. Apapun yang terjadi. itu pikirannya." (Purnomo, 2020, p. 297)

The word "harus" is particularly significant because the concept of obligation had previously been associated with social norms imposed upon Magi. Here, however, "harus" takes on a different function. It no longer represents an obligation imposed by family or society but rather an internal determination originating from Magi herself.

The same linguistic form therefore produces different ideological functions depending on the source of the obligation. "Harus," which previously implied obedience, becomes a marker of personal determination. Agency in this context does not necessarily mean complete freedom from structures of power. Rather, it emerges as the capacity to make decisions and act within structures that remain restrictive.

The sentence also demonstrates the relationship between language and action. The internal determination expressed through “dia harus sampai” is translated into concrete movement toward the police station. Magi’s transformation can therefore be conceptualized through three stages: articulating her will, maintaining that will, and acting upon it.

At the first stage, Magi says “tidak mau.” At the second, she maintains her refusal in the face of pressure. At the third, she undertakes a concrete action to seek protection. Language thus does not merely represent agency; it becomes part of the process through which agency is constituted.

8. Synthesizing Gender Construction: Language, Power, and Agency

When the textual data are read sequentially, gender construction in the novel appears as a dynamic process.

Stage	Linguistic form	Magi’s position
Naming	“anak nona,” “anak perempuan”	Identity defined by others
Regulation	“Magi akan dibelis”	Object of decision
Silencing	Her refusal does not become the decision	Speaking subject without authority
Bodily control	“diperlakukan seperti binatang”	Body as an object of power
Refusal	“Sa tidak akan kawin...”	Subject of will
Naming violence	“Pemerkosanya!”	Subject interpreting her experience
Action	“Dia harus sampai di kantor polisi”	Acting subject

The pattern demonstrates that gendered positioning is not singular or static. Magi moves from object to subject through changes in the function of language. At the beginning, the language of others defines her. Subsequently, language is used to regulate and control her body. At later stages, Magi uses language to determine her own choices, name violence, and direct her own actions.

This finding extends previous scholarship. Wulandari and Triandana (2022) demonstrate that the novel employs language as a form of social protest, while Savitri and Suyanto (2024) and Rahayu and Rahayu (2026) identify subject-object positioning within the novel’s discourse. The present study connects these findings through a process-oriented dimension: the transformation of subject positioning does not occur instantaneously but develops through a shift in the function of language – from language that defines the woman toward language through which the woman defines herself and her own actions.

9. Pedagogical Potential: From Reading Texts to Reading Power Relations

1) The Novel as a Space for Critical Literacy

Literary instruction often emphasizes characters, plot, themes, moral values, and other intrinsic elements. Although these components remain important, such approaches do not necessarily enable students to examine how texts operate as social practices. *Critical literacy* extends literary interpretation by encouraging readers to question the relationships among language, meaning, ideology, and power (Vasquez, 2017).

Within *critical literature pedagogy*, literary texts can become spaces in which students question social representations and assumptions embedded in texts (Borsheim-Black et al., 2014). This approach is particularly relevant to *Perempuan yang Menangis kepada Bulan Hitam* because gender is not merely a thematic concern but is constructed through language.

Students can be encouraged to compare the following two constructions:

“Magi akan dibelis...” (Purnomo, 2020, p. 32)

and:

“Sa tidak akan kawin deng laki-laki yang kasih culik sa.” (Purnomo, 2020, pp. 51–52)

The comparison reveals a change in the source of decision-making. In the first sentence, Magi is the object of a decision. In the second, she becomes the subject who determines her own choice.

Such a learning activity shifts the question from “What happens to Magi?” toward the more critical question: “How does language position Magi in a particular way?” Further questions can address who has the authority to speak, how adat functions in the discourse, who makes decisions, and how Magi changes her position through language.

This approach is consistent with Canett Castro et al. (2021), who develop critical literacy with a gender perspective in literature education. Savitz et al. (2024) similarly demonstrate the value of dialogue and inquiry in enabling students to examine gender representation in literary texts.

2) Developing Gender Awareness

Gender awareness in education can be developed through the ability to recognize that representations of women and men in texts are not necessarily neutral. Students can be encouraged to examine how particular words, categories, commands, and actions produce social positions.

The novel provides several entry points for such learning. Students can compare terms such as “anak perempuan,” “istri,” “perawan,” and “perempuan” with Magi’s own statements about herself. Through this comparison, students can examine the difference between identities assigned to women by others and identities articulated by women themselves.

Whitford (2024) demonstrates that critical literacy practices can help students identify gender stereotypes in texts while reflecting on their own understandings of gender. Granger

(2024) likewise shows that feminist issues in language education can create opportunities for students to recognize gender inequality and reflect on broader social issues.

In the context of this novel, gender awareness should not be reduced to the transmission of a predetermined moral conclusion. Instead, students can be provided with opportunities to examine textual evidence, articulate interpretations, compare perspectives, and question the norms represented in the text. Gender awareness is thus approached as a process of critical reading.

3) Feminist Pedagogy and Marginalized Voices

The pedagogical potential of the novel can also be connected to feminist pedagogy. Currier (2020) explains that feminist pedagogy has historically emphasized women's voices and experiences that have been marginalized within educational processes. Its development has subsequently expanded toward broader systems of inequality and difference. Almanssori (2020) similarly demonstrates that feminist pedagogy has developed as an approach that consciously questions and transforms educational experiences.

In teaching this novel, attention to voice can be implemented by asking students to identify whose voices dominate the narrative and whose voices are constrained. Magi is particularly significant because she is not completely voiceless. The central problem is that her voice initially lacks the same authority as the voices of those who control her life.\

Students can therefore be encouraged to consider questions such as:

1. Who names Magi?
2. Who determines Magi's future?
3. Who has the authority to say "must"?
4. Is Magi's voice recognized?
5. When does Magi begin to make her own choices?
6. How does the use of personal pronouns contribute to the construction of agency?
7. How does Magi use language to name violence?
8. What distinguishes regulatory language from language that expresses personal will?

These questions enable literary learning to move from interpretation toward an examination of power relations.

4) A Critical Reading Model for Literary Education

Based on the findings, the pedagogical potential of the novel can be organized into four stages.

Stage 1: Textual Identification

Students identify words, phrases, or sentences that indicate naming, commands, prohibitions, silencing, bodily control, refusal, and resistance.

Stage 2: Analysis of Power Relations

Students identify who speaks, who becomes the object of speech, who makes decisions, and who is expected to follow those decisions.

Stage 3: Critical Reading

Students question the gender assumptions embedded in the text. At this stage, questions move beyond “what happens?” toward “why is this action treated as normal?”, “who benefits from this arrangement?”, and “what language is used to legitimize it?”

Stage 4: Reflection

Students reflect on how language may shape their understanding of gender, the body, choice, and social relations. Reflection may take the form of discussion, reflective journals, argumentative essays, or critical responses to the text.

This model is consistent with critical literacy approaches that position texts within broader social contexts and encourage readers to connect language with the social world (Vasquez, 2017). Fitriati et al. (2026) likewise demonstrate that critical literacy pedagogy can move learners beyond surface-level comprehension toward identifying identity construction, silenced voices, dominant norms, and counter-narratives.

5) Implications for Literary Education

The findings have three major pedagogical implications. First, literary education can expand its focus from thematic interpretation toward linguistic analysis. In this novel, students do not merely learn that Magi experiences violence; they can examine how linguistic structures initially position her as an object and how those structures change as she becomes an acting subject.

Second, the novel can be used to develop critical reading of social norms. Critical literacy does not require students to accept a single predetermined interpretation. Instead, it provides opportunities to examine assumptions, compare perspectives, and connect textual representations with social structures. In this context, students can discuss the relationships among adat, gender, the body, consent, choice, and power without generalizing the representation of Sumbanese culture in a single literary work to the entirety of Sumbanese society.

Third, literary learning can develop gender awareness through linguistic analysis. Students can examine the difference between the language used by others to define Magi and the language Magi uses to define herself. This difference provides textual grounds for discussing agency, consent, autonomy, and power relations.

These implications, however, should be understood as pedagogical potential, rather than evidence of instructional effectiveness. The study does not involve classroom intervention or measurement of changes in students’ attitudes or literacy abilities. Therefore, the claim that the novel directly increases gender awareness or critical literacy cannot be established from the present data. Further research using classroom-based studies, action research, experimental designs, or mixed methods is required to assess the effectiveness of the proposed pedagogical approach.

This distinction strengthens rather than weakens the study's contribution because it separates textual findings from pedagogical implications. The textual findings derive from the analysis of the novel, whereas the educational implications represent possible ways of utilizing those findings in literary instruction. Such a distinction is essential for maintaining methodological clarity in literary research.



Conclusion (خاتمة)

The feminist stylistic analysis of *Perempuan yang Menangis kepada Bulan Hitam* demonstrates that gender construction in the novel develops through a series of linguistic mechanisms. Magi is initially positioned as a woman who is named and categorized by others, then becomes the object of decisions through regulatory language, experiences silencing when her expressed will lacks authority, and becomes subject to control over her body. These positions, however, are not static. Through verbal refusal, the use of first-person expressions, the naming of violence, and concrete action toward the police station, Magi moves from an object of discourse toward a subject with agency. This transformation demonstrates that language in the novel functions not only as a means of reproducing power relations but also as a resource through which those relations can be negotiated and female agency can be reclaimed.

The findings further indicate that *Perempuan yang Menangis kepada Bulan Hitam* has pedagogical potential for literary education oriented toward *gender awareness* and *critical literacy*. Students can be encouraged to examine who names, who commands, whose voice carries authority, how the female body is constructed, and when the protagonist begins to use language to determine her own identity and choices. Literary learning can consequently move beyond comprehension of narrative content toward critical examination of the relationships among language, gender, and power. Nevertheless, the present study identifies pedagogical potential rather than demonstrating instructional effectiveness. Further classroom-based research is therefore needed to determine how critical reading strategies based on this novel may contribute to the development of students' critical literacy and gender awareness.

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Thank you, Ms. Dian Purnomo, for writing *The Woman Who Wept for the Moon*, a work that does more than simply tell Magi's story; it also gives a voice to women who confront culture, power, wounds, and the choices they make for their own lives. Through Magi, we see that a woman's courage is not merely about resistance, but also about defending her right to determine her own life, body, and future. Thank you for making literature a space to question, to challenge, and to remind us that behind every tradition, there are human beings with feelings, desires, and the right to choose. May this novel continue to live in the memories of its readers and become a voice that empowers many women to find the courage to say: **I have the right to choose.**



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