This comparative study delves into the nuanced realms of women's resistance against male hegemony in two literary works from distinct cultural and temporal contexts: Nathaniel Hawthorne's "The Scarlet Letter" and Ahmad Tohari's "Bekisar Merah." This study adopted qualitative descriptive approach for the design while for data analysis, comparative through literary feminism study was employed. Through a meticulous analysis and comparative of the narratives, characters, and society’s landscapes depicted in both novels, the study unveils the pervasive presence of male hegemony and its impact on women's lives. As the findings, this study shed light on the multifaceted nature of male hegemony, illustrating its manifestations across different cultural and society contexts. By examining the dynamics of resistance enacted by female characters in both novels, the study revealed the male hegemony, gender dynamics and women resistance in each novel, this would contribute to a deeper understanding of the universal challenges women face in patriarchal societies. This exploration underscores the significance of women's agency and resistance as they navigate the complex web of societal expectations, ultimately challenging and redefining the boundaries of gender roles. In light with these findings, scholars can enrich the discourse surrounding male hegemony, gender dynamics, and women's resistance in literature. Moreover, through this study, further researchers are encouraging to foster a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the intricate relationships between power, gender, and resistance in literary narratives.
fearlessness, amorousness, hate, enviousness, eagerness, frustration, dreams, happiness, sadness, and soreness constitute the elemental threads of human experience, interwoven within the fabric of literary discourse. Nathaniel Hawthorne's "The Scarlet Letter" and Ahmad Tohari's "Bekisar Merah" purposefully emphasize universal values pertinent to the ongoing discourse on women, undertaking a concerted effort to challenge and counterbalance entrenched, burdensome, and hegemonic perspectives on sexuality and dominant power within their respective societal frameworks. These literary compositions emerge as intricate products intricately interwoven with the zeitgeist, populace, and cultural milieu, fundamentally bound to the collective tapestry of humanity. They represent not mere artifacts but thoughtful contemplations and reproductions of civilization, serving as reflective or imitative mirrors of the societal panorama. In accordance with Lotman, as cited in Goldmann (1981: 8), a work of art necessitates a symbiotic connection with its cultural context, akin to an inscription on a tomb in an enigmatic language. Simultaneously, Pradopo (1995: 113) underscores the inseparability of a writer from their cultural and social milieu during the creative act, further reinforcing the intrinsic linkage between literary creation and the broader socio-cultural environment.

Male hegemony, the pervasive dominance and control exercised by men over societal structures, norms, and institutions, has been a persistent theme throughout history (Cudd & Andreasen, 2007: 1). This phenomenon, deeply rooted in patriarchal systems, finds expression in various forms in literature, serving as a mirror reflecting the power dynamics prevalent in society. Nathaniel Hawthorne's timeless classic, "The Scarlet Letter," and Ahmad Tohari's contemporary masterpiece, "Bekisar Merah," both provide rich narratives that delve into the complexities of human relationships and societal expectations, with a keen focus on the role of male dominance. Through a comparative study of these two works, this research seeks to unravel the nuanced ways in which male hegemony is portrayed, challenged, and perpetuated within different cultural and temporal contexts.

Nathaniel Hawthorne's "The Scarlet Letter" stands as a quintessential work of American literature, exploring the consequences of Puritanical society's rigid moral codes on individuals. Set in seventeenth-century Massachusetts, the novel centers around Hester Prynne, a woman condemned for committing adultery and forced to wear the scarlet letter 'A' as a mark of her sin. Within this puritanical framework, male hegemony is evident in the harsh judgment and punishment meted out to Hester, while the male characters, such as Arthur Dimmesdale, maintain positions of authority and control. The power dynamics in the novel reflect a societal structure where men dictate the narrative, both in the private and public spheres. Analyzing the characters and their interactions in "The Scarlet Letter" unveils the subtle ways in which male hegemony is ingrained in the fabric of Puritan society, influencing interpersonal relationships and individual destinies.
On the other hand, Ahmad Tohari's "Bekisar Merah" offers a unique perspective by presenting a narrative rooted in the cultural richness of Indonesia. The novel is set against the backdrop of rural Java in the early twentieth century, capturing the intricate interplay between tradition and modernity. Through the character of Lasi, a strong-willed Javanese woman, Tohari weaves a tale that challenges traditional gender roles and confronts the male-dominated power structures inherent in Javanese society. In this context, the bekisar, a symbolic rooster, becomes a powerful metaphor, embodying both the defiance against male hegemony and the struggles faced by women in asserting their agency. By examining the ways in which Tohari navigates the cultural nuances of Indonesia, this research aims to uncover the distinctive manifestations of male dominance in "Bekisar Merah" and compare them with the dynamics depicted in Hawthorne's American classic.

Furthermore, a comparative analysis of these two works allows for an exploration of the universality of male hegemony across different cultural and historical contexts. By examining the thematic parallels and divergences between "The Scarlet Letter" and "Bekisar Merah," this research aims to contribute to a broader understanding of how power dynamics based on gender persist or evolve in various societies. The juxtaposition of these two novels offers a nuanced exploration of the ways in which male hegemony can manifest, adapt, and be resisted within distinct cultural landscapes, shedding light on the complexity of gender relations in literature and society.

**REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

**Male Hegemony**

Male hegemony in literature refers to the dominance and prevalence of male perspectives, voices, and experiences within the literary canon. Throughout history, many literary works have been produced and celebrated primarily by male authors, contributing to a pervasive gender imbalance in the representation of diverse voices (Nasrin, 2023). This phenomenon often results in a limited portrayal of female characters and reinforces stereotypical gender roles, reinforcing the societal power dynamics that favor men. Male hegemony in literature can be seen as reflective of broader societal structures that historically marginalize women's voices and experiences (Stratton, 2020). This dominance not only influences the content of literary works but also impacts the reception and recognition of female authors, making it essential to critically examine and challenge these patterns to promote a more inclusive and representative literary landscape.

One of the examples illustrating male hegemony in literature is the underrepresentation of women in classic literature and the canonization of predominantly male-authored works. Historically, the literary canon has been
shaped by patriarchal norms, leading to the marginalization of female voices (Ibrahim et al., 2021); (Odok, 2020). Virginia Woolf's seminal work, "A Room of One's Own," explores the challenges women face in gaining equal footing in literature, emphasizing the importance of financial independence and creative space for women writers (Cited in Guo, 2019). Another insightful perspective is provided by Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar in "The Madwoman in the Attic," where they analyze the portrayal of female characters in classic literature, highlighting how women have often been confined to limited and stereotypical roles. These works shed light on the pervasive influence of male hegemony in literature and the need for a more inclusive and diverse literary landscape.

**Patriarchy**

Patriarchy is a social system that places men at the forefront of power, influencing societal structures, norms, and institutions to prioritize and perpetuate male dominance. This entrenched system manifests in various forms, including political, economic, and cultural spheres, leading to the subordination of women (Rakow, 2022); (Rorintulus, 2020). The concept of patriarchy has been extensively explored by feminist scholars who analyze the ways in which power and privilege are distributed along gender lines. As mentioned in Martin (2019), Simone de Beauvoir's "The Second Sex" is a foundational text that critically examines the historical and philosophical underpinnings of patriarchy, arguing that women have been historically relegated to the status of the "other" and exploring the ways in which societal institutions perpetuate gender inequality. Additionally, bell hooks, in her book "The Will to Change: Men, Masculinity, and Love," delves into the intersections of patriarchy and masculinity, discussing how men are socialized within patriarchal structures and the impact on their emotional lives (cited in Rakow, 2022). These works provide valuable insights into the theoretical foundations of patriarchy, emphasizing the need for a transformative approach to dismantle these ingrained power structures and promote gender equity.

Patriarchy also influences literature, shaping the portrayal of gender roles and reinforcing societal expectations. Kate Millett's "Sexual Politics" is a seminal work that explores the intersection of patriarchy and literature, examining how male authors often depict women as passive objects and reinforcing gender hierarchies through their narratives (Cited in Hussain, 2022). Similarly, Judith Butler's gender performativity theory, discussed in "Gender Trouble," challenges the binary understanding of gender roles perpetuated by patriarchy, arguing that gender is a social construct performed through repeated actions. These theoretical perspectives contribute to a comprehensive understanding of patriarchy and its impact on various aspects of society, including literature. Analyzing literature through the lens of patriarchy allows for a deeper exploration of how power dynamics are reinforced and
contested in fictional narratives, shedding light on the broader social implications of gendered representations.

**Resistance**

Resistance emerges as a result of an extended period during which an individual undergoes oppression, suppression, subordination, alienation, or marginalization. In the presence of hegemony, resistance becomes inevitable, aligning with Michel Foucault's assertion that "where there is power, there is resistance" (cited in Sandoval, 2000:1). This resistance is not characterized by overt physical actions but rather by a psychological evolution in the protagonists. It signifies a transformation in their personalities, as they shift from conforming to dominant values to adopting a steadfast rejection of external pressures. This form of resistance involves personal and internal endeavors to oppose oppression and hegemonic values without resorting to physical movements, revolts, or protests.

Many novels portray female characters who resist hegemonic gender norms that confine women to submissive, domestic roles. These women refuse to conform and instead seek to define their identities and roles on their own terms. For example, As cited in Odok, (2020), Charlotte Brontë's "Jane Eyre," the titular character rejects the societal expectations of Victorian England by demanding equality and independence in her relationship with Mr. Rochester. Challenging Patriarchy: A common form of resistance in novels is the challenge to patriarchy, which often involves women rebelling against male-dominated power structures (cited in Stratton, 2020). In Margaret Atwood's "The Handmaid's Tale," Offred and other women resist the patriarchal regime of the Republic of Gilead, even in the face of severe oppression (Cudd & Robin, 2007).

Moreover, Asserting Sexual Autonomy: Novels often depict women asserting control over their bodies and sexual autonomy. As mentioned in Pradopo, (1995) one of the excellent example is Milan Kundera's "The Unbearable Lightness of Being," where the character of Sabina defies societal norms by engaging in sexual relationships outside of traditional monogamy. Political Activism: Some novels explore women's resistance against political hegemony or oppressive governments, in Isabel Allende's "The House of the Spirits," the character of Clara advocates for social justice and political reform, challenging the authoritarian regime in her country (as cited in Odok, 2020).

Furthermore, Overcoming Discrimination: Novels frequently depict women who resist discrimination based on factors such as race, class, or disability. In Alice Walker's "The Color Purple," Celie transcends racial and gender discrimination, ultimately finding her voice and self-worth (Harlow & Carter, 2023). Educational Empowerment: Education is often portrayed as a means of resistance against hegemonic forces. As mentioned in Rowbotham, (2014) characters like Scout in
Harper Lee's "To Kill a Mockingbird" and Hermione Granger in J.K. Rowling’s "Harry Potter" series use their intelligence and education to challenge oppressive systems and prejudices.

In addition, Cultural and Religious Rebellion: Some novels explore women's resistance against cultural or religious hegemony. In Khaled Hosseini’s "A Thousand Splendid Suns," the characters Laila and Mariam resist oppressive interpretations of Islamic law and tradition in Afghanistan (Rakow, 2022). In Harlow & Carter, (2023) Redefining Motherhood: Novels also depict women who challenge conventional notions of motherhood, where in Toni Morrison's "Beloved," Sethe's decision to kill her child rather than allow her to be enslaved is an act of maternal resistance against the horrors of slavery. Narrative Subversion: In postmodern literature, female characters may engage in narrative subversion by challenging traditional storytelling conventions. This is exemplified in Jeanette Winterson's "Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit," where the protagonist, Jeanette, resists hegemonic narratives about sexuality and religion (cited in Pradopo, 1995).

In novels, women's resistance against hegemony serves not only as a reflection of societal struggles but also as an inspiration and a call for change. These narratives highlight the strength, resilience, and determination of female characters in the face of oppressive systems, contributing to broader discussions about gender, power, and social justice.

**Novel**

The term originates from the Italian word "Novella," denoting a new composition of modest proportions (Reinares, 2019). The evolution of the novel took place predominantly in England and America, initially emerging from other forms of narrative nonfiction like letters, biographies, and historical accounts (Rorintulus et al., 2022). However, with societal shifts and the passage of time, the novel transcended its origins in nonfiction data, allowing authors to mold narratives based on their imaginative desires.

A novel is a form of prose narrative distinguished by its extensive structure, incorporating various characters and fictional events. The essential components of a novel encompass plot, setting, characterization, point of view, and theme. Sumardjo (1998: 29) posits that a novel is a prose story with an extended form, signifying a narrative enriched with intricate plots, a multitude of characters, and diverse settings. Essentially, a novel embodies a comprehensive artistic entity, wherein its elements interconnect closely and dependently. Novel is one of the genres of literary works in the form of prose. The story in the novel is a work of imagination that discusses the problems of a person's life or various characters. The divisions within a novel consist of both intrinsic and extrinsic elements.
Comparative Literature

Comparative literature is an interdisciplinary field of study that involves the examination of literature from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds to identify commonalities, contrasts, and interconnected themes. René Wellek and Austin Warren's influential work, "Theory of Literature," laid the groundwork for the comparative study of literature by emphasizing the importance of cross-cultural analysis and the exploration of universal literary principles (Cited in Rorintulus et al., 2022). Comparative literature scholars, such as Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak in "The Death of a Discipline," further expanded the theoretical foundations of the field by advocating for a postcolonial perspective, encouraging scholars to critically engage with power dynamics, colonial legacies, and marginalized voices in literary analysis (Gifford, 2021). Ali (2023) confirmed that comparative literature as a theoretical framework, thus allows for a nuanced understanding of cultural diversity and global literary interconnectedness, offering insights into the ways in which literature transcends national boundaries and contributes to a more comprehensive appreciation of human expression and experience. Along the statement above, it can be derived that the goals of comparative Literature include examining how literature reflects and shapes cultural identities, how it responds to historical and social changes, and how it transcends linguistic and cultural boundaries. Scholars in Comparative Literature may analyze themes, genres, literary techniques, and cultural contexts to draw meaningful comparisons and contrasts between works from different traditions.

METHOD

The research method used in this research is descriptive qualitative method. The reason for using this research is that the descriptive method is used to describe data and the results of data analysis by using words or sentences that contained quotes from words and sentences to solve problems regarding the form of analysis depiction of female characters of whom has the same core problem in terms of gender as a woman. Kammer et al., (2020) defining "Comparative Literature" becomes an intricate task, particularly when the comparatist must grapple with the multi-faceted dimensions inherent in this discipline linguistic, cultural, religious, economic, social, and historical factors across diverse societies. Broadly construed, comparative literature embodies a comprehensive concept, extending its purview to encompass the entirety of human experiences. Through a critical lens applied to the literatures under examination, it seeks to unveil all-encompassing human relationships across the globe. In this investigation, the author endeavors to juxtapose the gender hegemony imposed upon women and the corresponding resistance evident in both "The Scarlet Letter" and "Bekisar Merah" novels. To reveal the comprehensive aspects of male hegemony in both novels, literary feminism approach was used.
FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Brief Summary of the Novel “Bekisar Merah”

Ahmad Tohari’s Bekisar Merah tells about the life of the Karangsonga Community. On a daily basis, they mostly work as tappers for coconut sap to make brown sugar. Therefore, the majority of them are from the lower classes who just have a hard time eating. In it tells the story of a husband and wife named Darsa and Lasiah who have to endure a hard life. Darsa, who is a tapper, has a beautiful white-skinned wife, Lasi, who has a physical value above the average of the wives of other tappers. It turned out that Lasi was of mixed descent between mbok Wiriaji and a Japanese soldier who after his marriage, never returned to the village and lost his jungle – reportedly detained by the Dutch.

The poverty of the population is very detailed in this novel. The understanding of the social conditions of the poor, which is closely related to the structure of the sugar trade which is never fair, is described in great detail. Another strength of his novels is the highly articulate presentation of rural nature. It is as if the reader has been transported to the countryside so that they can feel the cool breeze of the early morning, watch the starlings feeding their young, the sound of the gongs of pongko (bamboo to collect sap sap), or the gurgling of the clear Kalirong river whose water flows through the rocks. - mossy rock. Understanding of natural resource issues is also very deep, for example about the destruction of forest cover by local people due to their poverty. There is no alternative to making a little extra profit, by 'stealing' the wood as fuel to make tengguli, the material for brown sugar.

The opening conflict in this novel is that the people of Karangsonga have to risk their lives while climbing a coconut tree to collect sap. Likewise Darsa’s fate. Due to falling, which is known by the community as a “jumping frog” (not to mention falling from a coconut tree—as a denial of communal fear), Darsa had suffered from abnormalities around her reproductive organs, weak shoots. He too, because he was poor, was only cared for by a dukun, Bunek. Lasi faithfully accompanied her husband even though he was weak and always wet the bed. Over time, because of Bunek’s intensive treatment, especially around Darsa’s groin, she was able to recover. On the night of Darsa’s ”resurrection”, Bunek asked to try it on Sipah, the old maid of Bunek’s own child. Darsa, who was in a difficult choice, finally accepted the offer. Until it led to the departure of Lasipah to the city to leave him. He also married Bunek’s son.

The story then dissects Lasi’s mind a lot. As a beautiful country woman who has been used to living with all her poverty for twenty-four years, she is suddenly faced with the norms of big city life that are very, very foreign to her. She, who was temporarily accommodated by Ibu Koneng, the manager of the shop where the truck drivers stop by which is also the place where the women “girlfriends” of the truck drivers come from, witnessed social values that were very difficult to understand for a simple village woman with a low level of education. For example, the intimacy of
men and women, which has been understood as behavior based on a spark of soul and love, can happen in a shop so easily, by anyone, with the basis of a few bills.

Long story short, Lasi, who has the advantages of a beautiful body and face, becomes a rare and very valuable "new merchandise" for Koneng's mother, who is then handed over to Ibu Lanting, a high-ranking pimp who serves officials, in exchange for a diamond ring. Government officials at that time are said to have a habit of looking for the umpteenth "girlfriend" or wife who has a face like the Japanese. This was the result of the talkative behavior of the bureaucrats as his Grand Master introduced a geisha into the palace and eventually became the first lady. It fits, with Lasi. She who has the face of a Japanese woman, became the target of officials. He was then exchanged for a Mercedes and several tens of millions of rupiah by Lanting's mother to Pak Handarbeni, a retired overste who became an official, almost sixty-five years old, fat, and already had two wives. Lasi also became a bekisar that became a display in his new and luxurious house in Slipi. Bekisar are hybrids of jungle fowl and native chickens that have beautiful shapes, feathers, and crows. Usually this type of chicken is used for decoration in beautiful cages by the rich.

Lasi, who finally married Pak Handarbeni (a playful marriage according to Lasi's term), enjoyed all material luxuries that a former wife of penderes nira could never imagine from the village of Karangsoga. But behind all material luxuries, Lasi's inner suffering is very heavy. He misses his village, his mother, and Kanjat, his schoolmate who is now a student and almost graduating. Meetings with old figures in her life made Lasi even more confused because she was standing between two values of life that were separated by a very deep chasm.

Brief Summary of the Novel “Scarlet Letter”

Published in 1850, Nathaniel Hawthorne's "The Scarlet Letter" stands as a pinnacle in American literature, hailed as a classic exploration of morality. Unfolding in seventeenth-century Boston under the stringent governance of Puritan law, the narrative commences with Hester Prynne, the central character, emerging from confinement with her infant, Pearl, cradled in her arms, the vivid scarlet "A" intricately embroidered on her chest. A throng eagerly awaits as Hester ascends a scaffold, subjected to public ignominy for her transgression.

During this ordeal, Hester is dismayed to identify her estranged spouse, Chillingworth, among the onlookers. His shock mirrors her own, yet he feigns unfamiliarity. Chillingworth, feigning ignorance, extracts Hester's tale from a bystander: she was wed to an English scholar who, though expected to join her in Boston, never arrived. Subsequently, after two years of solitude, she succumbed to adultery, yielding both her infant and the conspicuous scarlet "A" on her bosom. Chillingworth foretells the exposure of the unidentified paramour, but when Reverend Arthur Dimmesdale, a revered local clergyman, commands Hester to unveil the man's identity, she staunchly refuses, leading to her return to the confines.
of her cell. Employing a guise as a physician, Chillingworth gains access to Hester, coercing her into a vow of silence regarding his true identity as her husband.

After the passage of three years, Hester is released from prison and relocates to the outskirts of Boston, residing near the forest. Sustaining herself through her occupation as a seamstress, she continues to face societal ostracism from those who employ her. Hester steadfastly withholds the significance of the scarlet letter from Pearl, who becomes fixated on the emblem. Meanwhile, Chillingworth assumes the role of a physician in Boston, despite lacking formal medical training. Among his patients is Dimmesdale, who is afflicted with heart trouble. Chillingworth takes up residence with Dimmesdale to provide full-time care and begins to entertain suspicions of a connection between Dimmesdale's cardiac ailment and Hester's transgression. Upon the discovery that Dimmesdale has inscribed a mark resembling Hester's scarlet letter over his heart, Chillingworth deduces the clandestine relationship between Dimmesdale and Hester. Motivated by this revelation, Chillingworth resolves to torment and expose Dimmesdale.

Subjected to Chillingworth's harsh ministrations, Dimmesdale experiences a marked decline in his well-being. The weight of guilt stemming from his acts of adultery and the subsequent concealment inflicts profound emotional anguish upon him. Engulfed by remorse, Dimmesdale resorts to extreme measures, subjecting himself to self-imposed punishment through starvation and self-flagellation. One fateful night, he ascends the same scaffold where Hester faced public shame. In a poignant moment, Hester and Pearl coincidentally traverse the area and join Dimmesdale on the scaffold. As they converge, a meteor illuminates the night sky, assuming the distinctive shape of a crimson "A," casting an eerie glow that reveals Chillingworth's presence nearby.

Recognizing the need to assist Dimmesdale, Hester implores Chillingworth to cease his tormenting of him. Although Chillingworth admits to adopting a cruel and malevolent demeanor, he contends that his actions are, in fact, a form of protection for Dimmesdale by maintaining the secrecy of his transgressions. Undeterred, Hester takes matters into her own hands, intercepting Dimmesdale in the forest to disclose Chillingworth's true identity. Persuading Dimmesdale to escape with her and Pearl to Europe, they devise plans to embark on a ship immediately following Dimmesdale's impending significant sermon. Despite Dimmesdale delivering a sermon that is hailed as the pinnacle of his life, he comes to the realization of his impending demise, acknowledging that he won't survive the journey to Europe. Mounting the scaffold, he invites Hester and Pearl to join him. There, he publicly confesses his sin, baring his chest to unveil a scarlet letter etched into his own flesh. As Pearl kisses him for the first time, Dimmesdale succumbs to death.

Hester and Pearl depart from the confines of Boston. A year following Dimmesdale's demise, Chillingworth also passes away, bequeathing a modest
fortune to Pearl as part of her inheritance. Numerous years hence, Hester reverts to her dwelling on the outskirts of town, persisting in adorning the conspicuous letter "A." Meanwhile, Pearl, having entered into a prosperous marriage in Europe, sporadically corresponds with Hester. Hester remains rooted in Boston until her eventual demise, wherein she is interred beside Dimmesdale. Their joint tombstone bears the indelible mark of the letter "A." The elucidation of the findings succinctly outlined in Table 1 is expounded upon with clarity below:

**Table 1. Scarlet Letter and Bekisar Merah (Summary Findings)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Scarlet Letter</th>
<th>Bekisar Merah</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time</strong> (Setting Background)</td>
<td>17th century</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Setting</strong></td>
<td>Puritan Society, Boston</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Patriarchy</strong></td>
<td>Reveals the atrocities of the patriarchy and masculine hegemony in society and thereby perceive women as the current redeemer of humankind's sin.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Character Hegemony</strong></td>
<td>Hester got punished alone for thesin she made with the Puritan Priest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resistance</strong></td>
<td>The resistance of Hester for her existence as an independent woman in the society. To get respect from the society she also does charities. She fights for the sake of her child and also her secret lover.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Discussion**

The theme of women's resistance against societal hegemony is a compelling and recurrent motif in literature across cultures and historical periods. Two novels, Nathaniel Hawthorne's "The Scarlet Letter" and Ahmad Tohari's "Bekisar Merah," offer rich narratives that provide valuable insights into how women navigate oppressive power structures and assert their agency. This research discussion aims to explore and compare the ways in which Hester Prynne in "The Scarlet Letter" and
Lasi in "Bekisar Merah" engage in acts of resistance against hegemonic forces while operating in vastly different contexts.

Women's resistance against hegemony in novels is a recurring and powerful theme that explores the ways in which female characters challenge and defy dominant power structures and societal norms. This resistance can take various forms and is often depicted as a means of asserting autonomy, agency, and self-determination. Here's a detailed explanation of women's resistance against hegemony in novels.

**Male Hegemony in Bekisar Merah**

A woman is often assessed solely based on her physical attractiveness rather than her other qualities. This is evident in the narrative of Lasiyah, who rapidly accumulates wealth within six months of residing in Jakarta, with the local belief in Karangsoga attributing her success to her beauty. The sentiment expressed is captured in the statement, "If not because of her beauty, Lasi would probably have become merely a house maid in Jakarta" (page.242).

This underscores the prevalent undervaluation of women, reducing them to mere objects for male gratification. Such a perspective represents a gender-skewed and unjust stance towards women. Lasi's involvement with Pak Handarbeni further exemplifies this sexual hegemony, positioning her as subordinate in their relationship. Their shared experience of watching a pornography film serves as an additional manifestation of gender-biased oppression, highlighting the power dynamics favoring men over women. Particularly egregious is Pak Handarbeni's proposition for Lasi to engage in sexual intercourse with another man under his control, reinforcing her status as a mere object of desire.

The process of Lasi's divorce from Pak Handarbeni accentuates her subordination within the male-dominated power structure, emphasizing the prevalence of gender injustice. The ease with which Lasi obtains divorce letters from both Darsa and Pak Handarbeni underscores her objectification as a sexually desired entity. Consequently, she is denied the recognition and treatment befitting a human being with dignity and honor.

Lasi faced a dual form of mental suppression within her society, being not only sexually judged but also subjected to unwanted sexual advances. This dual oppression stemmed from societal expectations regarding her youth, beauty, and consequent sexual attractiveness. She was perceived as a sexual being, yet societal norms demanded that she remain devoid of passion until fulfilling her role as a submissive wife in the marital bed (Kerber, 1982:7). The second layer of suppression emerged as people disregarded her emotional experience as a human being. She was reduced to a mere object for the gratification of men, subject to both oppression and victimization through the consumption of pornography and, at times, violent acts (Harlan, 1998:75). When Lasi eventually married Kanjat, a man two years her junior,
she found herself compelled by social conventions that prioritized male superiority. This was evident in the requirement for Lasi to address him as "Kang" (translated as "big brother"), while Kanjat could refer to her by her name without such hierarchical formality.

**Gender Dynamics in "Bekisar Merah" by Ahmad Tohari**

Ahmad Tohari's novel, "Bekisar Merah," offers a thought-provoking exploration of gender dynamics, particularly towards women, within Indonesian society. Through vivid storytelling and powerful character development, Tohari sheds light on the struggles and triumphs of women in a patriarchal society. One notable aspect of the novel is the use of quotations, which further underscores the prevailing attitudes towards women. The novel is set in the rural village of Desa Ploso during the 1960s, a time when traditional gender roles were deeply entrenched in Indonesian society. Women were expected to conform to societal expectations, primarily as dutiful wives and mothers. However, "Bekisar Merah" challenges these norms by presenting strong, complex female characters who defy societal expectations and assert their agency.

One such character is Srintil, a young woman gifted with the ability to perform the traditional Javanese dance, known as the "bekisar." Despite her talent, Srintil faces numerous challenges due to her gender. She is objectified and commodified by the men in her village, who view her as a mere source of entertainment. The quotation, "She dances like a bekisar, but she's not a bird" (page.20), captures the dehumanizing treatment Srintil endures, reducing her to an exotic spectacle rather than recognizing her as a person with hopes and dreams. Through Srintil's journey, Tohari highlights the resilience and strength of women in the face of adversity. Srintil refuses to be confined by societal expectations and rebels against the confines of her traditional role. She seeks education, defying the limited opportunities available to women at the time. This rebellion is encapsulated in the quotation, "I refuse to be a caged bird; I want to soar high in the sky" (page.28).

Tohari also explores the role of women in the Indonesian independence movement through the character of Srintil's mother, Mbok Rondo. As a member of the Gerwani women's organization, Mbok Rondo actively participates in political discussions and fights for women's rights. The quotation, "A woman's voice is as powerful as a thousand men," emphasizes the strength and influence women can wield in shaping society. Additionally, the novel delves into the consequences of a patriarchal society on men themselves. The character of Balia, a talented dancer, struggles with his own identity and sexuality due to societal expectations. Quoted as saying, "The world is a stage, and I'm just an actor playing my part," (page.25), Balia encapsulates the internal conflicts faced by men who are forced to conform to rigid gender norms.
"Bekisar Merah" also addresses the consequences of gender dynamics on relationships. The love story between Srintil and Balia is fraught with challenges, as societal expectations and gender roles threaten to tear them apart. The quotation, "Love knows no boundaries, but society does," encapsulates the barriers they face and the oppressive forces that seek to control their lives. In conclusion, "Bekisar Merah" by Ahmad Tohari offers a compelling exploration of gender dynamics in Indonesian society. Through the use of quotations, Tohari highlights the struggles and triumphs of women, challenges societal norms, and sheds light on the consequences of a patriarchal society on both men and women. The novel serves as a powerful reminder of the importance of challenging oppressive gender dynamics and advocating for gender.

Women's Resistance in Bekisar Merah

Lasi's experience of alienation from her society inadvertently instigated a resistance deep within her, unbeknownst to her conscious awareness. On numerous occasions, she envisioned herself as a crab wielding formidable claws, symbolizing her desire to crush those who had treated her unjustly (Tohari, 1993:33,35,74). She articulated her approach to resistance, stating, "Running and rebelling were the only way to resist and defend her existence as well" (page. 83). Lasi actively resisted conforming to a passivity that led to suppression and identity loss. She opted to distance herself from her village and steadfastly refused to return, despite the pursuits of Sapon and later Kanjat. Her resistance gained momentum during her time in Jakarta. Rejecting any intimacy from both Pak Handarbeni and Bambung, she grounded her resistance in a steadfast belief in the sanctity of marriage and the holiness of the child growing within her womb. She vocalized her resistance with conviction, denouncing Bambung's attempts at dominance and challenging the hegemonic values of gender subordination with the assertion, "I don’t want the holiness of my pregnancy to be stained" (page.119). In the face of anxiety and fear, Lasi demonstrated an unpredictable resolve, emphasizing, "If forced to terminate this pregnancy, I promise you I will commit a daring action" (page.118). This statement underscored her determination to resist external pressures and maintain agency over her own body and decisions.

Expressing her desire to visit her uncle Ngalwi in South Sulawesi signaled a manifestation of anxiety that, in turn, catalyzed a newfound sense of self-determination previously absent in her. Choosing to journey to her uncle Ngalwi's residence in South Sulawesi became the sole avenue she pursued to counter the oppressive hegemony fueled by her feelings of anxiety and fear. The experience of pregnancy induced a profound psychological transformation in her, instilling a sense of dignity, pride, and self-determination that ultimately led to her silent resistance. In Lasi's apparent powerlessness, a latent power emerged. Drawing from Christina
Handayani's perspective (2004), it is stated that "power may come from powerlessness and oppressedness" (page.3). This underscores the notion that even in a state of apparent vulnerability, one can wield a certain form of power.

*Male Hegemony in Scarlet Letter Novel*

Nathaniel Hawthorne's "The Scarlet Letter" is a classic work of American literature that delves into the intricacies of women's hegemony within a 17th-century Puritan society. The novel explores the multifaceted dynamics of power, shame, resilience, and defiance through the lens of its female characters, particularly Hester Prynne, the protagonist. This discussion aims to elucidate the theme of women's hegemony in "The Scarlet Letter," analyzing how the female characters challenge, subvert, and wield power within the oppressive framework of Puritan New England.

Arthur Dimmesdale, the Puritan clergyman, also reaped the advantages of an environment where women were subservient to men. Hester Prynne's refusal to disclose the identity of the man responsible for her pregnancy allowed Arthur to maintain his privileged status as a revered priest within Puritan society. Meanwhile, Hester endured the severe punishments imposed by the Puritans for the transgression they both shared. Hester Prynne's apprehension and aversion towards encountering her former husband, Roger Chillingworth, similarly illustrated the dominance of gender norms. Her overwhelming fear stemmed from the internal conflict of betraying him and the potential retaliation he might seek. Consequently, she experienced a form of hegemony, wherein "hegemonic masculinity concerns the dread of and flight from women" (cited in Howson, 2006:3).

At the heart of "The Scarlet Letter" is Hester Prynne, a woman who stands as a symbol of female resilience and defiance in the face of societal hegemony. Hester's journey begins with her public shaming for the sin of adultery, marked by the scarlet letter 'A' embroidered on her chest. This initial act of public humiliation is a stark example of the Puritan community's judgment and control over women's bodies and sexuality. The Scarlet Letter as a Badge of Honor: Instead of succumbing to shame, Hester transforms the scarlet letter into a symbol of her own agency. She wears it with dignity and pride, reframing its meaning from "Adultery" to "Able." In doing so, she subtly challenges the hegemonic moral rigidity of Puritan society.

Economic Independence: Hester's skill as a seamstress allows her to support herself and her daughter, Pearl. In a society where women were economically dependent on men, Hester's self-sufficiency represents a form of resistance. She refuses to be bound by traditional gender roles. Rejection of Societal Norms: Hester's refusal to reveal the identity of her child's father and her insistence on raising Pearl as an individual outside the boundaries of Puritan norms demonstrate her resistance against societal expectations.
Hester's daughter, Pearl, serves as a living emblem of resistance within the novel. Born out of the act of adultery, Pearl's existence challenges the puritanical constraints placed upon women's sexuality and reproduction. Wildness and Freedom: Pearl is characterized by her wildness and untamed spirit. She refuses to conform to societal norms and expectations. Her very existence is a constant reminder of her mother's defiance and an affront to the rigid moral code of Puritan society.

Interactions with the Scarlet Letter: Pearl's fascination with the scarlet letter and her tendency to create her own versions of it suggest her deep connection to her mother's struggle. She is, in many ways, a physical embodiment of the scarlet letter itself, challenging the community's attempts to control and shame her mother. "The Scarlet Letter" also presents a contrast between Hester's form of resistance and that of other women in the community, such as Mistress Hibbins. Hester's Quiet Strength: Hester's resistance is characterized by quiet strength and personal agency. She does not seek to openly challenge the Puritan authorities but instead focuses on carving out a life for herself and Pearl. Her resistance is rooted in her determination to live according to her own principles.

Mistress Hibbins' Open Rebellion: In contrast, Mistress Hibbins openly rebels against the societal norms of Puritan New England. She is associated with witchcraft and openly mocks the religious authorities. While her resistance is more overt, it ultimately leads to her downfall, highlighting the risks associated with challenging hegemonic power too openly.

The scarlet letter itself is a central symbol that shapes the hegemonic power dynamics within the novel. It serves as a physical representation of the community's control over Hester and, by extension, all women's sexuality and moral behavior. Public Shaming: The public display of the scarlet letter on Hester's chest is a form of patriarchal control and humiliation. It enforces a sense of shame and subordination, reinforcing the hegemony of the Puritan clergy. Transformation of Symbolism: Hester's ability to transform the scarlet letter into a symbol of her own agency represents a significant act of resistance. It challenges the conventional meaning assigned to the letter and asserts Hester's right to define her own identity.

Moreover, "The Scarlet Letter" also exposes the hypocrisy inherent in the Puritan society's treatment of women. While outwardly moralistic and pious, the community's treatment of Hester reveals the underlying double standards and injustices. Treatment of Hester vs. Dimmesdale: Hester bears the public shame for her sin, while the father of her child, Reverend Arthur Dimmesdale, hides his guilt in secret. This stark contrast in their treatment highlights the gendered nature of the society's judgment and control. Public Spectacle: The Puritan society uses Hester as a public spectacle to reinforce its moral authority, yet it turns a blind eye to the moral transgressions of its male leaders. This hypocrisy exposes the inherent gender bias within the hegemonic power structures.
In short, "The Scarlet Letter" by Nathaniel Hawthorne is a profound exploration of women's hegemony within a repressive and patriarchal society. Through the characters of Hester Prynne and Pearl, the novel illustrates the ways in which women resist and navigate the power dynamics imposed upon them. Hester's transformation of the scarlet letter from a symbol of shame to one of empowerment challenges the societal norms of her time. Pearl's untamed spirit embodies resistance to conformity. Their stories collectively highlight the enduring power of women to challenge, subvert, and redefine hegemonic structures, even in the face of societal judgment and hypocrisy. In the legacy of "The Scarlet Letter," we find a powerful narrative that continues to resonate, offering insights into the complexities of women's hegemony and their enduring struggle for autonomy, agency, and identity within a patriarchal world.

**Gender Dynamics in "The Scarlet Letter"**

"The Scarlet Letter" by Nathaniel Hawthorne, set in 17th-century Puritan Massachusetts, provides a rich exploration of gender dynamics, societal expectations, and the consequences of transgressing gender norms. The novel follows Hester Prynne, a woman condemned for committing adultery, as she grapples with the stigmatization and social ostracism that result from her perceived violation of Puritanical morality.

In the patriarchal society depicted in the novel, gender roles are rigidly defined, and women are expected to conform to strict moral standards. Hester's scarlet letter 'A,' symbolizing adultery, serves as a constant reminder of her deviation from societal norms. The judgment and scrutiny she faces underscore the harsh consequences of women who challenge traditional gender expectations. This is evident when one of the women in the crowd remarks, "This woman has brought shame upon us all, and ought to die" (page 50). The comment reflects the collective condemnation of Hester, illustrating the harsh judgment women faced for perceived moral transgressions.

Hawthorne also introduces the character of Pearl, Hester's daughter, who embodies the complexities of femininity and societal expectations. Pearl is portrayed as a symbol of defiance and resilience, challenging the conventional roles imposed on women. Her refusal to conform is evident when she crafts a green letter 'A' for herself, suggesting a rebellious rejection of the societal stigma attached to her mother. Hawthorne writes, "On the breast of her gown, in fine red cloth, surrounded with an elaborate embroidery and fantastic flourishes of gold thread, appeared the letter A" (page 89). This vivid description underscores the symbolic nature of the scarlet letter and its impact on the lives of women in the novel.

The character of Hester evolves throughout the narrative, offering a nuanced exploration of female agency and resilience. Hester's strength and determination...
challenge the limitations placed on women in Puritan society. As she reflects on her experiences, Hester asserts, "What we did had a consecration of its own. We felt it so! We said so! We said so to each other. Hast thou forgotten it?" (page. 189). Here, Hester emphasizes the sanctity of her own experiences and challenges the judgment imposed by society, highlighting her agency in defining her identity beyond societal expectations. In conclusion, "The Scarlet Letter" serves as a compelling exploration of gender dynamics in a Puritanical society, shedding light on the harsh consequences faced by women who deviate from societal norms. The characters of Hester and Pearl provide a nuanced understanding of female agency, resilience, and the complexities of challenging traditional gender roles in a society dominated by patriarchal expectations.

**Women’s Resistance in The Scarlet Letter Novel**

Hester Prynne exhibited remarkable strength, possessing a sense of self-determination and dignity that anchored her to her principles. Right from the beginning, she displayed her resistance, as described by Hawthorne (1998:39), "on the threshold of the prison-door, she repelled him, by an action marked with natural dignity and force of character, and stepped into the open air, as if by her own free will." Her resolute stance extended to her refusal to divulge the identity of her lover. She adamantly declined to provide a name, asserting that the man was deeply ingrained in her heart akin to the scarlet letter, boldly challenging both authority and her former husband. Further evidence of her robust personal resistance emerged when she visited the magistrates and rejected their attempt to separate Pearl from her maternal care, asserting, "I will not give her up" (Hawthorne, 1998:78). In her resistance against the societal hegemony, Hester Prynne relied on her guiding principles, self-determination, pride, and dignity. Her form of resistance was silent and personal, undertaken without inciting others to follow or join her actions; instead, she faced the challenges alone.

In reflecting on the location as the site of her guilt and earthly punishment, Hester Prynne aimed to endure the daily shame as a form of self-inflicted purification. The excerpt from Hawthorne (1998:57) portrays her hope for a renewed, saint-like purity born out of martyrdom. By opting to stay in Salem despite the humiliation and torture she faced, Hester Prynne showcased her resistance against the hegemony of the more influential faction in the region. This decision also underscored her will and courage to carve out a distinct life for herself, seeking purity amid an agonizing atmosphere. Hester Prynne gleaned valuable lessons from her experiences of misery and hardship. The adversities she endured made her internally stronger and kindled a heightened compassion for the suffering and sins of others. As expressed in Hawthorne (1998:136), "Shame, Despair, Solitude! These had been her teachers, stern and wild ones, and they had made her strong but taught her much amiss."
Transforming the negative connotation of the scarlet letter, Hester changed its meaning from 'adultery' to 'affection' and 'able.' Despite lacking social and political power as a woman, Hester drew strength from love, dignity, pride, and self-determination, enabling her to withstand and resist the hardships she faced. This transformation was evident in her encounters with Roger Chillingworth; while she initially appeared resistant but weak and powerless, in subsequent meetings, she radiated strength, leaving Chillingworth to sense a remarkable shift in her demeanor.

Moreover, her awareness of the concealed sins buried deep within the hearts of others transformed her perspective and approach to the affairs of those around her. Evolving from a state of bitter misery and hatred, she cultivated a heart brimming with love and passion. The once powerless woman emerged as a formidable force, shifting from a stance of reckless and obstinate resistance to one marked by dignity. The scarlet letter underwent a profound change in its significance, transitioning from a negative connotation to a positive one. Likewise, the bearer of the letter transformed from an 'adulterer' into an 'affectionate' and 'able' woman. Through silent resistance, she triumphed over the hegemony that sought to control her.

Nathaniel Hawthorne's "The Scarlet Letter" and Ahmad Tohari's "Bekisar Merah" offer profound insights into the multifaceted and enduring nature of women's resistance against hegemonic forces. Hester and Lasi emerge as resilient and transformative figures who challenge the norms of their respective societies, inspiring readers to reflect on the complexities of gender, culture, and oppression. These literary works serve as timeless reminders of the importance of individual agency and the ongoing struggle for gender equality and autonomy in a world characterized by power imbalances and societal constraints. Through the exploration of these narratives, we gain a deeper appreciation of the ways in which literature can shed light on the complexities of female resistance against hegemony, ultimately contributing to broader discussions on gender, power, and social change.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This study reveals that both Hester Prynne and Lasi confront the hegemonic values of their societies and exhibit a quiet resistance fueled by their self-determination, pride, love, and dignity. From the preceding discussion, five universal values emerge: the characters’ resistance against oppressive societal norms, the process of establishing a new identity, the driving forces behind their silent resistance, women’s subordination and men’s dominance, and the characters’ strength within their vulnerability.

Three closely intertwined concepts are conveyed through these works. Firstly, pride and dignity, which to some extent empowered the possessors beyond their own expectations. Secondly, the strength within vulnerability, as they were perceived as weak yet demonstrated remarkable strength, even surpassing that of men. Lastly, the
theme of silent resistance. Thus, with these pride and dignity, the characters resisted oppressively hegemonic values, and this has proven that women were in fact very powerful. The writer would like to give some suggestion such as: For the further study are suggested to compare more than two novels and readers are hope to be more concern about hegemony in literary works because it can be considered to find new knowledge.

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