
Maternal Resilience in the Shadow of Patriarchy: Reading Nanamama Through Andrea O'Reilly Matricentric Feminism in the Novel *Kokokan Mencari Arumbawangi*

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ABSTRACT

The abstract provides a brief overview of the entire paper, including the role of single mothers is often reduced to a mere domestic function, even though they are vulnerable to multi-layered structural pressures within a patriarchal system. In responses to this issue, this study aims to examine the representation of maternal feminism in *Kokokan Mencari Arumbawangi*, a novel by Cynthia Hariadi, using Andrea O'Reilly's matricentric feminism perspective. The analysis focuses on Nanamama as a single mother who faces economic, social, and patriarchal structural pressures in sustaining her family's life and living space. This research employs a qualitative descriptive method with a sociological approach to literary analysis. The data consists of narrative passages and dialogues that represent maternal practices, mother-child relationships, and forms of resistance against patriarchal systems. The findings reveal that motherhood is depicted as an empowered and political practice rather than merely a domestic role. Nanamama develops survival strategies through economic independence, moral courage, social vigilance, and ecological awareness. However, these strategies lead to stigma and social exclusion. This study concludes that the novel presents motherhood as a source of strength while simultaneously exposing maternal vulnerability within patriarchal structures.

1. INTRODUCTION

In Indonesian literature, both historically and culturally, the image of the mother is often associated with the domestic sphere based on norms, morality, and patriarchal systems.

The identity of mothers in any society holds a crucial position because they occupy a certain status (Winarmo, 2015). Mothers are generally depicted as caregivers who are always sacrificing, obedient, and completely dedicated to their families, without the opportunity to express disagreement, negotiate, or refuse (Fahmi & Arifyanti, 2020). In this view, the role of the mother is simplified to merely biological and emotional functions, while the social, economic, and political aspects of the mother's experience, especially single mothers, are often ignored (Rahayu, 2023). As a result, the resilience of mothers as social entities facing structural pressures has not received adequate critical analysis.

In Indonesia's patriarchal society, mothers not only bear household responsibilities but are also burdened with layers of moral and cultural obligations. The state, custom, religion, and social norms often work together to regulate the mother's body and role, so that motherhood is seen as a "natural" practice and a silent, non-political devotion (Suryakusuma, 1996). Based on data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS, 2024), the percentage of female heads of households is 60.5%, with a higher percentage in rural areas (66.71%) than in urban areas (56.52%). The majority of this occurs due to the loss of a partner or husband, with a rate of around 67.17% in 2018. The data then reveals that many women become single mothers due to the death of their partners, which also affects the mother's physical and psychological balance (Langgita & Lestari, 2025). In fact, the experience of motherhood, especially in conditions of poverty, social stigma, and gender inequality, also exacerbates conditions in the complex realm of power negotiations (Madi & Adriani, 2025). Moreover, the social stigma against single mothers carries negative connotations because it is considered a flaw in social values in Indonesia (Aini & Wijayanti, 2022). Therefore, literary studies that focus on maternal resilience as the core of their analysis are crucial and urgent, especially when literary works depict mothers who are not only obedient but also actively struggle to survive, even challenging unfair social structures (Layalin et al., 2023).

The urgency of this research is further strengthened when literature not only depicts the personal experiences of the mother figure, but also records agrarian conflicts, development projects, and the power relations between the state and capital that are interconnected with women's lives. Literary works are produced through high imagination that is made as beautiful as possible and expressed through the author's ideas, experiences, main ideas, and feelings (Anggraini & Fitriani, 2024). Luxemburg, et al. (1989:5) also stated at a definitive level that literature is understood as a creation that is not merely an imitation of existing reality. In this context, literature functions as a means of social criticism that reflects the reality of the

mother figure as an "invisible but invincible subject," as emphasized in the framework of literary sociology and maternal feminism (Kurniawati, 2022). Soraya (2019), argues that feminism examines the injustices experienced by women in the scope of literary works. In this case, women are usually depicted as oppressed, abused, and victims of male violence. Feminism has many branches, and each provides a different view of the role of women in society (Nabila, 2025).

Academic studies on the representation of women in Indonesian literature show significant developments through various feminist perspectives, such as existential feminism, radical feminism, postmodern feminism, and ecofeminism. Various studies in national scientific journals position women not only as victims of patriarchal structures and objects of exploitation, but also as subjects who have a symbolic and ethical relationship with the natural environment. One relevant study is the research of Zahro et al. (2025) who discusses the struggles of female characters in the novel *Perempuan yang Tunggu di Lorong Menuju Laut* by Dian Purnomo, focusing on women's responses to social, cultural, and ecological injustice and the relationship between women's exploitation and environmental damage. Furthermore, Lutfiyah & Raharjo (2025), expand on the analysis of the same novel (*Perempuan yang Menunggu di Lorong Menuju Laut*) by highlighting how transformative ecofeminism emphasizes active female resistance to ecological exploitation, featuring cooperative efforts between men and women as well as the progressive use of technology to build solidarity and defend small islands. This finding is in line with the research of Lutfiyana et al. (2023) who also analyzes the novel *Kokokan Mencari Arumbawangi* by Chynta Hariadi through the perspective of environmental ethics and shows the role of female characters, especially Nanamama, as moral agents in maintaining environmental sustainability.

Additionally, Manullang et al. (2024), provide a socialist ecofeminist reading of *Kokokan Mencari Arumbawangi*, demonstrating how a woman's physical and emotional intimacy with nature drives her struggle to protect environmental resources from modern development, a stance that unfortunately exposes her to direct physical, verbal, and symbolic oppression by dominant parties. Beyond specific novels, ecofeminist studies in Indonesia also address broader national and cultural dimensions; for instance, Permatasari & Siswadi (2022), present a reflective analysis showing that ecofeminist ideology aligns perfectly with Indonesia's national values and Pancasila, advocating for a holistic worldview based on cosmic solidarity, equal relations, simplicity, and responsibility for the biosphere. This eco-ethical paradigm is also evident in Ayu Utami's *Bilangan Fu*, where Mulyati et al. (2024),

analyze the representation of nature and spiritual ecofeminism, identifying how traditional rituals, mythologies, and the veneration of female spiritual figures become powerful instruments to counter modern capitalistic industrialization and patriarchal environmental abuse. In a similar vein, Mulyati et al. (2024), examine Restiana Purwaningrum's *Bumi Ayu* to show how palm oil plantation expansion degrades local ecosystems and triggers both verbal and physical resistance from village women, who face direct and symbolic oppression from patriarchal village heads as they protect their ancestral lands.

Moreover, the connection between women and environmental preservation is preserved not only in modern novels but also in local oral literature; Nasrullah & Adriani (2025), study the Pandara oral tradition of Tidore, illustrating how Tidore women are elevated as active earth-keepers whose wisdom and related local myths act as traditional environmental regulations that secure ecological and social balance. This deep cultural connection between motherhood and ecological struggle cannot be detached from historical gender politics; as Kurnia & Hidayatullah (2024) point out, the New Order regime's state ideology of 'ibuism' historically restricted women's roles to domestic and biological servitude, yet pioneering female creators utilized their 'limited agency' to introduce complex, non-stereotypical representations of mothers confronting systemic challenges. Thus, the sources of this article confirm that the ecofeminist and environmental ethics approaches in Indonesian literature not only broaden the reading of women's experiences, but also strengthen women's position as subjects of resistance against gender injustice as well as ecological damage.

However, there are several fundamental limitations to this study. First, mothers are often lumped into the general category of "women" rather than being the primary focus of analysis with specific maternal experiences. Second, studies of single mothers in Indonesian literature are still dominated by narratives of stigma and suffering, while aspects of maternal resilience strategies as a form of agency and alternative narrative to patriarchy have not been explored in depth. Third, the relationship between motherhood, conflicts over living space, and development power in literary texts is rarely analyzed comprehensively. Therefore, studies that explicitly place motherhood at the center of critical analysis are needed to understand how single mothers construct resilience, moral legitimacy, and symbolic resistance under patriarchal social structures.

To address this gap, this study applies the matricentric feminism framework developed by Andrea O'Reilly. Matricentric feminism views motherhood not only as a personal or instinctive experience, but also as a social, political, and cultural institution shaped

by patriarchal power relations (O'Reilly, 2004; 2016). This approach positions mothers as social subjects with the ability to act, the capacity for resistance, and resilience strategies in the face of marginalization and discrimination. Nurgiyantoro (2019: 107) argues that many fictional stories view and treat women as inferior to men.

Discussions related to women cannot be separated from issues of emancipation and gender equality in society. This emancipation issue emerged as a form of women's resistance to the existing gap in rights, which demands their obligations and roles in society (Munaris & Joko, 2021: 300). In a literary context, matricentric feminism allows for a more sensitive reading of motherhood, maternal language, and the moral legitimacy that mothers construct through their relationships with their children, society, and living spaces. This framework aligns with sociological approaches to literature, which view literary texts as reflections and critiques of social realities, including patriarchal norms, stigma against single mothers, and agrarian or ecological conflicts. The study of motherhood as a social construct is often a focus in feminist studies (Amundari, 2025).

This research focuses its analysis on the depiction of maternal resilience through the character of Nanamama, a character in the novel *Kokokan Mencari Arumbawang* by Chynta Hariadi. Furthermore, it will explain Nanamama's resistance and struggles, as well as how they affect her children's education. Nanamama is depicted as a single mother living under the influence of patriarchy, social stigma, traditional power, and development projects that threaten her living space. Nanamama's resilience is not interpreted as masculine heroism, but rather as a daily practice of motherhood filled with ethical choices, moral courage, and the risk of criminalization.

The limitation of this study is that the analysis is conducted on literary texts as the main object, without involving field data or interviews, using descriptive-critical qualitative methods. This study focuses on three main aspects, namely: (1) Nanamama's experience as a single mother; (2) criticism of patriarchal norms and social power in the narrative; and (3) the mother's resilience strategies reflected through Nanamama's actions, language, and relationship with her children and the land as a source of life and identity. The main objective of this study is to reveal how maternal feminism can explain maternal resilience as a form of agency and symbolic resistance in Indonesian literature. In addition, this study aims to enrich the field of feminist literary studies with a perspective that centers on motherhood, as well as to emphasize the position of mothers, especially single mothers as social and political subjects in contemporary Indonesian literary works.

2. METHODS

This study uses a descriptive-critical qualitative research design to identify matricentric feminism or maternal feminism using Andrea O'Reilly's theory in the novel *Kokokan Mencari Arumbawangi*. Creswell (2014), argues that research with descriptive qualitative methods is used for analysis in the process of meaning, namely the understanding obtained from text or images. The data collection techniques use observation techniques, literature studies, reading, and notes with the researcher as the key instrument. The object of this research is maternal feminism found in the subject of the novel *Kokokan Mencari Arumbawangi* by Cyntha Hariadi published by PT Gramedia Pustaka Utama in 2020.

The instrument used was observation, which paid attention to aspects of experience, criticism of patriarchal norms, and the mother's resilience strategies as reflected through Nanamama's actions, language, and relationship with her children and the land as a source of life and identity. Data analysis used discourse analysis techniques with a sociological literary approach to dominant discourse, maternal strategies, counter-discourse, symbols, and metaphors. The data used were quotations from the novel, including words, sentences, or dialogues that demonstrate and strengthen the research findings.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Results and Discussion section should address the research problems and objectives. This section is the largest part of the main body of the article, comprising at least 60% of the entire article. The discussion should be detailed and refer to relevant studies (from the last 7 years), highlighting the novelty and findings of the research. It may also be presented with systematic subsections. For references with three authors, use all names (Author1, Author2, Author3); for references with more than three authors, use the first author's name followed by et al. (Author1 et al., 2020). Footnotes should not be used. Results may be presented as tables, graphs, or figures. Tables, graphs, and figures should not be excessively long or large. Tables should follow the specified format, and font size within tables can be reduced to 10 pt.

Tabel 1. Findings of Maternal Feminism in the Novel Kokokan Mencari Arumbawangi

Maternal Feminism	Findings
Mother Representation	The mother is represented through the figure of Nanamama as the center of physiological, psychological, and sociological life. Motherhood is defined as a practice of nurturing life that encompasses the mother's body, children, the land, and nature. Nanamama serves as an educator of values, an ecological educator, and a supporter of the sustainability of the next generation.
Critique of Patriarchy	The novel reveals a critique of the patriarchal system through the structural oppression, stigma, criminalization, and social exclusion experienced by Nanamama as a single mother resisting development. Patriarchy operates through legal authorities, village power, and collective societal pressure, silencing the mother's voice and legitimizing her suffering.
Maternal Resilience Strategy	Nanamama's resilience strategy is evident through symbolic and moral resistance in her efforts to defend her land, her life, and her children's future. She uses economic ingenuity, courage to speak out, and consistency of values to survive the discrimination and marginalization that plagues her. Her resilience is also passed on to her children as ideological provisions and a sense of dignity after her passing.

Based on the findings presented in the table, there are three important points regarding maternal feminism, which consist of the representation of mothers, critique of patriarchy, and strategies of maternal resilience. O'Reilly herself suggests that matricentric feminism is based on the experience of mothers as the center of feminist analysis (O'Reilly, 2008). This feminism rejects the view that motherhood is a source of oppression, and instead positions mothers as subjects who have rights, moral authority, and political power. In the findings that have been reviewed, the oppression of mothers does not come from motherhood itself, but from patriarchal motherhood as a social system that controls, disciplines, and demeans the experience of a single mother. The findings in the novel Kokokan Mencari Arumbawangi show the practice of matricentric feminism entirely through the figure of Nanamama.

Mother Representation

In O'Reilly's perspective, mothers are understood as social and political subjects, not merely subjects with domestic roles. The representation of mothers in the novel Kokokan Mencari Arumbawangi is shown in the character of Nanamama by highlighting the practice of autonomous and empowered motherhood, in line with the concept of empowered mothering. This concept stems from the mother's own choices and experiences with the rejection of oppressive patriarchal standards of motherhood. The narrative of motherhood in

the novel can then be read as a form of social resistance, and the relationship is then presented as a comprehensive living relationship between the mother's body, child, land, and nature.

Physiologically, Nanamama practices motherhood rooted in the care of life. The mother's bodily relationship to the land affirms O'Reilly's concept of maternal experience, which is often embodied and relational. The physiological representation of the mother places the mother at the center of life, working through her own body and through the nature she cares for. Motherhood is not only interpreted as the process of giving birth, but also as a close relationship between the mother's body, the land, and life that supports each other. The mother's body and nature both play a role in maintaining and continuing life. The land depicted in the novel is then made part of the body of life that the mother cares for the continuity and sustainability of her children in the future.

The centering of the mother's body on the land simultaneously emphasizes that Nanamama's physiological relationship is not only a matter of biological survival, but also a form of political contestation over the exploitation of living space. This representation shows that the mother's body cannot be separated from the materiality of nature that is the source of the continuity of generations, so that land grabbing can be read as a direct threat to the mother's existence as a supporter of life. Therefore, this work shows an indication that the mother's physiology functions as a starting point for resistance, because eroding the land means simultaneously destroying the socio-maternal body that supports the lives of her children. This physiological relationship is found in Nanamama's dialogue in the novel which then strengthens the following theoretical idea.

"Lihat sekelilingmu. Semua yang hidup, tumbuh dari pori-pori bumi yang juga hidup, seperti kulit kita. Aku bisa mendengar denyut nadiku dan anak-anakku dalam tanah yang kami olah dan sayangi setiap hari. Sebagai balasan, tanah ini memberi kami hidup. Apa jadinya, kalau kemudian mesin-mesin itu datang, mengebor dan menancapkan beton dan besi menembus kulit ke dalam daging sampai jantungku? Tanah ini akan mati. Kami semua." (Page 152).

Nanamama teaches and instills the value of love for nature as part of human survival in Kakaputu and Arumbawangi, her children. Land is positioned as an economic resource, as well as a living entity that has a reciprocal relationship with humans. Through daily practices such as planting, caring for, and cultivating rice fields, Nanamama teaches ecological awareness to her children from an early age by viewing nature as a life partner that must be respected and protected. Within the framework of O'Reilly's maternal feminism, this practice demonstrates that motherhood is a space for the production of knowledge and social values.

Mothering is not passive, but active and political. Nanamama practices mothering as an act of resistance against the logic of coercive development that separates humans from their original essence, namely the land.

In addition to the physiological aspects, the psychological aspects in the novel *Kokokan Mencari Arumbawangi* also dominate, shown through the representation of the mother. Psychologically, feelings such as affection, anxiety, and determination of Nanamama represent O'Reilly's concept called maternal agency. The mother's emotions are shown through the depth of Nanamama's feelings and inner strength in facing life not as a form of weakness, but as a basis for decision-making and action. Nanamama's thoughts and feelings are continuously directed towards the safety, happiness, and survival of her child, even when she is under pressure, blamed by society, until after her death. Nanamama's psychological form not only forms self-resilience, but also instills a survival mechanism for her children through the values of gratitude, fighting spirit, and moral courage. This psychological representation shows that the mother's emotional stability is social capital that is passed down across generations, making the maternal role the foundation for social character formation. Her strong inner attitude proves that motherhood is not static in the domestic sphere, but rather presents an emotional agency that encourages the continuity of life amidst socio-patriarchal pressures. The psychological representation instilled by Nanamama is in the following narrative.

"Hirup hijau itu, Kakaputu. Simpan di dalam dadamu dan kau akan selalu hidup."

"Arumbawangi, rangkul langit di atasmu. Birunya, hitamnya, terangya, gelapnya, segala rahasianya. Jangan takut. Kau akan jadi anak paling kuat." (Page 10).

Nanamama memeluk kedua anaknya, bersyukur kepada pencipta langit-bumi, gelap-terang, baik-buruk, ada-tiada, dewa-dewi pelindung makhluk hidup-mati, dan terutama kemurahan hati kokokan, yang memberikannya dua orang anak sesuai dengan jumlah tangan yang kini lengkap merangkul keduanya. (Page 45).

Nanamama passed on religious values and a strong sense of gratitude to Kakaputu and Arumbawangi by making herself a good example for her children to see and emulate. Her psychological resilience is also evident when she considers the continued education, food, and land of her children, despite being physically disabled and having her dignity stripped by social accusations.

"... Kalian berdua harus tetap sekolah dan bertani. Untuk biaya sekolah, aku punya tabungan. Kerjakan lahan yang kecil saja semampu kalian. ... Jual hasil kebun untuk tambahan

uang. Olah sawah kecil saja, sisanya biarkan mati suri dulu. Tanah itu akan menunggu sampai kalian dewasa dan bisa bertani penuh. Apapun yang terjadi, jangan lupa bersyukur, sembahyang. Kalian masih punya rumah, tanah, hewan, dan kalian berdua, tidak sendirian.” (Page 213).

Sociologically, Nanamama is represented as a social agent who maintains community values and ecological sustainability. Nanamama then acts as a social educator who shapes her children's perspectives on work, anger, justice, and dignity. The values instilled by Nanamama continue from the domestic sphere to the social practices demonstrated in Kakaputu and Arumbawangi after her death. This sociological aspect shows that Nanamama's maternal practices become a social pedagogical tool that shapes her children's courage in interpreting dignity and justice. The representation of mothers in the social realm plays a dual role, starting from being a caregiver, also acting as a producer of community ethics that bequeaths values of resistance to inequality. Thus, the mother's role will not end in the domestic sphere, but will then reach the public sphere through the values she passes down, making motherhood a social institution that reproduces class consciousness, power relations, and the sustainability of life.

“Kau tahu, ketika seharian dari pagi sampai sore, kau merasa seluruh dunia memusuhiimu, keluargamu, terutama menghina ibumu, bukannya kecil melempem, kau bisa merasa sebesar raksasa dan nekat. Karena kemarahan tidak selalu buruk. Kita tidak mampu harus selalu sabar. Kemarahan bisa jadi kekuatan. Untuk membuktikan bahwa kita ada. Sebagai manusia. Seburuk-buruknya. Sekecil-kecilnya.” (Page 209).

Furthermore, even the smallest things, such as the habits Nanamama instills in her children throughout their lives, can lead them to independence. It's natural for Kakaputu and Arumbawangi to be unsure how to proceed, especially after their mother's death. However, the values and good habits Nanamama passed on to them have enabled the children to thrive. An example of this is the narrative below.

“Betapa kaget ia menemukan begitu banyak uang kertas menjadi sumpalan kasur yang busanya sudah tercerai-berai. Tak pernah ia melihat uang sebanyak itu. Dari seribuan lama sampai seratus ribuan baru yang mengeluarkan wangi pandan dan cengkih kering yang Nanamama sebar di dalam kasur untuk menyamarkan bau uang. Semua hasil penjualan padi dan kebun yang Nanamama titip jual ke berbagai pedagang di pasar selama masa hidupnya. Ibunya ternyata jutawan, Kakaputu tersenyum geli.” (Page 234-235).

“... Tapi aku mau minta tolong. Mau tidak Titibatu membantu menjual hasil kebun pas dia ke pasar. Aku kan, pagi-pagi harus sekolah. Kalau laku, silakan Titibatu mengambil sayuran di kebun kita gratis untuk keperluan masak hari itu. Melihat kangkung kita yang gemuk-gemuk, dia langsung mau.”

"Kok, kamu bisa punya ide kayak gitu?"

"Ya, ikutin Nanamama, Ka. Kan, aku tahu apa-apa yang dia jual di pasar." (Page 237-238)

Based on the physiological, psychological, and sociological descriptions above, it can be concluded that the representation of the mother in the novel *Kokokan Mencari Arumbawangi* places Nanamama as the center of the production of life, knowledge, and social values. Physiologically, the mother's body is networked with the land as a source of material sustainability; psychologically, inner steadfastness forms emotional capital for the continuity of generations; and sociologically, motherhood becomes an instrument for the reproduction of moral values and social agency that opposes injustice. Therefore, motherhood is not only reduced to a biological experience, but is also interpreted as a structural force that produces dignity, courage, and social resistance in children and their communities.

Critique of Patriarchy

The novel *Kokokan Mencari Arumbawangi* presents a sharp critique of the patriarchal system through Nanamama's experiences as a single mother living under the pressure of social norms, village power, and state officials. Patriarchy in this novel is not only present as an individual, but also works as a collective system that stigmatizes, ostracizes, and criminalizes mothers who do not submit to dominant interests. Nanamama's position as a woman without a husband, as well as a rebel who rejects the construction of a hotel there, makes her perceived as a threat to the social stability of the village. She is not treated as a subject with moral legitimacy, but as a rebellious figure who should be suspected and eliminated. This is evident when the village community collectively labels her as dangerous, as depicted in the following narrative.

"Semua orang tetap bergotong-royong untuk kepentingan desa, tapi Nanamama sudah terlanjur dicap pembangkang yang sewaktu-waktu bisa membahayakan keselamatan desa ..." (Page 34).

Criticism of patriarchy intensified when formal power played a role in exacerbating Nanamama's oppression. Law enforcement and village officials exploited Nanamama's marginalized social position to make one-sided accusations without fair evidence. Nanamama's opposition to the hotel construction was used as a logical basis to place her as the prime suspect in the fire, as if a mother's critical stance automatically equated with criminal intent. This patriarchal logic is reflected in the following statement from officials.

"... Kita semua tahu kau terang-terangan menolak pembangunan hotel tersebut. Kemudian tiba-tiba, hotel terbakar. ... Tapi jelas, siapa yang paling punya motif untuk menggagalkan usaha hotel," ujar polisi pertama mulai tak sabar. (Page 179).

These accusations demonstrate how the patriarchal system operates by excluding women's voices through the rationalization of power. Furthermore, patriarchy in this novel also operates through the destruction of the mother's dignity and moral legitimacy. Nanamama is not only accused legally but also dehumanized, as if her motherhood is no longer a source of ethical value. She is portrayed as a figure worthy of suspicion for being capable of extreme violence, an accusation born of collective prejudice against women deemed "problematic." The denial of Nanamama's humanity is clearly illustrated when she realizes how low her position in society is in the following narrative.

"Begitu rendahnya aku di mata kalian, kalian bisa membayangkan aku membakar sesuatu yang bukan milikku dan mencelakakan manusia yang ada di dalamnya. ..." (Page 180).

Furthermore, criticism of patriarchy is also evident in the way the village community unilaterally produces truth and closes off Nanamama's advocacy. Ibu's voice is disregarded because she lacks a strong structural position, either as a woman or as a single mother. Patriarchy operates by transforming social consensus into a tool of symbolic violence, where gossip, prejudice, and collective fear are legitimized as truth. Nanamama is positioned as "different" and therefore deserving of exclusion for the sake of village stability. This situation demonstrates a situation where patriarchal power is not always present in the form of physical violence, but can also manifest through the normalization of systematic social exclusion.

Furthermore, the patriarchy in this novel utilizes development discourse as a moral justification for eliminating the mother, who is considered an obstacle to progress. The hotel's construction is presented as a symbol of masculine, rational, and modern progress, while Nanamama's stance in defending her land is seen as excessively emotional and illogical. This view demonstrates a patriarchal bias that separates rationality from motherhood, as if the mother's concern for her living space and her children's future has no legitimate basis. This is reinforced by the following narrative.

"Mama tidak suka hotel itu. Hotel apa pun, di persawahan ini. Bencana, Arum, hanya akan menimbulkan bencana! Peraturannya memang tidak boleh. Pemilik hotel yang dulu itu melanggar, makanya tidak jadi. Tapi begitulah, ganti pemimpin biasanya ganti peraturan." (Page 68)

This logic is reinforced when Nanamama's refusal is used as the primary reason for suspecting her in the fire case, thus shifting criticism of development into a personal accusation against Ibu. At this point, the novel implicitly reveals that patriarchy not only oppresses women but also controls the direction of development and human relations with nature. By excluding the voice of a single mother, the patriarchal system blocks the possibility of an ethical perspective oriented towards sustainability and life. Nanamama's rejection of land exploitation is not merely a form of personal resistance, but an expression of maternal responsibility that is considered subversive by those in power. When such voices are silenced, what is maintained is not social order, but rather the interests of a handful of elites hiding behind the discourse of progress.

Through this series of events, the novel *Kokokan Mencari Arumbawangi* emphasizes that patriarchy works by reducing mothers to objects of surveillance and accusation, rather than moral subjects with a voice. Nanamama is not given the space to explain, defend, or define herself. The novel's critique of patriarchy demonstrates how social systems can strip mothers of their authority and subject them to collectively legitimized structural violence.

Maternal Resilience Strategy

The mother's resilience strategy in the novel *Kokokan Mencari Arumbawangi* is demonstrated through Nanamama's efforts to maintain her family's life independently. Despite economic limitations, Nanamama does not surrender, but actively seeks ways to ensure that her and her children's needs are met. This demonstrates maternal agency, or the mother's ability to act consciously, independently, and responsibly for the sake of her children's survival. Economically, this resilience is evident in her ability to identify opportunities and utilize the resources around her. Despite financial limitations and minimal social support, Nanamama does not rely on assistance from others, but instead strives to manage her life independently through farming and managing natural resources, as depicted in the following narrative.

"Nanamama pandai memanfaatkan kesempatan ini untuk mendapatkan uang lebih. Ia akan menyewa satu atau dua orang dari desa seberang untuk membantunya membersihkan, mengumpulkan, dan menjual jerami." (Page 37)

In addition to economic survival, Nanamama's resilience strategy is also evident in her courage to confront village authorities that threaten her living space. She does not choose to remain silent when development interests begin to harm the community, but rather expresses

symbolic resistance. In O'Reilly's framework, this practice demonstrates that the mother has the moral legitimacy to speak out when her children's lives and future are threatened. This incident is remembered by villagers as an unusual act, demonstrating moral courage despite being undertaken from a socially disadvantaged position, as illustrated in the following narrative.

Semua orang tak pernah lupa kejadian Nanamama mencegat kepala desa yang menjabat waktu itu, pada masa pemberian izin hotel pertama kali. Kepadanya, Nanamama menyodorkan sebilah kayu yang ujungnya penuh getah nangka dan di atasnya terperangkap seekor capung yang masih hidup. ... Sela beberapa waktu kemudian, Nanamama mengirimkan bilah kayu yang sama tapi kali ini dengan capung yang sudah mati di atasnya, ke atas meja kepala desa. Sejak itu Nanamama menjadi buah bibir setiap orang. (Pages 110-111).

Mother's resilience strategy is also reflected in Nanamama's vigilance towards her social environment. She doesn't trust others easily and tends to test them first to protect herself and her family from threats. This attitude stems from experience and a strong survival instinct. In the context of maternal feminism, this vigilance is a form of maternal protection for herself and her children, as well as a rational response to the threatening and unjust social environment depicted in the following narrative.

Ia merasa Nanamama adalah orang yang suka menguji orang lain untuk mengetahui apakah orang itu layak mendapatkan kebaikan atau angkara ... karena Nanamama mencium bahaya. (Page 129).

Furthermore, Nanamama's resilience is rooted in her awareness of the long-term impacts of development on human life and nature. Her rejection of land conversion is based on the understanding that land exploitation will eliminate sources of life. However, this resilience is misinterpreted by the community as selfishness, even impacting her children, which ultimately leads to the mother's resilience strategy leading to stigma and exclusion, despite being based on responsibility for life, as revealed in the following narrative.

"Di masa depan, kalau semua orang menjual, yang kemudian sisa sawahku, dan sekelilingnya semen, maka sawahku pun tidak akan bisa bernapas dan bertahan hidup... Semua pada akhirnya akan tergantikan benda mati yang dikontrol manusia. Aku tak mau dikontrol manusia lain." (Page 154).

Peristiwa-peristiwa sampai tragedi yang lalu membuktikan perlawanan Nanamama untuk bertahan hidup malah disalahartikan sebagai perbuatan yang egois. Kakaputu tahu orang-orang menyebut ibunya perempuan gila. ... Kakaputu sangat marah, ... Yang lebih ia hindari

adalah orang-orang sedesa makin membenci Nanamama karena menganggap anaknya kurang ajar. Maka Kakaputu selalu berusaha sabar. (Page 256).

The stigma experienced by Nanamama has been shown to impact her children, who also experience social pressure due to the negative label attached to their mother. Despite this, Nanamama continues to instill values of steadfastness, patience, and dignity, which will later become a form of resistance passed down to Kakaputu and Arumbawangi. Nanamama also inherited an ethical and spiritual awareness regarding the relationship between humans and nature. Therefore, under these conditions, the mother's presence in maternal feminism is believed to live on through the values, memories, and actions of her children.

"Apa pun yang terjadi, jangan menjual sawah kita. Biarkan mereka merampas. Tapi, jangan pernah kau serahkan. Ingat, di bawahnya berdetak nyaring napas semua moyangmu, aku, dan kalian, seperti jam waktu yang abadi. Mereka senantiasa mencipta untuk kalian. ... Selagi aku tidak ada, jangan pernah lupa memberikan sesajen kepada bumi sebelum kita sendiri makan. Kalian tidak akan pernah kekurangan. Akan selalu merasa cukup. Jangan sedih, anak-anakku, aku ada di setiap langkah yang kalian injak." (Page 189-190).

"Karena satu hotel muncul akan muncul hotel yang lain. Itu sudah pasti. Sawah akan kering dan semakin mengecil, lalu kita makan apa? Tinggal di mana kalau terdesak terus? Orang-orang suka kerja di hotel. Aku tidak mau! Aku tidak akan pernah meninggalkan sawahku. Aku harap kau dan Kakaputu pun, tidak. ... Menelantarkan tanah yang telah menghidupi keluarga sudah beratus-ratus tahun lamanya, kok, bisa? Mengganti tanah yang bernapas ini dengan gedung-gedung, sama saja membunuh orang-orang yang dihidupinya, kok, tega? Manusia sendiri bisa jadi hama sawah paling jahat! Mereka ingin menikmati keindahan sawah dengan membangun hotel atau villa di dekatnya. Membangun berarti mengambil lahan sawah, kan? Kalau semakin banyak orang yang bangun, sawahnya tinggal apa? Lama-lama cuma jadi taman, hiasan. Mereka senang, Kita kelaparan!" (Page 68-69).

However, this novel also shows that Mother's resilience doesn't always lead to victory. Nanamama's confession is shown through exhaustion, loneliness, and physical limitations, demonstrating the cruelty of the patriarchal system, which works by crippling Mother's body to silence its echoes. Mother's long-standing resilience strategy is ultimately depicted as failing in the following narrative.

"Ternyata aku tidak sekuat yang aku kira, Arum, dan yang kau kira, Kakaputu. Aku kuat menghadapi tuduhan apa pun dan aku akan buktikan aku tidak bersalah. Tapi, kenyataan bahwa aku sendirian menghadapi seluruh desa mengikis rasa juangku. Sakit hatiku melihat mereka tanpa ragu menzalimiku. Dan rasanya, aku yakin, ada kekuatan luar juga yang mencoba

menyakitiku. Melumpuhkanku. Tahu, bahwa mulut besarku ini, tidak ada gunanya tanpa kekuatan tubuhku. Mereka tahu cara menghentikanku. ..." (Page 212).

Thus, through the figure of Nanamama, the novel *Kokokan Mencari Arumbawangi* presents the mother's resilience strategy as a complex maternal practice, both strong and fragile, both courageous and fraught with risk. Within O'Reilly's maternal feminist framework, this resilience demonstrates motherhood not as a source of oppression, but as a potential for moral and political resistance born of love, responsibility, and a commitment to life.

Based on the description above, Nanamama's representation shows that the experience of motherhood in *Kokokan Mencari Arumbawangi* is not merely a static domestic construction, but rather exists as a social practice related to physiological, psychological, and sociological aspects. The resilience of the mother figures reflected through their bodies, emotions, relationships with nature, and involvement in society, shows how motherhood functions as a source of knowledge and morality that shapes women's subjectivity. Therefore, the overall findings of this reading lead to the understanding that motherhood in the novel functions as an epistemic space that transcends the boundaries of traditional roles, while simultaneously opening up new possibilities for reading about the position of mothers in Indonesian feminist literature. These findings form the basis for the following conclusions and recommendations.

When compared with previous studies on the same novel, the findings of this study both confirm and extend existing readings. Lutfiyana et al. (2023) and Firdaus et al. (2022) primarily read Nanamama's closeness to the land through an environmental-ethics lens, emphasizing her respect and moral responsibility toward nature, while Manullang and Putri (2024) frame the woman-nature relationship in the same novel through a socialist-ecofeminist perspective. The present study confirms these ecological readings but extends them by situating Nanamama's care for the land within a specifically maternal and political framework, following O'Reilly's matricentric feminism: her ecological vigilance is read not merely as environmental ethics or class-based ecofeminism, but as an inseparable part of her practice of motherhood itself. Likewise, while Zahro et al. (2025) and Latif et al. (2023) show that women's resistance to ecological injustice in other Indonesian literary works is frequently met with social and structural repression, this study shows that Nanamama's resistance is further compounded by her position as a single mother, so that the patriarchal backlash she experiences works simultaneously through stigmatization of her motherhood and criminalization of her environmental defiance. This comparison confirms that the matricentric

lens adds an explanatory dimension—the entanglement of motherhood, ecology, and patriarchal power—that previous ecofeminist and environmental-ethics readings of *Kokokan Mencari Arumbawangi* have not fully addressed.

4. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the representation of mother resilience in *Kokokan Mencari Arumbawangi* places the figure of Nanamama at the center of a physically embodied experience, connecting body, emotion, land, and community. Using Andrea O'Reilly's maternal feminist perspective, Nanamama's resilience is read not as individual heroism, but as a practice of sustainability realized through caring for the body and environment, building emotional solidarity, and passing on social values to her children. Through this reading, motherhood emerges as an epistemic focus that produces knowledge, morality, and resistance. The academic contribution of this research lies in strengthening the position of the mother as a subject of knowledge and social agent in Indonesian feminist literary studies, thereby broadening the perspective on motherhood as a political concept based on relational, embodied, and intergenerational experiences.

The social implications of these findings suggest that maternal experiences are inseparable from the social structures that govern women's lives, particularly single mothers in a patriarchal society. Nanamama's representation emphasizes that mothers' values, resilience, and social dignity are shaped through everyday practices, thus motherhood needs to be understood as a source of moral legitimacy rather than stigma. By positioning mothers' experiences as a source of social learning, the novel's narrative demonstrates the potential of maternal literature in shaping public awareness of women's roles in ecological sustainability, intergenerational education, and social justice. Therefore, literary works can function as a medium for social literacy that broadens public understanding of the complexity of maternal experiences and the ethical values that accompany them.

Based on these contributions, this study recommends three directions for literacy and gender policy. First, the development of literary literacy programs that incorporate representations of motherhood into school and community curricula to build gender sensitivity from an early age through texts that position mothers as social subjects. Second, strengthening protection policies for single mothers through narrative approaches and community education so that the values of resilience depicted in literature can be translated into social support at the village and city levels. Third, translating these academic findings into

critical reading programs and gender-based workshops in public spaces, especially through libraries, reading houses, and women's empowerment institutions, so that literary literacy does not stop at academic consumption but produces value transformation in society. Thus, this research not only enriches the study of Indonesian feminist literature but also offers a model of literacy-based social intervention relevant to women's and family empowerment policies in the contemporary Indonesian context.

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