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Transformation of women in Indonesian short stories in the 2000s

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Cuisine is not enough

Transformation of women in Indonesian short stories in the 2000s

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Women's attachment to the world of cooking is not without practical cause, but it is also an ideological process. This paper examines married women's relationship with cooking and its ideological background in four Indonesian short stories. The stories serve as primary data, discussed through narrative textual analysis, from a feminist perspective. Married women are obligated to be good cooks, especially to earn their husbands' loyalty and faithfulness, so their main role is in the kitchen. In the meantime, patriarchal ideology is passed on from mothers to daughters. Although not all texts describe women's resistance to their role in the kitchen, some women resist by preparing food and marketing it with the aim of not relying on their husband's income alone and gaining economic independence.

Keywords: patriarchy, ideology, kitchen, income

1. Introduction

To be independent of men, women must earn a salary. One way of doing so is cooking, for example, by opening a food stall or a restaurant. Among Asian countries, Indonesia has numerous ethnic groups that possess diverse cultures and languages, interweaving regionally related dialects. Furthermore, Indonesian cuisines are as diverse as these cultures, demonstrated especially by the 1990–2000 decade, which was a heyday of television, with cooking programs being an audience favorite (Mustinda 2018). Previously, culinary information and stories were predominantly found in women's magazines or newspapers, once a week, as recipes, reports, or experience notes, alongside a variety of interesting images.¹

In the meantime, many studies on women in literary texts have been conducted (Harjito 2017; Widyastuti 2013; Wiyatmi 2012; Saryono 2009; Liliani 2010). However, studies related to women's cooking are still very limited. Rahman (2011) wrote about Indonesian culinary culture during the

¹ At least one tabloid titled *Saji* is specifically for cuisine, and the magazine *Sedap* has links that can be tracked in the bibliography.

colonial period (1870–1942). He noted that the colonial period was an important cultural connection at least from the 16th to the 19th century. The combination of European and indigenous cultures began to show signs in the 19th century of something later called “Indies” culture. One Indies cultural manifestation is *rijsttafel*, a banquet of Indonesian dishes carefully arranged on a dining table. Researching the history of Indonesian food from a global perspective, Rahman (2016) made several important findings. First, the formation of Indonesian culinary culture has been going on since the 10th century when the community made efforts to utilize surrounding food resources. Second, until the 18th century, global influences came mostly from China, India, Arabia, and Europe. Third, food cultivation from the 19th to the 20th centuries gave rise to food science and gastronomy as food innovation marked by the creation of Indische cuisine or Indische Keuken. Fourth, the preparation of Indonesian cookbooks is a deconstruction effort on Indische cuisine. As stated, Rahman focuses on the history of Indonesian food.

In contrast to Rahman’s research and other previous research, this paper discusses women and cuisine in Indonesian short stories. Although the paper targets food, it also focuses on its relationships with women’s transformation in short story texts and their ideological background.

In Indonesia, women’s position in society is not equal to that of men. For instance, the Javanese, one of the largest ethnic groups in Indonesia, have a division of inheritance called *sepikul segendongan*. That is, sons receive a two-thirds share of their parents’ estate, while daughters receive one-third (Kodiran 1975: 336). The responsibility for all household work—cooking, washing, and caring for children—falls upon the wife. The husband has very little to do with household chores. When it comes to society and politics, wives usually send sons as their representatives (Geertz 1985: 130–131; Koentjaraningrat 1994: 144–145; Heertz 1985: 49).

In Indonesian literature, short stories and poems are the most popular genres; authors prefer them because they do not have to create the world of a novel. Readers also prefer the brevity of short stories and poems (Rosidi 1983: 10). The decade from 2003–2013 was the heyday of printed newspapers,² and usually once a week, newspapers carried a short story. Since 2014, however, the Internet and online media have been booming.³ Additionally, social media, e.g., Facebook and blogs, have become alternatives in the development of Indonesian literature, especially the short story.

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² <https://news.detik.com/x/detail/intermeso/20210701/Loper-Koran-di-Ujung-Senja/>

³ Of newspapers, 66.7 percent prepare an electronic version, 57.4 percent of magazines, and 7 percent of tabloids (Kusuma 2016: 61).

In contrast to the myriad recipes presented weekly in newspapers or magazines, short stories about food that match the intent of this article are limited. Hence, we conducted a search for “cuisine,” locating four short stories that became the main texts in this discussion: *Dapur Nyonya Besar* [DNB, “Grand Lady’s Kitchen”] (Haryadi 2002); *Sihir Tumis Ibu* [STI, “The Magic of Mother’s Saute”] (Widia 2014); *Sambal di Ranjang* [SR, “Condiment in Bed”] (Purwanti 2015); and *Perempuan Sinting di Dapur* [PSD “Eccentric Woman in the Kitchen”] (Prasad 2009).

- DNB contains the characters of the married couple Mimi and Jihan and Mother and Father (Mother1 and Father1, respectively, for ease of analysis).
- STI has four characters: I, the husband; the wife; mother; and father (I2, Wife2, Mother2, and Father2, respectively).
- SR has three characters: I, the wife; the husband; and Dimas, a young man: (I3, Husband3, and Dimas).
- PSD has two characters: Saodah (female) and Wak Haji Mail (male).

2. Methodology and corpus

The four texts were chosen with the following considerations:

1. they are united by the theme of cuisine prepared by women.
2. They are set in Indonesia and
3. significantly, they are written in the Indonesian language.⁴ Therefore, this study assumes that these short texts represent indigenous social reality.

Furthermore, this paper employs a feminist perspective by revealing the relationship between the wife figure and cuisine in short stories of Indonesian origin. Feminism is here interpreted as a movement seeking to develop strategies for women’s benefit (Barker 2005: 297; Pocha 2010: 70; Young 2010: 263; Udasmoro 2011: 4; Humm 2009: 331–332; Tong 2008: 309–310). Feminism’s main concern is gender as the governing principle of social life, which is fraught with power relations. The structural subordination of women is usually referred to as patriarchy and appears with its derivative meanings of male-led family, male domination, and male superiority. In the opinion of Walby (2014: 28), patriarchy is defined as a system of social structures and practices that supports men in dominating,

⁴ However, people with higher education backgrounds are known predominantly to have mastery of the Indonesian language (Munandar 2013: 95). This is used to communicate in formal situations, the workplace, service functions in education among students, and also to converse with persons one does not know (Rahayu 2010: 133).

oppressing, and exploiting women, that is, keeping them subordinate. Recently, however, in contemporary culture, representation of mothers has changed. Woodward noted that the domestic figure of a mother who deals only with child caregivers has become an “independent mother,” that is, a mother who supports women’s work. Mothers who have careers can explore individuality and appear attractive (Barker 2005: 297–335). In simple language, being a mother and/or a woman who has income, looks attractive, and becomes a subject able to explore individuality can be done, but it is a struggle for women.

The research technique used in this paper is narrative text analysis. Narrative is chronologically ordered, claims to record an event, and provides understanding of how social order is formed by recognizing various characters and issues (Barker 2005: 41). Based on this, steps in analysis of the text as a narrative include determining:

1. the female figure in the story,
2. how the figure is related to cooking,
3. the relationship between the female figure and others, and
4. what actions the female figure takes.

3. Results and discussion

The four texts studied show relationships between women and the kitchen or cooking. In DNB, Mimi really likes the kitchen and cooking. However, with his upward social mobility, Mimi’s husband no longer allows her to cook, preferring to have a professional cook. In STI, Mother2 is good at cooking stir-fried kale, considered by many to be useful in solving the problems of anyone who eats it. Thus, the story’s title refers to Mother2’s cooking as “the magic.” The problem is, however, Mother2 has died. In fact, I2, the first-person narrator and Mother2’s son is being sued for divorce. Next, in SR, Wife3 did not like to cook at first, but in her development, she learned to cook and was especially good at making chili sauce. The difficulty is that Wife3 wants to market and sell her homemade chili sauce, but Husband3 tries to prevent that. Finally, in PSD, Saodah is an independent woman, and Wak Haji Mail cannot dictate to her. One of the things enabling Saodah’s unpredictability is that she owns a restaurant and is financially independent.

Through these female figures, the four texts respond to patriarchal ideology. Mimi accepts that her husband no longer eats the food she loves to cook. With a stir-fry, Mother2 shows that her cooking can aid others in trouble. Both Mimi and Mother2 believe that cooking is only for families, not to be commercialized. However, Wife3 resists when she continues to sell her homemade chili sauce even though Husband3 has forbidden it. Furthermore, she opens a restaurant. Compared to Wife3, Saodah

already owns a restaurant and markets its cuisine to the public. Detailed analysis of the four texts is presented below.

3.1. Women who are good at cooking

A dish is not presented without any interest beyond itself. Therefore, as a product in the community and an ideology both in relationships between husband and wife, mother and child, or buyer and seller, the cuisine comes in contact with the creator and the connoisseur. In these stories, the author of this paper discusses women with various conditions and problems, especially since the stories' food lovers are generally men. Hence, the relationship between wives and husbands illustrates various household problems related to male–female social relationships. Therefore, the cuisine reflects the hegemony as well as the ideology that women and men bring to the table, so to speak.

Complicating the situation, many women are attractive, not only because of their outer beauty, including stature, slimness, or elegance, but also due to their ability to cook. Hence, cuisine is ascribed to female characters as part of the domestic role—conveyed from mother to daughter—also part of patriarchal ideology.

DNB illustrates the feminine role in the kitchen. Jihan adores Mimi because of her voluptuous stature but mainly because of her versatility in cooking, ranging from cookies, side dishes, and vegetables to everyday meals. Jihan and Mimi have two daughters, Mulu and Anita. Jihan and Mulu are both very dependent on Mimi's cooking, and Mulu prefers her mother's cooking to any snacks at school. Similarly, on business trips, Jihan often suffers from stomach ache, due to ingestion of restaurant meals, and he also claims to be healed by his wife's food. Furthermore, on assuming a chairman position in the political arena, Jihan turns Mimi's kitchen into a luxury, buying her expensive equipment. This shows how much women can be attached to this area of the house; Mimi always felt content spending hours in her modest kitchen, which was only three by four meters. Besides that, Mimi had memorized the location of each favorite item (Haryadi 2002: 185).

An Indonesian home is divided into three spaces, the front, serving as a place to sit or talk; the central part, which is relevant for privacy; and the back, usually used as a kitchen (Raap 2015: 140). Among rural dwellers, a dining room is not particularly common because it is often part of the living room, where such items as motorcycles, laundry, grain, or furniture are kept (Maryoto 2007). A simple kitchen usually contains an oil stove, cooker, and a simple table, in contrast with modern or luxurious versions equipped with an electric stove, electric cooking utensils, and tiled floors (Maryoto 2014).

But, tradition or not, the skill of cooking is not sufficient to keep men in check. Despite Mother1's delicious cooking, Mimi's father had an affair, which Mimi blamed on Mother1's lack of care for her appearance.

... hanya tubuh gembrot ibunya yang tak diturunkan kepadanya. Bahkan moto ibunya bahwa pengikat cinta suami hanya dari masakan istri ternyata gugur. Ayahnya lari ke seorang wanita yang lebih molek, lebih muda, dan lebih langsing dan yang mengherankan si cantik yang memikat ayahnya ini sama sekali tak mengenal dapur (Haryadi 2002: 185).

... only the fat body of the mother does not presented to her. Even the mother's rhetoric, saying that the only way to tie a man's love to his wife's cooking, has fallen. However, it is now clear that the father has run into a woman who is much smarter, younger, and slimmer, with an enchanting beauty magic despite not being able to cook.⁵

The ideology that the husband could kneel for the sake of his wife's cuisine was taught by Mother1 for many years. However, Father1 perceived cooking as less important than a slim, dainty, young body. Furthermore, Mother1 is overweight with a makeshift appearance, regularly dressed "potluck" in shabby housedresses, having an oily face without lipstick, and a body scented with garlic, pepper, and turmeric that strongly evoke the kitchen.

Unlike Father1, Jihan was not overtly described as having affairs, but from the sentence *Rumahnya banyak dan dia pun sudah menempatkan wanita-wanita langsing cantik yang pantas mendampingiya sebagai laki-laki bukan sebagai istri* ("Jihan's houses are many and he has also placed slender and beautiful women who deserve to accompany him as men, not as wives"), affairs are implied (Haryadi 2002: 191). Therefore, his attraction to women with beautiful faces and slim bodies is made known. If we examine Jihan more deeply, it seems he had an affair not only because of Mimi's fat body but also because of the family's rising social class, which refers not only to ownership of economic capital but also to class practices, including appetite, dress codes, body disposition, home models, and various collective choices in everyday life (Wilkes 2005: 139). Previously, Jihan had been very proud of Mimi's cuisine, which was often exhibited to friends. But now that Jihan has become a political party leader and an official, he possesses many homes and is able to reward Mimi with a luxurious kitchen.⁶ Paradoxically, he stopped eating her meals, which are now enjoyed only by Mimi and the house helpers. When

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⁵ All excerpts from the analyzed stories were translated by this paper's authors.

⁶ To design a pleasant kitchen, the main considerations are cooking habits, size, color, lighting, and air circulation—all need consultation with an interior designer (*Kompas*, April 17, 2016).

entertaining colleagues, Jihan prefers meals cooked by famous chefs in modern hotel kitchens. Being the wife of an official and no longer expected to cook, Mimi gains weight.

Three points are worthy of note here:

1. as with cooking, women are synonymous with an attractive, slim body,⁷ topped by a beautiful face;
2. the eye-catching body is valid not only in adolescence, but also in wifehood;
3. a fat wife is understood to give a man the justification to turn to other women. Moreover, men have little obligation to their wives; hence, they are allowed to cheat.

That a woman's cooking is only for close family is also illustrated by Mother2, of whose sautéed food I2 and Father2 were very fond. Mother2's cuisine—consisting of vegetables, pieces of tofu, and a little meat—seems magical, tasting right on the tongue, making those who eat it forget their suffering, find a solution to the problem at hand, and be happy. Three reasons evidence that Mother2's cooking makes the diner happy. First, when Father2 went bankrupt, had no job, and was desperate, after eating Mother2's cooking, he rediscovered the spirit of life and again built a business. Second, I2 was a gloomy, lonely little boy, but after eating Mother2's cooking, I2 felt that his mother was always with him to save him from being bullied. Third, Linda and her husband are about to divorce, but after eating Mother2's stir-fry, Linda's husband withdraws his divorce suit and apologizes to her.

Mimi and Mother2 have three similarities. First, they both remain in the kitchen. Second, their cuisine is reserved for their loved ones, not sold to just anyone who can afford it. Wife2 and everyone else who tasted it adored Mother2's cuisine, so they encouraged commercialization in a stall or restaurant. However, the possibility of being famous and well-liked could not tempt Mother2. Third, Mimi and Mother2 depart from the belief that cooking has the power to conquer a husband. In reality, after marriage, besides being a wife and mother, cooking is not enough.

Based on this, DNB continues the patriarchal tradition and defends men's superiority, as indicated by Mimi's acceptance of new conditions in her marriage. She did not fight back. She had a luxurious kitchen, but, ironically, was not allowed to cook for her husband, something she loved to do very much. She gained weight because she was inactive. Unlike Mimi, Mother2 can be called a fighter because she knows that her cooking can make those in need happy. Consciously too, Mother2 refuses to sell her food. Thus, Mother2's resistance to patriarchal ideology and male superiority manifests in the consciousness of action (Graddol 1989).

⁷ Having a slim body and paying attention to diet have become anxieties deliberately promoted in Western culture as a norm (Barker 2005: 333–334). The same thing seems to be happening in Indonesia.

Overall, Mimi and Mother² depict women without an independent income. Domestic life is supported only by the husband. Women's unequal position in the social structure, coupled with the wife's dependence on the husband's income, renders wives inferior and husbands superior. If conflict arises between wife and husband, the woman becomes a weak subject without a bargaining position.

3.2. Women who refuse

SR recounts that since five days after the wedding, Husband³ has had the habit of eating dinner on the couch, with chili, before going to bed. Because *sambal* (a traditional Indonesian chili condiment) serves as an aphrodisiac, he then invites Wife³ to make love. Initially, however, Wife³ could not make *sambal*, but after buying cookbooks, learning from Mother³, and long practice, she gains cleverness and excellence in making various types of *sambal*, including *tomat*, *bajak*, *terasi*, *matah*, *mangga*, *dabu-dabu*, and *bawang* (Purwanti 2015).

The culture of Malay People stipulates that the spice often used to flavor dishes is *lombok* (chili), and its addition to salt, followed by grinding, is called a *sambal* (Raffles 2008: 63). This is also added to other basic Indonesian ingredients, including *terasi* (fermented shrimp) (Reid 2011: 35). Based on processing, it can be distinguished into *sambal ulek*, which has a richer taste because it is fried and so is often used in the main dish, and *sambal ulek*, which is made separately and placed on small plates, serving as an appetite enhancer (Rahman 2011: 74). Javanese cuisines are usually prepared by *muluk*⁸ (Lombard 2005: 159).

Related to the pattern of inherited cooking techniques, Raap (2013: 45) noted a shop run by three generations of women—grandmothers in charge of cooking, mothers serving buyers, and grandchildren carrying baskets. This illustrates how the ability to cook is passed to future generations through the behavior of Mother³ and Mother¹. Those who are good at producing such meals are what Mother³ calls “*Istri Idaman*” or “the Ideal Wife.”

In SR, Husband³ had a change of career that often took him out of town. To avoid boredom at home, Wife³ opened a shop in the garage, and her *sambal* was appreciated by many, including Dimas, a young entrepreneur who subsequently requested cooperation in opening a restaurant. The plan was conveyed to Husband³, but he did not approve. The previously opened stalls were sealed and the garage then filled with cars. Wife³ suspects her husband's disapproval stems from his jealousy of Dimas.

⁸ Kneading with rice, by the hand-and-bite method, which does not need to be cut on plates with a knife.

In families, generally, tasks and roles are often divided. In Indonesia and in SR, the wife has authority over domestic duties and the husband over public obligations (Murniati 1992: 25). Household roles include cooking, washing, shopping, and other related arrangements, while the public domain is associated with the world outside the home—that is, seeking employment, socializing with the community, or fostering the country (Reid 2011: 187; Raffles 2008: 246). Emphasis is laid on men's avoidance of domestic work, for instance, cooking (Geertz 1985: 49). Describing these activities as *roles* for women is not really appropriate. Rather, they are *obligations* because wives are compelled to perform the tasks for the husbands' benefit. Furthermore, patriarchal ideology lies behind the obligation, which places females in a subordinate position.

In SR, Husband3 does not return home from a business trip for a month, and Wife3 traces evidence of him staying at hotels and making love to other women.

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Ternyata ada yang membuka pintu, tapi bukan suamiku yang membukanya. Seorang perempuan berbalut baju tidur tampak heran memadamku. Dengan nekat, dalam hitungan detik aku terus melangkah masuk ke dalam dan menemukan aneka sambal di atas ranjang, lengkap dengan cobek-cobek kecil untuk setiap sambal. Di atas sofa yang tak jauh dari ranjang, ada dua orang perempuan mengenakan lingerie sedang duduk memegang gelas berisi milkshake vanilla Mungkin tadi salah satu dari mereka membukakan pintu karena berpikir aku adalah bagian dari mereka, yang akan bergabung malam itu (Puwanti 2015: 27).

Someone opened the door, but not my husband, a woman clad in a nightgown looking surprised. Desperately, within seconds, I stepped inside and found various chili sauces on the bed, complete with small chunks for each. On the sofa, not far from the bed, lay two women in lingerie, sitting and holding a glass of vanilla milkshake. Maybe one of them opened the door thinking I was part of those joining for the night.

Some factors perceived to cause Husband3's affairs include strong libido and absence of children in his marital home. In Javanese tradition, a child is a binder in married life (Harjito 2016; Koentjaraningrat 1994: 101). In case of childlessness, adopting children is a way to avoid divorce (Koentjaraningrat 1994: 142) but is also a middle ground of both avoiding divorce and continuing the tradition of parenting. At the end of ST1, I2 is divorced from Wife3 (Widia 2014), and readers understand that they have no children. In SR, Husband3 cheated because they had no children, so Wife3 and Husband3 do not choose the middle ground by raising children. Wife3 prefers divorce. In fact, she refuses in two ways—namely, rejecting her husband who is having an affair and refusing to sell her food to consumers.

Besides that, in DNB, Father2 is attracted to other women because of Mother2's fat body, and Husband2 is also attracted to other women because Mimi has become fat. Tolerance of husbands' affairs

for various reasons (e.g., no children, gaining weight, etc.) signals the prevalence of male superiority in domestic life. Certainly, cooking is no longer enough to bind men's loyalty. The husband's traditional loyalty to his wife because of her delicious cooking, represented in the short story by *Mother1* and *Mother3*, is no longer valid.

In the short story PSD, Saodah has a crazy way of cooking. Saodah declined a subordinate role and engaged in controlling public areas by opening an Indonesian food stall in an attempt to support her family. Although she is notoriously fierce and unfriendly, buyers are very fond of her cuisine. Saodah, the unfulfilled love of Wak Haji Mail, was given a *warung* (Indonesian food stall). He has three wives and 14 children but is currently obsessed with Saodah, the aging mother of five children, whom he sent to high school. Besides that, he had a toilet built, the front of the house repaired, and got electricity fixed. As he lay dying, he seeks Saodah's cooking, but she refuses because of an incident of being hurt and of the quest for revenge for her husband, whose exile from society and death without self-esteem was Wak Hajis's doing. Still, his last request was for Saodah to prepare meals for his *tahlilan*⁹ prayer.

Most astonishing, however, was Saodah's resistance, in which she openly opposed male domination. First, she refused to marry Wak Haji Mail, and then she rejected an open invitation to visit him when he was dying. Finally, although the demands of the deceased were fulfilled, her opposition can be traced through her unexpected way of cooking the *slametan*.

5

Butuh beberapa detik untukku menemukan apa yang ganjil dari semua ini. Mak Saodah terus-menerus meludah bahan-bahan masak yang sedang dikerjakannya.

...

Mak Saodah sedang mengangkat kainnya tinggi-tinggi, melewati lutut, lalu berdiri setengah jongkok mengangkangi salah satu panci yang isinya mulai mendidih. Raut wajahnya, gabungan yang ganjil antara mengejan dan kebencian, mengerikan. Sedetik kemudian, dari tempatnya berdiri kudengar suara desing yang akrab dan gemericik air jatuh ke panci. Mak Saodah meludah lagi ke panci, sekali (Prasad 2009: 147).

It took a few seconds for me to discover what was odd about all this, as Mak Saodah constantly spits on the ingredients worked with.

...

Mak Saodah was lifting her cloth high, past her knees, then standing half-squat straddling one of the pots whose contents began to boil. The look on her face, which was an odd combination of straining and hatred, was horrible. Meanwhile, a second later, from where

⁹ Traditional Islamic-Indonesian ceremony, usually held for those who have passed away.

she stood, I heard the familiar whirring sound and water rushing into a pan, as well as Mak Saodah spitting again into the pot.

Slametan is the tradition of a joint meal, accompanied with a prayer before its distribution, usually sitting on a mat, spread over the floor (Kodiran 1975: 340; Lombard 2005: 160). Furthermore, Saodah is willing to cook, not with love, but with a mixture of revenge, hatred, saliva, and even urine. Ironically, however, the cuisine that Wak Haji Mail has long been missed was exactly the title “*Sinting* (Eccentric) Woman in the Kitchen” as Saodah cooks and controls the kitchen area in a crazy way. Therefore, through this madness, resistance is perceived, along with the conquering of a man. As in the quotation above, Saodah's vengeful cooking included spitting and urinating on the food.

The Indonesian novel has reported that in the life of women in a polygamous marriage, this characteristic is considered common (Purbani 2013: 374). Conversely, women have the role of caring for and supporting children, husbands, and families (Blackburn 2009: 248, 250). Saodah raised children, but she refused to be polygamous with Wak Haji Mail.

3.3. Transformation: Women who have income

Three distinguishing traits between Wife3 and Mimi include:

1. Mimi's skill at all kinds of cooking, while Wife3 prepares only *sambal*.
2. Mimi has no intention of opening a shop or a market; she just wants the dishes to be enjoyed by her husband and child. Meanwhile, Wife3 opens a stall for homemade meals to be eaten by buyers.
3. By creating the shop, Wife3 earns income, therefore possessing the confidence to be independent.

Udasmoro (2007: 2-4) mentions that factors in power relations are ethnicity, gender, race, class, and age. Rahardjo (2011: 84) states four things that affect layers of Javanese society, namely age, gender, property ownership, and position in government. Property ownership and position in government can be categorized into social class. Social class not only refers to ownership of economic capital, but also to class practices, appetite, and various collective choices made in everyday life (Wilkes 2005: 139), including food tastes and choices. This is the logic for creating the tables below.

	DNB	STI	SR	PSD
Cook	Mimi	Mother2	Wife3	Saodah
Cuisine	All-Range	Sautéed <i>Tempeh</i>	<i>Sambal</i>	All-Range
Source	Mother1	-	Recipe, book, Mother3	-
Eater	Jihan, Mulu, Anita	I2, Wife2, Father2, Linda	Husband3	Wak Haji Mail, Consumers
Relation	Husband-Wife	Mother-Son	Husband-Wife	Other

Table 1: Women's cuisine: How women who are good at cooking can be viewed

Although each dish has different delights and flavors, Saodah's cuisine is special and missed by Wak Haji Mail even at the moment of his death, meaning that it was delicious. Conversely, Jihan abandoned Mimi's delicious cooking. All case scenarios are noted in Table 2.

	Mimi	Mother2	Wife3	Saodah
The Body	Slim to Fat	Passed away	Slim	Aged
Children	2	1	-	5
Social Class	Middle to Upper	Middle	Middle to Upper	Lower to Middle
Problem	Husband1 Ignored Her	I2 Divorcing	Husband3 Cheated	Heartbroken
Cause	Fat, Increasing Social Class	Unexplained	Having no son, male superior	Refused to marry

Table 2: Social Class

Women have survived and created resistance of various forms, but the public often identifies their silence or non-resistance toward practices of patriarchal ideology. Furthermore, women are positioned in ambiguous situations, often to play only the domestic role in the kitchen. But even in the kitchen, women should not fully develop their versatility in cooking, as noted in Table 3.

	Mimi	Mother2	Wife3	Saodah
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Publication Year	2002	2014	2015	2009
Role	Kitchen	Kitchen	Kitchen	Kitchen
Territorial	Domestic, Traditional to Modern	Domestic	Domestic to Public	Domestic to Public
Cuisine's Use	No resistance	Resistance	Resistance	Resistance
Action	Dreaming	Solving Problem	Opening a Restaurant	Having a restaurant, Eccentric
In Form of	Accept the situation	Solution	Marketing	Processing, sale

Table 3: Women's transformation

In a marriage, participants have unequal positions because women depend greatly on men, especially financially (Harjito 2014). Moreover, as “a valuable lesson,” their nature is supposedly intended for the patient virtues within household life. Even if abandoned by her husband, a woman must faithfully wait (Harjito 2017: 72). *Serat Suluk Redriya* by Paku Buwono IX is literature that serves as a guide to behavior within the community (Widyastuti 2014: 121). It states that because the wife is under the husband's command, all his orders concerning the household must be carried out. Furthermore, Javanese wives are considered helpless, and therefore require patriarchal support. In both domestic and public spheres, feminism is still considered weak. Based on analysis of roles in 20 Indonesian novels from 1900-2000, women play roles in public and domestic settings, both separately and collectively. Those who play a joint role carry a double burden, as experienced by working women. Meanwhile, despite being educated, the weak woman figure arises when women's image is often handcuffed by love (Liliani and Sari 2010: 46). In addition, Indonesian novels and female characters have become the arena of establishment and demolition of cultural orientation (Saryono 2009: 32).

Concerning women's resistance and literary texts, women novelists in the 2000s marked the presence of this phenomenon against patriarchal dominance in the history of Indonesian literature (Wiyatmi 2012: 45). Gender constructions in mass media analysis reported that in symbolic battles, verbal forms of diction and speech styles represented the speaker's gender, and men tend to respond positively to patriarchal culture, while women react negatively. However, women react positively to the feminist movement. Conversely, it is interesting to note the realization of boldness and the possession of critical powers by females, although they begin to retain branching consciousness. On

the contrary, women are very decisive, as doubt is not conceived as to whether their choices are right or wrong (Wahyuni 2014: 234).

In addition to DNB, three other short stories have been published in newspapers, and before posting, PSD was published in the *Kompas* newspaper, on November 2, 2008. This medium has properties to contain latest events (Harjito 2015: 221), and its writers live between “was” and “was not,” which is based on double thoughts, including:

1. newspapers pretending to address current issues in the reader’s environment.
2. They are also a product of industrial and mass capitalism, working on the principles of the exchange rate (Faruk 1995). Furthermore, the mass media also possess the authority to decide parameters for good and bad works of literature, as well as the attribution of rewards (Laksana 2015). Some experts characterize fictional works published in dailies as literary newspapers because only the dominant personality—the man—is recognized because the newspapers are filled with patriarchal ideology.

Husband3’s actions in shutting down the shop and not allowing Wife3 to initiate the restaurant plan were part of a trick because he feared three things:

1. Wife3’s economic independence arouses his anxiety about losing his superiority.
2. Husband3 desires that his wife stay in an inferior, subservient position. Therefore, “protection” with underlying jealousy is a technique adapted to limit Wife3’s movement. Selling *sambal* to buyers in stalls was prohibited because of the wish to monopolize Wife3 and her cuisine.

Wife3 also tracked Husband3 in an attempt to discover the reason behind his month’s absence. She thus discovers his affair, but at the story’s end, Wife3 decides to open a restaurant with or without his consent. By so doing, she achieves two things, first attempting to be more independent economically and not depending only on men’s income. The shop is an attempt to bring wives out of the domestic sphere, to enhance socialization in the community, and to build a wider relationship with the outside world. Saodah and Wife3 illustrate an ideological shift that instigates the need for women to penetrate the public domain by possessing economic independence. If women are self-reliant, they can be independent and can decide not to obey a man’s orders.

From the short story’s release year, 2002–2015, it is observed that women currently struggle with the role in the kitchen. However, the role itself does not imply “lack of resistance,” because the dynamics of the meaning of cuisine attached to women is noted, meaning a manifestation of feminine

resistance. Mimi shows no resistance, but Mother², Wife³, and Saodah resist in various ways. The analysis shows a transformation from cuisine-kitchen to income-economic independence.

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4. Conclusion

Based on the discussion above, it can be concluded that women, especially wives, remain attached to such household duties as being a good cook. These four stories reveal how this role must be preserved to perpetuate patriarchal ideology—that is, to maintain the superiority of men and the inferiority of women. Passing down this approach to gender roles involves oral narration from mother to daughter.

Of the four texts studied, not all dismantle patriarchal ideology. One text can be said to continue patriarchal tradition because the female figure is depicted as accepting her husband's actions. However, readers might be more outraged at her acceptance. The other three texts struggle against men's supposed superiority. Notably also, two texts describe female figures who market their food for sale to consumers, thus illustrating an ideological change—from women who depend only on their husbands' income to women who have independent income. Sales emerging from these women's talents signal that women are subjects who can explore their individuality, support themselves and their families, and become self-actualizing.

This study has the limitation of data from only four short stories, but studying more stories can produce more data, leading to more adequate conclusions. However, stories of women and cooking are scarce, so first, more stories need to be carefully researched. Second, the search should be extended to a longer time period than 2002-2015. The longer the time period, the more the description of the era's ideology. Three, even the selection of the same timeframe can enrich or correct the results of this study. Fourth, use of different theories can also broaden the perspective and enrich the repertoire of research on women.

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