

Patriarchy in Urban Landscape in the Short Story “Berita dari Kebayoran” by Pramoedya Ananta Toer

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Abstract. The short story "Berita dari Kebayoran" by Pramoedya Ananta Toer represents a postcolonial social reality that captures the dynamics of class, gender, and power in the context of urban development. It examines how patriarchal systems operate through various structures that oppress women in both private and public spheres. This study aims to identify and analyze the specific forms of patriarchy depicted in the narrative and explore how the protagonist Aminah experiences structural oppression. By doing so, the study also highlights the connection between literature and broader socio-political discourses on gender in urban Indonesian society. The study employs a descriptive-qualitative method, using Sylvia Walby's theory of patriarchy as its main analytical framework. The findings reveal that patriarchal control in the story is manifested through six interconnected structures: household production, violence, paid work, the state, culture, and sexuality, which simultaneously form a system of oppression against the character Aminah. This study contributes to feminist literary discourse by highlighting literature's role in critiquing patriarchal structures and socio-political power in contemporary Indonesia.

Keywords: patriarchy, urban landscape, Pramoedya Ananta Toer, marginalization, violence

1 Introduction

Patriarchy has evolved into a deeply entrenched social structure of male dominance over women. Patriarchal relations of power manifest in intricate forms and adopt the form not only in the private sphere, but also the public sphere, including the urban landscape. Urban landscape built upon masculine values continues gender injustice. Urban space becomes like a prison by the masculine values and laws that underpin the urban social order [1]. During the postcolonial period, Sukarno's administration maximized and amplified the modernization of colonial heritage through the formal housing landscape [2]. In the process, the poor were relegated to the margins because of forced eviction or unaffordable land costs. The urban landscape was structured by dominant forces whose interests did not always include taking into consideration the demands of marginalized groups, such as women, thereby maintained the hegemony of the patriarchal state within the urban landscape. The urban landscape, as a symbol of modernity, is a field of power that reproduces relations such as class and gender.

The lower classes, particularly women, are usually subjected to structural forms of violence. Society's welfare is not only at stake when it comes to modernization, but

the will of the government to decrease economic and social inequalities as well [3]. Cities that evolve into symbols of progress and modernity without economic equality and social justice are more probable to be detrimental to marginalized groups, like women, who are denied the equal access to space and social protection. Mobility restriction, the persistence of stereotyping, and symbolic violence undergone by women indicate the means whereby the city itself can act as an instrument of patriarchy, and the state, as a masculine entity, to persist in the reproduction of domination over women.

The character of Aminah in "Berita dari Kebayoran" portrays a woman marginalized by state policy. The government's land acquisition initiative, aimed at promoting development and modernity, is forced to repress her. She is dispossessed of her village and family and has nowhere to call "home." When she attempts to leave her *kampung* and try to live elsewhere hoping for something better, she is stigmatized and excluded by her people, those who are supposed to form her immediate support group. The case of Aminah illustrates how urban space itself functions as a field of power, revealing the face of patriarchy through multiple structural forces. This aligns with Marxist and Socialist feminists' perspective who argue that the oppression of women does not result from the acts of individuals, but from political, social, and economic structures in which individuals exist [4]. Through "Berita dari Kebayoran" we can observe how the patriarchal social structures perpetuates gender inequality in urban settings.

This study aims to analyze how patriarchy is represented within the urban landscape in the short story "Berita dari Kebayoran". Adopting a feminist perspective, this research aims to analyze the complex systems that enable the reproduction of patriarchal behavior in both private and public spheres. According to Walby's patriarchy model, private patriarchy is centered in the household, where men have direct control over women, while public patriarchy operates through institutions conventionally located in the public domain. Private patriarchy tends to exclude women from participation, whereas public patriarchy segregates them within established systems. Walby identifies six structures that relatively autonomous yet interrelated that uphold patriarchy [5]. These structures consist of the patriarchal mode of production, patriarchal relations in paid employment, patriarchal relations in the state, male violence, patriarchal relations in sexuality, and patriarchal relations in cultural institutions. In the private sphere, the patriarchal mode of production is the dominant structure. In the public sphere, this dominance is primarily upheld through the state and paid employment.

This study is important to understand how gender relations are constrained not only within the private domain but are also perpetuated by systemic social institutions

present in the public sphere. Walby's structural patriarchy theory presents a comprehensive explanation of researching the intricacies of gender relations, building on and complementing existing feminist theories that have focused on only one type of domination.

2 Methods

This study is a qualitative research method presented in a descriptive format. The material object of the study is the short story "Berita dari Kebayoran" from *Cerita dari Jakarta*, while the formal object is the representation of patriarchy as experienced by the protagonist within an urban landscape. This study analyzes the various forms of gender injustice as represented in the urban environment through patriarchal structures reinforced by capitalism.

The theoretical framework is based on Sylvia Walby's theory of structural patriarchy, which identifies six interrelated structures that contribute to the perpetuation of patriarchal domination, namely the patriarchal mode of production, patriarchal relations in paid work, patriarchal relations in the state, male violence, patriarchal relations in sexuality, and patriarchal relations in cultural institutions [5]. This theory was chosen due to its capacity to provide a comprehensive analytical framework for understanding the complexities of patriarchal domination within social contexts.

The analysis is conducted through in-depth and repeated reading of the literary texts, attentively observing and noting instances of patriarchal domination within urban landscape as represented through characters, conflicts, and narratives structures. This textual examination aims to reveal how social structures and state policies shape women's experiences and how patriarchy is reproduced through various institutions and mechanisms. Data analysis will be structured according to the Miles and Huberman interactive data analysis model, which includes three main stages, namely data reduction, data presentation and conclusion[6].

3 Result and Discussion

Aminah, as a representation of lower-class women in "Berita dari Kebayoran", experiences various forms of oppression stemming from a patriarchal society and capitalism, operating both private and public spheres. The patriarchal structure is embedded within the urban landscape and significantly affects the lives of female characters. This analysis examines how patriarchal domination is manifested through various structural mechanisms in both the private and public domains.

3.1 Patriarchy in the Public Sphere

The state functions as a dominant structure in reproducing patriarchal norms in the public sphere[5]. This is reflected in Aminah's warning to her husband, Saleh, to not to sell their house and farmland, as it was their primary source of livelihood. Despite her caution, Saleh proceeded to sell the property, arguing that they had to hand over their property to the government to avoid potential issues. The house and land were sold for merely three thousand rupiah. As a consequence, they lost the means to produce rice wine and sugar, and Aminah was no longer able to sell *rujak* due to the absence of harvestable produce. Their economic situation worsened as they could not acquire new farmland, since no one was willing to sell.

"... I told Kak Saleh not to sell the house and our farm. It was our lifeblood, our livelihood. But he said: we have to surrender our possessions to the government, Minah, if we don't want trouble. So he sold the house and the land on which it stood. Three thousand rupiah. But after that we could not make rice-liquor and sugar again. And I could not sell *rudjak* anymore because we had no cassava and hot pepper to harvest. And we couldn't buy another farm because no one was selling."[7]

This quote shows that the state plays a crucial role in perpetuating patriarchal practices through its policies. The government emerges as a repressive force that takes people's land, thereby exacerbating economic inequality. The statement "we have to surrender our possessions to the government, Minah, if we don't want trouble" shows how the state asserts its authority while disregarding the hardships faced by lower-class individuals. These unequal power relations form a hierarchical structure where the dominated are controlled by the dominant. The dominant dictates actions and decisions for the dominated [8]. During the modernization initiatives under Sukarno's era, kampung settlements were excluded as significant spatial elements in the urban planning of post-independence Jakarta, despite comprising most of the city's landscape [2]. Throughout this process, the lower-classes were forcibly removed from their original areas, showing how urban development, perceived as progress, occurred at the expense of the vulnerable groups.

Carrying the bundle of clothes she brought last night to market her flesh, she crosses the street and goes down to the Kali Besar to bathe. On the way she encounters all sorts of people with different faces. She no longer recognizes the dozens among them who have enjoyed her body. And they don't recognize her either. What does it matter? She doesn't need them. She only needs their money. They don't need her either. They only need her flesh, and that, too, only at certain times, not all the time."[7]

Aminah's loss of livelihood ultimately drives her into sex work. This shows how women are systematically marginalized from access to the means of production and force them into informal and exploitative labor. Due to state policies, Aminah faces both economic and sexual exploitation through commercial sex work. Sexual

exploitation becomes an inevitable consequence for those in prostitution, because without accepting such conditions, they are denied access to alternative forms of employment[9]. From Marxist feminist perspective, prostitution is framed as a class-based phenomenon. Women who lack skills or resources are left with little option but to commodify their bodies, a situation perpetuated by a patriarchal capitalist system that positions men as the primary purchasers of sexual services [4].

And when on two consecutive nights, no men approach her because the moon is shining brightly with its yellow rays, she finally follows the example of her friends when in desperation-by offering up the last of her dignity. "Well, O.K. then. You can use my mouth."[7]

This situation portrays the height of Aminah's agony in an oppressive regime. After losing her means of livelihood and being forced into prostitution as a last resort, Aminah must sell the remnants of her dignity for money. Women's bodies not only become commodities, but also lose their self-defined boundaries. This emphasizes that sexual exploitation is not merely an economic transaction, but it is a deeper form of subjugation where structurally powerful forces undermine women's control over their own bodies. Sexual exploitation embodies the relationship between laborer and employer, the sex worker continues to provide services for a wage dictated by those with economic power [9]. From Marxist feminist perspective, women in such conditions experience not just alienated from their work but also from themselves, as the labor is done for others rather than for self-expression [4]. Aminah's decision is not a reflection of free will, but the consequence of structural oppression that traps her in poverty and powerlessness. Lacking capital, her body becomes the only "capital she can trade for survival.

If a woman prostitutes herself, she is considered evil and is given no chance to become decent again. But if a man goes to a prostitute no one objects and he is still free; he can even boast of it in public. Aminah whispers this into the night which is even more silent than Diman[7].

The societal perceptions and judgments surrounding sex exhibit a significant disparity. Women engaged in sex work are often stigmatized and irredeemable, while men who purchase sexual services typically face little to no stigma and may even attain social approval. This aligns with Walby's critique of the gender double standard. Referencing 19th-century British societal norms, Walby notes that a woman's societal status was largely determined by her sexual 'purity', so that women who engaged in pre-marital or extra-marital sexual activities facing severe social penalties [5].

...In the past, she had always bought only ripe pineapples to fend off that burden of life: a new human being! But now her womb can no longer perform its duty. A terrible disease once penetrated her and made her barren. Now all she needs is unripe pineapple. All this while it's been this fruit that's fought off the disease that had once attacked her."[7]

Governments often exhibit a tendency to assign the responsibility for prostitution and the transmission of venereal diseases primarily to women, rather than men, reflecting a double standard that disadvantages women's social status [5]. The pineapples Aminah regularly purchases symbolize how women's sexuality and reproductive roles are subjected to moral scrutiny. Some perceive pineapples as having the potential to prevent pregnancy and are consumed frequently to address menstrual irregularities; they are even considered to possess abortifacient properties (abortivum) [10]. Aminah's choice of a ripe pineapple to evade the 'burden of life', symbolized by the potential of bearing a child. Later, her selection of an unripened pineapple, following her body's infertility due to illness, illustrates how women's bodies are often becomes a site of social control and judgment.

Her face now scares even herself. And as the months crawl by, every man who approaches her first talks for a long while. She knows the reason why: they want to look closely at her face. So that, one night, a young man shouts at her: "It's too bad I didn't bring a handkerchief to cover your face. If I had, I'd have wanted you." [7]

The man's statement to Aminah represents a form of verbal and symbolic violence that belittles and excludes her bodily existence for no longer conforming to patriarchal notions of beauty. Such violence does not exist in isolation but is surrounded by a public patriarchal order in which women's bodies are commodified and made available for men's use. Even in prostitution, concerning the body as a commodity to exchange, women still lack full autonomy over their own bodies. A woman is "worthy" only when her body meets the requirements of male specifications. Women are expected to prioritize the needs of others without any consideration for their own needs [11].

3.2 Patriarchy in the Private Sphere

Household production is a dominant structure that functions in the private sphere [5]. In "Berita dari Kebayoran" state policies ultimately reinforce patriarchal hegemony, structurally affecting the private sphere. Saleh, as the head of the household, unilaterally decides to sell their property and land, disregarding Aminah's circumstance. This action reflects male dominance within the household, where women lack the agency to voice their opinions. In homes governed by patriarchal principles, decision-making is predominantly male-centric, leaving women with minimal input and consequently fostering feelings of dissatisfaction and profound powerlessness among them [12].

"Who could stand it, Tidjah? I told Kak Saleh not to sell the house and our farm. It was our lifeblood, our livelihood. But he said: we have to surrender our possessions to the government, Minah, if we don't want trouble. So he sold the house and the land on which it stood.... But after that we could not make rice-liquor and sugar again. And I could not sell rudjak anymore because we had no cassava and hot pepper to harvest." [7]

Aminah experienced emotional distress and regret when she left her home. Women who lack the opportunity to make independent decisions often suffer intense regret as they lose control of their lives [11]. Having been excluded from the decision-making process, Aminah begins to question those made by her.

Aminah opens her eyes as wide as possible to shrug off her sleepiness. The emptiness in her chest now lays her whole spirit waste.

"If only you had not brought me here..."

"We can't return to the past, Minah." [7]

Violence can also be perpetrated by women who have adopted patriarchal values. This is illustrated in the relationship between Aminah, Khatidjah, and their mother. After Aminah leaves home, she faces a dilemma as her sister Khatidjah is being married off to Saleh. Despite her desire to return to Kebayoran, Aminah feels trapped, knowing that Khatidjah's marriage to Saleh prevents her from doing so. Instead of offering support, Khatidjah unfairly blames Aminah for her need to escape.

"But who would take us in anymore? Our land is now the government's. When I left, a school had already been built there. And now you want to marry Saleh, and he wants to marry you."

"It's your own fault," says Tidjah." [7]

Khatidjah's response illustrates that women can also act as agents in perpetuating patriarchal values, particularly when they exist within the same social system and have internalized its dominant norms. Aminah also faces verbal abuse by her mother, who condemns her decision to leave home. Her mother cursed her and even threatened to beat her with an *alu* if she ever returned to Kebayoran. The *alu*, a traditional pestle associated with cooking and domestic labor, becomes a symbolic instrument of punishment for a woman perceived to have failed in her assigned domestic role.

"Is Mama angry with me, Tidjah?"

"She curses you."

"Curses me." Aminah memorizes the words.

"She curses you and hopes you die covered in flies."

A pair of clear teardrops forms at the edges of Aminah's eyes.

"And if you dare to return, she is going to beat you with an *alu*."

In "Berita dari Kebayoran" the women are portrayed as involuntarily internalizing patriarchal discourse woven into their environments. The actions exhibited Khatidjah and Aminah's mother illustrate that violence is perpetrated not only by men but also by women themselves. Their expressions and attitudes reflect symbolic and verbal violence, which detrimentally impact self-esteem and interpersonal relationships among women. Cultural norms often compel women to engage in self-sacrifice to uphold familial harmony [11]. women who transgress established norms face social and emotional repercussions, including rejection and ostracism, leading to perceptions of moral failing.

4 Conclusion

The short story "Berita dari Kebayoran" shows how patriarchy is reproduced in the urban landscape through various interconnected structures. Aminah's character represents lower-class women who experience multiple oppressions as a result of state policies, the capitalistic economic system, and patriarchal cultural values. In the public sphere, the state plays an active role in encouraging marginalization through eviction and urban development policies, pushing women into economically and sexually vulnerable positions. In the private sphere, male dominance in the household makes it difficult for women to have control over their own lives and bodies. Analysis based on Sylvia Walby's patriarchy theory reveals that six patriarchal structures are intertwined and reinforce the exploitation of women in the private and public spheres.

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