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## Patriarchal Propaganda on Archipelagic Folklores

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### Abstract

*A folklore is a patriarchal propaganda, by carrying out stories that indoctrinate how mankind should behave, or how men and women have their role in society. This study aims to discover the patriarchal construct in archipelagic folklore and how archipelagic folklore gave rise to propaganda to the current patriarchal system. This study used a qualitative descriptive method using a mimetic and objective approach. The process of collecting data is through library study including sources taken from texts in the book "The Collection of Folklore in 33 Provinces" by the publisher Lingkar Media, and the animated video of The Archipelago Story on YouTube from the channel Gromore Studio. Furthermore, this study found there are 11 constructs of patriarchy contained in the archipelagic folklore in selected legends. As the result, the intention of patriarchal culture rooted in Indonesia and existing in the current times did not only come from one direction, but from several directions which then gave rise to a complex understanding. It is influenced by the culture of the colonial foreign countries and the fundamental beliefs of its society even before the colonialism era. The archipelagic folklore is one of a tool for spreading implicit messages that contain a deep meaning, patriarchalism.*

**Keywords:** Patriarchy; Patriarchal Propaganda; Archipelagic Folklore

### Article information

Received:  
18 April 2023

Revised:  
5 August 2023

Accepted:  
14 August  
2023

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### Introduction

Patriarchal propaganda has been long-rooted in the archipelago (Alaudin, 2022; Halizah & Faralita, 2023; Kurniawati & Junaedi, 2023; Octavia et al., 2023; Rabbaniyah & Salsabila, 2022; Zuhri & Amalia, 2022). According to communication experts on Roosinda & Suryandaru (2020), the practice of propaganda is divided into three, those are White, Black, and Gray Propaganda. White

Propaganda is clean and honest in delivering content based on legitimate sources. Black propaganda is cunning, fake, dishonest and makes negative arguments to blame opponents by using false information to bring up negative responses related to their opponents. Meanwhile, Gray Propaganda is a form of persuasive direction whose source is vague, which raises doubts. It seems that they are neutral, but continually provide misleading information.

Burnett argued in Malhan et al., (2020), that the role of propaganda is an espousal of ideology and it forms the dominant ideological meaning with the media as its intermediary. The media itself becomes part of the litterateur's way in maintaining their existence through literary works. It is not only reflecting the society but serves as a mirror in which members of the society can look at themselves and see the need for positive change. Agreed with a famous quote, "*literature is an expression of society*" (Wellek & Warren, 1984).

Literary works depict people's lives can be seen through the intrinsic elements contained in the story. Myths, legends, and fairy tales are part of oral literature that develops in the social life of the community and then becomes local wisdom where the story develops (Isnanda, 2015). Those three kinds of story told are part of folklore. Folklore is an anthology of traditional beliefs, customs, and stories of a society that are narrated through generation by word of mouth (Michalopoulos & Xue, 2021). In the Dutch context, the representation and meaning of folklore also emerged as a result of discovering and preserving traditions (Bosch, 2009).

For Bascom, tales are regarded as fiction, myth and legend as a history or dogma (Conrad, 2014). It also carries messages related to social events in the society. One of the mediums is through a legend, it reflects life that presents the people's mindset in accordance with the social and cultural conditions of a locality (Sugiarti, 2021). It is also a tool to gain sympathy from Indonesian people (Varadyna & Rosyid, 2014).

Nowadays, the most rapid spread of propaganda is through the mass media where it is considered as the most up-to-date means. In addition, it is widely confirmed that propaganda systematically uses the mass media as the most efficient channel for spreading propaganda and media manipulation (Moravčíková, 2020). It is a comfortable tool of spreading dogma and propaganda to be believed in today's society. Therefore, the people themselves must be smart in filtering what they read.

Additionally, propaganda and how patriarchy spreads in society through the mass media has been extensively studied. In evidence, during the Japanese colonial period, they spread propaganda through language styles, the use of sentences and images that marginalized women (Rosalini & Prianti, 2022). Not only that, even in a study on some religious speech, women are also presented as a form of commodity (Retpitasaki & Amaludin, 2023). As a matter of fact, the media is also used to spread hateful sexist utterances against women in the public space (Sitompul, 2022). This is also categorized as a media abuse because it contains excessive elements, hoax news, influences various parties, and emotional damage (Palupi, 2019).

As well as how literature can also carry an understanding of patriarchy which then became propaganda have a great influence on human life, especially for women, this topic is still debatable as time goes by. Pease (2019) argued that literature is the relationship between sexist attitudes and patriarchal ideology, which sustains male dominance over women. He added, violence against women is justified by the patriarchal ideology adopted by men to support their dominant and privileged position. It is also portrayed in the modern literature, Novarisa (2019) analysed the symbolic violence in soap operas which place women in the domestic sphere and a sexual object. Patriarchy also found in Photocopier films (Permatasari et al., 2022) and Putu Juli's novel *Kulit Kera Piduka* in 2020 (Widyawati & Esther, 2023) which emphasizes that women's conformity to culture is only in favour of masculine visions.

As seen in the previous studies, the field of patriarchal propaganda in folklore has not received a depth attention. It is because the attention to folklore at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries was role of the renegotiation of domesticity in this modernity along with the effort to aestheticize and feminize women (Bosch, 2009). It seems that patriarchal propaganda arisen from modern literature. However, what many people do not realize is, when did this propaganda take a root? it turns out that it has arisen from ancient literature that is still relevant until today. Furthermore, the purpose of this study is to find out the

patriarchal construct in archipelagic folklore and how an ancient literature, archipelagic folklore, gave rise the propaganda to the current patriarchal system.

## Methodology

This study used a qualitative descriptive method that utilized words, sentences, and phrases using a mimetic and objective approach. The description cannot be separated and needs to be firmly held by cultural researchers from a qualitative perspective (Ilma & Bakthawar, 2019). The mimetic approach is based on the connection between a literary work with the socio-cultural environment that forms the background of the literary work's origin (E. M. Putri & Gulo, 2023). Analysis using an objective approach is intended to find out the rising elements, meanings, and cultural narratives in the form of local wisdom presented by literary works (Ilma & Bakthawar, 2019).

Through mimetic and objective approach, it revealed the relationship between folklore, the culture, and traditions that lie behind it. Besides, this approach also answers how the existence, dynamics and problems faced by local communities are expressed in literary texts. Through this study, researcher can connect sociologically the relationship between folklore as a literary work in the form of legends and local problems with the local surrounding.

The process of collecting data is through library study including sources that describe stories, histories, cultures and situations of the people who produce literary work and beliefs of the author itself. The data analysis technique was carried out in several steps; 1) selecting the data, 2) observing the data in order to have a deeper understanding, 3) exploring

messages, and 4) drawing conclusions. The library sources were taken from fictional texts in the book "*The Collection of Folklore in 33 Provinces*" by the publisher Lingkar Media, and also the animated video of *The Archipelago Story* on YouTube from the channel Gromore Studio. Other sources are in the form of manuscripts and descriptions both written and oral that support research.

## Results and Discussion

There are two problems to be discussed in this section; 1) the construct of patriarchy contained in the archipelagic folklore, and 2) propaganda that gave rise to the current patriarchal system through ancient literature, archipelagic folklore.

### *The Construct of Patriarchy Contained in The Archipelagic Folklore*

Generally, folklore spreads mouth-by-mouth, therefore, folklore is a type of story that is told orally. However, in this study, researchers took data that had been scripted. It consists of four types; legends, myths, fairy tales, and fables. Folklore is categorized as ancient literature and all ancient literature found in Indonesia has no author's name (Hasibuan & Matondang, 2017) including folklore. Therefore, the background of the story's origin cannot be ascertained properly because the time and the author are unknown. Surely, each of these stories must carry a certain message to be taught to their descendants to establish values and norms about how people should act. From hundreds of folktales from various regions, researcher discovered several stories that have the patriarchal construct in archipelagic folklore presented in the following table;

**Table 1.** Patriarchal that constructed on Archipelagic folklore

No	Title	Patriarchal Construct
1.	The Legend of Tangkuban Perahu – West Java	Dayang Sumbi as a mother who is defenceless when a young man falls in love with her. In fact, that he is her biological son, but she still cannot resist the passion of a man who falls in love even though he knows that she is his own mother.
2.	The Legend of Candi Prambanan – Central Java	Roro Jonggrang is a representation of the powerlessness women who cursed became a pile of stone in the hand of a sacred man.

No	Title	Patriarchal Construct
3.	The Legend of Jaka Tarub – Central Java	One of the seven heavenly angels whose shawls were stolen by Jaka Tarub. The shawl is a depiction of male control over women.
4.	The Legend of Gunung Kelud- East Java	In the narration it is said that Princess Dyah Ayu Pusparini did not want to get married but her father forced her to marry by holding a contest. She did not dare to refuse against his father. The Princess resignedly agreed.
5.	The Legend of Reog Ponorogo – East Java	The princess, Dewi Songgolangit, was reluctant to marry, but her father forced her to marry, so she had to meditate to determine a contest to find a husband for her.
6.	The Legend of Danau Toba – North Sumatra	A woman who incarnates a goldfish whose destiny is in the hands of her husband. When the husband says her real figure then she will turn into a fish as before.
7.	The Legend of Malin Kundang – West Sumatra	The patriarchal propaganda that constructs male masculinity as breadwinner, persistent, tenacious, and successful
8.	The Legend of Batu Menangis – West Kalimantan	The legend of the crying stone talks about a lazy woman who was disobedient to her mother and then was cursed to become a crying stone.
9.	The Story of An Innocent Child and A Wise King – South Kalimantan	The king who was labelled as kind-hearted voluntarily gave his daughter to a boy because she had eaten his jackfruit. As if his daughter was traded for a jackfruit. The portrayal of the King here is also as if he was the most perfect human
10.	The Origin of Mermaid – Central Sulawesi	A mother of three forced to catch fish in the dark of the night and was not allowed to go home until she caught a lot of fish. Finally, over time the mother's body has started to be scaly like a fish only because her husband anger.
11.	Lahilote – Gorontalo	It has the same story as Jaka Tarub, where the fate of women is in the hands of men

The reflection of gender relation describes pattern that constructed in society such as strength, courage, ingenuity, leadership, and power that can be implemented by men and women (Sugiarti, 2021). However, mostly, the image of the female character is described only about their physical appearance. Beautiful face, white-glass-skin, having body goals, almost no narratives are found about women who have supernatural powers, brain ingenuity, intelligence, as portrayed in the male characters. As Qur'ani, (2021) describes the image of women as three; physical, psychological and social. The physique is in the appearance of perfect beauty from the face, smooth white skin, also a fragrant body. The psyche is that of kindness, loyalty and patient character. While social image is the relation of the female characters with society. It shows that the main reason women are being chosen is only because they are beautiful (Putri et al., 2019). Patriarchy that is constructed is that women must be beautiful, have smooth skin and have soft speech.

Dayang Sumbi, Roro Jonggrang, Dyah Ayu Pusparini, and Dewi Songgolangit were holding contests that seem impossible to be granted because of the difficulty of the requirements requested. This is manifestly a rejection of men because they don't want to marry. "*Sayembara*" is a contest which was tactically created by those women characters as a means of their alternative weapon to resist men's domination and power (A. Mustofa, 2011). Also, this "*Sayembara*" carries the concept that women are complicated and their many requests are unreasonable. Even though it was an attempt to reject the man.

Dayang Sumbi refused because Sangkuriang was her own biological child. Roro Jonggrang refused Bandung Bondowoso because Bandung was the one who had killed Roro's father. Who would voluntarily marry the man who killed her father? If only the male character like Bandung Bondowoso and Jaka Tarub have a tolerance, as defined by Mustofa, (2022) it is the action of respecting any varieties in the form of physical appearances, behaviour, culture, religion, and tribes. What he was doing was harassment, she should have

the right to say “no” and be respected. He chose to act like his will to get was above her right to say “no”. However, most of the moral messages mentioned were not to be cunning like Roro Jonggrang and Dayang Sumbi. This puts a woman in a corner as if she is the worst human being. Instead, there is a message that is more important than considering the female character to be cunning, what should have happened was that Bandung and Sangkuriang had to accept rejection. Because not all human desires can be granted. accepting the rejection of love that is impossible to have, then stories like this would never happen.

Dyah Ayu Pusparini and Dewi Songgolangit held a competition because they still didn't want to get married but were forced by their father to get married soon. They are both victims of patriarchy in a family where all decisions are in the hands of their father. Supposedly, an adult daughter can determine their own path in life. Also, marriage is a lifelong commitment, so it requires mature readiness both physically and mentally. It is not arbitrary when the father orders to get married, the daughter must surrender to her father's decision. In the script, it said that the enchanting beauty of Putri Dyah Ayu Pusparini made men want to make her their wife. However, Putri Dyah Ayu did not want to randomly choose a husband, so her father held a competition to choose a husband for his daughter.

The story of Batu Menangis is identical to Malin Kundang's story about a child who was cursed into a stone. Nevertheless, the portrayal of each character is very contrasting between the two since the main character of Batu Menangis is a woman. The difference is, the portrayal of the character Batu Menangis seems to have no good value in the aspect of social life and personal values. Only physical appearance shows that she is beautiful, has smooth skin and beautiful flowing hair. Batu Menangis is a daughter who is lazy, selfish and doesn't want to acknowledge her mother. Meanwhile, Malin Kundang was a dutiful son so he wandered to obey his mother, but after he became rich and had a beautiful wife when he returned to his hometown, he did not want to admit his old mother. The patriarchal propaganda in Malin Kundang constructs male

masculinity as breadwinner, persistent, tenacious, and successful (Krisna, 2016). The fact that women do not have to go abroad and just stay at home is considered as a weak feminine essence and must be under the protection of men.

Jaka Tarub, Lahilote, The Legend of Danau Toba, The Origin of Mermaid, and The Story of an Innocent Child and A Wise King are a different story with the same hidden meaning. Those are about how men have control over women. It is always men who determine women's lives no matter how it affects women. As happened in the legend of Jaka Tarub and Lahilote where the fate of a woman depends on a shawl stolen by a man. When the shawl is found, then she can return to heaven. The legend of Danau Toba and the origin of the mermaid is a depiction of a woman who is the incarnation of an animal. That is, women are not completely human, they were previously intangible as human beings. They are also described as beautiful women after being reincarnated as human beings. In the story of Danau Toba, women are the incarnation of a goldfish and the origin of a mermaid is a woman who becomes a fish which both of them were cursed with because of their husband's anger. This also happens in several other stories such as the Legend of Putri Malam who is the incarnation of a pig, even Dayang Sumbi who becomes a Jaksi flower to save herself from Sangkuriang's wrath.

### ***Propaganda That Gave Rise to The Current Patriarchal System through Archipelagic Folklore***

Literature as propaganda managed to gain a version of immortality in the public consciousness before the definite consequences of using literature as propaganda were imagined. The fact that they require exploration and particular memory that a literature perfectly suited for current propaganda becomes tomorrow's ammunition because of its longevity (Senn, 2015). He added, the use of literature as propaganda is not without consequences. In certain cases, literature lasts longer than the average propaganda pamphlet and can carry with it a much wider meaning than the propagandist

intended. Therefore, propaganda was created for life continuity in the future.

The most important aspect in discussing literature and propaganda is the social and historical conditions in which the propaganda was created, when and why it appeared, to whom the propaganda was presented, how it was 'used' and by whom (Satiyoko, 2020). Propaganda is interpreted as an intertextual process in which certain special meanings are recycled repeatedly in many texts (Oddo, 2022). It is an expression or action by individuals or groups designed to influence a community. Implicitly, propaganda is an attempt to build an understanding of either right or wrong that is developed to convince people to form certain ways of behaving, attitudes, or actions.

Propaganda that occurs within the Indonesian people is influenced from the culture of the colonial foreign countries as well as the fundamental beliefs of its society. Before the colonialism era, in the practice of Hindu society in the Vedic era 1500 BC, women do not receive inheritance from husbands or relatives who died. In the tradition of the Buddhist community in 1500 BC, women were married off before reaching the age of puberty. They do not get an education, so most of them become illiterate. For this reason, women are prohibited from attending religious ceremonies, and are only allowed to be in houses of worship. Meanwhile, Indonesia before the colonial period, was a strong Hindu-Buddhist adherent. This can be seen from several historical legacies including the formation of mind-sets and customs that are rooted in society. In the period of Dutch and Japanese colonialism, women were used as sex slaves for foreign soldiers who are on duty in Indonesia (Sakina, 2017).

In a podcast between Deddy Corbuzier and a historian of *Kisah Tanah Jawa* (Closethedoor, 2021), Om Hao said that the author of the story about the Legend of the Prambanan Temple about Roro Jonggrang, Bandung Bondowoso and 1,000 temples made by the Javanese themselves who have lost their memory of Java in the VIII-X centuries AD. It was precisely the Dutch historians who pioneered the tracking of historical buildings

built by their ancestors. The construction in one night was made to present a building that seemed haunted because there was a princess who was cursed to become a statue. Which then made people afraid to visit this building with the aim of Dutch freedom in exploring the historical heritage of the Mataram kingdom.

Dutch people were making stories and spread by word of mouth and then believed and rooted in society implicitly carried out hidden meanings. This then strengthen the patriarchal understanding in a country that has a base of patriarchal culture. The story of Roro Jonggrang was a prove that the presence of Netherland colonialism strengthened the existing patriarchal understanding by creating artificial stories about the superiority of men over women.

During the Japanese colonialism, propaganda was spread through audio-visual media that can be seen from films, plays, radio, news agencies and were spread by each organization, those are Jawa Hôsô Kanrikyoku, Domei news agency, Javanese Engeki Kyokai, and Nihon Eigasha or Nichi'ei (Putri et al., 2019). When viewed from its historical background, the patriarchal system in Japan cannot be separated from the ideological influence of the concept of the ideal woman which was introduced in the Meiji era. This concept is known as Ryosai Kenbo which literally means "a good mother and a wise wife". This concept was promoted when Japan was running a modernization (Adriani & Minandha, 2021). And this understanding was transferred when the Japanese colonized Indonesia.

If someone argues that, as in the story of the daughters who don't want to get married but are forced to marry by their fathers, this is not a form of patriarchy but strictness from a father, we must review the definition of patriarchy. According to Bhasin, patriarchy is used to refer to a type of "family ruled by men" (Israpil, 2017). It refers to a form of household organization in which men dominate other family members and control household economic production. Then, a patriarchal society is a society where men have power and control. Women are usually exploited, disadvantaged and have lower status.

Accordingly, the obedient attitude of daughters who are forced to marry as in the legends of Gunung Kelud and Reog Ponorogo is an implementation of the success of patriarchal propaganda within the family sphere.

Israpil (2017) added, the most common subordinating roles are played by women in power relations: 1) the woman acts as a fixer, she wants the relationship to be stable, harmonious, and enjoyable; 2) woman as a pleaser, she tries to meet the expectations of men; 3) women as martyrs, she wants her partner to live happily even if she sacrifices herself. It can be seen from the story, as proof woman as a fixer and pleaser is in the Legend of Ande-Ande Lumut which is exalted for the loyalty of a princess to her king (her husband). This is also seen in the narratives of many legends where the devotion of the woman (the wife) cooks various kinds of dishes to please her husband, as in the stories of Jaka Tarub, Lahilote, and Danau Toba. As a martyr is the sacrifice of a mother who becomes a mermaid to fulfill her angry husband's selfishness.

The legend that has the most patriarchal construct was on the island of Java. The label for a wife, that is "*kanca wingking*" or a friend behind his back, makes strong women's roles invisible. Why Kartini when Indonesia still have other influential women? Instead of making female characters who are really tough in struggling to patriarchal system, her who is branded is a character who did not have much power against this system's rejection. Apologize to our heroes, does not mean to blame the struggle, but this is not without implication. That the female hero named Kartini labelled as a woman who fight for education and reject the patriarchal system in Indonesia. However, she herself could not choose her own choice.

It is an example of how the patriarchal system existed in the modern era, Kartini - a figure of Indonesian women's emancipation is a figure of patriarchal propaganda itself. Among many female figures who fought for Indonesian education, a character that is created was her, a woman who was not legally "independent". Kartini's willingness to become a third wife is considered far from the image of

women's resistance to patriarchal system. If she strictly rejected the patriarchal system, then she should resolutely refuse to become the third wife even if it would be against her father. The impact of this history is very substantial when it is narrated to the future generation, that a woman can be highly educated, but she can never be truly independent.

In the world of modern literature for example, the movie "*Ngeri-Ngeri Sedap*" in 2022 portrays how inequality in a family of a female character who is the only daughter among five siblings is pressured as a "good Bataknese daughter". She spoke her heart out in a scene where she was blamed for her parents' fake divorce, then she revealed that being a Batak woman is not easy. The dreams she had to bury and the job she wanted but couldn't achieve because she had to stay at home. Since that's how the Batak people treat daughters, while all her brothers were given the freedom to continue their education and work as successful as possible. This is very inversely proportional to how Bataknese treat daughters. Again, this happens because patriarchy is deeply rooted in Indonesian families. Patriarchy considers men as inferior creatures and women as the second humans.

Patriarchy seems entrenched in all aspects of human's life. In the current days, Indonesian women's political representation is 30% compared to men, this number is not equal. It does not mean that no women are able to fulfil the number of percentage but, they just do not want to contribute (Julita et al., 2020). This happens because women have concerns about consequences of taking risks or hindered by the opposite sex. Because in this modern world, there are still men who do not want to be beaten by women.

Without any exaggeration, the government programs specifically for women such as officials' wife associations; Dharma Wanita, Dharma Pertiwi, Bhayangkari, and PKK (Family Welfare Development) cannot be separated from intervention and state interests that are patriarchal biased. Even though women are given wide space to actualize themselves, structurally the two organizations are nothing more than an

extension of the state in realizing the interests of power which tend to be the status quo (Shalihin & Firdaus, 2019).

As it has become an agreement that men work outside and women only take care of the domestic area. This is none other than because the mind-set of Indonesian women is formed in such a way as to become human beings who are obedient, soft-spoken and their main goal is to obey their husbands. Within folklore that has been passed down from generation to generation, it will imply a patriarchal system that will indirectly be practiced by future generations. This propaganda build patriarchy from something that initially looks ambiguous, to something that is normalized.

## Conclusion

Patriarchy that is rooted in Indonesia originates from the propaganda of ancient society through the media of folklore. The patriarchal constructs were identified in 11 legends from 33 provinces in the selected book and animated videos. This study found that the archipelagic folklore is a tool for spreading an implicit message that contain a very deep understanding, the basis of patriarchalism. Furthermore, it settled down that a legend is a patriarchal propaganda, by carrying out stories that indoctrinate how mankind should behave, or how men and women have their role in society is a winning propaganda of patriarchy.

Patriarchal propaganda is basically carried by all religions, where almost all apply the concept of men as human beings that are "more" than women in all aspects. Afterwards, it was perpetuated by historical heritage that talks about the past lives, one of which is the archipelagic folklore. This system was next intervened by the colonialism of foreign countries that spread their concept to Indonesian people. For that reason, patriarchal system that is rooted in Indonesia did not only come from one direction, but from several directions which then gave rise to a complex understanding.

Moreover, this study only focused on scripted folklores, in fact, there a lot of

folklores that narrated but not scripted yet. Future studies are expected to be more systematic and comprehensive in order to obtain more diverse conclusions.

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