

## GENDER STEREOTYPES OF A WIFE CHARACTER IN A JAVANESE FILM *MUDIK* (2020)

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### ABSTRACT

*Dadi Wong* (Being a successful person) has been socialized through gender stereotypes in Javanese communities. The thought has also been contested with the opposite concept, namely *Durung Tutug* (Being an unsuccessful person). One can be included in either classification provided that he or she meets the criteria which are manifested in gender stereotypes. This article aims at identifying gender stereotypes of a Javanese wife character named Santi in film *Mudik* (2020). This article is analyzed using film narratology along with gender performativity and power relations. The elements, such as kernel and satellites, which show gender stereotypes of a Javanese wife character, Santi, were studied. The results present that Santi is represented as a wife who can not fulfill the criteria of *Dadi Wong* so that she is labelled *Durung Tutug* due to not having an intact family following her husband's passing. However, she negotiates it by getting married again with another man to meet the condition of *Dadi Wong* in Javanese society.

**Keywords:** film; gender stereotypes; Javanese wife; narratology.

### BACKGROUND

Javanese thinking of *Dadi Wong* (Being a successful person) has been socialized as an ideal concept for married couples (Fardhani, 2015). Fardhani (2015) added that this ideology has determined gender stereotypes that a husband and a wife have to act to fulfill its requirements. Two criteria that have been socially established comprise marriage and descendants (Fardhani, 2015).

The ideal representation of a Javanese wife is embodied in the figure of a mother which is pertaining to the domestic roles in a family (Permanadeli, 2015). Permanadeli (2015) added that this image has to be intergrated in Javanese wives'

mental framework. Also, state has taken this into account to continue constructing the ideology of a mother in society (Suryakusumah, 2011). *Kanca Wingking* appears to be the women domestic roles encompassing *Masak* (Able to cook), *Macak* (Able to make up), and *Manak* (Able to give offsprings) (Sakti, 2021). These images have been written in an old scripture called *Serat Cendrarini* (Permatasari & Widisanti, 2018).

If the husband has passed away, the wife is labelled a widow. In Javanese society, a widow can not be categorized as *Dadi Wong* since the marital status is not complete anymore (Sofyan & Bakhri, 2021). Sofyan and Bakhri (2021) also stated that if a woman becomes a widow, they can not fit into the ideal image of a Javanese wife, and

the family status has been broken. In order to be classified as ideal, the widow needs to get married again or re-married (Sofyan & Bakhri, 2021).

This happening leads to a conflicting ideology which ensues between *Dadi Wong* and *Durung Tutug* that define whether or not a wife has successfully met the expectation of Javanese society (Fardhani, 2015). The expectations are decided through gender stereotypes of ideal Javanese wife in performing domestic work (Fardhani, 2015). As a result, Barker (2003) contended that the dominant ideology influences the subjectivity of individuals in society. This signifies that the existence of this concept drives the way Javanese wife perceive herself in Javanese communities (Fardhani, 2018).

## I. RESEARCH METHOD

This article points out gender stereotypes of a Javanese wife character named Santi in film *Mudik* (2020) by Adriyanto Dewo. This study uses film narratology (Chatman, 1978) as an analytical tool. Kernel and satellites are the elements that were analyzed. Kernel is an essential occurrences in the film which narrate the logical story over the movie (Chatman, 1978). Meanwhile, satellites are characterized to be less important scenes in the film which only ornament it by showing the aesthetic aspects to complement the kernels (Chatman, 1978). The study also took gender performativity by Judith Butler

(1990) which explicates that gender is performative and is constructed by society. The theory of power relations by Michele Foucault (1997) was also incorporated in the article which explains that dominant ideology in society can influence how subject perceived their subjectivity in communities. As a result, it is a must to discipline themselves to be able to be classified in a particular social classification (Barker, 2000).

The object of the research is the *Mudik* (2020) by Adriyanto Dewo. The research instrument was the scenes and dialogues regarding gender stereotypes depicted through the acts of character Santi in the movie and how she positions herself to fit into the dominant ideology, *Dadi Wong*, in the film.

## II. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In order to present the previously mentioned research problems. Some specific Kernels and Satellites are taken to explain them on the acts of a wife character, namely Santi. The following is the research discussion,

### M.1 Eksterior, in the house yard, at night (00:39:15 – 00:39:20)

“Aida is walking alone, having an intention to visit Santi’s house at night. Meanwhile, Santi in her house yard is preparing the firewood for cooking. She is silent, and Aida is approaching. Santi is looking at Aida with an angry face and is leaving Aida alone.”



**Figure 1. Santi is burning some logs for cooking**

The quoted scene M.1 (Figure 1) is a kernel which shows that Santi is preparing the firewood for cooking while the other men are attending the village forum in the hall. This scene is also supported by the retrospective satellite M.2 (Figure 2) which depicts that Santi is looking for tree branches for cooking in the wood,

**M.2 Eksterior, in the wood, in the afternoon (00:44:12 – 00:44:20)**



**Figure 2. Santi is searching for logs in the wood for cooking**

The two scenes (Figure 1 and 2) are the proofs that Santi must do the domestic work, such as cooking. As stated by Butler (1990), gender is a performative action that is culturally and socially constructed. As referred to the scene, Santi is not allowed to attend the village forum by male villagers, and they think that a woman should stay at home doing the domestic work. Sakti (2021) explained that there is a Javanese gender stereotype of *Masak* (Able to cook) which

positions the women at home to take care of domestic-related business.

**M.3 Exterior, at the graveyard, in the afternoon (00:33:10 – 00:33:15)**

“Aida, Firman, Santi, and her daughter are attending Sugeng’s burial. Santi is looking very sad over the passing of her husband while holding her daughter.”



**Figure 3. Santi is attending the burial of her husband**

The kernel scene above M.3 (Figure 3) portrays Sugeng’s burial ceremony attended by Firman, Aida, Santi, Santi’s daughter, and all villagers. It indicates that Sugeng has left a wife and a little daughter after his death. This scene is also supported by the retrospective satellite M.4 (Figure 4) below,

**M.4 Interior, in the car, in the afternoon (00:53:01 – 00:53:06)**

“Santi and her daughter are keen on going out of the village to meet her parents in another village. She asks for help to Firman and Aida to take her to the village by their car.”



**Figure 4. Santi is holding her daughter**

The two previously quoted scenes (Figure 3 and 4) are the evidences which shows that Santi and Sugeng have got a daughter in their marriage. As contended by Suryakusumah (2011), the marriage in Indonesia leads to the procreative purpose. Sakti (2021) added that in Javanese society, *Manak* (Able to give offsprings) is one of gender stereotypes that must be fulfilled by the wife if a couple has got married. It indicates that having children positions Santi to take care of children which is included in the domestic work.

**M.5 Exterior, in the wood, in the afternoon (00:45:38 – 00:46:26)**

“Aida is looking for Santi in the wood, while Santi is searching for logs for cooking. Aida is approaching Santi while calling her name. They have a conversation related to Sugeng’s death and Aida’s apology over the accident.

Aida : *Santi, aku bisa bantu kamu apa? Kamu mau uang? Aku bisa kasih uang ini sekarang. Aku lebih baik kasih ke kamu daripada mereka.*

Santi : *Aku gak minta apa-apa Mbak. Biar mereka aja yang urus. Lagian Mbak ngapain sih masih ada di sini?*

Aida : *San, aku minta maaf.*

Santi : (Santi is leaving Aida)

Aida : *San, San, tunggu dulu San. Dengerin aku.*

Santi : (Santi is hurting herself)

Aida : *San, Santi.*

Santi : *Aku yang minta dia pulang. Biasanya dia gak pernah pulang. Tapi, lebaran tahun ini dia harus pulang. Kalau gak ada Mbak, semuanya baik-baik aja. Sekarang aku mesti bilang apa sama orang kampung?.”*



**Figure 5. Santi and Aida are discussing Santi’s disappointment**

The quoted kernel M.5 (Figure 5) depicts Santi’s sadness over the passing of her husband, Sugeng, in an accident involving Aida. She is expecting her husband to come home from the city because he has not got home yet for three years. Apparently, Sugeng is hit by Aida’s car, and he passed away afterwards. Becoming a widow is an insecure moment for Santi since she does not have a job to provide a living for her daughter. It is also followed by a retrospective satellite M.6 (Figure 6) which tells that a widow whose husband has just passed away must stay at home during forty-day period after his death and can not work outside homes,

**M.6 Interior, in the village hall, in the afternoon (00:49:29 – 00:34:50)**

“Firman and Aida are attending the village forum with other male villagers and the head of the village. All of the sudden, Santi is coming to the village hall and is interfering the discussion.

Villagers : *Santi.*

The Head : *Ini loh Ti. Kita tuh baru ngurus uangnya.*

Villager 1 : *Santi, seharusnya kamu di rumah saja, Ti.*

Santi : *Pak Ade, saya gak pernah liat bapak main ke rumah saya. Kalian ini semua sama aja. Kalau ada uang baru ngerubung kaya semut. Saya mau ikut mereka ke Jakarta.*

Villagers : *Loh kok mau ke Jakarta.*

Villager 2 : *Mbak, kamu tawarin apa ke dia? (Talking with Aida)*

Firman : *Kita gak nawarin apa-apa Mas.*

The Head : *Santi, suami kamu itu baru saja meninggal loh, Ti. Kamu itu tidak boleh keluar dari rumah.*

Villager 2 : *Makam Sugeng siapa yang ngurus?*

The Head : *Ini sudah gak bener. Pokoknya Ti, kamu tidak boleh pergi dari sini.”*



Figure 6. Santi is attending the forum suddenly

The two previous scenes (Figure 5

and 6) are the proofs that becoming a widow reflects a huge insecurity for the woman. Santi is anxious over her new status as a widow whether or not she can provide for a living to her daughter since she also needs to stay at home without going anywhere until the forty-day period of death finishes. Sofyan and Bakhri (2021) stated that becoming a widow is not an ideal marital status in Javanese society. This means that the woman does not suit the ideal expectation of Javanese communities due to the non-intact family (Sofyan & Bakhri, 2021).

Referring to the previous discussion on the ideal representation of a Javanese wife, Santi is represented as a wife who can not be categorized as *Dadi Wong* (Being a successful person). This means that she can not fulfill the primary criteria of the concept which is marriage, and the family members must still be complete (Sofyan & Bakhri, 2021). Even though Santi is showed to perform the domestic work like *Masak* (Able to cook) and *Manak* (Able to give offsprings), she has become a widow. This signifies that she is classified in the category of *Durung Tutug*, *Rampung*, or *Jowo* (Being an unsuccessful person) since she can not meet the Javanese communities’ expectation of having an intact family.

Table 1. Santi’s Social Category

<i>Dadi Wong</i> (Being a successful person) The Ideal	<i>Durung Tutug, Jowo, or Rampung</i> (Being an unsuccessful

Category for a Javanese Wife	person) (Santi)
Masak (Able to cook)	Meets the criteria.
Manak (Able to give offsprings)	Meets the criteria.
Getting married and having an intact family	Becoming a widow (Her husband has passed away due to a traffic accident).

Nonetheless, Santi is trying to fulfill the construction expected by Javanese communities of having an intact family which a husband, a wife, and children are all still present (Sofyan & Bakhri, 2021). As explained by Barker (2000), discourse leads people to discipline themselves to be able to suit the existing social category in society. Kernel M.7 (Figure 7) portrays that Santi is eventually getting married to Agus, and they live together with Santi’s parents in another village,

**M.7 Exterior, in the field, in the morning (01:23:20 – 01:23:35)**

“Aida is looking at Santi’s family after taking Eid prayer in the morning. They get together while greeting Aida.”



**Figure 7. Santi and her family are taking Eid prayer together**

Kernel M.7 (Figure 7) shows that by

having an intact family, Santi can meet the criteria of *Dadi Wong* (Being a successful person) in Javanese society. Fardhani (2015) contended that getting married and having an intact family are the primary criteria of *Dadi Wong* in Javanese communities.

**III. CONCLUSION**

The ideal representation of a Javanese wife in film *Mudik* (2020) by Adriyanto Dewo is shown through the domestic affairs performed by Santi, such as *Masak* (Able to cook) and *Manak* (Able to give offsprings). However, Santi can not fulfill the whole criteria of *Dadi Wong* (being a successful person) because her husband, Sugeng, passed away on the way of homecoming. As a result, she is labelled *Durung Tutug, Rampung, or Jowo* (Being an unsuccessful person). Becoming a widow is a hard time for Santi since she is alone to make a living for her daughter. Thus, she is trying to meet the criteria of *Dadi Wong* by betting married again or re-married to have an intact family as expected by Javanese society (Sofyan & Bakhri, 2021).

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