

# Un-tying Patriarchal Legacy: Polygamy in the Indonesian Novel 'Entrok'

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## Abstract

*This article examines how Entrok, a novel by Okky Madasari, portrays the oppressive realities of polygamy and patriarchal domination within Indonesia's socio-political landscape, especially during the New Order regime. Using feminist literary criticism as the main theoretical framework, supported by a Marxist view on economic power, this study explores how literature critically reflects women's lived experiences under systemic gender inequality. While previous studies have discussed gender bias and resistance in Entrok, few have examined polygamy as a tool of patriarchy or analysed how resistance strategies vary across women's social and educational positions. The analysis reveals a clear contrast in how female characters respond to polygamy and patriarchal structures. Yu Yem, Yu Parti, Endang Sulastri, and Marni, who represent uneducated women, not only reject and do not tolerate polygamy but also actively resist it by building economic independence, thus asserting their agency and autonomy. Their refusal becomes a form of open defiance against patriarchal expectations. Conversely, Rahayu, an educated woman, accepts her position as a second wife under religious justification, internalising patriarchal norms despite experiencing profound psychological distress. These representations demonstrate how both class and ideology influence women's capacity and methods of resistance to gendered oppression. Framing Entrok within broader feminist and socio-political discourse, this study affirms the novel's role as a critique of patriarchal injustice. It underscores how fiction can challenge ideological violence and support Sustainable Development Goal 5 on Gender Equality by imagining alternative possibilities for empowerment and resistance.*

**Keywords:** feminist literary criticism, polygamy, patriarchy, Entrok, SDG 5

## INTRODUCTION

Patriarchy is a socio-political ideology that promotes male supremacy and assigns women to domestic roles; this situation was strengthened by discourse and public policy during the New Order regime (1966–1998), making gender roles that expect women to be loyal wives and obedient mothers commonplace (Lestari 2016). In such a socio-cultural context, polygamy functions not just as a household practice but also as a tool for maintaining gender dominance: religious and traditional justifications are used to support the concentration of power and resources by men (Sakina and A. 2017; Suryaningrum, Suwandi, and Waluyo 2019). Consequently, analysing the portrayal of polygamy in literary works set in the New Order regime has dual significance, revealing historical gender relations and contributing to contemporary gender equality discourse (SDG 5).

The novel Entrok by Okky Madasari depicts this oppressive reality through female characters such as Yu Yem, Yu Parti, Endang Sulastri, Marni, and Rahayu. These five characters exhibit diverse responses to the practice of polygamy: four village women, lacking formal education, tend to reject polygamy and seek economic independence as a form of resistance, whereas Rahayu, an educated woman, internalises and justifies her role as a second wife based on religious interpretation (Sulkhan 2021). As a textual illustration, "...sehari setelah peristiwa itu, Yu Parti dan Yu Yem telah berjualan seperti biasa. Seolah-olah tak ada satu hal pun yang perlu dirisaukan dalam hidup mereka, tak ada apa pun yang dapat menjadi aib bagi mereka. Selama matahari masih terbit, selama perut masih makan, dan selama berdagang di pasar masih bisa dilakukan, mereka adalah manusia-manusia bebas yang tak terpasung kegelisahan apa pun.", which affirms the experience of stigma and economic marginalization experienced by the wives in the novel. This reading shows that polygamy in Entrok is not merely a personal phenomenon but a practice operating through ideological, social, and economic networks.

The portrayal of the community of women under patriarchal pressure in Entrok is depicted through the daily lives of Yu Yem, Yu Parti, Marni, Endang Sulastri, and Rahayu, illustrating their efforts to resist the influence of patriarchy in the form of polygamy. A thorough analysis reveals the varying responses among these individuals to the practice of polygamy. The characters Yu Yem, Yu Parti, Endang Sulastri, and Marni are rural women lacking formal education, who tend to oppose the practice of polygamy. Yu Yem, Yu Parti, and Marni endeavour to establish economic independence as a form of open resistance. Conversely, the character Rahayu, who is educated, accepts her position as a second wife, justifying her role through religious legitimacy.

Female characters in Entrok, such as Yu Yem, Yu Parti, Marni, Endang Sulastri, and Rahayu, exemplify the way patriarchal culture marginalises and oppresses them. Yu Yem and Yu Parti, portrayed as two wives compelled to share a husband, are depicted as experiencing social and economic stigma. Yu Yem and Yu Parti perceive themselves as complete human beings when engaging diligently in market activities without reliance on their husband. This stance challenges the stigma that a woman's value as a whole person is contingent upon her marital status. Conversely, Marni must exert twice the effort to support her family, even though her husband Teja has been proven to maintain another woman and secretly marry her.

On the other hand, the female character Rahayu is portrayed in a different light. Rahayu decides to marry Amri, who is already married, and justifies her right to do so through a religious interpretation, despite facing rejection from her husband's family. Rahayu emerges as a female character successfully created by Okky Madasari, a woman who supports the practice of polygamy with a religious justification. Moreover, the grip of patriarchy is also evident in the division of labour between men and women. The practice of wage inequality in the market is clearly illustrated in Entrok, where female labourers are paid with cassava, while male labourers are paid in money. The main issue raised is how the practice of polygamy and the patriarchal system affected the lives of women in the New Order regime, particularly as depicted in Entrok. This study aims to uncover and analyse these issues more thoroughly.

From the description of these phenomena, several research questions emerge, which will be addressed in this study: (1) How does Entrok portray polygamy as a tool of patriarchy during the New Order regime?; (2) What differences do socio-economic background and educational level make to the resistance strategies of female characters? (3) What is this representation's theoretical and policy relevance to the discourse on gender equality? This problem formulation highlights the research focus on the relationship between polygamy, patriarchal structures, and class/ideological dynamics in literary discourse. The importance of this research derives from two principal aspects. Firstly, although numerous studies have examined gender and resistance in Entrok, few have systematically contextualised polygamy as an ideological instrument of patriarchy intricately linked to economic mechanisms (analysis gap). Secondly, comparative analyses of women's responses based on educational background and social class have not been sufficiently explored (novelty). By addressing this gap, the study aims to not only contribute to the body of feminist literary criticism in Indonesia but also to offer insights applicable to gender policy formulation and social historical analysis. Similar to how Little Snow White's study shows women's shift from submission to agency, challenging patriarchy, this research views Entrok as a text where gender ideology is contested through the institution of polygamy (Sampurna, Salindri, and Priya 2024).

Theoretically, this research integrates feminist literary criticism, which underscores gender constructions and women's experiences as subordinate (Beauvoir 1956; Bressler 1994), with a Marxist perspective that emphasises economic structures and class relations as factors that sustain gender subordination (Browning 2014; Marx 2007). This synthesis facilitates an analysis of polygamy as a practice that operates concurrently as a form of cultural oppression and as a mechanism for accumulating economic power (Owoeye 2018; Vogel 2013). The qualitative-descriptive methodology uses a textual analysis approach (close reading) and thematic analysis. Primary data comprises the text 'Entrok'; secondary data encompasses critical studies, journal

articles, and historical sources about the practice of polygamy and gender discourse during the New Order regime. The analytical process involves identifying pertinent text fragments, categorising themes (such as polygamy, stigma, economic independence, and religious legitimacy), and interpreting these within a feminist-Marxist framework.

Following the above review, this study seeks to: (a) examine how Entrok portrays polygamy as a manifestation of patriarchy; (b) pinpoint variations in women's resistance strategies based on education and social status; (c) evaluate the impact of this representation on the gender equality discourse. The benefits of this research include theoretical contributions to feminist and Marxist literary studies in Indonesia and practical implications for understanding socio-cultural history related to gender and equality policies.

## THEORY

### A. Feminist Literary Criticism

Feminist literary criticism emphasises how gender power relations in literature emerge as a consequence of patriarchal ideology impacting women (Beauvoir 1956; Murphy 1992; Wiyatmi 2012). As understood, patriarchy constitutes a social system that confers dominance upon men, thereby leading to the oppression of women in various manifestations (Tong 2010). A study asserts that "patriarchal ideology often results in gender-based violence and repressive cultural and religious practices that victimise women... [leaving] men to dominate every aspect of life" (Hasan et al. 2022). Consequently, feminist literary criticism examines how gender roles are constructed and how literary texts may either uphold or challenge patriarchal norms (Ali 2024; Wiyatmi 2012). Through this analytical framework, literature is regarded as a medium for exploring how patriarchal structures operate to control social dynamics. Within this context, the practice of polygamy is identified as one manifestation of patriarchal authority within the domestic sphere that adversely impacts women (Asri 2018). Polygamy functions as a mechanism to reinforce patriarchal culture by privileging men as husbands to have more than one wife, while the wives remain subordinate. This phenomenon raises concerns among feminists, as polygamy is perceived to strengthen the 'knot', the complex entanglement of patriarchal issues, within patriarchal society.

### B. Marxism

The concept of Marxist feminism offers an additional theoretical framework for analysing women's oppression, particularly concerning economic factors and social class. Unlike liberal or radical feminism, which concentrates on legal or cultural dimensions, Marxist feminism underscores that women's oppression also originates from the capitalist economic system. This perspective holds that women's emancipation is unattainable without the transformation of the exploitative economic structure. As Federici asserts, "women's oppression is not merely cultural or legal, but is fundamentally tied to economic systems that rely on reproductive labour" (Rosyalina Nur Aprilyani and Irma Rahmawati 2025). Consequently, women are oppressed not solely due to patriarchal cultural constructs but also because of their roles in reproductive and domestic labour, which are exploited by the capitalist system without acknowledgement or remuneration.

In numerous instances, women experience a double-burden, being oppressed both as women and as members of the working class. The Marxist feminist perspective encourages a critical examination of the interconnectedness between patriarchy and capitalism: specifically, how male dominance within families and society is supported by unequal class and economic structures. In essence, Marxist feminism broadens feminist analysis by emphasising the capitalist foundations of gender inequality (Rosyalina Nur Aprilyani and Irma Rahmawati 2025). Applying this concept within literary criticism allows for the unveiling of more profound layers of oppression, such as the way male characters exploit institutions like marriage- including polygamy- to sustain their economic and social power. This combined analysis of gender and class is anticipated to uncover the

patriarchal entanglement within the novel Entrok, specifically the interweaving of male dominance and socio-economic structures that restrict women.

Several previous studies have addressed the issue of patriarchy in Indonesian literature and have laid a foundational basis for this research. For instance, Nenabu and Suroso (Nenabu and Suroso 2024) identified numerous discriminatory actions against female characters in the novel Entrok by Okky Madasari, attributable to the pervasive influence of patriarchal culture. Their study underscored that “there are still many acts of discrimination against women due to patriarchal power” within the narrative. Furthermore, other scholarly examinations of Indonesian novels indicate that polygamy is portrayed as a manifestation of patriarchal authority, which confines women to subordinate roles (Asri 2018). For example, in classical novels such as *Sitti Nurbaya* and contemporary works like *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban*, polygamy is depicted as a tradition upheld by the high social status of men, with detrimental effects on the wives.

However, most previous studies have taken a general feminist approach (such as liberal or radical feminism) and have not specifically examined polygamy from a Marxist feminist perspective. In short, no study has yet thoroughly analysed polygamy as a patriarchal issue in Entrok by combining feminist critical theory and Marxist analysis. This is the gap in analysis that this study aims to address. Unlike previous research, this study brings a new approach by integrating feminist literary criticism and the concept of Marxist feminism to analyse Entrok. This combined approach enables us to reveal the current state of patriarchal and economic relationships in polygamy in the novel, providing a more thorough understanding of how polygamy functions as a form of patriarchal oppression in literary texts.

## RESEARCH METHODS

The methodology employed in the analysis presented in this article is a qualitative descriptive approach utilising textual analysis within the framework of feminist literary criticism. The descriptive-qualitative approach offers a “comprehensive summary of events in the everyday terms of those events” (Sandelowski 2000), thus ensuring that the researcher remains closely aligned with the data as it naturally occurs. The selection of a feminist critical framework is predicated on its focus on depicting women’s experiences within literary texts and its emphasis on revealing patriarchal ideologies embedded in culture. As articulated in feminist scholarly discourse, this critical method demonstrates how literary works authored under male dominance tend to “reproduce and promote popular notions or generalised beliefs about women” (Fazli 2023). Within this framework, the novel Entrok is subjected to detailed examination to identify instances of polygamy as a manifestation of patriarchy. The researcher discerns various strategies of women’s resistance depicted in the novel, influenced by differences in educational backgrounds and social statuses of the female characters, and assesses how these representations contribute to the discourse on gender equality in Indonesia during the New Order regime.

The primary data comprises the novel Entrok by Okky Madasari in the data analysis methodology. Conversely, the secondary data encompass literary criticism studies, journal articles, and historical sources concerning the practice of polygamy and gender discourse during the New Order regime. Data collection is executed through document review and close reading techniques; relevant text fragments are purposively selected according to the research themes of polygamy, stigma, women’s economic independence, and religious legitimacy. Data analysis employs thematic analysis. According to Braun and Clarke (Braun and Clarke 2019), “thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It organises and describes the data set in rich detail and interprets various aspects of the research topic.” Through thematic analysis, narrative patterns in Entrok are categorised into polygamy, social stigma, women’s economic independence, and religious legitimacy, which are then interpreted in depth. This process is conducted within the framework of Marxist feminist theory. Marxist literary criticism combines

feminist and Marxist theories to investigate the mechanisms of male domination over women, while also considering the role of the capitalist system in reinforcing such hegemony.

## DISCUSSION

The novel titled Entrok by Okky Madasari portrays polygamy as a tangible expression of the patriarchal cultural legacy that oppresses women. Polygamy is shown not as a smooth or conflict-free practice, but as a source of gender injustice with harmful effects on women. Through its story and characters, Entrok explores how men within the patriarchal social system see themselves as entitled to have multiple wives, while women are forced to accept such circumstances.

### **Polygamy as a Manifestation of Patriarchy in *Entrok***

The novel Entrok depicts polygamy as a form of male domination that is normalized within patriarchal culture. In this literary work, polygamy is shown as a symbol of male authority and gender inequality, serving as a “patriarchal legacy” closely linked to social norms and conservative religious interpretations. For example, the husband of two women, Pak Suyat, can take Yu Parti and Yu Yem as wives without their consent.

*“Sedulur sedulur, si Iyem ini sundal. Suami orang direbut juga,” teriak Yu Parti dengan penuh amarah. Yu Yem, yang terlihat takut, terpancing dan mulai marah. Dengan suara tak kalah kencang, dia membala kata-kata Yu Parti. “Enak saja, nyebut aku sundal. Sampeyan sendiri yang tidak bisa ngladeni suami. Bukan salahku kalau suami sampeyan mau kawin sama aku.”*

*“Dasar sundal, perebut suami orang.” Yu Parti mulai kehilangan kesabaran. Dia bergerak mendekati tempat Yu Yem berdiri. Dagangan cabe yang ada di los disapu dengan tangannya. Cabe-cabe itu berhamburan ke seluruh los.*

“Brothers and sisters, this Iyem is a whore. She has also taken someone else’s husband,” shouted Yu Parti with intense fury. Yu Yem, who at first appeared frightened, was provoked and began to grow angry. With a voice just as loud, she retorted to Yu Parti’s words. “How dare you call me a whore! You are the one who cannot serve your husband. It is not my fault if your husband wanted to marry me.”

“Damn whore, husband stealer.” Yu Parti began to lose patience. She moved toward where Yu Yem was standing, sweeping away the chilli peppers displayed on the stall with her hand. The peppers were scattered across the market stall.

After the intense argument between Yu Parti and Yu Yem, Pak Suyat faced no repercussions from the community. Instead, he took his wife back home, and their polygamous lifestyle went on as before.

*Laki-laki itu Pak Suyat. Suami Yu Parti sekaligus Yu Yem. Laki-laki yang menjadi sumber perkelahian dua pedagang Pasar Ngranget. “Ti, sudah, Ti. Sudah!” Pak Suyat meraih tangan kiri Yu Parti yang sedang menjambak rambut Yu Yem. “Sudah, ayo pulang!” Pak Suyat menarik tangan istrinya.*

That man was Pak Suyat. He was the husband of both Yu Parti and Yu Yem—the man who became the source of the quarrel between the two traders of Pasar Ngranget. “Ti,

enough, Ti. Enough!" Pak Suyat grabbed Yu Parti's left hand as she was pulling Yu Yem's hair. "Enough, let's go home!" Pak Suyat seized Yu Parti's left hand while she was yanking Yu Yem's hair. Pak Suyat pulled his wife away.

This story shows that men have full control over choosing additional partners. A husband is seen as justified in practicing polygamy, while the wives are forced to accept it. In fact, the wives blame each other and use insults like "sundal" instead of criticizing the husband for his actions. Overall, Entrok demonstrates that the husband acts as the head of the household and the main supporter of polygamy, since this practice is considered a husband's right. Meanwhile, the wives are expected to accept this arrangement without resistance or complaint.

Entrok's main character, Marni, clearly shows how polygamy can harm women. Marni was Teja's only wife until she discovered he had been secretly involved in polygamy. The woman Teja married as his second wife was a dancer named Endang Sulastri.

*"Semua orang di desaku tahu, Bu. Sampayan saja yang selama ini tidak tahu atau pura-pura tidak tahu. Wong kami sudah kawin lama kok. Pas dia nggeblak, aku ndak ke sini. Tidak enak sama omongan orang. Ini karena anaknya yang mau."*

*Kuperhatikan anak itu. Terlihat tak terurus dibandingkan ibunya yang mukanya penuh bedak dan gincunya merah. Duh, Gusti, matanya dan hidungnya adalah milik Teja. Aku mengenalinya.*

"Everyone in my village knows, Ma'am. It is only you who all this time did not know or pretended not to know. We have been married for a long time. When he collapsed, I did not come here. It did not feel right because of people's gossip. This is because his child wanted it."

I observed the child. He appeared more neglected than his mother, whose face was covered with powder and whose lips were painted red. Oh, God, his eyes and nose belonged to Teja. I recognised him.

Teja's practice of polygamy shows that men have the privilege to marry other wives without considering the feelings of the first wife or the more complex consequences involved. As a result, Marni only learned about Teja's second marriage after his death. At that time, Teja's second wife, Endang Sulastri, and her son Waseso, approached Marni to claim Teja's inheritance. It is important to note that throughout his lifetime, Marni was the one who tirelessly supported the family. Therefore, it can be said that the wealth Teja enjoyed was mostly due to the hard work of his first wife, Marni.

*"Ya normalnya orang hidup, Bu. Anak-anak pasti dapat jatah dari bapaknya sendiri." Endang Sulastri berbicara tentang jatah. Apa lagi kalau bukan jatah warisan. Harta.*

Well, normally in life, Ma'am, children surely receive a share from their own father." Endang Sulastri was speaking about a *jatah*—what else if not inheritance. Wealth.

Due to her husband's secret practice of polygamy, Marni's conflict with Endang Sulastri over inheritance has made her a deeply vulnerable victim. She has already been emotionally betrayed and now faces economic and legal threats with no protection. Despite this, Marni showed

great courage by refusing to divide the property. However, she still demonstrated compassion by caring for her husband's second wife's child, Waseso.

*"Kalau anak itu mau hidup baik-baik, makan cukup, sekolah sampai sarjana, biarlah aku yang mengasuhnya. Biarkan dia tinggal di rumahku. Akan kuanggap anakku sendiri. Kuberikan semuanya yang paling baik. Tapi jangan sampai harta yang kucari susah payah ini dinikmati perempuan itu!"*

"If that child wants to live properly, eat sufficiently, and go to school up to university, let me be the one to raise him. Let him live in my house. I will consider him as my own child. I will give him everything that is best. But never shall the wealth I struggled so hard to earn be enjoyed by that woman!"

Next, we have Rahayu, Marni's daughter, who is portrayed as intentionally and willingly taking on the role of a second wife. Rahayu, who has received a better education than her mother, actually holds a different view on polygamy. This is, naturally, quite different from Marni's perspective, leaving her stunned and in disbelief.

*Mbah Ibu Bumi Bapa Kuasa! Anakku mau kawin sama suami orang. Duh, Gusti! Ampuni kesalahan anakku ini. Selama hidup aku selalu berhati-hati. Tidak pernah sekali saja aku kepikiran mau menggoda suami orang, apalagi mau kawin sama suami orang. Di Singget ini sundalsundal seperti itu akan jadi omongan sampai mati. Malah sekalian kledek atau sinden, nggak apa-apa, wong itu sudah kerjaannya. Lha sekarang, anakku yang pintar, yang mau jadi sarjana, malah mau kawin sama suami orang.*

"O God Almighty! My child wants to marry another woman's husband. Oh Lord, forgive my child's mistake. Throughout my life, I have always been careful. Never once did it occur to me to seduce another woman's husband, let alone to marry one. In Singget, such whores will be talked about until death. If it were a *kledek* or a *sinden*, that would be understandable, since it is their work. But now, my clever daughter, the one who was to become a scholar, instead wants to marry another woman's husband."

This quote clearly shows how deeply Marni is disappointed with Rahayu. Despite having the chance to pursue higher education, unlike her mother, Rahayu still fell into the practice of polygamy, which harms women. It was especially evident when Rahayu joined the Kyai Hasbi group, known for its religious expertise. After joining a conservative religious group, Rahayu intentionally became the second wife of an Arab man. This incident demonstrates that women with higher education can also be vulnerable to being drawn into polygamy disguised as religious obedience. In terms of gender, polygamy is not a movement promoting gender justice, but a form of gender inequality that men use to practice polygamy. Ultimately, polygamy becomes a normalized practice that is considered acceptable.

*"Laki-laki boleh punya istri lagi, Bu."*

*"Ngawur! Dari mana kamu dapat pikiran kayak begitu? Bertahun-tahun bapakmu gendakan sama kledek, aku diam saja. Asal jangan sampai dia kawin lagi. Jangan sampai dia punya istri lagi. Lha ini kamu malah mau jadi istri simpanan. Malu, Nduk... Malu!"*

*"Bu! Malu itu cuma urusan sama orang lain. Yang penting urusan sama Yang Di Atas. Lha kalau Gusti Allah saja mengizinkan laki-laki beristri menikah lagi, ya kenapa mesti bingung? Yang penting semuanya sah."*

"A man is allowed to take another wife, Mother."

"Nonsense! Where did you get such an idea? For years, your father kept mistresses with *kledek*, and I kept silent as long as he did not marry again. As long as he did not take another wife. And now you want to become a man's kept wife. Shame, my child... Shame!"

"Mother! Shame is only a matter concerning other people. What matters is our relationship with the One Above. If God Himself allows a man who is already married to marry again, then why be troubled? What matters is that everything is lawful."

Driven by a sense of religious duty, Rahayu fails to recognize how harmful polygamy can be to women. As a second wife in Entrok, she demonstrates that even educated women can lose their independence when they conform to patriarchal norms. Rahayu unintentionally falls into a pattern of being seen as a submissive, obedient wife who serves her husband, while he enjoys his power.

The practice of polygamy has social implications, especially the tension among wives. Instead of holding the husband responsible, the wives often turn against each other, blaming and arguing. In Entrok, Marni, Endang, Yu Yem, and Yu Parti argue with each other instead of confronting their husbands.

*Semua harta ini akan dibagi dua. Persis sama rata, untuk kedua anak Teja. Rahayu dan bocah laki-laki itu. Napasku seperti terhenti ketika mendengar itu. Bagaimana mungkin pembagian seperti itu dianggap adil? Siapa yang punya harta ini semua, siapa yang mencarinya dengan susah payah, juga siapa bocah yang tiba-tiba datang hanya untuk minta bagian itu? Meskipun Rahayu anakku, bagaimana mungkin namaku tidak disebut sama sekali dalam urusan harta ini?*

"All this property will be divided into two. Exactly equal, for Teja's two children. Rahayu and that boy." My breath seemed to stop when I heard that. How could such a division be considered fair? Who owned all this property, who had struggled so hard to earn it, and who was this boy who suddenly appeared only to demand a share? Even though Rahayu was my child, how could my name not be mentioned at all in matters of this property?

Labels like 'first wife', 'second wife', 'legitimate child', and 'other child' become tools that create competition and hierarchy among women. Wives are set against each other, while the husband enjoys the power and privilege of having two wives. One of the rivalries shown in Entrok is the fight over the inheritance or property left by the husband. Marni, who lives alone after Teja's death, has her property threatened by the second wife (who is not legally recognized). However, upon closer examination, Teja was not the family's primary breadwinner during his lifetime. It appears that Marni was the one who generated the family's wealth. Because of this, Marni felt threatened. This highlights a patriarchal reality where the rights of wives are often ignored or weakened in polygamy. Therefore, Entrok demonstrates that polygamy is not just a "life choice" for some but is strongly connected to a patriarchal culture that places women in vulnerable and threatened positions.

Among the issues shown in Entrok, it is clear that polygamy in a patriarchal culture harms women in all ways. Also, almost all male characters in Entrok are shown as practicing polygamy, including Pak Suyat, who has wives named Yu Parti and Yu Yem; Teja, who takes another wife, Endang Sulastri, along with his wife Marni; Kyai Hasbi, who is said to have three wives; and Rahayu, who becomes her husband's second wife, Amri. Essentially, the practice of polygamy in Entrok reinforces patriarchal norms. The story shows that as long as patriarchy maintains its power through practices like polygamy and husband's infidelity, women's suffering will continue. Through this feminist literary analysis, Entrok effectively highlights that polygamy is a patriarchal legacy that must be dismantled, emphasizing to readers the gender biases rooted in societal norms.

### **Variations in Women's Resistance Based on Education and Social Status**

Women in Entrok, such as Endang Sulastri, Marni, and Rahayu, lived under the New Order regime and had different educational backgrounds. These differences also highlight the various strategies they used to resist. Entrok effectively portrays the contrast between two generations of female characters through their education levels, life experiences, and social statuses. These differences influence their thoughts and actions in challenging gender injustice and polygamy. It becomes clear that there is no single way for women to resist patriarchal culture, as each woman finds her own way to practice resistance.

One such woman is Marni. Marni, a Javanese village woman from the New Order regime, displayed remarkable independence and resourcefulness despite never receiving a formal education. Since childhood, Marni has been depicted as a figure who resisted traditional women's roles. She worked hard in the market, much like the men around her. It is also known that Marni eventually became a moneylender, a type of work considered taboo in her community (Setyorini 2017).

*Simbok mulai mengajakku bekerja. Ia membuka goni yang masih ditali rapat. Mengeluarkan sebagian isi singkong, lalu membaginya kepadaku. Meski belum pernah bekerja di pasar, aku sudah bisa mengupas singkong yang dibawa Simbok ke rumah. Tanpa diajari lagi, aku dan Simbok saling berlomba mengupas singkong sebanyak-banyaknya.*

Simbok began to involve me in work. She opened the tightly tied sack, took out some of the cassava, and handed it to me. Although I had never worked in the market, I already knew how to peel the cassava that Simbok brought home. Simbok and I competed to peel as much cassava as possible without further instruction.

Although traditional women were often confined to domestic duties and stayed home, Marni was not. Marni defied the patriarchal pattern that limited women to the domestic sphere. Following her mother's footsteps, she ventured out to the market, striving to become a skilled and reliable worker to eventually earn her income.

*Ibu tak lagi hanya meminjamkan ketika ada orang yang memaksa berutang. Dia terang-terangan menawarkan pinjaman uang pada semua orang, sebagaimana dia menawarkan barang dagangan. Pedagang-pedagang di Pasar Ngranget menjadi langganannya. Sekarang, Ibu dan Bapak berangkat ke pasar bukan hanya untuk kulakan barang, tapi untuk mengambil cicilan dari pedagang-pedagang yang meminjam uang Ibu.*

Mother no longer lent money only when someone insisted on borrowing. She openly offered loans to everyone, just as she offered her merchandise. The traders in Pasar Ngranget became her regular clients. Now, Mother and Father went to the market to purchase goods and collect installments from the traders who had borrowed money from her.

Over time, Marni's persistence in establishing herself in the market paid off, and she gradually expanded into a more profitable business, becoming a moneylender. This marked the beginning of her socio-economic rise, as many market traders depended on Marni's loans. However, Marni's economic progress did not free her from the patriarchal system. The state apparatus, controlled by men at that time, misused its authority to exploit women like Marni who sought justice. A telling incident was when Endang Sulastri, Teja's mistress and Marni's husband's lover, claimed Teja's inheritance from Marni. Despite her economic power, Marni was ultimately weakened by the authority of the state system.

*Masalah Endang Sulastri telah selesai. Sesuai janjiku, seperempat hartaku menjadi milik Sumadi. Ya, komandan itu menjadi kaya mendadak. Setelah mendapat satu hektar sawahku, sekarang ia mendapat lagi tanah dan setumpuk kayu jati, yang nilainya sama dengan seperempat dari yang kupunyai.*

The matter of Endang Sulastri was settled. In accordance with my promise, a quarter of my wealth became Sumadi's. Yes, that commander suddenly became rich. After obtaining one hectare of my rice field, he received more land and a pile of teak wood, equal to a quarter of what I possessed.

During the New Order regime, men dominated the legal system and bureaucracy, leaving Marni with little choice but to rely on money and negotiation skills to stand up to them. However, Marni showed remarkable persistence and a strong personality in resisting this dominance. A telling example is when she convinced herself that her wealth was entirely her own, since it was only through her efforts that she had accumulated it. At the time, Teja was little more than a servant, accompanying Marni here and there. As a result, Marni had the confidence to confront Endang Sulastri and defend her property interests.

*Akan kukejar keadilan sampai ke mana pun. Orang paling bodoh saja tahu harta yang kukumpulkan dengan susah payah itu semuanya milikku. Lha bagaimana ceritanya, orang yang sama sekali tidak kukenal sekarang akan mendapatkan seboro dari hartaku ini? Dan bagaimana bisa aku yang mencari semuanya malah tidak mendapat apa-apa?*

I will pursue justice wherever it may lead. Even the most foolish person knows that all the wealth I painstakingly gathered belongs to me. How could someone I do not know at all now receive half of my property? And how could I, who earned everything, end up with nothing?

Although Marni never received a formal education, she never gave up and accepted her lot in life. She was willing to stand up for her rights and dignity. Growing up with a tough and harsh background, Marni represented the grassroots women's resistance, a form of struggle that arose from instinct, was practical, and was unafraid to challenge norms for personal justice.

The second is Rahayu. Unlike Marni, Rahayu had a more complex form of resistance. Rahayu was the epitome of an educated woman who pursued education up to university. Rahayu opposed the outdated or harmful norms practiced by her mother, Marni. Her formal education and religious experiences shaped an ideological perspective that was different from Marni's. One example of this is when Rahayu rejected her mother's belief in ancestral spirits (animism).

*Di depan kelas dia berkata, ibuku tak beragama. Ibuku sirik. Masih menyembah leluhur, memberi makan setan setiap hari.*

*Setelah mendapat doktrin agama di sekolah, Rahayu melihat ritual Marni (menyembah arwah leluhur, menyediakan sesajen) sebagai perbuatan syirik dan dosa besar. Alih-alih memahami konteks tradisi ibunya, Rahayu justru mengutuk dan menjauhi Marni karena dianggap kafir.*

*Aku membenci Ibu. Dia orang berdosa.*

*Aku membenci Ibu. Kata orang, dia memelihara tuyul.*

*Aku membenci Ibu, karena dia menyembah leluhur.*

*Aku malu, Ibu.*

*Aku tak pernah lagi berdoa di bawah pohon asem saat te ngah malam. Aku juga selalu menolak makan panggang dan tumpeng yang dibuat untuk selamatan. Ibu tak pernah lagi membangunkanku saat tengah malam. Aku tahu Ibu marah, tapi kami tak pernah membicarakannya.*

In front of the class, she said, My mother has no religion. My mother is heretical. She still worships the ancestors, feeding demons every day.

After receiving religious doctrine at school, Rahayu came to view Marni's rituals (worshiping ancestral spirits, providing offerings) as acts of *shirk* and grave sin. Instead of understanding the context of her mother's tradition, Rahayu condemned and distanced herself from Marni, whom she regarded as an infidel.

I hated Mother. She was a sinner.

I hated Mother. People said she kept a *tuyul*.

I hated Mother because she worshiped the ancestors.

I was ashamed, Mother.

I never again prayed beneath the tamarind tree at midnight. I always refused to eat the roasted meat and *tumpeng* prepared for the *selamatan*. Mother never again woke me in the middle of the night. I knew Mother was angry, but we never spoke about it.

For Rahayu, rejecting her mother's spiritual teachings was a matter of principle. She believed her mother's practices couldn't be rationalized and felt she had to let them go. At that time, they no longer aligned with her life. In Rahayu's mind, her mother's actions were misguided and needed correction. This attitude deeply affected her mother, causing her pain and feelings of being unappreciated.

*Anakku sekolah tinggi sekali, pintar, tapi kok begitu bodoh. Bagaimana ibunya yang tidak pernah sekolah ini tahu tentang Gusti Allah, hafal doa-doa Arab itu, lha wong tahu saja tidak? Masa aku yang sejak kecil diajari nyuwun pada Mbah Ibu Bumi Bapa Kuasa tiba-tiba harus menghentikan semuanya. Ealah... Nduk, sekolah kok malah membuatmu tidak menjadi manusia.*

My child has gone to the highest schools, so clever, yet so foolish. How could a mother who never went to school know about God, know by heart those Arabic prayers, when she never even learned them? How could I, who was taught to pray to *Mbah Ibu Bumi Bapa Kuasa* since childhood, suddenly be expected to stop it all? Oh, child... schooling has instead made you less of a human being.

Her criticism highlights Marni's opinion that higher education doesn't always lead to individuals with empathy. To Marni, Rahayu's actions showed a lack of compassion, even toward her mother, and were driven by arbitrary judgments. There was a clear conflict between traditional values and modern ones in education.

*Bersama tiga orang itu aku pergi ke Semarang. Sepanjang jalan, Kyai Hasbi menceritakan apa yang telah terjadi pada Rahayu. Semua cerita itu kudengar begitu saja. Waduk. Tentara. Negara. Hak. Aku tak peduli. Yang jelas anakku sekarang ada di penjara. Sudah tiga tahun dia hidup di dalam sana.*

Together with those three people, I went to Semarang. Along the way, Kyai Hasbi told me what had happened to Rahayu. I listened to all those stories passively. A dam. Soldiers. The State. Rights. I did not care. What was clear was that my child was now in prison. She had been living in there for three years.

This realization convinced Marni, as she learned that Rahayu had been imprisoned because of her reckless actions and thoughts. Rahayu had been jailed for joining Kyai Hasbi and his group in defending villagers whose land had been taken by the government, as seen in the Kedung Ombo Dam case. She even challenged the authorities in heated debates and organized protests among the villagers. Unlike her mother, who used economic power to win, Rahayu stood up to the authorities with her ideals. Her resistance showed her idealistic side as an educated woman, using her voice and knowledge to fight against larger injustices, beyond personal gain. Rahayu did not rely on socio-economic power like her mother, Marni.

*Surat itu tiba. Surat pemecatan dari rektorat. Amri dipecat sebagai dosen. Aku, Iman, dan Arini dikeluarkan sebagai mahasiswa. Kami dianggap telah menyebabkan terjadinya kerusuhan. Tak ada sedikit pun yang menyenggung tentang peristiwa di Kali Manggis atau kematian Mehong. Taufik juga dipecat dari pekerjaannya. Dia dituduh mengarang berita. Kami orang-orang kalah.*

The letter arrived. A dismissal letter from the rectorate. Amri was dismissed as a lecturer. Iman, Arini, and I were expelled as students. We were deemed responsible for causing the unrest. Not a single word mentioned the incident at Kali Manggis or the death of Mehong. Taufik was also dismissed from his job. He was accused of fabricating the news. We were the defeated.

For Rahayu, there was a painful irony at play. While Marni secured her rights through social and economic influence, Rahayu became trapped and victimized. The price Rahayu paid was high. She was expelled from university because of her activities, her activist husband Amri was dismissed and later shot dead, and finally, Rahayu herself was arrested and imprisoned by the New Order regime for being considered subversive.

A comparison of these two contrasting female characters shows that a woman's social and economic power influences how she approaches resistance. Marni, who ultimately became wealthy, had the means to resist. She could bribe officials and felt empowered because of her financial security. Conversely, Rahayu lost out.

The third example is Endang Sulastri. Like Rahayu, Endang Sulastri also experienced a series of losses. First, she was widowed after her husband Teja died. Second, her child was not legally recognized because there was no official marriage certificate, since their marriage was private. Third, Endang Sulastri received none of her husband's inheritance. She lost everything because she lacked a legal identity as a second wife.

*"Setelah dipelajari lagi, ternyata ada yang salah dalam pembagian kemarin. Aturannya tidak seperti itu. Saya yang salah," kata Pak Lurah membuka pertemuan hari itu. Lalu dia memberikan penjelasan panjang sesuai kebenaran baru yang telah dia dapatkan.*

*Semuanya harta itu menjadi milikku dan Rahayu. Katanya, Endang dan Teja tidak pernah punya surat kawin. Anak itu tidak jelas anak siapa. Dalam hati aku tertawa. Bahkan hingga saat ini aku tak pernah tahu surat kawin itu apa. Ternyata adat, aturan, keadilan bisa diatur dengan gampang kalau kita punya uang, punya kenalan yang berseragam dan memegang senjata. Harga diriku telah kembali dengan memberikan seperempat harta ini.*

After reviewing it again, it turned out that there was an error in the previous division. The rules were not like that. It was my mistake," said the village head as he opened the meeting that day. Then he gave a long explanation in accordance with the new version of the truth he had obtained.

All of that property became mine and Rahayu's. They said Endang and Teja never had a marriage certificate. That child's parentage was unclear. In my heart, I laughed. Even until now, I have never known what a marriage certificate is. It turned out that customs, rules, and justice could easily be manipulated if one had money, acquaintances in uniform, and those who held weapons. Giving away a quarter of this property restored my dignity.

Endang's failure shows that women from lower social classes often find their resistance crushed without support from power or wealth. As explained above, Entrok presents a range of women's resistance strategies, from direct and independent resistance (Marni) to ideological or political resistance (Rahayu) and covert resistance or resistance forced into representation (Endang). A woman's educational background and social status significantly impact the form and effectiveness of her resistance. Entrok conveys the message that women's struggles against patriarchy are not uniform. Women use different means according to their abilities and circumstances, some through economic independence and others through education and activism.

### **Gender Equality and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**

Depicting polygamy in Entrok not just criticizes society of its time but also makes a significant contribution to the ongoing discussion on gender equality, which remains very relevant today. The novel's exploration of gender equality is shown through various representations of women's resistance to polygamy, their struggles within a patriarchal society, and their lived experiences during the New Order regime. The book conveys numerous lessons on gender equality,

addressing issues such as polygamy, domestic violence, and state oppression of women. This literary work enriches the public discussion of gender inequality issues in Indonesia through Indonesian literature. Globally, this aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially Goal 5: Gender Equality. As a global initiative, SDG 5 aims to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, including eliminating all forms of discrimination and violence against women. Through its compelling narrative, Entrok contributes to this worldwide effort by highlighting the severity of patriarchy, which must be challenged and changed to attain equality.

First, Entrok illustrates how patriarchal practices like polygamy, early marriage, and gender-based violence create significant obstacles to women's rights. The stories of Yu Yem, Yu Parti, Endang Sulastri, Marni, and Rahayu offer empathetic insights into women who are polygamized and harmed, making abstract issues in legal debates more immediate and tangible. In the polygamy conflict within Marni and Teja's household, involving Endang Sulastri, readers are encouraged to consider the struggles of women whose economic rights are compromised by polygynous marriage. The financial disadvantages faced by women are one of the issues targeted for elimination under SDG indicator 5.3, which calls for the eradication of harmful practices such as child marriage, forced marriage, and all forms of discrimination against women (polygamy is considered a risky practice due to the injustice it often involves, especially toward its victims, predominantly women). Although Entrok does not explicitly mention the SDGs, its moral message aligns with these goals' spirit, emphasizing that cultures and traditions that harm women must be changed if society is to move toward equality.

Second, women's resistance to polygamy is often expressed through economic power. Providing equal economic opportunities for men and women significantly influences the ways women resist. This is exemplified by the character Marni, who is depicted as a strong and independent woman despite never having received formal education and being illiterate. Nevertheless, she managed to overcome poverty and stand against injustice. This demonstrates that women's resistance can arise from different sources, including economic strength or financial independence, rather than solely education. This supports SDG indicator 5. a: "Take measures to ensure women have equal access to economic resources, including ownership and control over land and other property, financial services, inheritance, and natural resources, in accordance with national laws."

Third, Rahayu's form of resistance emphasizes education as the main source of strength that can demonstrate the presence of empowered women. The need for education goes beyond academic achievement to mental and social empowerment, aligning with SDG indicator 5.c, which states: "Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels." A holistic approach to women's empowerment, covering both academic and ideological aspects, can serve as a foundation for resisting oppression in various forms. Rahayu's example demonstrates that failing to combine academic intelligence with broader social effectiveness can limit one's ability to oppose oppression.

Overall, Entrok's portrayal of polygamy and women's resistance significantly contributes to the discourse on gender equality in Indonesia. Furthermore, Entrok acts as a powerful reflection that highlights the historical context of patriarchal culture, which continues beyond the New Order era and into today's world. Therefore, it can be argued that Entrok supports the goals of SDG 5 indicators, especially in raising awareness of gender injustice and promoting women's rights.

## CONCLUSION

Entrok portrays polygamy as a tool of patriarchal power under the New Order regime, where religious and traditional justifications are used to reinforce male dominance. This study shows that female characters respond in different ways or demonstrate forms of resistance to their husbands' polygamous practices. Yu Yem, Yu Parti, Endang Sulastri, Marni, and Rahayu display distinct resistance due to their varied life experiences, education levels, economic circumstances, and social backgrounds.

Character Marni, who was uneducated and illiterate, strongly rejected polygamy and chose economic independence as a way to challenge patriarchy. Similarly, characters Yu Yem and Yu Parti lacked access to proper education. At first, they argued and blamed each other, but eventually they quietly reconciled and continued with their lives by working and earning money in the market. In contrast, educated character Rahayu accepted her role as a second wife, citing religious legitimacy. A different situation is seen in Endang Sulastri, who was made a victim of her husband's secret polygamy. The absence of an official marriage certificate left her to bear social and financial burdens. She was denied inheritance for her child and could not provide a legitimate identity for her child. These different responses demonstrate how patriarchal ideology and socio-economic class factors influence women's ability to resist gender injustice in their lives.

By applying feminist literary criticism and Marxist feminism, this study highlights the link between patriarchal ideology and economic control in polygamy. The feminist perspective shows how gender injustice and women's resistance are portrayed through the stories of female characters. Using Marxist feminism, the study uncovers how class and economic disparities strengthen the grip of patriarchal power, illustrated through different levels of economy, social status, and education. Combining these viewpoints, the study presents a broader understanding that polygamy is not only a form of ideological violence against women but also a way for men to accumulate power. Entrok becomes a literary document that offers an imaginative history of the New Order regime, serving as a social critique that can challenge patriarchal traditions and enhance the discussion of gender equality in modern Indonesia. Consequently, this study supports efforts to promote gender equality (SDG 5) by critically examining cultural practices that oppress women.

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