



The Culture of Intermarriage in the Novel *Perempuan Yang Menangis Kepada Bulan Hitam*: A Study of Kate Millett's Radical Feminism

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the cultural practice of marriage by capture as represented in Dian Purnomo's novel *Perempuan yang Menangis kepada Bulan Hitam* through the perspective of radical feminism as proposed by Kate Millett. The main focus of this study is to reveal how the culture reflects gender injustice and reinforces patriarchal structures within society. The approach employed in this research is descriptive analytical, with data collection techniques carried out through close reading and documentation of relevant quotations from the novel as the primary data source. The findings reveal that the practice of marriage by capture in the novel is not only depicted as a customary ritual, but also as an instrument of domination that perpetuates various forms of oppression against women. The identified forms of gender injustice include abduction, forced marriage without consent, sexual violence, social subordination, and prolonged psychological burdens experienced by female victims. Furthermore, the patriarchal system appears strongly embedded in the social structure portrayed, where men occupy superior positions and hold the authority to determine women's fate in the name of custom and tradition. By employing Kate Millett's radical feminist theoretical framework, this study concludes that the culture of marriage by capture is a tangible manifestation of systematic patriarchal domination, which consciously or unconsciously restricts women's mobility, autonomy, and fundamental rights. This study is expected to make a critical contribution to discourses on gender equality and serve as reflective material for readers regarding the destructive impacts of traditions that are not aligned with the values of social justice. Overall, these findings affirm that the novel functions not only as a work of literature, but also as a social critique against cultural practices that are detrimental to women.

Keywords : culture of intermarriage, novel, radical feminism

Budaya Kawin Tangkap dalam Novel *Perempuan Yang Menangis Kepada Bulan Hitam*: Kajian Feminisme Radikal Kate Millett

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengkaji praktik budaya kawin tangkap yang direpresentasikan dalam novel *Perempuan yang Menangis kepada Bulan Hitam* karya Dian Purnomo melalui perspektif feminisme radikal yang dikemukakan oleh Kate Millett. Fokus utama kajian ini adalah mengungkap bagaimana budaya tersebut merefleksikan ketidakadilan gender serta memperkuat struktur patriarki dalam kehidupan masyarakat. Pendekatan yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah deskriptif analitis, dengan teknik pengumpulan data melalui pembacaan cermat dan pencatatan kutipan-kutipan relevan dari teks novel sebagai sumber data primer. Hasil analisis menunjukkan bahwa praktik kawin tangkap dalam novel tidak hanya digambarkan sebagai ritual adat, tetapi juga sebagai instrumen dominasi yang melanggengkan berbagai bentuk penindasan terhadap perempuan. Bentuk-bentuk ketidakadilan gender yang teridentifikasi meliputi tindakan penculikan, pemaksaan perkawinan tanpa persetujuan, kekerasan seksual, subordinasi sosial, serta beban psikologis yang berkepanjangan bagi korban perempuan. Selain itu, sistem patriarki tampil sangat kuat dalam struktur sosial yang digambarkan, di mana laki-laki menduduki posisi superior dan berhak mengatur nasib perempuan atas nama adat dan tradisi. Dengan menggunakan kerangka teori feminisme radikal Kate Millett, penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa budaya kawin tangkap merupakan manifestasi nyata dari dominasi patriarki yang sistematis, yang secara sadar atau tidak, membatasi ruang gerak, otonomi, dan hak-hak dasar perempuan. Kajian ini diharapkan dapat memberikan kontribusi kritis terhadap wacana kesetaraan gender dan menjadi bahan refleksi bagi pembaca mengenai dampak destruktif dari tradisi yang tidak selaras dengan nilai-nilai keadilan sosial. Secara keseluruhan, temuan ini menegaskan bahwa novel tersebut tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai karya sastra, tetapi juga sebagai kritik sosial terhadap praktik budaya yang merugikan perempuan. Radikal Kate Millett, budaya kawin tangkap merupakan bentuk dominasi patriarki yang membatasi kebebasan dan hak perempuan.

Kata kunci: budaya kawin tangkap, novel, feminisme radikal

Submitted
18/05/2026

Accepted
24/07/2026

Published
27/07/2026

Citation	Kadir, H., Suleman, R., Husain, K., Tonuo, A., Unusa, F. R., Djafar, R. Y. (2026). The Culture of Intermarriage in the Novel <i>Perempuan Yang Menangis Kepada Bulan Hitam</i> : A Study of Kate Millett's Radical Feminism. <i>Jurnal Pembelajaran Bahasa dan Sastra</i> , Volume 5, Nomor 4, Juli 2026, 3349-3356. DOI: https://doi.org/10.55909/jpbs.v5i4.1555
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Publisher
Raja Zulkarnain Education Foundation

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Juli 2026, 3349-3356

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INTRODUCTION

Each region has distinctive cultures that differ from one another. According to D. Kleden (2017:625), one cultural heritage that continues to be practiced today is the tradition of proposing to women as part of the marriage process. On Sumba Island, in the Province of East Nusa Tenggara (NTT), there are various forms of customary marriage that have been passed down from generation to generation and are still practiced by the community. These forms of marriage include conventional marriage that follows customary stages, Kona (levirate marriage), Kako Ndona (elopement marriage), Wenda Mawine (bride kidnapping), angu marriage (uxorilocal marriage, in which the husband joins the wife's family), and ailana kalaki lede (marriage between two people who are still related by blood). Among these forms of marriage, the practice of bride kidnapping has attracted significant attention because it has sparked controversy and opposition from various groups.

This phenomenon cannot be separated from patriarchal and patrilineal cultural views that position women as part of the property of a particular family or group. In a cultural context, women's identities and positions are shaped by the values and norms prevailing in society. Culture serves as the foundation for people to live and develop themselves based on socially established agreements. Like men, women are also products of cultural construction that influences how they behave and express themselves. When women act outside prevailing cultural norms, they often face social stigma, exclusion, and are even considered immoral. Meanwhile, Koentjaraningrat (Iswantoro, 2018:4) explains that cultural richness is a characteristic of a region or ethnic group that possesses high value and produces unique cultural elements distinct from other cultures.

Based on the view of Luxemburg (Arifudin & Susanto, 2020:124), literature is essentially a reflection of the social conditions that exist within society. Literature becomes a form of artistic expression that functions to record and convey

various phenomena that arise in social life. Authors or poets generally construct fictional stories such as short stories, novels, and dramas based on real issues originating from everyday life experiences. Through literary works, readers are able to revisit various events and social, cultural, and political phenomena that have occurred in society at certain times. In the process of creating literature, authors capture various social symptoms occurring around them, which then become sources of inspiration for their works. All social phenomena and societal problems are raised as objects within the literary world. Literature can therefore be viewed as a social indicator that reflects life. In other words, literature makes use of realities that occur within society. Consequently, the social environment surrounding the author greatly influences the creation of a literary work.

Based on the explanation of Mutaqqim (2003:13), etymologically, the term feminism derives from the Latin word *femina*, which in English becomes feminine, meaning possessing characteristics typically associated with women. When combined with the suffix “-ism,” the term refers to an ideology or system of thought. The feminist movement itself can be understood as an awareness of discriminatory treatment, injustice, and the subordinate position of women, followed by efforts to change these conditions toward a more just social order. Meanwhile, Rokhmansyah (2016:37) states that feminism and its advocates, called feminists, constitute a women's movement that fights for emancipation, equality, and justice of rights with men.

According to Ratna (2004:219), feminist theory contains two main concepts, namely emancipation and gender. Emancipation derives from the Latin term *emancipatio*, which refers to equality of rights in all aspects of life. Meanwhile, gender is understood as the opposite of biological sex. The core issue in feminism and gender studies is the question of equal rights. Gender is psychological and cultural in nature, concerning the differences between masculinity and femininity, whereas sex is physiological or natural,



distinguishing men from women. From a feminist perspective, women possess their own abilities and initiatives to fight for their rights and interests through various forms of action (Rokhmansyah, 2014:130). One influential feminist movement is radical feminism proposed by Kate Millett. This school of thought is based on a political structuralist approach. Radical feminism departs from the assumption that relationships between individuals and groups are fundamentally relations of domination and power control.

According to the views of Kate Millett as cited by Damayanti et al. (2024:280), in order to dismantle male domination over women, both men and women are required to eliminate the primary gender characteristics attached to their status and roles as regulated within the patriarchal system. Millett's theory encompasses eight concepts: (1) Ideological: concerning the formation of roles, inherent traits, and the positions of women and men. (2) Biological: related to sexual politics that exploit biological differences between the sexes, in which biology is viewed as the basis for understanding sex as a cultural and social construct that can be changed. (3) Sociological: associated with the process of patriarchal socialization beginning within the family and extending into society. (4) Class: in this context, social class places women in a lower position than men regardless of their class background and often creates conflict among women themselves. (5) Economy and Education: including the burden of domestic labor imposed on women, the assumption that women are unfit for the public sphere, the absence of wages, exploitation, and discrimination. Women are positioned at lower levels within economic and educational specialization. (6) Force: concerning legal pressure through threats as well as informal pressure through domestic violence and rape. (7) Myth and Religion: related to beliefs and religious teachings that often become sources of suffering for women. (8) Psychological: connected to feelings of inferiority that men exploit to control women. Patriarchy becomes a powerful

psychological weapon to restrain and influence women, both directly and indirectly.

According to Rokhimah (2014:133), gender inequality remains a significant issue within Indonesian culture, as is also the case in many other developing countries. Patriarchal culture continues to strongly influence social, political, economic, and cultural life. Women are often placed in unequal positions, experiencing subordination, inequality, and the loss of rights and freedom in determining their own lives. As a result, women frequently face various forms of exploitation and violence, both within the domestic sphere and in public spaces.

According to Sakina (2017:72), patriarchal culture continues to persist and develop within society despite the ongoing efforts of feminist movements and women's rights activists to fight for equality and the fulfillment of women's rights. Patriarchal systems can be found in various aspects of life, ranging from domestic, economic, and political spheres to cultural domains. The existence of this culture has given rise to numerous social problems that are still widely found in Indonesia. From the perspective of the system blame approach, the problems that emerge are viewed as consequences of a social system that does not function according to society's expectations. Various cases related to patriarchal culture, such as domestic violence, sexual harassment, early marriage, and the stigma against divorced women, are examples of the impacts of a cultural system that still tolerates such practices. This condition is worsened by a law enforcement system that has not yet been fully effective in preventing and addressing these cases in a sustainable manner.

The novel *Perempuan yang Menangis kepada Bulan Hitam* by Dian Purnomo portrays the lives of Sumbanese women who are born and raised within the tradition and culture of bride kidnapping. The novel specifically tells the story of a woman named Magi Diela, who must confront a fate harsher than coral rock. She is abducted and then subdued like an animal—this marks the beginning of a suffering she never chose. Her

dream of developing Sumba so that its people could be free in both mind and body vanishes instantly under the force of a blind tradition. Magi fights not just one enemy, but three: her parents, who should have protected her; the entire village, which becomes a silent executioner; and tradition itself, transformed into invisible bars imprisoning her life. She is a woman struggling within the confines of culture, while her soul cries out to the black moon, a silent witness to every tear that is never recognized as resistance. In the suffocating silence, Magi realizes that she must choose her own hell: leaving behind her homeland and parents forever, surrendering her body and destiny to a womanizing man driven only by power, or deceiving death itself by biting the veins in her wrists in the hope of meeting her God directly—three choices, three forms of hell. None of these choices could ever be fair for a woman who only longs to be free.

The focus of this study includes: (1) how the culture of bride kidnapping is viewed from the perspective of gender injustice in the novel *Perempuan yang Menangis kepada Bulan Hitam* by Dian Purnomo; and (2) how the culture of bride kidnapping is viewed from the perspective of patriarchy in the same novel.

METHOD

This study employs a descriptive-analytical method. Razak (2017:176), Yuliani (2018:85), mentions that descriptive methods are commonly used in various social research in various fields of literary studies.

The source of the research data is the novel *Perempuan yang Menangis kepada Bulan Hitam* by Dian Purnomo, published by Gramedia Pustaka Utama in 2020, consisting of 320 pages. The research data consist of quotations from the novel that are relevant to the focus of the study. Data were collected through reading and note-taking techniques by identifying sections related to the research problems. Data analysis was carried out through several stages: (1) reading the novel thoroughly to understand the plot and content of

the story; (2) classifying the data based on aspects of gender injustice and patriarchal culture found within the practice of bride kidnapping; (3) describing the classified data according to the focus of the study; (4) analyzing the data using the radical feminist approach proposed by Kate Millett; (5) interpreting the meaning of the data based on the context of the story in the novel; and (6) drawing conclusions regarding the representation of bride kidnapping culture based on the results of the analysis conducted.

RESULTS

1. The Culture of Capture Marriage: A Look at Gender Injustice

The results of this study indicate that the practice of capture marriage in the novel depicts various forms of gender injustice experienced by female characters, particularly Magi. These injustices include the subordination of women, sexual violence, forced marriage, and psychological pressure stemming from patriarchal culture. The forms of gender injustice present in the novel can be seen in the following quote:

Data 1:

"If Tamo continues to fight, Tamo himself will be the one hurt. We are women. Give in, that's enough. Even if we fight, we will lose." (Purnomo, 2020: 57)

The quote above demonstrates the gender injustice experienced by women in the culture of capture marriage. Tamo believes that women lack the power to challenge traditions dominated by men and customs. Women are positioned as those who must give in and accept the situation, even if it is detrimental to themselves. This demonstrates the subordination of women in a patriarchal society.

Data 2:

"She was raped while unconscious and is now forced to marry her rapist." (Purnomo, 2020:52)

This quote demonstrates a clear form of gender inequality, namely sexual violence against women. Magi was raped while unconscious and then forced to marry the perpetrator. The woman



was denied the opportunity to seek justice for the violence she experienced.

Data 3:

"I want to be a wife. I have no other ill intentions. So, be quiet and be a good wife to me." (Purnomo, 2020:53)

This quote demonstrates gender inequality against women. Leba Ali unilaterally determined that Magi should be his wife without considering Magi's consent and feelings. Women are positioned as those who lack the freedom to make their own life choices, especially in choosing a partner.

Data 4:

"I will not marry the man who kidnapped me." (Purnomo, 2020:51)

This quote demonstrates the gender inequality experienced by Magi. Magi are not given the right to make their own life choices, especially in choosing a partner. In the culture of marriage by capture, women are positioned as objects that can be taken and forced into marriage without their consent. Magi's refusal demonstrates her refusal to accept the abduction carried out in the name of custom.

Data 5:

"If you don't want to marry Leba Ali, no other man will." (Purnomo, 2021:51)

The quote above demonstrates a form of subordination towards women. Magi are considered worthless if they reject the men who kidnap them. Women are placed in a lowly position, as if their lives depend on the acceptance of men. This statement demonstrates the social pressure on women to continue following the tradition of marriage by capture.

2. The Culture of Marriage

The research results show that the culture of marriage by capture in the novel is influenced by a strong patriarchal system. This system is evident through male dominance in decision-making, control over women's bodies, and the legitimacy of customs that justify acts of violence against women. The forms of patriarchal practices that

emerge in the culture of marriage by capture in the novel can be found in the following quotes.

Data 1:

"The man's family who disagrees on the amount of the dowry may kidnap or capture the woman." (Purnomo, 2020: 83)

This quote demonstrates the patriarchal culture within the tradition of marriage by capture, which positions women as objects in customary dispute resolution. Women are denied the right to make their own choices, as decisions rest entirely with men and their families. In this quote, women are treated as mere instruments for resolving customary disputes, thus denying their rights and freedoms.

Data 2:

"Did they know that Magi was kidnapped and forced into a forced marriage?" (Purnomo, 2020:61)

This quote demonstrates a patriarchal culture that views women as objects who can be forced into marriage without their consent. Women do not have full rights to choose their own life partners.

Data 3:

"Leba Ali was not detained because of her connections with insiders." (Purnomo, 2020:83)

This quote demonstrates the dominance of men within a patriarchal system, supported by social and political power. Leba Ali is portrayed as a man with significant influence in society, so his acts of violence against women are not immediately prosecuted by law. Leba Ali's social position allows her to receive preferential treatment compared to other female victims who suffer as a result of the marriage-by-capture tradition.

Data 4

"Not only will she be married by kidnapping, she will also become a second wife..." (Purnomo, 2020: 59)

This quote demonstrates male dominance in the marriage-by-capture tradition. Women are not only forced to marry, but also have to accept the possibility of becoming second wives. Women's positions are weakened because men have greater freedom to determine their marital relationships.

Data 5:

"Her memories drifted to Ina Rade, her little mother, who was also married in this way." (Purnomo, 2021: 61)

This quote demonstrates that the marriage-by-capture tradition is passed down through generations in a patriarchal society. Women from previous generations also experienced similar treatment, thus continuing to be considered normal.

DICUSSION

The discussion in this study focuses on the analysis of the culture of capture marriage depicted in the novel "Women Who Cry to the Black Moon" by Dian Purnomo. The analysis is conducted using a radical feminist perspective, specifically the patriarchal theory proposed by Kate Millett, and is supported by the views of several other feminist figures.

The Culture of Capture Marriage: A Review of Gender Injustice

Based on the research results, the culture of capture marriage in the novel "Women Who Cry to the Black Moon" demonstrates various forms of gender injustice against women. This injustice is evident through the subordination of women, sexual violence, forced marriage, and psychological pressure born of patriarchal culture. In Data 1, the character Tamo illustrates that women must give in and accept their circumstances because they are considered powerless to challenge customs and male power. This condition demonstrates the subordination of women in a patriarchal society. According to Kate Millett's radical feminist theory, this is a sociological concept because patriarchal culture is inherited through the family and social environment, thus shaping women to submit to men. This opinion aligns with June Hannam's view that feminism arose as a form of awareness of the inequality and oppression of women in a patriarchal society.

Data 2: Magi was raped while unconscious and then forced to marry the perpetrator. This

incident demonstrates both sexual violence and male domination of women's bodies. According to Kate Millett's theory, this act constitutes coercion because women's bodies are used as objects of male power. This aligns with Adrienne Rich's argument that patriarchy empowers men to control women's bodies and lives.

Data 3: Leba Ali unilaterally decrees that Magi must become his wife. The phrase "so be quiet and be a good wife" indicates that women are expected to obey and not challenge men's decisions. According to Kate Millett, this condition constitutes a form of female subordination within a patriarchal system. Furthermore, Nurjismi explains that gender inequality arises when men's roles are considered more important than women's, thus limiting women's rights and freedoms.

Data 4: Magi's rejection of a "captive marriage" demonstrates women's efforts to defend their rights and freedoms in choosing a life partner. However, patriarchal culture continues to force women to submit to custom. From Kate Millett's perspective, these conditions constitute coercion and ideology, as custom is used to justify male domination over women. June Hannam's perspective also emphasizes that feminism champions women's rights to determine their own paths in life without patriarchal pressure.

Data 5 shows Magi experiencing psychological pressure through the threat that she would not be accepted by other men if she rejected Leba Ali. According to Kate Millett, patriarchy operates not only physically but also psychologically, building fear and dependence on men in women. Adrienne Rich's argument reinforces that patriarchal culture shapes women into feeling dependent on men to maintain their social status.

The Culture of Capture Marriage: A Patriarchal Aspect

Based on research findings, the culture of capture marriage in the novel *Women Who Cry to the Black Moon* demonstrates the strength of a patriarchal system that places men in greater



power than women. This system is evident through male dominance in decision-making, control over women's bodies, forced marriages, and the legitimacy of customs that justify these actions.

In Data 1, the culture of marriage by capture is illustrated by the practice of kidnapping women when the man's family cannot reach an agreement regarding the dowry (*belis*). Women are denied the right to make their own choices, as the decision rests entirely with the man and his family. According to Kate Millett's radical feminist theory, this situation constitutes coercion and ideology, as the kidnapping is carried out for the benefit of the man and is considered normal by society in the name of tradition. Adrienne Rich also argues that patriarchy is a system that controls women's bodies and lives, often positioning them as objects to be manipulated according to men's interests.

Data 2: Magi was kidnapped and forced into a forced marriage without her consent. This situation demonstrates that women do not have full rights to choose their own life partners. According to Kate Millett's theory, this constitutes an ideological concept because society has built the belief that men have greater power than women, including in matters of marriage. June Hannam's opinion reinforces that feminism emerged as a form of resistance against social structures that place women in an unequal position.

Data 3: Leba Ali was not immediately prosecuted because she possessed connections and influence within society. This situation demonstrates male domination, supported by social and political power. According to Kate Millett, this situation encompasses concepts of class and coercion, as men hold a higher position than women, leaving women vulnerable and oppressed. Nurjasmis opinion also explains that gender inequality occurs when men have greater control over power and decision-making, resulting in women experiencing discrimination and difficulty obtaining justice.

Data 4 shows that Magi was not only forced into a marriage through a "capture marriage" but also had to accept the reality of being a second

wife. This situation demonstrates male domination in marital relationships, as women lack the freedom to make their own life choices. According to Kate Millett's theory, this situation is related to biological and psychological concepts, as women's bodies are under patriarchal control, while women experience mental stress due to male domination. Adrienne Rich also argues that patriarchy places men in a dominant position and women are subject to male authority.

Data 5, the experience of Ina Rade, who was also married through a similar method, demonstrates that the culture of "capture marriage" is passed down through generations in society. This tradition persists because it is considered normal and accepted by the social environment. According to Kate Millett's theory, this condition includes sociological concepts, myths, and religion, because customs and traditions are used to maintain male dominance over women from generation to generation. Adrienne Rich's opinion also explains that patriarchal culture persists because it is inherited through a social system that places women in a subordinate position, making oppression of women considered normal in society.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research on the novel *Perempuan yang Menangis kepada Bulan Hitam* by Dian Purnomo, the culture of marriage by capture in the novel shows gender injustice towards women. This injustice is seen through acts of kidnapping, forced marriage, physical violence, sexual violence, threats, and the loss of women's rights to determine their own life choices. The character of Magi is a depiction of women who experience oppression due to a culture that prioritizes male power over women's freedom. In addition, the culture of marriage by capture in the novel also shows the strength of the patriarchal system in society. Men are positioned as those who have the power to regulate women's lives, while women are expected to submit to and accept customary decisions. Based on Kate Millett's radical feminist theory, this condition shows that

patriarchy is a tool of male domination over women, both physically, psychologically, and socially. This novel also critiques traditions that harm women and limit women's rights to determine their own lives.

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