

Two dark stories from rural Indonesia: Comparing the poverty in turah (2016) and siti (2014)

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Abstrak

This paper examines the unsettling stories of poverty from rural Indonesia in two films, Siti (2014) and Turah (2016). The concept of structural poverty enables a thorough analysis of these films' depictions of poverty and the main characters' reactions to the poverty they experience. This paper also employs the concept of gendered poverty to highlight how gender injustice perpetuates the poverty of women, as depicted in the films. Both structural and gendered poverty are propagated by the interpellation of ideological state apparatuses. This paper argues that the poverty of the rural people depicted in both films results from structural engineering by the elite, not from natural or inevitable conditions. This poverty is further intensified by the patriarchal culture of rural communities, which perpetuates gender inequality and results in deeper poverty for women. Every woman in these two films seems to have accepted, or at least resigned herself to, the patriarchal system and the gendered poverty it produces. The sole exception is Siti, who struggles against the double burden of being both housewife and breadwinner, resisting the naturalization of poverty and thereby revealing the role that ideological state apparatuses play in perpetuating oppression in society writ large as well as in individuals' minds and souls.