

Symbolic Violence among Characters in Selected Eka Kurniawan's Works

Christiana Anindya Putri

Sanata Dharma University

e-mail: chr.anindya@gmail.com

<https://doi.org/10.24071/ijels.v6i1.2694>

ABSTRACT

This article explores symbolic violence experienced by men and women in their everyday lives as portrayed in selected Eka Kurniawan's works: *Beauty is a Wound* (2016), *Man Tiger* (2015), and *Vengeance is Mine, All Others Pay Cash* (2017). In order to identify the symbolic violence, Pierre Bourdieu's concept of symbolic violence is applied in this research. The finding of this research indicates that symbolic violence experienced by men and women is the result of patriarchal system which is manifested in culture and tradition. This culture and tradition has power to discipline society and it also induces symbolic violence towards society since they are required to follow the patriarchal values or stereotype. The symbolic violence against men and women in selected Kurniawan's works are depicted through arranged marriage, marital rape, women's obligation in domestic domain, and men's sexual performance and masculinity.

Keywords: *patriarchy, symbolic violence, stereotype*

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia can be considered as a country that embraces patriarchal system which can be found in its culture and norms. Patriarchy is a system of social structures and practices that placed men in a dominant position to oppress and exploit women (Walby, 1989, p. 214). In patriarchal societies, power is generally associated with men's property. Patriarchal society also gives absolute priority to men and to some extent limits women's human right (Sultana, 2011, p. 1). Men definitely benefit in all things from patriarchy since it gives privilege to men. Meanwhile, women are kept away from the power system and placed in conditioned of being objectified and oppressed. Women are often considered as an object that depends on man's existence as a subject. Thus, patriarchy system has placed women in the subordinate or inferior position in all fields.

In Indonesia, patriarchal system is even more implanted in daily life since the state also took part in creating ideal construction of women through the notion of *kodrat wanita*. Throughout the twentieth century, the Indonesian state upheld the notion of *kodrat*, or natural destiny, for men and women which projects men as primary income-earners while women as child-bearers and housewives (Blackburn, 2004, p. 11). Besides, women are often demanded to be loyal to the husband and supposed to be an ideal housewife and mother for the family. The state also took part in creating ideal construction of women at that time through *Panca Dharma Wanita* or the Five Duties of Womenly (Suryakusuma, 2011, p. 128). These were duties that had to abide by *Dharma Wanita*, the association of wives of civil servants, the counterpart of *Korpri*, with an organizational structure that parallels that of their husbands. However, it

was also considered to be ideal for all women in the state.

The stereotype of women's role or status and women's ideal characteristic constructed by society has established gender inequality and perpetuated women's subordination. As a result of this, women are often discriminated and put into a restricted life with fewer rights. Apparently, men who are given the absolute priority and privilege also suffer from the stereotypical norms and tradition created by patriarchal system. Men are also harmed by patriarchy in ways that they are required to obtain the ideal masculinity as internalized by society. This certainly has led to symbolic violence since men and women are bounded with patriarchal values that controlling their life. The concept of symbolic violence was firstly coined by Pierre Bourdieu. Symbolic violence is a gentle violence, imperceptible and invisible even to its victims (Bourdieu, 2001, pp. 1-2). Symbolic violence is different from other kinds of violence since its form and effects are subtle and hardly recognized, hence people do not realize that certain act or attitude actually contains symbolic violence.

The practices of symbolic violence are reflected in Eka Kurniawan's, particularly in *Beauty is a Wound* (2016), *Vengeance is Mine, All Others Pay Cash* (2017), and *Man Tiger* (2015). In Kurniawan's works, symbolic violence is depicted through the culture and tradition constructed and acknowledged by society. Society passively accepts these oppressive traditions and they never challenge it because it has passed down from generation to generation. The setting of the time in selected Kurniawan's works used in this research ranges from the late Dutch colonial period until the post-Soeharto period so that several depictions are closely related to patriarchal system which has been implanted in Indonesian society. Thus, it can be said that symbolic violence appears in Kurniawan's works is the result of patriarchal system which is manifested in culture and tradition.

In regard to Kurniawan's works, there are several studies from various points of view and different topics that have been conducted previously. A study on *Beauty is a Wound* argues that the novel represents gender relation dominated by patriarchal power in domestic and public domain (Wiyatmi, 2009). Another study on the same novel analyzes gender and sexuality which are constructed and negotiated in the story using postcolonial approach (Rahayu, 2017). There is also a study on the characteristic of femme fatale portrayed in the women characters (Som & Hasanah, 2017). The novel *Vengeance is Mine, All Others Pay Cash* also used in a study which discusses about the dynamic of masculinity and femininity of a women character (Permata, Priyatna & Rahayu, 2018). The novels are also used in a study that examines violence against women (Prasetyo & Haryadi, 2017). Lastly, there is also a study on Kurniawan's short story which discuss about women resistance portrayed through food, culinary, and kitchen (Rusdiarti, 2019). Based on the list of previous studies, none of them has discussed about symbolic violence among characters in Kurniawan's works. Therefore, this study aims to identify how symbolic violence is represented in Kurniawan's *Beauty is a Wound*, *Vengeance is Mine, All Others Pay Cash*, and *Man Tiger* by applying Bourdieu's concept of symbolic violence.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Symbolic violence is a kind of violence in which the practice is invisible and subtle. In contrast to other kinds of violence of which the form and effects can be clearly recognized, symbolic violence is very smooth and subtle, hence the society may not recognize that there are numerous practices or values in the society that contain symbolic violence. The concept of symbolic violence was proposed by Pierre Bourdieu. According to Bourdieu, symbolic violence is a gentle and imperceptible violence that is hardly recognized even to its

victim (Bourdieu, 2001, pp. 1-2). Symbolic violence is the domination that people maintain in everyday living. Since it is practiced and repeated in everyday life by subject to other subject, people do not realize that certain act or attitude actually contains symbolic violence. Bourdieu states that: symbolic domination is something you absorb like air, something you don't feel pressured by; it is everywhere and nowhere, and to escape from that is very difficult (Grenfell, 2014, p. 192). In other words, symbolic violence occurs when people are unconsciously subjected to various forms of violence. People who experience symbolic violence still think that they are doing things based on their free will while in fact they are unconsciously oppressed and they do not feel it as destruction.

In order to understand the concept of symbolic violence, one should understand the concept of habitus, capital, and *doxa*. Bourdieu defines habitus as set of dispositions that generate practice and perceptions within the original meaning in a normal or typical condition, state, or appearance in the body (Bourdieu, 2003, pp. 14-16). In other words, habitus can be defined as a social structure that is internalized through a gradual process so that it becomes a habit that continues to be realized. Habitus focuses on the way of how people act, think, and be. It also captures how people carry the history from the past into the present circumstances and how people make choices or act in certain ways. Thus, we can simply say that habitus is a set of social values, habits, and skills lived by people, created through a socialization process, and possessed due to people's life experiences. The way people live at any moment is the result of past events that have shaped their path.

In dealing with the social world, individuals are inseparable from human interaction and social space. In order to be eligible or socially acceptable, individuals must have capital to meet their interactions and social spaces with others. Bourdieu does not

merely define capital in the form of material capital but capital as a result of accumulated works. Capital can be understood as an element that is possessed by an individual or certain group in order to achieve their goals and determine their position within a social structure.

Capital is divided into four types which are social capital, economic capital, cultural capital, and symbolic capital. First, social capital refers to a set of actual or potential resources related to mutual networks or relationships. Social capital also refers to resources linked to award and title one may possess. Secondly, economic capital refers to capital in the form of financially based goods or economic resources such as money, stocks and shares, possessions, and property. Thirdly, cultural capital covers the accumulated knowledge, behaviors, and skills of individuals that is managed in order to demonstrate one's social status. It also covers all intellectual qualification from formal education or family inheritance, such as: one's prestige, status, ability, and authority. Lastly is symbolic capital which cannot be separated from symbolic power. Symbolic capital covers accumulated pride, honor or recognition that considered as an essentials source of power.

The concept of *doxa* is applied by Bourdieu in order to explain the practice of symbolic violence within society. According to Bourdieu, *doxa* is the pre-verbal taking-for-granted of the world that flows from practical sense, and it is also the relation of immediate adherence between habitus and field (Bourdieu, 1992, p. 68). In the field, individuals are able to initiate relationship and exchange their accumulated experiences and history or habitus. The accumulated experiences and knowledge of individuals in the field are developed into common sense. This process has changed habitus into *doxa* and *doxa* start to be internalized within individuals when they feel comfortable with the common sense and consider it as natural as well. In this field, *doxa* is implemented in the mind of dominated individuals; hence

they will lose their critical thinking as if there is no oppression since they consider that everything runs logically and naturally. It can also be understood that symbolic violence runs due to the recognition, willingness, and involvement of the dominated. Besides, there is a form of agreement on the viewpoint of dominant group that is subtly implanted. This situation is called as *doxa* by Bourdieu and it is accepted as common truth by those dominated individuals.

Symbolic violence persists because of the approval of society and the ignorance of the dominated party (Haryatmoko, 2010, pp. 128-129). Since it operates in a symbolic principle in the form of language, the ways of thinking, the ways of working and the ways of acting, symbolic violence is known and accepted by both the dominant and the dominated. It is not even felt as a form of violence so that it can run effectively. It also leads to obedience that is not realized as coercion. Symbolic violence is carried out by the mechanism of "hiding violence" and turning it into something that is accepted as something that is natural and supposed to be.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Arranged Marriage

Marriage is commonly understood as a union of two individuals based on romantic or passionate love and agreement between the two spouses who decide to get married in order to legalize the relationship. However, there is a marriage that is done based on negotiation and decision between parents of the two intended spouses which is known as arranged marriage. Arranged marriage can be defined as a marital union in which the intended bride and groom are selected by parents or respected elders (O'Brien, 2008, p. 40). Typically, in arranged marriage, the boys and the girls are told to get married without a right to consent, even if they have never met each other until the wedding day (Broude &

Greene, 1983). However, sometimes, both intended spouses approve the marriage arranged by their parents or elder relatives. Arranged marriage is usually caused by various reasons, such as economic and social factors. In some places whereas arranged marriage has become the tradition, when a girl is already in a certain age, her family starts to keep an eye open for a proper man to be matched with her. The bride's parents usually will scrutinize the background family of the groom in order to know whether their daughter's spouse have a good reputation or not.

The practice of arranged marriage can be found in Kurniawan's *Man Tiger* through the portrayal of Nuraeni who is matched to a young man named Komar by her parents. The arranged marriage is portrayed in the following excerpt.

Komar has married Nuraeni when she was sixteen years old and he was nearly thirty. As was common in the village, the match was an arranged one, and the engagement had lasted for years. On the day Syueb came with a pail full of rice and noodles and a dark blue scarf to ask for her hand in marriage on behalf of Komar, she was a girl whose breasts were only budding and with hair still sparse between her legs. Of course, the two fathers had discussed the matter already, meaning that even this proposal was arranged, a formality. Their father agreed that once Nuraeni was able to bear a child, the two would be married in the nearest surau (Kurniawan, 2015, pp. 89-90)

After failing in looking for job in the big city, Komar comes back home and marries Nuraeni. Both Komar and Nuraeni do not know each other even they do not have any feeling to each other as well, yet their parents have already matched them and arranged their marriage. In the matter of fact she would be matched to Komar, Nuraeni

does not against her parents' will to have an arranged marriage for her.

Arranged marriage portrayed in *Man Tiger* is considered as an ordinary tradition within society. The girls in the society portrayed in *Man Tiger* will wait for the time in which their parents will set them up with men based on their parents' choice. Like every other girl, Nuraeni has been waiting for the moment her father would tell her who she would marry (Kurniawan, 2015, p. 90). Thus, the girls usually will accept their parent's choice for their future husband without opposing their parents' will. Unfortunately, this arranged marriage leads to an unhappy marriage life between the two. Nuraeni often gets physical and sexual violence from her abusive husband although she does not make any mistake.

The practice of arranged marriage that has been rooted in society and acknowledged as a custom actually can be considered as a form of invisible violence. Society accepts and obeys this custom without realizing that they actually experience violence. As a daughter, Nuraeni has been familiar with the long years of arranged marriage custom in her society; hence this custom has been internalized within her. According to Bourdieu, this situation can be called as *doxa*; a discourse that is already acknowledged as a truth and it does not need to be questioned anymore. As previously mentioned in the literature review section, when the individuals already feel comfortable with the truth, the truth itself will be internalized and considered as natural or common matter.

Arranged marriage that has been internalized within society can be considered as symbolic violence since this custom restricts the children's choice of life and repress their freedom. The choice of whether, and whom, to marry is intimately related to self-determination and it has been acknowledged in several key international instruments as a fundamental human right (Dauvergne & Millbank, 2010, p. 58). This

kind of marriage is arranged in order to satisfy the parent's desire without taking the children's feeling into consideration. The parents already have chosen a partner for their son or daughter with certain background that meets their parent's requirements or standard. As the results, there is no contribution in the decision making and no freedom for either the bride or the groom to choose their own future partner since all the things have been set according to the parent's will. In addition, following parents' choice and will is a form of obedience and respect of children toward their parents. Thus, children will likely feel guilty if they do not follow the parents' choice and will. Besides, in the arranged marriage, the intended couples do not have capability to oppose or refuse their parents' will and it is also unacceptable for them to argue.

The practice of arranged marriage in society is not considered as violence since it is delivered in a subtle way as a custom. Thus, society does not realize that actually there is something taken from them, that is their freedom and right to choose future life partner. This custom has been implemented in the mind of society; hence they lose their critical thinking as if there is no oppression since they consider that everything runs logically and naturally. They also lose their idea that as a human they have the right to decide what best and suitable choice is for them freely. The society portrayed in *Man Tiger* live under the custom of arranged marriage and they have no freedom to choose their own choice. Unfortunately, they passively accept that custom without asking why the custom has to be obeyed. In the case of arranged marriage, children are the dominated party because they have the weakest capital than the parents.

In line with Bourdieu's concept of symbolic violence, arranged marriage can be seen as symbolic violence. Society considered both of arranged marriage and child marriage as custom while in fact it is a kind of subtle violence that represses women although it

does not give visible effects or physical impacts to its victim. This violence can grow even subtler when it hides behind power relation; in this case is power relation between parents and children in which parents are considered to have more power than their children. The girls also might not want to do that, but if they refuse it or do not follow their parents' choice, they would have upset and embarrassed their parents.

Arranged marriage portrayed in Kurniawan's works can be considered as an oppressive tradition that devalues women and it can lead to other severe problem such as domestic violence. It can also be said that arranged marriage is the extension of patriarchal agenda that violates the right of women to choose and it makes them as if they do not have alternatives or choices for their life. Unfortunately, women passively accept this oppressive tradition and this custom is never challenged or being unquestioned by society because it has passed down from generation to generation. As a consequence, this oppressive tradition has become a part of the society's life for a long time and internalized within society as well. This oppressive custom can persist due to the approval of society and the ignorance of the dominated party.

Marital Rape

In Kurniawan's selected works, there are numerous portrayals of sexual violence against women; one of them is marital rape. Marital rape is a term used to describe the act of sexual intercourse within legitimate marriage that is done without consent from one spouse. People might think it is impossible for rape to take place within marriage relationship because it is the right of spouses to fulfill their sexual needs. However, if the act of engaging sexual intercourse is obtained by force or violence or without consent, it will be considered as a rape. Unfortunately, marital rape is seen as a taboo topic that society refuses to acknowledge the act as a rape within a legitimate marriage. Moreover, wives who

become the victims of marital rape prefer not to report the violence because they consider sexual intercourse as private matters. This condition shows how society still hold on to the prevailing belief that husbands have control over their wives bodies' and wives have to sexually serve their husband under any circumstances as a compliant act towards husband.

In a patriarchal society, men are addressed as the primary holders of power while women are subordinated and associated with domestic domain (Sultana, 2011). Due to patriarchal system which subordinated women, women are perceived as husband's complement instead of equal partners within marriage. Some husbands believe that the wife has the obligation to fulfill the husband's sexual desire under any circumstances. Since society acknowledge a prevailing belief that women have to serve their husbands whether they want it or not, marital rape which considered as deviant actions will blend into everyday life and it will not be considered a crime. In regards to Bourdieu's concept of symbolic violence, symbolic violence has already taken place at this stage because some women do not realize that they are actually experiencing marital rape due to the prevailing belief that has been internalized. Therefore, they consider the act of sexual intercourse without consent as a reasonable act instead of marital rape which degrading humanity value. Bourdieu also adds that symbolic violence will lead to other types of violence targeting women as the dominated party.

In Kurniawan's selected works, some women are portrayed as sexually submissive and subservient to men. The first book to be discussed in this part is *Man Tiger*, in which Nuraeni often gets marital rape from her abusive husband since the first day of their marriage. Nuraeni lays exhausted in bed, still in her wedding blouse and batik skirt. The lust-ridden Komar invites her to get naked so they can make love, but Nuraeni merely growls, half-awake, remains wrapped-up and defensive. Although

Nuraeni has refused to have sex, Komar continues to force her (Kurniawan, 2015, pp. 102-103). Since the first night of their marriage, Komar engages sexual intercourse without asking Nuraeni's consent and understanding her condition as well. He only fulfills his own lust and sees his wife as his object of sexual desire. Since then, he often forces Nuraeni to have sex with him. This is what has been internalized within our society that forcing a spouse to have sex or doing sexual intercourse without consent is perceived as a reasonable matter and it is not even considered marital rape. In addition, society still puts husband's satisfaction as priority in the relationship. For the majority of Indonesian people, it is impossible for rape to take place within the marriage institution, however some others believe that it possibly occurs (Susila, 2013, p. 319). Since the act of having sexual intercourse without consent is considered as rape, some people insist on Indonesian government to qualify marital rape as violence.

Komar perceives marriage as the legalization for having sexual intercourse with partner so that he often insists Nuraeni to sexually serve him. Komar's habit of forcing his wife to have sex with him does not only happen in the beginning of their marriage but also throughout their marriage life as well. He even forces Nuraeni to have sex by beating and doing other physical violence so that Nuraeni would serve him. Komar's domination towards Nuraeni shows that he cannot control his ego to demand her wife to fulfill his sexual desire. Komar also does not hesitate to beat Nuraeni who does not have enough strength to fight back (Kurniawan, 2015, pp. 103-104). In her marriage, Nuraeni is treated as object to be used and abused by Komar. If Nuraeni does not want to grant her husband wishes, her abusive husband will soon beat her and she does not oppose or resist him although she knows that Komar can threaten her life. She even does not dare to go back to her parents because she is afraid that her parent will be angry. This portrayal proves

that symbolic violence caused by the habitus of patriarchy leads to other kind of violence against women.

In relation to sexual intercourse within marriage, women have the right to refuse their husbands' request to have sex if they do not want to. However, women are afraid to refuse her husbands because they already acknowledge that it is their obligation as wives to serve the husband so they mostly do not resist the violence. Besides, women who become the victims of domestic violence are reluctant to report the violence they experienced in the house because they consider that domestic affair should be kept as it is seen as private matter. This belief acknowledged by women is also included to symbolic violence that makes women always resigned to what their husbands have done to them.

The portrayal of marital rape against woman is also found in Kurniawan's *Beauty is a Wound*. Dewi Ayu's first daughter named Alamanda is forced to marry a Japanese soldier named Shodanco who has raped her. Being married to Shodanco makes Alamanda devastated and she does not want to have sexual relations to Shodanco. Thus, she wears impenetrable underwear made from iron to protect herself and it can only be opened with a mantra that only she knows how to recite. Although she already protects herself, Shodanco still asks Alamanda to make love with him and fondle her by force. For several years, Shodanco is unable to conquer her wife and he cannot have sex with her until one day he manages to attack and kidnap her from the bathroom when she is completely naked with her iron underwear resting on the edge of the tub.

Alamanda lays in bed naked and unconscious after being raped by her husband. Her hands and feet are tied to the four corners of the bed. Alamanda pulls at the ropes binding her, but they are tied so tightly that whatever she does only make her wrists and ankle hurt all the more (Kurniawan, 2015, pp. 230-231). Shodanco

repeatedly forces Alamanda to have sex with him thereafter. The more Alamanda refuses, the more Shodanco gets angry. He will strip her naked and force her to have sex with him.

Both of Nuraeni and Alamanda are the victims of marital rape of their own husband. However, unlike Nuraeni, Alamanda strictly states that she does not want to have sex with Shodanco since the beginning of their marriage. She even tries to protect herself and resist Shodanco's violent behavior although she is raped by her husband in the end. Alamanda shows that she has courage to speak up her voice and strive for her right. Unfortunately, some women do not have courage to be outspoken about how the husband abuse them because of the necessity to maintain the family's dignity. Besides, women are reluctant to not report or be outspoken because they consider sexual intercourse as private matters. Consequently, men can do any sexual violence without worrying of any repercussions.

As previously stated, symbolic violence has occurred because women do not realize that they actually experience marital rape while they consider that they perform their obligation as wives to sexually serve their husbands. Moreover, women do not do any resistance towards marital rape performed by their husbands. The idea comprehended by society that wives have to sexually serve their husband under any circumstances will perpetuate the perception that women are object of men's sexual desire. It will degrade women's value as human beings because their presence is merely seen as objects or property to satisfy and please men. Besides depicting symbolic violence, marital rape also depicts women's failure to be aware of their own autonomy. As mentioned earlier in the previous chapter, a woman is considered to have autonomy of her own body if she is able to take control over herself and make autonomous decision over herself. Unfortunately, some women in Kurniawan's work are not aware of their

own autonomy since they are unable to take control over their bodies.

Women's Obligation in Domestic Domain

The images of men and women in literary works are often based on social construction acknowledged by society. A society embedded with patriarchal ideology usually has a set of idea about how individuals are expected to act and present themselves based on society's expectation related to their gender. Gender is the state of being male or female and it is socially and culturally constructed. Based on *Women's Studies Encyclopedia*, gender is a cultural concept that perpetuates a distinction between females and males in terms of role, behaviors, and mental and emotional characteristic which developed by society (Tierney, 1999, p. 565). Thus, it can be said that gender is a cultural expectation for men and women.

Gender differences create various rules related to gender roles and gender relation within society. People who were born male are often expected to be tenacious, aggressive, curious and ambitious while people who were born female are often expected to be affectionate, obedient, kind and friendly (Eisenstein, 1983, p. 5). Society acknowledges the differences of gender roles between women and men as a result of this gender-based stereotype. Since women have been traditionally considered as being caring and nurturing, they are identical with their social function as dutiful homemakers and housewives in domestic place who have responsibility to take care of the family and household works. Meanwhile, men as the leader of family are placed in public place and they tend to have more power since they are the main breadwinner of the family.

Gender-based stereotype can be a possible reason for gender inequality in society. Gender inequality is a condition in which there is a discrimination against people due to their gender, particularly between men

and women. In patriarchal society, men are given absolute priority and it eventually limits women's human right (Sultana, 2011, p.1). Patriarchal culture also gives authority and domination to men within a family and public space while it gives woman a position as an object that depends on man's existence as a subject. Women are often imprisoned in domestic domain and they do not have chance and role in public domain to influence society. This patriarchy system definitely has placed women in the subordinate or inferior position and it has led to discrimination against women. As a result, women is often treated differently and put into a restricted life with fewer rights.

In selected Kurniawan's works used in this study, there are portrayals of traditional gender roles in which men are portrayed as a leader and breadwinner of the family. Meanwhile, women are imprisoned in domestic domain and do not have equal opportunity to perform their ability or works in public domain. As portrayed in Kurniawan's *Man Tiger*, in Nuraeni's family, men are responsible for farming while women are responsible for doing domestic works. Men tend to do the job or works that needs more strength or power such as cultivating the land while women tend to be assigned to do the household works such as cooking and cleaning the house. After being told to have an arranged marriage by her parents, Nuraeni has no longer helping her father in the rice field. She is assigned to help her mother cooking the dish for the family and back to the rice field only to plant the rice, clear the algae and weeds and cut the rice plants when it comes to harvesting time. Moreover, Nuraeni is asked to mind her looks and be careful with her behavior since she is about to marry a man. Her mother buys her crimson lipstick and an eyebrow pencil and she no longer let her slightly protruding breasts be exposed in the breezy air of the hillside village (Kurniawan, 2015, p. 90).

The distinction of roles has been taught in

the family since Nuraeni is still young and this perception is carried over when she is married with Komar. Thus, the same pattern is also created in her marriage in which husband goes out to work and wife stays at home. After being married with Komar bin Syueb, Nuraeni is assigned to stay at home, take care of the family, and do the household works while Komar is working as a barber. Komar has left his village shortly after turning twenty. He learns how to shave people's heads and chin and becomes a barber. However, he actually does not want to be a barber at all and hopes to get a job at some factory instead, like other young men (Kurniawan, 2015, p. 92). The same condition is also portrayed in Kurniawan's *Beauty is a Wound* whereas Maya Dewi performing her role as an obedient and polite wife. She stays at home and takes care of the family and house like other women typically do. Besides, Maya Dewi also goes to the women's Thursday night prayer meetings and to the *arisan* on Sunday afternoon, socializing and contributing money to the women's lottery pool. She makes her family seem just a little bit civilized, in part by earning a living from her daily work of making cookies with her two mountain-girl helpers (Kurniawan, 2016, p. 367).

Aside from being required to be responsible for domestic works, women are also often being told to behave and present themselves based on society's expectation or the stereotype of women justified by society. As a consequence of gender-based stereotype, some activities or works are often associated to a particular gender. For instance, cooking, dancing, sewing are often assumed as women's typical activity. Besides, some people also quickly assume that teacher, nurse, and are women's occupation while doctor, pilot, and engineer are often assumed as men's occupation. Accordingly, women who do not behave or/and dress properly in ways that are stereotypically based on their gender would likely to be judged or get comments.

In Kurniawan's *Vengeance is Mine, All Others Pay Cash*, gender-based stereotype is also experienced by Iteung, particularly when she asks to get an extra class. When Iteung asks to take an extra class, her father quickly assumes that she wants to learn piano, dancing, flower arranging, or baking (Kurniawan, 2017, p. 142). His assumptions show how women are often associated with hobbies or activities that are typically 'feminine'. The excerpt also shows that it is common for society to distinguish the activities or job based on individuals' gender, whether they are men or women. In relation to occupations, jobs or occupations that need strength and courage such as soldiers or police are often called as masculine jobs while jobs that require accuracy and feelings such as cooking, sewing are called as feminine jobs.

Iteung is portrayed as a tomboy girl who loves to fight since her early appearance in the story. After being sexually abused by her teacher, she enrolls in a martial arts class to learn how to fight. Iteung's mother describes her daughter as a girl who does not like to wear skirt and make up but loves to fight all the time, climbs trees, speed around her motorbike, and hikes up mountains (Kurniawan, 2017, p. 83). Iteung's decision to take martial arts class has made her mother sad and worried seeing her daughter doing the unusual activities for women. Society perceives that fighting, climbing trees, practicing martial arts, and racing are attributes that belong to men because they are seen as part of masculinity. When a woman does not appear to be feminine or being different from the standard or norm, it can be considered as violation towards normativity. Thus, Iteung's mother feels relieved when Iteung gradually changes to be a feminine woman and follows the normative concept of women after she falls in love with Ajo Kawir. Iteung's mother is happy that Ajo Kawir has helped her daughter to become a woman again (Kurniawan, 2017, p. 83). The concern appears from Iteung's mother indicates that traditional gender construction

is still embraced by her mother and society as well. That concern disappears when Iteung finally wears skirt and puts on make-up which has been considered as a feminine attribute.

The excerpts presented in this sub-chapter portray that women in Kurniawan's works are imprisoned in domestic territory and required to present themselves based on society's expectation related to their gender. This gender-based stereotype is generally caused by patriarchal culture and it has been internalized in society. Patriarchal ideology assigns different roles, rights and responsibilities to women and men (Sultana, 2011, p. 5). As a result, division of labor based on sex which does not accommodate equality between men and women is considered as a common or natural thing by society. While men work in public domain, women are often isolated in domestic works by staying at home, taking care of the family and household.

In regards to Bourdieu's concept of symbolic violence, gender-based stereotype which isolates women in domestic domain can be seen as symbolic violence against women since it restricts women's right and freedom. This stereotype which has been acknowledged by society negates women's opportunity to work and perform their ability and interest in public domain. As a result of this restriction, women are discouraged to express and actualize themselves as well. In addition, this stereotype can also be repressive when it is manifested in a way that women are considered to be incapable of jobs or tasks which require a lot of physical strength. Therefore, it is difficult for women to change or erase the construction within society because they do not have opportunity to speak up their voice and take role in public domain.

Unfortunately, women are not aware that they actually experience violence caused by gender-based stereotype. Women are always told about how they should be based on

standard constructed by society. Subsequently, women follow the standard constructed by society and act accordingly in order to be accepted by society. If they deviate or do not act accordingly, they will be considered to violate *kodrat* or women's natural destiny. As a result, women will feel guilty if they do not follow the rigid or traditional gender role or deviate from the standard constructed by society. In addition, the state also takes part in creating ideal construction of women hence the construction is embraced by women themselves. Since it has been implanted for so long, women passively follow this oppressive stereotype. They also consider it as a normal standard in society while in fact it restrains women's freedom and it leads to gender inequality as well. There are many stereotypes ascribed to women that limit their freedom, but ironically women also perpetuate those stereotypes because of lack of awareness of gender equality.

Men's Sexual Performance and Masculinity

In a society that embraces patriarchal culture, women often become the target or victim of symbolic violence. However, men can also become the victim of symbolic violence caused by gender-based stereotype internalized in patriarchal society. As aforementioned, patriarchal society usually has a set of idea about how individuals are expected to act and present themselves based on society's expectation related to their gender. In the life of patriarchal society, men's gender roles are strongly influenced by the ideology of masculinity in which men are often demanded to be strong, firm, and dominant as they are considered as the characteristic of masculinity. Masculinity refers to behaviors, characteristics and roles that usually assigned for men. As gender is socially constructed, masculinity values and its stereotype are also socially constructed as well. When men do not have masculine traits, they are more likely to be considered as unmanly.

In Kurniawan's *Vengeance is Mine, All Others Pay Cash*, Ajo Kawir experiences symbolic violence which caused by stereotype of masculinity uphold by society. In the beginning of the story, it is told that Ajo Kawir cannot get an erection. His sexual dysfunction is not caused by a health problem but an adolescent trauma after witnessing a rape of a lunatic widow done by two police officers. One night, Ajo Kawir's friend named Gecko brings him to spy on a widow named Scarlet Blush when she takes a bath at her home. Instead of watching Scarlet Blush takes a bath, they witness a violent rape committed by police officers. Ajo Kawir is not lucky that he gets caught by the police officers and they even force Ajo Kawir to rape the widow too. However, Ajo Kawir's penis is curled up as small as it could get and the two policemen bursts out laughing, saying the he is an useless kid (Kurniawan, 2017, p. 26) The policemen's reaction shows how men are seen or judged from their virility or sexual ability. Men are considered to be useless individuals when they have erectile dysfunction. Ajo Kawir who is portrayed as a strong man who loves to fight is not spared from the scorn of society due to his erectile dysfunction. This kind of judgment is certainly influenced by social construction of masculinity circulating in the society.

Ajo Kawir is demanded by society's perception that being a man must be able to get an erection. Erection is perceived as a symbol of virility and masculinity of an ideal and real man. Ajo Kawir also admits that one must have an erect penis in order to be considered as a real man. Therefore, he considers himself as a useless individual when the two police officers insult and mock him after seeing his penis is curled up. The projection of masculinity constructed by society is a kind of symbolic violence which is presented in the form of *doxa*. The concept of *doxa* is applied by Bourdieu in order to explain the practice of symbolic violence within society. *Doxa* is created from the accumulated experiences and

knowledge of individuals in the field which are developed into common sense or perspective and internalized within individuals. People will unconsciously believe in certain perspective that they are unable to criticize it. When people feel comfortable with certain perspective, they will glorify it as a truth or consider it as normativity. In regards to Ajo Kawir's context, the society around Ajo Kawir has created doxa with values and normative demands on how to be an ideal man. Ajo Kawir obviously implements the consensus from the society that a man has to have an erect penis if he wants to be seen as an ideal man.

The idea of ideal masculinity is not only agreed and perpetuated by men but also women as well. It is depicted through the response of a streetwalker when Ajo Kawir is invited by Irwan Angsa to use the streetwalker's service in order to 'wake up' his sleeping penis. The streetwalker has tried several ways to wake Ajo Kawir's penis up but it is useless. The streetwalker says that there is nothing more demeaning to a prostitute than a bird that won't stand up (Kurniawan, 2017, p. 35). In order to achieve the label of an ideal man, Ajo Kawir tries several ways to erect his penis by rubbing chopped up chili pepper on his penis and letting his penis get stung by bees (Kurniawan, 2017, pp. 28-31). His efforts are certainly in vain that it only causes him pain and humiliation. Thus, he laments his fate and equates himself as a useless rusty blade that cannot be used to cut anything (Kurniawan, 2017, p. 54). The decision he takes to erect his penis is certainly influenced by society's perception on ideal masculinity that must be fulfilled.

Ajo Kawir grows up to be a sloppy and stubborn man who loves to fight. He often looks for troubles only for fulfilling his desire to smack others and it will end in a fight that will make him black-and-blue. He grows even more violent by killing The Tiger and cutting Mister Lebe's ear. The violence committed by Ajo Kawir is caused

by the concept of ideal masculinity which he comprehends. When Ajo Kawir finds himself is unable to get an erection, he feels he has failed to meet the standard of ideal masculinity perceived by society. Regarding this context, Ajo Kawir's sexual dysfunction has placed Ajo Kawir in a subordinate position in the area of sexuality. Ajo Kawir's violence is a form of compensation for his failure in obtaining the ideal masculinity, particularly in the area of sexuality. Therefore, he tries to acquire masculinity by committing violent acts against other men.

Social construction towards men's masculinity, particularly in sexual ability, can also be found in Kurniawan's *Beauty is a Wound*. After Shodanco and Alamanda are being married for a year, people start to gossip about their marriage since Alamanda still shows no sign of being pregnant. A number of people begin to speculate that if Shodanco is impotent or he is sterile. The other people also make another speculation that Shodanco has been castrated by Japanese during the war. When he has finally heard the gossip about himself, Shodanco is completely distraught, stewing in a mix of humiliation and anger and helplessness. (Kurniawan, 2016, pp. 228-229)

The depiction of Ajo Kawir and Shodanco as previously explained shows how society accepts the stigma about men's sexual powerlessness. Men are considered to be not masculine if they are unable to have an erect penis and get their wife pregnant and it is considered to be a shameful issue. When society accepts the stigma or construction about men's ideal traits, men will merely be seen and measured by their sexual ability and performance so that other values of men as human beings are ignored. In addition, the depiction also shows that symbolic violence against men takes place in social sphere in which its society embraces a social construction of the ideal standards of masculinity that are not entirely appropriate due to the influence of patriarchal system.

CONCLUSION

After discussing the symbolic violence among characters in selected Kurniawan's works, it can be concluded that symbolic violence is depicted through arranged marriage, marital rape, women's obligation in domestic domain, and men's sexual performance. Patriarchy becomes the major cause of symbolic violence within society as depicted in the novels. Both men and women can be the victims of symbolic violence that hides behind the habitus of patriarchy. Symbolic violence against women is the result of domination and power of men against women which is supported by patriarchal culture embraced by society. In a patriarchal society, norms, rules, and stereotype in society are constructed from men's perspective without considering women's right. Women are often regarded as objects for men's importance without having their rights to make decisions like autonomous individuals. Therefore, norms, rules, and stereotype prevailing in society will result in women's subordination and women's freedom of expression is restrained.

Patriarchal society often uses morality as a weapon to oppress women and to keep them subordinated. Apparently, men who are given the absolute priority and privilege are also not free from the stereotypical norms or values created by patriarchal system. Men are also harmed by patriarchy in ways that they are required to obtain the ideal masculinity as internalized by society. Those who are failed to meet the requirements will feel pressured and it can lead to negative impacts.

Men and women in Kurniawan's works are bounded by society's values and they inevitably respond those values by following it. The values or stereotypical norms which control how men and women should act and present themselves based on their gender are the product of social construction caused by patriarchal ideology. In addition, those values or stereotypical

norms are also damaging to men, women, and society as whole. Thus, both men and women need to break down the flawed structure of patriarchy in society and to live a life that is not hindered by aged out traditional roles and values.

REFERENCES

- Blackburn, Susan. (2004). *Women and the State in Modern Indonesia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. (2003). *Language and Symbolic Power*. Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. (2001). *Masculine Domination*. (Richard Nice, Trans.). Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. (1992). *The Logic of Practice*. (Richard Nice, Trans.). California: Stanford University Press.
- Dauvergne, Catherine & Millbank, Jenni. (2010). Forced Marriage as a Harm in Domestic and International Law. *The Modern Law Review*, 73(1), 57-88. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/27755233>
- Eisenstein, Hester. (1983). *Contemporary Feminist Thought*. Boston: G. K. Hall & Co.
- Grenfell, Michael (Ed.). (2014). *Pierre Bourdieu: Key Concepts*. New York: Routledge.
- Haryatmoko, Johannes. (2010). *Dominasi Penuh Muslihat: Akar Kekerasan dan Diskriminasi*. Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama.
- Kurniawan, Eka. (2016). *Beauty is a Wound*. London: Pushkin Press.
- Kurniawan, Eka. (2015). *Man Tiger*. London: Verso.
- Kurniawan, Eka. (2017). *Vengeance is*

- Mine, All Others Pay Cash*. London: Pushkin Press.
- O'Brien, Jodi (Ed.). (2008). *Encyclopedia of Gender and Society*. Vol. 1. New York: SAGE.
- Permata, Denti, Aquarini Priyatna, & Lina Meilinawati Rahayu. (2016). Dinamika Maskulinitas dan Feminitas Dalam Novel Seperti Dendam, Rindu Harus Dibayar Tuntas Karya Eka Kurniawan. *METASASTRA*, 9(1), 13-24.
- Prasetyo, Yudi & Haryadi. (2017). Kekerasan terhadap Tokoh Perempuan dalam Novel Seperti Dendam, Rindu Harus Dibayar Tuntas dan Lelaki Harimau karya Eka Kurniawan. *Seloka: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa dan Sastra Indonesia*, 6, 152-160.
- Rahayu, Mundi. (2017). Gender dan Seksualitas Postkolonial dalam Novel Eka Kurniawan Cantik Itu Luka. *SENASBASA*, 1, 229-239.
- Rusdiarti, Suma Riella. (2019). Dapur, Makanan, dan Resistensi Perempuan dalam Cerita Pendek Kutukan Dapur Karya Eka Kurniawan. *Jurnal Ilmu Budaya*, 7(2), 282-290.
- Som, Witakania S & Hasanah, Ferli. (2017). Representasi Femme Fatale dalam Novel Cantik Itu Luka Karya Eka Kurniawan. *Poetika: Jurnal Ilmu Sastra*, 5(1), 14-25.
- Sultana, Abeda. (2011) Patriarchy and Women's Subordination: A Theoretical Analysis. *The Arts Faculty Journal*, 1-18.
- Suryakusuma, Julia. (2011). *State Ibuism: The Social Construction of Womanhood in New Order Indonesia*. Depok: Komunitas Bambu.
- Susila, ME. (2013). Islamic Perspective on Marital Rape. *Jurnal Media Hukum*, 20(2), 317-332.
- Tierney, Helen (Ed.). (1999). *Women's Studies Encyclopedia*. Connecticut: Greenwood Press.
- Walbi, Sylvia. (1989). Theorising Patriarchy. *Sociology*, 23(2), 213-234.
- Wiyatmi. (2009). Representasi Peran dan Relasi Gender dalam Novel Cantik Itu Luka karya Eka Kurniawan dan Novel Nayla Karya Djenar Maesa Ayu. *Litera*, 8, 82-92.