Journal of Language and Literature
Vol. 25 No. 1, April 2025, pp. 119 – 130
DOI: 10.24071/joll. v25i1.9598
Available at https://e-journal.usd.ac.id/index.php/JOLL/index
This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

The Resistance of Subaltern Class against Patriarchal Hegemony in *Cantik Itu Luka* by Eka Kurniawan

Ghefira Zahira Shofa & Imas Istiani
ghefirazahirashofa21@students.unnes.ac.id
Faculty of Language and Arts, State University of Semarang, INDONESIA

Abstract

This study aims to examine patriarchal hegemony in the novel Cantik Itu Luka (Beauty Is a Wound) by Eka Kurniawan using the theories of Gramsci and Walby regarding colonial culture and ideology that controls the women who are classified as the subaltern classes under male power in various aspects of life. According to Spivak's theory, subaltern class is an individual or social group that is marginalized under dominating power economically, socially, and culturally. This study also uses postcolonial approach by Tyson which serves to examine and respond to colonial influence on social structure, identity, and cultural continuity. The study of patriarchal hegemony in Cantik Itu Luka examines three main aspects: (1) the manifestation of patriarchal hegemony in the subaltern class; (2) the psychological and emotional impact of patriarchal hegemony on subaltern women; and (3) the forms of resistance against hegemonic. The research data are quotations from the novel contained in the form of words, phrases, sentences, and paragraphs that interpret the issue of patriarchal hegemony obtained from narration, dialog, characters' thoughts, and storyline. The data collection used literature study techniques, whereas the data analysis used qualitative descriptive techniques. The results of this study resulted in the discovery that patriarchal hegemony greatly influences society's ideology about subaltern women, all forms of community attitudes in the form of objectification, subordination, and marginalization of subalterns cause impacts, responses, and resistance by subaltern classes.

Article information

Received: 22 October 2024

Revised: 15 December 2024

Accepted: 23 December 2024

***Keywords**: Hegemony; Patriarchal hegemony; Subaltern class; Resistance*

Introduction

Literature is reflection of social reality that is not limited by time and space (Manugeren et al., 2020). One of the social realities is postcolonial novels, created from the representation of various views of reality in life and closely related to society. Postcolonial works contain fictional stories, imagery, or social commentary but also a means of analysis and favorable opinions of the author conveyed implicitly and covertly. Postcolonial novels contain how indigenous people experience the impact or influence of subaltern, domination, hegemony,

discrimination, and patriarchal culture. Postcolonial novels were used as a form of resistance that highlighted how the powerless and harmful elements in the work were censored, stereotyped, and criminalized by the colonizer (Dar, 2024).

One of the famous postcolonial novels is *Cantik Itu Luka* by Eka Kurniawan (2002). The novel is set during the Japanese colonization of the Dutch East Indies in 1942-1945. The story begins in a town called Halimunda, which is shocked by the resurrection of a 51-year-old woman named Dewi Ayu after her 21 years of death. Before her death, Dewi Ayu was a daughter of Indonesian-Dutch descent from the inbreeding of Henri Stammler and Aneu Stammler. After the Japanese took control of Indonesia, Dewi Ayu was captured along with other Dutch people, and they were imprisoned in Bloedenkamp. Dewi Ayu's courage was shown when she helped her sick friend by sacrificing her chastity to the Japanese soldiers. After two years in prison, Dewi Ayu and 19 other beauties were moved to a luxurious mansion to become slave prostitutes. Dewi Ayu was forced to become a prostitute to satisfy the lust of the Japanese soldiers until she gave birth to 4 children.

Dewi Ayu is a representation of women's resistance during the Dutch and Japanese colonial periods. Women were objectified of patriarchal hegemony in colonial period, they were considered weak and powerless, had no space in society, and were only used as objects of sexuality by men. Despite her profession as a prostitute, she shows the resistance of patriarchal hegemony as a respected woman who is beauty, intelligent, and strong. Dewi Ayu is a responsible mother; even though she is a prostitute, she does want her children to resist patriarchal ideology and to prevent them from becoming a prostitute. Dewi Ayu fights patriarchal hegemony by educating her three daughters, carry out the dual role of earning a living, taking care of, and protecting her children well without a husband by her side.

Dewi Ayu can be classified into a subaltern class because she is considered low-status, marginalized, and does not have dominant power in society. The subaltern experienced through Dewi Ayu falls into the gender category of ethnic minority groups, such as women of Dutch descent. The subaltern issue experienced by Dewi Ayu is closely related to the issue of patriarchal cultural hegemony because hegemony is included in the context of ideological and cultural domination structures that influence the way of thinking and ideology in society. The connection between the two issues is also seen when Dewi Ayu, as a female subaltern character, resists hegemony through education and awareness of the character to educate herself and others.

This novel needs to be studied because the author presents essential issues about the colonizers' treatment of subaltern populations and the patriarchal hegemonic culture that subordinates women only as sexually enslaved people. Colonialism is the biggest obstacle for women to get an equal position with men, especially when women's position is subaltern under the power of the colonizers. This condition can adversely affect the social system if women are distracted that they are born weak and helpless, leading to an attitude of not caring about their potential. Therefore, *Cantik Itu Luka* deserves to be used as a motivation for women to have the same rights in society.

Many prior studies analyzed the issue of women's image and gender injustice through feminism theory in the novel *Cantik Itu Luka.* The research by Febrianti et al in 2023 entitled "*Gender Injustice and The Image of Women in The Novel Cantik Itu Luka by Eka Kurniawan: A Study of Feminism Literature Criticism*" explains the gender injustice experienced by women characters in *Cantik Itu Luka* in the form of stereotypes, subordination, marginalization, violence, and workload. Women in the novel get labeled as negatively related to their nature and do not have power. In the *novel Cantik Itu Luka*, gender injustice influences female characters. Dewi Ayu is forced to work as a prostitute to get her house, and she does not want the tragic story of Ma Iyang and Ma Gendik to happen in other households. The justice experienced by Ma Iyang changes Dewi Ayu's psychological image. She became an assertive woman who did not care about her social status in society, which dubbed her a prostitute.

The study of *"Women's Discrimination of Beauty Is a Wound: Feminist Stylistics Approach of Sara Mills"* by Maknun et al. (2023) contains discrimination against women in the novel *Beauty Is a Wound (Cantik Itu Luka)* using the theory of feminist stylistics by Sara Mills. The theory reveals gender injustices experienced by women, namely marginalization, subordination, negative stereotypes, violence, and double burden. The study highlights how patriarchy shapes discrimination and awareness of women's rights to fight gender-based discrimination.

There have also been several studies on the novel through postcolonial perspectives. Rosyada et al. (2023), in *"Mimicry and Hybridity as Forms of Resistance in the Novel Cantik itu Luka by Eka Kurniawan,"* discusses the resistance shown by Dewi Ayu's character through mimicry in terms of mindset, education, language, and lifestyle. The hybridity of community characters also shows resistance manifested in behavior, living equipment, mindset, lifestyle, and style of dress.

The research from Harahap and Asnani's research (2023) entitled *"Injustice in Eka Kurniawan's Novel Beauty Is A Wound"* discusses the types of injustice experienced by women (Dewi Ayu and her four daughters) during the colonial period. Dewi Ayu was forced to become a prostitute and forced to satisfy the lust of Japanese intermediaries when she was a prisoner of war. Even after not being a prisoner of war, she remained a prostitute because she had to fulfill her children's needs. Fitriadin (2021), in *"Postcolonial in Novel Cantik Itu Luka by Eka Kurniawan,"* discusses the form of resistance by indigenous characters against the colonizers by not maintaining Western traditions and the discrimination of the Dutch government that put limits on the natives and the Dutch in gaining freedom in their lives.

This study is analyzed by using postcolonial approach and examines the work more deeply through the patriarchal hegemony. This study is analyzed using a postcolonial approach and examines the work more deeply through patriarchal hegemony. The postcolonial approach functions to examine and respond to colonial influences on social structures, identities, and cultural survival. This approach seeks to reveal the structure and ideology of colonial domination of society, culture and individuals that is ongoing in contemporary society, as well as how postcolonial societies respond and resist to reclaim their identities, autonomy, and marginalized voices.

This research uses the postcolonial approach in the book Critical Theory Today by Tyson (2006) that postcolonial criticism did not gain prominence in literary studies until the early 1990s, this approach serves to understand the political, social, cultural, psychological dynamics of colonialist and anti-colonial ideologies. The postcolonial approach analyzes the forces that influence colonized people to internalize colonial values, as well as the resistance of colonized peoples to their oppressors, which has taken place throughout the history of colonialism. Postcolonial analysis can be applied to literary texts that may not be explicitly categorized as postcolonial. This allows the analysis of works in the postcolonial approach to reveal the dynamics of power, cultural representation, and resistance.

In the article *"Subaltern Studies as Postcolonial Criticism"* by Prakash (2015), the postcolonial approach plays a role in identifying and examining the experiences of marginalized subaltern classes in the context of history and power relations ignored by colonialism, and even nationalism. In this approach, subaltern studies contribute to emphasizing the importance of looking at history from more diverse perspectives to understand the discursive forces that have oppressed subaltern groups. Subaltern studies highlight the roles and experiences of groups of people who are oppressed and marginalized by colonial, nationalist or elite powers. It aims to give voice to groups that have been previously unheard in dominant historical narratives

This research examines how the ideology of patriarchal hegemony occurs over the subaltern class in the society of *Cantik Itu Luka*. This research also explores the impact of patriarchal hegemony on subaltern women, as

well as reveals and shows the main character's responses to patriarchal hegemony. The focus of the research on *Cantik Itu Luka* novel by Eka Kurniawan is how the novel represents the subaltern female character, who describes the conditions of women during the colonial period. Women were positioned as subalterns and had to deal with a patriarchal culture that considered women as servants of men. However, Dewi Ayu was able to prove that women at that time had the power to resist, be honored, and change the patriarchal perspective with her ability to raise her children well without a husband.

Methodology

This literature research uses a qualitative descriptive method with literature study techniques. According to Asmawi and Alam (2024), qualitative research aims to identify phenomena from a subjective perspective, interpret them, and explore meaning and experience. This study adapts the discussion of Istifadah and Rohmana (2022) regarding patriarchal hegemony. However, this study emphasizes the issue of patriarchal hegemony of the subaltern class and uses a postcolonial approach to explore the lingering impact of colonialism on society, culture, and identity. The postcolonial approach views hegemony and resistance as the mechanisms used to internalize and normalize colonial ideologies, and the strategies used by colonized communities (subalterns) to resist these power structures. In this study, the postcolonial approach serves to highlight the complexity of identity and resistance, especially focusing on the object of women who are trapped in the patriarchal culture of society due to colonial hegemony.

This current study uses research data in the form of words, phrases, sentences, and paragraphs that contain interpretations obtained from narrative quotations, dialog, character thoughts, and storylines. The data sources and data objects in this research are classified into two: primary data in the form of the *Cantik Itu Luka* novel by Eka Kurniawan, published by PT Gramedia Pustaka Utama in 2004, and secondary data in the form of books, journals, and articles related to the object of the study and related to subaltern, hegemony, and patriarchy theory.

Data collection techniques are through in-depth reading of the novel, identifying and noting essential elements, and using notes for further analysis. The data analysis technique uses the model Miles and Huberman (1994) which consists of four steps of analysis: (1) collecting qualitative data relevant to the novel research; (2) the information that has been collected is then reduced to focus on the most critical data and relevant to the research objectives; (3) data display, the process of presenting the results of data analysis in a form that is easy to understand and interpret for further analysis; (4) drawing conclusions presenting the results of in-depth analysis of the novel under study.

Results and Discussion

The three main points discussing patriarchal hegemony in *Cantik Itu Luka* are: (1) the ideology of patriarchal hegemony society occurred over the subaltern class are categorized into three issues: objectification, marginalization, and subordination; (2) the impacts of patriarchal hegemony toward the subaltern women in term psychology and emotionality; (3) the main character's resistance to patriarchal hegemony in the novel through education, facing stigma with dignity, utilizing beauty as a tool of resistance, and her courage to make independent life decisions.

1. The Ideology in Patriarchal Hegemony Society

This part categorizes the discussion of patriarchal hegemony ideology in the novel into three interconnected concepts in Gramsci's (1971): subordination, objectification, and marginalization. Subordination is the result of hegemony that forces the subaltern class to submit to the ruling class. Marginalization is the condition of the subaltern class being excluded from the ruling class space to maintain the structure of hegemony and objectification is used to reinforce subordination by reducing an individual or group to an object without voice and autonomy.

Journal of Language and Literature
ISSN: 1410-5691 (print); 2580-5878 (online)

a. Subordination

In the context of patriarchal hegemony, subordination is a social group that is in a low position in the power structure politically, economically, and culturally. The minority or subordinate group internalizes the ideology of the dominant group which can strengthen patriarchal hegemony. Women are considered to have an irrational or emotional nature, therefore women are placed in an unimportant position and limit women in doing things (Fakih, 2012).

The subordination of women is seen in various aspects of the lives of subaltern female characters in the novel. Women are often treated as second-class in a patriarchal society.

> *"Aku ingin mati di pelukanmu," katanya. "Aku tak akan membayarmu, tapi kuberikan anak bisu ini. Ia anakku."* (Kurniawan, 2002, p.13)

> *"I want to die in your arms," he said. "I can't pay you, but I'll give you this mute child. She's my daughter."* (Kurniawan, 2015, p.14)

Rosinah meets Dewi Ayu for the first time when her father, suffering from severe rheumatism, is so addicted to sex that he willingly trades his daughter Rosinah to pay Dewi Ayu. Unlike parents who wanted to stay alive for their child's survival, the old man wanted to die while sleeping with Dewi Ayu. The old man chose to exchange his daughter by sleeping with Dewi Ayu, and let his daughter be used as a prostitute by Dewi Ayu. Women are seen as goods that can be used as a medium of exchange, and Dewi Ayu's body is seen as an object that can be rented to satisfy the old man's desires. The position of women seems to be worthless in the eyes of men and degraded.

> *"Aku gantikan gadis yang tadi, Komandan. Kau tiduri aku tapi beri ibunya obat dan dokter. Dan dokter!" (Kurniawan, 2002, p.67).*

> *"I will take the place of the previous girl, Commandant. You can sleep with me, but give her mother medicine and a doctor. And a doctor!" (Kurniawan, 2015, p.58).*

Women in this novel are often placed in an inferior position compared to men in that women must submit and obey men. The characters Ola and Dewi Ayu unconsciously have to obey the conditions given by the Kamp Commander, which is to sleep with him to get medicine and a doctor for Ola's mother. Dewi Ayu unwillingly replaces Ola's position to get medicine and a doctor.

The role of Dewi Ayu in the novel is positioned as a sexual object whose existence is seen to serve the needs of men. In the *Cantik Itu Luka* novel, Dewi Ayu is treated as a woman who is a victim of patriarchal hegemony so that her profession as a prostitute reinforces the subordinate stereotype that women are considered as something that can be exploited. Women are positioned in passive roles as victims or objects in the story and their identities are constructed through the influence of men who control the power of women (Mills, 1995).

> *"Perempuan itu, pelacur atau bukan, aku ingin tidur dengannya," ia berbisik pada Mama Kalong. "Ia pelacur terbaik di sini, namanya Dewi Ayu," kata Mama Kalong.* (Kurniawan, 2002, p.120)

> *"I want to sleep with that woman, whether she is a prostitute or not," he whispered to Mama Kalong. "That's Dewi Ayu, and she's the best whore here," said Mama Kalong.* (Kurniawan, 2015, p.102)

The practice of subordination can be proven by Maman Gendeng who insists on sleeping with Dewi Ayu and indirectly he degrades women just to satisfy his lust. Mama Kalong also supports the practice of subordination by prioritizing the satisfaction of men over the dignity and position of women. Mama Kalong promotes to Maman Gendeng that Dewi Ayu is the best prostitute in the city. This phenomenon proves that in society, the role of women tends to be used by men to broaden their thinking. Women are exploited in terms of business and sex (Minaryanti et al., 2021).

b. Objectification

The concept of objectification is a process whereby the ruling class disregards the

humanity of individuals and treats them based only on their material or physical value. Objectification has relevance with hegemony, it can be seen how the ruling class treats the subaltern class as objects or tools to achieve their goals. Objectification of women according to Langton (2009) can occur in the form of sexual objectification which is enforced by external forces and self-objectification which is internalized by the individual themselves.

The title *"Cantik Itu Luka"* itself already reflects the patriarchal ideology that associates a woman's value with her beauty. Dewi Ayu, as a symbol of beauty, suffers a lot, showing how patriarchal standards of beauty can harm women. The ideologies of the patriarchal society portrayed in the novel justify violence against Dewi Ayu as a subaltern woman. The patriarchal cultural hegemony that occurs in Dewi Ayu is the sexual objectification of women, where women are used as tools to satisfy men's desires, and the character of Dewi Ayu as a prostitute is often treated as a sexual object by men.

Dewi Ayu is known to be a prostitute which makes her the center of objectification and exploitation in the novel. As sexual objectification, Dewi Ayu is not entirely under her control. Her profession as a prostitute is based on the pressure of post-war circumstances. Her existence is respected not because of her thoughts or personality, but rather her visual and alluring appearance. Her body was seen as a commodity in society, and her existence was only considered to serve the sexual needs of men.

> *"Legenda kecantikannya nyaris menyamai reputasi leluhur kota itu, dan satu-satunya alasan kenapa tak ada perang memperebutkannya, adalah karena ia seorang pelacur dan semua orang bisa menidurinya asalkan ada uang untuk itu." (Kurniawan, 2002, p.124)*

> *"The legend of her beauty rivaled that of the city's founder, and the only reason there had never been a war over her was because she was a whore, so anyone could sleep with her as long as he had the money." (Kurniawan, 2015, p.105)*

Dewi Ayu is the central female character as a subaltern who is a victim of patriarchal hegemony objectivity in society. The Japanese soldiers, in this context as having dominant power, brought Dewi Ayu and other women to force them to work as prostitutes at Mama Kalong's house. Among other female prisoners, Dewi Ayu was well known for her facial beauty as a prostitute. The societal ideology at the time was that it was customary to buy a prostitute who only satisfied the desires of men without having to be in marital status.

Dewi Ayu performs self-objectification to internalize society's view of her. Dewi Ayu consciously accepts her role as a prostitute and uses her body as a tool to survive and support her family. It reflects the influence of patriarchal hegemony that does not provide space to speak out against something that happens to her, and in the end Dewi Ayu accepts the condition and does not fight back.

> *Ia sendiri tak pernah sungguh-sungguh mengaku bahwa ia menjadi pelacur karena keinginannya sendiri, sebaliknya, ia selalu mengatakan bahwa ia menjadi pelacur karena sejarah. "Sebagaimana sejarah menciptakan seseorang jadi nabi atau kaisar," (Kurniawan, 2002, p.104)*

> *She herself had never honestly admitted that she was a prostitute because that was what she truly wanted, in fact just the opposite; she always said that she had been forced into prostitution due to circumstance. "Just like circumstance makes somebody a prophet or a king," (Kurniawan, 2015, p.89)*

Dewi Ayu accepts and acknowledges her decision to become a prostitute, although her confession explicitly shows that becoming a prostitute was caused by history and does not mention directly that it was her own desire. The decision of Dewi Ayu to become a prostitute is due to the internalization of an ideology that sees her as a means of survival and not as a human being who has other options to survive.

c. Marginalization

Marginalization is a concept that connects with hegemony. The practice of marginalization can occur when a minority

Journal of Language and Literature
ISSN: 1410-5691 (print); 2580-5878 (online)

group does not conform to the hegemonic consensus. The ruling group needs marginalization to maintain hegemonic power by excluding minority groups from the center of power, influence, and representation in the social structure. According to Fakih (2012), marginalization leads to poverty and the process of neglecting the rights of minorities so that they cannot develop themselves.

The practice of patriarchal hegemony by the structures of colonialism causes various problems that directly affect women. This culture is one of the causes of a lot of discriminatory behavior, restrictions, exploitation, and violent behavior against women (Susanto, 2016). Through this behavior, women do not get justice and are marginalized from their own social status.

> *"Aku sudah memeriksa semuanya," kata Dewi Ayu. "Tak ada tempat untuk meloloskan diri." "Kita akan jadi pelacur!" teriak Ola sambil duduk dan menangis. "Lebih buruk dari itu," kata Dewi Ayu lagi. "Tampaknya kita tak akan dibayar."* (Kurniawan, 2002, p.84)

> *"I already tried everything," said Dewi Ayu. "There is no escape." "We are going to become prostitutes!" shrieked Ola, collapsing and weeping. "It's actually worse than that," said Dewi Ayu. "I don't think we're even going to get paid."* (Kurniawan, 2015, p.73)

After the colonial culture entered the indigenous society, there was a subaltern class or known as the lower class that was marginalized or did not receive attention from the colonial government, and was at an inferior level (Farr, 2019). The practice of marginalization made the subaltern (Dewi Ayu) an object to become a prostitute and satisfy the lust of the Japanese middlemen. Dewi Ayu and the other captives were unable to resist and fight for their rights to freedom. The patriarchal system that has been hegemonized by colonial culture normalizes the subordination of women, so they are marginalized in the social structure and considered degraded, having no control over their own fate and bodies.

Patriarchal hegemony influenced by colonialism creates marginalization through economic exploitation and cultural domination. Patriarchal hegemony works by controlling the ideology of society which states that men are always above and dominate women, so women will never be equal to men (Aulia, 2019). Through this, colonial hegemony marginalizes Dewi Ayu as an indigenous character who does not have the power of an ideologically and physically oppressive system. Dewi Ayu is an individual who is in a position of having no economic power, this is utilized by the ruling class to submit to a poor profession and accept her fate as part of an unjust social structure.

> *"Aku akan kembali padamu jadi pelacur, untuk bayar hutangku." (Kurniawan, 2002, p.101)*

> *"I'll come back and whore for you to pay off my debt." (Kurniawan, 2015, p.87)*

Dewi Ayu was economically exploited, with no opportunity to support her standard of living. She is forced to pawn herself off in prostitution to survive and get the house and jewelry she used to live in. After many attempts, Dewi Ayu could not find the jewelry to repay her debt to Mama Kalong, and she was again trapped in this lowly job.

2. The Impacts of Patriarchal Hegemony

Hegemony is a system of domination that changes people's views on norms of moral behavior, values, and social structures. The subordinate position of women in social, economic, and cultural systems is often dominated by patriarchal values. In the hegemony system, patriarchy works as social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress, and exploit women (Walby, 1990).

Patriarchy has a very complex relationship with hegemony and involves the enormous influence of dominant forces in a given society or region on culture. The hegemonic power of dominant groups or dominating political forces uses their power to disseminate specific values, ideologies, and narratives that influence the views and cultural

identities of the wider society. Patriarchal hegemony is a term for an ideological power or control that asserts that men are positioned above, dominate women, and assume that women will never be equal to men (Istifadah & Rohmana, 2022).

Hegemony controls patriarchal ideology which involves social structures and practices where men use their power to oppress, exploit, abuse, and control women in the public and domestic spheres (Sukmafitriani et al., 2020). These patriarchal practices impose norms, rules, hierarchies to support male dominance and marginalize women who do not have power (subaltern) which can create pressure and affect psychologically and physically.

Patriarchal hegemony has a devastating impact on subaltern female characters. All forms of physical and psychological violence against women occur to the characters in the novel, affecting them psychologically and emotionally (Polat et al., 2023). They feel trapped and powerless in the patriarchal system that oppresses women. They often feel that they are nothing more than a means of satisfying men's lust and lose their dignity as human beings.

Psychological violence against women can be pressure applied to intimidate or humiliate someone; the impact of such violence has psychological effects such as depression, stress, and trauma (Polat et al., 2023). Patriarchal society always intimidates women by objectifying, subordinating, and marginalizing them in order to mentally humiliate them as a form of punishment better known as social sanctions. Such forms of violence can be mentally disruptive to a person and eventually lead to depression.

> *"Dewi Ayu berbaring tenang di atas tempat tidurnya berselimut kain kafan, menanti dengan kesabaran ganjil malaikat pencabut nyawa datang menjemputnya." (Kurniawan, 2002, p.7)*

> *"Dewi Ayu was lying calmly on top of her bed wrapped in a burial shroud, waiting with an uncanny patience for the angel of death to come and carry her away." (Kurniawan, 2015, p.9)*

The quote above illustrates how Dewi Ayu experienced mental health problems in the form of depression until she wrapped herself in a shroud to wait for death. Until her habit of lying on the bed with a shroud ended up being an answered prayer. Dewi Ayu's behavior proves that she experienced depression caused by psychological violence by society that objectified her and her daughters as lowly prostitutes. She even wanted her last daughter to be born ugly to avoid objectification.

The causes of violence against women are related to the position of women in society who internalize cultural norms that justify such violence and abuse (Göktepe, 2024). Physical violence in the form of sexual harassment against women can be in the form of coercion to perform sexual acts, harsh treatment, and torture. Such violence can occur due to the subordination of society, which considers women to always be in a lower position than men, causing women to often become objectified violence in the form of sexual harassment and coercion, which has an impact on physical, mental, and emotional health.

> *"Sakit hatinya bertambah-tambah jika ia mengingat betapa lelaki itu menyetubuhinya hanya dalam beberapa menit yang pendek, seolah ia bukan tubuh perempuan cantik yang dikagumi seluruh kota, seolah ia hanya seonggok daging dan lelaki itu hanya menyetubuhi lubang toilet." (Kurniawan, 2002, p.130)*

> *"Her anger steadily increased as she thought about how he had only slept with her as if she was just a hunk of flesh as if that man had been fucking a toilet hole for a few short minutes as if the entire city wasn't in awe of her." (Kurniawan, 2015, p.109)*

Dewi Ayu is a visualization of the objectification of sexual violence experienced by women during the Japanese colonial era. Subaltern women were exploited through sexual harassment by men, which caused deep physical, emotional, and psychological suffering. In the quote above, Dewi Ayu experienced physical violence in the form of coercion until the buttons on her dress came off. Shodancho, an Indonesian Japanese arm,

treated Dewi Ayu like a hunk of flesh and a toilet hole that left deep psychological and emotional suffering for her. Through this treatment, Dewi Ayu felt that she was being humiliated and degraded by the Shodancho, causing her to hurt, cry, and damage her emotional well-being. She felt she lost control over her body, and was forced to accept her fate as a sexual object. The sexual violence created deep trauma that affected her psychologically towards her life and family.

Patriarchal hegemony also impacts social stigma and discrimination in the lives of subaltern female characters in the novel. Patriarchal and colonial societies treat women as marginalized in an unfair manner and devalue their social status. Women are treated with prejudice, and they are forced to accept patriarchal ideology. One of the gender injustice behaviors on women is marginalization, which has impacts such as subordination, stereotypes, and violence (Fakih, 2012). The marginalization experienced by female characters in *Cantik Itu Luka* is a manifestation of the patriarchal hegemony brought by the Japanese and influences the ideology of Indonesian society.

> *"Sang imam masjid memandang gadis bisu itu dengan kebencian, dan berkata bahwa ia tak sudi salat bagi sebongkah mayat pelacur dan apalagi menguburkannya." (Kurniawan, 2002, p.11)*

> *"The imam, looking at the mute girl with hatred, said that he himself was not inclined to recite the prayers for that lump of a prostitute's corpse or what's more, to even bury her." (Kurniawan, 2015, p.12)*

When Dewi Ayu died, no one wanted to pray for her because of her image as a prostitute during her lifetime. Indirectly, the patriarchal society ostracizes and devalues Dewi Ayu for being a prostitute. Her work carries a heavy social stigma compared to the social stigma given to men who use her services only to satisfy their lust. Even in death, Dewi Ayu is still denied the right and justice to be buried according to her religion. This proves that Dewi Ayu is in a marginalized position and thus receives unfair treatment from society.

3. The Character's Resistance to Patriarchal Hegemony

The subaltern is one of the continuing effects of colonialism on the colonized country even after colonialism has ended. The subaltern involves a deliberate use of dominant social, political, economic, and geographical hegemony through imperialist/colonial hierarchical systems to exclude or marginalize certain groups (Theresia, 2023). The colonizers created a hierarchical system with their colonial ideology to manipulate the reality that occurred with the class system and group domination. The subaltern class unconsciously becomes a group that has no political voice and no social space. Through these issues, Spivak's subaltern theory can encourage thinking about how marginalized groups are positioned in the context of history and global politics, as well as understanding how women and other minority groups are marginalized in various social and political structures, while also discussing how they can claim their rights and power (Spivak, 1988). The concept of subaltern according to Spivak does not directly refer to women, but often women are a large part of the subaltern class because they are under systems of power such as patriarchy and colonialism that make women's positions vulnerable to subordination. Subalterns will resist due to structural injustice, exploitation, and threats to their identity (Scott, 1990). Such resistance is an attempt to gain voice, space, and recognition in a system that marginalizes them.

Subaltern female characters show various responses and actions to fight patriarchal hegemony. In the novel, Dewi Ayu shows power, courage, and resilience to face complex and discriminatory situations. Dewi Ayu fights patriarchal hegemony by educating her three daughters to resist patriarchal ideology and to prevent them from becoming prostitutes like her.

> *Ia mengirimkan anak-anak itu ke sekolah terbaik, bahkan mengirimkannya pula ke surau untuk belajar mengaji pada Kyai Jahro. (Kurniawan, 2002, p.104)*

She sent the kids to the best schools, and to the mosque to recite prayers with Kyai Jahro. (Kurniawan, 2015, p.89)

Dewi Ayu tries to keep her children from falling into the world of patriarchy and prostitution. She refused Mama Kalong's offer to stay in the brothel, sent her children to the best schools, and studied the *Quran* at the mosque with *Kyai* Jahro. Dewi Ayu does not want her daughters to be influenced by the environment in which she works. It breaks the ideology of society that women also have the right to a proper education.

Although Dewi Ayu is trapped in the patriarchal system, she still tries to have control over her life and tries to change the situation for the betterment of her children's future. Dewi Ayu is brave and independent in making decisions to resist the patriarchal system despite being in a pressured position. She dares to make the decision to become a prostitute in order to survive and provide a better life for her children, despite the negative stigma of the society that considers her life choice inferior.

Subaltern female characters face stigma with their heads held high and with class and do not let the opposing views of society ruin their lives. Although Dewi Ayu's profession as a prostitute is looked down upon by society, she still lives her life with courage.

"Di tempat umum, orang asing tak akan mengenalinya sebagai pelacur, sebab ia akan mengenakan gaun yang jauh lebih sopan dari siapa pun, melangkah seanggun gadis-gadis istana, dengan keranjang belanjaan dan payung di tangan yang lain" (Kurniawan, 2002, p.124).

"Strangers to the city would never have guessed that she was a whore, dressed more modestly than anyone else and walking as daintily as a palace maiden, with her shopping basket in one hand and her parasol in the other" (Kurniawan, 2015, p.105).

Dewi Ayu is a representation of subaltern women who are victims of double subordination by colonialism and patriarchy. She illustrates how women were exploited by the Japanese colonizers and had no power over their own bodies. Although Dewi Ayu's beauty is considered a curse, she utilizes her beauty as a tool to obtain justice and fight oppression. Dewi Ayu's appearance also supports her resistance to patriarchal hegemony so that she is not solely seen as a lowly prostitute.

Dewi Ayu's character also performs symbolic actions as a form of resistance to patriarchal culture. Where social pressure is very much judging women based on their appearance and physical beauty alone. Dewi Ayu decides to fight against social values that judge women as having many limitations and are only seen in terms of physical beauty.

Ia akan segera berkata, "Siapa pun yang mendengar doaku, Tuhan atau iblis, malaikat atau jin Iprit, jadikanlah anakku buruk rupa." (Kurniawan, 2002, p.16)

She would immediately say, "Whoever is listening to my prayer, god or demon, angel or Genie Iprit, make my child ugly." (Kurniawan, 2015, p.17)

Dewi Ayu hoped to give birth to an ugly woman. Although her daughter (Beauty) did not have physical beauty, Dewi Ayu gave her a name that implies that a woman's beauty is not only in her physical appearance. The statement is a symbolic act that states that women and even humans cannot only be judged based on their physical appearance.

Conclusion

Based on the results of research on patriarchal hegemony that occurs in subaltern women in Eka Kurniawan's *Cantik Itu Luka* novel by collaborating the theories of Antonio Gramsci, Gayatri Spivak, and Sylvia Walby, it can be concluded that in the adaptation of previous study from Istifadah &Rohmana (2022), this study has similar arguments in terms of aspects of patriarchal hegemony, namely regarding marginalization, subordination, violence, and exploitation of women. However, there are differences in the findings highlighted in *Cantik Itu Luka* by Eka Kurniawan, namely regarding objectification that treats women as objects or things as if they can be traded, and another difference is the resistance carried out by the main

character as a form of rejection response to the patriarchal hegemony culture.

The impacts of patriarchal hegemony caused by colonialism are violence and harassment experienced by women, resulting in physical, emotional, and psychological distress. The stigma of society results in discrimination against subaltern female characters because their status is considered dishonorable. Forms of resistance to patriarchal hegemony are also represented by Dewi Ayu, namely providing the best education for her daughters, utilizing her beauty to obtain justice, fighting against oppression, and her courage to make independent life decisions. Dewi Ayu tries to assert her existence and resist the existing patriarchal hegemony by using symbolic and practical forms of resistance to maintain her dignity.

The results of this study have implications for readers that can influence and expand the existing theories of patriarchal hegemony. The further research is possible to pursue how resistance against patriarchal hegemony contributes to empowering women within various social, cultural, and political contexts. The future works could include examining specific movements that against patriarchal norms, as well as exploring the broader impact of such resistance on women's rights, gender equality, and their representation in decision-making processes. By developing into these areas, future studies could provide a deeper understanding of how the exposure of patriarchal structures can promote sustainable empowerment and transformation of society.

References

Asmawi, A., & Alam, M. S. (2024). Qualitative Research: Understanding Its Underlying Philosophies. *Forum for Education Studies* 2(2),1320. https://doi.org/10.59400/fes.v2i2.1320

Aulia, N.A. (2019). Patriarchal Hegemony as Seen in TS Elliot's the Waste Land.

Dar, B. A. (2024). Postcolonial Literature : A Definitive and Analytical Study. *International Journal of English Research* 5(3), 34–36. www.englishjournals.com.

Fakih, M. (2012). *Analisis Gender Dan Transformasi Sosial*. Pustaka Pelajar.

Farr, P. M. (2019). Subalternity as Margin and Center of Anachronistic Discourse. *Çankaya University Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, *13*(1), 62–78.

Febrianti, N. L. A., Artika, I. W., & Artawan, I. G. (2023). Gender Injustice and the Image of Women in the Novel Cantik Itu Luka By Eka Kurniawan. *Jurnalistrendi : Jurnal Linguistik, Sastra, Dan Pendidikan*, *8*(1), 131–43.

Fitriadin. (2021). Poskolonial Dalam Cantik Itu Luka Karya Eka Kurniawan (Postcolonial in Novel Cantik Itu Luka by Eka Kurniawan). *Jurnal Bahasa, Sastra dan Pembelajarannya*, *11*(2), 224–35.

Göktepe, O. (2024). The Impact of Social Values and Culture on Discrimination against Women. *South Asian Journal of Social Studies and Economics*, *21*(7), 99–109.

Gramsci, A. (1971). *Prison Notebooks*. ed. Quetin Hoare. Lawrence & Wishart.

Harahap, F., & Asnani. (2023). Injustice in Eka Kurniwan's Novel Beauty Is a Wound. *Journal of Language, 5*(2), 432–37. https://jurnal.uisu.ac.id/index.php/journaloflanguage.

Istifadah., & Rohmana, W. I. M. (2022). Patriarchal Hegemony in the Novel Women at Point Zero by Nawal El Saadawi: A Feminism Study and Its Correlation with Islam. *Journal of English Language Teaching and Linguistics, 7*(2), 383–94. https://dx.doi.org/10.21462/jeltl.v7i2.838%0APatriarchal.

Kurniawan, Eka. (2002). *Cantik Itu Luka*. PT Gramedia Pustaka Utama.

Kurniawan, Eka. (2015). *Beauty Is a Wound*. ed. Annie Tucker. The Text Publishing Company.

Langton, Rae. (2009). Sexual Solipsism: Philosophical Essays on Objectification. *Oxford University Press*.

Maknun, L., Sotlikova, R., & Hartati, E. (2023). Women's Discrimination of Beauty Is a Wound: Feminist Stylistics Approach of Sara Mills. *Literature and Literacy*, *1*(2),

95–109. https://journal.uny.ac.id/v3/index.php/lit.

Manugeren, M., Suhadi, J., & Pardi, P. (2020). Literature as a Medium of Exposing Social Problem through Thomas Gray's Elegy Written in A Country Churchyard. *Journal of Language and Literature, 20*(1), 150–58.

Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). Qualitative Data Analysis: An Expanded Sourcebook (2nd Ed.). *Sage Publications*: 1–318.

Mills, S. (1995). *Feminist Stylistics*. Routledge.

Mirnayanti, F., Sumiharti, & Masni, H. (2021). Aspek Feminisme Radikal Tokoh Dewi Ayu Dalam Novel Cantik Itu Luka Karya Eka Kurniawan. *Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Bahasa dan Sastra Indonesia*, *5*(2), 203–14. http://aksara.unbari.ac.id/index.php/aksara.

Polat, O. et al. (2023). Intimate Partner Violence Against Women: The Case of Hakkari. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Invention, 10*(08), 7985. https://valleyinternational.net/index.php/theijsshi

Prakash, G. (2015). Subaltern Studies as Postcolonial Criticism. *Oxford University Press*, *99*(5),1475–90. http://www.jstor.org/stable/2168385.

Rosyada, S. A., Supriyanto, T., & Doyin, M. (2023). Mimicry and Hybridity as Forms of Resistance in the Novel Cantik Itu Luka by Eka Kurniawan. *Seloka: Jurnal Pendidikan … 12*(3), 279–85. https://journal.unnes.ac.id/sju/index.php/seloka.

Scott, J.C. (1990). *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*. Yale University Press.

Spivak, G. C. (1988). Can the Subaltern Speak? *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture. Macmillan.*

Sukmafitriani, A., Nuryatin, A., & Nugroho, Y. E. (2020). Patriarchal Hegemony in the Novel Damar Kambang by Muna Masyari. *International Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Translation (IJLLT), 6*, 91–96. www.al-kindipublisher.com/index.php/ijllt.

Susanto, N. H. (2016). Tantangan Mewujudkan Kesetaraan Gender Dalam Budaya Patriarki. *Muwazah* 7(2).

Theresia, L. (2023). Trinitas Di Antara Subaltern Dan Politik Egaliter. *Jurnal Luxnos, 9*(1), 1–14.

Tyson, L. (2006). *Critical Theory Today: A User-Friendly Guide*. Routledge.

Walby, S. (1990). *Theorizing Patriarchy*. Basil Blackwell.