

Form of Intimidation and Female Resistance in Eka Kurniawan's *Beauty is a Wound*

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Article Info	Abstract
Article history: Received: March 12, 2026 Accepted: April 24, 2026 Published: May 11, 2026	This study examines the theme of intimidation and female resistance in the novel <i>Beauty Is a Wound</i> by Eka Kurniawan. It aims to identify the types of intimidation depicted in the novel and to analyze how the characters resist such intimidation. This research employs a qualitative descriptive method. The primary data source is the novel, published by Text Publishing Company in Melbourne in 2002, while data collection is conducted through note-taking techniques. The analysis is based on the classification of intimidation proposed by Coloroso and the theory of resistance by James C. Scott, supported by feminist theory as the main analytical framework. The findings reveal that the novel portrays several forms of intimidation, particularly verbal and physical intimidation. In response, the characters demonstrate open resistance, in which victims directly oppose discriminatory and oppressive treatment. The study shows that women are often portrayed as more vulnerable to intimidation due to persistent stereotypes of weakness. However, the novel also challenges this assumption by illustrating that women are capable of resisting intimidation and confronting injustice.
Keywords: <i>feminism</i> <i>intimidations</i> <i>struggle</i> <i>woman</i>	
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1. Introduction

A literary work is a creative activity of a work of art. In addition, literary works are imaginative works that are seen more broadly than works of fiction. Wellek and Warren (1995: 3-4), literary works are generally works of art that are the author's expression of the results of his reflection on life with language, a literary work is also a picture of people's life poured in the form of writing by the author with his imagination, and one of the types of that literary work is a novel. Novel as one of the types of literary work can freely talk about the life experienced by man. Rules and norms governing human interaction with the environment are reflected in literary works, particularly novels, which convey nuanced meanings about life. Novels effectively portray character development, complex social contexts, interpersonal relationships involving varying numbers of characters, and a series of intricate events unfolding over extended periods with considerable detail.

Another characteristic of novels is their ability to create a universe that is both complete and complex (Stanton, 2012: 90). The completeness contained in the novel always makes a reader and researcher able to imagine the fictional world.

Intimidation is a common theme in literary works, referring to actions or behaviors intended to frighten, coerce, or pressure individuals or groups, either verbally or nonverbally. In literature, it serves as an important element for portraying power dynamics, illustrating how authority can oppress and influence others, and revealing the psychological impact on both victims and perpetrators. Authors often use intimidation to develop characters, shape plot conflicts, and convey moral messages, particularly through the struggle between protagonists

and antagonists. At the same time, literary depictions of intimidation may reflect how certain cultural or social systems enable or justify such behavior, especially in relation to broader issues like gender, race, and social class. While these portrayals can raise awareness, foster empathy, and encourage resistance against injustice, they may also evoke emotional responses or trauma in readers with similar experiences.

Women have transformed into areas of business and sex exploitation. In other words, nowadays it has lost the feminine nature that is proud and flattered not only by women but also by men. We can read this phenomenon from stories, advertisements, and films that almost sell the image of women as sex spreaders. Power still belongs to men, while women's position is as male "harvesters" (Anshori, 1997:2).

Literary works are said to be tools intended for the author to express his ideas. Literary works, in this case, novels, are literary works written by authors based on true stories and imaginations that have many benefits (Anggraini, 2016: 67-76). The novel is also used as a conveyer of the author's ideology to the reader. The ideas expressed by the author are perceived by the reader. Literature is an embodiment of the existence of life in society. Things that can be described in a literary work about society can be in the form of social structures, functions, and patterns of society, as well as about the social relations of society. The depiction of social interaction in society cannot be separated from the interaction between men and women. The interaction between the two opposite sexes can be an interesting theme that can be used as a study because it can create a pattern in people's lives both culturally and socially.

The theory of feminism is more appropriate to express the views of women in literary studies. Because, feminism is a theory about the equality of women with men, besides that feminism is used as an organizational activity to fight for the rights and liberation of women from male pressure. Feminism seeks to equalize the position between women and men (Anggraini, 2016) Feminist literary criticism is a major form of feminists' strong desire to examine literary works to show women's views that usually in the work of male writers mostly women are abused, or underestimated by patriarchal traditions.

In the point of view of feminism, there are two terms that describe the space of women's activities, namely domestic and public spaces. Domestic space is a woman's activity related to the household, while public space is related to women's activities carried out outside the home, both interactions with the surrounding community and within the scope of work (Sugihastuti and Setiawan, 2010: 84). Domestic space is known for the role and function of women as domestic workers, this happens in the inferiority section of women. Women are in charge of looking after and educating children, cleaning the house, cooking etc. In the public sphere, men are more dominant over women, because basically men work hard to make a living. Socialist feminism asserts that gender differences in addition to class oppression are the origins of women's oppression that exude issues of economic imbalance, property rights for family and domestic survival, and the provision of workers' salaries are contained in the rules of capitalism. Socialist feminism asserts that gender differences in addition to class oppression are the origins of women's oppression that exude issues of economic imbalance, property rights for family and domestic survival and the provision of workers' salaries are contained in the rules of capitalism. So that the novel *Beauty is A Wound* by Eka Kurniawan shows that there is female resistance, as well as the determination of the main character Dewi Ayu when facing Japan in the colonial period, the strength of women in facing the miserable life, and the use of men by women to get their wishes. The protagonist is the main character in a story. A protagonist is the key decision-maker that influences the plot of a story. The protagonist plays a major role in the storyline, often portrayed as the character who faces the most conflicts and obstacles. In a complex story that contains subplots, each subplot can have its own protagonist.

The researcher decided to analyze this topic because this study will explore the protagonist's fight against intimidation that occur and the way she got it. The study focuses on the intimidation and the struggles of the protagonist to fight against the intimidation.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Definition of Intimidation

In *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia*, intimidation is defined as an act of frightening (especially to force another person or party to do something), bluffing, or threats. Intimidation is also said to be aggressive behavior that is intentional and carried out repeatedly to create pressure on other people, both physically and psychologically. In general, intimidation is a serious problem, and intimidation is usually defined as intentional, repeated physical or psychological actions carried out by people who hold power over the victim (Kowalski et al., 2014: 1073-1137). According to Crow & Macintosh (2009), intimidation is an act of frightening, especially to force another person or party to do something, such as bullying, or threats of humiliation. Aini (2024) added that intimidation is generally caused by various factors, including the first being a harsh social environment, both in the economic, social, political, cultural, and so on. Phylogenetically, the nature of violence is innate, but to become an action, violence is a product of the social environment in society at large.

Indirectly, intimidation is behavior carried out by individuals or groups to achieve their goals. The goals of the individual or group can of course be positive or negative (Gumelar, 2022). In the literary context, intimidation is often associated with the themes of power and domination, as well as with the characteristics of powerful individuals. Therefore, depictions of intimidation in literature often show a conflict between power where the victim of intimidation and those in power try to maintain or gain power. In literary works, this can be reflected in the struggle between the protagonist and antagonist characters.

In several literary works, intimidation is also often associated with broader social issues, such as race, gender, and social class. Literary works can describe how intimidation can be a form of discrimination and oppression of weaker or marginalized groups in society.

2.1.1 Types of Intimidation

a. Verbal Intimidation

Verbal intimidation is a form of intimidation that is carried out by insulting, insulting, threatening, and mocking the victim with unkind words, calling bad names, making fun of, spreading bad rumors, threatening, speaking rudely, and criticizing cruelly. The aim is to influence the victim's mental condition (Mishna et.al, 2005: 718-738). Verbal intimidation is an action in the form of insulting, harassing, and labeling someone in a communication pattern (Gendron & Frenette, 2016).

Meanwhile, Lestari (2018) said that verbal intimidation is all forms of verbal acts that are insulting, shouting, cursing, and frightening by uttering inappropriate words. According to Shields (1999), verbal intimidation has a worse impact than violence carried out by physical means. This is because injuries resulting from physical intimidation can still be treated with various types of medicines. However, verbal intimidation requires recovery which tends to take longer through therapy and psychological assistance because of its abstract nature.

According to Kuvaja & Day (2021), there are several characteristics of verbal intimidation, namely:

1. Usually carried out by people closest to the victim who has the opportunity to carry out verbal intimidation, namely where the victim finally believes the perpetrator that there

is something wrong with him and begins to feel that he is worthless and that he is the source of the problem.

2. Verbal intimidation is very manipulative and aims to control the victim.
3. Verbal intimidation causes the victim's self-esteem to decrease without the victim realizing it, and they increasingly withdraw from their environment so that the victim will change their behavior and surrender to the behavior whether they realize it or not.

Based on the definition above, researchers conclude that verbal intimidation is threats, insults, harassment, humiliation, shouting, cursing, frightening, calling out bad names, making fun, spreading bad issues, threatening, saying rudely, and criticizing cruelly, and carrying out continuously which has the potential to result in psychological harm and, feelings of inferiority.

b. Physical Intimidation

Physical intimidation has a much more negative impact on the victim than verbal bullying. Because physical threats involve violence. Violence is usually carried out with bare hands, such as slapping or grabbing, and worst of all, with sharp weapons. This physical threat causes deep trauma for the victim who tends to blame themselves. Physical intimidation is usually carried out by people who feel they are physically stronger than other people (Mishna et.al, 2005: 718-738). This action is carried out as an attempt to control the victim with the power possessed by the perpetrator. This includes kicking, hitting, punching, slapping, pushing, and other physical attacks (Zakiyah et al., 2017). Physical intimidation is the most visible and most identifiable form among other forms of intimidation. Afifi et al., (2016) add that the stronger and more mature the person doing the intimidation, the more dangerous this type of attack is, even if it is not intended to cause serious harm. This physical intimidation can cause short-term and long-term damage.

Based on the definition above, it can be concluded that physical intimidation is any form of physical violence involving kicking, hitting, punching, slapping, pushing, and other physical attacks.

c. Psychological Intimidation

Psychological intimidation aims to destroy the victim's mental and selfconfidence. This is done by eliminating the trust of people around the victim, such as accusing him of stealing, exclusion, neglect, and shaming, slandering him, inviting other people to stay away from the victim, and inciting people around the victim to isolate the victim. As a result, the victim's self-confidence will decrease and his psychology will become disturbed (Mishna et.al, 2005: 718-738). According to Hufon (2023), psychological intimidation is an act of violence conveyed through body language or other non-physical actions, that target the opponent's psyche so that it can have a mental impact. The impact can even disrupt the victim's mental condition. Examples of psychological intimidation are humiliating, isolating, nagging, alienating, and even mentally suppressing the victim.

Based on the definition above, the researcher concludes that psychological intimidation is intimidation that attacks the victim's mental and mental health by humiliating, isolating, degrading, alienating, and weakening the victim's self-esteem.

2.2 The Influence of Intimidation in Literature

The depiction of intimidation in literature can affect the way readers perceive the characters, plots, and moral messages in literary works. The influence of intimidation in literature can shape the image of social, economic, and political society. Literature can strengthen or undermine the concept of social justice. According to Losey (2011:33), literary

works that display intimidation can affect readers who have experienced or become victims of intimidation.

Some of the influences that can occur due to the depiction of intimidation in literature are:

1. Convey a moral message: Literary depictions of intimidation can convey a moral message about the importance of avoiding behavior that frightens or coerces others and about the importance of rejecting intimidation and discrimination.
2. Creates tension and conflict: It can create tension and conflict between characters, which can increase the level of drama in a literary work.
3. Demonstrates power dynamics: Intimidation in literature can also reveal power and domination dynamics in the relationships between characters, as well as show the impact of power imbalances in society.

2.3 Theory of Feminism

Feminism is a theory about the equality of women with men, besides that feminism is used as an organizational activity to fight for the rights and liberation of women from male pressure. Feminism seeks to equalize the position between women and men (Anggraini, 2016: 67). Feminist literary criticism is a major form of feminists' strong desire to examine literary works to show women's views that usually in the work of male writers mostly women are abused, or underestimated by patriarchal traditions. Feminism is a women's movement that demands emancipation or equal and just rights with men.

Feminism is unlike any other view or understanding. Feminism does not originate from a theory or concept based on a single theoretical formula. That is why, there is no abstraction of the specific understanding of the application of feminism to all women throughout the ages. The definition of feminism according to Khatimah and Sai'dah (2003: 34) is an awareness of the oppression and exploitation of women that occurs both in the family, at work, and in society as well as the conscious action of men and women to change the situation lexically. Feminism is a movement that demands full equality between women and men. The understanding of feminism can change due to feminist understandings or views based on historical and cultural reality, as well as the level of awareness of perception and behavior.

Feminism is a theory about the equality of women with men, besides that feminism is used as an organizational activity to fight for the rights and liberation of women from male pressure. The novel *Beauty is A Wound* by Eka Kurniawan shows that there is female resistance, as well as the determination of the main character Dewi Ayu when facing Japan in the colonial period, the strength of women in facing the miserable life, and the use of men by women to get their wishes. Therefore, the theory of feminism is more appropriate to express the views of women in literary studies in this research.

2.4 Fight against Intimidation

James C. Scott in Asiktiyan (2002: 13-15) defines resistance as all types of resistance carried out by the weak against the powerful with the aim of reducing or rejecting all demands that harm the weak or asking for the rights they should get. In this definition, it can be understood that resistance is a form of resistance carried out by one or more people who intend to reject the demands of classes of people who are against classes of people who are weak. Fighting against something is also classified as resistance.

According to James C. Scott (Asiktiyan, 2002: 13-15), there are two types of resistance, namely as follows:

- a. Open resistance

Open resistance is an organized and overt form of open and overt resistance. The form of resistance in open resistance is by violent means such as rebellion.

b. Closed resistance

Close resistance is resistance that is carried out clandestinely secretly and unorganized. Some examples of closed resistance are gossiping, slandering, lack of respect for the authorities, etc.

3. Research Method

This study employs a descriptive qualitative research design to examine the portrayal of intimidation and the protagonist's resistance in the novel *Beauty Is a Wound* by Eka Kurniawan. A qualitative approach is selected because it allows for an in-depth interpretation of narrative data in the form of words, sentences, and dialogues found in literary texts, as emphasized by John W. Creswell (2007) and Lexy J. Moleong (2014).

The primary data consist of textual excerpts from the novel that represent forms of intimidation and the protagonist's responses, while secondary data are drawn from relevant books, scholarly articles, journals, and credible online sources to support the analysis. Data collection is conducted through close reading, followed by identifying, selecting, and categorizing relevant passages based on the research focus.

The data are analyzed using qualitative content analysis, which involves interpreting narrative elements, classifying them according to the research questions, and explaining how intimidation is depicted and how the protagonist resists it. Through this process, the study aims to uncover the underlying thematic meanings embedded in the narrative and to provide a systematic and descriptive account of the protagonist's struggle against intimidation.

4. Discussion

This chapter contains analysis and findings that focus on the types of intimidation and the protagonist's struggles to fight against the intimidation. This entire discussion analyzes the intimidation faced by the three protagonists in the novel *Beauty is A Wound* by Eka Kurniawan, namely Dewi Ayu, Beauty, and Alamanda, and their struggles to fight against intimidation. It is told in the novel that *Beauty is A Wound* and a curse for the person who has it. Beauty does not guarantee someone happiness, on the contrary, it causes suffering.

The first subchapter in this chapter displays the types of intimidation, and the second is an analysis of the protagonist's struggles to fight against the intimidation. These two subchapters will be explored and discussed through the explanations below.

4.1 The Types of Intimidation

There are two types of intimidation found in the novel, namely verbal intimidation and psychical intimidation. These types will be explained further in the sub-sections below.

4.1.1 Verbal Intimidation

Verbal intimidation is intimidation that involves words (speech). This is the initial form of intimidation or the most frequently carried out. Through words, people can intimidate other people consciously or unconsciously, for example by gossiping about other people. This intimidation can occur anywhere, such as school, work, or home. This form of intimidation involves insults, teasing, and threats. The intimidator uses degrading words and hurts the victim's feelings. In line with the statement above, the characters Dewi Ayu, Beauty, and Alamanda are the protagonists who are most often verbally intimidated.

The types of verbal intimidation that occur to them include: threatening, saying rude, spreading bad issues, and making fun. However, due to the lack of information about these

types of verbal intimidation, the researcher looked for references and understanding from other experts.

a. Threatening

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, a threat is a communication of intent to cause harm or loss to another person. Intimidation is a tactic used by parties to a conflict to timid or psychologically intimidate the other party and prepare them for coercion or control. Intimidation to coercion is considered intimidation. According to US Legal, threatening behavior (or criminal intimidation) is a crime that intentionally or knowingly places another person in fear of physical harm. Threat of harm generally includes the knowledge of an act or event of injury, physical or mental harm, injury or material impairment or loss to a person. Threatening can be seen in the novel through the data below.

The group walked toward the prison, passing through three iron gates guarded by soldiers. Before entering, they lined up in front of a table where two Japanese men sat clutching a list. Next to them, there was a basket for money and valuables. A number of women were already taking off their jewelry and tossing it in. ***“Do it before we search you,”*** ordered one of the soldiers in proper Malay (Kurniawan, 2002: 61).

The data above clearly shows verbal intimidation and physical intimidation against Dewi Ayu, an Indo (a citizen of Indonesian and Dutch descent). This does not only happen to herself but to all Indo and Indigenous people. The Japanese armies destroyed Halimunda and imprisoned the Indo who were a threat to them. They imprisoned them and took their valuables. Through the bold words in the quotation above, it can be seen that the Japanese soldiers force and threaten Dewi Ayu to give them her valuables. Of course, this implies verbal and physical intimidation, namely coercion and involving threats. The Japanese Army's goal is to create fear and cruelty that is detrimental to the Indo and natives. Other data to prove threatening can be seen from the quotation below.

She swore that if she only had all of her power at that moment, she would not have hesitated to take a knife and stab that man to death as he slept. Or to detonate a mortar in his mouth. Or to shoot him deep into the ocean with a cannon. But she was wrong to think the man had fallen asleep, because Shodancho now got up and said—and this time she could hear him ***“If all you want to do is conquer men and throw them away like abject trash, well, then it's too bad you met me, Alamanda. I win every war I fight, including the war against you.”*** She heard these cynical and contemptuous words that pierced like a thorn but couldn't say anything in reply, only look at Shodancho with a still blurry gaze as he stood up and gathered his clothes (Kurniawan, 2002: 182).

The data above clearly shows verbal intimidation and physical intimidation against Dewi Ayu, an Indo (a citizen of Indonesian and Dutch descent). This did not only happen to herself but to all Indo and Indigenous people. The Japanese armies destroyed Halimunda and imprisoned the Indo who were a threat to them. They imprisoned them and took their valuables. Through the bold words in the quotation above, it can be seen that the Japanese soldiers force and threaten Dewi Ayu to give them her valuables. Of course, this implies verbal and physical intimidation, namely coercion and involving threats. The Japanese Army's goal was to create fear and cruelty that was detrimental to the Indo and natives.

b. Saying Rude

Saying rude complies (Adisastrajaya, 2012) in (Latif Muslim, Supriatna, & Indriani Putri Utami, 2018: 879–888.) Saying rude is inappropriate language to speak because it is not good for the existing rules in a language environment. Saying rude is an expression that contains harsh words or rude or dirty expressions, either in joking, saying sexy things, or cursing someone. Saying rude can be seen in the novel through the data below.

This woman leaped in through the window, convinced that Dewi Ayu had gone too far. "Listen up, you whore who slept with all of our men!" she said resentfully. ***"If you are going to die, then die, but don't preserve your body, because it's only your rotting corpse that nobody will envy."*** She shoved Dewi Ayu, but her body only rolled over without being awakened. Rosinah came in and gave a signal that she must already be dead. "That whore is dead?" Rosinah nodded (Kurniawan, 2002: 21).

The data above proves that verbal intimidation does exist in the novel *Beauty is A Wound*. This was conveyed through a greeting received by Dewi Ayu from her neighbor, whose husband had been having an affair with Dewi Ayu. Even though the situation and conditions justify the woman speaking harshly towards Dewi Ayu, the word "slut" is still a harsh word when spoken to other people. Another harsh word that appeared was the woman cursing Dewi Ayu to die. Because only with Dewi Ayu's death, the men in their village were no longer tempted by her beauty, which made all the women in the village jealous. Further data to prove rude words can be seen from the quotation below.

"A Dutch woman wandering about in the era of the new republic." She suddenly heard a voice coming from behind her back. "What are you doing here, Missy?" She turned around and there was the owner of that voice: an old native woman who looked quite fierce. She was wearing a sarong and a tattered kebaya, with a cane supporting her leg. Her mouth was filled with clumps of betel leaf. She stood looking at Dewi Ayu resentfully, as if she would strike Dewi Ayu with her cane just as she would strike a stray dog, without hesitation (Kurniawan, 2002: 93).

The data above shows the rude words spoken by the old woman, the new owner of Dewi Ayu's house. The old woman's words above can be said to be rude words in the form of sarcasm. She insinuated that Dewi Ayu, who is of Dutch descent, still exists and lives in Halimunda. Because, in fact, the Dutch had lost to Japan, and then Japan also lost to the natives. The defeat of the Dutch became the reason for the old woman to claim Dewi Ayu's house, that their property should be owned by Indigenous people. So, it can be concluded that the old woman intimidated Dewi Ayu with rude words, because these words contained hatred, and annoyance, and were aimed at hurting other people.

c. Spreading Bad Issues

Spreading bad issues can refer to the act of spreading information that is false or detrimental to a particular person or group of people. This action can be carried out directly or indirectly and can be carried out through various media, such as social media, newspapers, television, or radio. Spreading bad issues can have serious consequences, such as damaging the reputation of a person or group of people, or can even trigger legal action. Therefore, it is very important to check the veracity of information before releasing it to the public. Spreading bad issues can be seen in the novel through the data below.

As soon as day dawned, she would vanish inside the house, like the head of a turtle shying from those who disturb it, because schoolchildren always

stopped in front of the fence gate, hoping to see her, staring at the door and the windows in their curiosity. ***The old folks had already told them the scary tales about terrifying Beauty, who lived in that house, ready to cut off their heads at the slightest disobedience, ready to gobble them alive for any whiny complaint:*** all these stories haunted them, and yet at the same time heightened their desire to meet her and determine whether such a frightening specter truly did exist (Kurniawan, 2002: 28).

Beauty is the only child of Dewi Ayu who was born with an ugly physique. People who see her would say that she is a monster. Because of his physical appearance, people spread bad news and lies about her. Also, they often teased and made fun of her. As a result, Beauty does not want to show herself when daylight so that people will not make fun of her physical appearance. Through the explanation above, it can be stated that Beauty receives verbal intimidation from the environment where she lives. This form of verbal intimidation is spreading bad rumors, mocking, and insulting. The result that happened to Beauty is avoidance and withdrawal from social life.

d. Making Fun

Making fun of is behavior that belittles or insults another person. In Islam, making fun of religious teachings or their followers is a major sin and disbelief. Apart from that, making fun of other people also includes behavior that hurts other people which can damage their good name or human dignity; therefore, bullying is haram in Islam (Tuaksikal: 2010). The form of verbal intimidation, such as making fun occurred against Dewi Ayu. This happens between Dewi Ayu and the new owner of her house. This form of intimidation will be proven through the following data.

The old woman quickly ordered her to leave, but Dewi Ayu insisted that she held the deed. In response, the woman merely laughed, waving her hand. ***“Your house has been confiscated, Missy,”*** she said. And it was clear, just as the old woman explained while seeing the uninvited guest to the door, that the house had been taken by the Japanese and at the end of the war, a guerrilla family stole it back. This was the old lady’s family: her husband had lost half his arm to the slash of a samurai sword before going to the jungle with five of his sons, and not long after that he died, shot by a KNIL soldier, along with two of those sons. ***“So now I have inherited this house. But you can take your photos with you if you want, and I won’t charge you for them.”*** Dewi Ayu realized that there was no way to fight the woman with words (Kurniawan, 2002: 93-94).

The data above shows the verbal intimidation experienced by Dewi Ayu, namely being ridiculed and belittled. During the Japanese colonial period over Indonesia, all property belonging to Dutch people is forcibly taken and accidentally given to other people. Therefore, when Dewi Ayu returned to her house many years ago, the house is already owned by someone else. The old woman, the new owner of the house, claims that she already owns the house. Dewi Ayu can take the photos left behind, but she cannot take the house. Apart from that, verbal intimidation is visible when the old woman laughs and waves her hand, saying in a scornful and dismissive tone that Dewi Ayu's house had been confiscated. Due to this treatment, Dewi Ayu seemed unable to say anything and was serious. This proves that Dewi Ayu was verbally intimidated.

The data below also shows the verbal intimidation faced by Beauty. This will be explained further in the quotation below.

"So, she has three daughters?" asked Aneu Stammmler. "Four. The youngest was born twelve days before Dewi Ayu died." The kid told them the address where they could find their youngest granddaughter, that she lived with and was taken care of by a mute servant named Rosinah, and that Dewi Ayu had named her Beauty. "*But she is hideous, like a monster*," warned the kid. They found out for themselves when they visited the house the next day. They both almost fainted, incredulous that they had a granddaughter like that. "*Like a burnt cake*," said Aneu Stammmler, sinking down into a chair (Kurniawan, 2002: 280).

Through the quotation above, it can be seen that the verbal intimidation of beauty was not only carried out by her neighbors but also by her grandmother. Aneu Stamler is Dewi Ayu's mother. In the past, she left the newborn Dewi Ayu at her parents' doorstep and fled to the Netherlands with her husband. She and her husband are half-brothers from different mothers. After years away, she returns to Halimunda to meet her daughter However, Dewi Ayu has died, and she only finds Rosinah and Beauty in the house. When she sees Dewi Ayu's fourth daughter, Beauty, Aneu says that Beauty is like a "burnt cake". This is of course a derogatory word that can intimidate the victim.

4.1.2 Psychical Intimidation

Psychical intimidation is behavior that is anti-social and aims to make someone feel afraid or dangerous. This intimidation will destroy and mentally hurt the victim. As a result, victims lose self-confidence, anxiety, and other psychological disorders. Types of psychical intimidation include exclusion, neglect, and shaming. In connection with the explanation above, Beauty is one of the characters who most often experiences psychical intimidation. The psychical intimidation is exclusion and this will be proven through the data below.

a. Exclusion

Exclusion is a term that refers to the action or process of excluding individuals, groups, or communities from full participation in social, economic, or political life. The purpose of exclusion is to create separation or isolation which can result in feelings of being unappreciated, not taken into account, or not recognized by the majority.

She had been obsessed with that handsome prince ever since she realized that other people were not as ugly as she was. Rosinah had tried to bring her to neighbors' houses back when she was only a babe in arms, but not one person received them, because their children would scream and cry for the rest of the afternoon, and the old folks would instantly come down with fever and die two days later. They rejected her everywhere, and it was that way, too, when it was time for her to attend school; not one school accepted Beauty (Kurniawan, 2002: 26-27).

Through the data above, it is clearly illustrated that Beauty experienced psychological intimidation, namely ostracism by her environment. Intimidation for not being beautiful can refer to degrading or harassing someone based on their physical evaluation. This is proven by the sentence "but no one person received them". This means that Beauty's ugly physical appearance means she is ostracized by her environment. In fact, they reject it everywhere, not only at home but also at school. Beauty accepts this injustice and intimidation because she is physically different. Furthermore, the quotation below explains the intimidation that faced by Beauty because of her physical appearance.

Aside from all these marvels, she was still an unfortunate, ugly, and pathetic little girl. Rosinah often caught her standing behind the window curtain, peeking out at people in the street, or gazing at her when she had to go out to buy something as if asking to be invited along. Of course, Rosinah would have been happy to take her along, but the little girl herself would protest, saying in her pitiful voice, “No, it’s better I don’t come, because people will lose their appetites for the rest of their lives (Kurniawan, 2002: 27).

The data above explains the consequences of the intimidation that occurs against Beauty. She is intimidated by the way people look at her. The signs of intimidation can be seen from what Beauty feels. She feels that people will be uncomfortable seeing and hanging out with her. As a result, she isolates and withdraws herself from the environment. Another consequence that arises is that she feels insecure because other people are not like him, ugly.

4.1.3 The Protagonist’s Struggles to Fight Against the Intimidation

Resistance against intimidation is divided into two, namely open resistance and closed resistance. Based on the data that has been collected, researchers found that the protagonist fought against intimidation openly, namely open resistance. So, in this sub-section, the researcher only discusses resistance to intimidation openly.

4.1.3.1 Open Resistance

Intimidation is an action that is often carried out by some people to gain power and control over the victim. Intimidation can have a negative impact on a person or society, and fighting back against intimidation is an important step in creating safety for everyone. It is called open resistance if the victim openly resists. In line with the explanation above and analysis of types of intimidation, the protagonists in the novel *Beauty is A Wound* do not just remain silent about the intimidation they receive. They put up resistance because they do not want their self-esteem to be stepped on. This resistance can be proven through the data below.

But the ruckus quickly came to an end as soon as the police came with a Kyai who considered the whole thing heresy. That kyai began to fume and ordered Dewi Ayu to stop her shameful behavior, even demanding that she remove the burial shroud. “You are asking a prostitute to take off her clothes,” said Dewi Ayu scornfully, “so you’d better have the money to pay me.” The kyai quickly prayed for mercy, moved along, and never came again (Kurniawan, 2002: 17).

The data above shows Kyai's ridicule towards Dewi Ayu. This incident begins when Dewi Ayu puts on her own shroud and waits for death. As a result, people are curious and gossip about her behavior. The furious Kyai then came to Dewi Ayu and told her to remove the shroud. Certainly, Dewi Ayu does not accept Kyai's treatment and goes against his words. She responds with sarcasm that people have to pay to take off her clothes. It can be concluded that Dewi Ayu fights against intimidation openly, namely by means of verbal resistance. Verbal opposition is a firm statement used to express a view or argument. The struggle against intimidation was also visible when Dewi Ayu expressed her opinion on the ongoing war.

That was how the Franciscan nuns tried to help during the war; they opened the doors of the dormitory at no charge. Now all of the lessons at school were filled with anxious stories about the war that was finally right in their own front yards. Dewi Ayu, who was impatient with the endless speeches,

stood up and asked loudly: **“Rather than sitting here talking, why don’t we learn how to shoot rifles and cannons?”** (Kurniawan, 2002: 46).

Apart from showing verbal resistance, Dewi Ayu also showed non-verbal and open resistance. She said that instead of just talking about war, why do not they actively defend it, for example by firing guns and cannons. She wants real action rather than just mere talk. Of course, this statement is Dewi Ayu's view of the intimidation of Japanese colonialism. From this explanation, it can be said that Dewi Ayu does not just silently accept colonialism under the Japanese government. She is clearly not afraid of such intimidation. Other data showing Dewi Ayu's resistance to intimidation is illustrated in the quotation below.

That angered Shodancho so that he didn’t care about anything anymore and roughly yanked at his new bride’s evening gown until it was torn. Alamanda let out a little scream but Shodancho quickly silenced her, pulling at her clothes. Just when it seemed that Alamanda was no longer really resisting and Shodancho had ripped off her gown, he cried out in surprise. “Damn it! What have you done to your crotch?” he asked, gaping down at a pair of underwear made out of metal, locked with a padlock that appeared to have no keyhole with which to open it. Alamanda said with a mysterious calm, “This is an antiterror garment, Shodancho, I ordered it directly from a metalsmith and a sorcerer. It can only be opened with a mantra that only I know how to recite, and I will never ever open it for you, not even if the sky has fallen.” (Kurniawan, 2002: 189-190).

The essence of intimidation is coercion aimed at taking control and power. This is what Shodancho does to Alamanda when he rapes her. He thinks that Alamanda will not be able to fight him and will get the woman completely. Indeed, Alamanda agrees to marry him, but not to have a relationship like husband and wife. However, he thought wrongly. Alamanda did not want to submit to Shodancho's control and claimed herself completely. Therefore, she puts on metalsmith panties so that Shodancho cannot touch her as he pleases. She does this for a year of their marriage. Alamanda's actions illustrate her struggle and resistance against Shodancho. Furthermore, the data below describes Dewi Ayu's struggle when she was imprisoned by the Japanese.

Making a small campfire, she boiled all the leeches in the tin with some water from the river. Without adding any seasoning, she quickly brought them back to the hall that was now her new home. “Dinner is served,” she said to a number of women and children who were living near her, her new neighbors. No one was interested in eating leeches, and one woman practically retched at the very thought of such a meal. “We’re not eating the leeches, but cow’s blood,” Dewi Ayu explained. She split open the leeches with a small knife, pulled out the clots of cow’s blood inside them, stabbed them with the point of the knife, and swallowed them. Nobody moved to join in her savage meal, at least not until night fell and they could no longer bear their hunger. Then they tried it. It tasted bland, but sort of good. “We won’t starve,” said Dewi Ayu. “In addition to leeches, there are geckos, lizards, and mice.” (Kurniawan, 2002: 62-74).

The data above illustrates Dewi Ayu's struggle to survive in prison. As explained previously, the Japanese army forced and imprisoned the Indos. They are left without enough to eat and are forced to starve for days. Unlike other prisoners, Dewi Ayu does not want to just stand by and face her fate. She must survive. Therefore, she looked for all the resources

she could eat. For example, looking for leeches that eat cow's blood for consumption. Of course, this action is an open resistance to the Japanese army which indicates that she refuses to bow to pressure or threats.

5. Conclusion

The analysis of the novel *Beauty Is a Wound* by Eka Kurniawan reveals that the protagonists experience two primary forms of intimidation: verbal and physical. Verbal intimidation is manifested through threatening, insulting, mocking, and the spread of negative rumors, particularly targeting the characters Dewi Ayu and Beauty. Dewi Ayu faces intimidation when she is belittled and ridiculed by an elderly woman who claims ownership of her inherited house, while Beauty becomes the object of insults and mockery due to her physical appearance. In contrast, physical intimidation is reflected in acts of social exclusion experienced by Beauty, who is ostracized and marginalized because of her appearance. As a result, she loses the opportunity to attend school and suffers a decline in self-confidence.

The study also demonstrates that the protagonists respond to intimidation through open resistance, as conceptualized by James C. Scott. Dewi Ayu exhibits resistance by verbally confronting those who demean her, expressing defiance against oppressive forces, and striving to survive despite the intimidation she faces, including during her imprisonment. Similarly, Alamanda resists harassment by Shodancho through symbolic actions, such as wearing protective metal underwear to prevent physical violation, representing her effort to reclaim control over her body and dignity. These findings indicate that although women are often positioned as vulnerable due to societal stereotypes, the female characters in the novel display resilience, agency, and the capacity to challenge intimidation and injustice.

For future research, scholars are encouraged to examine intimidation in other literary works to compare its representation across different cultural and social contexts. Further studies may also apply alternative theoretical perspectives, such as trauma theory or gender studies, to deepen the analysis of power relations and resistance. Additionally, future research could explore readers' responses to intimidation in literature to better understand its psychological and educational impact.

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