

# VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMAN IN EKA KURNIAWAN'S NOVEL *CANTIK ITU LUKA*

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## Abstract

This study delves into the theme of violence against women in Eka Kurniawan's novel *Cantik Itu Luka* based on gender roles and violence experienced by women during and after Japan's periods of pre-independence and post-independence. The study aims to identify and analyze the various forms of violence and the underlying factors contributing to social deviance towards the protagonist, utilizing theoretical framework of cultural forms of violence by means of descriptive qualitative research to uncover the social phenomena of violence against women. The study concludes that the novel provides a profound exploration of gender-based violence, encompassing direct, structural, and cultural dimensions of violence. The protagonist embodies the trauma of direct violence witnessed during the Japanese occupation, highlighting the gender-based discrimination prevalent against women. Structural violence is evident in societal disparities, while cultural violence permeates the narrative through deeply rooted attitudes and beliefs. The novel also delves into various aspects of discrimination faced by female characters in educational, domestic, and professional settings. The intertwining of historical contexts and personal stories within the novel serves as a potent commentary on women's ongoing struggles for justice and the enduring effects of discrimination. Ultimately, *Cantik Itu Luka* emerges as a poignant exploration of the intricate layers of gender-based violence and the resilience exhibited by women in confronting oppression.

**Keywords:** *cultural violence; direct violence; structural violence; violence*

## 1. Introduction

During the colonial period, women were considered very weak, so they were forced to satisfy sexual needs of men. Adiyanta (2019: 1) states that women have a position as a subaltern subject or receive discriminatory treatment from groups that have power in the colonial period so that if they refuse to fulfill the sexual needs of the soldiers, they would be tortured and still have to serve the greed of the invaders. The situation of women, especially teenagers, is very apprehensive. They have to give up their virginity by force and for human beings who are inhuman. The colonialists deliberately provide a place for them to commit indecent acts with innocent women. They are forced to serve tens or even hundreds of men in one day. There is no resistance that could be done because women are considered low.

Actually women are synonymous with gentle nature. Therefore, women must be looked after properly. Sugihastuti & Suharto (2016: 64) state that stereotypes of women are soft, beautiful, emotional, and motherly, while men have the power and rational thinking. In fact, various cross-cultural studies show that it is this kind of dichotomy that causes women to always be subordinated. Therefore, the cases of harassment or violence are always associated with stereotypes like this. In addition, if women experience harassment they are blamed for not taking care of themselves. Women only function to serve their husbands; therefore, this stereotype assumes that education for women is secondary. Stereotypes like this form the basis of religious and cultural rules in society.

Women are creatures full of tenderness and do not have strong power like men, so they are given housework and serve their husbands for those who are already married. Perceptions like this are the thoughts of ancient society that make women's status below men. Meanwhile, another concept is the concept of gender. According to Ainiyah (2017: 100), there is a difference in a trait that is inherent in both men and women. Women are known for their gentle nature, full of affection, graceful, beautiful, polite, emotional, motherly, and need attention. Meanwhile, men are known for their strong, hard, rational, mighty, fierce nature, and are essentially protective. Based on some of these perceptions, women tend to be targets of crime, especially sexual crimes. They are considered to have no power to fight because they have a gentle nature that makes men have the courage to commit various crimes against women.

Violence is a form of criminal behavior that is not wearing and can hurt others. According to Novita (2019: 40) violence is an act committed by another party, with individual or more actors, and can cause misery for the party being targeted. The phenomenon of violence in society often makes women the main object of acts of violence. With the hope that readers can take lessons from phenomena that occur in society, authors often raise this issue in a literary work. A literary work basically contains social behavior through the characters. There are many characters that can be described prominent, one of which is violence that occurs in the reality of people's lives.

It is these various oppressions and violence experienced by women which then encourage the emergence of the feminist movement aimed at women in order to realize equal rights between women and men. Sugihastuti & Suharto (2016: 18) state that the feminist movement emerged in the 60s in the United States. In a lexical sense, feminism is a women's movement that demands full equality of rights between women and men. This feminist movement elicits a very good response among women, because it fights for freedom for women in politics, education, work, and other things that are usually done by men.

The novel as a form of literary work can be used as a medium for conveying the voice of society. The description of the construction in the novel also influences literary works. The embodied form of fiction is of course not purely a picture of society as a whole (real). However, with the addition of the development of the author's storytelling style which involves his imagination, a work of fiction is created. A novel is a fictional story that presents deep and ever-changing aspects of people's lives and is a meaningful dynamic unity. Novels are often researched in various disciplines, one of which is feminist literary criticism. This criticism takes issue with the longstanding ideology in which men predominate. This study certainly focuses on a feminist perspective which criticizes stereotypes of women which give rise to social stigma and if challenged, will

result in conflict according to the understanding of patriarchal society (Nafia & Dewi, 2022: 12).

One of the novels that tells about gender roles and the violence that women receive is *Cantik Itu Luka* by Eka Kurniawan. This novel is one of the many literary works that take on a colonial setting with the issue of women. This novel describes women in general during the colonial era, forced and forced to become prostitutes when Japan colonizes the country. This novel reveals the dark side of not only Japan's preposition, but also post-independence. Women do not necessarily get independent; they still have to fight for justice. *Cantik Itu Luka* is the best-selling novel of all time, even 20 years after its first release. The novel is a multi-generational epic that follows the life of an Indonesian family during the 20th century, and explores themes such as history, politics, colonialism and gender. The premise presented by Kurniawan is quite simple, about a grudge covered in horror, mystical, supernatural nuances and not forgetting to touch on human issues.

Being a prostitute with four children without a marriage and the negative stigma of the Halimunda community has not stopped the protagonist by the name of Dewi Ayu trying to improve her life through her child. However, the same thing, even more terrible than his own life, is experienced by his four daughters. In the novel *Cantik Itu Luka*, the novelist, Eka Kurniawan seems to want to tell that war can degrade women and that the image of women is always portrayed as weak without being able to put up a fight.

The novel is set in Indonesia and focuses on the lives of several women who have been subjected to various types of violence and abuse. One of the main characters, Dewi Ayu, is a young woman who is forced into prostitution after being sold by her own father. Through the experiences of the main characters, Kurniawan sheds light on the various forms of gender-based violence that women face in Indonesian society. This includes sexual violence, domestic violence, and violence perpetrated by the state.

In this research, the researchers examine the types of gender-based violence against women: cultural violence, direct violence and structural violence in the novel *Cantik Itu Luka* and discuss how Kurniawan's novel contributes to the wider conversation on gender-based violence and women's rights in Indonesia.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Feminism**

Feminism is one of the most important theories, and shows a strong influence on the development of the literary criticism approach as a theory that is new and contains a feminist concept, often misunderstood and seen as a theory contrary to values and norms. Sikana (2005: 279) states that feminism is the struggle of women to get the same status as men and ask for old rights sidelined by history. This theory makes use of its main concepts, and the difference between these concepts needs to be understood. The basic concept of this approach is feminist, female, and feminine. Feminism is defined as a political issue and position and femaleness (women) is defined as physical or biological, and femininity (femaleness) defined as the desired behavior by society. Sikana (2005:290) then explains that feminist literary criticism has several principles, namely biological aspects, psychological aspects, and social aspects.

## 2.2 Violence

Violence, derived from the Latin "vis" meaning strength and "latus" meaning to bring, referring to acts causing harm or death to individuals or property. It encompasses physical force against persons or objects, with social violence targeting specific social groups. Walby (2013) defines it as physical abuse or severe destruction, with psychological analysis revealing discrepancies between potential and actualities, leading to direct and structural violence. Galtung & Fischer (2013) distinguishes the points among physical, psychological and structural violence, while psychological aspects in literature explore characters' thoughts and emotions, influenced by taste, societal norms, and pressures. Social aspects, including socialization processes and gender roles, impact violence. Models like the psychodynamic, personality traits, social learning, family structure, environmental stress, social-psychological, and mental illness models relate to violence causation, highlighting familial dynamics, societal pressures, and psychological factors. Understanding these models aids in comprehending the complexities of violence.

## 3. Research Method

The research method employed in this study utilizes a descriptive qualitative analysis approach to delve into the concept of Gender-Based Violence depicted in Eka Kurniawan's novel *Cantik Itu Luka*. Following Endrawaswara's notion (2013) that the sociology of literature tackles human issues, this method is apt for examining the types and causal factors of Gender-Based Violence experienced by Dewi Ayu within the novel's narrative. The descriptive qualitative analysis method involves observations and document reviews, where the novel serves as the primary source of data. This approach aligns with the sociological perspective, aiming to elucidate social deviance factors in Dewi Ayu's character, thereby contributing to a deeper understanding of societal dynamics as portrayed in the novel (Satori, et al., 2017).

Data collection procedures encompass document analysis and content review methods, focusing on the novel's contents related to Gender-Based Violence. By carefully studying and categorizing data from *Cantik Itu Luka*, the researchers aim to gain insights into the underlying factors and manifestations of Gender-Based Violence. The data analysis process involves thorough reading, categorization, corpus formation, analysis based on established theories, and drawing conclusions regarding the forms and causes of violence against women depicted in the novel. This systematic approach, rooted in qualitative research principles, ensures a comprehensive exploration of the research topic, supported by scholarly references to bolster its scientific validity.

## 4. Discussion

### 4.1 Direct Violence

Dewi Ayu, a central figure in the novel, emerges as a character marked by the indelible scars of direct violence, a harrowing testament to the tumultuous historical backdrop against which her life unfolds. The narrative casts her as a woman whose journey is steeped in adversity, with the initial shadows of discrimination darkening when she is a prisoner of Japanese soldiers in Bloedenkamp.

The direct violence against Dewi Ayu becomes a lens through which the novel examines the broader socio-political climate, unraveling the layers of oppression woven into the fabric of war-torn societies. It portrays her resilience and strength in the face of adversity, underscoring the human spirit's capacity to endure, resist, and transcend the

shackles imposed by external forces. Dewi Ayu's narrative serves as a poignant reflection on the enduring impact of direct violence, not merely as a personal tragedy but as a microcosm of the collective trauma inflicted upon individuals and communities during historical upheavals.

In summary, the direct violence experienced by Dewi Ayu in Japanese soldiers in Bloedenkamp is a pivotal aspect of the novel, unraveling a complex tapestry of suffering, discrimination, and resilience. Her character becomes a vessel through which the broader societal implications of wartime brutality and gender-based oppression are explored, inviting readers to confront the harsh realities of history and the enduring strength of the human spirit.

*“Aku gantikan gadis yang tadi, Komandan Kau tiduri aku tapi beri Ibunya obat dan dokter. Dan Dokter!”* (Kurniawan, 2015: 71).

The poignant quote encapsulates a moment of profound despair and moral quandary in the life of Dewi Ayu, a central character in the narrative. Faced with the anguish of her terminally ill mother, Ola, in the grim confines of Bloedenkamp during wartime, Dewi Ayu grapples with a reality so stark and intricate that it becomes an agonizing pill to swallow. The narrative unfolds with a vivid portrayal of the weight of responsibility and the impossible choices thrust upon Dewi Ayu in her pursuit of sustenance and survival.

Dewi Ayu's internal conflict surges to the forefront as she confronts the brutal reality that securing medicine and sustenance for her ailing mother hinges on acquiescing to the insatiable desires of the commander. The stark choice between preserving her mother's life and sacrificing her own moral boundaries casts Dewi Ayu into a moral abyss. The resignation alluded to in the quote signifies not just Ola's acceptance of her impending fate but Dewi Ayu's profound acknowledgment of the harsh constraints imposed by a merciless environment.

The direct violence is received by Dewi Ayu showing that she is a prisoner of Japanese soldiers, being used as a mistress, as shown below:

*“Kami merawat jiwa-jiwa tentara yang sakit,” katanya.  
“Demikianlah kami jadi pelacur, dipaksa dan tak dibayar”*  
(Kurniawan, 2015: 96).

The evocative quote sheds light on the profound misfortune that befalls Dewi Ayu during a dark chapter in her life when she falls prey to the grim circumstances of being taken prisoner by the Japanese during the colonial period. The narrative unfolds with a stark portrayal of the depths of despair and degradation that Dewi Ayu and her fellow mistresses are subjected to in the face of wartime atrocities. The quote captures the essence of their plight, transcending mere imprisonment to a horrifying extent where they are coerced into a life of prostitution.

Moreover, the mention of the colonial period adds another layer of complexity to Dewi Ayu's narrative. It suggests that the exploitation and degradation of women are not only a consequence of the war but are deeply rooted in the historical and colonial context of the time. The mistreatment of Dewi Ayu and her fellow mistresses becomes emblematic of the broader injustices and abuses inflicted upon individuals who find themselves at the mercy of oppressive forces.

In this novel, it is clear that Dewi Ayu becomes a prostitute to support her family.

*“Mama Kalong masih mengizinkan Dewi Ayu menerima baik hati untuk menempati salah satu kamar, tanpa harus melacurkan dirinya kembali, sampai kapanpun”* (Kurniawan, 2015:1 03).

Dewi Ayu devotes herself as a prostitute becoming a victim of rape by Shodancho who eventually marries her daughter Alamanda. This rape happens because he does not get a reply from Alamanda. It is found in the following data:

*“Ia tak pulang bagaimanapun, namun akhirnya dengan kasar membuka pakaian Dewi Ayu dan mendorongnya ke tempat tidur. Ia membuka pakaiannya dengan tergesa-gesa, dan naik ke atas tempat tidur menyetubuhi pelacur itu dengan ketergesa-gesaan yang sama. Setelah kemaluannya muntah-muntah, ia tergeletak sejenak sebelum turun dan berpakaian, lalu pergi meninggalkannya tanpa berkata apa-apa lagi”* (Kurniawan, 2015: 137).

The second dimension of violence within the narrative unfolds as a stark confrontation with nature itself. Alamanda, the inaugural offspring of Dewi Ayu, emerges as a central figure in this exploration of direct violence against the inherent harmony of the natural order. As the narrative unfolds, Alamanda becomes a poignant embodiment of the perils and injustices that extend beyond the human realm. The use of the term "direct violence against nature" evokes a profound sense of violation, suggesting an intrusion upon the very essence of life and existence. In the intricate tapestry of the story, Alamanda's experience becomes a crucible where physical and nonphysical discrimination converge in a distressing crescendo.

The convergence of physical and nonphysical discrimination in Alamanda's narrative emphasizes the multidimensional nature of violence and its pervasive impact on both individuals and the broader fabric of existence. As the audience is drawn into Alamanda's ordeal, the narrative compels reflection on the interconnectedness of human actions and their repercussions on the natural world, prompting a profound exploration of the consequences of disrupting the delicate equilibrium that binds humanity and nature.

*“Alamanda masih melihat wajahnya yang berupa seberkas warna putih di jarak yang demikian dekat dengan matanya, merasakan kemaluannya dibuat porak poranda oleh kebiadaban tersebut”* (Kurniawan, 2015: 223).

The data above, explain that the Shodancho finally rapes Alamanda because he is very infatuated with Alamanda's beauty, even before he has proposed to Alamanda in a good way but Alamanda rejects him arrogantly. This is what makes the Shodancho commit the act of rape. Before being raped, he first drugs Alamanda and takes her to an old house, where he then carries out his bad intentions. He does assault in the form of coercive sexual intercourse. As a woman, she is powerless to resist. Even Alamanda's genital is ravaged by the rude Shodancho. From the data above it also illustrates that Alamanda is a woman who experiences physical discrimination, due to the violent actions of the Shodancho who attacks her sexual organs, which are carried out intentionally, causing great pain and suffering.

## 4.2. Structural Violence

The concept of structural violence constitutes a profound exploration of societal inequalities and systemic injustices that operate within the framework of social structures. It represents a form of violence that transcends the conventional understanding of physical harm inflicted by individuals, instead manifesting as a deeply embedded, often subtle, harm rooted in the very fabric of society. At its core, structural violence acknowledges that certain social, economic, or political structures inherently disadvantage specific groups, hindering their ability to fulfill basic human needs. Unlike overt acts of violence committed by individuals, structural violence operates insidiously, perpetuating harm through institutionalized norms, policies, and power dynamics.

This narrative choice also prompts readers to reflect on the broader implications of such depictions. It invites contemplation on the real-world consequences of reinforcing gender stereotypes and the importance of challenging these narratives to foster a more equitable and just society. By presenting women as multifaceted beings who grapple with societal expectations and personal struggles, the novel has the potential to inspire conversations about the complexities of gender dynamics and the urgent need for societal transformation to empower women beyond restrictive stereotypes. Ultimately, this portrayal serves as a poignant commentary on the challenges faced by women in navigating a world that often defines and constrains them based on narrow and limiting perspectives.

*“Kemaharannya menguap demi memperoleh anugrah luar biasa ini, di sore hari yang membosankan. Gadis ini sangat cantik, mungkin masih perawan, memberikan tubuhnya untuk seorang lelaki tua hanya untuk obat demam dan dokter. Ia tersenyum, begitu licik dan bengis, merasa dirinya sebagai lelaki tua yang sangat beruntung”*  
(Kurniawan, 2015: 71).

The text provides a vivid exploration of the intricate dynamics surrounding a man's sexual discourse, emphasizing the awakening of desire upon encountering a beautiful woman. This nuanced portrayal delves into the complex interplay of power and submission within the realm of male sexuality. The assertion that women are compelled to submit to the man's power underscores the imbalances inherent in traditional gender dynamics, where societal norms often dictate a hierarchical structure. This power dynamic reveals itself in the way men perceive and engage with sexual identity, transforming it into a multifaceted landscape laden with desire, fantasy, emotion, symbols, conflict, and ambivalence.

In essence, the text unfolds as a rich tapestry, unraveling the layers of meaning woven into the fabric of a man's sexual discourse. It invites contemplation on the broader implications of power dynamics, the complex nature of desire, and the multifaceted dimensions that shape the intricate landscape of sexual identity. By delving into the nuances of these themes, the text encourages a more profound understanding of the complexities inherent in human sexuality and the need for a nuanced and empathetic approach to discussions surrounding desire, power, and identity.

*“Malam pertama itu sungguh-sungguh merupakan horor yang mengerikan. Cahaya menghilang begitu cepat sebagaimana seharusnya di negeri tropis. Tak ada listrik di dalam tahanan, tapi hampir semua orang membawa lilin, sehingga nyala kecil memenuhi ruangan dan dinding dipenuhi bayangan yang bergoyang-goyang*

*membuat banyak anak kecil ketakutan. Mereka berbaring di lantai beralaskan matras, tampak menyedihkan, dan tak pernah sungguh-sungguh memperoleh tidur yang nyenyak”* (Kurniawan, 2015: 67).

Look at how accidents are experienced by female characters in *CIL* novel. The theory of feminism is often associated with sexuality and gender. In the novel *CIL* sex is very thickly felt. This is “natural”, considering that the Indonesian state at that time is not yet independent. The colonization of women seems to be common, even in general, this text or novel tells the whole story about women. Something beautiful, in the sense of “beautiful” it becomes a scary thing. The “beauty is a wound” paradox portrays beautiful women will always be victims.

### 4.3 Cultural Violence

Galtung and Fischer (2013) make conceptualization of cultural violence offering a profound lens to understand the deep-rooted attitudes and beliefs ingrained in societies that contribute to the perpetuation of power imbalances and the acceptance of violence. Cultural violence, as defined by Galtung and Fischer (2013) goes beyond overt acts of aggression and physical harm; it delves into the very fabric of our upbringing and daily lives, shaping our perceptions about power and the perceived necessity of violence. At its core, cultural violence stems from the prevailing attitudes and beliefs that have been instilled in individuals since childhood, permeating their existence and influencing their understanding of societal structures.

The six domains of culture—religion, ideology, language, art, empirical knowledge, and formal knowledge—serve as sources of cultural violence, acting as conduits through which attitudes and beliefs are transmitted and perpetuated. Religion, for instance, can be wielded to justify or legitimize certain power structures and acts of violence, often embedding them within the moral fabric of a society. Ideology shapes the collective mindset and can be manipulated to rationalize actions that may otherwise be deemed unacceptable. Language, as a powerful tool of communication, can reinforce hierarchical power relations and serve as a vehicle for the normalization of violence.

The subordination of women to men originates from earlier societies that use women as a means of exchange. The phrase describes the stubbornness of Dewi Ayu against the violence committed by the Japanese invaders.. In reality, they are merely tools for political activity, both native and non-native people.

*“Dewi Ayu yang tiba-tiba, “Aku tak akan pergi.” “Jangan tolol, Nak,” kata Hanneke. “Jepang tak akan melewatkanmu”* (Kurniawan, 2015: 50).

Dewi Ayu's narrative in the face of historical upheavals reflects a resilience that extends beyond physical violence to encompass profound internal conflicts. The mention of Dewi Ayu experiencing violence not solely in its physical manifestation but also as an internal struggle adds layers of complexity to her character. The Dutch defeat of Japan becomes a pivotal point in Dewi Ayu's life, resulting in not just physical injuries but also leaving lasting scars on her mental well-being. The trauma inflicted by historical events, such as the Dutch defeat of Japan, underscores the psychological toll in which external conflicts can have on individuals. Dewi Ayu's inner conflict serves as a poignant illustration of the ways in which historical events can reverberate through an individual's psyche, shaping their perceptions and responses to the world around them.

The complexities of war, occupation, and subsequent changes in power dynamics contribute to Dewi Ayu's internal struggles, revealing the profound impact of historical events on personal narratives. Importantly, the narrative emphasizes Dewi Ayu's refusal to succumb to despair despite the adversities she faces. Instead of capitulating to the challenging circumstances, she demonstrates resilience and strength of character. When her family attempts to navigate the perils posed by the Japanese army, Dewi Ayu chooses a different path—remaining afloat. This choice to stay afloat in the face of adversity symbolizes her determination to persevere and navigate the tumultuous currents of life, even when surrounded by the chaos and uncertainties of war and occupation.

Dewi Ayu's story becomes a testament to the multifaceted nature of survival, extending beyond mere physical endurance to include the fortitude required to withstand the internal turbulence of conflicting emotions and traumatic experiences. Her resilience challenges the narrative of victimhood, portraying her as an individual who, despite enduring profound hardships, manages to maintain agency and a sense of self amidst the chaos of historical events.

Eka Kurniawan's novel *Cantik Itu Luka* presents the harrowing struggles of Dewi Ayu and her descendants, female characters who endure pervasive oppression, yet persist by nurturing solidarity and resilience. The novel unfolds in a raw narrative, replete with explicit language and frequent scenes of intimacy, immersing readers in the emotional spectrum of happiness, bitterness, and fury that these women experience. *Cantik Itu Luka* explores themes of gender, history, and philosophy through a tapestry of women's suffering and defiance, set against the backdrop of colonialism and post-independence Indonesia. During the colonial period, Dutch women, including Dewi Ayu (who remains in her hometown Halimunda), are imprisoned by the Japanese army. Although Dewi Ayu has a native name, her Dutch features betray her heritage. Before the Japanese occupation, the Dutch authorities disrupt the lives of native lovers, Ma Gedik and Ma Iyang, with Dewi Ayu's grandfather forcing Ma Iyang into servitude and bearing his child. This legacy of oppression haunts Dewi Ayu's lineage, marking the beginning of generational trauma. Kurniawan centers the narrative around Dewi Ayu's defiance, highlighting women's roles and positions across family, society, and work. The female characters exemplify resilience, each battling subjugation and fighting for rights within a patriarchal framework. The novel articulates multiple forms of discrimination: in education (through marginalization and subordination), in domestic life (via stereotypes, violence, and workload), and in society at large (through labeling and subordination). Through Dewi Ayu, Kurniawan offers a nuanced portrayal of women's struggles, underscoring how beauty—whether an asset or curse—does not shield them from the objectification and misfortune inflicted by male dominance. In exploring beauty, Kurniawan critiques its role as a double-edged sword: far from empowering, it often leads to the women's exploitation and suffering. Feminist themes reveal how societal and legal structures reinforce gender inequality, pressing female characters to combat discrimination within a largely unyielding system. Dewi Ayu's resistance, exemplified in her killing of the spirit Ma Gedik to protect her children, symbolizes a broader female solidarity that endures beyond personal survival. Ultimately, *Cantik Itu Luka* portrays women's resilience in a world rife with patriarchy. In the novel's conclusion, Kurniawan grants women a semblance of equality, positing that women's persistence and mutual protection foster not only survival but also dignity.

and hope for change. This message emphasizes the need for collective strength, challenging societal constructs to support equality.

## 5. Conclusion

Based on the analysis above, the researchers draw the conclusion that the analysis of Eka Kurniawan's novel *Cantik Itu Luka* reveals a profound exploration of gender-based violence through the lens of direct, structural, and cultural violence. The central character, Dewi Ayu, embodies the scars of direct violence inflicted during the Japanese occupation, highlighting the brutality of war and the specific gender-based discrimination faced by women. Structural violence is evident in societal inequalities that hinder basic human needs, while cultural violence permeates the novel through deeply ingrained attitudes and beliefs contributing to power imbalances and the acceptance of violence. The intersectionality of Dewi Ayu's identity unveils broader social inequities, emphasizing the impact of violence on women during times of conflict. In addition to the analysis of violence types, the novel also delves into the role and position of women, presenting a narrative that challenges traditional gender norms. Through Dewi Ayu's story, the novel explores various facets of discrimination experienced by female figures in education, households, and the workplace. The intertwining of historical events and personal narratives serves as a powerful commentary on the condition of women, their struggles for justice, and the enduring impact of discrimination. Eka Kurniawan's choice of Dewi Ayu as the main character signifies a representation of women's plight, highlighting issues such as the role of women in society, fighting for their rights, and confronting the patriarchal system. The novel, therefore, becomes a poignant exploration of the complexities of gender-based violence and the resilience of women in the face of oppression.

It is recommended to integrate *Cantik Itu Luka* into academic curricula to facilitate critical engagement with gender-based violence themes. This inclusion aligns with efforts to diversify literary canons and fosters discussions on gender dynamics and power structures. Additionally, future research should explore the novel's nuanced societal implications to deepen understanding of violence, discrimination, and resistance intersections.

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