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**Author:** Sushartami, Wiwik

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## **Battered Women on Display: Making Domestic Violence Public**

Video cameras take us into the intimate details of pain and misfortune (Kleinman and Kleinman, 1996:1).

A campaign film about domestic violence against women produced by Kalyanamitra, a women's organisation based in Jakarta, titled *Menguak Kekerasan dalam Rumah Tangga* (Revealing Domestic Violence, 2001), hence *Menguak KDRT*, showed a woman being slapped in the face again and again by her husband. The woman screamed but people in the surrounding area were silent. Blood dripped from her nose and side of her mouth. After repeatedly slapping his wife's face, the man eventually took up a block of wood and hit her on her back. She lurched forward and landed in a ditch. Nobody in the crowd was willing to help the woman even when she cried for help.

Cases of domestic violence draw public attention to the paradox of patrimonial life, which is sanctioned through various media representations as the only appropriated model of a relationship between women and men in Indonesian society. The home turns into a tragically insecure place for women. Media, both print and electronic, have become more open to exposing such violence. Recalling these series of violent scenes in the public media in Indonesia, this chapter finds it worth examining the significance of representing the victims and violent acts in speaking out against violence that occurs in the domestic arena. The example mentioned above represents only a small part of the vibrant media usage in the campaign against domestic violence against women in the last decade, especially those produced by women's organisations. As the space is limited, this chapter does not take into account other examples, such as posters, stage performances, arts exhibitions,

and postcards, nor presentations by the mainstream media in newspapers and television programmes.<sup>1</sup>

Under the New Order, bordering the public and domestic spheres was problematic. While rigidly separating the two domains, for example, by ideologically and legally<sup>2</sup> positioning men as the heads of the households and as the breadwinners, and women as housewives, the New Order actively, on the one hand, invaded the domestic sphere, e.g., via the family planning programme, and on the other hand, domesticated the public by organising women into Dharma Wanita and PKK organisations (see Chapter Two). The efforts by many feminist activists and various NGOs to introduce issues of domestic violence into the public sphere and to demand a law condemning domestic violence cannot be separated from the venture to conceptually and practically deconstruct the public/domestic dichotomy as the rigid separation of these two spheres has been considered disadvantageous for women (*Kompas* 2004[1]). In addition, introducing cases of domestic violence to the public discussion has also become a means to openly protest the state's ignorance of these issues and women's problems in general. The title of the video, *Menguak Kekerasan dalam Rumah Tangga*, declares that domestic violence is still considered to be an issue in need of revelation.

The following section first reviews the conceptual outline of the border between the domestic and public spheres. I then discuss the discourse of domestic violence as indicated by research and campaigns in Indonesia conducted by feminist and social activists and academics as well to provide a context for the subsequent analysis of the media presentations. This section is then followed by a close reading of the film *Menguak KDRT*. It highlights the reconstruction of violent scenes and representations of the female victims in the film and analyses the discursive context of the film's production and distribution. It also touches upon the important issue of witnessing, which draws the line between the film, visualisation of domestic violence, and attempts to make such violence public.

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<sup>1</sup> Due to space limitations, this chapter does not discuss mainstream media exposures on cases of domestic violence involving celebrities and public figures, although they receive much attention from both the public and the media, and are potentially useful in the campaign against domestic violence. Short descriptions about cases of domestic violence that involve public figures and celebrities are mentioned in Chapter Six, footnotes 45 and 46.

<sup>2</sup> See *Undang-undang No. 1 Tahun 1974 tentang Perkawinan, Pasal 34 (1 & 2)* (Matrimony Law 1974, verse 31 (1 & 2))

### **Question on Bordering: Public/Domestic Dichotomy**

The border between the domestic and public spheres cannot be easily drawn. If we follow the distinction between the public and private domains as that of Jürgen Habermas' (1962) bourgeois law, the idea of the public sphere is that of "a body of 'private persons' assembled to discuss matters of 'public concern' or 'common interest'" (Fraser 1999: 112). Habermas, referring to early modern Europe, suggests that the idea of the "public sphere" was introduced in the constitution of "bourgeois public spheres" as "counterweights to absolutist states" (Fraser 1999: 112). These public spheres were to mediate between society and the state. They were meant to control the state. In its development, not only did the bourgeois society make public the state's accountability, but it also conveyed their best interests to the state. This means that the idea of the public sphere is both designating "an institutional mechanism for rationalising political domination by rendering states accountable to (some of) the citizenry" and "a specific kind of discursive interaction" (Fraser 1999: 112-113). Within this idealistic bourgeois society, the distinction between the public and the private became dichotomous. This was indicated by the fact that discussion of private interests within the public sphere was rejected. The dichotomy between genders also became rigid.<sup>3</sup> Thus, Habermas differentiates the public and private spheres based on access to political power. When this is implicated in gender distinctions, then it results in inequality between men and women in their respective access to power and the public sphere. This also summarises Michelle Zimbalist Rosaldo's view that women's subordination is caused by the lack of access to the public sphere, which has become the basis of the "classic" feminist's argument (Ryan 1999: 260).

When women stay at home, household chores are rarely considered as "economic assets", but more as cultural tasks (Hubies, A.V. as quoted in Mafriana and Syakrani 1999: 15). The consequence of this is that women are recognised only as contributing to use values. In the context of capitalism, that is a society dominated by exchange values, women are thus positioned only as consumers, not as producers. This, according to Heidi Hartman, results in the condescending attitudes that place women in a position with no access to the economy (1995: 199). Where the division between the public and domestic

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<sup>3</sup> However, as Mary Ryan documents, Habermas fails to acknowledge other competing public spheres, such as "nationalist publics, popular peasant publics, elite women's publics, and working-class publics". Ryan further argues that the exclusion of women from the public sphere is only ideological; "it rests on a class-and gender-biased notion of publicity" that is of the "bourgeois public's claim to be the public". See Fraser 1999: 115-116. For Ryan's discussion on the history of American women's politics in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, see Ryan 1999: 259-288.

spheres is sharpening, women are at risk of losing any chance of economic access to the patriarchal society that keeps them in the domestic sphere.

The border between the domestic and public spheres is never easy, even to some extent impossible, to inscribe. Studies have posited criticism against the rigid bordering between the domestic and public spheres from different standpoints. In her essay on the anthropology of gender, Rosaldo (1974) proposes an account on the concept of the universal public/domestic dichotomy and argues that this dichotomy is based on the social organisation and position of men and women that can be traced to “social rather than biological considerations”. This is the basis for the universal denigration of women, as women are associated with the “domestic”, which places them in activities organised immediately around the home and children, while men are placed in “public” activities, institutions, and associations. However, as she found in her fieldwork among Ilongot hunter-horticulturalists of the Philippines, the blurring dichotomy between the public and domestic spheres among the people in this society engenders a more favourable position for women. Although her argument is based on her rejection of the division between public and domestic spheres, it still implies the obstinacy and resilience of such a division by maintaining the insistent dominance of a single public *à la* Habermasian bourgeoisie.

Meanwhile, looking at the particularity of the Laweyan neighbourhood, which was once a district of major batik producers in Solo, Central Java, Suzanne Brenner (1998) proposes to retain and reconceptualise the notion of the domestic sphere. Retaining the term ‘domestic’, Brenner argues that such a notion can assign “both a physical and conceptual space that centres on the home and family, but which in Java can also be expanded outside the confines of the home to include practices that may be linked conceptually to home and family even if they take place within the domain that we usually call ‘public’” (1998: 16). In Laweyan, Brenner found, “local society revolved around women and a particular configuration of the domestic economy [...] to include not only material consumption and production but also the management and control of human passions, spiritual substance, and cultural value” (ibid.). By returning the concept of domestic economy to its original sense, that is “managing the household” and as such adding a key point to “home”, the domestic sphere thus “takes on a new significance”, which is no longer “subsumed by and subordinated to the public sphere” (1998: 18). Eventually, the domestic and public spheres are equally engaged and indivisible.

Nancy Fraser offers a similar approach to “scaling-up” the domestic vis-à-vis the public through the formation of “alternative publics” (1999: 122). Habermas’ idea of the public sphere, according to Fraser (ibid.: 110), can help

solve the feminist problem of the politicisation of the terms “public and domestic spheres”. As a commonly adopted concept, the public is perceived as “everything that is outside the domestic or familial sphere” (ibid.). This usage of the definition of “public” thus covers three distinct entities: “the State, the official economy of paid employment, and arenas of public discourse” (ibid.). In Habermas’ framework, the state and the official economy are excluded from the public sphere. In this light, it is thus irrelevant to promote women’s liberation by subjecting the gender issue exclusively to access to the market economy or the administrative state. Practically, women’s engagement in the economic market does not necessarily always mean their engagement in the public sphere.

For Fraser, the important criticism of Habermas’ idealisation of the bourgeois public sphere is that he also fails to recognise other “non-liberal, non-bourgeois, competing public spheres” (1999: 115). Quoting Mary Ryan, Fraser further illustrates that in the nineteenth century, North American women across classes and ethnicities “constructed access routes to public political life” despite the exclusion from official public sphere (1999: 115). Yet what should be noted is the inequality that remains in the public spheres where members of the subordinated groups are informally marginalised both in official and everyday life public arenas. Taking the example of media development wherein media becomes the ultimate medium to circulate views, Fraser finds that its ownership at the hands of the economically privileged groups has outcast those with the smallest means (1999: 120).

In a stratified society, that is, “societies whose basic institutional framework generates unequal social groups in structural relations of dominance and subordination”, subordinated social groups—“women, workers, peoples of colour, and gays and lesbians”—have to struggle against this marginalisation by constituting “alternative publics” (Fraser 1999: 122-123). Fraser terms this as “subaltern counterpublics” to refer to “parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counter-discourses to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interest, and needs” (1999: 123). She takes the late twentieth century American feminists as her example in which their many publications and agents all contribute to the invention of new terms to describe social realities in particular to women, such as “sexism”, “the double shift”, “sexual harassment”, and “marital, date, and acquaintance rape” (ibid.). The invention of such terms help women cast their identities and needs and, as such, also help fight for their rights in the official public sphere. Subaltern counterpublics, adds Fraser, have dual characteristics: on the one hand as “spaces of withdrawal and regroupment”, and on the other hand, “as bases and training grounds for agitational activities directed toward

wider publics” (1999: 124). Within this dual function of subaltern counterpublics, women’s “emancipatory potential” can be expected to transpire.

Of particular relevance for this chapter, I find Fraser’s considerations concerning domestic violence—which now has received public acknowledgement and has also been included in the discourse on the subaltern counterpublic—helpful. Here, I quote Fraser’s comment at length:

Until quite recently feminists were in the minority in thinking that domestic violence against women was a matter of common concern and thus a legitimate topic of public discourse. The great majority of people considered this issue to be a private matter between what was assumed to be a fairly small number of heterosexual couples (and perhaps the social and legal professional who were supposed to deal with them). Then feminists formed a subaltern counterpublic from which we disseminated a view of domestic violence as a widespread systemic feature of male-dominated societies. Eventually, after sustained discursive contestation, we succeeded in *making* it a common concern (Fraser, 1999: 129, italics in the original).

In considering whether an issue is a “common concern” or private interest, there is no rigid boundary, as it is constituted through a “discursive contestation” (Fraser 1999: 129). Particularly in the case of domestic violence in Indonesia as the focus of this chapter, the dissemination of discursive contestation about domestic violence comes in various forms of representations. Campaign media, such as the film, *Menguak KRDT*, might be one form of a discursive contestation.

Before I discuss the film, I will review the discourse of domestic violence in Indonesia.

### **Domestic Violence in Contemporary Indonesia: a Review**

Domestic violence has been one of Indonesian society’s problems for a long time.<sup>4</sup> However, it was only a decade ago that the documentation work started

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<sup>4</sup> The problem of domestic violence is not specific to Indonesia. It occurs across countries and currently shows similar direction in how the issue is taken up on a national level as a public matter. Presumably, the legislation concerning acts on violence against women around the world has been the result of the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women in 1993. However, the Indonesian government’s response to it appears to be slower than some other countries. In comparison, the U.S. government, for example, legalised its Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) in 1994; Malaysia with its Domestic Violence Act 1994; Australia with its Family Law Reform Act 1995; Singapore with its Women’s Charter (amendment) Act 1996; China with its Domestic Violence Ordinance 1997; and South Africa with its Domestic Violence Act 1998. (<http://cyber.law.harvard.edu/population/domesticviolence/domesticviolence.htm>, accessed 15 September 2010)

to augment the discourse. Public awareness about domestic violence was prompted by the *Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Asosiasi Perempuan Indonesia untuk Keadilan* (LBH APIK, Legal Aid Foundation of Indonesian Women's Association for Justice), a legal aid foundation that works on cases of violence against women. LBH APIK has been actively engaged in the advocacy for women victims of violence since 1996. Feminist activists, researchers, academics, policy makers, and government and non-government institutions began to be seriously concerned with cases of domestic violence, and, in 1997, demanded a law to regulate violations (Munti 2005(b)). However, wider public awareness about domestic violence as part of the larger issue of violence against women only started to develop to a large extent after the downfall of the New Order regime in 1998. The downfall of the regime contributed to the formation of a new genre of media presentations about violence, particularly those allegedly done by the state and its apparatus. The increasing awareness and campaign against domestic violence against women was also prompted by public discussion in newspapers, television talk shows, academic forums, and anecdotes, of the cases of gang rapes during the May 1998 riots in Jakarta and its surroundings (see Chapter Three). Much of the attention has been paid to numeral and causal analyses of the cases of domestic violence.

### ***Domestic Violence and Feminist Activism***

This chapter is particularly concerned with the issue of domestic violence that is generally understood as violence occurring within the household and involving persons related to each other by kin or definable relations. In tandem with the flourishing of women's groups in the midst of the opening of the public sphere on the one hand, and explosion of media production due to deterioration of the state's control of the media on the other hand, the discourse on domestic violence manifests itself in a number of different dimensions of activism and media presentations. One of the dimensions is that in October 2004, after a lengthy campaign and struggle by feminist and human right activists, the House of Representatives (*Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat*, hence DPR) finally ratified the draft bill as *Undang-undang No. 23 Tahun 2004 tentang Penanggulangan Kekerasan Dalam Rumah Tangga* (Bill No. 23/2004 on Anti-Domestic Violence, hence UUPKDRT). Another dimension is the growth of public awareness about issues of domestic violence owing to the thriving of media presentations concerned with these issues. With the explosion of various media venues there are more possibilities for more issues to be publicised and made known to the general public. This second dimension includes the blooming of media productions for the campaign against domestic violence as

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produced by women's organisations that garner more attention to the issue paid by the mainstream media.

The debate on domestic violence is inseparable from the gap between the concepts of family and household. Although both concepts cannot be neatly distinguished, the family is generally understood as the unit constituted of kinship relations; whereas household is of "propinquity" (Saptari 2000: 11). Meanwhile, the "nuclearisation" of the extended household into nuclear family composition is deemed "modern and Western" (Nolten 2000: 3) and favoured by the state since it is easily defined and a unit upon which the state "could place its claim" (Saptari 2000: 12). It is also with the concept of the nuclear family that the state could draw more easily the border between the public and domestic spheres—since such a demarcation simply does not occur within the concept of an extended household—and only then could the state inscribe the proper place for women (Tiwon 2000: 79). Bear in mind that within the boundaries of the nuclear family, the male position is the one in power and the possibility of "internal household exploitation of female labour" becomes inconspicuous (Tiwon 2000, f.n. 14).

Within the state's encapsulation of a harmonious nuclear family, domestic violence is thought to be inconceivable. However, with the weakening of the state, the state's gender ideology and practises were deemed to have failed. Together with the fall of the New Order, its gender ideology that facilitated the de-criminalisation of domestic violence started to loose its grip. A wide range of texts and images from print and electronic media, such as newspapers and magazines, films, television programmes, and the Internet, focused increasingly on the images of female victims of domestic violence. Visibility of tortured wives, even if media-reconstructed, has to a degree heralded the meaning of domestic violence. At the level of practical politics these images also serve as fuel for feminist activism while representing, thus giving voices to, those victims to speak or to be spoken about. Further examination of those media presentations may reveal the logic of inclusion and exclusion, which selects what kinds of violence are textually and visually representable and discussable, and which are not. Examining the prominence of images of violence as a visible subject is significant for comprehending the "mode of writing" about violent events (Spyer 2002) and helps place the issue of domestic violence within a broader framework of violence and identity politics in Indonesia's reformasi.

As mentioned earlier, public awareness about domestic violence in Indonesia was prompted by LBH APIK's initiative. Through their studies they found that indeed domestic violence has been responsible for the majority of the cases of violence against women in Indonesia, and the numbers increase

each year.<sup>5</sup> In 1997, following their study about cases of domestic violence, and finding that more women became victims of violence by their spouses, LBH APIK initiated a public discussion through a workshop that focused on the legal aspect of the issue (*Kompas* 2003(b) and 2004(h)). This workshop, and others that followed, involved groups and institutions representing, among others, government institutions, NGOs, academics, politicians, and religious authorities. The workshops agreed that it was mandatory for the Indonesian government to pass an anti-domestic violence law.

The series of open public discussions and campaigns not only affected the state, but also stimulated public awareness about the issue. More victims reported the violence they experienced and sought advocacy from the growing numbers of women's non-governmental organisations.<sup>6</sup> Positioned outside the world of activism, the state's institution for women's affairs during the reformasi period also began to show concern about domestic violence. Under the administration of then Minister for Women's Empowerment in the cabinet of President Abdurrahman Wahid, Khofifah Indar Parawansa, the ministry established a *Pusat Krisis Terpadu* (Integrated Crisis Centre, hence PKT) in cooperation with a number of hospitals and police stations nationwide.

Reports about domestic violence do not only highlight its highest occurrence among other forms of violence against women, but also the fact that women are usually the victims and men the perpetrators (Komnas Perempuan 2002: 52-65). Rifka Annisa, a women's organisation focusing on advocacy for female victims of violence situated in Yogyakarta, Central Java, noted that the number of reported cases of violence against housewives committed by their husbands rose from only 10 in 1994, to 117 in 2004 (*Kompas* 2004(f)).

The increasing numbers of cases reported to the Women's Crisis Centres and PKTs can mean several things. First, that the actual number of cases indeed increases over time. Why such an increase should occur requires further analysis beyond the scope of this study. Second, with the increase in the number of advocacy organisations and media presentations that focus on cases

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<sup>5</sup> From their study, LBH APIK found that cases of domestic violence, together with other cases of sexual abuses in working places constituted the majority of cases of violence against women reported to them. They also found that the numbers of cases being reported tended to increase each year: in 1996 there were 90 cases reported to them, 240 in 1997, 227 in 1998, 295 in 1999, 343 in 2000, 471 in 2001, 530 in 2002, 627 in 2003, and 817 in 2004. See Munti 2005(a).

<sup>6</sup> However, the increase of the cases reported does not necessarily mean there are more cases tried. Komnas Perempuan found that out of 5,934 cases of domestic violence they handled in 2003, only 162 were brought to trial. "The rest were either withdrawn by the victims or rejected due to insufficient evidence" (*Jakarta Post* 2004). This finding is also shared by other women's organisations. Mitra Perempuan, focusing on advocacy for female victims of violence, noted that only 30% of the 572 cases they handled in 2003 were tried and the rest were settled out of court (ibid.).

of domestic violence, this issue has become increasingly acknowledged by the public; people talk about it more openly and are more likely to file a report on such cases. The publicity of cases of domestic violence has been endorsed by both the growth of advocacy organisations and media concerns promoting the campaign against this kind of abuse. What is more important is that both the advocacy activism and media industry focusing on this issue are feeding each other. On the one hand, we now can find how newspapers quote results of studies conducted by women's organisations on the cases of domestic violence. On the other hand, media awareness among the organisations also increases to the point in which newspapers are increasingly seen as sources of analyses. Most of the women's organisations that I visited during my fieldwork maintain files of news clippings and some have analyses of media reports concerning cases of domestic violence.<sup>7</sup>

### ***Domestic Violence on the Indonesian Political Stage***

Shortly prior to the 2004 general election, a coalition of almost 200 institutions and non-governmental groups declared a campaign movement called the *Gerakan Nasional Tidak Pilih Politisi Busuk* (National Movement to Abstain from Voting for Bad Politicians, GNTPPB).<sup>8</sup> The main objective of this campaign was to build people's awareness to abstain from voting for legislative candidates who were indicated as being involved in four kinds of offences: corruption, human rights violations, natural resource endangerment, and violence against women. In order to support their campaign, this group published and circulated the *Surat Kabar Sosok* (*Sosok Newspaper*) that listed profiles (Indonesian: *sosok*) of legislative candidates that were 'blacklisted'. The first edition of *Sosok* appeared in March 2004. Although its circulation was not extensive, media exposure helped to boost its publicity.<sup>9</sup>

The inclusion of the issue of violence against women as one of the four disqualifying criteria for candidacy as a member of the DPR was a major accomplishment for Indonesian feminists. Together with the campaign for affirmative action of a 30% quota for women's participation in the DPR, which paved the way shortly before 1999 general election, the concern over domestic

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<sup>7</sup> For example, during my research at Yayasan Jurnal Perempuan and Rahima, I found that news clippings were crucial documentary materials in their libraries.

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.tempointeraktif.com/hg/nasional/2003/12/23/brk.20031223-30.id.html>

<sup>9</sup> The Kontras (*Komisi untuk Orang Hilang dan Korban Tindak Kekerasan*, Commission for the Disappeared and Victims of Violence) website wrote that *Sosok* printed 200,000 exemplars ([http://kontras.org/index.php?hal=dalam\\_berita&id=116](http://kontras.org/index.php?hal=dalam_berita&id=116), accessed 1 March 2012). As a comparison, *Kompas* printed 550,000 – 600,000 exemplars in early 2004 (Dewabrata 2010: x). However, this may not represent the total readership, as photocopying and Internet distribution may boost its circulation.

violence against women has carried women into the political arena. Although the campaign for a 30% quota for women in the DPR did not achieve any significant success in the 1999 general election, in the 2004 election it received more public attention, although not all political parties were successful in its implementation. By 2003, the 30% quota was legally instated in the election law. However, the issue of violence against women as one of the disqualifying criteria for candidates of the legislature still remains an issue at the level of public debate and feminist activism. Admittedly, both of these feminist concerns, that is, women's political participation and domestic violence, effectively decreased the distance between women and the politics. While both concerns might have been based on the perception that women have thus far been deprived because of their subordinate positioning in their homes, one concern brings as a consequence alienation from politics, while the other concern is the exposure to violent spouses. Thus, although equally significant to the issue of the absence of women's participation in the political sphere, raising the topic of the domestication of women into the political arena via the issue of female victimisation, turned out to be more controversial.

The significant role played by (female) feminists who are involved in the GNTPPB, such as Smita Notosusanto, to name only one, to some extent has highlighted the feminist colour of this movement.<sup>10</sup> According to the group's interpretation, violence against women is represented in those offences against women conducted in households, against women's sexuality and economic access, and those related to trafficking of women (GNTPPB 2004). The insertion of the issue of violence against women in the discourse of the general election has become part of the long running campaign to make this issue public. They further identified the perpetrators of domestic violence against women as:

[...] those who conduct domestic violence (KDRT), or support and allow such violence to happen. These [forms of domestic violence] include injuring wives, children, and domestic workers (physical violence), abandoning wives and children (economic violence), and forcing sexual relations on wives (sexual violence). Included as KDRT is polygamy (*Sosok*, March 2004).

Defining polygamy as negative conduct is still risky, because the controversy over whether or not polygamy should be legally banned has yet to subside. It

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<sup>10</sup> Smita Notosusanto is a prominent feminist activist in Indonesia. She also played one of the key roles in the campaign for the establishment of the 30% quota in the DPR.

remains an unresolved issue within Islamic circles. As it is widely known, there are several political leaders who engage in polygamy, both legally and illicitly.<sup>11</sup>

*Side note: the Anti-polygamy Politics*

The issue of polygamy has been stirring public debate for long time. In 1983, the government under Suharto formalised PP 10-1983 (*Peraturan Pemerintah* No. 10, hence PP 10), a Government Regulation that regulates marriage, including polygamy, and divorce for civil servants. This regulation requires that any second and subsequent marriage of a civil servant must have the written approval from the first wife and a letter of approval from the employee's superintendent. Some people interpreted the issuance of PP10 as allowing polygamy (Phrases 3, 4, 5). The reformasi government under President Abdurrahman Wahid seemed to take a different approach, as the State Minister for Women's Empowerment, Khofifah Indar Parawansa, proposed to annul this regulation because, she argued, the issue of polygamy should not be the state's concern (*Liputan6 SCTV* 2000). However, the fact that many civil servants have manipulated this regulation and easily married more than one wife shows that the state remains involved in the regulation of polygamy.

A campaign for polygamy, motorised by a businessman, Puspowardoyo, self-proclaimed *presiden poligami* (polygamy president), undoubtedly publicised the issue and elicited a variety of responses from the public. Puspowardoyo is the owner of Wong Solo restaurant chain, who claimed that his polygamous marriages have enabled him develop his business. His open and bold campaign for *poligami yang islami* (Islamic polygamy) stirred bitter debate among, mostly, Muslim factions. After establishing a foundation to 'socialise' polygamy, he sponsored the Polygamy Award event to select the 'best' example of men who practised polygamy. During the event, which was held at a five-star hotel, Aryaduta Hotel, in Jakarta on 25 July 2003, several feminist activists protested (*Liputan6 SCTV* 2003). A number of these women were able to enter the hall and approach the stage to voice their protest. They were, however, escorted out

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<sup>11</sup> By 'illicit' here I mean that the marriage is not registered at the state Kantor Urusan Agama (KUA, Office of Religious Affairs) office. Polygamous marriages among Muslims are sometimes also conducted under *siri*, an Islamic law that acknowledges marriages under religion (Islam) without legal or state acknowledgement. There are no legal obligations in these unions. There is a split among Muslims in Indonesia concerning *siri* marriages. On the one hand, some people find it acceptable since according to religious teachings it is considered *sah* (legitimate); meanwhile others, including some Muslim feminist activists, find it risky for women and children since there is no legal acknowledgement. Thus, when the marriage ends, the women and children have no legal rights for joint-property and child support. However, in 2012, *Mahkamah Konstitusi* (Constitutional Court) decided that children of *siri* marriage have legal relationship with their biological fathers; this means that the fathers are obliged to support the children financially and the children have rights to settlement.

by the security personnel.<sup>12</sup> Puspowardoyo's campaign for polygamy did not stop there. He soon published his biography, *Indahnya Poligami* (The Beauty of Polygamy).<sup>13</sup> This book challenges the campaign against polygamy that claims that polygamy prompts victimisation of women. The book, particularly the testimonies from Puspowardoyo's four wives, presents a positive perspective on polygamy. It strongly contests the discourse brought forward by the feminist circles that polygamy has negative consequences for women. What is at stake here is the position of Muslim women, as the righteousness of polygamy is determined by the debate on whether or not it victimises women.

In reaction to the increasingly open campaign for polygamy, many Muslim feminist groups expressed their protests in various ways, including demonstrations, public debates, stage performances, and even a photography exhibition. The first lady at that time, Sinta Nuriyah, openly rejected polygamy during the Mukhtar [General Congress] NU in 2005 by boycotting the meal provided by Puspowardoyo's chain restaurant (*Tempo Interaktif* 2004). Within progressive Muslim circles there has also been an attempt to inscribe polygamy as *haram* (Ar., prohibited) by proposing a legal counter draft of the *Kompilasi Hukum Islam* (KHI, Compilation of Islamic Law). The KHI is a collection of Islamic laws that, since 1991, based on the President's instruction has served as the basis for Islamic jurisprudence. It regulates marriage, inheritance, and donation based on Islamic rules. Musdah Mulia, one among those who proposed to amend KHI, argues that KHI does not reflect gender equality and places Muslim women subordinate to men. The strongest point that she proposed is the elimination of polygamy based on the reason that it symbolises men's superiority and potentially can generate domestic violence (*Jaringan Islam Liberal Website* 2003; Mulia 2004).<sup>14</sup> Not surprisingly, the Minister of Religion rejected the draft, claiming that it runs against mainstream Islamic thought and it "*menyebabkan keresahan diantara umat Islam Indonesia*" (raises anxiety among Indonesian Muslims) (*Kompas* 2005(a)). When placing the debate about polygamy in parallel with the issue of local autonomy, part of the concern is that polygamy may gain ground as part and parcel of the demand for

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<sup>12</sup> From a friend who also joined the protest group, I learnt that this open protest was jointly coordinated by Rahima (about Rahima see Chapter Six). Rahima's website also shows pictures taken during the protest. Some of Rahima's members posed for photographs while holding posters and banners that condemned polygamy.

<sup>13</sup> His biography, *Indahnya Poligami: Pengalaman Keluarga Sakinah Puspo Wardoyo*, is written by Nurbowo and Apiko Joko M., Jakarta: Senayan Abadi Publishing, 2003.

<sup>14</sup> However, the KHI counter draft does not only focus on polygamy, but also on contracted marriage, dowries/bride prices, women's right to represent themselves, etc. (email correspondence with Musdah Mulia 3 February 2005).

the implementation of sharia in the regions, and would put women at a disadvantage (see Chapter Six).<sup>15</sup>

While polygamy is still debated within Muslim circles, there is a move to reshape the debate into a more secular argument. The movement for the elimination of polygamy has been redirected to amending the marriage law by arguing that polygamy is a crime against marriage.<sup>16</sup> One of the most vocal non-religious women's organisations that is attempting to make polygamy illegal is LBH APIK. They have proposed an amendment to the marriage law (UU Perkawinan 1974) that currently allows polygamy. The proposal for the amendment is based on the reason that in polygamous marriages there is a higher potential for outbreaks of domestic violence.<sup>17</sup>

### ***Finally, the Anti-Domestic Violence Bill***

Approaching the 2004 general election, the draft for the anti-domestic violence bill had not yet been passed by the state. The atmosphere was tense. The discourse on domestic violence quickly became heavily political. Aside from the GNTTPB discourse that was mentioned earlier, the political slogan was now "*Pilih Presiden yang Menolak Kekerasan dalam Rumah Tangga*" (Vote for a Presidential Candidate who Rejects Domestic Violence) (*Kompas* 2005(b)). In turn, the campaign against and struggle for the elimination of domestic violence has become less of a moral issue and more of a political one. President Megawati's decision to agree to the draft of the anti-domestic violence bill, and send it to the legislature shortly before her administration ended, was also considered to have been politically driven. In an effort to seek more support from women, she approved the draft of UUPKDRT to be sent to the DPR (*Kompas* 2004(d)). Although the DPR finally ratified the bill, it did not provide enough support to elevate Megawati's popularity, and she lost her bid for re-election in the 2004 General Election (*Suara Merdeka Cybernews* 2009).

Among of the several issues raised during the discussion of the UUPKDRT amongst members of the DPR, the use of the term 'marital rape' specifically caused prolonged and heated debate. Objection to the inclusion of the term 'marital rape' in the law is often based on the religious interpretation

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<sup>15</sup> The banner "*Dengan Visi Religius Islami Kita Masyarakatkan Poligami*" (With an Islamic and Religious Vision, We Socialise Polygamy) in Tasikmalaya becomes part of the ideology and praxis of the discourse of the implementation of Sharia Islam in the region. See *Gatra* 2003(c). According to Acep Zam-zam Noer, the promoter of the idea who financed the making of the banner, it was meant as social criticism, as he also use banners to comment upon other issues, such as local government elections and land use. See *Kompas* 2005(e).

<sup>16</sup> Immediate reference is the UN agreement on the elimination of discrimination against women CEDAW.

<sup>17</sup> See 'Usulan Amandemen UU Perkawinan no 1 Th 1974' ([www.lbh-apik.or.id/amandemen\\_UUP-usulan.htm](http://www.lbh-apik.or.id/amandemen_UUP-usulan.htm), accessed 11 August 2004).

concerning the requirement of a wife's loyalty and submission to her husband. What is important to note here is the strong leaning towards religious interpretation in the state's regulation and the reference to religious teaching to justify many subjective thoughts. The phrase 'marital rape' eventually became the last phrase to be decided upon and was included in the law against domestic violence (*Kompas*, 2004(j)). The law defines domestic violence as follows:

Domestic violence is any action against someone, especially women, that causes agony or physical, sexual, psychological suffering, and or, household abandonment, including threats to do a deed, enforcement, or deprivation of one's freedom in the manner that is against the law in the area of households (UUPKDRT, Chapter I, Phrase 1).

As mentioned previously, the demand for a law that regulates domestic violence commenced with a series of discussions initiated by LBH APIK and other women's NGOs. Part of the pressure was due to the fact that Indonesia had already ratified the UN's CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, ratified by Bill No. 7/1984). With this ratification, the state is required to pass a law based on the convention that guarantees the fulfilment of women's rights. However, much stronger pressure to pass the anti-domestic violence bill came from the increasing number of cases of domestic violence and expectation that the law would reduce that number.

Media attention to the issue of domestic violence was also evident. From 30 August 2004 through 15 September 2004, *Kompas* newspaper followed the process of the discussion of the bill draft in the DPR. During this process, the term *fraksi balkon* (balcony fraction) was coined in reference to the groups of activists who attended the sessions in the DPR building and sat in the balcony to follow the discussion of the bill, bearing banners and vocally expressing support of the bill (*Kompas* 2004(k)). The activists lobbied the members of the *Panitia Kerja* (Working Forum) by sending short text messages via cellular phones (sms). The publicity of feminist intrusion into the state institution was delineated by their physical presence.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> In comparison, the Indonesian feminists also carried out an assiduous manoeuvre when they demanded affirmative action to assure that 30% of DPR representatives be female. On September 23, 2002, I attended the National Conference: Strengthening Women's Political Participation in Indonesia that was organised by IDEA (Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance) and CETRO (Centre for Electoral Reform). In this forum I learned more about the activists' operating mode. During the parallel session, Creating Links between Civil Society and Political Institutions to Ensure Responsive Governance, I found that women's groups are becoming more aware of the need to use effective, even massive, media to campaign for the elevation of women's political participation. It was also mentioned that the links between NGOs at the local and national levels



While the campaign against domestic violence had commenced before the ratification of the bill, it gained steady ground and was more openly supported and represented to the public thereafter. The following close reading of the film, *Mengungkap Kekerasan dalam Rumah Tangga*, is one example of the media campaign against domestic violence against women.

### **Revealing Domestic Violence**

I obtained the VCD, *Mengungkap Kekerasan Dalam Rumah Tangga* (hence *Mengungkap KDRT*), when I visited the Kalyanamitra office in Jakarta. This film is part of the campaign that Kalyanamitra conducted against domestic violence against women.<sup>19</sup> Kalyanamitra is a women's organisation based in Jakarta that was established in 1985 by five women who were concerned about women's problems.<sup>20</sup> The organisation was initially concerned with issues of female labourers. In 1994, Kalyanamitra started to focus on state violence by bringing to public attention the murder of Marsinah, a female worker who was killed after participating in a strike and demanding a wage raise. After the May 1998 riots, Kalyanamitra became actively engaged in the advocacy for victims of the gang rapes, who were mostly of Chinese-Indonesian descent. The May 1998 rapes were the onset of the organisation's programme of advocacy for women victims of violence across ethnicity and class lines. In 2003, Kalyanamitra divided its programmes into two divisions that focus on research and documentation (*Riset Informasi dan Dokumentasi*, or its abbreviation, Risdok) and advocacy. The Risdok programme aims at providing the public with information and relevant documentation about women's issues. Meanwhile, the advocacy programme provides advocacy for female victims of violence.

### **Setting and Audience Response**

During my fieldwork in Jakarta I was staying in a relative's home. After dinner with relatives and friends, I screened the film, *Mengungkap KDRT*, on a computer

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can be built by disseminating information (prepared by CETRO, based in Jakarta) through local media (radio stations, local newspapers, etc.), as well as alternative media prepared by local NGOs. Also interesting was the use of words equated with women's movement slogans, such as: *gempur* (bombard), *gerilya* (guerrilla), *penggrebegan* (raid), and *amunisi* (ammunition), in reference to the approaches to the members of the DPR that were conducted on a daily basis, were incessant and massive, so that their concerns were taken into serious consideration.

<sup>19</sup> In the project of campaigning against domestic violence (2001) Kalyanamitra produced two VCDs, *Mengungkap Kekerasan dalam Rumah Tangga* and *Ketika Mata Hati Bicara* (When Conscience Speaks), which is about incest. These two films were based on real cases for which Kalyanamitra advocated. In this chapter I focus primarily on the first film.

<sup>20</sup> The following is culled from Kalyanamitra's website (<http://kalyanamitra.or.id/who.php>). The viewing period was in October 2005.

set placed next to the dining table. There were nine people present—six women and three men—who were seated in three groups: four sat around the television, three around the dining table and the rest in the kitchen. While everybody seemed to be engaged in their own conversations, my silence soon attracted their attention. Noticing that I was intently watching the film, two people moved to sit closer to me. They started to ask me about the film and began to watch it with me. It was a different audience from the ones I usually met during discussions of feminism and feminist activism. Most of the people in this group were not familiar with issues of the feminist movement; to some extent they kept a distance from such activism.<sup>21</sup> I did not expect that they would join me watching the film, as I had thoughtlessly classified them as members of the apolitical middle-class who had little interest in this media campaign. However, it turned out that their candid responses toward the film helped me shape the questions about the nature of the film and its impact towards audience responses, the prominence of violent scenes, and the construction of the triad victim-perpetrator-agent.

The beginning of the film did not seem attractive to the group since it showed only scenes of women's everyday lives, such as scenes in rural areas, working women in the city, and housewives in their kampongs. The narrator's commentary seemed too serious for an uninitiated audience. The opening question, "In the globalisation era when geographical border is no longer a problem, what is women's position?" might not be appropriate for audiences who watch the film in the midst of many other activities. Later, scenes of violence that constantly punctuated the film began to draw the audiences' attention. When the scene showed a victim being brutally slapped by her husband, one woman in the audience criticised the victim as being "*terlalu lemah*" (too weak). When the violence grew in intensity, she started to yell, "If I were her, I'd kill him!" She emphasised that these kinds of incidents could really happen in our society. She thought that the film was good, but felt that the difficulty of access to it made it less effective as a campaign strategy. Her comments influenced the other women as they started to express their own thoughts about the film and its subjects. Meanwhile, the men only observed and, although they seemed interested, did not make any further comments.

The film appeared to stir the (female) audiences' sentiments. They reacted strongly to the blatant depiction of the husband's violent acts toward his wife—from verbal abuse to kicking, slamming, and hitting—and felt that it represented events that "*benar-benar terjadi*" (really happened). The women's

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<sup>21</sup> Except that one of the male audiences was a local journalist in Yogyakarta who has been quite familiar with cases of violence against women.

reactions to the violent depiction criminalised men in general and seemed to alienate the male members of the group.<sup>22</sup> When a blurred image of a woman wearing a kerudung appeared and began to tell her story, someone behind me whispered, “*Oh, itu korbannya*” (Oh, that is the (real) victim). The presentation of the ‘victim’ who retold her story, concealed under a veil and in a dark setting, reinforced the reality of the film. Meanwhile, the appearance of ‘real’ people—a female feminist activist, a female lawyer, and a female psychologist—validated the film as a campaign tool. It was obvious that the “sense of the real” in the film “affects the knowledge and emotions” of the audience (Corner and Rosenthal 2005: 6).

The setting for this unintentional group viewing was muddled. The atmosphere was very casual, where the audience could move freely from the kitchen to the living room area, and from the television set to the computer while the film was screened. The group sitting around the television was simultaneously involved in three activities: watching a television programme, talking to each other, and watching the film played on the computer. However, their interactions were bridged by their spontaneous responses to the scenes of violence, the appearance of the female victims, and their engagement with the film through personal reflections. Every time the woman in the film was hit and one of the women watching screamed, others in the room who were not watching moved closer to the screen and began to watch. Often the audience members casually referred to examples of domestic violence experienced by their friends, neighbours or relatives. Domestic violence against women is apparently not an unfamiliar phenomenon for many, but the fact that there have been campaigns against such violence, a law to regulate the abuse and, especially, a video about a woman battered by her husband has gone largely unnoticed. This underlines the limited circulation and minimal public exposure of the campaign media.

### ***Background of the Film Production: Docu-Drama as a Campaign Media***

The film was based on a true story of a woman whose name is as abbreviated to D.E., a victim of domestic violence at the hands of two men that she married.

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<sup>22</sup> Hegel Terome, the Manager of Programmes, Research and Documentation of Kalyanamitra also acknowledged that they received criticism because some of the scenes were regarded to be *kasar* (violent) and inappropriate for under-aged audiences without parental guidance. (E-mail correspondence 31 March 2004). While this film is certainly not intended for children, his comment revealed an important problem about media distribution in Indonesia. The problem of the lack of control of the age of the media consumers has been a focus of attention among media analysts in Indonesia who are concerned that under-aged audiences are often exposed to media presentations that are inappropriate for them, including scenes of violence and pornography (*Kompas* 2005(c) and 2005(d)).

She sought help from Kalyanamitra. Together with the film's director, Kalyanamitra developed the case into a film. Unlike the documentary films produced by Yayasan Jurnal Perempuan and Offstream about women in conflict areas (see Chapter Five), this film features actors impersonating real people and enacting real events. The film is circulated, both through sale and free distribution, via the organisation's network as part of the campaign to build support for the movement protesting violence committed against women in Indonesia. As a "medium of awareness and education", the film has been screened on several occasions.<sup>23</sup> For example, on 13-16 April 2004, commemorating Kartini's Day<sup>24</sup>, the Centre Cultural Francais in Jakarta screened the film together with other films about violence against women.<sup>25</sup>

According to Hegel Terome, the manager of Programmes, Research, and Documentation of Kalyanamitra, the reason why they presented the story as a *film cerita* (fiction film) was primarily to protect the identity of the victims. He argued:

There is an operational principal that we hold to when we work with victims [of violence]. We have to appreciate all of the victims' rights and keep their confidentiality, nobody is allowed to know [their identities] so that they won't be 'victimised' once again. When we took the case for this film, we discussed it with them [the victims] at length and asked for their permission to make the film. Without their agreement, we would not dare to do it.<sup>26</sup>

As discussed in Chapter Four on the representations of rape victims, it is mandatory for Indonesian journalists, as it is with journalists around the world, to conceal the identity of victims of rapes or other kinds of sexual assaults. In addition to protecting the identity of the victim, Terome pointed out an additional value of a fictionalised film, that is, it can be "more nuanced". In his words:

*Film cerita* is more nuanced—various backgrounds can be staged, various relationships between the victims and their environment can be

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<sup>23</sup> E-mail correspondence with Hegel Terome, 19 March 2004.

<sup>24</sup> Kartini's Day (*Hari Kartini*) refers to the birthday of Raden Ajeng Kartini, a pioneer of rights for women who has been adopted by feminists as the 'mother' of Indonesian Feminism. In 1964, the first President Sukarno declared her birthday, 21 April, a national holiday.

<sup>25</sup> Not all of the films concerned domestic violence. They included *Ketika Mata Hati Bicara* (When Conscience Speaks), concerning incest and also produced by Kalyanamitra; *Almost Sunrise*, concerning female workers in cigarette factories in East Java that was produced by an artist-cum-politician, Marissa Haque; and *Tulang Punggung* (Backbone), concerning *buruh gendhong* (literally, labourers who carry other people's shopping items in the market) in Beringharjo Market, Yogyakarta, which was produced by Komunitas Matahari (*Kompas* 2004(a)).

<sup>26</sup> E-mail correspondence with Hegel Terome, 31 March 2004.

presented, its aesthetic aspect can be highlighted without reducing the innermost message of the film. Feature film is more sensitive in touching everybody's deepest emotions, more so than documentary films. It's more universal in expressing the meanings of 'violence'.<sup>27</sup>

He concludes, "*film cerita jauh lebih efektif menyampaikan nilai-nilai*" (fictionalised film is much more effective [than documentary] in conveying values).<sup>28</sup>

Although most of the scenes in *Menguak KDRT* were staged based on a written script, it is indeed based on a true story. Leslie Woodhead provides an authoritative boundary about dramatised documentary as a new kind of documentary that she finds has emerged from "some exhaustion within the conventions of current affairs documentary, a frustration about access to a range of important stories, and a sense of the increasing complexity of relevant issues" (2005: 480). She adds that this kind of dramatised documentary still has a "particular status" concerning its claim to accuracy. The film, *Menguak KDRT*, although it seems heavily dramatised, still hints at the actuality of a true story behind the presentation—by providing real actors and allegedly a real, though concealed, victim, who's concealment makes the victim even more real as the audience recognised in my film viewing—and aims at pushing forward this sense of actuality to achieve tangible support.

For an organisation such as Kalyanamitra, the effectiveness of a media presentation in a campaign for an issue is no doubt of crucial importance. In order to evaluate the effectiveness of the film, Kalyanamitra has held public viewings and dialogues in several places with various audiences. Kalyanamitra notes that there are general responses expressed by the audiences: "anger, revenge, and other kinds of emotional expressions, aimed at both the perpetrators and the victims of violence".<sup>29</sup> Similar responses were also apparent in the audience during my group viewing.

It should be noted that throughout the film almost none of the actors in the illustrative scenes speak. This perhaps is based on the assumption that images of violence, as prominent in this film, 'speak for themselves'. The talking is done by the real 'victim' who gives her testimony and 'knowledgeable persons' who provide authoritative information about cases of domestic violence. It is also in this sense that the presentation of real people speaking in the film is important. After all, the film is meant to be a persuasive media campaign in which the scale of its authority is elevated by its capability to present reality.

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.



Figure 7.1: Image of victim in the VCD, *Menguak KDRT*. The image of the victim is shown wearing a reddish kerudung and a colourful, floral-print blouse, in front of a half-shut blinds. Her pseudonym is D.E., Client of Kalyanamitra

While concealing the identity of the victims is part of the journalist's ethic, to some extent it also implies contempt towards the state's failure to protect victims of violence (*Jakarta Post* 2005(b)). As mentioned previously in Chapter Two and Chapter Four, the May 1998 rapes have become canonised in the discourse of female victimisation and revealed the failure of the state to guarantee security for both the victims and witnesses of the rapes. As such, concealing the identities of female victims of violence politically is a criticism of the state's impotence in protecting their citizens. Concealing the victims' identities can also be part of validating their identities.<sup>30</sup> In other words, it is through their concealment that the victim is recognised as a victim, just as when one of the members in my viewing group immediately recognised the blurred image as "*Oh, itu korbannya!*" (Oh, that's the 'real' victim).

### ***Witnessing Domestic Violence***

The film *Menguak KDRT* tells the story of a woman named Rina (the acted character of D.E.), in her mid-thirties, who experienced violence committed by both of her husbands. She divorced her first husband following a series of abusive encounters. Hoping for a better life, she decided to get married a second time. This time she married a younger man. Unfortunately, violence

<sup>30</sup> Compare Siegel's account of the significance of cross-barring the eyes of alleged criminals with black rectangles to conceal their identities in newspapers (see Chapter Four).

erupted again. The film, set in Jakarta, reflects the life of a lower middle-class family. Rina first worked at a lawyer's office, but had to give up her career during her second marriage. She had one daughter from the first marriage and a son from the second marriage.

The film can be divided into three parts. The first, which takes only a very small part of the film, is about her first marriage that ended after repeated violence. The second part, that comprises most of the film, focuses on her second marriage. While the experience of domestic violence is the main theme of this section, it also portrays the cycle of violence that has a honeymoon period during which there is a pause in the violence. It is in this section that the interventions from other women—a female activist and a female psychologist who comment on the violence both in her case and in general—are shown. The last part highlights the resolution in which she encourages other female victims of domestic violence to stand up together and build a better future. Meanwhile, in validation of her decision to oppose the violence that she has experienced, a female lawyer comments on women's right to seek justice.

The film opens with a poem written by a well-known woman poet, Dorothea Rosa Herliany, about women's never-ending burdens. Then it shows scenes of women's daily lives. A narrator opens with a question about the position of women. The narration is presented by voice-over throughout the film. The main character, Rina, is first shown as a working woman who is happily married with a man and has one child. However, violence ends the marriage. There is only one scene of the first husband's violent behaviour. Most of the violent scenes concern the second husband. A blurred image of the supposed 'real victim' bears witness to the violence she experienced.<sup>31</sup> Three other women appear in the film: an activist, a psychologist, and a lawyer. At the end of the film it shows groups of women protesting domestic violence. The narrator emphasises that violence against women is a violation of human rights and so it must end. The film ends with another poem written by the same poet whose work appears at the beginning of the film. This poem is about hope, although it is bitterly vague.

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<sup>31</sup> One might wonder if she is the real victim. When I consulted Terome via e-mail, he explained that the real victim also acted in the film, following the direction of the art director, although he did not clarify which character she played.



Figure 7.2: Pictures of violence, in the VCD, *Menguak Kekerasan dalam Rumah Tangga*

Violent scenes constitute the main part of this film. The audiences, just like the bystanders shown in the film, bear witness to the series of abuses that Rina experiences in her two marriages. One part of the film shows how Rina is beaten up by her second husband outside the house and in front of many people who witness the violence. Rather close behind Rina and her husband are two men sitting at a street vendor's stall selling cigarettes and beverages, and rather farther away from them is a larger group of men and women, old and young, standing and watching. These bystanders, who may have been watching the shooting of the film, appear to be incorporated into the film to provide visualisation of how people only watch and let the violence happen. As D.E. elucidates:

I can't comprehend it, *mbak*, why the people in my area, none of them ... ever wanted to understand that I was in a dangerous situation. I thought, I screamed for help, but they don't want to know. They don't want to get involved. I'm sad, I thought, whatever, I will die now. I'll surely die now. Luckily, there was a cigarette seller and a street cleaner (VCD, *Menguak KDRT*).

The incorporation of bystanders watching the shooting of the film as stand-ins reveals another mode of mediatising the violence of this film. As a campaign media, this film's ultimate objective is for audiences to actually do something in



order to end the violence. Audiences who watch the film but do nothing about it afterwards can be paralleled to those people in the scene described above who only watched a woman being battered and did nothing to stop it. About the “voyeurism” of watching violent scenes, Arthur Kleinman (referring to Kleinman and Kleinman 1996) finds that “the mediatization of violence and suffering creates a form of inauthentic social experience: witnessing at a distance, a kind of voyeurism in which nothing is acutely at stake for the observer” (Kleinman 2000: 232). Arthur Kleinman and Joan Kleinman also warn that too much exposure of the mediated suffering “desensitize[d] the viewer”; in other words, “the massive [...] images of suffering [...] produce moral fatigue, exhaustion of empathy, and political despair” (1996: 9).

Rendering domestic violence private also draws the border between the ‘Other’ and us. When the scene shows the woman being beaten by her husband in front of their neighbours, she questions the silence of the people who witness the violence. The act of witnessing, according to her, entails a response. Since they do not respond, she positions them as the ‘Other’, *orang-orang itu* (those people). On the other hand, the neighbours who witnessed the violence committed by the husband towards his wife, and as such violence rendered private, restrain their responses since they consider someone else’s household problems as the problems of the Others. However, while the victim positions her neighbours as ‘those’ Others, she considers the interviewer—a woman whom she calls *mbak* (Jav., elder sister)—as part of ‘us’, because she listens and responds to her story. The act of responding, even without witnessing, has made her part of the victim’s subjectivity, part of ‘us’.

The issue of witness and witnessing has raised intense debate in which feminists demand that filing a report concerning domestic violence should require only “*satu saksi satu alat bukti*” (a single witness and a single piece of evidence) (*Kompas* 2004(h), 2004(i)). This was finally incorporated in the UUPKDRT, Chapter VIII, Phrase 55, where victims of domestic violence can themselves serve as victim/witness. In the UUPKDRT, individuals who witness such violence are obliged to attempt to prevent the violence, protect the victims, administer first aid, and help the victims to secure protection (Chapter V, Phrase 15).<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Children’s witnessing of parental violence is also invalidated and this message has been conveyed in the film. These children are potentially traumatised and may develop psychological problems when they become adults. It is also unjustifiable for children to witness mediated domestic violence. Adult intervention in what children should or should not see concerning domestic violence can also be seen from how audiences react to the violence portrayed in the film and children witnessing that moment, as Terome revealed that some of the audience members found that “*beberapa adegannya kelihatan cukup ‘kasar’ sehingga apabila ditonton oleh anak-anak, tanpa bimbingan orang tua, tafsirannya akan menjadi lain*” (“some scenes are quite ‘rough’ so that children may interpret them differently if

The scene in which the victim was hit by her husband in front of their house and that was witnessed by many people also raises another important question regarding the definition of domestic violence. What is 'domestic' about violence that happens 'outside' the home environment? Obviously, domestic violence is not necessarily confined to events that occur inside the house. It is the relationships between the victims and the perpetrators—not the spatial borders—that domesticate the violence.<sup>33</sup> Rendering the relationships to be 'private' maintains the separation between public and private, which carries with it respective roles of domination and subordination. Hence, rendering spousal violence 'private' restrains any public function of the act of witnessing. As such, the act of witnessing domestic violence conducted in a public area can be nullified by rendering the violence as private. This validates the concept that public and private spheres are not defined spatially.

### ***Hailing Victims of Domestic Violence***

The resources sought for providing opinions in this film are notable public figures who explain that what happens to the victim is domestic violence, of which the victims themselves might not be aware of beforehand. After an introductory remark by the narrator, the audience is presented with the blurred image of the 'real victim', named D.E. She reveals her hopes for happiness in her marriage.

I got married with the hope of finding a protective husband. For sure, by getting married we want to be happy, right *mbak*, raising the children, right? (VCD, *Menguak KDRT*).

After the second sentence, she halted, overwhelmed by emotion. The film then moves to the scenes depicting the sweetness of the first year of their marriage. Then she continues to reveal how the marriage started to change in the second year when her husband began to hit her for no serious reasons. Then the scene moves to the moment when the husband hit her outside the house and she questions the silence of her neighbours who witnessed the violence. One

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not accompanied by adults") (E-mail correspondence with Hegel Terome, 31 March 2004).

While the discussion of the relevance of this media presentation to children is beyond the scope of this chapter, it is worth noting that the film also relates the issues of domestic violence to children since women's problems are often treated inseparable from children's, and also the impact of domestic violence on children is discussed intensely among feminists.

<sup>33</sup> Also true in the cases of abuse against (mostly) female servants. Such cases are considered domestic since they are concerned with occupations that are considered to be domestic—relationships between domestic workers and their employers are not recognised in legal terms, in other words, are still privatised. The positioning of the female servants as members of the family also contributes to this repudiation (See Tiwon 2000: f.n. 14).

prominent feminist activist, Sita Aripurnami, indicates the patriarchal values that position men as superior to women as a possible cause of violence against women:

[...]Men are always formed, constructed or positioned by the society as the ones who have to lead everything, have to be heard, and in the dominant position in decision-making. (VCD, *Menguak KDRT*).

She continues to explain the categories of domestic violence against women that cover not only physical violence, but also psychological, economic, and sexual violence. In general, her comments represent more common opinions shared among feminist activists, as discussed above.



Figure 7.3: Sita Aripurnami, a prominent feminist activist

The next depiction shows the man kicking the woman in the back as she prays. Shortly after he kicks her, he shows remorse. D.E. reflects:

[...] He apologised. I forgave him. I forgave him. Well, if he wanted to apologise, I thought, even God is so loving, so generous, and forgiving. Why shouldn't I, a mere human, forgive him? (VCD, *Menguak KDRT*).

As if in response to D.E.'s reflection, a female psychologist, Sjenny Hartono ponders over the cyclical phases of marriage from the honeymoon to tension to violence, then back again. She analyses the psychological impact of women who are abused by their husbands:

[...] The direct impact is on the wife and it will surely belittle her self-esteem. [...] Its social impact will cause the wife who is suffering from violence to withdraw from the society. How would she engage in her social

life if, say, she has bruises all over her face? Socially, indeed, it has impact on the wife because she withdraws from society. (VCD, *Menguak KDRT*).



Figure 7.4: Sjenny Hartono, a psychologist

Then the film shows the woman crying while watching her children play. D.E. mourns:

I sacrifice for my children. If I only thought of myself, I would have run away. But I took pity on my children. (VCD, *Menguak KDRT*).

This becomes the turning point of D.E.'s life. She transforms into an enlightened-survivor-turned-activist who inspires other women to stand up against domestic violence. D.E. reminds other women who are victims of domestic violence:

For other women who also experience the same violence as I have, we have to strive forward. We cannot give up facing our lives. Let's stand up together. We seek protection. Let's raise ourselves up out of our position that has been squashed by men. Don't hurt yourself anymore. It's enough, sis. (VCD, *Menguak KDRT*).

Following D.E.'s declaration to other female victims of domestic violence, a female lawyer and feminist activist, Nursyahbani Katjasungkana, appears and comments:

In the name of the family and the children's futures, many women hide the violence that they face. [...] Generally speaking, all the legal systems do not support women. [...] I think a regulation for domestic violence has to cover these two objectives, that is, protecting the wives, children, parents, and

all members of the family, including the domestic helpers, but also keeping the household whole and not allowing any violence to ever occur. (VCD, *Menguak KDRT*).



Figure 7.5: Nursyahbani Katjasungkana, a lawyer-cum-feminist

As one of the participants who was involved in the conception of the draft for the UUPKDRT, Katjasungkana continues to explain other legal terms concerning the necessity for a law that regulates domestic violence. Her comments reassure victims of domestic violence to seek similar resolutions to their problems. This kind of self-transformation—from victim to survivor—is what the film wants to encourage.

The section of the film where these notable figures comment about what domestic violence is, who the victims and perpetrators are, what the victims should and can do, etc., represent the woman as a victim; that is, a victim of men's violence, who is psychologically and socially troubled because of the violence, and who is in need of legal assistance to resume her normal life. In addition to this, when the victim transforms into a survivor and invites other women sharing the same experience to join her in ending the violence, she hails other female victims too. It is through the incorporation of scenes of violence, experts' explanations, and a 'real' victim's testimony, that victims of domestic violence are hailed in this film.

## Conclusion

Campaign media, such as the film discussed above, has been an important tool of the Indonesian feminists' attempt to bring domestic violence into the public view. What appears to be the most important issue in the venture to make

domestic violence public has been how to present it in a public campaign media in presentations that are as real as possible and that will ultimately prompt public awareness and contribution.

While under the authority of the New Order, the state was deemed to be the cause restraining women to the domestic sphere—thus spelling out the state-induced border between the domestic and public spheres. With the weakening of the state's power following the New Order's demise, it is violence against women at home that becomes the signifier of the public/domestic boundary. The New Order's gender ideology and regulations that were ineffective in preventing domestic violence, proven by the absence of a regulating law, resulted in the isolation of the violence. Thus, violent acts were often not considered to be 'violence' because of the domestic nature and separation from the public sphere. More discussion and media campaign on domestic violence in the public eye are expected to transform its domestic character, and to regenerate its 'public' importance. Of importance here is the deployment of visualisations of domestic violence and its victims in the 'subaltern counterpublics' to win women's demands in public, both formal and informal. The visual availability of victims of domestic violence becomes a must, especially so in Indonesia during the time of public appeal to the aspect of 'visibility' (see Chapter One).

The film *Menguak Kekerasan Domestik* also hints at how to make domestic violence public by asking the audiences to get involved as active witnesses who are expected to not only to watch, but actually to do something, as voiced by the victim when questioning of the silence of people when they saw her husband brutally hitting her. The same logic has also been used in translating the phrase about the obligation for witnesses of domestic violence to give testimony as mentioned in the anti-domestic violence law. It is deemed important in the unveiling of cases, as well as to deconstruct the understanding about domestic violence, as such violence needs to be made public and put to an end.

What also becomes important in this film is the hailing of female victims of domestic violence who watch the film. It is not only the audience who are expected to get involved in the action to stop domestic violence by being active witnesses who offer help to the victims and are willing to provide the testimony required in filing a case, but also female victims who watch the film are hailed and made aware that they are victims who in order to survive must dare to take initiatives to end the violence and ultimately become advocates against domestic violence. While the activists and the sources are presented publicly, the identity of the victim must remain concealed. Even if the victim herself eventually becomes a survivor-cum-activist for the campaign against domestic violence, her identity must remain in the dark.