DISCOURSE OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN THAI MASS MEDIA: A TRANSMISSION OF PATRIARCHY THROUGH THE LANGUAGE

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Abstract
Since its beginnings, feminism has studied the relationship between men and women which is based on sexual inequality. It indicated that the needs of men to dominate women has lead to sexual violence at present. This concept, sometimes called 'Patriarchy', was implemented almost at the same time as the beginning of urbanization. Patriarchism is the concept that men have the power to oppress women. It is the power in society, ideology, family, and the political system which men use to oppress directly or through worship, law, language, custom, idioms, education as well as the division of labour in which women are always less powerful. Patriarchism is the system by which men use the law, culture and religion to give them the confidence that they have more power than women. Therefore, they use violence because women are lower in status and they need women to be lower in status. This also affects men's need to overcome their sense of alienation caused by women's fertility whereby women give birth and raise children. This article focuses on the discourse about violence against women through the language of various Thai media, which reflects the transformation of the patriarchy mechanism to the social truth establishment by the media.
Keywords: *feminism, patriarchism, urbanization, media*

INTRODUCTION

Feminism has been interested in studying sexual inequality and has indicated that sexual inequality came from men's domination of women. This concept is called patriarchy, implemented almost at the same time as the beginning of urbanization. Patriarchism is also the concept that men have the power to oppress women as Rich (in Tamangraksat, 2006: 33-34) said. The patriarchy system is the power of men in society, ideology, family, and the political system in which they either use the power to oppress directly or through worship, law, language, custom, idioms, education as well as the division of labour in which women are always lower in status. Josiah (2002) also stated that patriarchy is the system whereby men use the law, culture and religion to give them the confidence that they have more power than women. Therefore, they use violence because women are lower in status and they need women to be lower in status. This is consistent with Yot Tantasombat (2005: 4) who referred to Mary O'Brien's article on "The Politics of Reproduction" which defined women's power in comparison to men's need to overcome their sense of alienation caused by women's fertility

whereby women give birth and raise children.

Mohanty (1988: 65-88) pointed out that patriarchism was formulated by the interaction of various factors including the history of colonization, nationalism, armed conflict, and migration. It is also represented by economic status, social organization, nationality, level, age, handicap, region, culture etc. Those factors caused sexual inequality which turned out to be a part of men and women's relationship system later.

Patriarchism created inequities in economics, politics, and society. It controlled the mechanisms of social organization, the thinking system, the value system, culture through traditions, worship, law and legal policies. Sexual bias created inequality and inadequate access to health care and therapy as well as affected women's perceptions, i.e. lack of health knowledge, physical attitude which emphasized beauty, youth, shape, sexuality, sexual exploitation, pornography, the image of women, etc. (Somsawas, 2006: 53). Thus, the important affect of patriarchy that feminist academics want to study is violence against women.

Violence Against Women: Reflection of Patriarchy

Violence against women is the main issue that feminist academia focuses on,

due to fact that violence always leads to inequalities between men and women, who are historically treated unfairly without considering their human rights. Violence against women is the outstanding issue for the worldwide movement by women's organizations at the grass root level. They focused on adding more equality and rights awareness among themselves. Therefore, many organizations have become interested in the fact that violence against women has its foundation in patriarchy. They also believed that, in the unequal relationships between men and women, violence is men's tool to control and oppress women. (Josiah, 2011 : 79)

Definition and Type Of Violence Against Women

Bogard (1988: 133) divided the violence against women into two levels. These are personal violence and structural violence. Personal violence is visible such as physical battering, rape, or sexual harassment. Structural violence is invisible but engrained in the social structure and related through norms, thought, beliefs, then blended and transferred to other generations through the socialization patterns, such as values of men's and women's roles, women's images, role of the wife etc, and automatically affects the violence anticipation of receivers.

The United Nations is interested in the concept of violence against women as a pattern of discrimination and human rights threats to women. The declaration on the elimination of violence against women from the United Nations General Assembly on December 20, 1993 summarized their concerns that violence against women will be a barrier to fulfill humanity's goals of equality, development, and peace. Violence is also the violation of rights and fundamental freedoms of women. Violence against women is a phenomenon of the basic power relationship between men and women which is unequal. This phenomenon causes further domination by men and discrimination against women and has interrupted women's improvement. It is also clear that violence against women is one of the savage social mechanisms that affect women's status making them inferior to men.

The above declaration defined violence against women to mean any action of sexual violence which may physically, sexually, or mentally hurt or offend women. This includes threat and deprivation both publicly and in personal life. Therefore, violence against women definitions include: 1) physical, sexual, or mental violence within the family which includes battering, sexual abuse of girls, rape by the spouse, female genital circumcision, and traditional rules that disadvantage women; 2) violence which is not by a spouse but takes advantage of women as shown in murder, rape, trafficking in women and girls, sexual harassment in workplaces or schools (United Nations, 2006: 66-68); 3) physical, sexual, and mental violence within the community, including rape, sexual abuse, sexual harassment, threat in the workplace, school or other places, trafficking in women and girls and forced prostitution. Besides these, ignorance of the state of those forms of violence counts as violence as well.

United Nations research divided forms of violence against women into four types (United Nations, 2006: 37-46). Violence against women within the family includes physical assault either by force or weapons, rape by a husband of his own wife, verbal threat or hurt, as well as improper treatment and blocking women's access to the basic resources. Maynard (1993: 116) said that the study of violence against women in the family must be very careful because particular societies and cultures have their own approaches to managing violence within the family. Violence against women within the community, such as physical and mental violence in the workplace or in public, in the form of rape, murder, sexual harassment either verbal or mental, and trafficking. Violence against women perpetrated or condoned by the state, such as not accepting the notification of or ignoring violence

against women within a family, investigating rape without protecting or considering human rights. Violence against women in armed conflict, such as in ancient times or during war, when women may be sent to fight, raped, or used as slaves to the soldiers or the winning party.

Violence against women is caused by many factors which are related to each other, such as drinking alcohol (Clark and Foy, 2000, Johnson, 2011, Miller, Wilsnack and Cunradi, 2000), psychopathology and personality traits, sex and power motives: many cases of violence against women are from men's need to have more power than women which led to the concept or belief that men use violence as a tool to control women. Social learning theory points out that humans learn behavior by observing others' behaviors. If a society recognizes that violence is normal and acceptable, then the children will grow up to accept violence as a normal matter in daily life. Attitude and gender schemes, such as patriarchy norms and certain cultures, which expect men to have more power than women, either physically or mentally, may cause violent behavior. (Crowell and Burgess. 1996: 54-61)

In the past two decades, there have been many research studies about violence against women, named variously as violence against women, sexual violence, and gender violence. The key of study is to set the appropriate topic, reflect the right message, propose a definition of violence, and follow the direction of feminism (Radford, Harner and Friedberg, 2000: 1). The research emphasized the definition of violence against women and also related to violence against children. It also focused on domestic violence, sexual harassment, pornography, and sexual abuse of children (Radford, Harner and Friedberg, 2000: 1).

Discourse of Violence Against Women: Reflection of Patriarchy From the Third Wave of Feminism

Feminism has been in continuous development since its beginning. It is divided into many schools: the first, second and third waves of feminism. The third wave feminism began in 1980 and continues to the present. It focuses on the importance of differences between men and women, which brought up many issues such as sexual diversity, identity, skin color, homosexuality etc. The main issue that the third wave feminist focused on was sexual violence and the need to eliminate any violence which happen from sexual inequality (Krolokke and Sorensen, 2006: 15-17). They tried to define "femininity" which was the universal female identity. They also tried to change the stereotype of women as well as the image and language which is used about women in the media. Postmodern feminism believes that

language is an important tool to set the frame and build the social truth about women, while cultural mechanism is the tool to set the femininity through the language (Peet and Hartwick, 2009:241).

The important school for third wave feminism is postmodern feminism. The keywords that they are interested in studying are "language", "discourse", and "power". Postmodern feminism explained that power is about benefit and how it is used by a particular group, context and situation. Power will generate the reaction and not tie in with any group. Foucault, who was one of the important theorists in this group, saw that identity is indefinite. The important writing of Foucault, "History of Sexuality", mentioned that power is everywhere, in every interaction, is diverse, and is organized under various principles, not a single one (Woodhill, 1988: 168). In reference to Foucault's concept of power, Martin (1988: 12-14) mentioned that discourse about sex is the main focus for power control. Women are targeted to be watched, dominated, and controlled. Women's strength will grow when they get themselves out of a discourse domination situation or create a mechanism for desexualization. Physical gender is also one of the determinant to let women under the men according to the sex for both control and freedom areas. So, the struggle must not lead every social situation to focus on the sex issue and remain unrelated to sexual identity.

One of the famous theorists in postmodern feminism was Judith Butler. Her most popular writing was "Gender Trouble" which reviewed the concepts of last wave feminists and pointed out the difference between gender, which is set by society, and sex, which is set physically. It was questioned why we accepted sex to determine men or women in society. (Butler, 1995: 35-37)

From the third wave feminism, academia questioned the role and influence of mass media: whether it was the key to transmit patriarchy via various media to receivers. If media has an influence on knowledge, thought, and expression about violence against women, it has led to the sexual inequality problem and the mentioned violence continuing in society. Therefore, a group of journalism academics proposed the feminist media theory which emphasized the role and influence of the media in presenting the power relationships which led to threat of inequality between men and women.

Thai Mass Media and a Transmission of Patriarchy in Feminist Media Theory

Pipithkul (2005: 8-9) explained that the feminist media theory as a reflection of women in media was out of date and affected women's external and internal

visions. Women took those pictures into their brains and allowed them to dictate their lives especially the relations between men and women. The pictures of women in media not only affected the domination of women's thought and personal way of life but also affected men's thought, which framed the women in similar visions. This circle created the stereotype. These situations provoked additional study by academic media feminists who were interested to find out what was the concept behind the presentation, how to disclose and how to revoke that concept. Those images presented via media as a socializing agent may have a powerful effect on attitude, value, thought, and behavior of people in the society (Somsawas, 2006: 69).

In Thailand, there have been many research studies about violence against women via mass media based on postmodern feminism. They studied the discourse of sex and violence against women in Thai society based on beliefs that language was the agent to transmit the thinking system, values, and culture as sexual inequality in the social structure. Language was used as a regulator to drive some thought and expression and may hide the thought and expression at the same time. Boonmongkol, Chonwilai, Lapimol, and Samkkikarom (2008) found that the discourse about mainstream sex dominated the thinking system and the practices of sex

for the people in society through various methods i.e. the production of knowledge about the truth of sex, creating and reproducing the value of sex which refers to morality, controlling by religious rules and laws, etc. Hence, the discourse about mainstream sex was not isolated but it was a part of the knowledge bonding and the reproduction, transmission, and establishing of the truth of sex through social mechanisms and people related to the production and use of that knowledge.

The growth of Thai mass media affected the direction of study on Thai women in academic area. In the past, many Thai research studies about women related to worship, ritual, and way of life in the community. With mass media playing a bigger role in society, there was more research to confirm the influence of mass media on women's issues. Many research studies pointed out the role of the media in publicizing violence against women through its features. Women have been presented as a victim of violence or as sexual objects through the media (Hansawasdi, 2001; Maison, 2001; Ratsadornnuwat, 2001; Saejung, 2001; Jeenjaroen, 2001) consistent with the research overviews of the mass media in Thailand, which also found the same findings (Kaewthep and Pipithkul, 1996). The feminist media theory states that the language operation and media discourse

have very high impact in portraying sexual violence through the cultural productions, stereotypes and presentations.

Discourse of Violence Against Women: Gender Stereotype

In the early days of feminism and media studies, academics were interested in studying gender stereotypes. Tuchman (1978: 8) found that media did not reflect the actual changes in relationships between sex and the fact that many women were not just housewives but workers in society. The results of these distorted presentations and productions affected girls in that they could not find women who could be role models in any aspect other than the same role that they used to see in daily life. Therefore, Tuchman proposed that the anticipated changes in the media were presenting a reflection more than an established truth still existing in the changed society.

The long term study of Caballero & Solomon (1984) who studied the image of women in advertisements on television for 3 years (1977-1980), found that women represented the housewife for a household product or appliance, but were seen as sexual objects when selling cosmetics or men's products. For the whole 3 years, the image of women in advertisements continued in the same direction without significant change.

In society, the female stereotype has been displayed continuously. A survey of the Commission on the National Women's Council reported that in 1988 women represented only the beauty image without a specific role. Women had an important role only as housewives. Images of women were weak and below men. Fewer women producers were in the mass media and there were many problems in work similar to women working in other industries. The problem with those image presentations in the media was that the purpose of presentation was the pursuit of their own business benefit more than the objectives of education and human resource development. They believed that the presentation of individuals in traditional ways, either in news, movies, or series would gain better audience approval. The results from that study were similar to the research on women's images 15 years later, in 2003. As Chaemsanit (2008: 41) found in a critique on sex in the media, they wouldemphasize female images, such as presenting women as sexual objects, sexy actressesin public displays, and in TV series which presented only drama and not intellectualenrichment. Even the internet has been mentioned in the cabinet for focusing more on advertising services and gambling than for portraying women as sexual objects.

Discourse of Violence Against Women: Cultural Reproduction

The cultural reproduction concept is about the transmission of culture, values, and norms from generation to generation. It is also the mechanism for cultural continuity to remain strong as time passes. Pierre Bourdieu, the French sociologist, discussed cultural reproduction. Bourdieu presented the concept of cultural reproduction and focused on capitalism, field of work, and behavior or personal capital (habitus). He claimed that cultural reproduction in every society was transmitted from generation to generation through various social channels in order to maintain capital in the society, such as through the education system as well as various branches of the arts (Bourdieu, 258-260).

Many research studies supported the mass media in cultural reproduction's role, as Hansawasdi (2001) who studied women in the movies and found that all movies presented Thai female images in the same style, which was idealistic. That process was formulated from the main concept about women as elite or high class people, either formal or informal. That concept has predominated and is used as the main idea about females in Thai society. Later producers, as members of society and the patriarchy, received this idealistic concept to model women's images in the movies on.

Women in the movies have proceeded through the norm of conformity. The normalizing judgment has been used as a tool for the concept that any abnormal matters must be made normal. Hence, the people, especially women, would accept the women's images in the movies. All these processes were factors which affected women's idealistic images, which became the main conceptualizations in Thai society of femininity and were reproduced continuously.

Discourse of Violence Against Women: Representative Image

Stuart Hall was a theorist who described the representative image. He explained that a representative image meant to the people or group whatever that representative image portrayed, consistent with the thoughts, beliefs, or norms which existed in the society. Representative images have been presented via existing codes and symbols and the society will recognize the meaning as a truth of society (Hall, 1997: 4). It is consistent with the domination theory of Gramsci (Gramsci, 1971: 188) which explained the people or group who have more power in society will try to build acceptance and will control the poor people or outsider group without physical violence but by using the media to create a thought domination situation. A person's identity can be built through the

media. Gramsci also classified the domination strategy or the mastering process into 2 types. There were political hegemony and cultural hegemony (Kaewthep and Hinwiman, 2008: 186-187)

From the media's role in violence against women, Kaewthep et al (2005), who studied the image of women in Thai mass media, found interesting points in various media content: it always included the domestic ideology, i.e., specifying that the place for women is the house and women always rely on and need the protection from men, while woman was a sexual object for men. Now women are working outside the home but the media still reflects only the middle class of working women who succeed in their careers without reflecting all working women. It always represents some meaning of working women included as an unimportant factor or in a minor role when compared to men.

The women represented not only appeared as higher status of working women but also reflected the attitude towards women's external image. Maison (2001) studied the representative elements from the concept to define the meaning by women's figures. She also found power negotiation factors between women and the mass media in the political sense about the negotiation of how the body is presented in Thai magazines: the presentation has been coded and negotiated by women themselves. It was in line with the negotiation concept in setting a representation which reversed the stereotype and substituted a positive image for a negative one and retained the stereotype but changed the meaning. The element of negotiation in order to get the representative through the body presentation is consistent with negotiation with the capital owner (capitalism), negotiation with the production (photographer and stylist), and the negotiation with society. The study also found a challenge to the patriarchy concept in magazines by women who set their own representatives. They showed the beauty image presentation while the camera and lens were tools to present their images. They built the meaning of nude images by their own concept and imagination. However, the negotiation was limited by capitalism and patriarchy while the models had no chance to say no and none of them blamed the customers who bought and saw those images.

The study of violence against women through magazines found the same results as the study through movies. It represented the women's image idealistically as Ratsaranuwat (2001) found: magazines for women had only one way to portray the feminine, by focusing on the image intention; they also had one way to show unsuccessful people - as followers

only. For other feminine styles, the magazine represented in different ways and mostly showed a passive image of Thai women.

In the patriarchy presentation, Ratsaranuwat (2001) found that women who accepted the men were successful and always a leader, had more sex appeal and no inclination to refuse the patriarchy. The magazines for men accepted men and women totally in the same direction. They accepted women as a sexual object, beneath men in sexual matters, unsuccessful and only followers, while they accepted men as strong, interested in sports, successful, showing leadership, aggressive, rude, with more sex appeal, above women in sexual matters, and interested and knowledgeable in mechanical technology, as well as cars.

This was similar to Chuemuangpan's finding (2009). She found that the women's image in Thai entertainment magazines, both in writing and in photos, shows identity has been cut off and only some part of the body is shown to draw the readers' attention. Moreover, the media emphasized sexual expression, as a role and duty by women, who were assumed to be easy, under control, and always reliant on men. They were used as the sexual incentive with no shame for men. Magazines also influence readers in terms of the conceptual framework of women's image presentation. It is clear that media

always choose celebrities to be a main factor in drawing readers' attention and distorting the message that they want to present. The results were that the information and image of female actresses have been published widely so that people in society judge the women by the image presented by the media.

The presentation of those representations affected the receiver's recognition of women's image and made an impression. Saejung (2001) studied the representation of Thai women in media which presented sexual matters, such as publications, VDO, computerized media, and karaoke as well as men's perceptions of stereotypes of women. The research found that Thai women in media representations about sexual matters presented only the feminine attributes of shape, figure, smiling face, invitation, proposal, open to opportunity, and making compromises with men. In these representations, women would refuse in the beginning but finally would allow and respond to having sex with men. They always had high sexual needs, passive roles, and were careless in morality and ethics. The stereotype that Thai men perceive of Thai women as represented through media is that women appear unimpressive, are prostitutes, work or give service only for money, have sex with men easily, express insincere behavior, and are pretentious and unreliable.

Actually, Thai men's stereotype of Thai women is that they have beautiful faces and figures, are lovely and polite, play a large role in society, are open about relations with the opposite gender, may dress in a sexy way, but are not easy. However, the study found that some Thai men's stereotype of Thai women was that they were easy and did things for money, expressed an innocent look but loved to have sex, especially those who go out at night or are student prostitutes. They also believed that women have inadequate knowledge or misunderstandings about sex.

CONCLUSION

Thai mass media plays a very important role, both as an institution and a mechanism for the transmission of the patriarchy, by perpetuating the violence against women discourse in many ways, such as violence against women, gender and physical beauty, women as sexual products, traditional sexual traditions, culture and Thai values. Mass media selects language specifically to present certain sexual definitions and thereby builds the stereotype which clearly reflects the communication problem about sex in Thailand.

Many research studies support that the patriarchy affects the presentation of violence against women discourse through the language in mass media, which builds

the social truths that women are the victims of violence, that sex is a personal issue, that sexual harassment of women is normal, and that there is inequality in the power relationships in Thai society. These affect the status of Thai women, who are still only sexual objects, under men's power, as reproduced through every media continuously.

From an analysis of discourse of violence against women in Thai mass media, academics should be aware of the influence of the mass media and find appropriate approaches for positive social change. This would create a movement towards the correct understanding, a change from the patriarchy to human rights awareness for sexual equality, by using the mass media to support women's power in negotiation with the patriarchy.

Further study should focus more on the cultural dimension in Thai society and how it supports the patriarchy. Moreover, they should study the role and influence of the digital media such as the internet, as a new media with many features of speed and unlimited access, on what its role is and what it can transmit about the violence again women in Thai society.

Besides the language used by mass media, they should focus on women as a knowledge builder from their own stories through the media. They should analyze the roles women have in mass media, both

qualitative and quantitative, how they are aware of and understand their roles, how they define their identity, how they understand and manage their own power negotiation, etc. This will lead to the understanding of women's potential as knowledge builders from their own stories to set the sexual discourse through mass media.

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