

Intertwined gender inequality in Desy Anwar's *Growing Pains*

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ABSTRACT

Rooted within structures of patriarchy and modern life, gender equality seems still far from achieved. Providing social issues like gender inequality, literary works become reliable proof to portray subordination or discrimination against women. Thus, this study aspires to strive for women empowerment and re-educating men expectantly to tackle the problems of gender inequality. Desy Anwar's *Growing Pains* is interlaced with gender issues in five chapters. This research aims to unveil a range of gender conflicts and the efforts of the female main characters to overcome the hardships in life. Descriptive criticism is employed as a method of analysis. Following Lazar's Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (2014), the linguistic data in the form of lexical choices, phrases, and clauses are first identified based on the language features indicating gender inequality or violence. Eckert and McConnell-Ginet's language theory (2013) is applied in unraveling the details of linguistic evidence. Then, interpreting the discursive logic is correlated with the cultural realm of the novel. Hence, the findings yield that all the selected lexicons, phrases, and clauses of the novel construct the meanings of gender issues. Socio-cultural experiences represent forms of gender-based violence such as asymmetrical family systems, misogynistic practices, gender-identity threatening, deviant female promiscuity, and cruel motherhood portrayal. The symbolic and psychological impacts are also identified, referring to post-patriarchal regimes. Although there seems to be effortful survival in masculine domination, both internal and external factors are in support of constructed gender inequalities. Eventually, all the female characters are demonstrated as the vulnerably subordinated subjects of neoliberal hegemony. This research fervently aims to recall the awareness of symbolic gender violence due to ongoing powers that halt the emergence of gender equality and reshape it into hegemonic strategies.

Keywords: hegemony, inequality, misogyny, patriarchy, symbolic violence

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INTRODUCTION

Numerous aspects of literary works are brought to the readers, like the manifestation of gender inequality that appears ubiquitously in literary works (Akhter, 2020; Mir & Jahangir, 2021). Besides entertainment, reading literature also sheds light on social issues that can be experienced or felt in the real world. A product of literature acts as a means for broader targeted goals to express a range of matters in human life. Similarly, Toliver (2020) states that one of the uses of literature is to reflect all human experiences. Thus, the emergence of gender issues can become evidence of literary works that accurately represent marginalized groups of people.

Gender as a social product can be investigated through language and gender in various texts, for instance, a theory by Eckert & McConnell-Ginet (2013) about linguistic resources demonstrating the reference or conscious attention to gender construction. Lazar (2014) examines semiotic expressions of discursive meanings such as agentive verbs 'reach', 'achieve', and 'go for it' to disclose emancipated female subjectivity. Hence, the story of the female main characters is significant and nourishing for delineating the social and cultural discourse that grounds the gender imbalance in a novel. Language becomes an essential indicator of the numerous ways to unveil the implications of gender and power in different levels of social life (Weatherall, 2002).

Although most stories are produced based on fictitious events, the author's social and cultural experiences influence author's approach to any issues in the text. By presenting imaginative work and written narratively, types of gender violence are brought in a novel titled *Death of an-Ex Minister*

(Juhana et al., 2021). Women's struggles include stereotypes and double burdens in the public and domestic spheres (Febriani et al., 2022). Principally, in a feminist movement, the female characters are depicted as struggling for justice since their position is not equally constructed as that of males. This strategic positioning for five female characters is also seen in Anwar's *Growing Pains*.

This novel contains five separate series of life. With her myriad international experiences, Anwar is one of the Indonesian senior journalists working for a significant Indonesian private media company. It tells how the five female characters, Delia, Adela, May, and the other two roles, without proper names, face pitiful realms and survive against all odds. The author used the first singular subject, 'I' and the third singular, 'she'. It seems that 'I' refers to the author since the first chapter conveys her father's death, a Professor lecturer at a university in Sumatra. Shortly put, the conflicts in the novel are about family members' complicated relationships, such as husband and wife or parents and daughter relations. However, this problem triggers gender issues, which is recognized as a hint of inequalities in this novel that is worth investigating.

Discussion of gender cannot be detached from language practice in texts and criticism as approaches to women empowerment. Fowler (2013) states linguistic features are not neutrally constructed by the speaker or writer. Referring to interdisciplinary studies, Fakhrrshafaie (2020) compares two novels based on different period of productions to observe negative feeling of female characters, proving patriarchal mindset due to the women's disapproving attitudes. Women are posited as the target of oppression in post-structural feminism (Saptiadi et al., 2022). Meanwhile, religious factors and feudalistic traditions bring about gender equality struggles in two novels, *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban* and *Gadis Pantai* (Muzakka & Suyanto, 2020). These previous research studies support the grounding of feminist identity in literature products. They participate in solidifying the concept of feminism to struggle in social reality.

Ample relevant studies highlight the construction of female positions or characters in assorted social realities. First, Muhammad and Khan (2021) describe how subordination to women is maintained as a refugee in the novel *Exit West*, written by Mohsin Hamid (2017). While using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), Fairclough's theory is mainly employed by Muhammad and Khan (2021) in their research. The result of their work shows the survival of a female character called Nadia, yet she still experiences discrimination and verbal harassment. On the other hand, Siboro (2023) figures out the patriarchal structure and legal constitution in *Stoning of Soraya M* novel. This study reveals the complicated country's law causing abuse towards women in Iran, which has secular and religious laws. These two previous studies demonstrate a discrepancy in the broad socio-cultural context with this current research. For example, they focus on the novels whose settings are the countries suffering from democratic crises. In addition, the writers of the previously analyzed novels are all men: Freidoune Sahebjam for *The Stoning of Soraya M* and Tariq Ali for *Exit West*. This fact gives intriguing association to compare with Anwar's *Growing Pain*. This evidence furnishes most of the concerns for this current research. Through various situations faced by all the female characters, this current research is in the effort to fill the void. Thus, it is expected to bring more complex insight of this particular avenue.

Furthermore, another relevant study emphasizing gender violence appears on television broadcasting. Ulfah and Wuryanta (2018) suggest ideological contestation in a specific problem, which is a sexual crime reported on television. It provides the moral viewpoint ignored in the symbolic form of gender imbalance. The image of women as the victims suffers from gender bias. Regarding this case, although this current research focuses on symbolic violence, it differs in the framing of mass media and literature. The previous research reveals the subordination through real cases, yet this current research presents the intertwined gender inequality in a novel. Hence, the gap can be considered from the surroundings of the ordinary daily lives of female characters in the novel and the particular situation of violent criminals.

Due to an unequal gendered social order (Stoneley, 2020), the relationship between males and females is expressed in the domain of power and ideology. Introduced by Lazar (2014), Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (henceforth, FCDA) is influenced by the development of contemporary critical feminist thought. By bringing together two distinct disciplines, namely Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and feminist (language) studies, a scholar named Michelle M. Lazar articulates textual representations to reveal discrimination and inequality. This theory clearly divulges the complexity and diversity of gender ideologies as from a political viewpoint. It intensifies the issue of gender ideological asymmetries and how to address them. Therefore, Lazar's FCDA (2014) takes roles in the progress of

feminism, which seeks equality as the positioning of women is always hindered by the patriarchal setting of dominations.

Under the theoretical framework of FCDA, there are preceding studies that delineates the coherence of feminism and inequality in literary works. For instance, gender bias in the stereotypical feminization of a character named *Sin* in *Paradise Lost* book (Zaidi, 2017) and social and economic discrimination in *The Stone Woman* novel (Amir et al., 2020) show approvals for the insight of feminist CDA. Another example of analysis comes from Zhou (2021), who proves some changes in the consciousness of women, such as independence, inner support, and the importance of taking power in recent years. Furthermore, Zhou (2021) emphasizes the change in traditional Chinese women's culture that is fading, which both female novel authors and readers show. It means that feminist analysts propose power relations affect the subordinate group, leading to hegemony practices for the continuance of patriarchal order. Thus, in the essence of FCDA this current research holds the notions of dominance, gender violence, and hegemony.

All the above mentioned, gender studies are in line with this current research. Yet, to mitigate the gap, several distinctions are briefly projected. Most notably, the combination of FCDA by Lazar (2014) and language and gender by Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2013) are employed in this research. It is also remarkable to connect the gender issue with the socio-cultural context of millennial modernism. Thus, the primary aims of this recent research are not merely to acknowledge the feminist literary works, but to demonstrate a range of gender inequality and the context of post-patriarchal regimes in the novel *Growing Pains*.

As mentioned in the above part of the patriarchal structure, most cultural values show patriarchy as a universal practice. For instance, known as the supplementary role in Indonesian society, women were mainly seen as a wife or a mother. Nowadays, however, that paradigm is shifting. An intriguing consideration comes from the background of the writer of the novel *Growing Pains*. Desy Anwar was born in Minangkabau family that also operates patriarchal system although it has matrilineal kinship. The first proof is clearly realized from her name, as Anwar is her father's name. From this viewpoint, she succeeds in illustrating how male domination constructs women to take full responsibility for domestic tasks, verbal abuse, or symbolic violence. It becomes the grounding evidence that women's role is still marginalized based on local values and cultural beliefs. This harmonizes with Eckert & McConnell-Ginet's explanation (2013) that the significant resonance of masculine naming refers to the social prestige of a particular ethnicity or religion. Furthermore, the matrilineal kinship system in Minangkabau society does not in fact, affect the authority of patriarchal rule. This is in accordance with Valentina & Safitri (2022) that the role of women in Minang customs is substantial, yet they experienced degradation due to globalization.

Thus, with the gender issues in mind, this research conceivably contributes to the enrichment of awareness about gender inequality in literary works. In millennial modernism, it is crucial to raise the challenging critical expectations (James, 2012). It brings together readers of poems, short stories, or novels and specifically for researchers of linguistics and literature to increase concern about such social and cultural gender issues that undoubtedly can appear in neighborhoods, surroundings, institutional workplaces, and even in educational fields.

METHOD

Growing Pains (Anwar, 2018) was chosen as the source of data in this research. Since the main characters were all females and they were involved in various conflicts, the gender issue is noteworthy to untangle its complexities. The data were in the form of lexical choices, phrases, and clauses since it focuses on the language practice of social use. So, it is categorized as qualitative research. The first step was to peruse the novel. Then, the data were selected based on the meanings that convey gender issues, especially inequality in each chapter of the novel. It means that only several linguistic features are provided to describe, in detail by using combined theories. After that, the chosen linguistic resources are identified based on language and gender by Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2013). By examining the linguistic variability, such as grammatical and lexical morpheme, syntactical alternatives, and adverbial phrases, this theory became the analytical tool that can articulate particular meanings beyond what was written in the novel. Next, Lazar's FCDA (2014) is employed by correlating it with the cultural values or norms. Her theory was aligned with the framework of modern society demonstrated in the novel in which gender issues still appear as a class struggle for female empowerment. Hence, these theories were

aimed to reveal a range of gender inequality connected to the impacts and social and cultural context or triggering factors in the novel.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As one of the major problems, gender inequality occurs as it is constantly renewed and enacted in social realities. Females' survival is still an ongoing process in hegemonic power wielded by patriarchy as the dominant ideology. In the novel titled *Growing Pains*, the forms of female subordination are constructed in various ways. Five chapters convey different female characters in each problem. Anwar's position representing the intelligence, bravery, and courage of women constitutes valid evidence of the women's movement in Indonesia. Gender inequality and symbolic violence are successfully delineated as concerning issues of how women are struggling for identity in society.

Following FCDA, the first analysis is concerned with the language as it becomes the means to conceptualize the gender issue. Through scrutinizing the linguistic aspects, such as grammatical choices and expression, the data are explained based on Eckert & McConnell-Ginet's theory (2013) about language and gender. This language description, then, strengthens the interpretation of discursive processes and explanation of cultural factors based on Lazar's Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (2014). As a result, there are 1) asymmetrical family systems, 2) misogynistic practices, 3) gender-identity threatening, 4) deviant female promiscuity, and 5) cruel motherhood portrayal. On that account, this current research is elaborated by applying an interdisciplinary approach. The socio-cultural context enhances the discursive practice of patriarchal hegemony. Based on FCDA, the social situation needs to be exposed to understand the gender dynamic in the modernized era.

Results

This section offers succinct results yet essential part from a range of language perspectives. Linguistically analyzing the female characters and their conflicts in a patriarchal society, the meaning in each extract taken from the novel is defined. The underlying oppression operated by dominant ideology can be validated through the language aspects found in the selected extracts. It opens broader correlations with the discursive logic and the context of cultural and situational realities (Lazar, 2014). The articulation of symbolic violence depicts the renewal of patriarchy through the narrative description in the novel and the conversation of every character. As the main characters, all females suffer the subordination. Hence, five chapters in the novel with varying stories yield five forms of gender inequality. They are asymmetrical family system, misogynistic practice, gender-identity threatening, deviant female promiscuity, and cruel motherhood portrayal. These essential findings were obtained by referring to language and gender theory conducted by Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2013), who shed light on the societal norms brought by language. Hence, language analysis in this gender issue is inseparable from the effort to prove the injustice due to hegemony. As a result, the linguistic practices in the novel *Growing Pains* are considered the indisputable evidence for the intertwined gender inequality.

Discussion

Asymmetrical Family System

Extract 1 is a demonstration of gender inequality, especially the asymmetrical role of males and females in the family. The extract is found in the chapter 'A Million Pieces'.

- (1) At home, my father had few practical skills. That was the domain of my mother. She was the handy one who fixed things round the house, who knew how to lay bricks, paint the walls and change the car oil. Meanwhile my father's greatest desire was to be left alone, with his books, his studies or his wrestling match. (Anwar, 2018:57)

Some grammatical choices of extract (1) are defined to compare the imbalance role of mother and father. The prepositional phrase "at home" becomes the explicit limitation to construct the full responsibility of female's role in a family. Another piece of evidence can be seen in the grammatical quantifier, "few" which entails specifying plural expressions but contains negative meanings (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2013). Moreover, it is stated that the grammatical morpheme is fundamental to the language use. It assists in furnishing the messages with gender ideology. The intertwined gender

inequality can be seen through the phrases “to lay bricks, paint the walls and change the car oil” as Eckert & McConnell-Ginet (2013) suggest men do house repairs and look after car. It was demonstrated that the father tends to focus on his academic interests and watching sports competitions. The gender violence appears in his ignorance concerning the housework. The gender ideology here seems ‘consensual and acceptable’ (Lazar, 2014), because the mother showed obedience and did not confront the hardship she should tackle herself.

The discursive meaning lies in the physical activities performed by the mother. The situation could have been more balanced since the father gained the privilege to enrich his knowledge while the mother was placed in the domestic sphere. The female’s role took up the material consequences, such as laying bricks, painting the walls, and changing the car oil. It can be described as the influence of the higher value of men than women in the social order (Weatherall, 2002). This case was seen as a form of male supremacy, that the father is ‘the ruler’ over the inferiority of the mother. It represents the patriarchal system to gain authority in social life. Although the data shows that the female character demonstrated power to be the chief responsibility in domestic work, it still contains male domination issues. The lexical item “greatest desire” acting as a possessive pronoun illustrates the male superiority, indicating normalized excuses for the asymmetrical family system. Further, it can be interpreted that domestic work has no significant impacts to reach the ambition of the male character. This is in accordance with Trivedi and Tiwari’s thought (2016): “In patriarchal society, men are the main source of income of the family and have been given the dominating positions and women have been enslaved in the family”.

- (2) Father could not be relied upon to do anything, including making decisions that four year olds didn’t normally have to, such as talking to her teacher about her wish to go up a grade because she could already read and write, which May had to do herself, and demanding to be taken to a hospital when her tonsils were inflamed. (Anwar, 2018:263)

There is a negative modal “could no” used in extract 2 to describe the father’s incapability. It implicitly suggests hidden presuppositions often problematic, to state in a fully explicit form (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2013). Readers are guided to presuppose that the father has no significant role, even responsibility, to solve his daughter’s problems. The capability for childcare is in the domain of motherhood, which makes it a hegemonic gender relation in fatherhood (Lazar, 2014). The character May seems to be trained as an independent daughter.

However, it becomes the reflection of the male’s superior position in society as the modal “had to” refers to the necessity of another person or external power, which in this case is the father. It can be seen from the difference in the use of modals “must” from personal obligations and “have to” from a rule or cultural norms. To raise a daughter as a compelling figure is seen as a neoliberal hegemony since it correlates to excellent academic achievement. The father becomes the cause of May as the female character to rely on herself. It drives her to devastating obligation. May is depicted as a completely clueless female figure who has been burdened with serious decisions since she was a young little girl. Trivedi and Tiwari (2016) explain the inferiority of women is demonstrated by the manipulation of power. This is the fact that female members in a family are the victims of male domination. Hence, in providing child support, the male character seems ignorant, as it supposed to find in the patriarchal system. The female character is constructed as a weak figure, showing the difficulties of solving her problem when his father is unconcerned with his daughter.

Misogynistic Practice

Misogyny is no longer about hatred of women, but it encapsulates more cultural elements. Extract 3 show misogynistic practices in the novel.

- (3) Delia, ‘You never took any interest in what’s happening in the house, what I get up to...’
 Cam, ‘I could never stand any of your feminist rubbish anyway...’
 Delia, ‘I’m taking the teapot with me. My mother gave it to me before we got married’
 Cam, ‘Rubbish. It was a wedding present. You’re not taking it.’ (Anwar, 2018:105)

The character named Cam in (3) shows misogynist practice by mentioning the lexicon “rubbish”.

It shows his patterns of lexical choice, that Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2013) point out about it as the strategy to build social meaning. The lexical item 'feminist rubbish' shapes harmful and sexist outcomes. It appears as an insult to the female character for whatever reason. Based on the context of the quarrel, Cam and Delia were husband and wife dealing with household and relationship problems. The stuff they argued was "that teapot" that Delia's mother gave it to her. The source of the teapot is from Cam's mother-in-law. The teapot itself becomes the symbol of women's cultural stigma, referring to tea time, even stuff she should do in the kitchen, as well as gossip. Ging and Siapera (2018) throw light on misogynistic hate as the locus of harm related to gender inequality.

Similarly, misogyny appears as the masked hatred in the unhappy marriage between Cam and Delia. The presence of men's power is explicitly manifested through the offensive word in the lexical choice "rubbish". In dealing with the ignorance of the male's role in household matters, Delia's phrase, "You never took any interest in what's happening in the house," obviously portrays this gender issue. The grammatical morpheme "any" shows the validity of the male character as having no care for his wife and domestic life. In the end, Delia and Cam decided to live separately. It can be seen as the survival strategy of the female character to defend herself from a stressful marriage. All in all, it highlights that the male character practices psychological violence towards his wife. (Nartey, 2021) concludes that there is the ideology of 'ugly' to evaluate the devalued and repulsive conditions of women.

Additionally, Lazar (2014) highlights gender asymmetry is depicted in face-to-face interactions. It matches with extract 3 that when the male character 'Cam' is having a quarrel with the female character 'Delia' about the teapot as they decide to live separately. The 'teapot' constructs the feminist discourse as it is generally used by females in the kitchen. Based on the critical feminist perspective, this symbolizes a power imbalance that addresses females with domestic appliances. It is considered one of the discursive aspects referring to symbolic oppression. This is in line with Lazar (2014), who states that the interest of FCDA lies in the social practices that are discursive in the discourse context.

- (4) But the beast was no monster. It was herself. That part of her that had grown with her since she was a child but which she failed to recognize and had thus pushed aside. From time to time, it emerged to tease her and beg for her attention. (Anwar, 2018:172)

On the other hand, another misogynist practice appeared to the female character identifying herself as "the beast". As a new idea in the lexical choice (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2013), it represents the female character cherishing negative feelings towards 'herself'. With respect to this point, women are described as mere parasites (Mir and Jahangir, 2021) and hold negative feelings toward themselves (Fakhrshafaie, 2020). This is in line with the acceptance of the female character as a radically shifted image, which is 'the beast' in (4). In this part, she exposed herself to be vulnerably conquered or the pervasive power to reflect her own deep, troubled inner state. Through the lens of gender, Lazar (2014) emphasizes that textual representations become evidence of power and dominance. Thus the existence of power that controls the female character in this case can be depicted from the phrase 'to tease her' since teasing is a strategy for intentionally cruel expression to her. The linguistic data in (4) uncover the female character's weakness that she had no control over herself. This is symbolic violence over gender issues, especially misogynistic practices. It is not only about how the female character makes her equal to the threatening figure, but it also delineates the avowal to be the psychological burden defeating her conscious mind. Furthermore, the 'bad' image becomes the cage that traps the female character in a growing misogynistic view of her own identity. It indicates that the sociocultural environment has a total impact, proven by the adverbial phrase 'from time to time'. It showcases that women are considered as a subordinated group, degrading, dehumanizing, and debasing themselves to maintain the patriarchal norms (Richardson-Self, 2018).

Gender-identity Threatening

The extract below becomes the evidence of a female character with different viewpoint of the construction of female identity.

- (5) Hearing this, her father was understandably annoyed. After all the worries and anxieties she put herself through, convinced that she would not be accepted to any university, now she decided to play hard to get. (Anwar, 2018:180)

There is a father-daughter relationship in extract 5. A passive construction was used to portray the significant message from the father's reaction. The progressive form of "Hearing" indicates the father is implicitly the doer, while "this" refers to an unexpected event or activity causing annoyance to him. Similarly, Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2013) pointed out the passive construction and specific modifiers that represent situations of gender issues. The modifier 'understandably' assigns cultural norms for the disappointment of a father to see her daughter's unstable states. The lexical items which are 'the worries and anxieties' refer the main problem owned by the daughter. The instilled ideology of patriarchal power is demonstrated by the treatment of the father to his daughter (Septiadi et al, 2022). It means that patriarchal society is confirmed through the control and reaction of the male character when the female character faces a problem. The male character is in an attempt to preserve the family honor. For this reason, the female character experiences structural injustice. In this case, the father is constructed to gain permission on his reaction to be annoyed by the daughter's academic results. The social order to oppress the female character leads to the degrading character of his daughter.

The case in extract 5 is in correlation with Lazar's explanation (2014) about how males take roles as caregivers in a family. A father optionally contributes to taking responsibility for his children, as a mother is 'naturally' assumed to be the source of affection and care in a family. The most crucial evidence to link with cultural norms is the state when the father is annoyed due to the failure of his daughter. The lexicon 'annoyed' implies the lack of parenting capability performed by the father. It clearly showcases Lazar's point (2014) about 'active fatherhood' that still needs to be encouraged in terms of parental responsibilities. The parameter of feminist discourse is demonstrated in the reaction of the daughter to 'play hard to get'. It implies the meaning that she seeks freedom from the hegemonic power of a patriarchal society.

- (6) Instead, the boy did nothing except look embarrassed. He did not even look at her or responded when she taunted him with silly words to move him to action (Anwar, 2018: 222).

As gender results from social and cultural construction (Juhana et al, 2021), the boy's reaction in extract 6 is depicted rational and assertive. Both the past participle "embarrassed" and the adverb 'even' become the linguistic evidence of the gender issues. The word choice, like 'even', is considered as a vague presupposition (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2013). The female's action is represented by 'silly words', assigning she is interested in getting attention from the male character. In this context, both characters are classmates, and the female role has special feelings for him. Yet, it shows that the female's action was embarrassing, which leads to a misperception that it is not culturally accepted for a female to tease a male. It encourages sexist attitudes to accommodate men's expectations (Lazar, 2014). Hence, it proves the gender-identity threatening due to inappropriate behavior or state demonstrated by the female characters, resulting in in males disaffirming them through their annoyed and embarrassed reactions. The patriarchal system suppresses the female character, especially in the name of tradition and culture.

Female Promiscuity

In indexing social identities and divisions, female's activities are prone to judge and punish harshly. One of them is female promiscuity that is represented through extract 7.

- (7) Adela's heart went out to him. But Riz seemed to bear it all patiently, with no ill feeling. Adela drew near. Nobody paid any attention to her, least of all Riz. At least, not until she stealthily crept up behind him and in one deft movement of her hand, grabbed the backpack from Riz's shoulder (Anwar, 2018:220-221).

Extract (7) brings the childhood background of a female character named Adela. Her developing feeling as stated in "Adela's heart went out to him" marks an essential point. As stated by Lazar (2014) about semiotic expression, the lexical unit "heart" can be considered as the weakness of a woman to control her behavior. This results in the way she breaks the cultural value of being a rude girl to take Riz's bag provokingly. The verb "grabbed" sounds improper for a female to act rudely. Here, the beginning of Adela's image as a real female flirt is obviously commenced.

- (8) Her mind was with Caspar, who remained in the corner of her eye. So close and yet so far. Meanwhile Jacob was always within her orbit and she had no reason to find time alone with Caspar. (Anwar, 2018:231)
- (9) After a long while, she began to develop an affection to Karl. Whenever she was alone, she found herself thinking about Karl a lot. She was conscious of nothing else except the pull of his lightblue eyes and before she knew what happened, his lips were on hers, full of desire and longing. She was blind to everything and everyone in the room. Conscious only of their deep and hungry kiss.

Being a full-grown woman, Adela officially made a relationship with Jacob. Yet, in extract (8), another man called Caspar loosens her faith in Jacob as her boyfriend. The lexical unit “her mind” pertains to “Adela’s heart” in extract (7), re-stating the frailty of a female’s emotional condition and moral values. This uncontrolled behavior is strengthened in extract (9) with the phrase “thinking about Karl a lot”. The verb “thinking” refers to the conscious activity. It indicates that, as a female character, she lacks honesty and sincerity towards her commitment to be the girlfriend of one particular man. Furthermore, the phrase “blind to everything” in extract (9) does not mean she has blind eyes, but it implicitly conveys her ignorance about her role and responsibility as a good woman. The peak of this problem is in her uncontrolled reactions to Karl’s inducing stare to break the rules that they are buried in lascivious physical interaction. In this phase, without knowing her affair, Jacob decides to marry Adela. The construction of a female’s promiscuity is noticeably delineated from the immorality of the female character to be easily interested in other males.

- (10) Perhaps Jacob was right when she said that the fault was entirely Adela’s. That she was the one who ultimately ruined everything (Anwar, 2018:210).
- (11) Jacob would of course, have a different perspective on these states of affairs. Just like universe, he thought her cruel, scheming, and manipulative who had set out to punish him from the very start (Anwar, 2018:248).

In these particular extracts, the effects of lousy labeling for women are showcased. The use of adverbs is found twice in (10), which are “entirely” and “ultimately”. These adverbs indicate certain modifiers of the portrayal of the female character, as Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2013) suggest this linguistic sign to represent gender issues. The blame was mainly placed on Adela, as Jacob’s wife had affairs with other men. Moreover, other lexical choices representing female’s unacceptable traits are seen in (11) “her cruel, scheming, and manipulative”. It constructs negative imagery of female characters with weak faith and immoral behavior. In parallel, Zaidi (2017) found that based on the analysis of the *Paradise Lost* novel, moral decline is caused by physical and psychological weakness of women. Both linguistic evidence in (10) and (11) demonstrate that female promiscuity is projected from male’s position, as Lazar (2014) stated that information codified in the text was largely in the interest of men.

Implicitly accepting such an association of female character and her irresponsible commitment to be a wife is seen as a shameful disturbance. Jacob and Adela’s marriage is obviously constructed to show symbolic gender oppression, as Ishikawa (2016) argues it as a ‘metaphorical framework’. Drawing on FCDA, Lazar (2014) explains that the issue of gender oppression is revealed through the meaning-making of the language used in the text. It confirms the patriarchal order showing men’s power to address sentiment and hatred towards women. Hence, the female promiscuity found in Adela’s betrayal places the unfaithful female as the normative target for men’s judgment. Yet, the falsity of other male characters like Caspar and Karl, who are playful and flirtatious, is not validated from Jacob’s viewpoint. The complete blame is addressed to Adela as the female character.

Cruel Motherhood Portrayal

Normally, mothers are depicted as the prime caregivers. However, it is not found in Anwar’s *Growing Pains*, which particularly telling a daughter named May and her mother. The mother lacked of ability to be the important role of giving affection to May was affected from her miserable childhood. This special depiction contradicts with how the image of Indonesian mother who tends to self-sacrificing (Kalauserang, 2023). In the context of broken home of a wealthy family, May’s grandfather left her mother causing severe to May’s mother trauma until the birth of May was nurtured and raised. It is shown in the following data.

- (12) After all, Mother had hit her, and with a stone that broke apart on her head nonetheless! (Anwar, 2018:280).
- (13) ‘I’m not accountable to anyone,’ she said. ‘Certainly not to you.’
‘Well, I was worried,’ May protested. ‘I’m home alone and I’m still a schoolgirl.’ ‘That’s your problem,’ Mother retorted unpleasantly, ‘not mine’ (Anwar, 2018:294).

As social meaning is made in the process of constructing someone’s identity (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2013), it is palpably real that Mother abused her daughter, seen in (12) “Mother had hit her” with a stone in her head. This evidence shows physical violence, while in (13), there is emotional or psychological insult to the daughter. The possessive pronoun “not mine” appears as the lexical choice that the mother and the daughter have a separate connection. With particular reference to gender discrimination (Amir et al., 2020), this problem occurred in the relationship between the mother and her daughter. Moreover, Lazar (2014) argued that understanding ‘the situatedness’ of gender is accomplished through discourse. Hence, the data in (12) and (13) prove that the imbalance is prone to be exaggerated even by the same gender in a family relationship.

In addition, this kind of barrier in the same gender, found in May and her mother, creates and maintains social hierarchies in the modernized world. It is commonly viewed as dysfunctional when a mother shows inappropriate treatment to her daughter, which means that there is a threat that the daughter will probably turn to be cruel and rebellious. The barbaric portrayal of the mother was caused by the previous wound done by the grandfather. This is proved in (14) as quoted below. This extract shows the traumatic experience given by the male character in the mother’s childhood that made her fail to take the role of a caring mother.

- (14) ‘He was an important man in the community,’ she said, ‘who thought it more important to take care of everyone else except his own family. He was never around. I don’t think he even knew I existed. As a matter of fact, when I was eight, he took off for good and we never saw him again.’ (Anwar, 2018:300)

In this extract, the scar or traumatic experience caused by the mother’s father or the grandfather shows the male’s dominant traits. Lazar (2014) claims that patriarchal gender ideology gives more privileges to fathers optionally involved in childcare. The expression of despair, “I don’t think he even knew I existed,” becomes solid evidence that the mother lacked affection and even experienced injustice felt by the grandfather. Hence, the portrayal of the mother depicted as hard-headed, even abusive, is the destructive impact of the offensive and discursive role of the father. This indicates male supremacy in the construction of selfhood. Within the context of the industrialized world, the grandfather is illustrated as the male political subject, referred to in the noun phrase “an important man in the community”.

The patriarchal system has been reproduced, and it leaves psychological trauma, making the mother an abusive figure to her daughter. In line with this, Akgul (2017) posits patriarchy has a reproductive mechanism. The mother, giving a statement in (14), indicates herself as the victim of a male-dominated society. Women lack of power when it is correlated with local beliefs and cultural practices. Although the struggles faced by Indonesian women during the colonial period until the Reform era never came to an end, they changed the reaction and impact of Indonesian women. For example, R.A Kartini (1879-1904), Cut Nyak Dien (1848-1908), and Dewi Sartika (1884-1947) were well-known female figures to commence the essential women empowerment in Indonesia during imperialism. Next, Wuschitz and Reza (2021) define on a global scale Gerwani as new feminists who collapsed in the fact of genocide and imprisonment, although they had already obtained consideration at an international conference. From the historical background, women empowerment in Indonesia assists an ongoing process in the modern era to keep struggling. Hence, an ample of excellent female scholars (for example, Ayu Savitri Nurinsiyah and Osi Arutanti from the Indonesian Institute of Sciences/LIPI) and politicians (for example: Khofifah Indar Parawansa, born on 19th May 1965).

In addition, modern female inspiring figures from the field of law enforcement are Irawati Harsono (a police officer who established DERAP-WARAPSARI, an NGO which was established and is funded by retired Women Police Officers fighting for *Special Service Room/Ruang Pelayanan Khusus*) and Maria Farida Indarti (the first appointed female judge in the Constitutional Court). In the

Reform era, for particular cases, gaining opportunity in public space still seems restricted due to the assorted cultural factors. The stereotypes of women, their roles, and leadership positions now remain the same in society (Aspinall et al., 2021). In Indonesian culture, being good women, mothers, or wives is the central role as cultural markers or bearers in a family.

On the contrary, this results in a rebellious female identity, as shown in (14). The image of taking the role of a good mother disappears. This entails transformative women's social condition in a complex landscape of post-patriarchy regime. Therefore, it is significant to reveal the correlation with the background of women's movement in Indonesia. Arivia and Subono (2017: 23) describe "The scholars and activists face a 'common enemy', namely the authoritarian state, patriarchal culture, and religious fundamentalism in society. It means that in a hundred years of feminism in Indonesia, this movement brought a social change in 'contemporary feminist perspectives.' The interventions by men power to lead and discipline women will not be easily transformed (Nilan et al., 2014). It deals with the dynamic constellation of both empowering women and re-educating men.

In this regard, the rejection of the family shown in extract (14) by the male character transforms into a cruel mother, treating her daughter abruptly. Through the different layers of society, men's independence has adverse impacts. It reflects interpersonal violence, resulting in the portrayal of cruel motherhood. There is a major concern causing the mother to nurture and raise her daughter with physical and emotional violence. History is always repeating. The psychological wounds suffered May's mother is caused by May's grandfather. It perpetuates gender power imbalance in the form of individual experiences as evidence of patriarchy manifestation. Becoming an adolescent mother is a significant transition, yet in facing the new role, family support is required to have less stress for women (Nilan et al., 2014).

CONCLUSION

This research sought various forms of gender inequality in Anwar's novel *Growing Pains*. In essence, FCDA provides reflexivity of females' roles and struggles in a family as a mother, wife, and daughter. The positioning of females in this novel is in the effort to recuperate feminist values in each phase of their lives. Symbolic violence is restructured in a patriarchal society that hinders women from achieving social, economic, and political accomplishments. Meanwhile, according to the author's real life, Anwar is a successful senior Indonesian journalist. An accumulation of some linguistic features is attained to provide indisputable evidence of gender inequality in the novel, such as negative construction, passive form, lexical choices, grammatical morpheme, and meaning-making process. In an attempt to explicate gender issues in the novel, there are forms of social inequality, even symbolic violence. The textual representations are coherence to disclose the injustice suffered by five female characters in five different chapters. Anwar has highlighted the pitiful condition of women in a male-dominated society. Through the literary works, social issues like gender injustice can be revealed. The author successfully portrays the power of female characters, yet the oppressive practices still exist in terms of survival to gain gender equality. Hence, it leads to the term hegemonic state that masks the primary interests to expose gender imbalance.

In this current research, the intertwined gender inequality appears in many aspects of life, such as asymmetrical family system, misogynistic practices, gender-identity threatening, deviant female promiscuity, and cruel motherhood portrayal. Besides that, the symbolic and psychological impacts are also identified as it is related to post-patriarchal regimes. It is the modern era of giving freedom to women empowerment, yet in some points, they still experience verbal abuse or symbolic violence. Although there seems to be effortful survival in masculine domination, both internal and external factors are in support of constructed gender inequalities. Eventually, all the female characters are demonstrated as the vulnerably subordinated subjects of neoliberal hegemony. A pivotal void between this current research and the previous ones can be considered from the strategy of the female characters in facing the men's power, causing hardships and gender stereotypes. This also entails concerns that female children should not transfer their terrifying childhood memories when they later take on the roles of mothers/wives. This all calls for acts of specific solutions such as gender socialization and effective public service for women's mental health required to solve gender inequalities in this new modern life. From this view, with the gender issues in mind, this research conceivably contributes to the enrichment of awareness about gender inequality not only in literary works but also in real-world settings. It also fervently participates in recalling the concern about symbolic gender violence. It aspires any strives of

women's empowerment and re-educating men expectantly to tackle the problems of women's subordination Future literary scholars have the opportunity to elucidate gender issues in particular fields and correlate them with the dynamic movement of women's struggles in Indonesia.

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