



The Representation of Women in the Novel *Cinta di Dalam Gelas* by Andrea Hirata: A Liberal Feminist Study

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ABSTRACT

This research is motivated by the importance of literature education that goes beyond mere appreciation of the work itself; it should also foster students' awareness of various social issues, including gender equality. The novel *Cinta di Dalam Gelas* by Andrea Hirata was selected because it depicts various forms of gender injustice and the struggles of women to achieve equality. This study aims to describe the forms of gender injustice and the nature of women's struggles from a liberal feminist perspective. A qualitative approach utilizing descriptive analysis was employed. The primary data source is the novel *Cinta di Dalam Gelas* by Andrea Hirata, with data collected through reading and note-taking techniques. Data analysis involved the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The findings reveal that the forms of gender injustice present in the novel include marginalization, subordination, stereotyping, and patriarchy. Meanwhile, women's struggles are represented through efforts regarding education, economic freedom, public participation, equal civil rights, and resistance against patriarchy. The character Maryamah (Enong) is portrayed as a woman striving for equal opportunities and rights through education, economic independence, and involvement in the public sphere—an arena traditionally dominated by men. The research findings were subsequently developed into a gender-sensitive teaching module for review texts, designed in accordance with the *Kurikulum Merdeka* (Independent Curriculum) and incorporating a growth mindset approach and the Problem-Based Learning model. Thus, the novel *Cinta di Dalam Gelas* serves as a representation of various forms of gender injustice while simultaneously illustrating women's struggles to attain equality.

Keywords: representation of woman, novel, liberal feminist study

INTRODUCTION

Listening is a language skill that plays a crucial role in the Indonesian language learning process in elementary schools. It serves as a foundation for students to acquire information, comprehend messages, and develop critical thinking skills, while also supporting other language skills—namely speaking, reading, and writing. Therefore, listening instruction must be systematically designed to enable students to understand orally conveyed information and interpret the underlying meaning.

In the implementation of the Independent Curriculum, Indonesian language instruction focuses not only on mastering subject matter but also on developing student competence through meaningful learning experiences. Teachers are expected to create active, enjoyable learning environments that align with students' characteristics. One strategy is to provide teaching materials that accommodate the diversity of students' abilities, interests, and learning profiles. This ensures that every

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student receives learning opportunities tailored to their needs, thereby optimizing the achievement of learning objectives.

This article addresses several research questions. First, what forms of gender injustice do the female characters experience in the novel *Cinta di Dalam Gelas* by Andrea Hirata? Second, what is the nature of the patriarchal system in the novel *Cinta di Dalam Gelas* by Andrea Hirata?

In line with these research questions, the article outlines several research objectives. First, to describe the forms of gender injustice experienced by the female characters in the novel *Cinta di Dalam Gelas* by Andrea Hirata. Second, to describe the patriarchal system in the novel *Cinta di Dalam Gelas* by Andrea Hirata. Third, to describe the protagonist's struggle to achieve gender equality in the novel *Cinta di Dalam Gelas* by Andrea Hirata.

Relevant articles were found in online journals. The articles in question are by Hakim (2014), Rachman (2018), and Apriyanti (2015).

First, the study by Hakim et al. (2014) is titled "Gender Perspectives in the Novel *Cinta di Dalam Gelas* by Andrea Hirata: A Feminist Literary Review and Its Implementation as Literary Teaching Material in Senior High Schools." This research aims to describe the author's socio-cultural background, the novel's structural elements, the gender perspectives within the novel, and the implementation of the research findings as literary teaching material at the senior high school level. The study employs a descriptive qualitative method, focusing on the novel's structure and the gender perspectives reflected through the main character in *Cinta di Dalam Gelas*. The similarity between Hakim's research and the current study lies in the shared object of analysis—Andrea Hirata's novel *Cinta di Dalam Gelas*—and the use of a feminist approach to analyze gender issues within the literary work. However, the difference lies in the analytical focus. Hakim's research emphasizes gender perspectives in general and their implementation as teaching material in schools. In contrast, the current study specifically

highlights the representation of women through the lens of liberal feminism and develops the findings into a literature learning module.

Second, the study by Rachman (2018) is titled "Analysis of Gender Perspectives in the Novel *Cinta di Dalam Gelas* by Andrea Hirata (A Feminist Study)." This research aims to describe the social gender perspectives found in Andrea Hirata's novel *Cinta di Dalam Gelas*. It utilizes a qualitative approach, with the novel itself serving as the data source. The data were analyzed through a process of reading, identifying, classifying, and interpreting information related to social gender perspectives appearing in the story. The results indicate that various forms of social gender perspectives are reflected in the novel. Key findings include the position of female characters facing pressure and marginalization due to societal traditions, the desire of female characters to obtain rights equal to those of men, and the tendency of male characters to uphold traditional values. Furthermore, the study found that the behavior... The characters in the story are influenced by the customs and traditions of the village community, and the dialogue is dominated by Maryamah, Ikal, and other local residents involved in the narrative. The similarity between Rachman's research and the current study lies in the shared object of analysis—Andrea Hirata's novel *Cinta di Dalam Gelas*—and the use of a feminist perspective to examine gender relations within the literary text. However, Rachman's research places greater emphasis on analyzing the social gender perspectives present in the story, whereas the current study focuses on the representation of women in the novel through a liberal feminist approach.

Third, there is the study by Apriyanti (2015) titled "The Image of the Character Enong in Andrea Hirata's Novel *Cinta di Dalam Gelas* and Its Suitability as Indonesian Language and Literature Teaching Material for Senior High School." This research aims to describe the characterization of Enong in Andrea Hirata's novel *Cinta di Dalam Gelas* and to evaluate its suitability as literature teaching material for senior high schools.



LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Representation in Literary Works

In the early history of literature, women were frequently represented as objects of the male gaze. They were portrayed as passive, emotional, gentle, and dependent on men. This perspective aligns with the critique offered by Simone de Beauvoir (1949) in *The Second Sex*, noting that within patriarchal culture, women are consistently positioned as "the Other"—defined not by themselves, but by men.

Moi (1985) asserts that the representation of women in literary texts often serves as an arena for ideological struggle between the dominant voice (patriarchy) and efforts to resist it. In other words, beyond merely reproducing images of women, literary texts can also act as a medium for the emergence of counter-discourses that challenge such dominance.

The representation of women in literature has shifted over time. In ancient literary works, women were often cast as objects of male desire and depicted as passive figures devoid of agency. This is evident in Homer's epic tales, the *Odyssey* and the *Iliad*, where female characters such as Penelope and Helen appear primarily as adjuncts to stories of male heroism. Such representations illustrate how patriarchal culture shapes the image of women within the social imagination through literary texts (Hall, 1997).

With the advent of the Enlightenment, the representation of women began to shift. Lindayani (2024) notes that the portrayal of women became more complex, beginning to showcase aspects of intellectuality and deeper emotional depth.

2. Feminism

Etymologically, the word "feminism" derives from the Latin *femina* (meaning "woman") and the suffix *-ism* (denoting a belief system or movement based on political, social, or economic principles). The *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (KBBI)* Online defines feminism as a women's movement demanding full equality of rights between women and men (Kemdikbud, 2026). Furthermore, accord-

ing to Fakihi (2024) in his book *Analisis Gender dan Transformasi Sosial (Gender Analysis and Social Transformation)*, feminism is a movement aimed at addressing gender inequality—which places women in a subordinate position—as well as an effort to advocate for a just life for both women and men.

In this context, feminism is frequently linked to the concepts of sex and gender; thus, it is essential to understand the fundamental differences between the two. Fakihi (2024) states that sex relates to an individual's innate and immutable biological aspects—such as differences in reproductive organs, hormones, and chromosomes—whereas gender is a social and cultural construct that assigns specific roles to women and men within society.

Social constructs arising from gender differences often lead to injustice for both women and men. Fakihi (2024) explains that gender injustice manifests in various forms—such as marginalization, subordination, stereotyping, violence, and the exploitation of a specific gender (e.g., through excessive working hours or restricted access to economic resources). These social constructs shape the identities and social roles of women and men based on deeply rooted cultural values and norms. One outcome of this construction is the emergence of patriarchal ideology—a socio-cultural system that positions men at the center of power and places women in a subordinate position (Fakihi, 2024). Feminism functions not only as a social movement advocating for gender equality but has also evolved into a framework for critical thought influencing various fields of study, including the social sciences, cultural studies, and literature. According to Humm (2002), feminism integrates the doctrine of equal rights for women into an organized movement aimed at securing women's human rights.

3. Liberal Feminism

Liberal feminism is a branch of feminism rooted in the Western liberal intellectual tradition dating back to the 18th century, coinciding with the rise of the Enlightenment. Its philosophical

foundation rests on the concept of human rights—specifically John Locke’s notion of “natural rights”: the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Liberalism posits that human essence lies in consciousness and rationality; every individual is unique and possesses the moral capacity to make autonomous life choices. Through the use of rationality, humans are capable of understanding the moral principles that guarantee their own freedom and autonomy (Rizki, 2020).

According to Tong (2017), liberal ideology served as the initial foundation for the women’s equality movement. Liberal feminism operates on the premise that every individual is fundamentally a rational and autonomous being. Therefore, if women are treated as individuals possessing the same rational capacity as men, there is no justification for restricting their rights in the fields of education, politics, economics, or law. The primary goal of liberal feminism is to create a just society that allows individual freedom to flourish without gender-based discrimination.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach, specifically a descriptive-analytical research design. A qualitative approach was selected because the study aims to understand the meanings and interpretations of phenomena found within a literary work. This approach enables the researcher to examine a phenomenon in depth based on its underlying context. According to Sugiyono (2019), qualitative research is a method used to study subjects in their natural setting. The researcher acts as the primary instrument in the data collection and analysis process. Thus, qualitative research allows the researcher to comprehensively interpret the meanings contained within the data through the analytical process.

Qualitative research also emphasizes understanding phenomena holistically based on the experiences or realities lived by the re-

search subjects. Moleong (2018) and Sudaryono (2016) explain that qualitative research aims to understand phenomena experienced by subjects—such as behaviors, perceptions, motivations, and actions—in a holistic manner by describing them in words within a natural context. This indicates that qualitative research places greater emphasis on meaning and process rather than on numbers or statistical measurements. The specific type of research employed here is descriptive-analytical research, which aims to systematically describe the facts and characteristics of the object under study. Descriptive-analytical research seeks to present phenomena exactly as they are, based on the data found, without manipulating the research object (Sugiyono, 2019). In this study, a descriptive qualitative approach is used to analyze the representation of women in the novel *Cinta di Dalam Gelas* by Andrea Hirata through the perspective of liberal feminism. The analysis focuses on how female characters are portrayed in the text and how the struggle for gender equality is represented in the story.

A research design is a plan or framework used by researchers to guide the research process systematically, ensuring that research objectives are achieved optimally. It outlines the steps taken by the researcher, ranging from the planning and data collection stages to the processes of analysis and drawing conclusions. According to John W. Creswell, a research design constitutes a research plan and procedure that encompasses decisions regarding data collection methods, data analysis, and the interpretation of research findings (Creswell, 2014). A clear research design allows the research process to be conducted in a focused and structured manner.

Research designs are flexible and may evolve as the research progresses. This is because qualitative research emphasizes an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under study within its natural context.

Research data refers to the information used as the basis for analysis in a study. In qualitative research, data typically takes the form of words, sentences, or documents that carry specific meaning. Data in qualitative research consists of words or actions obtained from sources that can be observed and analyzed in depth (Moleong, 2018).



The data in this study consists of text excerpts from the novel that demonstrate gender perspectives—whether through narration, dialogue, or character descriptions. The data sources for this study comprise both primary and secondary sources. The primary data source is the novel *Cinta di Dalam Gelas* by Andrea Hirata, which serves as the main object of analysis. Meanwhile, secondary data sources are obtained from various relevant references, such as books on feminist theory and literary studies, scholarly journals, and prior research related to gender studies and literature education. Data collection techniques are the steps researchers take to obtain the data necessary for a study. In qualitative research, data collection is carried out systematically to gather information relevant to the research objectives. According to Sugiyono, data collection in qualitative research can be performed using various methods, such as observation, interviews, documentation, and literature reviews (Sugiyono, 2019). The choice of data collection technique must be aligned with the type of research and the characteristics of the data the researcher aims to obtain.

RESULTS

1. Gender Injustice in the Novel *Cinta di Dalam Gelas*

1.1 Marginalization

Forms of marginalization are clearly depicted in the text through a dialogue regarding the restrictions placed on women in the public sphere. Women are confined to the domestic realm—managing the household—while men dominate intellectual activities. This is illustrated in the following excerpt:

“Ours is a village of men. Our tradition is deeply patriarchal. Never before had a woman played chess, let alone competed against a man. In the context of chess, a woman’s role was merely to serve coffee while her husband played with his friends, then lie awake unable to sleep as they roared with laughter, mocking the loser. Finally, with a throbbing head in the dead of night, she would clear away the cluttered table. That was all.

Women had nothing to do with checkmates. Yet suddenly, Maryamah appeared, wanting to challenge those men?” (Hirata, 2011:4).

The excerpt depicts women lacking equal access to the public sphere—a situation viewed in liberal feminism as a form of structural injustice. Women serve merely as adjuncts to men’s activities rather than as subjects possessing the equal ability and right to participate. In Andrea Hirata’s novel *Cinta di Dalam Gelas*, women are deemed fit only to serve coffee rather than engage directly in intellectual pursuits like chess.

These restrictions are legitimized as part of a tradition considered normal within the community. The dialogue reveals an underlying assumption that women must not surpass men or step outside their prescribed roles. Consequently, when the character Maryamah boldly enters a chess tournament populated entirely by men, this act serves as the catalyst for the novel’s central conflict. Furthermore, this form of marginalization is also reflected in the following dialogue:

“It’s still impossible. The chairman of this year’s tournament committee is Modin. He’s a hardline Muslim. He certainly wouldn’t approve of a woman playing chess at all, let alone competing against a man.” (Hirata, 2011:47)

“Look at what you’ve done! No woman in this village has ever dared to pull a stunt like this before. You’re the ones who incited them!” He pointed his finger at me, Giok Nio, Selamat, Detective M. Nur, and the Dwarf Thug. “Why do women want to get involved?” (Hirata, 2011:103)

These excerpts reinforce the existence of restrictions placed on women; women in the village never played chess. This perspective demonstrates that marginalization occurs not only in social practices but also in the societal mindset that stifles women’s potential from the outset. However, the forms of injustice depicted do not exist in isolation; rather, they reinforce one another. While elements of subordination, stereotyping, and patriarchy are present, the restriction of women’s access remains the dominant aspect.

1.2 Subordination

Subordination is the notion that women are inferior to men. Women are regarded as second-class beings, meaning they are viewed through a male perspective. Subordination serves as the root cause of the gender injustice experienced by women. In this novel, subordination manifests in the belief that women possess lesser capabilities than men, particularly in the intellectual realm. The text repeatedly positions women as irrational and unfit for activities requiring intellectual thought.

“Mot, how can you equate playing chess with tin mining? One requires the mind, while the other demands the strength of an ox!” (Hirata, 2011:47)

Even when Maryamah advanced to the later rounds, her opponents still failed to take her abilities seriously. This is evident in the following excerpt:

“Overste was pleased. Among the opponents he faced, Maryamah was the weakest. He felt his path to the final would be smooth sailing. ‘This time Maryamah is done for; her luck has run out—game over!’” (Hirata, 2011:253)

Furthermore, an attitude of disparagement is deeply ingrained in the setting where the protagonist lives, as seen in the way Alvin—a young boy—views Maryamah:

“Alvin’s smile grew more knowing. He gazed at Maryamah with a peculiar look—a look of disdain mingled with a hidden intent...” (Hirata, 2011:81).

1.3 Stereotypes

Stereotypes regarding women in this novel are evident in the negative labels attached to them, concerning both their physical attributes and their capabilities. The primary stereotype repeatedly echoed in the novel concerns female intellect, which is deemed inferior to that of men, as illustrated by the following excerpts:

“Impossible. Chess is a game of the mind. A game for smart people, for office workers. Besides, have women ever played chess in this village?” (Hirata, 2011:46)

“As for Midah, she was a woman treated unfairly by the laws of physics. Earth’s gravity had caused her chubby cheeks to sag, creating a convex curve in her upper lip—a feature that conveyed only one impression: that she was sour-tempered. In reality, however, Midah was incredibly friendly. It was Uncle who discovered the link between the laws of physics and Midah’s romantic fate; he advised her to smile often, noting that when she remained expressionless, people were afraid to approach her. This explains why Midah would often smile to herself for no apparent reason, looking rather like someone who had lost their mind.” (Hirata, 2011:37)

This excerpt illustrates how women are judged based on their physical appearance, which in turn influences how others treat them. Midah is labeled as sour-tempered, despite actually being friendly. This demonstrates how stereotypes can shape social realities that disadvantage women. Furthermore, stereotypes also manifest as verbal abuse: “You can’t even wash a glass properly! ... That’s just who you are—an idiot!” (Hirata, 2011:85).

This remark reflects a negative generalization about women, who are deemed incompetent even in domestic tasks. The stereotype that washing glasses is a woman’s duty is evident in the quote above; consequently, when a woman fails to perform a task considered her responsibility, she is subjected to verbal abuse.

1.4 Patriarchy

In this novel, patriarchy appears as a system governing power relations between men and women. Men hold the authority to set the rules, while women are positioned to submit to them.

“My reason for rejecting Maryamah was based on Sharia considerations. There is no need for me to offer lengthy justifications or quote specific verses. In Islam, a woman is not permitted to hold a gaze for too long with a man who is not her *mahram* [a male relative with whom marriage is forbidden].” “In a chess match, that would happen, and it is a clear violation of religious law.” (Hirata, 2011:106)



Opposition to women's participation in chess matches reflects the social and cultural legitimacy of constraints placed upon women, including those stemming from interpretations of religious norms. Furthermore, a patriarchal perspective is also evident in the following statement:

"A woman daring to challenge a man... Men have the superior right!" (Hirata, 2011:7).

"Mitoha, the head of the Di Timoer Matahari chess club, was furious and openly opposed Maryamah. 'Blasphemy, pure blasphemy! A woman daring to play chess against a man—it's a sign the world is ending!' (Hirata, 2011:93) 'What did I tell you? Women these days have absolutely no sense of propriety! What right do they have to join a chess match? Chess is a man's game! Playing bekel with snail shells—that's what's best suited for them!'" (Hirata, 2011:93)

These statements underscore that the patriarchal system not only restricts women's actions but also shapes a collective belief that men hold a superior position.

2. The Protagonist's Struggle in the Novel *Cinta di Dalam Gelas*

2.1 Education

The struggle regarding education is evident in Maryamah's efforts to acquire knowledge despite her economic limitations.

"Her interest in English never waned. She even advanced to a higher-level course and continued taking the bus twice a week to attend classes in Tanjong Pandan, never once skipping a session." (Hirata, 2011:18)

This excerpt demonstrates Maryamah's awareness of the importance of education as a means of self-development. Although there was no explicit prohibition against women studying, economic constraints posed a major obstacle for Maryamah. Yet, this did not deter her from continuing her education.

Maryamah's desire to learn English serves not only as a form of self-development but also plays a narrative role in shaping the plot. Her language

skills act as a narrative bridge, enabling her to connect with the wider world—including her eventual interaction with the international chess player Ninotchka Stronovsky. This shapes Maryamah's characterization as someone capable of personal growth and engagement with the outside world. Furthermore, this aspect reinforces the setting and Maryamah's characterization, including her past relationship with someone who had an interest in the English language. This element enriches the character's motivations, ensuring that her learning process is not merely rational but also emotional. Thus, education in this novel is positioned not only as a tool for self-development but also as part of the character's inner journey.

"Mrs. Indri, the course director, took the podium and delivered a speech. At the end of her speech, she announced the five top graduates. The first top graduate was a young Chinese woman wearing thick glasses who appeared very intelligent. The audience applauded her. The second best was a young Malay man, a second-year high school student. The third and fourth graduates were also third-year high school students. 'The fifth top graduate,' said Mrs. Indri. She paused before mentioning the name, perhaps because it was particularly special. Her expression was a mix of tension and joy. 'Maryamah binti Zamzami!'" (Hirata, 2011:33)

This excerpt presents a pivotal moment: public recognition of Maryamah's intellectual achievements. Being named one of the top graduates demonstrates that women are not only capable of participating in the educational process but can also excel and compete academically with others from more privileged backgrounds. This also dispels the stereotype that women are illogical.

Maryamah's success in the English course is a crucial aspect of her characterization. This achievement highlights her strong fighting spirit. It also connects to other parts of the narrative arc, particularly her efforts to learn chess. This persistence is evident in the following excerpt. "This means Maryamah had practiced across 658

boards—or, in other words, played 658 matches. That is all I can say to describe her mental fortitude in learning. Her learning philosophy—‘challenging the impossible’—manifested as a clear ideology guiding her mastery of a subject. She never wavered, never did things by halves. This made me realize that ideology is essential to the learning process—more so than mere authority. Meanwhile, I—who always felt exhausted after just an hour of study—had every reason to feel ashamed.” (Hirata, 2011:77)

This passage illustrates Maryamah’s extraordinary learning process, characterized by remarkable intensity and commitment. Practicing through 658 matches demonstrates the discipline, perseverance, and mental strength that formed the foundation of the protagonist’s learning journey.

A strong emphasis is placed on Maryamah’s idealism, reflected in her refusal to yield to circumstances deemed impossible. This mindset serves as the driving force behind her entire learning journey. Indeed, Maryamah’s efforts are contrasted with those of the narrator—the “I” character—who feels outdone by her perseverance. This comparison reinforces Maryamah’s status as an individual possessing both a keen awareness of the learning process and unwavering conviction regarding her goals. Through her successes and tenacity across various endeavors, the author gradually reveals Maryamah’s ability to overcome the limitations standing in her way.

Furthermore, this passage critiques the notion that women are intellectually inferior. Through a rigorous and methodical learning process, Maryamah effectively overturns this stereotype. She does not merely study; she demonstrates that a woman’s intellectual capacity can reach its full potential through perseverance and fighting spirit.

As the plot unfolds beyond the climax—specifically when Maryamah repeatedly defeats Matarom in the chess finals—she undergoes a transformation, moving away from the instability that characterized her life earlier in the story. Education acts as a catalyst for this personal evolution, as illustrated in the following excerpt:

“Maryamah continued to await the publication of the next volume of the One Billion-Word English Dictionary left behind by her father. She realized her dream of teaching English by organizing weekly gatherings for English enthusiasts at Giok Nio’s chicken stall.” (Hirata, 2011:19)

This passage demonstrates that education has evolved from a mere tool for personal development into a means of self-actualization and knowledge sharing for Maryamah. Her desire to teach English signifies a profound shift in her character: she has transformed from someone defined by limitations into an individual capable of independently fostering education.

In terms of narrative progression, this section also marks a psychological shift in the character following the culmination of the central conflict with Matarom. While Maryamah is depicted at the beginning of the story as being under social and emotional pressure, in this section she appears more stable, composed, and possessed of a clear sense of direction in life. The author demonstrates that the learning process Maryamah undergoes not only fosters intellectual ability but also cultivates a mature perspective and outlook on life.

Furthermore, the use of Giok Nio’s chicken stall as a gathering place illustrates that education does not always take a formal shape; rather, it is portrayed as something closely integrated into the community’s daily life and accessible to everyone. This also highlights the capacity of women to act as catalysts for intellectual growth within their social circles. Consequently, this excerpt falls under the category of education, as it showcases a woman’s successful journey—one that extends beyond personal learning to encompass the sharing of knowledge and the fostering of educational development for others.

2.2 Economic Freedom

Economic struggle forms the foundation of Maryamah’s life. From a young age, she assumed the role of breadwinner. The conflict driving Maryamah’s struggle stems from the financial hardship caused by her father’s death. This situa-



tion further highlights her steadfastness and heroism as she strives to break free from the constraints of her circumstances.

“It was all because, throughout their lives, those three little sisters had witnessed how their mother and Enong fought for them. Enong had worked hard as a tin panner since she was just fourteen. She did her utmost to provide what her three younger sisters needed from a father figure. She bought them Eid clothes, cared for them when they were sick, and wept every time she collected their report cards—for in signing the documents that should have been signed by their father, she longed for him.” (Hirata, 2011:11)

This passage illustrates that Maryamah (Enong) took on the role of primary breadwinner at a young age. She worked not only to meet her own needs but also to fill the void left by her father, both financially and in terms of the responsibility of raising her younger sisters. Maryamah is thus portrayed as the family’s financial backbone, as well as a protector and a surrogate father figure.

Shifts in societal gender boundaries are also reflected in the impact of Maryamah’s decision to work as a tin miner. A change occurred in the mindset of the Belitong community, enabling Maryamah to inspire other women to work in the mining sector, as shown in the following excerpt: “Enong continued to work as a tin panner. Yet, she was no longer the only woman doing so; now, women could easily be found at the mining sites.” (Hirata, 2024:19)

This passage demonstrates that Maryamah challenged the social norms of the Belitong community. Her presence marked the beginning of change in an environment deeply rooted in patriarchal culture. Maryamah emerged as a pioneer, paving the way for other women to enter a workforce previously considered the exclusive domain of men. In the novel, the activity of panning for tin is depicted as arduous work traditionally associated with men, as it demands physical strength and mental resilience. Yet, Maryamah succeeds in transcending these boundaries. The

author constructs the character’s struggle in a gradual manner—evolving from her initial status as a lone woman working in the mines to a point where a woman’s presence in the tin fields becomes commonplace. This transformation creates both an emotional and dramatic effect by illustrating the shift in societal perceptions regarding women’s capabilities.

2.3 Public Participation

Maryamah’s struggle to enter the public sphere serves as one of the central conflicts developed in this novel. The author constructs the narrative around the clash between a woman’s struggle and the social injustices she continually faces, using a chess match as the vehicle for this conflict.

“I want to learn to play chess. I want to compete this coming August 17th. I want to challenge Matarom.” We were dumbfounded. “Yes, I want to play against them,” she added, pointing at the men who were laughing boisterously around the chessboard. She said this casually—as if merely mentioning a desire to pump up a flat bicycle tire—while we stood there as if struck by lightning. (Hirata, 2011:46)

This passage marks the inception of the main conflict and serves as the clearest manifestation of Maryamah’s resistance against the patriarchal system she constantly confronts. Her desire to learn chess and challenge men—specifically Matarom—acts as a symbolic act of defiance; it also encapsulates the broader struggles of her life, characterized by repeated mistreatment in both her social interactions and her role as a tin panner.

In terms of narrative structure, the strength of this scene lies in the contrast between Maryamah’s desire to play chess and the reaction of her surroundings. Those around her react as if faced with the impossible. The reaction—described as feeling “as though struck by lightning”—indicates that her action is viewed as a deviation from deeply rooted societal norms. Chess is perceived as an intellectual pursuit belonging to men; thus, a woman’s presence in this arena is seen as disrupting the established order.

The conflict in this section reveals not only Maryamah's personal struggle but also a broader clash between the individual and patriarchal social constructs. Chess serves as a symbol of intellect deemed exclusive to men. Consequently, Maryamah's decision to play is not merely a desire to participate in the Independence Day tournament, but an attempt to reclaim the dignity and self-worth that had long been trampled upon.

The statement "I want to go up against them" reveals the strong emotional motive behind Maryamah's actions. She seeks not only to face opponents in a match but also to challenge those who have consistently belittled, hurt, and looked down on her. This conflict unfolds gradually through the various opponents she encounters—figures who turn out to be linked to her past experiences and emotional wounds. Thus, this passage represents a rejection of patriarchy, illustrating a woman's conscious act of challenging norms and dismantling gender dominance by attempting to claim an intellectual symbol previously monopolized by men.

A recurring pattern in the novel is that every struggle Maryamah undertakes triggers a domino effect within her community. This occurs once again when she decides to enter the public sphere through the chess tournament; the social impact of her courage begins to manifest across several chapters of the novel. Maryamah's presence is even drawn into a broader context through the appearance of female Grandmasters like Ninotchka Stronovsky and the emerging discourse regarding women holding public office, including the presidency. This is evident in the following excerpts:

"In another part of the world—far away in the heart of Helsinki, the capital of Finland—a magnificent hall was packed with spectators, fans, and journalists. All eyes, along with dozens of microphones, lights, and cameras from international news agencies, were focused on the faces of the women seated in a row: Bellinda Hess-Hay, Nikky Wohmann, Frederika Vilsmaier, Nazwa Kahail, and Ninotchka Stronovsky. They were the best female chess players on earth—Grandmasters. This was

the event Nochka had told me about the other day; here, she aimed to secure a place among the world's top twenty female chess players." (Hirata, 2011:24)

"The small-scale female traders who had previously staged a rally to support Maryamah's registration arrived in a large, festive group. Chinese shopkeepers joined forces with the Sawang and Malay people—including the men in sarongs and their boat captains. Everyone wanted to see the woman who was touted as a brilliant chess player. There was also a large crowd of mysticism enthusiasts; they didn't understand chess, but they wanted to see that magical silver chessboard. They had come from remote corners of the island, dressed entirely in black." (Hirata, 2011:289)

These excerpts demonstrate that Maryamah's struggle had evolved into a phenomenon involving many strata of society. The presence of the female traders—who had previously staged a rally—indicates that support for Maryamah was no longer limited to individuals within her immediate circle but had succeeded in igniting public enthusiasm.

As the plot unfolds, this section reveals that Maryamah's struggle gradually shifts from a personal conflict to a social movement involving the wider community. The courage of a single woman can spark awareness within her social environment. Thus, this excerpt falls under the category of public participation, as it demonstrates active community involvement in supporting a woman's struggle while marking the transformation of an individual fight into a broader social phenomenon. Furthermore, women's engagement in the public sphere is also evident in the discourse and societal perspectives regarding female leadership.

"It gave me goosebumps just hearing it. A woman wanting to become president? Is that even possible? That is truly extraordinary, Chip!" (Hirata, 2011:25)

This excerpt represents the emergence of discourse regarding the possibility of a woman holding the highest office in the power structure—that of president. The character's reaction—feeling "goosebumps"—indicates that the idea is still considered unconventional, or even shocking, within



a social context still influenced by patriarchal culture.

The sentence serves to embed a social critique of the societal mindset that has historically confined women regarding leadership roles. There is a sense of ambivalence in the character's response; while doubt arises through the question "is that even possible?", there is simultaneously an acknowledgment of the woman's capabilities. This ambivalence reflects a society caught between rejecting and accepting the concept of gender equality.

The dialogue serves to broaden the scope of the female struggle depicted in the novel. While Maryamah's struggle previously centered on economic activities and overcoming stereotypes of intellectual inferiority in chess matches, this section elevates the issue of women to the realm of power and public leadership. It demonstrates that women are not only entitled to a presence in the public sphere but also possess equal opportunities to shape the direction of social and political life. Consequently, this excerpt falls into the category of public participation, as it highlights the opportunity for women to engage in public structures and decision-making processes.

2.4 Civil Rights

Maryamah's struggle regarding civil rights is evident in her ability to make decisions about her own life, particularly concerning her marriage.

"Unlike the marriages of her mother and her three younger siblings, Enong's was not a fortunate one. Her husband's bad behavior had been apparent from the very beginning of the marriage, yet she endured it. No matter how poorly she was treated, she felt she had made her choice and wished to spare her mother's feelings. However, Enong's resolve finally broke when a woman arrived one day claiming to be Matarom's wife. The woman was pregnant. She did not come in anger, for she knew that what had happened was not Enong's fault. Enong apologized, explaining that she had never known men before and knew little about Matarom. Enong's marriage came to a sad

end; she asked for a divorce." (Hirata, 2011:19)

This passage illustrates an unjust domestic situation in which Maryamah is disadvantaged by her husband's behavior. Initially, she persevered due to moral and social factors, such as the desire to protect her mother's feelings. This reflects the cultural pressures that often compel women to maintain marriages even under unfair conditions. However, a turning point occurred when Maryamah decided to end the marriage. Her decision to seek a divorce demonstrates an awareness of her rights as an individual; she refused to continue accepting a detrimental situation and chose instead to uphold her self-respect.

From a liberal feminist perspective, this action illustrates women's civil liberty to make their own life choices, particularly within the private sphere of marriage. Consequently, this excerpt falls under the category of civil rights equality, as it affirms that women possess authority over their own decisions. Nevertheless, the passage also reflects a strong patriarchal backdrop, evident in Maryamah's initial persistence in an inequitable relationship. This demonstrates that the struggle for women's civil rights in the novel does not emerge abruptly but evolves through a long process influenced by social norms that constrain women. It highlights how Maryamah's struggle began to be recognized as part of a broader right: the right to be acknowledged and supported within society. The theme of women's civil rights within the context of Belitong society is further reinforced by the narratives of other characters, such as Hasanah.

"Hasanah was still very young—only twenty-seven. That is to say, she was young considering she had already been married four times, with every husband having run off. Yet, she was a cheerful soul who didn't dwell on her string of bad luck. When it came to love, she lived by a single motto: she wanted to marry again!" (Hirata, 2011:37)

This excerpt portrays Hasanah, a woman who has endured repeated marital failures yet retains the autonomy to make her own life choices, specifically regarding marriage. Her determination to

marry again demonstrates that she does not succumb to the social stigma often attached to women with marital histories deemed unconventional or "less than ideal."

Narratively, Hasanah's character is constructed through irony. On one hand, her repeated marriages and subsequent failures can be read as a social critique of women's vulnerable position within the institution of marriage. On the other hand, her cheerful demeanor and refusal to give up reveal her mental resilience and the freedom to chart her own life's course.

Through these excerpts, the female characters reject the role of helpless victims in social relationships. Through the additional character of Hasanah, women are portrayed as individuals who retain agency and the power of choice, even when situated in disadvantageous circumstances. Thus, this passage reinforces the role of women in asserting equal civil rights, demonstrating that they have the right to make personal decisions without being entirely controlled by restrictive social norms.

2.5 Rejection of Patriarchy

The rejection of patriarchy represents the culmination of Maryamah's struggle in the novel. This is evident in her courage to challenge the norms that have long constrained women. In this instance, Maryamah's entry into the chess match is not merely participation in a competition; it is an effort to uphold her dignity and prove that women are not the weaker sex.

'Yes, I want to take them on,' she said again, pointing at the men who were laughing boisterously around the chessboard. She said it casually—as if she were talking about pumping up a flat bicycle tire—while the rest of us stood there thunderstruck." (Hirata, 2011:46)

Her statement signifies more than just a desire to compete; it serves as an act of defiance against the male dominance that has long overshadowed Maryamah's life. The world of chess represents an intellectual arena monopolized by

men; consequently, Maryamah's decision to enter this space carries profound social significance. She challenges not only Matarom—her ex-husband who had caused her pain—but also the social system that views women as inferior to men.

Maryamah's resistance is also linked to her past experiences struggling to survive as a female tin panner. Male figures like Overste Djemalam embody power dynamics that deem women unfit for spaces traditionally reserved for men. Overste Djemalam's pursuit of Maryamah for panning tin illustrates how male authority seeks to control women's bodies and their freedom of movement. Consequently, Maryamah's decision to "fight them" carries a significance far greater than merely facing an opponent in a chess match; she is contending against a lifetime of humiliation and injustice. Furthermore, the scene's power lies in the contrast between Maryamah's composure and the astonishment of those around her. Reactions describing the onlookers as being "struck by lightning" reveal that a woman's boldness in entering a male-dominated arena is still viewed as unconventional. The text implies that a patriarchal society has long restricted the spheres of men and women to such an extent that even playing chess can be construed as an act of rebellion. Thus, this passage represents a rejection of patriarchy, as it demonstrates a woman's conscious effort to challenge male dominance.

DISCUSSION

There is a prevailing view that women face injustice or unequal treatment within the societal culture inhabited by the protagonist.

In line with this, through repeated readings, the researcher identified 20 raw data points illustrating various forms of injustice against women in the novel **Cinta di Dalam Gelas**. This data was subsequently reduced by grouping excerpts that shared similar meanings and ideological tendencies. The reduction process yielded 12 selected data points deemed most relevant and representative of the research focus. These results were then



classified into four primary categories: marginalization, subordination, stereotyping, and patriarchy. Meanwhile, other data not discussed in depth were still utilized to reinforce the arguments presented in the analysis. The grouping into four categories is not intended to limit the complexity of the data, but rather to facilitate an understanding of the patterns of injustice emerging within the text. Furthermore, these four categories were selected because they are the most dominant and frequently occurring in the data, and they bear strong relevance to the liberal feminist theoretical framework employed in this study. Thus, this classification remains open-ended, allowing for interconnections between categories as they manifest within the novel.

Gender injustice is a condition in which women and men are treated unequally as a result of social constructs prevalent within a community. Analysis reveals that Andrea Hirata's novel *Cinta di Dalam Gelas* depicts various forms of gender injustice experienced by its characters, particularly the protagonist, Maryamah (Enong). Such injustice is predominantly experienced by female characters, reflecting the position of women within a social structure still influenced by patriarchal culture. Maryamah (Enong) serves as the most potent representation of gender injustice, as the central conflict revolves around her struggle against various challenges—including social, economic, and cultural pressures. Meanwhile, other characters—such as Midah, Hasanah, and Selamat—reinforce the portrayal of gender injustice through their own respective experiences. The presence of these characters demonstrates that gender injustice is part of a broader social system: a patriarchal societal construct that relegates women to a subordinate position.

From the perspective of liberal feminism, gender injustice stems not from biological differences but from women's limited access to equal opportunities (Tong, 2017). This is clearly evident in the novel through the discriminatory treatment women face. Forms of treatment that relegate

women to specific positions include marginalization, subordination, stereotyping, and patriarchy. All four forms of injustice are present in Andrea Hirata's **Cinta di Dalam Gelas**.

CONCLUSION

First, the novel *Cinta di Dalam Gelas* represents various forms of gender injustice experienced by female characters. These forms include marginalization, subordination, stereotyping, and patriarchy. Such injustices demonstrate that women remain in a less equal position compared to men within the social life depicted in the novel. Second, the protagonist's struggle in **Cinta di Dalam Gelas** encompasses five aspects: education, economic freedom, public participation, civil rights, and resistance against patriarchy.

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