

**FEMALE CHARACTERS' STRUGGLE AGAINST  
PATRIARCHY IN MEG ELISON'S *THE BOOK OF FLORA***

**THESIS**

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**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LITERATURE  
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES  
UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI MAULANA MALIK  
IBRAHIM MALANG  
2024**

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PATRIARCHY IN MEG ELISON'S *THE BOOK OF FLORA***

**THESIS**

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Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of *Sarjana Sastra* (S.S.)

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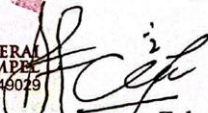
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Malang, September 24<sup>th</sup>, 2024

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## APPROVAL SHEET

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## MOTTO

يُحِبُّ اللَّهُ الْعَامِلَ إِذَا عَمِلَ أَنْ تَحْسِنَ

“Allah mencintai pekerjaan yang apabila bekerja ia menyelesaikannya dengan baik”. ( HR. Thabrani )

## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is dedicated to the following:

My first love and role model, my father, Mas'udi

My heaven, my mother, Riwayati

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

All praise belongs only to Allah, the Lord of the universe, who has given His grace so that the researcher can complete the writing of the thesis entitled "**Female Characters' Struggle Against Patriarchy In Meg Elison's *The Book Of Flora.***" Shalawat and greetings always poured out to the Prophet Muhammad SAW, the messenger of Allah who became a role model for mankind.

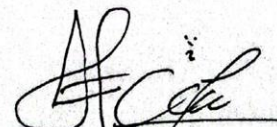
Special thanks belong to my family: my parents (Mas'udi and Riwayati ), my beloved two brothers and sister (Nur Ali Wazni, M. Ali Musthofa, and Nazinda Az Zahra). Thank you for always providing support, love, and prayers in every step of my life journey. Without their presence, all my efforts and struggles would not have been this successful. The prayers from their sincere hearts have become a source of strength and inspiration for me in pursuing every journey of life.

With utmost respect and sincerity, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor, Ma'am Dr Istiadah, M.A., who has been a wonderful mentor during the journey of writing this thesis. She has provided invaluable direction, guidance, and encouragement at every stage of this research.

Last but not least, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my best friends, who have always been there for me through thick and thin. Moral support, motivation, and togetherness have formed beautiful memories that I will always remember throughout my life.

Hopefully, this thesis will be useful for the author, provide broad benefits for readers, and become a Jariyah charity that always flows its rewards in the hereafter.

Malang, September 24<sup>th</sup>, 2024



Huzaimatuz Zahra



## ABSTRACT

**Zahra, H.** (2024). *Female Characters' Struggle Against Patriarchy In Meg Elison's The Book Of Flora*. Undergraduate Thesis. Department of English Literature. Faculty of Humanities. Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. Advisor Dr. Hj. Istiadah, M.A.

*Key word: Patriarchy, Struggle, The Book Of Flora*

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This study aims to analyze the patriarchy depicted in the novel *The Book Of Flora*. This study examines the patriarchy experienced by 3 Female characters' in the novel: Dinty, Flora, and Etta. Patriarchy focuses on social systems and practices in which men dominate and subjugate women (Walby, 1990). This study uses a feminist literary criticism approach and Sylvia Walby's patriarchal theory and focuses on literary works in texts related to the six models of patriarchal structures. The main data is taken from the novel *The Book Of Flora*. The book, which was distributed in 2019, consists of 322 pages. The data collected from the novel include dialogues, sentences, and phrases related to the research questions. This study shows that (1) There are four patriarchal structures, namely Household Production experienced by Dinty, Male Violence experienced by the three characters': Dinty, Flora, and Etta, Sexuality experienced by Flora, and State experienced by Flora and all female Characters'. (2) There are three female Characters' who struggle against patriarchy. In Struggle Against Household Production, the character Dinty tries to find his mother so that her mother can redeem him. The second struggle is the Struggle Against Male Violence; the characters' Dinty, Flora, and Etta try to fight against the actions of men that have been done to them. The third struggle is the Struggle Against Sexuality, where the character Flora tries to escape and get to a safe place. The final struggle was the Struggle Against the State, the character Flora led her community to go somewhere safe and without fear. Suggestions for future researchers are to use a different approach if they are interested in researching *The Book of Flora*.

## مستخلص البحث

قسم الأدب الإنجليزي. البحث العلمي *The Book Of Flora* زهرة، حذيمه (2024) "نضال المرأة ضد النظام الأبوي في كلية العلوم الإنسانية. جامعة مولانا مالك إبراهيم الإسلامية الحكومية، مالانج. المشرفة د. حاج استعادة، ماجستير

الكلمات المفتاحية: النظام الأبوي، النضال، كتاب فلورا

يهدف هذا البحث إلى تحليل النظام الأبوي الذي تم تصويره في رواية *The Book Of Flora*. يبحث هذا البحث في النظام الأبوي الذي تعاني منه ثلاث شخصيات نسائية في الرواية: دينتي، فلورا، وإيتا. يركز النظام الأبوي على الأنظمة والممارسات الاجتماعية التي يهيمن فيها الرجال ويخضعون النساء) والبي، 1990، . يستخدم هذا البحث منهج النقد الأدبي النسوي ونظرية النظام الأبوي لسيلفيا والبي ويركز على العمل الأدبي في النصوص المتعلقة بنماذج الهياكل الستة للنظام الأبوي. تم جمع البيانات الرئيسية من رواية *The Book Of Flora* يتألف الكتاب، الذي تم نشره في عام 2019، من 322 صفحة. البيانات التي تم جمعها من الرواية تشمل الحوارات، الجمل، والعبارات المتعلقة بأسئلة البحث. أظهر هذا البحث ما يلي (1): هناك أربعة هياكل أبوية، وهي إنتاج الأسرة التي تعاني منها دينتي، عنف الرجال الذي تعاني منه الشخصيات الثلاث: دينتي، فلورا، وإيتا، الجنسية التي تعاني منها فلورا، والدولة التي تعاني منها فلورا وجميع الشخصيات النسائية (2). هناك أربع شخصيات نسائية تكافح ضد النظام الأبوي. في النضال ضد إنتاج الأسرة، تحاول الشخصية دينتي البحث عن الدتها لكي تقوم والدتها بتخليصها. النضال الثاني هو النضال ضد عنف الرجال، حيث تحاول الشخصيات دينتي، فلورا، وإيتا مقاومة الأعمال التي قام بها الرجال ضدهن. والنضال الثالث هو النضال ضد الجنسية. تحاول الشخصية فلورا الهروب والذهاب إلى مكان آمن. النضال الأخير هو النضال ضد الدولة. تقود الشخصية فلورا مجتمعها للذهاب إلى مكان آمن وبدون خوف. التوصية للباحثين القادمين هي استخدام منهج مختلف إذا كانوا مهتمين بدراسة *The Book Of Flora*

## ABSTRAK

**Zahra, Huzaimah** (2024). *Women's Struggle Against Patriarchy In Meg Elison The Book Of Flora*. Skripsi. Jurusan Sastra Inggris. Fakultas Humaniora. Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. Pembimbing Dr. Hj. Istiadah, M.A.

*Kata Kunci: Patriarki, Perjuangan, The Book Of Flora*

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Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis patriarki yang digambarkan dalam *novel The Book Of Flora*. Penelitian ini mengkaji tentang patriarki yang dialami oleh 3 Tokoh Perempuan dalam novel: Dinty, Flora, dan Etta . Patriarki berfokus pada sistem dan praktik sosial di mana laki-laki mendominasi dan menundukkan perempuan (Walby, 1990). Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kritik sastra feminis dan teori patriarki Sylvia Walby dan berfokus pada karya sastra dalam teks-teks yang terkait dengan enam model struktur patriarki. Data utama diambil dari novel *The Book Of Flora*. Buku yang didistribusikan pada tahun 2019 ini terdiri dari 322 halaman. Data yang dikumpulkan dari novel tersebut berupa dialog, kalimat, dan frasa yang terkait dengan pertanyaan penelitian. Penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa; (1) Terdapat empat struktur patriarki, yaitu produksi rumah tangga yang dialami oleh Dinty, Kekerasan Laki-laki yang dialami oleh 3 tokoh: Dinty, Flora, dan Etta, Seksualitas yang dialami oleh Flora, dan Negara yang dialami oleh Flora dan semua tokoh perempuan. (2) Terdapat tiga tokoh perempuan yang berjuang melawan patriarki. Dalam Perjuangan Melawan Produksi Rumah Tangga, tokoh Dinty berusaha mencari ibunya agar ibunya dapat menebusnya. Perjuangan kedua adalah Perjuangan Melawan Kekerasan Laki-laki, tokoh Dinty, Flora, dan Etta berusaha melawan tindakan laki-laki yang telah dilakukan kepada mereka. Dan perjuangan ketiga adalah Perjuangan Melawan Seksualitas. Tokoh Flora berusaha melarikan diri dan pergi ke tempat yang aman. Perjuangan terakhir adalah Perjuangan Melawan Negara. Tokoh Flora memimpin komunitasnya untuk pergi ke suatu tempat yang aman dan tanpa rasa takut . Saran untuk peneliti selanjutnya adalah menggunakan pendekatan yang berbeda jika tertarik meneliti *The Book Of Flora*.

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## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter, the researcher describes the basic framework of the study, which includes several elements. First, the background of the study describes the context and reasons for this research. Next, the researcher presents the research questions, which guide the direction of the study. After that, the scope and limitations explain the limitations and focus of the study, including the novels analyzed. Then, the significance of the study describes why this study is important both theoretically and in its application. Finally, the definition of key terms provides an explanation of important terms used in this study to help readers understand key concepts.

#### **A. Background of The Study**

Patriarchy, as a social system that privileges men over women, remains a global issue despite ongoing feminist movements. Walby (1990) identifies six core structures that perpetuate patriarchy: household production, paid work, the state, male violence, sexuality, and cultural institutions. These structures reinforce male dominance and create a pervasive system that limits women's autonomy and opportunities. Portugal presents a unique case as a semi-peripheral country whose journalism is heavily influenced by international media culture. Despite being on par with many EU countries in terms of gender equality in areas like health and employment (Eige, 2019), rape remains a significant public issue. Studies highlight the prevalence of sexual violence in Portuguese society; for

instance, one-third of university students in the Lisbon metropolitan area have experienced physical or sexual violence at least once (Expresso, 2019), and 94.1% of women surveyed in the University of Coimbra community reported being targets of sexual harassment, with 10.4% stating they had been raped (UMAR, 2021). Between 2017 and 2018, the number of reported rape cases rose by 3.3% (GSG, 2018), and in 2019, rape accounted for 11.5% of all reported sexual crimes (APAV, 2019). Portugal's record of addressing sexual violence has been criticized as insufficient, with its judicial system often perpetuating rape myths, which negatively impacts justice and the public (Ventura, 2018).

Based on the above issues, the researcher decided to use Meg Elison's *The Book Of Flora* as the object of study. The researcher was interested in choosing this novel because this novel tells a unique perspective. This novel shows the journey of Flora, a woman who lives in a post-apocalyptic world where civilization has collapsed and patriarchy persists. In addition to Flora, there are supporting characters' such as Etta and Dinty, who also struggle amidst the chaos of this post-apocalyptic world.

Flora, who has lived as a trans woman in a brutal time, not only faces violence and injustice rooted in the patriarchal social structure but also physical threats in a world full of violence. Flora tries to find freedom, not only for herself but also for the group of people who are displaced in this new world. Through her journey, Flora forms a close relationship with other

characters', such as Kelda, who becomes one of the leaders of their community, as well as Etta, Dinty, and Alice, who also play important roles in the group's struggle.

During this journey, Flora tries to protect her community from external and internal threats, including groups that still support the patriarchal system and commit violence against women and other vulnerable groups. Flora is constantly faced with challenges, but she remains steadfast in her efforts to create a safe place for herself and her loved ones. At the end of the novel, Flora and her group have successfully found a safe place, an island that they hope can be a new beginning for them all. However, even though they have reached a physical place of safety, the novel implies that their struggle against patriarchy and social injustice is not yet completely over. Flora realizes that to truly create a just and equal society, it takes continuous effort (Elison, 2019).

In addition to supporting the argument and expanding on existing knowledge, the researcher discovered several previous studies that were related to this research. From thesis written by Hilmiadiani in 2023 with the title *Helen's Struggles Against Patriarchy in Sophie Treadwell's Machinal Drama*. Used the theory of patriarchy by Sylvia Walby to describe the patriarchal practices that occur. Then, another study written by Ivana (2023) with the title *Women Struggle against Patriarchal Structure in Bridgerton's Series The Duke and I Season One*, used the theory of patriarchal structure from Sylvia Walby with the sociology of literature



perspective and women's struggle from Simone de Beauvoir to get a comprehensive understanding. And the other study written by Noersetyani (2020) with title *The Struggle Of Women In Huang Family Against Patriarchal Oppression In KIim Fu's Novel For Today I am a Boy*. Used theory by Sylvia Walby to analyze the oppression in the form of private patriarchy shaped by patriarchal structures.

The study written by Indriati (2022) titled *The Main Character's Struggle Against Patriarchal Structures in Abi Dare's The Girl with the Louding Voice*. This study aims to examine the patriarchal system in Abi Dare's *The Girl with the Louding Voice*, using a radical feminist approach and Sylvia Walby's theory. The results show that the novel depicts four models of patriarchal structures that exist in the context of households, culture, sexuality, and violence against women. The main character in this novel resists the patriarchal structure in various ways, such as refusing to have children from her husband, leaving unwanted situations, fighting sexual violence, speaking out, and pursuing her dreams.

Another study was written by Indryani in 2021 with the title *Patriarchal System in Anna Quindlen's One True Thing*. This study analyzes patriarchy in the novel *One True Thing* by Anna Quindlen with a focus on the experiences of the two main women, Ellen and Kate. The approach uses radical feminism and Sylvia Walby's theory. The main character, Ellen, experiences the effects of the patriarchal system, especially the loss of her job, apartment, and happiness due to her father's authority. The next study

was a thesis written by Mardiana in 2023 with the title *Patriarchal Culture Reflected in Live-Action Mulan ( 2020 )*. In this study, the researcher used Sylvia Walby's patriarchal approach, radical feminism, and Alan Swingewood's sociology to analyze the main characters, social settings, and cultural phenomena of patriarchy. The study results show that the patriarchal system is maintained through government and family regulations, and patriarchal culture influences people's lives.

The study was conducted by Ambalegin and Sinta in 2020 and was titled *The Struggle Against Patriarchal Dominance in Romeo and Juliet Drama*. This research reveals the form of Juliet's struggle against patriarchal domination in the drama *Romeo and Juliet*. By using a qualitative descriptive approach and the feminist theory of Simone de Beauvoir and Sylvia Walby, this research highlights how women at that time were only considered as objects in a patriarchal society. Research conducted by Sari in 2020 with the title *Patriarchal Oppression to the Main Characters in Etaf Rum's A Woman Is No Man*. The study uses a radical feminist approach and Sylvia Walby's patriarchal theory. Research findings include four forms of patriarchal oppression: patriarchal mode of production, male violence, patriarchal state, and patriarchal culture. The main characters, such as Fareeda, Isra, and Deya, face various forms of this oppression, including unpaid household work, physical violence, economic dependence on men, and traditional prohibitions on marriage and women's education.

Furthermore, a study conducted by Arifa in 2022 with the title *Perlawanan Tokoh Utama Perempuan Terhadap Patriarki Dalam Novel Perempuan Yang Menangis Kepada Bulan Hitam Karya Dian Purnomo*. The purpose of this study is to describe The form of patriarchal practices that exist in the novel *Perempuan yang Menangis pada Bulan Hitam* by Dian Purnomo, as well as the form of resistance carried out by the main female character against the patriarchy. The study uses Sylvia Walby's patriarchy theory and descriptive method with a qualitative approach. The data used are dialog quotes and sentences in the novel that reflect patriarchal practices and women's resistance. The last research was conducted by Sahira in 2022 with the title *Patriarchy Potrayed in Alan Drew's Gardens of Water*. This study aims to analyze the patriarchal practices depicted in the novel *Gardens of Water by Alan Drew* and how the female characters in the novel resist the patriarchal practices. The method used is feminist literary criticism with the perspective of radical feminism and the theory of patriarchy by Sylvia Walby.

The previous studies discussed earlier have similarities and differences. The similarities between this research and previous studies are related to the elements contained in the novel, such as issues on women. The difference lies in the object of study discussed. This study concentrates on examining the structure of patriarchy and women's struggle against patriarchy in Meg Elison's *The Book Of Flora*. Apart from that, from previous research, the researcher did not find any research that used Sylvia

Walby's theory of patriarchy in the novel *The Book of Flora*. This is what makes the researcher conduct a new study focusing on women's struggle against patriarchy, using *The Book Of Flora* with feminist literary criticism and six structures of patriarchy theory by Sylvia Walby.

### **B. Research Questions**

To understand how female characters' struggle against patriarchy by considering the perspectives of patriarchy by Sylvia Walby, the researcher developed the following research questions:

- 1) What are the structures of patriarchy depicted in Meg Alison's *The Book Of Flora*?
- 2) How do female characters' struggle against patriarchy in Meg Alison's *The Book Of Flora*?

### **C. Scope and Limitation**

In this research, the researcher focuses on analyzing feminist literary criticism, using Sylvia Walby's theory of patriarchy to examine patriarchy's structures and how female characters' struggle against it in the novel.

### **D. Significance of the Study**

This study aims to make a significant contribution to the theory of literary criticism, especially in the context of feminist studies in Meg Alison's *The Book Of Flora*. Theoretically, this study can expand our understanding of the novel and contribute to the progress of literary criticism by considering issues related to female character's struggles and patriarchy. In terms of application, this research can provide an in-depth

understanding of how novel characters' convey their beliefs, especially those related to female characters' struggle with patriarchy.

The results of this study are expected to be a valuable reference in the field of literature, especially in the context of feminism and the female character's struggle against patriarchy. In addition, this study is important for students who want to broaden their understanding of patriarchy and women's struggles. Thus, this study is expected to be a valuable source of information for others who are interested in conducting similar research.

#### **E. Definition of Key Terms**

To ensure a common understanding, the researcher provides definitions of some terms that appear frequently in this study. Here are some of the terms defined for clarity:

- 1. Patriarchy:** patriarchy is the unequal treatment of women caused by domination, exploitation, and oppression perpetrated by men in both the public and private spheres (Walby, 1990).
- 2. Struggle:** According to Walby, women's struggles against patriarchy can be understood through how they confront and challenge structures that hinder their freedom and autonomy. This struggle involves women's efforts to escape the domestic roles that imprison them in private patriarchy and demand equal rights in the public sphere (Walby, 1990, p. 181).

## **CHAPTER II**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

In this chapter, the researcher describes relevant theories and concepts as a literature review of this study. First, the researcher describes Feminist Literary Criticism, which is a critical approach in literature to explore how literary texts represent and challenge gender ideology. Next, the researcher describes the concept of Patriarchy in more depth. The researcher also describes the theory of Six Structures of Patriarchy by Sylvia Walby. This theory explains the six structures of patriarchy in various aspects of life, including household production, paid employment, state, violence, sexuality, and culture. Finally, the researcher describes Struggle. This struggle describes how Walby shows various struggles against patriarchy.

#### **A. Feminist Literary Criticism**

Feminist literary criticism is the approach to examining literary works through a feminist lens, utilizing feminist theory to assess the portrayal of women's actions within a literary context. This approach has evolved from extensive historical contemplation and holds promise for future utilization (Plain et al., 2007). Feminist literary criticism originates from the feminist movement's desire to scrutinize the works of women from the past. This entailed evaluating how women were depicted in the writings of male authors, who frequently portrayed them as marginalized, misrepresented, and undervalued within the framework of patriarchal dominance. Feminism is characterized as a diverse perspective or way of

life that evolves in response to various socio-cultural influences (Sugihastuti, 2010).

Historically, early feminism, as described by Hudgson-Wright, (2006) in "The Routledge Companion to Feminism and Postfeminism" by Gamble, (2004), involved efforts from 1550 to 1700 to challenge patriarchy. During this period, despite improved educational opportunities for women, they were still denied formal rights, such as the right to vote or access to higher education.

One significant aspect of feminism is the second wave, which began in the 1960s, marked by the publication of Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*. Additionally, Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* became a key reference for the feminist movement in the 1970s. Both authors emphasized that the key to liberating women from oppression was for women to change themselves.

Modern feminist literary criticism is rooted in the 1960s women's movement, which emphasized the importance of challenging the portrayal of women in literature. This movement saw literature as an essential tool for influencing everyday attitudes and behaviors. According to Barry (2009), feminist criticism should be viewed as an integral part of feminism, not just a branch of it.

Feminists consider patriarchy a central issue that must be addressed. The term "patriarchy" is often used to explain the power dynamics between men and women in society and is seen as the underlying cause of women's

subordination (Sultana, 2019). Feminists also use this concept to interpret women's experiences, questioning whether male authors and their literary works are more highly regarded because society has historically valued men over women. In essence, feminist literary criticism serves as both a perspective and a tool to analyze and examine the roles and positions of men and women depicted in literature. It explores the social, economic, political, and psychological aspects of literary creation (including writers, characters, and readers) to reveal the extent of male dominance across these areas (Carter, 2006).

## **B. Patriarchy**

Patriarchy is a social system that is unfair and discriminates against women, with the aim of maintaining male dominance based on gender. The existence of patriarchy can be manifested in various aspects of social, cultural, political and other life. In society, patriarchy can be reflected through communication patterns. Culture can also be closely linked to patriarchy through inherent symbols or myths, where some symbols may provide negative connotations towards women. In the world of politics, the existence of patriarchy can arise as a result of the balance of power (Makama, 2013).

Over time, feminism has expanded the definition of patriarchy. It is now generally understood to represent male dominance, describing power relations where men control women. Patriarchy is seen as a system that systematically subordinates women across various aspects of life (Bhasin,



2006, as cited in Sultana, 2019). Essentially, patriarchy refers to a societal structure that promotes male superiority at the expense of women (Higgins, 2018). Feminist theories stress that patriarchy is not an inevitable reality but a socially constructed system that can be changed (Pierik, 2018). Consequently, "social structures" are key in defining patriarchy.

Social structures significantly contribute to the creation and perpetuation of patriarchal systems. Patriarchy is a societal arrangement where men hold the majority of power, dominating political leadership, moral authority, social privilege, and property control. It is a complex phenomenon shaped by historical, cultural, and structural factors (De Beauvoir, 1961).

Sylvia Walby is a key theorist who defines patriarchy through the lens of social structures. Her theory combines multiple feminist perspectives, portraying patriarchy as a system of social structures and practices that systematically oppress women. Walby's work extends beyond individual sexism and focuses on the institutional and structural aspects of patriarchy *Theorizing Patriarchy* (1990).

Walby outlines six structures of patriarchy: paid work, household production, sexuality, culture, violence, and the state. She argues that these structures are interconnected and reinforce one another, creating a comprehensive system of male dominance. Her recognition of these interrelated structures has significantly contributed to feminist theory. Additionally, Walby incorporates intersectionality into her work,

recognizing that patriarchy intersects with other forms of inequality, such as class and race, making her theory more inclusive and relevant to diverse feminist viewpoints (Walby, 1990).

In patriarchal understanding, women continue to be considered as individuals who have a lower status than men. They are often underappreciated because men are considered to have a higher position in culture. Women are often underestimated compared to men, who are considered more competent. They are victims of oppression carried out by men. Unfortunately, this patriarchal system still persists today as a form of inequality that women cannot immediately eliminate (Walby, 1990, p. 32).

In simple terms, patriarchy is the dominance of men and the placement of women in a lower position. The group that benefits most from patriarchy is men. This is a system where men dominate, exploit, and oppress women both in public and private spaces (Walby, 1990, p. 20). It can be concluded that men have power in all institutions, while women often only have themselves.

### **C. Six Structures of Patriarchy by Sylvia Walby**

In 1990, Sylvia Walby presented six patriarchal structures in her book entitled *Theorizing Patriarchy*, covering aspects of Paid Work, Household Production, Culture, Sexuality, Male Violence, and the State.

#### **1. Paid Employment**

In the first patriarchal structure, women are often considered of low value by others. In the work environment, it is difficult for women to get

equal wages. Women are often seen as equal to male workers, who are considered more capable in various ways. This dynamic is the result of patriarchal roots, which establish the view that men are considered stronger than women. As a result, women often become victims of unfair treatment in the world of work, even though they actually have equal or better skills and abilities than men (Walby, 1990).

In the world of work, men tend to have greater opportunities to obtain more prestigious job positions than women. For example, it is very rare for women to be entrusted to serve as chairman or management leader. This situation occurs because of society's belief that men are more capable of leading and are considered more effective leaders than women. In many cases, men often occupy higher positions than women.

## **2. Household Production**

In the second patriarchal structure described by Walby, women are placed under the control of men in the domestic environment. This dynamic arises because women tend to be more involved in household work than men. Women are considered wives and housewives who are responsible for serving their husbands at home. Housework carried out by women is often considered a routine task, considered trivial and underappreciated. Women's roles in the household context are often limited to dependence on men.

In the household context, women are often considered individuals who must have versatile abilities. Women are expected to be able to carry out various household tasks such as cooking, washing clothes, washing

dishes, sweeping, mopping, looking after children, and other tasks. Women undertake domestic tasks voluntarily because their household labor is not acknowledged as legitimate work, resulting in them not receiving wages for their efforts. Consequently, they rely on their husbands for financial support since husbands typically claim ownership of all household properties (Walby, 1990).

### **3. Culture**

The third structure is culture. The distinction between femininity and masculinity in popular culture remains significant despite significant changes in recent decades. In patriarchal cultures, masculinity is often considered superior to femininity, and cultural discourse continues to reinforce this dichotomy. Historically, especially in the Victorian era, femininity was defined through domestic roles. For middle-class women, domesticity was a key ideal of womanhood. They were expected to live a life of fragility, dependent on a husband or father, and to avoid paid work, which was seen as violating feminine norms (Cott, 1978; Davidoff & Hall, 1987, as cited in Walby, 1990).

This discourse is also evident in the media and popular culture, where women's roles are often associated with domesticity. For example, magazines such as *Good Housekeeping* and *Woman's Own* perpetuated the idea that domesticity was an integral part of womanhood. On the other hand, media such as *Cosmopolitan* began to expand the idea of womanhood by

depicting women as more independent and engaged in careers (Coward, 1978, as cited in Walby, 1990)).

Culture has a significant impact on society's views on gender imbalance in social contexts. Differences in behavior between women and men are always an important discussion in a culture. Women are often taught to be more obedient, while men are given the freedom to act as they wish without having to ask permission. Culture plays a key role in maintaining patriarchy, making it difficult to eliminate it (Walby, 1990, p. 91).

#### **4. Sexuality**

In the fourth structure, Walby discusses sexual orientation, including heterosexual, homosexual, and lesbian, and highlights Freud's views linking sexual acts to patriarchy. According to Freud, initially, every individual was bisexual, but patriarchy encouraged the formation of a heterosexual orientation with the belief that men, as dominators, should partner with women (Walby, 1990, p.110).

In a sexual context, women are often objectified as sexual objects by men (A, MacKinnon, 1982, as cited in Walby, 1990). As a result, women become victims of sexual domination by men. News about sexual harassment against women tends to be reported more often than sexual harassment against men. Men, at the same time, engage in the sexualization and domination of women. Sexuality is considered a tool used by men to dominate women (Walby, 1990).

## **5. Male Violence**

Women are often victims of violence from men, which includes rape, sexual assault, violence against wives, sexual harassment, and sexual abuse against children (Walby, 1990, p. 128). Violence against women can occur in various places, both in the private and public spheres and can be intentional or unintentional.

Male violence can be considered a form of social control exercised against women (Brownmiller, 1976, as cited in Walby, 1990). Psychological disorders trigger violence perpetrated by men, with various factors such as childhood trauma, insecurity, etc. In particular, men's violence against women tends to increase in situations of economic stress. In these conditions, incidents of violence often occur when one of the parties finds it difficult to overcome a difficult economic situation, so they respond with violent behaviour as a form of outlet. Violence is considered an effort to control women when men feel they have lost their form of power (Walby, 1990, p.136).

## **6. State**

From a policy and legislative perspective, it is not surprising that states still tend to provide more benefits to men than women. Walby argues that many countries are still "patriarchal, capitalist, and racist." According to him, efforts to improve women's position in the public sphere are still minimal, and gender equality laws are often not enforced. Countries that adhere to a patriarchal system tend to harm women through the application

of unfair punishments. Laws in some countries still rarely reflect laws that do not discriminate based on gender. Institutions in these countries tend to assume that women are less successful in the political realm than men, and this can harm women through laws or regulations that are not in line with women's rights, such as regulations on prostitution, pornography, homosexuality, divorce, marriage, and so on (Walby, 1990, p.153).

#### **D. Struggle**

In *Theorizing Patriarchy* (1990), Sylvia Walby develops a deep understanding of the patriarchal system that perpetuates male domination over women in various aspects of social, economic, and political life. Walby explains that patriarchy is dynamic, moving from private forms (which occur within the household) to public (which includes the world of work and other public spaces) (Walby, 1990, p. 178). Within this patriarchal system, women are trapped in subordination, whether through unequal division of labour, gender-based violence, or state policies that do not support equality (Walby, 1990, p. 20).

According to Walby, women's struggles against patriarchy can be understood through how they confront and challenge structures that hinder their freedom and autonomy. This struggle involves women's efforts to escape the domestic roles that imprison them in private patriarchy and demand equal rights in the public sphere (Walby, 1990, p. 181). Walby states that even though women have entered the workforce and politics, they continue to experience subordination in more subtle forms through wage

discrimination, limited career opportunities, and violence legitimized by social norms ((Walby, 1990, p. 212).

Feminists reject the term "victim" for women who experience male violence because this term is considered to depict women as passive recipients of violence. Instead, they prefer the term "survivor," which emphasizes women's survival and forms of resistance to patriarchy, both verbally and physically (Kelly, L., 1988, as cited in Walby, 1990). Women's resistance in facing patriarchy is seen in various survival strategies, such as screaming or physical resistance that is considered to be able to deter the perpetrator of rape (Bart and O'Brien, 1986, as cited in Walby, 1990).

Women's struggles, in Walby's view, are not just individual efforts, but part of a broader social movement to change the patriarchal system itself. Walby also emphasizes that although women have made progress in the public sphere, their struggles do not end there. Patriarchal structures continue to adapt, and therefore women's struggles must continue (Walby, 1990, p. 252).

In this research, the struggle of female characters' is one of the main focuses of the study. This research outlines the various efforts made by female characters' to challenge patriarchal domination in their environment, as depicted in the novel *The Book Of Flora*. Patriarchy continues and develops because it is influenced by culture and male dominance in the story. However, through struggle, the female characters' manages to overcome the various problems she faces.



## **CHAPTER III**

### **RESEARCH METHOD**

In this chapter, the researcher describes the methods used in this study. First, Research Design, the researcher describes the approach used to analyze the novel *The Book Of Flora*. Then, in Data Source, the researcher explains the main data sources used for the study. Next, the researcher describes the collection process in this study, Finally, in Data Analysis, the researcher describes how the data was analyzed.

#### **A. Research Design**

In analyzing this study, the researcher uses the Feminist literary criticism approach and Sylvia Walby's theory of patriarchy, which defines six model structures of patriarchy and how female characters' struggle against patriarchy in Meg Elison's novel *The Book Of Flora*. However, the researcher only finds four of them, such as household production, sexuality, male violence, and State.

#### **B. Data Source**

This study's data is from *The Book of Flora* by Meg Elison. The novel used was the e-book version that was published in 2019 by 47 North. The object of this research is a fiction book with a total of 332 pages divided into 42 chapters. This novel was chosen because its main theme focuses on the struggle of women in a post-apocalyptic patriarchal world, which follows the analysis based on Sylvia Walby's patriarchal theory.

### **C. Data Collection**

The data collection process in analyzing Meg Elison's *The Book Of Flora* involved several stages. First, the researcher read the novel comprehensively to understand the storyline, characters', and their roles. The next step was to identify the data used by linking it to Sylvia Walby's theory. As a result, the researcher found four patriarchal structures: household production, sexuality, male violence, and State.

### **D. Data Analysis**

Once data collection is complete, the researcher takes the next step, which is to classify the data. This involved grouping the structures of patriarchy and women's struggles in the novel. After that, the researcher interprets the data based on Sylvia Walby's view of patriarchy. The next step is presenting the data as the result of analysis, and the last step is to make analytic conclusions based on the analyzed data.

## CHAPTER IV

### FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter describes the analysis that has been carried out by the researcher in answering research questions. This chapter is divided into two parts. The first part will review the structure of patriarchy in the novel *The Book Of Flora* by Meg Elison using the theoretical framework of patriarchy proposed by Sylvia Walby. The second part will describe the female characters' struggle against patriarchy in the novel.

#### A. Forms of Patriarchy

In this analysis, the structure of patriarchy are examined based on six classifications proposed by Sylvia Walby. However, in *The Book Of Flora*, there are only four types of patriarchal structures. The structure of patriarchy are reflected in household production, sexuality, male violence, and State.

##### 1. Household Production

In the home environment, men have the freedom to do whatever they want or don't want, while women are expected to handle all the housework. They are required to obey all orders from their husbands and fulfil all expectations. In addition, women are also required to work outside the home. Women's main role in the home is to produce children, while men are considered the financial masters of the family (Walby, 1990, p. 87). In *The Book Of Flora*, the father is considered to have dominant power in the family. He is the one who makes decisions about his existence in the

household, as experienced by the character named Dinty. This is evident in the quote below:

- Dinty

Dinty is a female character who experiences the patriarchal structure of household production, she was sold by her own father.

*By the time she understood me fully, the younger girl had been sold. She's shuffled off and into the arms of a short woman.*

*"That's his mother," my translator says softly in my ear. "She bought him back."*

*"Who was selling the child, then?"*

*"Must be his father. She'll have to leave Tona. She can't stay here with that. They're trying to make sure no more are born." (p.196)*

In *The Book Of Flora*, the father is considered to have dominant power in the family. He is the one who makes decisions about his existence in the household, as experienced by the character named Dinty. The quote above shows a form of patriarchy in household production. In the quote above, Flora asked her translator who had sold the child, and then the translator explained that the father of the child had sold it because he did not expect the child (Dinty) and made sure no more babies were born in his house. The quote reflects the dominance of gender-based power structures, where the father is considered to have full power in family decision-making.

The father decides to sell Dinty, showing strong control within the family sphere. This reflects gender inequality, where men often dominate in terms of decision-making and control over the lives of family members, including women and children. Gender equality is neglected, and women

are often marginalized in decision-making processes that are important to the family.

This action makes it clear that the father has full control over the lives of the family members, while Dinty and her mother are marginalized from the decision-making process that affects their fate. This gender inequality creates an environment where women have no voice or rights over their own bodies and lives. This reflects the patriarchy that has been rooted in society, where women are considered entities that can be treated and traded rather than individuals with rights and freedoms. By making the father the main decision-maker, this quote emphasizes that gender-based power structures not only limit women's roles but also create injustices that impact the well-being of the family.

## **2. Male Violence**

Women are often victims of violence by men, and this consistently influences the behavior of many women. Violent acts such as rape, sexual assault, beatings, and sexual harassment are considered traumatic for women (Walby, 1990, p. 128). In the novel *The Book Of Flora*, the characters' Dinty, Flora, and Etta experience this. This is evident in the quote below:

- Dinty

Apart from experiencing the patriarchal structure of household production, Dinty also experienced the patriarchal structure of male violence. She was tortured by Archie.

*"She's no beauty," Archie had said, beginning to dicker for her price.*

*"And she'll never breed. What's the use of her?" (p.22)*

The quote above shows the act of male violence against Dinty, a woman who is sold and criticized for her physical appearance. Archie's statement that Dinty is not beautiful indirectly states that a woman's value depends on her appearance. This is a form of harassment because women are judged based on the standards of beauty set by society, and if they do not meet these standards, they are considered weak or worthless. By stating that Dinty will never be able to reproduce, this shows that Archie views women only as objects of reproduction.

The quote shows the violence that degrades women. Women are only valued for their ability to give birth to children without looking at the other roles and potential they have. Archie's statement, "What's the use of her?" shows a lack of respect for women's humanity. Women are considered worthless or useless if they do not meet Archie's expectations, such as beauty or reproductive ability.

When Archie states that Dinty is not beautiful, he indirectly reinforces the statement that a woman's value lies only in her physical appearance. The statement that Dinty will never be able to reproduce reinforces the view that women are only considered valuable if they can fulfill their reproductive function. In this way, Archie reduces Dinty's identity to that of a mere reproductive object, ignoring the many roles and potentials that women can have. This injustice shows that society still deems

women worthless if they do not conform to patriarchal expectations, such as appearance or ability to bear children.

*He yanked Dinty upright and whirled her around to face me. "Your situation in life has changed. I'm not that toothless old man who used to own you. I am a trader, and I am going to turn you into something valuable, something I can sell. The sooner you act like that one"—here he pointed to me, and I looked over at them as detachedly as I could—"the sooner you will live pain-free days. Do you understand?" (p.24)*

This quote shows male violence. The threat of living days without pain suggests that compliance is the only option available to Dinty and that refusal will result in a painful experience. These sentences were intended to control and scare Dinty. This shows Archie's complete dominance and power over Dinty. Dinty's pulling and twisting actions indicate the beginning of physical violence, but the essence of the violence in this quote is the use of words and threats to subdue and control the victim. This creates an environment filled with mental stress and fear of possible physical violence.

This situation shows how violence against women often begins with psychological control, which undermines their sense of security and self-confidence. It also highlights how the patriarchal underpinnings of society justify this kind of behavior, allowing men to express their power through threats and intimidation. As a result, Dinty is not only physically threatened but also trapped in a cycle of powerlessness that reinforces gender inequality.

Archie's comparison of Dinty to other women highlights the expectation that women conform to submissive roles in order to avoid punishment. This tactic reflects a broader societal structure that normalizes male dominance and female oppression. The fact that Dinty's submission is presented as her only option emphasizes her vulnerability within this patriarchal system. Archie's behavior reflects the systemic nature of patriarchy, which often justifies such acts of violence as a means of enforcing male control, reinforcing women's powerlessness. Through this scene, the novel shows how patriarchal violence is both a personal and institutional force that shapes women's lives, trapping them in a cycle of fear and oppression.

*he'd pull down their lips to show their teeth. He would travel on the backs of girl children all his life. (p.19)*

*Most of the girls and women I saw were locked down in harems and travelling in chains. (p.20)*

In the quote above, Flora explains that she sees Dinty and other characters as victims of violence. The sentence "she would pull their lips down to show their teeth" can be said to be an act of physical violence, such as beatings or torture, carried out against women. This act is not only physical but also symbolic, depicting violence designed to humiliate and dominate women, showing how violence is an instrument of patriarchy in controlling and degrading women. Here, women are not only attacked physically but also psychologically, with the aim of eliminating their dignity and self-esteem.



The sentence "she would travel on the backs of girls all her life" can be interpreted as violence because the phrase "on the backs of girls" equates a woman's back with the back of an animal that can be ridden. This phrase shows the continuous exploitation of women's bodies. Women in this novel are treated like burdens, depicting an unbalanced power relationship where women are positioned as servants or tools that can be used by others. This is in line with the patriarchal structure described by Sylvia Walby, where the exploitation of women is a form of male domination.

The sentence "Most of the girls and women I saw were locked up in harems and traveling in chains" illustrates how women in the novel are oppressed and restricted in their freedom. They are locked up in harems and tied up, indicating that they have no control over their own lives. This depiction emphasizes that women are physically and mentally trapped in a patriarchal structure that limits their freedom. The harem and chains are symbols of total control over women's bodies and freedom, where women are treated like property that can be controlled and bound according to the patriarchal will. This illustrates the structural violence that women experience under the patriarchal system, in line with Walby's idea that control over women's bodies is a key element in patriarchal violence.

*He hit her again, the sound of his hand against  
her face as flat as if he  
had hit her with a wooden plank.  
"I can already tell that I paid too much for you,  
girl." He balled a fist  
and punched her in the stomach. I knew because I  
heard the air rush out of her mouth in a whoof  
sound.*

*He grabbed her by the hair and brought his mouth  
to her ear, though  
he did not lower his voice. "We stop when I say  
stop. You don't sit down  
until you're told. You don't eat, shit, sleep, or talk  
until you're told."  
She was crying now, a high, keening sound like a  
baby.  
"You shut your mouth and follow along, or I'll fix  
it so that your every  
step is agony. And you'll follow along anyway."  
(p.23).*

The analysis above clearly shows the violence committed by Archie against Dinty. Archie uses physical violence, such as beatings, as a way to assert his dominance, which shows that violence is an instrument of patriarchy in subjugating women. This action is not only physically painful but also psychological because this kind of violence damages Dinty's sense of self-esteem and confirms her position as an object that can be controlled.

In addition, when Archie says that he paid too much for Dinty, this indicates that Dinty is nothing more than a purchased item, showing the objectification of women in a patriarchal context. This is in line with Sylvia Walby's theory of patriarchy, which states that male control over women does not only occur in the physical realm but also in the way women are viewed as commodities. By setting strict rules and taking away Dinty's freedom, Archie shows how patriarchal power regulates and controls every aspect of women's lives, including their personal decisions.

The use of language that degrades Dinty as an object makes it clear how patriarchy not only uses physical violence to oppress women but also through language and attitudes that reinforce the idea that women are in a

lower position. In this context, Archie's actions reflect a larger social structure, where men have complete power over women and women are forced to obey, illustrating the gender inequality inherent in the patriarchal system.

- Flora

Flora, as the main character in the novel, experiences the patriarchal structure of male violence.

*"I was in Pediex most of my life. I don't remember anything before that. I was sold when I was little"*  
(p.128)

*The crowd was upon them, running them toward a pink stone building, pushing them through the doors. They pulled the three of them apart, putting Alice and Flora into a wooden enclosure on one side of the large room and holding them there at the point of a rifle. (p.183)*

The two quotes above illustrate the violence that Flora experienced in two different but related contexts. First, Flora's statement, "I was sold when I was a child" emphasizes a profound form of physical and psychological violence. Selling a child without consent is a form of human exploitation, where Flora is treated like a commodity with no human value. This act not only symbolizes physical violence, but also the denial of Flora's human rights, placing her in a position where she has no control over her life from a young age. Flora experiences a loss of autonomy, which indicates how patriarchy and the slavery system treat women as commodities.

Flora's presence at Pediex also shows the strict physical control over her life. She may not have the freedom to move, living in an environment where her every action is restricted, which further emphasizes the

confinement and oppression she experiences. These conditions illustrate a harsh and isolated life, where her freedom is completely taken away.

The second quote, where Flora and Alice are forcibly separated and put in a wooden cage at gunpoint, shows the direct threat of physical violence. This separation is not only an act of domination but also a form of physical and psychological control. By separating these two women, the patriarchal power seeks to undermine their sense of community and solidarity, making them even more vulnerable. The wooden cage and the threat of a gun are visible symbols of oppression, showing that they are stripped of their freedom and threatened with further violence, whether in the form of imprisonment or physical assault.

Taken together, these two quotes reveal how patriarchal violence permeates women's lives, from exploitation and trafficking to the threat of imprisonment and physical violence. This highlights the role of patriarchy as a system that not only controls women's bodies but also attempts to subdue their spirits and freedoms.

- Etta

Etta is a female character who disguises herself as a man, she changes her name to Eddy, Eddy experiences the patriarchal structure of male violence.

*Eddy was there, tied to a pole just as she was. He was still knocked out. (p.249)*

The quote shows the struggle experienced by Etta, who disguises herself as a man under the name Eddy, in facing oppression. Although Etta tries to disguise her identity as a man, the act of tying her to a pole shows that her gender identity as a woman is still recognized by the oppressors. This confirms that, in the context of patriarchy, women are still vulnerable to violence even though they try to escape from their assigned gender roles.

Eddy's condition of being tied to a pole and injured shows that the physical violence and detention experienced by women, including Eddy, is a form of patriarchal control that seeks to silence resistance and maintain male dominance. Although Etta tries to disguise herself to avoid the violence that is common to women, the violence she experiences still reflects how patriarchy not only oppresses based on gender identity but also reinforces women's powerlessness through brutal physical actions.

In a tied condition, Eddy still tries to free himself, showing women's struggle to free themselves from patriarchal oppression. This reflects that although women are often trapped by violence and oppression, they still have the drive to fight and seek freedom, indicating a strong struggle to the system that binds them.

### **3. Sexuality**

According to Walby (1990), sexuality is a form of patriarchy that allows men to dominate women. In this context, sexual relationships are unbalanced, with men sexually abusing women and reducing them to sexual objects. In the context of a patriarchal society, men often use their power to

control and objectify women's bodies, especially in relation to sexuality. This can manifest in a variety of ways, including the objectification of women's bodies and the use of violence or coercion to achieve sexual gratification. In the novel *The Book Of Flora*, there is a case of sexuality where women are made into objects for their (men's) pleasure. This is evident in the quote below:

- Flora

Apart from experiencing violence, Flora also experienced the patriarchal structure of sexuality. She has been made an object of sexuality since she was little.

*"I have no concept of a childhood without sex"*

*(p. 18).*

*"Archie was never brutal to me, despite his constant use of my body" (p.19).*

Walby argues that women's sexuality is controlled by men in patriarchal societies, where women are often reduced to sexual objects (Walby, 1990). The first quote, "I have no concept of a childhood without sex," shows that Flora has never experienced a childhood without sexual elements in her life. This indicates that her sexuality has been taken over and controlled by Archie from an early age, with no room for personal freedom. In a patriarchal structure, women's sexuality is exploited and objectified, which, in this case, is shown through Flora's experiences since childhood.

The second quote, "Archie was never brutal to me, despite his constant use of my body," reveals a form of sexual exploitation that does not involve direct physical violence but still involves control over

women's bodies. Walby emphasizes that patriarchy does not always involve physical violence to control women's sexuality. Here, although Archie is not "brutal" physically, he still uses Flora's body constantly, which shows her complete control over her sexuality. This reflects a form of patriarchal power where women's sexuality is used without physical resistance but still in the context of oppression.

In both quotes, the character reveals how her sexuality is exploited and used by others (Archie), which is a manifestation of the sexual objectification of women under patriarchy. This is in line with Walby's analysis, which emphasizes that women's sexuality is objectified for men's pleasure and power, where women's bodies are treated as property that can be used as desired.

*He had adopted me as a youthful outlet for his last few years of sexual function. (p.55)*

The quote highlights the objectification of women in a patriarchal system, where Flora is used as a tool to satisfy men's sexual desires. Archie adopts Flora not with the intention of protecting or raising her, but merely as an outlet for his sexual desires. This shows that Flora is treated as an object that has no autonomy, and her position as a woman makes her vulnerable to manipulation and exploitation.

In a patriarchal culture, as depicted in this quote, women are often viewed as the property of men and are used according to their needs. Women's rights and desires are ignored, while the main focus is on fulfilling

men's desires. Archie's power over Flora shows the dominance of men who treat women as sexual tools, a clear illustration of gender inequality.

Archie's actions in manipulating or forcing Flora to fulfill his desires reflect how the patriarchal system justifies control over women's bodies. Flora is not given space to voice her desires, and this shows how the patriarchal system takes away women's autonomy, insisting that women are only seen in a functional capacity, specifically in fulfilling men's needs.

#### 4. State

According to Walby sees the state not as a neutral institution but as a patriarchal structure that supports and strengthens male dominance and restricts women's freedom in various aspects of life. In *The Book Of Flora*, there is a patriarchal structure. This is evident in the quote below:

- Flora

Flora is the main character. She and other female characters experience the patriarchal structure of the state.

*They collect women. That much seems clear. They have gathered up women and girls from every town they have wiped out... (p. 188).*

In this quote, Flora explains to the other women that the men have gathered women from each city they have destroyed. The quote "They collect women... they have gathered up women and girls" indicates that a powerful group or entity uses their power to control and subjugate women. The women are systematically gathered, indicating an organized form of



power that takes over women's lives, illustrating how the state or power structure can be involved in the systemic oppression of women.

In this quote, "wiped out" indicates that the powerful group not only takes women but does so after destroying cities, reflecting the use of violence and absolute power to control women. The state or power in this quote acts by gathering women and girls after wiping out their communities. This illustrates how the state can use its power to systematically enslave women. In the context of patriarchy, as Walby explains, the state is not only silent about the oppression of women but is often actively involved in shaping and maintaining the systems that allow women to continue to be subordinate.

In the context of patriarchy, as Sylvia Walby explains, the state is not merely a passive observer of women's oppression but is often an agent that reinforces the systems that keep women marginalized. As such, the actions of these powerful groups reflect how power can be used to systematically enslave women, depriving them of control over their bodies and lives. This oppression is not just individual but collective, as women from all walks of life are uprooted from their communities, creating greater vulnerability within existing social structures.

### **B. Female Character's Struggle Against Patriarchy**

In the novel *The Book Of Flora*, the female characters' struggle against patriarchy caused by restraint and violence. Those who experience

violence and restraint struggle to have freedom in their lives without the interference of men who use and control them. Female characters' use various strategies against patriarchy, such as Struggle Against Household Production, Struggle Against Male Violence, Struggle Against Sexuality, and Struggle Against State. Their struggles are evident below:

### 1) Struggle Against Household Production

The first struggle is the struggle against Household Production. The struggle is based on Sylvia Walby's theory of patriarchy. In *The Book Of Flora*, the character Dinty tries to achieve freedom in her life. One of the strategies she uses is trying to find her mother so she can buy her back. The struggles are evident below:

- Dinty

Dinty is a character who was sold by her father. She tries to fight against the patriarchal structure of household production.

*She's shuffled off and into the arms of a short woman.  
"That's his mother," my translator says softly in my ear. "She bought him back."*

Dinty tries hard to find her mother in the hope that she will be brought back. As in the quote above, Dinty's mother struggles hard to get her child back after being sold by her father. This step shows her tireless struggle to defend her child and uphold her rights as a mother in a patriarchal system that often oppresses women. By taking control of her child's fate, a

mother challenges the patriarchal system that historically does not give women the power to make decisions about their own lives.

This step shows her courage and determination to make a better life for herself and her child. By buying back her child, this mother expresses her right to choose and protect her child from the patriarchal power that tries to control and exploit them. This shows that even though patriarchy tries to restrain women through household production, women have the capacity to fight and reclaim control over their lives. This mother's actions illustrate a real effort to deconstruct patriarchy and fight for freedom and independence for herself and her child.

This act represents a real effort to deconstruct patriarchy by asserting that women have the right to freedom and independence. Through this struggle, Dinty and her mother are not only fighting for their own rights but also setting an example for other women that they can fight oppression and reclaim their agency in a society that often does not give space for their voices and decisions. The courage and perseverance of this mother are a symbol of hope and resistance against a system that seeks to control and exploit women.

## **2) Struggle Against Male Violence**

The second struggle is the Struggle Against Male Violence. This struggle is based on Sylvia Walby's theory of patriarchy. In *The Book of Flora*, Dinty, Flora, and Etta struggle to free themselves from patriarchal male violence. The struggles are evident below:

- Dinty

Dinty is a female character who experiences violence from Archie. She struggle against the patriarchal structure of male violence.

*The best thing she does is to reluctantly agree or vacate (p.24)*

The quote, “The best thing she does is to reluctantly agree or vacate,” illustrates Dinty’s struggle against patriarchal structures through male violence in Sylvia Walby’s patriarchal theory. Male violence is one of the tools used by patriarchy to control women with threats or acts of violence. In this case, Dinty is faced with limited choices: reluctantly agree or vacate. Dinty’s submission “reluctantly agrees” reflects how male violence forces women to obey, not because of free choice, but because of the patriarchal power that controls their lives. However, the decision to “vacate” also shows a form of resistance, where Dinty tries to escape from male control in an effort to maintain control over her life. According to Walby, although this choice seems passive, the act of resisting male violence by running away is a way for women to resist oppression in the patriarchal system.

Although Dinty’s obedience seems passive, the choice to “vacate” implies a form of resistance to male control. Walby argues that although seemingly trivial, this act is a way for women to resist patriarchal structures that seek to restrict their freedom. Dinty chooses not to submit to the

violence fully but instead attempts to resist through escape, a move that symbolically demonstrates an attempt to maintain her autonomy and agency as a woman in the face of patriarchal pressure.

- Flora

Flora also experienced violence and she struggle against the patriarchal structure of male violence.

*but I grew up and figured out how to sell it myself, it's not hard. It beats the shit out of trapping nutria (p.128).*

This quote reflects Flora's harsh environment, in slavery or exploitation, and shows her journey from helplessness to mastery over her situation. However, she figured out how to "sell herself," which can be interpreted as taking control of her life's circumstances despite the difficult situation.

This quote also shows Flora's struggle to survive and take control of her destiny in a cruel world, where selling herself is a better option than menial work like trapping "nutria" (an aggressive rodent). Flora has accepted the harsh realities of life and turned them into something she can control, albeit within narrow boundaries.

Flora's decision to "sell herself" in comparison to the harsh labor of trapping nutria, which represents dangerous and inhumane forms of labor, highlights how she seeks to avoid more brutal exploitation. The nutria, as

an aggressive animal, symbolizes the world of hard labor that Flora must escape, and this shows her ability to adapt to harsh conditions. Although her powerlessness limits her choices, she uses the opportunity to reclaim authority over her fate. This action also reflects the social injustice she faces, where women like Flora are trapped in exploitative structures that leave little choice. Flora's decision thus illustrates a mixture of struggle and control, as well as her attempt to survive in unjust conditions. Besides that, Flora also fought against the troops when she was on the ship to find a safer place.

*Beside her, Eddy was beginning to stir.  
 "Eddy," she hissed through her teeth. "Eddy!  
 Eddy, can you hear me?"  
 Eddy rolled his head on a limp neck, looking at  
 her out of one eye.  
 "What the fuck?"  
 Flora shrugged. She saw Eddy immediately move  
 his hand to check  
 for his gun. He had his finger on the trigger at  
 once. The muzzle lay against the sand. (p.250)*

This quote also describes the disastrous situation that Flora is experiencing. He faced his enemy alone, and Eddy was unable to help him due to his own injuries. The use of the line " Eddy rolled his head on a limp neck " (Eddy turned his head, looking at her with one eye) emphasizes the extent of his injury and his inability to help Flora. Even though she was in a dangerous and vulnerable situation, Flora immediately acted to protect herself.

This situation further emphasizes that Flora is in a critical and vulnerable condition, but she does not let fear or helplessness control her. Instead, Flora

shows courage and determination in taking control of her fate amidst the threat. Thus, Flora no longer relies solely on others for protection but takes an active role as her own savior, showing the evolution of her character from someone who may have once depended on others to an individual who is fully capable of overcoming danger alone.

- Etta

Etta or Eddy struggle against male violence as they undertake a dangerous journey to find a safe haven. This is evident in the quote below:

*Flora found she could pull the trigger at the critical moment. She shot the man who was just turning back to Eddy. Her shot tore through his neck, and he stood a moment, spraying blood over those nearest him.*

*Eddy shot the man holding the rifle on Flora and Alice, who had not yet reacted to the sudden change. Alice dropped when she heard the first shot, hands over her head.*

*Eddy got his second gun free and unloaded it into the crowd. Flora emptied one before shoving it back into the folds of her silk and withdrawing the other. She was watching for more armed men. (p.184)*

*It had two masts and looked well cared for. Eddy found its mooring rope and threw it onto the deck. "Come on!"*

*Flora and Alice climbed over, Alice wobbling and nearly falling. Flora caught her.*

*Eddy stood on the dock a moment longer and took a shot at the next*

*rider who appeared. He missed. He vaulted over the edge of the dock into the ship, which had begun to drift just a little. He found a pole on board and used it to push them away from the edge, trying to make it too far for a man to jump. (p.186).*

The above quote highlights Eddy's struggle as they face a perilous journey in search of a safe haven. The tension of the situation increases when Eddy takes a brave action by shooting the man who is pointing his gun at Flora and Alice. This scene depicts uncertainty and chaos, especially when Alice falls to the ground, covering her head with her hands, which shows her fear and depicts the precarious situation that is taking place. On the other hand, Flora shows courage by facing the gunman, while Eddy tries to find a way out.

Although Eddy's gun is empty, he still holds it in front of him, creating an illusion of strength and courage in the midst of a terrifying situation. This reflects not only his physical resilience but also his mental resilience, showing that even in a desperate situation, Eddy still tries to maintain control over the situation.

Eddy's ingenuity and determination are in the spotlight as he is able to recognize the opportunity to strike back. His quick action in shooting the gunman shows that he is not only acting on instinct, but also has the ability to analyze the situation quickly and make the right decision to protect himself and his friends. This emphasizes that in the face of a threat, Eddy not only survives, but also plays an active role in fighting the attacker.



### 3) Struggle Against Sexuality

The third struggle is the Struggle Against sexuality. This struggle is based on the patriarchal theory by Sylvia Walby. In *The Book of Flora*, Flora struggles against the patriarchal structure of sexuality. The struggles are evident below:

- Flora

Flora is a female character who is made a sexual object. She struggle against the patriarchal structure of sexuality.

*I have to flee this place and find out who I am (p. 13)*

The quote “*I have to flee this place and find out who I am*” shows Flora’s strong desire to break free from patriarchal control over her body and sexuality. In Sylvia Walby’s theory of patriarchy, sexuality is one of the primary areas in which women are controlled and objectified, often used to maintain male dominance. Flora’s decision to escape is a form of struggle to this control, in which she seeks to reclaim autonomy over her body and sexual identity.

Flee from patriarchal structures reflects women’s need to find authentic freedom, free from the norms and constraints imposed by patriarchal power. In this sense, Flora’s actions are a manifestation of women’s broader struggle to reject sexual subordination and gain full control over their lives and sexuality. According to Walby’s theory, women’s sexuality is often regulated and restricted for the benefit of men,

and Flora's actions in seeking her own identity are a form of rebellion against this oppression. This search for an authentic sexual identity reflects women's struggle to patriarchal control and their attempt to reclaim their right to determine their own lives and bodies.

#### 4) **Struggle Against State**

The fourth struggle is the Struggle Against the State. In the novel *The Book of Flora*, this struggle is seen when the state or organized power imposes control over women. Flora's struggle against the state reflects women's efforts to fight a system that actively oppresses them. The struggles are evident below:

- Flora

Flora is the main character who leads her community to struggle against the patriarchal structure of the state.

*"Where will I go with you?"  
"Somewhere where it is safe to be who we are.  
We are tired of being in danger because of how  
we were born" (p.198).*

The quotes "Where will I go with you?" and "Somewhere where it is safe to be who we are" illustrate Flora's struggle against patriarchal structures. The state in Walby's theory is one of six patriarchal structures that play a role in oppressing women through regulations, laws, and policies that reinforce male dominance.

Flora and her group are looking for a place where they can live safely and free from the dangers created by the patriarchal state. The state, in this case, does not protect women and vulnerable groups but rather functions as

a means of control that restricts their freedom. Flora's desire to find a safe place shows an effort to fight against the state that imposes patriarchal rules that control and threaten women's existence. This struggle is a form of rejection of the power of the state that oppresses and marginalizes women, as well as an effort to reclaim their autonomy and rights to live without fear.

Flora's courage to lead reflects an awareness of the importance of solidarity in fighting patriarchal oppression, which often seeks to divide women in order to maintain dominant power. Flora's leadership also focuses on creating safe spaces where all members of the community can express themselves without fear of external threats. In the process, she inspires other women to take an active role in their own struggles, changing existing power dynamics and giving them a voice in determining their own destinies. In this sense, Flora is not just a seeker of safe spaces; she is an agent of change who mobilizes the community to fight for their rights collectively.

Through Flora's leadership, this struggle creates a greater awareness of how women can organize themselves, build solidarity, and create lasting social change. She shows that the courage to take action and create safe spaces is not only essential for individual survival, but also crucial to building a more just and equitable future for all women.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

After applying Sylvia Walby's patriarchy theory to analyze the data, the researcher moves on to the last chapter, which contains conclusions and suggestions. In this chapter, the findings of the analysis are discussed and presented as conclusions for the benefit of all readers, especially for future researchers who are interested in the novel *The Book Of Flora* as a study material. The conclusion of this research discusses the form of patriarchy and women's struggle against patriarchy in the novel *The Book Of Flora*. Then, continue with suggestions from the researcher.

#### A. Conclusion

In this research, Sylvia Walby's patriarchal theory is used to analyze the novel. This research divides the analysis into two parts. Firstly, to answer the first question, namely, what are the structures of patriarchy depicted in Meg Elison's *The Book Of Flora* and how do female characters' struggle against patriarchy in Meg Elison's *The Book Of Flora*.

First is the patriarchal structure in the novel *The Book of Flora*. The first patriarchal structure is Household production, in this patriarchal structure, the character Dinty is traded by her own father. The second patriarchal structure is Male Violence; in this patriarchal structure, the characters' Dinty, Flora, and Etta experience violent treatment from men. The third patriarchal structure is Sexuality; here, the character Flora

experiences treatment as an object of male sexual satisfaction. The last Patriarchal Structure is the State, where the state supports and strengthens male dominance and limits women's freedom.

To answer the second question in this study, female characters' struggle against the patriarchal structure they have experienced. The first struggle is the Struggle Against Household Production; in this struggle, Dinty tries to find her mother so that her mother can buy her back. The second struggle is the Struggle Against Male Violence. In this struggle, Dinty, Flora, and Etta try to fight against the actions of men that have been done to them. And the third struggle is the Struggle Against Sexuality. In this struggle, Flora tries to escape and get to a safe place. The final struggle was the Struggle Against the State. This Struggle, Flora, led her community to go somewhere safe and without fear.

### **C. Suggestion**

The researcher conducted a new study that focuses on women's struggle against patriarchy in the novel *The Book Of Flora*. The researcher suggests that further researchers who are interested in analyzing this novel as a research object use other approaches and theories. Hopefully the following researchers will have more accurate findings and analyses.

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## **CURRICULUM VITAE**



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