

**THE PORTRAYAL OF MOTHERHOOD AS INSTITUTION
BY THE MAIN CHARACTER IN MEAGHAN O'CONNELL'S
*AND NOW WE HAVE EVERYTHING***

THESIS

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FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI MAULANA MALIK
IBRAHIM MALANG**

2025

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THESIS

Presented to
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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2025

STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP

I state that the thesis entitled **The Portrayal of Motherhood as Institution by The Main Character in Meaghan O'Connell's *And Now We Have Everything*** is my original work. I do not include any materials previously written or published by another person, except those cited as references and written in the bibliography. Hereby, if there is any objection or claim, I am the only person who is responsible for that.

Malang, June 24th, 2025

The Researcher



Indri Prameswari Zahro

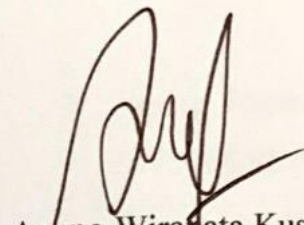
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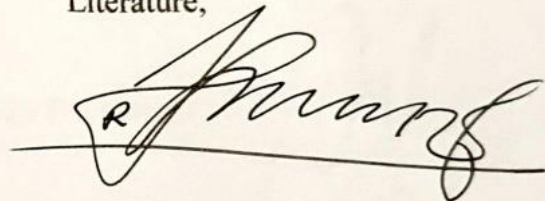
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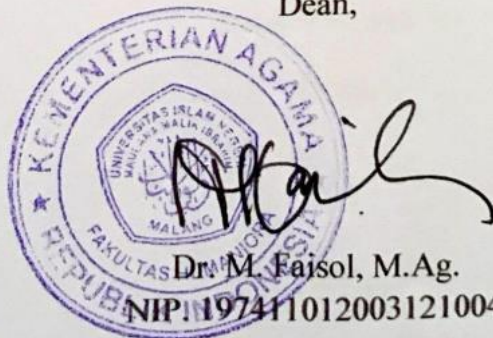
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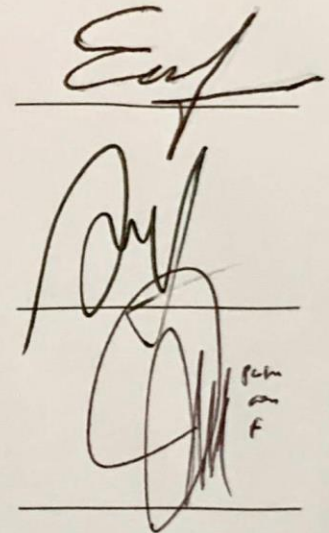
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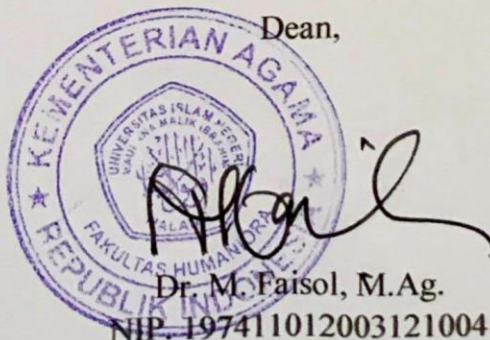
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MOTTO

“Being a woman and writing about women is an act of courage.”

-Indri-

DEDICATION

This thesis is proudly dedicated to:

Myself, Indri Prameswari Zahro

My dearest parents, *Father* Amirul Iksan and *Mother* Sutrisnik,

And My beloved lil brother the one and only Yusuf Ageng Ariwibowo

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

All praises and thanks always belong to Allah SWT, the most Gracious and the most Merciful. By the grace and guidance of God, I have been able to complete this thesis. Our *Shalawat and Salaam* are always delivered to the Prophet Muhammad SAW, who has guided us from the darkness to the lightness.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to:

1. Agung Wiranata Kusuma, MA, my advisor. Thank you for patiently guiding and giving me meaningful advice throughout the process of writing this thesis.
2. Dr. Yayuk Widyastuti Herawati, S. Pd., M.Pd, my academic advisor. Thank you for consistently accompanying and guiding me during my studies.
3. All lecturers in the Department of English Literature. Thank you for sharing valuable knowledge and experience during my studies.
4. My deepest gratitude to my beloved parents, Amirul Iksan and Sutrisnik, thank you for their endless love, prayers, encouragement, and sacrifices, as well as their meaningful support in every step of my journey.
5. My beloved sibling, Yusuf A Ariwibowo, who always supports me in completing this thesis.
6. All of my dearest friends, thank you for being a place to share stories, motivation, and always cheering me up during difficult times.
7. Lastly, I would like to thank myself for surviving, fighting, and not giving up during my college years.

Finally, although this thesis has weaknesses and imperfections, it is open to feedback and suggestions for future improvement. I hope this thesis can be

useful for literary criticism studies, especially in the field of motherhood studies.

Malang, June 24th, 2025

The Researcher,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Indri', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Indri Prameswari Zahro

ABSTRACT

Zahro, Indri Prameswari. (2025). *The Portrayal of Motherhood as Institution by The Main Character in Meaghan O'Connell's And Now We Have Everything*. Undergraduate Thesis. Department of English Literature, Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang.

Advisor: Agung Wiranata Kusuma, MA.

Key words: Motherhood as Institution, Social Expectation, Feminism

Motherhood as an institution refers to the social and cultural systems that shape, regulate, and control women's roles and experiences as mothers (Rich, 1976). This institution not only creates ideal expectations about motherhood, but also pressures women to conform to certain standards regarding behavior, responsibilities, and sacrifice. This study aims to reveal the forms of motherhood as an institution and the effects on the main character in Meaghan O'Connell's *And Now We Have Everything* using Adrienne Rich's theory of motherhood in her book *Of Woman Born*. Rich says that motherhood isn't just a biological or emotional experience, but it's also shaped by patriarchal social and cultural norms that suppress women. The results of the study show that the forms of motherhood as an institution experienced by the main character include social expectations, control over the body and reproduction, physical experiences, and power in the family structure. All of these affect the main character emotionally, physically, socially, and psychologically. Through honest and critical portrayals, Meaghan shows how motherhood as an institution can be burdensome, but also a place for self-reflection and growth.

ABSTRAK

Zahro, Indri Prameswari. (2025). *Penggambaran Motherhood Sebagai Institusi Pada Karakter Utama Dalam And Now We Have Everything karya Meaghan O'Connell* Tesis Sarjana. Jurusan Sastra Inggris, Fakultas Humaniora. Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang.

Advisor: Agung Wiranata Kusuma, MA.

Kata Kunci: Keibuan Sebagai Institusi, Ekspektasi Sosial, Feminisme

Motherhood as institution merujuk pada sistem sosial dan budaya yang membentuk, mengatur, dan mengontrol peran serta pengalaman perempuan sebagai ibu (Rich, 1976). Institusi ini tidak hanya menciptakan ekspektasi-ekspektasi ideal tentang menjadi ibu, tetapi juga menekan perempuan untuk mematuhi standar tertentu terkait perilaku, tanggung jawab, dan pengorbanan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengungkap bentuk-bentuk motherhood as institution serta pengaruhnya terhadap karakter utama dalam *And Now We Have Everything* karya Meaghan O'Connell dengan menggunakan teori motherhood yang dikemukakan oleh Adrienne Rich dalam bukunya *Of Woman Born*. Rich menyatakan bahwa institusi keibuan bukan hanya pengalaman biologis atau emosional, tetapi juga dibentuk oleh norma sosial dan budaya patriarkal yang menekan perempuan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa bentuk motherhood as institution yang dialami karakter utama meliputi social expectation, control over body and reproduction, pengalaman fisik, serta power in the family structure. Semua ini memengaruhi karakter utama secara emosional, fisik, sosial, dan psikologis. Melalui penggambaran yang jujur dan kritis, Meaghan memperlihatkan bagaimana keibuan sebagai institusi dapat membebani, namun juga menjadi ruang untuk refleksi diri dan pertumbuhan.

المستخلص

زهرو، إندري براميسواري. (2025). تصوير الأمومة كمؤسسة من قبل الشخصية الرئيسية في رواية "And Now We Have Everything" لميغان أوكونيل. أطروحة جامعية. قسم الأدب الإنجليزي، كلية العلوم الإنسانية، جامعة مولانا مالك إبراهيم الإسلامية، مالانج. المشرف: أغونغ ويراناتا كوسوما، ماجستير.

الكلمات الرئيسية: الأمومة كمؤسسة، التوقعات الاجتماعية، النسوية

الأمومة كمؤسسة تشير إلى النظام الاجتماعي والثقافي الذي يشكل ويحكم ويضبط دور وتجربة المرأة كأم (ريتش، 1976). هذه المؤسسة لا تقتصر على خلق توقعات مثالية حول دور الأمومة، بل تفرض على النساء الامتثال لمعايير معينة تتعلق بالسلوك والمسؤولية والتضحية. تهدف And Now We Have Everything هذه الدراسة إلى الكشف عن أشكال الأمومة كمؤسسة وتأثيرها على الشخصية الرئيسية في رواية Of Woman Born. لميغان أوكونيل باستخدام نظرية الأمومة التي طرحتها أديان ريتش في كتابها Everything. تقول ريتش إن مؤسسة الأمومة ليست مجرد تجربة بيولوجية أو عاطفية، بل هي أيضًا نتاج المعايير الاجتماعية والثقافية الأبوية التي تضغط على النساء. أظهرت نتائج البحث أن أشكال الأمومة كمؤسسة التي تعيشها الشخصية الرئيسية تشمل التوقعات الاجتماعية، والسيطرة على الجسد والإنجاب، والتجارب الجسدية، والسلطة في هيكل الأسرة. كل هذه العوامل تؤثر على الشخصية الرئيسية عاطفيًا وجسديًا واجتماعيًا ونفسيًا. من خلال كيف أن الأمومة كمؤسسة يمكن أن تكون عبئًا، ولكنها أيضًا مساحة للتفكير الذاتي والنمو Meaghan تصوير صادق ونقدي، تظهر

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter contains the background of the study, the problem of the study, significance of the study, scope and limitations, and definitions of key terms. All of the subchapters above will be explained in the following part.

A. Background of the Study

One of the most powerful acts performed by women is being a mother. Being a mother is associated with things like sacrifice, responsibility, and supporting positive things for the child's development; such things refer to the term of motherhood (O'Reilly, 2010, p. 571). Motherhood is one of the most important aspects of human life because it reflects the complexity of human reality. Many authors of literary works often raise the theme of motherhood, and it is often described as a personal journey that requires sacrifice and a deep understanding of the dynamics of family relationships. Literature provides a space to explore various aspects of motherhood, such as anxiety, fear of responsibility, and the joy of motherhood. In addition, with the complexity of motherhood, motherhood in literature also creates space for a deeper understanding of this important aspect of humanity.

Many feminist scholars have discussed motherhood, one of these scholars is Adrienne Rich. Adrienne Rich is a poet and feminist from the United States whose works partly highlight women, including motherhood. Rich (1976)

states in her book *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution* motherhood is a patriarchal institution that serves to control and regulate women's bodies and experiences, besides that, Rich suggests two categories of motherhood in her book: motherhood as experience and motherhood as institution. Motherhood as experience is an act of individual approach to the experience of being a mother. Meanwhile, motherhood as an institution describes the role imposed by patriarchal social norms and expectations (p. 13). Basically, motherhood is not simply a biological function, but also reflects a cultural practice that is full of meaning and social responsibility (Hallstein, Reilly, & Giles, 2020).

Motherhood has become a complex issue, especially in feminism. Motherhood is not only seen as a biological function, but also as an institution used to control and restrict women. Therefore, many feminists see the importance of criticizing the ideal image of mothers so that women have the freedom to choose and define their own roles as mothers. The term motherhood began to be used in the late 19th century and discusses the condition or experience of being a mother. However, it is more filled with patriarchy that prioritizes social order with expectations of being a perfect mother rather than being filled with things about equality and freedom. Rich (1976) in her book states that motherhood as an institution is not identical to caring for children but a general view that makes all of this closely related and can function as a woman's nature so that it can help create a hierarchy of power.

From a feminist perspective, Motherhood as an Institution reflects how society views women as mothers and limits their rights in fulfilling motherhood

roles. This is reflected in the expectations that place women in the role of motherhood and make it difficult for them to fulfill the role of motherhood effectively. Being a mother in a society that is still dominated by patriarchal pressures and gender norms is not easy, many people still have these expectations of women who become mothers, such as the expectation of being the perfect mother who is only at home and taking care of children without giving space for women to be free to do anything (Rich, 1976, p. 225). This is not something natural but has become a social order that makes power hierarchies are structured based on gender. Therefore, the institution of motherhood must be destroyed in order to create freedom.

Related to the explanation above, there is one novel that also discusses motherhood with the social pressure of society experienced by the main character in a novel published in April 2018 with the title *And Now We Have Everything* by Meaghan O'Connell. This novel is a memoir that tells the story of the author's experience as a mother. The novel describes how the main character feels unprepared to be a mother, she begins to feel anxious during her pregnancy, and she also has to face new challenges and struggles to adjust to her new role. In addition, the novel says there is a lot of societal pressure and expectations on the main character to be the perfect mother and the lack of support given to the main character as a mother.

Overall, however, the novel portrays a woman's journey in facing the challenges of motherhood that are full of patriarchal pressures and gender expectations from society and her surroundings. The novel can be viewed from a

feminist perspective as it discusses important things in life and shows how these social pressures make it difficult for women to be perfect mothers. Therefore, using Adrienne Rich's theory of motherhood, the main focus of this research is how motherhood is portrayed in this novel. The portrayals of motherhood can be found in the social domination that affects the main character's life.

Regarding the focus of discussion in this study, there are several previous studies related to the topic of motherhood. The first researcher is Putri (2016), her research focuses on analyzing the character Gauri by trying to redefining motherhood issue in the novel *The Lowland* by Jhumpa Lahiri. The researcher used Suzan Lewis's motherhood theory. This study has three results. First, an Indian mother named Gauri feels that her current situation is an obstacle for her to fulfill her role as a mother. She experiences pressure from society, which has an idealized view of the perfect mother. Secondly, the stereotypes about motherhood in Indian culture that portray mothers as caring, wise, and sacrificial make it difficult for her to fulfill these expectations. Thirdly, Gauri tries to fight against this idealistic view by creating a new understanding of what motherhood means. She gives herself freedom and tries to change her perspective by opening herself to new things.

Then, Amalia's (2007) research focuses on the concept of motherhood and the factors that influence the concept of motherhood in the novel *Beloved* by Toni Morrison by using the theory of motherhood and the perspective of feminism to be more effective in analyzing female characters. From the study, researcher found many concepts of motherhood that black slave mothers have

reflected in their struggle to protect their children from slavery in Africa. In addition, there are forms of slavery in Africa that can influence the concept of motherhood, which is revealed by slave mothers who protect their children from discrimination, violence, and the slave trade. All of these forms have been the main focus of this research.

Ayu (2017) in her research focuses on revealing motherhood in the novel *Room* by using Adrienne Rich's motherhood theory. The results of this study show that there are two categories of motherhood, motherhood as an institution, which shows the relationship between cultural goals and social goals, and motherhood as experience, which shows the strong instincts of a mother towards her child. Next, Ruf (2020) in his research, he wanted to analyze the depiction of motherhood and also identify three themes of motherhood contained in the TV series entitled *Game of Thrones*, which are motherhood as an obligation, motherhood as a status, and ideal motherhood. The result is that the depiction of motherhood has many critical aspects to construction and culture.

Next is Phil & Saputri (2017), focusing on two things to be analyzed in the novel *Divergent*, namely analysis based on structural elements and analyzing motherhood with feminism theory. This research shows that the character Tris mother's fights for the possibility to develop her potential in accordance with her characteristics, so that in her struggle, Tris mother's shows a redefinition of female stereotypes in her motherhood characteristics.

Then Mufidah & Hartanto (2021) in their research focused on the representation of motherhood in the novel *Silsilah Duka* on three women in

becoming a mother, which can be a devastating event by using patriarchal motherhood theory by Andrea O'Reilly. The results of this study stated that patriarchal motherhood is culturally and socially constructed. Then Sindhu & Frederick's (2020) research focuses on the representation of the plight of African women who struggle against patriarchal family structures and against unfair gender stereotypes in contemporary Africa by using motherhood theory. The results of this study show that after reaching the few satisfying things she has created, Nnu ego chooses silence and refuses to answer the prayers of the women who ask her. Nnu ego realizes that motherhood does not always bring happiness, but women have the right to choose their fate.

Other previous study is Bhatt (2021), his research focuses on the representation of sociocultural constructions that build the concept of motherhood. This research shows how black women who embraced motherhood were able to transform notions of the role at the intersection of race in history. The evolution of the role of black mothers who have been oppressed and encouraged them to be able to fight against racism.

Putri (2018) in her research focuses on motherhood as an experience against motherhood as an institution by using a social feminist perspective. In her research, it is concluded that although the main character is not always at home, she still takes good care of her child and she also improves her family's economy well. Then the last is Kumar (2017) whose research focuses on the depiction of motherhood in the novel *Mother of 1084* where motherhood has been redefined by highlighting "mother's selfhood". This research also seeks to see how weak

women become strong women and inspire fellow women who are trapped in the same situation.

From some of the previous studies above with this research, it can be concluded that there are differences with this research. What distinguishes this research from previous research is that this research focuses on the portrayal of motherhood as an institution and the effects on the main character in the novel using the theory of motherhood by Adrienne Rich. Meanwhile, previous studies have discussed the experience of motherhood and the concept of motherhood. In addition, this study aims to provide updates to existing research and also to provide and increase knowledge for readers about the portrayal of motherhood, which is still filled with patriarchal pressures and gender expectations. The use of Rich's theory really helps optimize this research and also strengthens the analysis to be more accurate.

A. Problem of the Study

Related on the focus of the issue that has been discussed in the background of the study, the researcher can formulate the research question below:

1. What are the forms of motherhood as an institution in Meaghan O'Connell's *And Now We Have Everything*?
2. The effects of motherhood as institution on the main character in Meaghan O'Connell's *And Now We Have Everything*.

B. Significance of the Study

This research is expected to provide theoretical and practical benefits. Theoretically, this research is expected to provide benefits to developing the portrayal of motherhood in the novel *And Now We Have Everything*. In addition, this research also aims to expand knowledge in literary studies. Practically, the researcher hopes that this research can be useful for readers and can be used as a reference for readers who are interested in the study of motherhood and feminism, which is still little known. It is hoped that researcher will expand their analysis of motherhood, especially motherhood as an institution, using a feminist perspective. The study of motherhood can also be a criticism of the patriarchal mindset that many people still believe in and, at the same time, a reminder of the importance of gender equality in everyday life.

C. Scope and Limitation

For the research to be more focused and not widespread, the researcher will concentrate on the form of motherhood as an institution depicted in the novel and the effects of motherhood as institution on the main character in Meaghan O'Connell's *And Now We Have Everything*. In addition, the researcher will use Adrienne Rich's theory of motherhood to support the identification of the form of motherhood depicted in the main character.

D. Definition of Key Terms

1. **Motherhood:** Motherhood is both a personal experience that a woman has as a mother and an institution of motherhood that limits a mother to determine her life (Rich, 1976).

2. **Motherhood as Institution:** Social construct that sets certain standards and expectations for women who become mothers, who sacrifice everything to fulfill these patriarchal expectations (Rich, 1976).

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter contains a review of literature related to the discussion of this research. This chapter would explain feminism as an approach and motherhood as the main theory in this research.

A. Feminism Approach in Literary Criticism

Feminism is a movement that fights for women's rights or equality. Feminism was born from the realization that women experience oppression in the patriarchal system, both in the public and private domains. In this case, Maggie Humm (1990) states that feminism is a form of politics that seeks to change the unequal power relations between men and women in society. There are many gender inequalities between men and women. It happens because, men's interests are always prioritized over women's interests. Such is the case in literary works. Many literary works tend to focus on male characters and portray women as objects or ornaments in the story. This shows that there are still many views that ignore the role of women as actors or main characters in the story. The feminist movement aims to improve the situation of women to end male domination and oppression of women so that women can obtain their rights in education, social, and other fields. Therefore, feminism can be expressed as a movement and effort to fight for equality in the position of women and men in a patriarchal society (Suwastini, 2013).

The feminist approach in literary studies is often known as feminist literary criticism. This feminist literary criticism always wants equal gender roles.

In literary works, gender roles are often a theme related to women. In addition, gender roles are also often analyzed and criticized for creating inequality and discrimination against women (Showalter, 1985). Sugihastuti (2002) states that feminism is a movement that has similarities in defending all interests and rights for women and men in politics, economics, and education. Feminism itself considers the cause of women being treated unfairly is patriarchal domination. Women are subjected to abuses such as rape, violence, and other physical activities. This is the cause of the feminist movement that wants to protect women from all acts of violence and inequality (Roberts, 2017, p. 6).

The feminist movement is divided into three main waves, each of which took place in a different historical period (Scholz, 2010). The first wave emerged in the late 19th to early 20th century, with the main focus on women's struggle for political, property and civil rights. This wave was marked by the publication of Mary Wollstonecraft's *The Vindication of the Rights of Woman* in 1792. At this time, women faced the reality of living in a subordinate position and were limited by the legal system and social norms. This is aligned with Simone de Beauvoir's view that women are positioned as second-class beings (Beauvoir, 2011).

This was followed by a second wave that began in the 1960s and continued until the 1980s. This wave is known as the era of women's liberation. In addition, this wave also involved the struggle to overcome gender discrimination and patriarchy that still existed in society. According to Thornham (2006), a strong desire to formulate a theory that can encompass all feminist

struggles is one of the characteristics of second-wave feminism (Suwastini, 2013, p. 202). In this case, the only solution to change conditions and free women from discrimination and oppression is to make them realize that they have been oppressed in a patriarchal society.

Finally, the third wave, which began in the early 1980s and 1990s, was characterized by an increasingly diverse understanding of the feminist movement. This wave is known as global, postmodern, and intersectional feminism. It emerged as a response to the second wave. Third-wave feminists were influenced by postmodernist philosophers of the late 20th century. As such, they rejected all unitary and essentialist concepts of self-identity in favor of radical multiplicity, which ended up producing complex new articulations of feminism.

From the explanation above, it can be concluded that the three waves of feminism have important contributions to the feminist movement as a whole and it will continue to develop and adapt to social and cultural changes that occur in society. In this case, it is hoped that through all the analysis and theory, feminist literary criticism can be applied in a real way. Endraswara (2008) states that this theory aims to reveal literary works written by female authors in the past and present, with various pressures on female characters in literary works that are mostly written by male authors and another aim is to fight for gender equality and overcome the injustices that still occur in society.

B. Motherhood by Adrienne Rich

Motherhood is a highly complex institutional experience that is closely related to the role of women in a patriarchal society. Rich (1976) in her book *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Institution and Motherhood as Experience* states that motherhood has two overlapping meanings: Firstly, the potential relationship between a woman and her reproductive capacity and children in which women have the power in their biological potential to give birth and nurture human life, and secondly the institutional meaning that aims to ensure that this potential and all women remain under male control. Rich (1976) criticizes social norms that limit women to motherhood and ignore the importance of mothers' personal and emotional experiences. She also highlights social perspectives that place mothers in a position of oppression by social and cultural expectations, which keep women in their role as caregivers of children. In Rich's thought, she was able to open women's consciousness to the patriarchal institutions that were created to confine women to the domestic sphere.

If women have full control over their own bodies, then they will be able to create a life that truly reflects their thoughts and perspectives, including in terms of sexuality, power, and motherhood and create new meanings that come from their own experiences and understandings (Rich, 1976, p. 285). Motherhood itself is not a natural need of women, but a pressure created by patriarchal society as a way to keep women trapped in an endless cycle of devotion and sacrifice. Rich (1976, p. 13) further states:

"We know far more about how, under patriarchy, female possibility has been literally massacred on the site of motherhood. Most women in history have become mothers without choice, and an even greater number have lost their lives bringing life into the world."

In this case, motherhood is not easy and can lead to huge sacrifices and suffering for women. Rich, in her book, identifies two categories of the portrayal of motherhood, motherhood as institution will be the main focus of this study:

1. Motherhood as Institution

According to Rich (1976) motherhood as institution is an institution related to the role of women in a patriarchal society and all women must be under the control of men. The pressure of society's expectations of a mother to be a perfect mother and mothers who do not fulfill these expectations are considered as incompetent mothers. Rich (1976) states that "the institution of motherhood is not only synonymous with giving birth and caring for children, only the common view that it is closely related and functions as the nature of the female experience" (p. 42). Institutional motherhood constrains women, in which women are enslaved and victimized because of their bodies and reproduction. Therefore, the institution of motherhood must be destroyed in order to be free from this situation.

The institutionalization of motherhood not only reflects individual experiences of motherhood but is a concept that social norms and societal structures have regulated. A woman's entire life as a mother is completely controlled so that she cannot be free in determining her own life. This is related

because motherhood status directly impacts women's lives, regardless of whether they become mothers or not. Therefore, women who become mothers feel pressured by the concept of the perfect mother, so they give their entire lives to others and do not have the freedom to be themselves (O'Reilly, 2004, p. 7). This can affect the identity and experience of new mothers and create a lot of pressure. If in a world where women are the leaders of their own bodies, women will create a new life that can sustain their thinking as well as sexuality, power, and motherhood, which will develop new meanings with their own thinking (Rich, 1976, p. 285).

From the perspective of feminism, Motherhood as Institution reflects the way society views women as mothers and limits their rights in fulfilling their maternal roles. This is reflected in social expectations that place a mother to be the perfect mother without getting the proper support and this makes it difficult for them to fulfill the role of mother effectively. The destruction of the institution of motherhood does not mean to abolish motherhood, but to release women from the decision to be able to choose freely for their struggles and imaginations (Rich, 1976, p.280). Therefore, Rich emphasizes the importance of critically understanding Motherhood as Institution and changing social and cultural expectations that limit women in motherhood. There are three forms of motherhood as institution that will be discussed in this research:

a. Social Expectation

This social expectation of motherhood as an institution is an expectation from society that has been determined by the social order towards the role of mothers. Social expectations place motherhood with the concept of the perfect mother, such as mothers who must be good at multitasking, balance various responsibilities, and must put the needs or welfare of their children and put their personal needs aside. These expectations leave many mothers feeling pressured and unable to make free choices in their lives (O'Reilly, 2004, p. 7). Society often judges mothers' ability to comply with societal standards. Social expectations can be empowering or limiting, they are sometimes necessary to demonstrate the importance of motherhood, but if they are too rigid, they can inhibit individual growth in mothers.

b. Control Over Body and Reproduction

This control over the body and reproduction has become a significant aspect of motherhood as an institution. Women who enter the role of mother often face pressure to control their bodies and reproduction in accordance with the existing social order, one example is after pregnancy, women must be wise to take care of their bodies to fit the ideal physical image. This physical appearance and body size are often a measure of society's success in carrying out the role of motherhood. Rich (1976) states, "In history, many women have been forced to become

mothers without choice, and many have lost their lives in childbirth. This is because women are controlled by controlling our bodies." Rich shows that control over women's bodies, particularly their reproductive functions, is a primary form of control over women as a whole. In short, motherhood as an institution is not merely a biological experience, but a means of controlling women, often carried out without consideration for their own choices and safety.

c. Physical Experience

The physical experience of motherhood refers to all forms of physical changes and burdens experienced by women during and after childbirth, including pain during childbirth, physical changes, physical attachment during breastfeeding, and chronic physical fatigue due to caregiving. Rich in *Of Woman Born* emphasizes that the biological experience of becoming a mother, including all the pain and physical labor that accompany it, has been appropriated by patriarchal institutions that erase women's control over their own bodies. The mother's body is seen as a reproductive tool, not as a body with rights, boundaries, or personal needs. In this context, women's physical experiences are not neutral or purely natural, which are experiences formed by external power, which historically has deprived women of knowledge and autonomy over their own bodies.

d. Power in the Family Structure

The power in motherhood as an institution creates a concept central to the family structure. Essentially, the family structure creates a hierarchy that places the mother's role as the lowest authority of the father, for example, the distribution of labour in the household and any decision-making that could risk generating inequality. As an institution, motherhood often assigns certain roles to mothers, and this can create a dynamic where women's decisions are always questioned or even ignored. This limitation in power can make women feel unable to assert their will and can also create inequalities in family relationships. It is important to reject restrictive norms and create equality so that power within the family structure is more balanced.

2. Motherhood as Experience

According to Rich (1976), motherhood as experience is the personal and emotional experience of a mother, including the experience of pregnancy, childbirth, and caring for children. In this case, mothers need to empower themselves so that they have the courage to expand their boundaries and break out of the institution of motherhood. In her book, Rich shows that the experience of motherhood differs greatly from one mother to another, depending on their individual and social situations. She also shows that the experience of motherhood is not always positive, but can be full of challenges and difficulties. The strong psychological bond between mother and child is the basis for

teaching and sharing experiences. Indeed, women are powerful in their biological potential such as giving birth and nurturing human life (Rich, 1976). But, this power is controlled by men so that women are oppressed. Therefore, Rich emphasized the importance of understanding Motherhood as Experience to show the importance of appreciating the sacrifices and supporting mothers in fulfilling their roles with proper support.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHOD

In this chapter, the researcher would explain the methods that would be used in this research. The method that would be explained in this chapter consists of research design, data source, data collection, and data analysis. Therefore, readers can find out the process conducted in this research.

A. Research Design

This research would use the literary criticism method to analyze what forms are portrayed in the novel *And Now We Have Everything* and the effects of motherhood as institution on the main character in becoming a mother. According to Fard (2016), the literary criticism method is a practical application of literary theory to facilitate research in analyzing and understanding literary works. This method has become the main approach to understanding literary works critically and deeply. This research would use the theory of motherhood proposed by Adrienne Rich (1976) through a feminist approach. The use of this theory is expected to direct this research to focus more on the main discussion in this study.

B. Data Source

The novel *And Now We Have Everything* by Meaghan O'Connell is the main data source in this research. The novel was published in April 2018 with a total of 163 pages and distributed in the New York Times Book. This novel is still relatively new and only a few have researched it, especially on the topic of motherhood. This research would focus on the categories depicted in the main

character and the effects of motherhood as institution on the main character, besides that this research would use literary criticism studies with the theory of motherhood through a feminist approach.

C. Data Collection

In analyzing this study, researcher took data from the novel *And Now We Have Everything* by Meaghan O'Connell to find out what forms of motherhood as institution are depicted in the main character and the effects of motherhood as institution on the main character. Data collection that would be carried out in this study includes three stages, as follows:

1. The researcher reads the novel in order for the researcher to know the main character's storyline that would be discussed in this study and this is as evidence or answers that refer to the research problem.
2. The researcher highlights and collects important data such as dialog between characters, sentences, and words related to the topic of this research.
3. The researcher analyzed the data with some data that has been collected through reading and highlighting the novel to answer the research problem.

D. Data Analysis

After collecting the data, the next step in the research is to classifying the data. There are several steps are taken by the researcher in classifying the data. Researchers classified data related to the motherhood as institution by using notes to make it easier to research. After that, the researcher analyzed the data using

Adrienne Rich's motherhood theory. Finally, the researcher determines and provides conclusions based on what has been found in the research and also answers all the research questions.

CHAPTER IV

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

This chapter of the study contains the answer of the research problems in the first chapter, those are 1) what are the forms of motherhood as an institution in Meaghan O'Connell's *And Now We Have Everything*, and 2) the effects of motherhood as institution on the main character in Meaghan O'Connell's *And Now We Have Everything*.

A. Motherhood as Institution in Meaghan O'Connell's *And Now We Have Everything*

And Now We Have Everything by Meaghan O'Connell describes her emotional, physical, and psychological journey as a first-time mother with an unplanned pregnancy and emotional unpreparedness. The novel portrays various forms of motherhood as an institution that can influence the main character in becoming a mother.

This story aligns with Adrienne Rich's theory of motherhood as an institution. In short, motherhood as an institution is a concept of motherhood shaped by social norms to control women's roles as mothers. According to Adrienne Rich (1976), motherhood as an institution is a social construct that sets certain standards and expectations for women who become mothers, who sacrifice everything to fulfill these patriarchal expectations. In the novel *And Now We Have Everything* (2018) by Meaghan O'Connell, there are characters who experience various forms of pressure through motherhood as an institution, such as emotional pressure and demands to be the perfect mother. In the novel, there

are four forms of motherhood as an institution, namely social expectations, control over body and reproduction, physical experience, and power in the family structure, all of which have been discussed by Rich (1976) in her theory.

1. Social Expectation

Social expectations refer to a set of values, norms, and standards constructed by society regarding how individuals should act, think, and feel in accordance with the roles they play. In *And Now We Have Everything* (2018), the main character shows how social expectations of motherhood create psychological pressure and inner conflict for her. She experiences pressure and even alienation because she has to deal with what she feels and what she is supposed to feel according to society. To see the form of social expectations experienced by the main character, here are some of the expectations felt by the main character in her experience of becoming a mother.

i. Expectations of Physical Appearance

One of the expectations experienced by the main character is physical appearance. Motherhood as an institution in patriarchal society constructs an image of the ideal mother who is not only capable of caring for children and managing the household, but also has to maintain her physical appearance according to these standards. It shows that physical appearance expectations are part of how the institution of motherhood regulates and evaluates women's bodies. In *And Now We Have Everything* (2018), the main character named Meaghan

experiences physical appearance expectations, which we can see in the quote below.

“It’s fucking eighteen dollars a month!” I said. “Fuck you, patriarchy!” We laughed, darkly. I’d finally managed to jettison my lifelong desire to lose ten pounds. All it took was getting pregnant. Unfortunately, that also meant giving birth and raising a child, trading one set of impossible societal expectations for another. (O’Connell, 2018)

In this data, it is clear that the main character is faced with pressure regarding her physical appearance. This can be seen in how the main character (Meaghan) experiences pressure regarding her weight. Although there is no explicit prohibition on the ideal body, this pressure is present in the form of indirect power through patriarchal social and cultural norms. The main character's desire to lose weight reflects long-standing beauty standards in society, where women are expected to maintain a slim and controlled physique. Before pregnancy, Meaghan felt bound by an idealized standard that encouraged women to always lose weight, and after becoming a mother, the pressure became a demand to live the perfect motherhood role, this is a form of unrealistic social expectation.

Rich (1976) argues that motherhood as institution not only regulates women's biological functions of giving birth and raising children but also enforces forms of social discipline on women's bodies. In the quote *“trading one set of impossible societal expectations for another,”* Meaghan explains that before becoming a mother, she wanted to lose weight to fit beauty standards. After becoming a mother, she still felt pressure, but it was no longer about being thin, it was about having a body that could breastfeed and care for her child. This

demonstrates that motherhood does not stand alone as a biological or instinctive experience but has been formed and influenced by the patriarchal values prevalent in society.

ii. Emotional Expectations

The second form of expectation experienced by the main character in *And Now We Have Everything* is emotional expectation. Emotional expectation in Motherhood as institution refers to social pressure that demands mothers to show certain emotional states, such as happiness, gratitude, and calmness, regardless of their actual emotional state. Rich (1976) highlights that motherhood as an institution suppresses the complexity of women's emotions by replacing them with idealistic narratives about boundless maternal love. As in *And Now We Have Everything* (2018), the main character experiences emotional expectations, where she is required to always be happy and hide her exhaustion and even stress in order to maintain the image of a “perfect” mother.

The first depiction of this issue can be seen in *And Now We Have Everything* (2018) when Meaghan experiences emotional pressure when meeting her friend, which can be seen in the following data:

“Well, you seem like you are doing great, considering,” Lindsay said to me and I felt something in me rise up.” “Oh, I dunno,” I said, but I was grinning. This was all I wanted to hear. I wanted us to seem happy to them, as ridiculous as it was, like we were coping well. I didn’t want my friends to walk out of our house and back onto the sidewalk and cringe at each other. I didn’t want them to lie in bed that night feeling grateful it was me and not them.” (O’Connell, 2018)

In this data, it illustrates the pressure Meaghan feels to look good as a new mother in the eyes of others, even though the reality is stressful and exhausting.

“Well, you seem like you are doing great, considering,” From the quote, her friend says something that sounds like a compliment, but the compliment causes an emotional response in Meaghan. It can also be seen that Meaghan is trying to present a version of motherhood that fits social expectations. She wants validation from her friends that she looks happy and able to cope with the challenges of being a new mother even though the reality is not that simple. Meaghan wants her friends not to feel pity or gratitude because they are not in her position and this shows that there is competition or shame that has been formed by the society.

Rich (1976) argues that in a patriarchal system, women, especially after becoming mothers, are not only expected to function biologically, but also to fulfill emotional standards set by society. Mothers are always forced to be happy and affectionate, even though the reality is often filled with anger, exhaustion, and frustration. This can be seen in the quote, *“I wanted us to seem happy to them, as ridiculous as it was, like we were coping well. I didn't want my friends to walk out of our house and back onto the sidewalk and cringe at each other. I didn't want them to lie in bed that night feeling grateful it was me and not them.”* What Meaghan wanted was not that she was actually ‘fine,’ but that others believed she was. Meaghan tried to hide her emotions so that her friends would not judge her as a failure as a mother. This shows that women are encouraged to cover up or even ignore their emotional difficulties in order to fulfill expectations of how they should feel as mothers.

The next emotional expectation Meaghan experienced is when she struggled with internal and external expectations about how she should experience motherhood, as in the data below.

I didn't want to simply endure, I wanted to enjoy the experience, to come out the other side of the gauntlet stronger, wiser, and—defying reason—more beautiful. I saw my ability to be present as a test of my character or of my bona fides as a mother: Was I going to be happy, or was I going to flail? Was motherhood going to make everything in my life better, make me better, or was it going to ruin everything? (O'Connell, 2018)

In this data, Meaghan expresses her hope that she will not only to survive the experience of motherhood, but she wants to enjoy it, and even wants to come out of the process stronger and wiser. The questions she asks herself reflect the dilemma between the hope that motherhood will fix everything or that it will destroy her life. These hopes are not just personal desires, but a reflection of social pressure that demands mothers to experience motherhood with feelings of happiness. “*Was I going to be happy, or was I going to flail?*” clarifies the emotional dilemma that comes from society's demands for an ideal image of a mother. Rich (1976) reveals that these emotional standards limit women's experiences, as they feel guilty or ashamed when they are unable to fulfill the ideal image of a mother. Rich also highlights that society often places unrealistic expectations on women, which in turn pressures women to feel guilty if they do not experience the expected positive changes.

The last emotional expectation experienced by Meaghan was when she felt the emotional complexity of being a mother. She felt deep love but, on the other hand, she also felt frustration, as seen in the data below.

One day he will grow up and move away from us and we will miss him constantly. I'm still mad when he wakes me up with his screaming each morning. I still need time and space away from him, to think and read and work and feel like a person, even though I know that one day I will long for nothing but to hold him again (O'Connell, 2018)

In this data, it shows that Meaghan feels an inner conflict between love and exhaustion that she feels as a mother. She realizes that her child will grow up and those moments of togetherness will be memories that she will miss. On the other hand, she feels bored and frustrated when her child keeps waking her up every morning and also she desperately needs space to think, read, work, and be herself. This is something that is not in line with the ideal image of a mother who is always emotionally and physically present for her child. This statement shows how the main character is trapped in social expectations that encourage women to erase their personal identity and fully immerse themselves in the role of motherhood. This reflects how motherhood as an institution, as criticized by Rich, limits women's expression of emotional honesty and forces them to constantly compare their personal feelings with idealistic social standards.

iii. Expectations of Domestic Roles

Expectations of domestic roles refer to social demands that expect mothers to automatically take full responsibility for housework and childcare. Rich (1976) states that these expectations are part of how motherhood as an institution ties women to the private domain, making it difficult for them to develop themselves outside the home. This issue is experienced by Meaghan in *And Now We Have Everything* (2018), which describes how she feels trapped

between her desire to maintain her personal identity and social demands to prioritize household and family matters, as seen in the data below.

I felt as hungry for the minutiae of their circumscribed days as they were but I was also filled with self-loathing for caring at all. We sounded so desperate, we moms. So boring. Can you believe this is what our lives have been reduced to? I wanted to say. Remember when we “were real people? Remember feeling in charge of your life? (O’Connell, 2018)

In this data, Meaghan experiences conflict where she feels trapped in the monotonous motherhood routine and also feels like she is losing her personal identity. The quote “*Remember when we were real people? Remember feeling in charge of your life?*” reflects that she misses her life before becoming a mother, where she felt she had control over herself. There is a sense of loss and dissatisfaction at not being able to want something outside of that role. Meaghan feels sick of her life only revolving around small household matters. Thus, the expectations of domestic roles in motherhood as an institution not only limit women's physical movement but also their psychological freedom.

Rich (1976) discusses how the institution of motherhood creates expectations that women must find their identity through their role as mothers. But in reality, women actually feel like they've lost their personal identity. Through Meaghan's experience in the quote above, it can be seen how motherhood as an institution, as criticized by Rich, forms a social understanding of motherhood, so that women are encouraged to measure their self-worth based on how well they adapt to these domestic ideals.

2. Control Over Body and Reproduction

Control over the body and reproduction refers to how women's bodies and reproductive decisions, such as pregnancy, childbirth, and breastfeeding, are often subject to external influences or control, whether in the form of social, medical, or family pressure. Rich (1976) emphasizes that motherhood as an institution has distanced women from autonomy over their own bodies. In *And Now We Have Everything* (2018), the main character's experiences show the tension between personal desires and external pressures on the body and reproduction. Therefore, the following section will discuss the main character's experiences of various forms of control she experiences in becoming a mother.

i. Control Over Pregnancy Decisions

Control over pregnancy decisions refers to the extent to which women have autonomy to decide whether to continue or terminate a pregnancy without pressure from their partner, family, or restrictive social norms. Rich (1976) states that motherhood institutions not only regulate how women become mothers, but also how they decide to become mothers. In patriarchal systems, these decisions are often not based on women's personal desires, but on external expectations that demand women to be rational. This can be seen in the main character in *And Now We Have Everything* (2018), who experiences control over her pregnancy, which can be seen in the data below.

I told myself that I was willing to get an abortion for him. Of course I was. Right? That's what a reasonable person would say. I don't want to have a baby with you if you don't want one. I wanted to have a baby with him, and I wanted him to want the same. If he didn't want it, I wanted him to convince me that I didn't either. I wanted to be swayed. I didn't want to have to argue on behalf of my

desire. "We know we want a kid eventually," he said. "In a couple of years we can have one." "But isn't that kind of dumb? To be like, Well, we want you but not yet. Sorry, the timing is off. I mean, isn't this bigger than that?" "Come on. We can have this baby again in a couple of years." "This baby?" My voice broke. He was a stranger to me now, my mortal enemy with pesticide-free produce slung over his shoulder. How had I ever loved him at all?" (O'Connell, 2018)

In this data, it shows how control over pregnancy decisions is not only influenced by personal desires, but also by agreement, expectations, and even the couple's uncertainty. Meaghan had a major dilemma regarding the decision to continue the pregnancy or have an abortion. Rich (1976) states that motherhood institutions often *"deprive women of their right to their own bodies"* by making reproductive decisions an area of external control. The decision is highly personal but can be significantly influenced by her partner's unwillingness. Her partner doesn't feel ready to have a child and Meaghan wants to have a child if her partner does. The quote *"I told myself that I was willing to get an abortion for him."* indicates that if they both don't want it, she feels ungrounded and doesn't even want to fight for her own wishes.

Meaghan feels powerless in making decisions about her own body and future. Although she wants to keep the pregnancy, she holds back and hopes that her partner will convince her not to. *"Come on. We can have this baby again in a couple of years."* the quote illustrates the experience of pregnancy is degraded into something that can be repeated, without considering the physical and emotional reality of the woman who is pregnant.

The next form of control that Meaghan experienced was when people around her commented that she should have another child. This shows that the

pressure to have another child came from outside herself, not from her own desire.

Which can be seen in the data below.

“You should give him a baby brother or sister!” There it is. Everyone knows you’re not supposed to say this sort of thing, but people can’t help themselves. Part of me wants to give in and play along, to submit to the natural way of things, to loosen my newfound grip and go flying off the side of the cliff again. Okay, fine, I’ll have another baby. Because you want me to. Because it would be really cute. To give up on the land of the living—the land of deadlines, of yoga classes, of happy hours—and dwell, again, in even more tenderness. (O’Connell, 2018)

In this data, Meaghan experienced comments from people around her about having a second child. These forms of social pressure are often unconscious but greatly influence reproductive decisions. These comments are very negative for mothers, as they do not consider the physical and psychological complexities experienced by mothers. She realized that society has a view of how a mother should act, as if having a second child is not a personal choice but a continuation of the “*natural course*” that must be followed. The fact that the second pregnancy has not yet occurred but is already the subject of discussion and social pressure highlights how institutional factors have reduced a mother's control over her reproductive decisions. “*Okay, fine, I’ll have another baby. Because you want me to.*” The main character feels pushed to comply with the expectation of having another child, not because of personal desire, but due to external pressure. Thus, this quote not only reveals Meaghan's individual experience as a mother but also exposes how motherhood institutions control even the potential for future pregnancies.

ii. Control Over the Childbirth Process

Control over the childbirth process refers to how the experience of giving birth is often beyond the control of the women who experience it. According to Rich (1976), the experience of childbirth has been socially and medically constructed as something that is “dangerous,” “unpredictable,” and “requires professional intervention,” making women feel incapable of giving birth without external assistance. This undermines women's trust in their own bodies and reinforces their dependence on external authority. In *And Now We Have Everything* (2018), Meaghan describes her birth as an experience of alienation, loss of control, and dependence on the decisions of others, which reflects the institutionalization of birth. Although she was in a delivery room physically designed to “support,” psychologically and emotionally she felt out of control. As can be seen in the data below.

I felt my legs go weak. As soon as Nurse Kathleen came back into the room with the hep-lock, I stood up and, almost without thinking, said, “Actually, I want the epidural.” Dustin looked at me. “Are you sure?” he asked in his supportive-but-firm birth-partner voice. “This isn’t what we talked about.” He put his hand on mine, stared right into my eyes. “This isn’t what you wanted.” “None of this is what I wanted!” I snapped at him (O’Connell, 2018)

In this data, Meaghan could not stand the pain, so she wants an epidural. However, her partner questioned her decision by saying “Are you sure?” “This isn't what we talked about.” “This isn't what you wanted.” These statements, although ‘supportive’ in tone, highlight how a woman's voice and decisions over her own body are not taken as final, even by the partner who is supposed to fully support her. Her partner indirectly encourages Meaghan to stick to her previous

“natural” plan, without considering that reproductive decisions may change as the process progresses. Rich (1976) highlights how this system has made women feel guilty or failed when they do not fulfill these standards. From this, it can be concluded that the main character's decisions about her body and pain, something that should be entirely under her control, instead becomes a subject of negotiation with others, including her partner. The medical process and expectations around natural childbirth often make women feel guilty when they need help or feel inadequate.

The next form that Meaghan experienced was when she wanted a C-section and wanted to know what other people thought about it, as can be seen in the data below.

I was thinking like a woman. I was in the most essentially oppressed, essentially female situation I've ever been in and I was mentally oppressing myself on top of it. "I should do the Pitocin, right?" I looked around at everyone in a panic. I wanted to know everyone's honest opinion. I wanted to know what they would think of me either way. Would I make a decision and would they all judge me internally? She didn't offer to give me time. She just kept saying it wasn't an emergency. And yet. And yet the clock was ticking anyway. It was an emergency of capitalism, of everyone being sick of my shit. Lucky for them I was sick of my shit too. Utterly. I wanted the C-section. "But the recovery!" I said out loud. I knew you were supposed to think about this, be haunted by this; it was supposed to keep you from "giving in," but damn if I could think beyond the pain of the now (O'Connell, 2018)

In this data, Meaghan's reproductive pressure is obvious, she wanted a cesarean section because she felt unable to follow the “natural path”. When she wanted to do pitocin, she looked around at everyone first and wanted to know what everyone thought. This highlights that she was worried about social judgment, rather than following the best decision for her body, she was following expectations and pressure from her surroundings. She did not only feel physical

pain, but also guilt, fear of being judged, and anxiety about being considered a “failure” if she chose the “easier” or “less ideal” path, such as a C-section. Will she be perceived as weak and selfish if she gives in to the pain? The question shows how the institution of motherhood shapes these standards and makes women subjects that are constantly watched and judged. Rich (1976) observed that control over a woman's body during childbirth is often transferred from the woman herself to the system, whether through medical interventions or even social opinions. Meaghan experienced exactly that—a loss of control, decisions made under external pressure, and even guilt for wanting to reduce her own suffering.

iii. Control Over Breastfeeding Decisions

Control over breastfeeding decisions refers to how breastfeeding, which is biologically personal and natural, is often shaped by social norms as a moral standard of motherhood that must be followed. Rich (1976) criticized how motherhood institutions set ideal standards of motherhood, one of which is through the narrative that breastfeeding is a moral and emotional obligation for every mother. In this institutional view, a “good” mother is one who breastfeeds exclusively, even though physically, emotionally, or situationally, not all mothers are able or willing to do so. In *And Now We Have Everything* (2018), Meaghan describes the experience of breastfeeding as a process filled with pressure, guilt, and external demands that make the decision feel no longer her own, as can be seen in the data below.

When I was pregnant, every time someone asked me if I planned to breastfeed, I stammered and avoided eye contact. Of fucking course, what do you think I am, some kind of monster? Obviously I thought about it all the time but I didn't want to jinx it by talking about it. Declaring my intentions felt too vulnerable, too potentially humiliating. The question was not whether I planned to breastfeed the future baby but whether I would physically be able to. What if the time came and the baby didn't latch on or my body didn't produce enough milk? The internet was full of stories about women struggling with just that. It was impressive but scary to read about them turning their lives upside down, willing to try or do anything if it meant they could check off this box (O'Connell, 2018)

In this data, it shows how breastfeeding decisions and experiences that should be private become full of pressure and fear of failure. Meaghan's confession in the quote shows how she felt fear and pressure when asked questions by others about breastfeeding. As criticized by Rich, breastfeeding is not just a biological act but has become a symbol of sacrifice, even a woman's worthiness as a mother. *“The question was not whether I planned to breastfeed the future baby but whether I would physically be able to.”* This is where the reproductive pressure becomes very real, she fears that her body will not be able to breastfeed. Society demands a mother to breastfeed, but not all bodies are ideally able to do so. Meaghan saw on the internet that discussed the challenges of breastfeeding. It was impressive but it reinforced the norm that a good mother is a mother who struggles to breastfeed. Instead of giving space for women to feel satisfied with their decisions, the narrative adds to the list of “motherly duties” that must be fulfilled for them to be recognized as good mothers.

3. Physical Experience

Physical experience is one of the most fundamental yet most ignored aspects of motherhood. This physical experience includes various forms of bodily changes and limitations experienced by women after giving birth. According to

Rich (1976), physical experience is an aspect that is often ignored or suppressed by the institution of motherhood. In *And Now We Have Everything* (2018), Meaghan highlights physical experience as something complex and full of contradictions. Her body goes through extreme changes from the traumatic process of childbirth to painful breastfeeding, from chronic fatigue to hormonal changes that affect her mental health. Therefore, the following will discuss the physical experiences of the main character in becoming a mother.

i. Postpartum Physical Changes

Postpartum physical changes refer to the transformations that occur in a woman's body after giving birth, including weight gain, childbirth scars, breast changes, hormonal imbalances, and chronic fatigue. In Rich's (1976) context, these physical changes are often hidden or normalized as something that women must accept without complaint. In *And Now We Have Everything* (2018), Meaghan describes her sense of alienation from her body after giving birth and how much she wants her body back. As seen in the data below.

I'd known it would look bad. I'd expected that, and accepted it. All the websites warned you that you'd look pregnant for weeks. Plus I'd always been frustrated with my body, always wanted to lose ten or twenty pounds, always wore a cardigan over a sleeveless dress to hide my chubby arms, dreaded trying on new jeans, blah-blah. I hate my body already, I'd figured. I'll be fine... My entire middle section was covered in purplish-red gashes and looked like it was hanging off my body. It bore no resemblance to any version of myself I'd ever seen (O'Connell, 2018)

In this data, Meaghan seems to feel pressure about her body changes after giving birth. She conveys that the bodily changes of pregnancy are something she had anticipated, but it still causes her frustration. Even when the body has gone

through an extraordinary biological process, women are still faced with demands about the ideal body shape, instead of getting space to recover and appreciate their bodies. This also reflects a loss of autonomy over her own body, as the body becomes an object to be seen and judged. *“I'd always been frustrated with my body, always wanted to lose ten or twenty pounds”* The quote shows that Meaghan has been insecure about her body since before pregnancy, deepening her sense of alienation from her own body.

Rich (1976) states that the postpartum body becomes a source of alienation because it does not align with the previous body identity and because there is no honest social space to discuss this experience. *“My entire middle section was covered in purplish-red gashes and looked like it was hanging off my body. It bore no resemblance to any version of myself I'd ever seen.”* The body that she once knew had changed drastically, and the changes were not only physical but also emotional. Meaghan felt separated from her own body, unable to connect it with her self-image as an individual.

ii. Physical Limitations Due to Breastfeeding

Physical limitations due to breastfeeding refer to the mother's constant physical attachment to the baby's biological needs, affecting her physical freedom, time, and energy. Rich (1976) highlights that although breastfeeding can be an intimate and meaningful experience, the institution of motherhood has deprived mothers of their freedom to choose and forced them to follow the narrative of the “good mother” who breastfeeds happily and without complaint.

In *And Now We Have Everything* (2018), Meaghan describes breastfeeding as exhausting and physically draining. She feels that her body is constantly “needed,” with no space for recovery or self-separation. As can be seen in the data below.

In fact, for weeks I'd been desperate to get out of the house and do something I was good at, but so far breastfeeding had made that impossible. I'd taken a few short, hobbled walks to get a juice or a coffee and cry alone on a park bench, but I'd never been gone for more than thirty minutes, and the baby was always crying when I got back (O'Connell, 2018)

This data illustrates that physical experience severely limits a mother's space and autonomy. The quote describes how breastfeeding not only involves the physical aspect of women, but also limits their mobility and personal freedom. Meaghan in the quote is distressed, as she desperately wants to get out of the house and do the things she is good at, but breastfeeding makes that impossible. She wants to do something to regain her personal identity outside of motherhood. “*I'd taken a few short, hobbled walks to get a juice or a coffee and cry alone on a park bench...*” expresses a body condition that is still recovering, but Meaghan still forces herself to go out just to find a breathing space from motherhood that takes up her entire identity. Even thirty minutes of free time does not free her from anxiety, because her son always cries when she returns. This implies how heavy the physical and emotional burden is after giving birth. Through this quote, it is clear that the institution of motherhood has created a sense of being trapped and losing self-identity, where breastfeeding is not just a biological activity but also a concrete form of institutional control over a mother's body and time.

iii. Hormonal and Emotional Effects

Hormonal and emotional effects refer to psychological and physiological changes experienced by women due to hormones during and after pregnancy, such as anxiety, irritability, emotional exhaustion, and even postpartum depression. In the institution of motherhood, negative emotions such as anger, frustration, and exhaustion are often viewed as personal failures of the mother, rather than as normal responses to extreme hormonal and emotional pressure. In *And Now We Have Everything* (2018), Meaghan honestly describes the emotions, anxiety, and feelings of isolation that accompanied her after becoming a mother. As can be seen in the data below.

I want the hormones out of me. I want to be my old self again, as if that were possible, and I fantasize that once my boobs dry up, everything will be back to normal. The all-consuming project of early motherhood will be completed. I'll be out on parole (O'Connell, 2018)

In this data, the quote “*I want the hormones out of me. I want to be my old self again...*” shows that Meaghan misses her old identity, which was free from the biological and emotional changes caused by pregnancy and breastfeeding. “*I'll be out on parole*” implies that breastfeeding and postpartum hormonal changes feel like a punishment, reinforcing the idea that motherhood in its early phase is not something easy, but rather a demanding project that requires both physical and emotional involvement. The desire for “*boobs dry up*” implies a hope to end the biological and emotional attachment that comes with breastfeeding. This is how institutionalized motherhood works, requiring women to fully embrace the role of motherhood, ignoring boundaries and their needs as

individuals. Meaghan shows a deep inner conflict between her identity as an individual before becoming a mother and the new identity formed by the experience of motherhood. This is similar to Rich's (1976) argument that the institution of motherhood not only creates physical and social demands on women, but also dissolves the boundaries between independent subjects and the demanding role of motherhood.

4. Power in the Family Structure

Power in the family structure refers to unequal power relations within the household. Rich (1976) explains that family structures often place women in the role of mothers with significant responsibilities for domestic work and childcare, yet with limited power in decision-making. In *And Now We Have Everything* (2018), Meaghan depicts a family dynamic full of inequality, both in decision-making, emotional burden, and daily responsibilities. Therefore, the following will discuss the imbalances experienced by the main character in her family structure.

i. The Imbalance in Decision Making

The Imbalance in decision-making refers to situations where mothers rarely have full control over important decisions in the household, whether due to social norms, the dynamics of the relationship with their partner, or pressure from motherhood institutions. But when mothers are given the opportunity to make decisions, they are often burdened and left with the entire responsibility without any balance in decision-making. In *And Now We Have Everything* (2018),

Meaghan shows how mothers are often trapped in situations where they have to make big decisions alone, without emotional support and active participation from their partners or the system around them. This reflects that imbalance in decision-making is not only about who has power, but also about who is forced to take on all the consequences alone. As can be seen in the data below.

I knew I could convince Dustin to get married; he had told me as much: "You wanting it makes me want it too." But did I want it enough for both of us? Did I want to be married enough to campaign for it and risk taking the blame if things went south? (O'Connell, 2018)

In this data, it reflects the imbalance in decision-making, particularly how women often take on greater responsibility in important decisions and at the same time carry the psychological burden of the consequences. "*Did I want it enough for both of us?*" shows that the decision was not made equally, but rather became a one-sided mental burden for the female character. Although the decision to marry should be the result of a mutual agreement between two equal partners, Meaghan feels that the desire and responsibility for the decision are entirely hers. She was faced with a position to lead and ultimately take full responsibility if the marriage did not work out. There was a fear of judgment or guilt, which is often placed on women when such decisions does not work out. She not only had to consider her own desires, but also the potential impact on the relationship, reputation, and her family structure in the future. Rich (1976) criticizes that women are expected to be planners, organizers, and responsible for everything in family relationships, including decisions that should be made together.

ii. The Imbalance in Emotional

Emotional imbalance refers to a condition in which mothers carry the primary responsibility for maintaining emotional stability in the family, including managing stress, fatigue, and anxiety without support or equal division of roles. Rich (1976) states that the institution of motherhood has created expectations that women are “naturally” ready and able to regulate everything emotionally, even in times of crisis. However, in reality, this institution forces women to carry the mental burden and feelings of guilt when they feel incapable. In *And Now We Have Everything* (2018), Meaghan describes this directly in her narrative about the birthing process. Amidst extreme exhaustion and pain, she not only had to deal with physical suffering, but was also left to make big decisions on her own, without equal emotional support from her partner, as can be seen in the data below.

The thought of staying awake twelve more hours and then actively pushing was unfathomable. I looked at Dustin. “What do you think?” I asked him, begged him to tell me. He was at a loss too. “Whatever you want to do. It’s your body.” I hated this. Stop reminding me. I had to endure the physical agony; at the very least, someone else should have to do the mental arithmetic (O’Connell, 2018)

In this data, the emotional burden carried by the main character is very clear. She is in the midst of a physically painful labor experience, but she is also carrying the mental burden of making a big decision alone. She hopes her partner can help her make a decision, but his response is simply, “*Whatever you want to do. It’s your body.*” The quote may sound like an expression of freedom, but in this context, it actually becomes an additional burden. She needs active emotional support. Meaghan feels emotionally abandoned, having to endure physical pain

while making mentally stressful decisions, while her partner does not show equal emotional involvement. By stating that the decision is entirely Meaghan's because it is her body, her partner indirectly distances himself from the emotional responsibility that is actually shared.

Next, another form of emotional imbalance experienced by the main character is when Meaghan interacts with her husband, when she realizes the difference in expectations applied to the roles of father and mother, as can be seen in the data below.

Do you talk to anyone when you go?" I asked him. "No. I mean, I don't know. I don't not talk to people. I just hang out with our guy here." "You mean you didn't meet the moms? Oh my God. It's such a scene." He laughed, admitted he had no idea what I was talking about. I envied him that. No one suggested he make dad friends. He got to demolish low expectations of fatherhood while I got defensive. I feared being eaten alive by motherhood, being completely subsumed. He seemed light-years away from me right then. Even his love for me was confusing. I didn't feel worthy of that either (O'Connell, 2018)

In this data, it is clear how the main character feels an emotional burden that her partner does not experience. This also highlights the difference between social expectations of the roles of mothers and fathers in the motherhood system. Meaghan felt isolated and emotionally burdened, while her partner was able to take on the role of father more casually, without significant social demands. The quote *"No one suggested he make dad friends. He got to demolish low expectations of fatherhood while I got defensive."* highlights how double standards in parenting roles constantly evaluate mothers, while fathers are praised simply for being present. This also touches on the issue of emotional experience gaps between men and women in raising children. The father is not expected to

build a social network or support community, not forced to get involved, and can be casually present in parenting without social pressure or specific expectations. Meanwhile, Meaghan feels constant pressure from social and emotional expectations as a mother, including the need to connect and prove her worth as a mother.

Lastly, another form of emotional imbalance is when Meaghan feels that she does not have a safe emotional place to express her exhaustion as a mother and can only express herself when there are other mothers who are experiencing similar things, as shown in the data below.

We take turns telling our birth stories and cuddling each other's babies and I feel myself getting manic with the thrill of finally being understood. The ability to be casually despondent, to complain to someone in shorthand and not feel like you have to insert disclaimers about how much you love your baby—I feel like if I could just be around her forever, I would be okay (O'Connell, 2018)

In this data, it reveals Meaghan's comfort in expressing her exhaustion and disappointment to other mothers who have experienced similar things without feeling guilty. She cannot even be completely honest with her partner and only finds comfort when sharing with other women who have experienced similar things. This reflects the huge mental burden carried by the main character and the importance of emotional solidarity among mothers. The quote, *"I feel like if I could just be around her forever, I would be okay,"* emphasizes the rarity of safe spaces for mothers to be honest about their experiences and shows that the family system does not provide such spaces within the household, which should be the center of support. In motherhood as an institution, it highlights that when social systems and families fail to provide equal support, mothers will only find comfort

in their own communities. Rich (1976) states that the institution of motherhood often requires women to carry an unbalanced emotional burden, where they are expected to maintain the emotional stability of the family as a whole.

iii. The Imbalance in Responsibility

The imbalance of responsibility refers to a condition in which the burdens of childcare and household management are disproportionately assigned to mothers, while the role of fathers is often optional or merely supportive. Rich (1976) explains that in the institution of motherhood, motherhood responsibilities are considered a natural obligation of women, rather than a social role that should be fairly negotiated between both parents. In *And Now We Have Everything* (2018), Meaghan describes how the burden of childcare is disproportionately placed on mothers, while the role of fathers tends to be passive, as can be seen in the data below.

When the baby cried and Dustin brought him over to me with an expectant look, I would wave my phone in his face. "I just fed him twenty minutes ago!" "Well, he seems hungry now. I don't know what you want me to do." The rage I felt at that moment was like nothing I'd ever experienced. I was strung out, under siege, depleted. Imagine, this was how everyone came into the world. It seemed so extreme. I tried not to think about what life was like just a week ago. Thinking too much, generally, felt like self-harm. Hold the baby, bounce the baby, feed the baby, and never coming back. The biggest problem of all was that I loved the baby so immediately and desperately, I knew I could never actually escape. I was not just trapped in our apartment with my tits out, I was also trapped in love with him. I could never go back to before (O'Connell, 2018)

In this data, it illustrates the imbalance in responsibility between Meaghan and her partner, Dustin. When the baby cries, instead of taking the initiative or sharing responsibility, Dustin hands the baby back to Meaghan, which shows how the burden of parenting is placed entirely on the mother, even though both parents

are technically present. “*I just fed him twenty minutes ago!*“ *Well, he seems hungry now. I don't know what you want me to do.*” This quote indicates the lack of participation from the male partner, placing all responsibility for the baby on the woman. The quote “*The rage I felt at that moment was like nothing I'd ever experienced. I was strung out, under siege, depleted*” shows the peak of emotional tension caused by constant pressure and the lack of equal support from the partner. The main character also feels like she is in a constant state of alert, with no time to recover. The feeling of being trapped strengthens Rich's argument that motherhood as an institution is not just a biological or emotional experience, but also a social structure that binds women to roles with no clear way out, even when their physical and mental conditions are disrupted.

B. The Effects on the Main Character in *And Now We Have Everything* (2018)

Motherhood as proposed by Rich (1976) in *Of Woman Born*, is not only a woman's personal experience, but also a social institution that shapes and regulates the role, behavior, and expectations of women as mothers. Motherhood as institution can also indirectly affect a person in forming self-perceptions and feeling guilty or not good enough if they do not fulfill the ideal standards of motherhood formed by patriarchal social and cultural norms. In *And Now We Have Everything* (2018), Meaghan's experience of motherhood shows how the institution affects her life. The first effect of motherhood as institution that affects Meaghan is the emotional impact, where she feels encouraged to keep presenting

the image of a happy mother who can overcome everything to fulfill external expectations, which can be seen in the data below.

“Well, you seem like you are doing great, considering,” Lindsay said to me and I felt something in me rise up.” “Oh, I dunno,” I said, but I was grinning. This was all I wanted to hear. I wanted us to seem happy to them, as ridiculous as it was, like we were coping well. I didn’t want my friends to walk out of our house and back onto the sidewalk and cringe at each other. I didn’t want them to lie in bed that night feeling grateful it was me and not them (O’Connell, 2018)

In this data, it is clear that motherhood as an institution affects the main character through emotional urges to seek validation from others that she is doing her role as a mother well, even though this contradicts her emotional reality. The desire to “look happy” reflects an inner conflict between what she feels and what she thinks she should show as a mother. Meaghan feels happy when her friend compliments her on how she “does everything well,” even though she is experiencing pressure and exhaustion on the inside. This shows that there is a deep emotional need to be validated by others as a “strong” mother, even if it does not reflect her emotional reality. This institution demands that mothers always be grateful and loving, even though the reality of motherhood is often full of pressure and a loss of self. In Meaghan's case, this is evident in her desire to “look happy” not because she actually feels happy, but because she doesn't want others to feel sorry for her or judge her as a failed mother. She fears the social reactions that might arise if others knew how difficult the role she is currently living is.

Meaghan not only experienced the emotional impact of motherhood as an institution, but she also experienced psychological impacts, which in *And Now We Have Everything* (2018), Meaghan describes how the role of motherhood

shaped by institutional expectations slowly created a psychological crisis in the form of loss of identity and alienation from herself, as can be seen in the data below.

I felt as hungry for the minutiae of their circumscribed days as they were but I was also filled with self-loathing for caring at all. We sounded so desperate, we moms. So boring. Can you believe this is what our lives have been reduced to? I wanted to say. Remember when we “were real people? Remember feeling in charge of your life? (O’Connell, 2018)

In this data, we can see how motherhood has impacted Meaghan's psychological condition, as part of the pressure caused by motherhood as an institution. In the quote, she feels a loss of identity and, besides that, her interest in the small details of other mothers' lives does not come from a sense of pride, but rather from a need for validation and a sense of connection in a situation that she herself finds boring and sad. The institution of motherhood has trapped Meaghan in psychological isolation, where she no longer recognizes herself and no longer feels in control of her life. This condition causes deep psychological distress, feelings of helplessness, depression, and a loss of meaning in life outside of her role as a mother.

Next, motherhood as an institution also affects Meaghan through social impacts. Meaghan highlights this social inequality and shows how motherhood as an institution has created an imbalance in the relationship and social position between her and her partner, which can be seen in the data below.

Do you talk to anyone when you go?” I asked him. “No. I mean, I don’t know. I don’t not talk to people. I just hang out with our guy here.” “You mean you didn’t meet the moms? Oh my God. It’s such a scene.” He laughed, admitted he had no idea what I was talking about. I envied him that. No one suggested he make dad friends. He got to demolish low expectations of fatherhood while I got

defensive. I feared being eaten alive by motherhood, being completely subsumed. He seemed light-years away from me right then. Even his love for me was confusing. I didn't feel worthy of that either (O'Connell, 2018)

Lastly, motherhood as an institution affects Meaghan's behavior in facing an unplanned pregnancy. Meaghan's behavior shows how this pressure encourages her to conform to the expectations set by the institution of motherhood, even when the decision concerns her own body and future, as can be seen in the data below.

I told myself that I was willing to get an abortion for him. Of course I was. Right? That's what a reasonable person would say. I don't want to have a baby with you if you don't want one. I wanted to have a baby with him, and I wanted him to want the same. If he didn't want it, I wanted him to convince me that I didn't either. I wanted to be swayed. I didn't want to have to argue on behalf of my desire. "We know we want a kid eventually," he said. "In a couple of years we can have one." "But isn't that kind of dumb? To be like, Well, we want you but not yet. Sorry, the timing is off. I mean, isn't this bigger than that?" "Come on. We can have this baby again in a couple of years." "This baby?" My voice broke. He was a stranger to me now, my mortal enemy with pesticide-free produce slung over his shoulder. How had I ever loved him at all?" (O'Connell, 2018)

In this data, Meaghan clearly shows reactions that reflect the impact of motherhood as an institution on her behavior. Meaghan shows a passive attitude and hands over control of important decisions about her body and life to her partner. Meaghan not only ignores her own desires but also expects her partner to "convince" her not to continue the pregnancy, a form of avoidance behavior that highlights the powerful impact of external influences in shaping women's personal actions. The inability or unwillingness to fight for personal decisions indicates the internalization of institutional values that make women feel they do not have full rights over their own reproductive choices. Thus, the quote shows

how the institution of motherhood affects women's behavior in making highly personal decisions.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

In this chapter, the researcher presents the conclusions and results of the study. In addition, the researcher also provides suggestions for further research using the same topic, namely motherhood as an institution.

A. Conclusion

The results obtained from this study are that there are various forms of motherhood as an institution experienced by the main character and the effects of motherhood as institution on the main character in *And Now We Have Everything* by Meaghan O'Connell. Based on the analysis conducted, there are four forms of motherhood as an institution, namely social expectations, control over the body and reproduction, physical experience, and power in the family structure. Social expectations are reflected in the pressure to be a perfect mother and to show happiness in fulfilling the role of mother. Control over body and reproduction is seen in how decisions about pregnancy, childbirth, and breastfeeding are regulated by social values that limit women's autonomy. Physical experience is demonstrated through postpartum bodily changes, physical limitations due to breastfeeding, and hormonal and emotional impacts. Power in the family structure is seen in the imbalance of emotional and mental burdens between women and men, where the main character must carry a heavy burden without equal support from their partner.

Other results in this study found several effects of motherhood as an institution on the character development of the main character named Meaghan.

The emotional effects she felt appeared in the form of insecurity, emotional exhaustion, and inner conflict. Psychologically, she experienced mental pressure, an identity crisis, and doubts about her suitability as a mother. Physically, she faced chronic fatigue, pain, and limited physical mobility due to breastfeeding. Social impacts were seen in her isolation from her previous social life. In addition, behavioral impacts also appear when she feels she must adjust her desires to the expectations of her partner or society, which results in a loss of control over personal choices. All of these experiences show how the institution of motherhood often places women in a position of oppression, control, and loss of autonomy, as Adrienne Rich argues in her book *Of Woman Born*. Therefore, this novel not only describes a woman's personal experience of becoming a mother but also serves as a social critique of the institution of motherhood that restricts women's freedom.

B. Suggestion

Based on the analysis of *And Now We Have Everything* by Meaghan O'Connell, it is hoped that readers will become more familiar with motherhood as an institution and some of its impacts. In addition, the results of this study are also expected to serve as a reference for other researcher who are interested in exploring issues of feminism and motherhood. For further research, it is recommended to develop similar topics by comparing the experience of motherhood in other literary works or by adding other theoretical approaches.

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