DIGITAL NOVELS: A RECYCLED ADVERTISEMENT ABOUT THE OLD SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF WOMEN'S IDENTITY

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Abstract: 21st-century digital novels, accessible through mobile apps like Webnovel, Dreame, and Play Books, commonly depict women characters as powerless, impoverished stepdaughters or illegitimate children. These prevalent themes in digital novels often reinforce patriarchal norms and present themes of fathers' financial struggles and indebtedness to wealthy families resulted to contract marriage or planned marriage. Employing the approach of feminist literary criticism, this study aims to examine how these novels uphold antiquated perceptions of women's identity. Through the reading strategy of feminist literary criticism is revealed that these digital novels represented the old construction about women identity, perpetuating the idea that women are powerless and financially dependent on men. From the setting of the novel, we know that the offered themes were not only occurred in eastern culture but also in western culture. They depict women as inanimate objects, lacking agency and voice. The narratives promote patriarchy by portraying male power and oppression as protection, often emphasizing material wealth. This notion is strategically disseminated through digital novels, targeting the millennial generation who have easy access to digital media. Consequently, younger women may internalize these ideas and accept their subjugated role. Instead, digital novels should empower women to navigate patriarchal constraints and depict men who respect and support women's autonomy, challenging traditional gender norms. While the study employs feminist literary criticism as the reading strategy, it's important to acknowledge that different theoretical frameworks or approaches may provide alternative interpretations of the novels. Recognizing the limitations and potential biases of the chosen methodology could lead to a more balanced analysis.

Keywords: *digital; novel; construction; women; identity*

INTRODUCTION

Digital novels are a trend in today's Android-based smart-phone era. These novels can be downloaded via the Play Store application. The novels are presented in various languages, including English, Indonesian, and other languages that can be chosen. In these digital novel applications, there are some English novels that come from English-speaking countries, and there are also some that were translated from Mandarin. This is known from the characters and settings used in the novel, which usually uses places in China that have Chinese names, but sometimes the translation into English is difficult to understand. Meanwhile, the Indonesian ones were created by Indonesian authors, using Indonesian settings and figures. However, the themes and characterizations of the female characters in these digital novels have similarities in any language and in any

countries' setting, so it is as if the stories in these novels have been formatted for that.

The purpose of this paper is to analyze the presence of these digital novels with the theme and characterization of female characters that seem to repeat the themes and characterizations in classic novels of the 19th and early 20th centuries relating to female characters in fiction (Roifah & Eliyanah, 2012) with the theme of forced marriage with wealthy male characters who have the power to decide who he wants to marry. Thus, the identity of women is imprinted as weak creatures who cannot solve their problems, unless they agree with the existing conditions. What the difference from the novels is the time setting which is in the 21st century. The time setting is different, but with the theme and characterization of female characters that are in line with the old literary texts, it implies that there is a re-infiltration of old values

and constructions by changing the era of narrated settings.

Digital Novels

Since we talk about digital novels, we must understand what digital novels actually are. Digital novels are novels which are provided by several applications on smartphone in the form of e-book. These novels are free for some chapters, but the rest chapters must be paid.

In the era of smartphone referring the present era, digital novels are available and easy to be found on the internet provided by various digital services, so that the activity of reading novels can be done everywhere and anytime by using a tablet or smartphone. Reading novels become more easily nowadays because digital novels are available on the internet. Since this paper discusses about digital novels, it is necessary to be familiar what actually digital novels is. Moreover, recently there reveal some novels which were read by native speakers, usually in English, and even novels which were transformed into the form of video. That is incredible, but the content or the theme about female characters of these kinds of literary form repeat what existed in digital novels.

However, the development of digital novels cannot be untied from the development of digital books and e-readers. According to Priyanto and Sedyaningsih (2013), E-books or digital books are believed to have originated in 1971 when Michael Hart started digitizing books in a project called Project Guttenberg. However, the idea of a digital book started when Vanevar Bush wrote an article about Memex in "As we may think". Memex is "a device in which an individual stores all his books, records, and communications, and in which is mechanized so that it may be consulted with exceeding speed and flexibility. It is an enlarged intimate supplement to his memory".

Further, Priyanto and Sedyaningsih state (2013), according to Reynolds and Derose, Andries Van Damm was the one who defined digital books for the first time in 1976. At that time Van Damm developed a hypertext editing system (HES) for reading text from a computer screen. At the same time, Allan Kay developed a similar thing and called it the Dynabook for a medium that resembles a laptop today. Nevertheless, it seems that the term e-book is more interesting as a term for digital books. Then, it was Van Damm's term that ended up being used today in English as digital books.

Actually, e-books are books in electronic or digital form that contain information like guides, tutorials, novels, or books in general. This eBook (electronic book) can only be opened and read using gadgets such as computers, tablets, and smart phones. Generally, e-book is not different from printed books, but e-books (digital books) also contain writings and pictures on various topics such as technology e-books, science e-books, motivational digital books, tutorial books and many other topics. Simply, the definition of an e-book is a book in a digital version. E-book or electronic book is also called digital book. Digital books present information in the form of text, images, videos, audio, and other forms of multimedia that can be accessed via laptops, computers, and smartphones (Deepublish, 2020).

Nevertheless, some people distinguish between e-books and digital books, but here we will not dispute about the terms, but this paper will concern to digital novels that is seen as same as e-book in the form of novel. Thus, it means that this paper will discuss about the content of literature in the form of digital application (Indriyanto, 2018).

This paper will discuss about the woman issues which reveal on the digital novels, with other words this paper will question the issues provided by digital novels. Since this kind of novels is more easily read by all people regardless of age limitation, even though there is a warning on the application about the age limitation but who ever know the readers' age.

Kind of Digital Novels

Before going into the discussion, we will briefly look at the providers of novels in the form of applications such as Webnovel, Dreame, Novelme, and Joyread. It is taken four examples from various providers of digital novels on the internet. These four applications were chosen because they represent application that use various languages included English and Indonesian, and the important thing is they provide many similar themes of stories. Here means the same themes on genre romance.
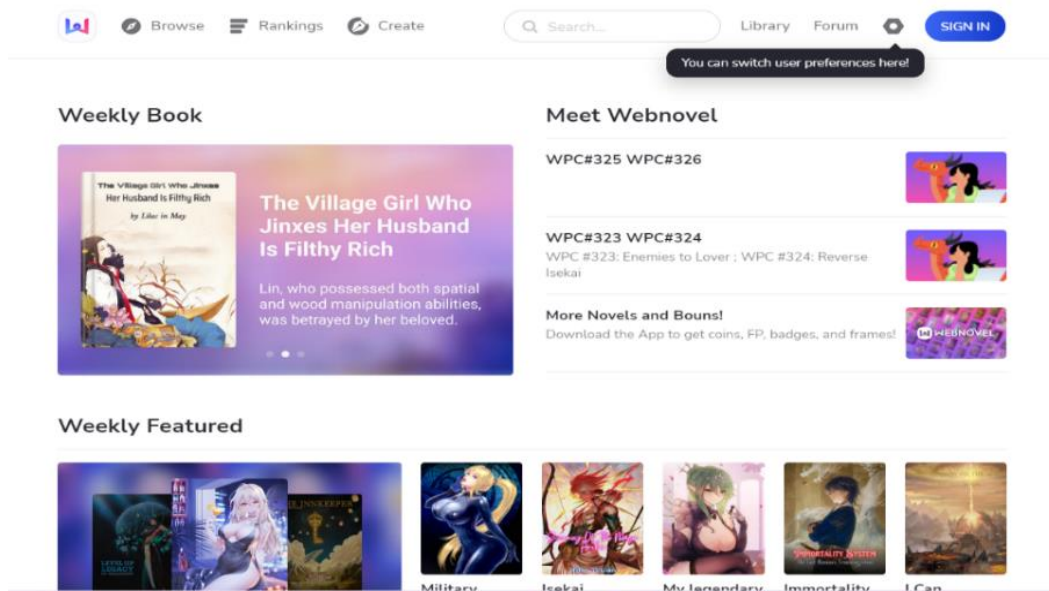

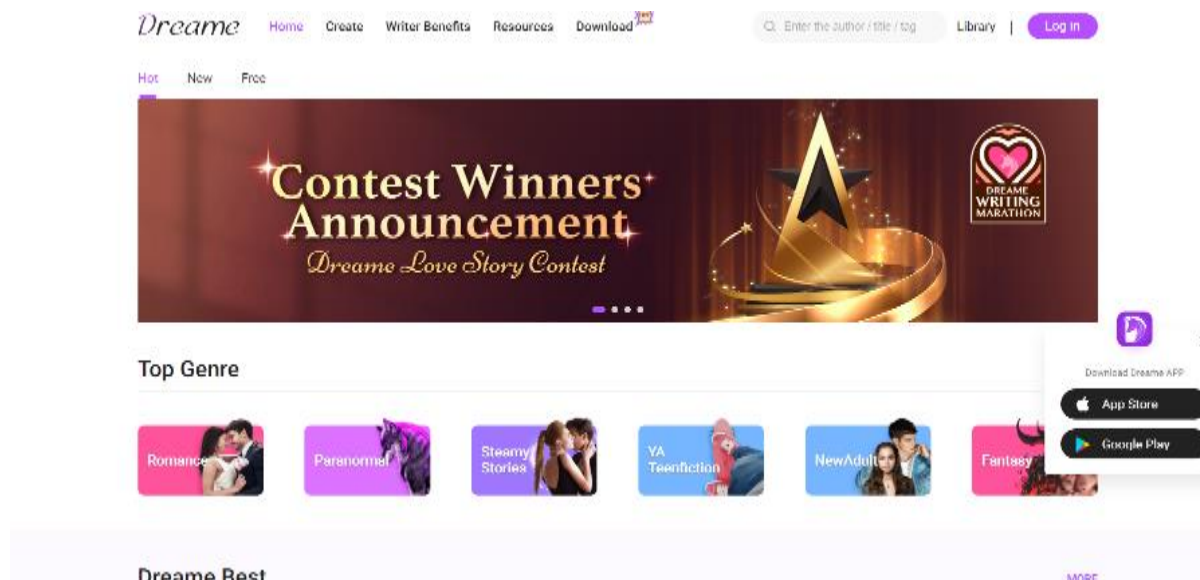Figure 1. *The frontpage of the website of Webnovel*

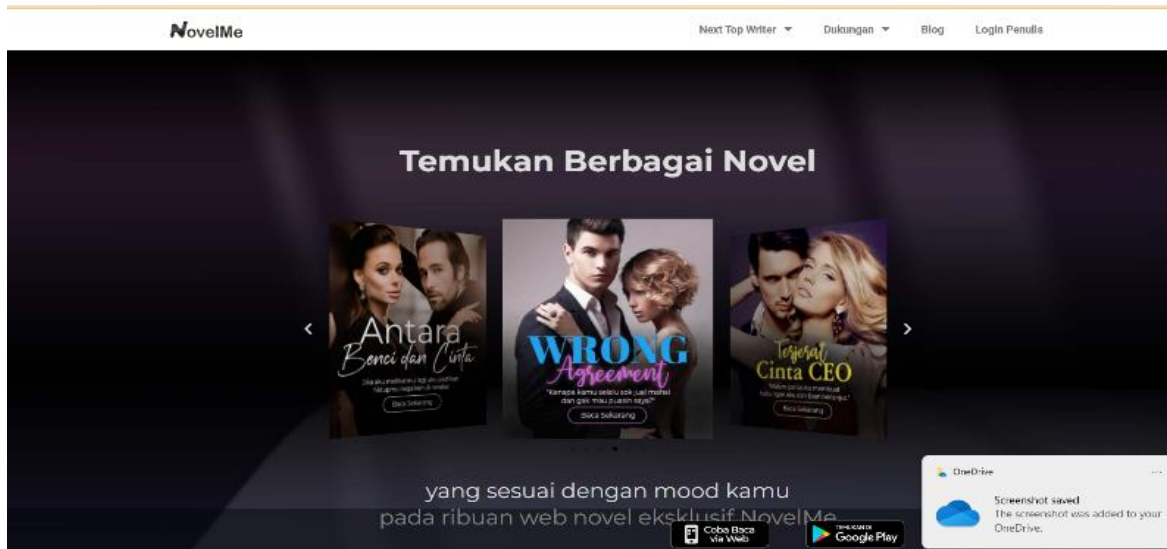Figure 2. *The frontpage of the website of Dreame*

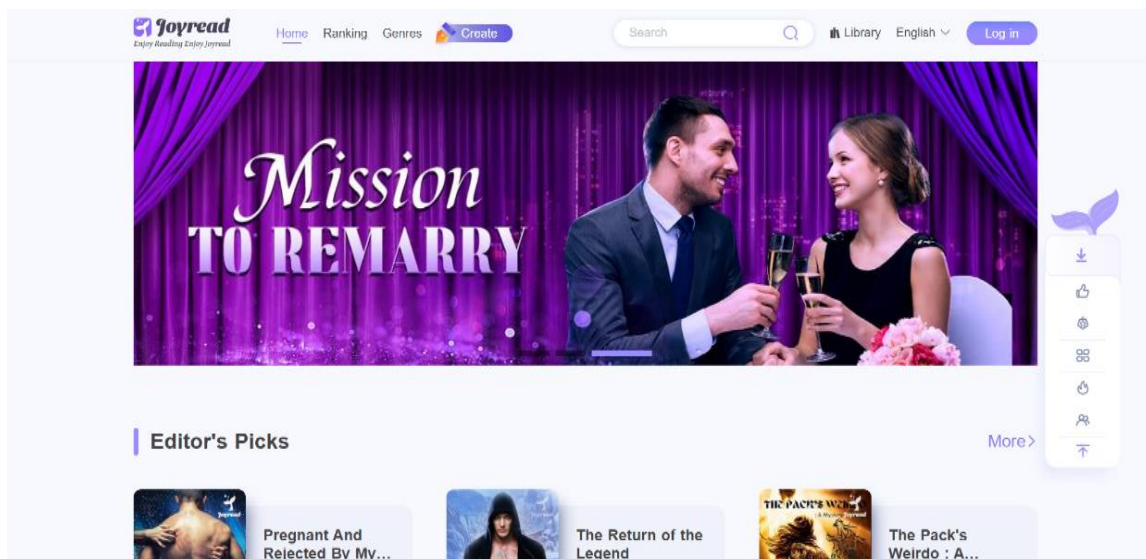Figure 3. *The frontpage of the website of Novelme*

Figure 4. *The frontpage of the website of Joyread*

Webnovel is a provider of novels or comics, it also creates the ideal online platform for global users with dreams of writing. It supports authors in creating their stories, be it novels or comics, via serialization. Readers can read free chapters and, according to their preferences, continue reading by purchasing the subsequent chapters. Webnovel is the international branch of Tencent Holdings Ltd's China Literature Ltd. Launched in May 2017. It provides content in six languages—English, Spanish, Bahasa Melayu, Vietnamese, Bahasa Indonesia, and Hindi. While Dreame is also application of digital novel that provide various stories and comics. The stories available in two languages, English and Indonesian. Novelme is also application that provide various stories, generally the genre romance, using Indonesian. The last is Joyread, an application that provide abundance of kind of story in English like romance, adventure and action, horror and triller, etc. It provides by https://www.joyread.com/. It also offers people to be author in its website. Like other application, these digital novels also provide novels that can be read free in some chapter, but must be purchased the rest chapters.

Feminist Literary Criticism

Since the discussion in this paper relates to

how female characters were described in digital novels, then Feminist literary criticism is needed as perspective to see the romance digital novels. Feminist Literary Criticism is literary criticism base on feminist theory, or feminist thought. It can be said that actually feminist literary criticism followed the politics of feminism in broad sense. It is more concerned with the position and function of women in the social structure that constructs them (Djajanegara, 2000). It uses feminist principles and ideology to critique the language of literature. This school of thought seeks to analyze and describe the ways in which literature portrays the narration of male domination by exploring the economic, social, political, and psychological forces embedded within literature. The narration could lead to gender discrimination in literature (Sugianti, 2022). We must be aware of the differences when studying fiction texts. This way of thinking and criticizing works can be said to have changed the way literary texts are viewed and studied, as well as changing the canon of what is taught.

At first, the feminist critics on literature want to know how women characters were represented in literary work. In general, feminist literary criticism before the 1970s—in the first and second waves of feminism—was concerned with women's authorship and the representation of women's condition within literature; including the depiction of fictional female characters. By criticizing literary works through the perspective of feminism, it also indirectly targets the author. Feminists use feminist literary criticism to show the image of women in the works of male writers who present women as creatures who are in various ways suppressed, misinterpreted, and underestimated by the dominant patriarchal tradition (Baga, 2019; Sugihastuti, 2002).

Kuiper (in Sugihastuti, 2002) shows that there are many approaches to literary works based on gender issues. This approach to literary works based on gender which was later called feminist literary criticism was established with several objectives, including 1) to criticize the canons of western literature and to highlight things that are standard based on patriarchal thinking; 2) to display forgotten and belittled texts composed by women; 3) to strengthen gyno criticism, the study of writings focused on women, and to strengthen the women's canon; and 4) to explore the cultural constructs of gender and identity. The use of various feminist theories is expected to be able to provide new views, especially those related to feminism.

Studying women in literary texts using feminist literary criticism, it means examining how women are represented in literary texts, examining how women and men are symbolized in literary texts, examining the tension between the image of women and the image of men in literary text, examining how male domination or oppression of the patriarchal world in literary texts, and subordination of women in literary texts, and also examining how women fight back and rejected in literary texts.

METHODOLOGY
Approaching method Reading as A Woman

Since feminist literary criticism develops from various sources (multidisciplinary science), to explore a literary work contained woman issues, it is needed broad view in readings about women. In fact, the help of other disciplines such as history, psychology, law, and anthropology are needed, and need to be considered another literary theory that feminist critics already have. This matter was done to sharpen the analysis, and this distinguishes feminist literary criticism from other criticisms (Sugihatuti, 2002).

This woman's point of view is termed as reading as a woman in Culler's terms (1982). Researchers in studying and understanding literary works must specifically use perspective and awareness of the experience of being a woman.

Furthermore, women's reading experience is tied to social experiences and structures within the family, and women themselves in reading. Even men, if they want to look for women issues in reading literature, they must use this method reading as a woman. They must set off their reading base on women experiences. Since the criticism will build from these experiences, so that the image of women or the actions of women who written by an author at a certain time or in a genre can be traced. This way of reading will bring researchers on a certain perspective that can express problems of belief, ideology, and institutions of life that a literary work presents (Baga, 2019).

Rationale and perspective of feminist literary criticism is an effort to understand the women's position and role as reflected in literature. The role and women's position were traced after digging the form structure of the work, so that the research discussion in literature provides another meaning from the point of view of feminism. By using a feminist perspective approach, then the research shifts from just centered on the work to the outside of the literary work, because the author has taken into account in the analysis. The research will pay attention to male domination or women's movement (Endraswara, 2003). The data taken in the form of qualitative data, for example a description of the status and role of women in the family, community and work environment. These data must be discussed proportionally, it means that it is not seen from the point of view of men look at women, but use women's point of view (Endraswara, 2003).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Digital novels that contain issues of gender inequality on the internet are generally in the form of romance. The form of this genre is what I explored. The main female characters presented in digital novels such as Webnovel, Dreame, Novelme, and others were generally characterized as stepchild who was removed or not acknowledged by the family. Then, the female character had to bear the family debt through forced marriage, or a contract marriage made by her father because the father had to pay debts to a richer family. The payment is with a wedding that has been planned. The storyline is similar to the story in the Indonesian novel that appeared at the beginning of the 20th century, namely *Sitti Nurbaya*: *unrequited love* by Marah Rusli. The novel was published in 1922. The main female character named Siti Nurbaya must be willing to marry Datuk Maringgih to pay off her father's debt, but the difference is Nurbaya not a stepdaughter, and her lover was not cheating.

In digital novels, there are always seemingly plausible reasons for accepting a planned and forced marriage in the presence of a cheating lover or because of a father who is in debt and is bankrupt. Other kind of plot about a planned or forced marriage emerge in digital novels is a poor girl without father because the father was died, or she is an orphan, so that the girl must be accepted the marriage arranged by other people.

Below are the same issues that always reveal in the digital novels on the internet. Usually, the titles emerge like *Contract Marriage*, *Unpredictable Marriage* or under other titles but with the same issues like *730 Days of Marriage*, the title is in English but the content of the novel is in Indonesian. The issues provide gender injustice, and implies strengthening the identity of women as weak and unable to fight back.

Powerless and Unable to Resist
The depiction of female characters that are generally presented in digital novels are those who do not have the ability to fight back. The characterizations always describe female characters who are powerless, and are not be able to express their objections. Generally, they received their fate unwillingly. Even if there were those who dared to express their objections to being forcibly married to someone they did not know and also did not want, they were still silenced, and made to accept the

circumstances that were imposed on them.

One example of the opening of the story usually directly come into the planning of contract marriage or the marriage must be done because of the urgent condition. This marriage does not need the consent of the girl.

> "But Lady Chen, did Liu Longwei agree to all of this?" Liuwei ask still confused.
> "Of course he did, he had a deal with his mother to marry anybody she introduces to him if he doesn't marry before he clocks 30. So, his mother Liu Bilu talked about you with him 2 weeks ago and then, he saw two of your pictures this evening because I had dinner and a little discussion about you and the company, he decided to collect the marriage certificate tomorrow because he's going on a business trip for a month". (*Unpredictable Marriage* in Webnovel, chapter 1).

From the citation of the novel, we can see how a girl was forced to marry a businessman who consider a marriage no more than a certificate, because what important to him is his business, and just to please his mother about marriage. This kind of reasons and its variation always appears in digital novel showing how a forced marriage occurred without approval of a woman. This demonstrates women's powerless and men control the power, because he can decide with whom he will marry (Asthereni, 2020).

In terms of their appearances on the digital novels, the main female character who experiences this oppression are usually considered ugly by their parents, especially by their stepmother and stepsister, so that she is suitable for the substitution of marriage, or in another meaning that she is proper to be sacrificed. Since actually the person who must bear the forced marriage was the stepsister, but it cannot be happened due to the position of the step sister more valuable on the perspective of the family. Nevertheless, in the development of the stories the main woman character would be considered beautiful by the family of the husband. Likewise, the husband who

married the main female character usually regard the female character as woman who only want wealth or money digger, so that at the beginning of the marriage she would experience oppression, humiliation, and sometimes even violence from the husband's side. One of the violence that is usually experienced by female character is the threat to be divorced in a few years after marriage, usually after two to five years of marriage. Therefore, at the beginning of the marriage, there made an agreement between the female characters and their husbands that later they would divorce at certain years. When the divorce happened, they are able to do nothing than accepted the decision.

One kind of the contract before marriage is as bellows. It is taken from Indonesian digital novel.

> "*Kita akan menikah kontrak selama 730 hari,*" lanjut Scott
> "*Whaaaattt?!?*" seru Gillian dan Kent bersamaan.
> "*Tidak, tidak. Saya tidak mau,*" tolak Gilllian.
> Scott menyeringai licik. "*Kau yakin tidak mau?*"
> " *Tentu saja,*" jawab Gillian 100% yakin.
> "*Hmm…baiklah, kalau begitu. Kau tidak memberiku pilihan. Namun, aku masih cukup berbaik hati untuk memberimu pilihan, Nona Winston.*"
> "*Pilihan? Pilihan apa?*" kening Gillian mengernyit.
> Dengan datar, Scott berkata, "*Silakan pilih, menikah denganku atau kujebloskan ke penjara?*"
> "*Apa??!*" Gillian menatap tidak percaya pada pria di hadapannya. "*Baru pertama kali ini saya mendengar jika seseorang bisa dijebloskan ke dalam penjara hanya karena menolak lamaran dari orang asing.*" (*730 Days of Marriage* in Novelme, chapter 2).

Translated version:
> ["We will have contract marriage for 730 days," Scott continued
> "Whaaaattt?!?" Gillian and Kent exclaimed together.
> "No, no. I don't want to," Gilllian refused.
> Scott grinned slyly. "Are you sure you don't want to?"

"Of course," Gillian replied 100% sure.

"Hmm… alright, then. You didn't give me a choice. However, I am still kind enough to give you a choice, Miss Winston."

"Choice? What choice?" Gillian's brow furrowed.

Flatly, Scott said, "Please choose, marry me or I throw you in jail?"

"What??!" Gillian stared in disbelief at the man before her. "This is the first time I've heard that someone can be thrown into jail just for refusing a proposal from a stranger."].

This kind of oppression is one model of narration in contract marriage of planned marriage. Usually, female character is unable to have other choice unless accepting the proposal. In this narration, female character is positioned as the weak.

These characterization, plot and theme flourish the stories of digital novel. The description of woman who is powerless and unable to fight for herself become the common view on digital novel such as *Webnovel, Dreame*, and *Novelme*. This shows how the female characters are constructed as weak and does not have the ability to struggle their lives, and this story is constructed to make sense by presenting a plot as if it has logical causes and effects. Even in some novels, female characters must not only accept the arrange marriage, but also must accept the violence in sexual intercourse. In fact, this harassment is repeated narration in other printed novels (Santoso, 2022; Sugianti, 2022).

Treated Like an Inanimate Object
In certain digital novels that are very thick of messages from the patriarchal system will narrate women as lifeless objects. Since women cannot fight back because of their position is weak, and usually they lived in poor lives, and they cannot speak out against their rights, then women in digital novels are usually treated like objects or non-humans who have rights to their lives, and must defend their rights (Baga, 2019).

The idea that women cannot fight back

and should not fight back is indeed constructed in such a way that the female characters should not fight back in the narration. This model of narration actually revealed in classic novels (Hetami, 2012), but it repeats in nowadays digital novels. For example, in the common digital novels, usually women cannot fight if she must marry to a big businessman who owes her father a debt and she became the victim to pay back the debt. This story is constructed, so we must question this. It implies that the fate of woman who was born to be poor and becoming a neglected child is bad fate. The story is presenting women as if non-human creature, and carried a bad luck. Accordingly, she must bear the mistakes of rich people. From the perspective of Feminist Literary Criticism, this characteristic subordinated or weaken the position of woman as weak creature who cannot struggle for her live, moreover here there exists also an issue of class. Therefore, woman on digital novels were described bearing double burden, namely weaknesses and poverty.

An example how female character in digital novel is unable to fight back for her rights, and was treated like inanimate object as below.

> *Demian menundukkan wajah dalam. Matanya berkaca-kaca. "Ma-maafkan ayah, nak. Ayah adalah orangtua yang tidak berguna. Kamu…kamu jadi harus dijadikan alat pembayar hutang."*
>
> *Sendi-sendi Raihana teras melemas. Syok dengan apa yang dia dengar barusan. Mulutnya pun sampai tidak bisa berkata apa-apa sebagai ungkapan perasaannya saat ini yang hancur bercampur aduk. Bahkan ketika empat pria berjaket itu memegang erat kedua tangannya dan menyeretnya masuk ke dalam mobil. Raihana masih membisu seraya menatap ayah dan neneknya dengan tatapam pilu yang luar biasa. […]*
>
> *"Hutang…hutang…Aku jadi penebus hutang…kenapa harus aku yang menebus hutang?" Raihana menggumam dalam hati. "Kalau aku jadi penebus hutang dan dibawa seperti ini, apa sama saja aku sedang ditawan sampai hutang ayah*

lunas? Kalau iya, bagaimana niatku untuk kuliah?" (Gadis Pelayan Tuan Muda in Dreame, chapter 1).

Translated version:

> [Demian lowered his face deeply. His eyes filled with tears. "I-I'm sorry, my girl. Dad is a useless parent. You…you have to be used as a debt payment tool."
>
> Raihana's joints felt weak. Shock with what she just heard. Even her mouth couldn't say anything as an expression of her feelings at this time which were shattered. Even when the four men in jackets held her hands tightly and dragged her into the car. Raihana was still silent as she looked at her father and grandmother with heartsick sad eyes. […]
>
> "Debt...debt...I am the debt redeemer...why should I be the one paying off the debt?" Raihana muttered in her heart. "If I become a debt redeemer and I'm taken like this, is it the same as I'm being held captive until my father's debt is paid off? If so, how do I intend to go to college?" (*Young Master's Servant Girl* in Dreame, chapter 1).

The above citation is from Indonesian novel. It demonstrates how female character was treated like an inanimate object. She was become a medium exchange for debt without her consent. She was not necessary to be asked about the important thing in her live.

One example from digital novels in English shows how female character was targeted to be the victim is not able to deny or reject the contracted marriage or substitute marriage. She was treated like inhuman.

> "The Lawrences are here. Why have you not changed your clothes?"
> Alyssa pushed the black-rimmed glasses on the bridge of her nose and looked dumbfounded. "Mom, do you really want me to marry my sister's fiancée?"
> Aurora thought she was making a big mistake by doing this, and her face turned white with anxiety. The Lawrences were waiting outside, and a simple mistake could destroy her whole family!
> She knelt in front of Alyssa and anxiously said, "Alyssa, I beg you. Your sister deserves better, why don't you just help her!"

> Alyssa's hopeless eyes gradually became cold. Although Aurora was her biological mother, she had favored the children of her father's ex-wife. Aurora knew that Alyssa's sister's fiancée was ugly and impotent, but she wanted Alyssa to marry him anyway. (*CEO"s Substitute Bride* in Joyread, chapter 1).

The citation above demonstrates how the targeted female character was not provided to choose her life. She does not have any choice unless to obey what other people want her to carry out. She was deliberately becoming a victim, because her position in the family was lower than her step sister. That citation shows how in the family it could be a gender and class injustice (Mulyani et al., 2022).

Financially dependent

The main female characters in digital novels are generally depicted as poor, because she was abandoned by her father to be raised by her grandmother. Or, although she was not poor, and was raised by her father, she did not have the same facilities as her stepsister, so that when she married a businessman, she will be very financially dependent on her husband. This condition leads her to accept all of decision made for her, because her position is weak, and unable to earn money for herself. Even, she must be a pion that can provide advantages to her family.

Thus, when the time comes for her to be divorced, she would lose her place to depend on. Depictions of women who are always financially dependent on their husbands generally appear in digital novels. Even though, for example, there are women who are able to rise up to stand on their own, it cannot be separated from the capital resulting from the divorce from her husband. It is very rarely depicted, when a woman is divorced from her husband, she rises from the results of her own strength.

This depiction provides an idea that women, however, cannot be independent without men financially. Women cannot earn a living without the help of men. This idea conveys the message that women will

never be like men in sustaining the economy. Women will forever depend on men economically.

Constructing Women's Identities through Digital Novels

The female characters in digital novels can be said to be representation of women in the real world from the countries where the novel is set. This representation can construct the identity of women, because the female characters are presented in a society even though it is a fictional society, but the place and cultural setting represent some places in the reality.

Through the description of the characterization of the main female character in the digital novel, the character is constructed by the author to be a weak woman, unable to choose for her life, unable to get out of pressure unless she accepts the situation and condition she must pass through. This is the spread of the patriarchal ideas that women naturally represent such characteristics. This is the embedding of women's identity as women who have positions that are not equal to men. Women are presented as having an identity as objects of male power, not partners in living. This identity is actually a repetition idea from the old idea construction about woman which reveal in the classic novels from 19th century in the west (Roifah and Eliyanah, 2012), and the beginning of 20th century in Indonesia.

CONCLUSION

This study seeks to investigate the perpetuation of outdated beliefs about women's identity within the digital novels. It is found that the element of replanting the idea that women are creatures that cannot get out of the power and oppression of men, was revived in digital novels. Women are powerless and unable to speak, women are inanimate object, financially dependent, are propaganda or advertisement of the ideas of patriarchy. Moreover, male power and oppression represented as protection, and the protection means is material or money.

Furthermore, the idea that women always need money because they cannot produce money by themselves, is spreading through some digital novels. Women must be surrender for this fact, and they cannot fight back, or cannot be able to be independent.

This idea is integrated in narrative form in digital novels. The spread of this idea through digital novels is a continuing strategy and advertising of patriarchal ideas to the millennial generation, because generally the millennial generation can access digital things easily compared to the older generation. They will assume, especially the younger generation of women, that this is how women should be, accepting their "nature". Moreover, if she is positioned as an illegal child and poor, then accepting the situation is a necessity. Whereas, digital novels that are more accessible to the millennial generation should present the spirit of a woman who can stand on her own in whatever situation she faces, she can get out of patriarchal circumstances and pressures. Then, digital novels should also present men who respect the existence of women, instead of presenting men who use their power and money to oppress women.

However, the analysis is limited to the depiction of women in digital novels and does not encompass the full range of themes and representations within the genre. The study also does not examine the perspectives and experiences of readers, which could provide valuable insights into the reception and interpretation of these narratives. Furthermore, the research does not consider potential variations or differences across different cultures or regions, as it primarily focuses on the millennial generation and digital novels accessible to them.

Therefore, future research could expand its scope to explore the portrayal of women in digital media across different age groups and cultural contexts. Comparing and contrasting representations in different genres and platforms could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the broader media landscape.

Moreover, future studies could also investigate the impact of these narratives on readers' attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. Examining the reception and interpretation of digital novels by diverse audiences, particularly by women themselves, would offer insights into the potential effects of these portrayals on individuals and society.

In terms of suggestions for future research, it would be beneficial to explore strategies for promoting more empowering and diverse representations of women in digital novels. This could involve analyzing successful examples of novels that challenge traditional gender norms and depict women as independent, capable, and respected individuals. Additionally, investigating the role of authors, publishers, and platform providers in shaping the content and themes of digital novels could shed light on the production and dissemination processes that contribute to the perpetuation of gender stereotypes.

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