Analyzing Patriarchy's Impact on Men in *Rintih Chicago* by Faizal Tehrani 2011

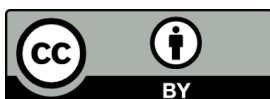**Iskandar Hilmi Lukman[1] & Umi Kalsom Ahmad[1*]**

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Abstract

This working paper examines the portrayal of patriarchy and its emotional consequences on male characters in *Rintih Chicago* (2011), a play by Malaysian writer Faisal Tehrani. While much critical attention on patriarchy focuses on the marginalisation of women, this study highlights how patriarchal expectations also shape and burden men. Specifically, it explores how ideals of masculinity influence identity formation, regulate emotional expression, and determine social roles within the narrative. By situating the play within broader discourses on gender and power, the paper demonstrates how Tehrani's work offers a nuanced reflection on the human cost of patriarchal structures. The analysis employs close reading of selected passages to trace how male characters internalise, conform to, or resist dominant gender norms. Particular attention is given to patterns of emotional repression, struggles with vulnerability, and the tension between personal desires and societal obligations. These dynamics reveal how patriarchal values, while granting men symbolic authority, produce psychological strain, fractured identities, and emotional isolation. The characters' experiences underscore the paradox that the very system designed to privilege men simultaneously constrains their humanity. By foregrounding the male emotional landscape, this study contributes to ongoing conversations in gender studies and literary criticism. It challenges the assumption that men are simply beneficiaries of patriarchy and instead demonstrates how they, too, are subject to harm, albeit in different ways than women. *Rintih Chicago* thus functions both as a critique of entrenched gender norms and as an exploration of the silent suffering that patriarchy engenders. Ultimately, this reading invites a more inclusive understanding of how patriarchal power operates, shaping and wounding all who live under its shadow.

Keywords: patriarchy, masculinity, identity, emotional expression, social roles, *Rintih Chicago*

Introduction

Rintih Chicago (2011) by Faisal Tehrani is a dramatic text that offers a powerful critique of patriarchy through the experiences of its male characters. Set within the sociopolitical complexities of a diasporic community, the narrative centres on three brothers, Za'im, Ali, and Nushi who face intense emotional and ideological conflicts under patriarchal expectations. The text interrogates how masculinity is constructed, enforced, and internalised, particularly in relation to emotional repression, leadership roles, and identity performance.

Patriarchy, as defined by Dobash and Dobash (1979), operates on both structural and ideological levels. Structurally, it is embedded in institutions that legitimise male dominance; ideologically, it is reinforced through cultural narratives that prescribe and justify specific gender roles. While men may appear to benefit from this system, many are in fact emotionally confined by rigid masculine ideals that deny them vulnerability, empathy, and self-expression. This study aims to achieve the following objectives: To discuss the elements of patriarchy as suggested by Dobash and Dobash (1979). To analyse the effects of patriarchal norms on the male characters' identity, emotional well-being, and roles in society. To support the elements proposed by Dobash and Dobash through the experiences of men in *Rintih Chicago*. This study narrowing to a single text and theme, this study aims to examine in detail how structural and ideological forms of patriarchy impact the lived experiences of men. The analysis will focus on themes such as masculinity, emotional isolation, and internalised pressure to conform. The theoretical framework is grounded in Dobash and Dobash's (1979) conceptualisation of patriarchy, supported by related literature on masculinity and gender roles (Ortner, 2022; Flood & Howson, 2015; Clearly, 2022; Berke, Reidy, 2018; Corvo and Golding, 2022; Hearth, 2019).

Problem Statement

Faisal Tehrani's Rintih Chicago is a compelling and underexplored literary work that directly engages with these themes (the text interrogates how masculinity is constructed, enforced, and internalised, particularly in relation to emotional repression, leadership roles, and identity performance). Through the characters of Za'im, Ali, and Nushi, Tehrani constructs a narrative that dramatises the inner conflict of men caught between ideological obligation and emotional authenticity. These characters do not only serve as ideological symbols within a political struggle; they are also deeply human, embodying the psychological burdens of masculine conformity. The play reveals how patriarchy, while outwardly privileging men, internally damages them by restricting their emotional agency and silencing their vulnerabilities. This paper, therefore, will focus on themes such as masculinity, emotional isolation, and internalised pressure to conform.

Literature Review

Patriarchy

Patriarchy is a social system where men hold primary power in various spheres of life, including within the family, the workplace, and political structures. This system establishes gendered roles that reinforce male dominance and subjugate women and marginalised groups. It is a hierarchical system that limits the freedom of not only women but also men, as it sets rigid expectations for masculinity and enforces conformity to societal roles (Acker, 1989). This system privileges men by providing them with greater access to resources, power, and decision-making, while simultaneously restricting their emotional expression and social flexibility. According to Ortner (2022) and Berke, Reidy (2018), patriarchy perpetuates male dominance

by embedding it into cultural practices, laws, and norms. Related to patriarchy, masculinity, identity, emotional well-being, and societal roles.

Masculinity

Masculinity refers to the collection of characteristics, behaviours, and roles that society expects from men. These often include being strong, unemotional, dominant, and in control. Men are frequently pressured to perform these traits to be considered "real men". Masculinity is not a fixed trait but a set of socially constructed ideals that change over time and across cultures. As Kimmel (2000) points out, masculinity is less about biology and more about performance; it is constantly reinforced by societal approval and peer regulation. In a patriarchal society, masculinity is often defined in opposition to femininity, where anything considered "soft" or "vulnerable" is deemed undesirable for men (Ortner, 2022). As Connell (2005) argues, masculinity is a complex and diverse concept that varies according to context, but patriarchal cultures often impose a dominant form of masculinity that marginalises those who fail to adhere to its standards. As Corvus and Golding (2022) for sometimes oversimplifying the biopsychosocial processes that shape male violence and emotional constraint within patriarchal systems.

Identity

Identity is how a person understands who they are, including their inner thoughts and how others see them. It is shaped by life experiences, culture, and what society expects. For men in a patriarchal society, identity is often built around fixed roles that expect them to be strong, in control, and unemotional. These outside pressures can conflict with their personal feelings and values. Flood and Howson (2015) say that men are often expected to be the provider, the protector, and the leader. These roles may seem powerful but can limit how men express emotions and affect their mental health. Seidler (2005) points out that many men feel a gap between how they really feel inside and the tough image they are told to show, which can lead to shame and emotional stress. Gill (2003) adds that men today face mixed messages. On one hand, they are still told to act strong and in control. On the other hand, they are now expected to be more open and emotional. This makes it hard for men to know who they really are. As a result, their sense of identity can become confused or unstable. Toller, Suter, and Trautman (2004) also highlight that gender role identity strongly influences how men position themselves in relation to traditional masculinity and emotional expression, which can affect their willingness to embrace alternative roles or identities. As a result, their sense of identity can become confused or unstable. In short, male identity in a patriarchal world is not something natural but something shaped by society that can have serious emotional effects.

Emotional Well-being

Emotional well-being means being able to understand and manage feelings in a healthy way. It includes handling stress, dealing with sadness, building good relationships, and expressing

emotions clearly. For many men living in a patriarchal society, emotional well-being is often harmed by the belief that they must hide feelings like fear, sadness, or vulnerability. From a young age, men are taught that showing emotions is a sign of weakness (Flood and Howson, 2015). This pressure to stay silent and strong can cause mental health problems such as depression, anxiety, and loneliness. Edström (2015) explains that these strict gender rules stop men from opening up emotionally, which affects how they connect with others and manage stress. Similarly, Hooks (2004) points out that patriarchy teaches men to shut down their emotions, making them feel empty and disconnected. De Boise and Hearn (2017) further argue that men's emotional inexpressiveness is not only socially constructed through patriarchy but also reinforced by cultural expectations, and that shifting towards more open emotional practices can improve both gender equality and men's own well-being. As a result, many men struggle to form close relationships or to feel truly understood. These emotional limits show how harmful patriarchal expectations can be to men's mental and emotional health.

Social Roles

Social roles are the expectations and behaviours linked to a person's position in society. These roles are shaped by identity, gender, and culture. In a patriarchal society, men are often expected to be the main earners, protectors, and leaders in both the family and the community (Beechey, 1979b). These roles are taught from a young age and are repeated in school, media, religion, and family life. Because of this, many men feel strong pressure to follow these roles, even if they do not match their true feelings or abilities. Connell (2005) explains that this pressure can cause frustration and confusion when men struggle to live up to what society expects of them. Mahalik, Burns, and Syzdek (2007) add that trying to meet these traditional roles can also lead to stress, poor mental health, or risky behaviour, especially when men are afraid of being seen as weak or unmanly. Richmond, Levant, and Ladhani (2012) further show that dominant ideologies about the male role often demand conformity to a narrow and unrealistic ideal, creating psychological strain and limiting men's freedom to embrace alternative identities. Overall, these roles may offer men power on the outside, but they can also create inner conflict and limit their freedom to be themselves.

This literature review explores the intersecting themes of patriarchy and masculinity as portrayed in *Rintih Chicago* (2011) by Faisal Tehrani. In patriarchal societies, men are frequently expected to embody rigid gender roles that emphasise dominance, emotional restraint, and authority. While these roles appear to bestow power and privilege, they often come at the cost of emotional suppression and identity fragmentation. As such, the study of masculinity within literature, especially in works like *Rintih Chicago,* offers critical insight into the psychological and social consequences of these rigid expectations. This chapter begins by examining the foundational concepts of patriarchy and masculinity in the Malaysian context, followed by an overview of how these themes have been represented in Malaysian literature. The review then narrows its focus to explore how *Rintih Chicago* dramatises the emotional and ideological pressures experienced by its male characters under patriarchal constraints.

Patriarchy and Masculinity in Malaysian Society

Patriarchy is a deeply entrenched social system that continues to shape gender norms and relationships across Malaysian society. Within this structure, men are typically assigned leadership roles and granted authority in familial, political, and institutional domains. These positions of power are often upheld by cultural, religious, and historical values that frame men as providers, protectors, and decision-makers. However, as Acker (1989) highlights, patriarchy not only privileges men but also binds them to prescriptive behaviours that can restrict emotional expression and personal autonomy.

In the Malaysian context, masculinity is not an inherent trait but a socially constructed identity that is developed through cultural conditioning and societal expectations. From an early age, boys are taught to suppress vulnerability and to adopt traits such as independence, strength, and stoicism. These ideals are presented as essential characteristics of a "real" man, creating pressure to consistently perform a narrow version of masculinity. Connell (2005) and Flood and Howson (2015) argue that such pressures can lead to internal conflict, emotional suppression, and psychological distress when personal identities diverge from societal expectations.

Male protagonists in Malaysian fiction are commonly cast as providers, protectors, or decision-makers, roles that align with traditional ideals of masculinity. However, when personal desires, emotional needs, or moral doubts emerge, these roles often become sources of inner conflict. The expectation to uphold a dominant masculine persona prevents men from fully expressing vulnerability or seeking emotional support. Berggren (2020) highlights that men's engagement with patriarchal norms and feminism is closely tied to emotional experiences, including feelings of shame, frustration, and alienation, which mirrors the internal struggles of these fictional characters. As a result, many male characters navigate complex emotional landscapes in silence, and their stories reveal the isolating effects of patriarchal socialization.

Authors such as Shahnon Ahmad, Usman Awang, and Faisal Tehrani have used fiction and drama to engage with questions of identity, masculinity, and resistance. While female characters are often positioned as overt victims of patriarchy, the subtle emotional toll on men is presented as a quieter but equally significant form of suffering. In some texts, male characters who deviate from conventional masculine roles by showing emotion, withdrawing from power, or challenging authority are either punished by the narrative or marginalized by other characters. These portrayals underline the extent to which patriarchy disciplines not only women but also men who step outside prescribed norms. dissonance can cause dissatisfaction, alienation, and even resentment, as men are forced to navigate roles that conflict with their authentic selves (Flood & Howson, 2015).

This context is especially relevant to *Rintih Chicago*, where male characters embody the emotional and ideological tensions produced by patriarchy. The play does not merely reinforce traditional masculinity but interrogates it portraying the cost of compliance, the fear of failure, and the longing for authenticity. It is within this literary tradition that Tehrani's work contributes a crucial, though under-explored, narrative of male vulnerability and resistance.

Masculinity in the Works of Faisal Tehrani

Faisal Tehrani is a prolific Malaysian writer known for his exploration of themes such as identity, morality, nationalism, and resistance. His works often critique social and political structures while weaving in religious and cultural commentary. While much of the scholarly attention has focused on his portrayals of women, Islamic values, and national identity, his depiction of masculinity particularly its limitations and psychological burden remain under-explored. This oversight is significant, as Tehrani's male characters frequently wrestle with societal expectations and inner conflict, making them fertile ground for gender-based analysis. In *Rintih Chicago* (2011), Tehrani positions three Palestinian brothers Za'im, Ali, and Nushi within a framework of ideological and emotional crisis. While the play is set against the backdrop of political displacement and religious struggle, its emotional core lies in how the characters grapple with masculinity under patriarchal expectations. Each brother embodies a different response to these pressures: Za'im reflects stoic authority and ideological rigidity, Ali struggles with indecision and internal conflict, while Nushi expresses vulnerability, empathy, and spiritual sincerity.

The narrative trajectory of these characters highlights how patriarchal ideals not only constrain their social roles but also distort their emotional landscapes. Za'im, in adhering to dominant masculine norms, suppresses his emotions in favour of control and logic. This aligns with the hegemonic masculinity described by Connell (2005), in which emotional suppression is essential to maintaining authority. In contrast, Nushi resists this expectation, openly displaying his inner turmoil and emotional sensitivity. His actions, however, are interpreted by others particularly Za'im as irrational or weak, revealing how patriarchal ideology is internalized and policed even among family members.

Ali, the middle brother, represents the most conflicted figure. He mediates between Za'im's intellectual dominance and Nushi's emotional truth, but in doing so, becomes fragmented. His indecision and passive responses reflect the psychological paralysis that can result from trying to meet conflicting expectations. Tehrani uses Ali to illustrate the emotional cost of performing masculinity in a society that values moral clarity, decisiveness, and strength above nuance and emotional honesty.

Despite the richness of these portrayals, existing scholarship on Tehrani's work has largely sidelined the emotional and gendered dimensions of his male characters. Most analyses focus on his political, religious, or feminist engagements, rarely interrogating how his male characters are shaped by or resist patriarchal norms. This gap presents an opportunity to reframe *Rintih Chicago* not just as a political or religious narrative, but also as a psychological and emotional critique of masculinity in crisis. By foregrounding the emotional lives of men, Tehrani contributes to a more nuanced representation of gender in Malaysian literature. His work suggests that the costs of patriarchy are not borne by women alone but are shared albeit differently by men who are expected to suppress emotion, uphold authority, and maintain coherence in the face of internal chaos. This tension between appearance and emotional truth is central to *Rintih Chicago*, making it an essential text for interrogating the emotional consequences of masculinity under patriarchy.

Contemporary gender theory, particularly the works of Connell (2005), Flood and Howson (2015), and Dobash and Dobash (1979), has expanded the understanding of

masculinity beyond structural dominance. These scholars have highlighted the importance of examining how men internalize patriarchal expectations, how they perform masculinity, and how that performance often leads to emotional repression, psychological distress, and fractured identities. Yet, within Malaysian literary criticism, there remains a lack of focused analysis on male subjectivity especially from an emotional and ideological perspective.

Faisal Tehrani's *Rintih Chicago* is a compelling and underexplored literary work that directly engages with these themes. Through the characters of Za'im, Ali, and Nushi, Tehrani constructs a narrative that dramatizes the inner conflict of men caught between ideological obligation and emotional authenticity. These characters do not only serve as ideological symbols within a political struggle; they are also deeply human, embodying the psychological burdens of masculine conformity. The play reveals how patriarchy, while outwardly privileging men, internally damages them by restricting their emotional agency and silencing their vulnerabilities.

Research Methodology

This chapter outlines the research design, methodology, and analytical approach used in this academic exercise. Since the study seeks to explore the emotional and ideological consequences of patriarchy on male characters in *Rintih Chicago (2011)* by Faisal Tehrani, it adopts a qualitative, text-based approach. The focus is on how patriarchal structures both social and psychological are dramatized within the play through the lived experiences of its male characters. The methodology involves close reading, thematic analysis, and interpretation grounded in gender theory, particularly the framework proposed by Dobash and Dobash (1979) and Connell (2005). The methodology is driven by three key research objectives. The first objective is to discuss the elements of patriarchy as suggested by Dobash and Dobash (1979). This will be achieved through a comprehensive review of theoretical literature on patriarchy, focusing on its implications for gender roles, with particular attention to how patriarchal systems impact men. By exploring their foundational work, the study will establish a theoretical framework that defines patriarchy and its relevance to the experiences of men, which will guide the subsequent analysis.
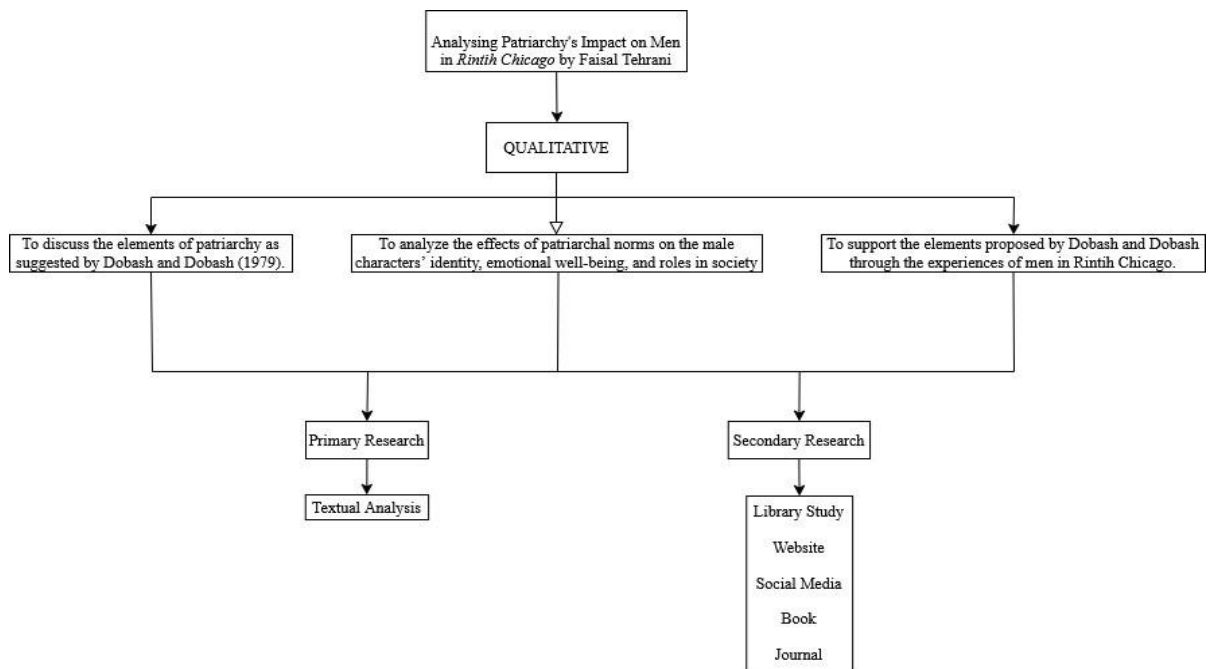
Methodology

Diagram 1: Research design

The research will employ both primary and secondary data sources to provide a comprehensive understanding of how patriarchy impacts men in *Rintih Chicago*. The primary method of data collection will be textual analysis, which will serve as the core research tool for investigating the themes and concepts central to the study. Textual analysis will involve a close reading of *Rintih Chicago*, with a focus on identifying and interpreting themes related to patriarchy, masculinity, identity, emotional well-being, and societal roles. The methodology for this study is grounded in a qualitative approach, which is particularly well-suited for exploring complex social phenomena such as patriarchy's impact on men. Patriarchy is a multifaceted and deeply ingrained societal structure that shapes various aspects of human life, including identity, emotions, and societal roles. By adopting qualitative research methods, the study aims to provide a nuanced understanding of how patriarchal norms influence the male characters in *Rintih Chicago*. Qualitative research allows for an in-depth exploration of the lived experiences and subjective perspectives of the characters, which is essential for understanding the subtle and intricate ways in which patriarchy operates.

In summary, the qualitative approach, textual analysis, and secondary research methods together form a cohesive and effective methodology for this study, allowing for a deep and comprehensive analysis of patriarchy's impact on men as portrayed in *Rintih Chicago*. This methodology section presents a comprehensive and well-structured approach to analysing the impact of patriarchy on men in *Rintih Chicago*. By integrating primary research through textual analysis with secondary sources such as academic books, journal articles, and websites, the study aims to provide an in-depth examination of how patriarchal norms influence male identities, emotional well-being, and societal roles within the novel. The combination of these methods allows for a thorough exploration of the themes of masculinity, patriarchy, and identity while grounding the analysis in established gender theory. This research design ensures a

nuanced and critical understanding of how patriarchal structures affect men, offering valuable insights into both the text and the broader cultural context.

Data Collection Methods

This study relies on qualitative data collection, drawing from two primary sources: the literary text (*Rintih Chicago*) and supporting theoretical literature. The objective is to uncover how patriarchy impacts men emotionally, psychologically, and socially, using close reading as the primary interpretive method. The data collection approach reflects the need for in-depth, context-rich interpretation, appropriate for textual and gender-based analysis.
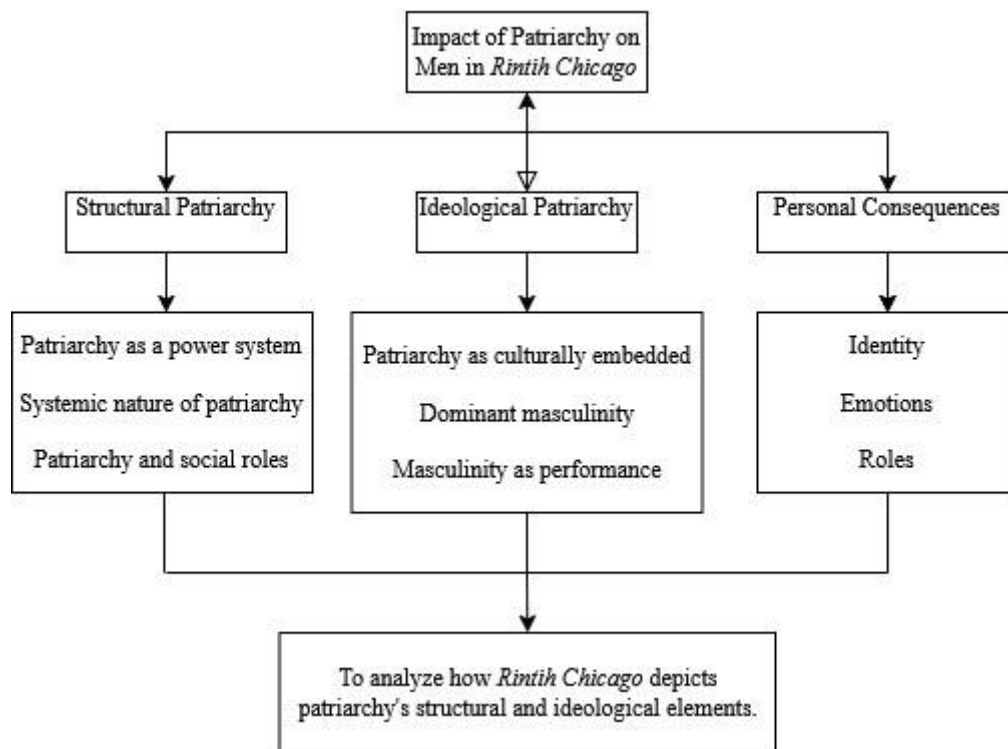
Theoretical Framework

Diagram 2: Theoretical Framework

This framework aims to explore how *Rintih Chicago* depicts the structural and ideological components of patriarchy and how these elements shape male identities, emotional responses, and social roles. Patriarchy is not treated here as a one-dimensional system but as a layered and dynamic force that operates through institutions, beliefs, and lived experiences. By dissecting the narrative through these three lenses, the study seeks to highlight the various ways in which patriarchy influences and co the first category, structural patriarchy, focuses on the societal systems that institutionalise male dominance. Drawing from Dobash and Dobash (1979), this concept views patriarchy as a power structure embedded in laws, cultural traditions, and institutional norms that position men as dominant figures in both private and public life. In

Rintih Chicago, this form of patriarchy is evident in the characters' inherited roles and responsibilities, particularly in how the brothers perceive leadership, authority, and moral obligation. These institutionalised expectations often force the characters to uphold social roles that limit their autonomy and emotional expression.

Finding and Analysis

This chapter presents the findings of the study through a thematic analysis of *Rintih Chicago* by Faisal Tehrani. Guided by the theoretical framework of Dobash and Dobash (1979) and Connell's (2005) theory of hegemonic masculinity, the analysis identifies key themes that reflect how patriarchal structures influence male identity, emotional repression, and societal roles. The male characters Za'im, Ali, and Nushi are analysed in relation to structural and ideological expectations, revealing the emotional and psychological toll of patriarchy on men within the narrative.

Emotional Repression as a Masculine Expectation

One of the most salient themes in *Rintih Chicago* is the suppression of emotion, which is portrayed as a fundamental expectation placed upon men in patriarchal systems. Za'im, the eldest brother, internalises the belief that masculinity is synonymous with emotional restraint. His rejection of vulnerability is evident when he reprimands his younger brother. *"Jangan tunjuk lemah. Kita ini lelaki. Lelaki tidak menangis."* (p. 32). This line reflects a cultural construction of manhood that excludes emotional expressiveness. By denying himself the space to grieve or be afraid, Za'im isolates himself emotionally, further reinforcing the patriarchal ideal of male stoicism. Ali, the middle brother, also represses his emotions but expresses them through aggression and ideological fervour. His sense of worth is tied to whether he is perceived as "man enough."". *"Apa lagi yang harus aku lakukan supaya kalian anggap aku lelaki sejati?"* (p. 42). This desperate outcry reflects the internalised pressure to constantly prove one's masculinity, even at great personal cost. It also illustrates how patriarchy distorts Connell's (2005) concept of hegemonic masculinity as performative and oppressive. Emotional needs into expressions of power or frustration.

Masculinity as Performance and Burden

In *Rintih Chicago*, masculinity is portrayed not as an inherent identity but as a role men are expected to perform. This theme is illustrated most clearly in the way the three brothers Za'im, Ali, and Nushi navigate their masculinity in relation to family expectations, ideology, and emotional struggle. Za'im assumes the role of the emotionless leader, embodying the patriarchal expectation that the eldest male must always remain composed and authoritative. He burdens himself with the belief that his weakness would destroy the family's moral structure. *"Aku perlu kuat. Kalau aku goyah, semuanya runtuh."* (p. 41). This internalized belief reflects how masculinity under patriarchy becomes an emotional prison. Za'im's performance of strength becomes a defense mechanism, one that ultimately distances him from his brothers and leads

to his emotional isolation. Iacoviello et al. (2022) note that traditional masculinity norms are often maintained because they are socially valued by men themselves, creating pressure to perform strength and emotional restraint even when it conflicts with personal needs.

Ali's masculinity, on the other hand, is deeply performative and militant. His vision of manhood is one of physical bravery and martyrdom. For him, true masculinity is tied to sacrifice. *"Syahid itu impian lelaki sejati."* (p. 45). This line demonstrates how masculinity can be constructed through violence and the glorification of death. Ali's performance of masculinity, rooted in resistance and martyrdom, represents how patriarchal systems reward emotional suppression and valorize male sacrifice often to the detriment of the self. Nushi, the youngest, resists these molds. He questions their choices, expresses fear, and refuses to fully perform masculinity as defined by his brothers. Yet his deviation from this script results in ridicule and rejection. The brothers' reaction to Nushi's emotional transparency reinforces how patriarchy marginalizes men who defy dominant gender norms.

Together, the three brothers present different manifestations of masculinity, all of which reveal how gender roles function as burdens rather than authentic expressions of self. Their identities are shaped by the roles they are expected to fulfill, not by who they truly are. This aligns with Connell's (2005) theory that masculinity is socially constructed and relational, constantly performed.

The Ideological Trap of Moral Absolutism

Patriarchy in *Rintih Chicago* operates not only through interpersonal and structural expectations but also through ideological constructs. Za'im, the eldest brother, internalizes a strict, absolutist morality that conflates masculinity with unwavering certainty, control, and religious authority. He believes that a man must lead with certainty, even if it means suppressing doubt or emotion. This is shown in his rigid declaration. *"Kita tidak punya pilihan. Lelaki harus tahu jalan benar dan tidak goyah."* (p. 49). Za'im's ideology reinforces the patriarchal norm that real men are decisive, morally superior, and unshakeable. This perspective leaves no room for emotional ambiguity or reflection, positioning doubt as weakness and introspection as failure. As Dobash and Dobash (1979) argued, ideological patriarchy sustains itself through moral narratives that justify male dominance, often by portraying men as rational and emotionally immune leaders. Ali, though rebelling against Za'im's religious authoritarianism, falls into a parallel ideological trap. His belief that silence equals weakness fuels his radicalisation. *"Dunia ini menghina lelaki yang diam."* (p. 47). This line encapsulates how patriarchal ideology equates male worth with action, resistance, and speech, preferably aggressive or militant. The ideology imposed on Ali and Za'im, though expressed differently, ultimately leads both to internal instability and interpersonal conflict.

Nushi, meanwhile, becomes a mirror of ideological disillusionment. He does not subscribe fully to either Za'im's righteousness or Ali's militancy. His passive yet emotionally rich perspective stands in contrast to his brothers, suggesting that masculinity outside ideology is possible but costly. He is isolated, viewed as weak, and excluded from the moral narrative that defines what it means to be "a man" in their world.

This theme reveals how ideology sustains patriarchy by framing it as natural, moral, or even divine. In this way, patriarchy becomes difficult to question, especially for men, who are

rewarded for conforming and punished for deviating. The ideological trap thus imprisons men as much as it privileges them, creating rigid standards that sabotage emotional well-being and critical reflection.

Brotherhood as a Site of Patriarchal Reproduction

In *Rintih Chicago*, the fraternal relationship between Za'im, Ali, and Nushi serves not only as a familial bond but also as a mechanism for reinforcing patriarchal norms. The play illustrates how patriarchy is passed down and policed within male relationships, particularly through hierarchical expectations of leadership, loyalty, and emotional restraint.

Za'im, as the eldest brother, assumes the authoritative role of the patriarch within the household. His declaration. *"Aku abang. Tanggungjawab di bahu aku."* (p. 34). Reflects the internalisation of patriarchal duty, where age and gender dictate leadership, decision-making, and control. His statement positions responsibility not as a shared effort but as a burden that affirms his masculinity. The phrase reaffirms the cultural belief that masculinity is defined by bearing weight, protecting others, and suppressing personal vulnerability.

This dynamic is further reinforced through Za'im's treatment of Nushi. When Nushi expresses concern or uncertainty, he is met with ridicule or dismissal. *"Lemahnya kamu, Nushi. Jangan jadi beban."* (p. 36). In this moment, emotional openness is not only devalued but also treated as a threat to the familial and ideological order. Nushi's difference is framed as weakness, reinforcing the patriarchal assumption that men must be emotionally invulnerable to be worthy of respect.

Ali, in turn, oscillates between challenging Za'im's authority and mirroring his dominance. His aggressive outbursts and ideological convictions become expressions of a different, yet equally patriarchal, masculinity, one that values assertiveness and radicalism over introspection or empathy. This conflict between brothers, while seemingly personal, is deeply shaped by competing versions of how masculinity should be performed under patriarchy.

The fraternal bond, instead of being a space of solidarity and emotional support, becomes a battlefield for proving one's manhood. Each brother tries to outdo the other in strength, conviction, or control, thereby reproducing the very ideals that oppress them. Patriarchy, in this context, is not only enforced by societal institutions or ideologies; it is internalised and sustained through everyday interactions among men, even within the intimacy of brotherhood.

The Emotional Toll and Fragmentation of the Male Self

The culmination of patriarchal pressures in *Rintih Chicago* is reflected in the psychological and emotional breakdown of its male characters. Beneath the facade of strength, rationality, and leadership, the brothers struggle with inner turmoil that exposes the cost of conforming to rigid masculine ideals.

Throughout the play, each brother reveals cracks in his identity. Za'im, despite presenting himself as resolute and righteous, shows signs of emotional exhaustion and moral uncertainty. His silence deepens as the narrative progresses, and his emotional detachment

isolates him not only from his brothers but also from himself. His adherence to patriarchal ideals leaves no space for self-care or vulnerability, resulting in a fragmented and lonely existence.

Ali, whose masculinity is defined by resistance and martyrdom, is consumed by his desire to be validated as a "true man". His journey ends not in empowerment but in implosion. His aggression, once a source of pride, becomes a mask for emotional desperation and identity confusion. His moral certainty is shaken, and his identity unravels under the weight of contradiction and suppressed fear.

Nushi, the only character who dares to reflect and feel openly, becomes a vessel for the emotional truth the others avoid. His most powerful moment comes in the form of a painful admission. *"Kita semua sudah hilang diri dalam perjuangan yang tidak kita fahami sepenuhnya."* (p. 51). This statement encapsulates the emotional devastation left in the wake of blind ideological and patriarchal adherence. Nushi recognises that their struggle – political, personal, and moral – has cost them their authentic selves. His words resonate as a critique not only of the characters' actions but of the system that demanded they sacrifice their humanity for a version of masculinity that was never theirs to begin with.

The emotional toll suffered by the brothers in *Rintih Chicago* exemplifies Dobash and Dobash's (1979) argument that patriarchy harms men by enforcing roles that are ultimately dehumanising. Their inner fragmentation, emotional suppression, and relational breakdown are symptoms of a broader patriarchal illness, one that promises power but delivers alienation and loss of self.

Conclusion

This paper explored how patriarchy affects male characters in *Rintih Chicago* (2011) by Faisal Tehrani. Using Dobash and Dobash's (1979) theoretical framework and a qualitative textual analysis approach, the research focused on how patriarchal systems shape men's identities, emotions, and roles in society. The analysis highlighted five key themes: emotional repression, performance of masculinity, ideological pressure, patriarchal enforcement through brotherhood, and emotional breakdown.

The findings show that patriarchy does not only give men power; it also limits their emotional freedom and creates psychological strain. Za'im, Ali, and Nushi each represent different struggles with masculinity. Za'im feels trapped by the need to appear strong, Ali loses himself in extremist ideals, and Nushi, though more emotionally open, is rejected for not conforming. These characters reveal that masculinity, when shaped by rigid patriarchal norms, becomes a burden rather than a privilege. In short, *Rintih Chicago* shows that patriarchy harms men by forcing them into narrow gender roles, distorting their emotions, and isolating them from others. The play offers a powerful critique of how society's expectations of men can lead to emotional suffering and loss of identity.

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