

**THE INFLUENCE OF POWER
RELATIONS WHICH GIVE RISE TO
GENDER INEQUALITY ON THE MAIN
CHARACTER IN THE NOVEL *THE RED
QUEEN* BY PHILIPPA GREGORY**

**Rustiyani
Agnes Setyowati H.
Ni Made Widisanti S.**

ABSTRACT

The topic of this research is the influence of power relations which gave rise to injustice against the female character in Philippa Gregory's *The Red Queen*. In a relationship, whether between individuals or groups, there is usually a figure who has more control than others. In this sphere, Foucault calls this kind of relationship "power relations". Power relation is something that can be said to be commonplace, but this is detrimental to one party, especially to women. Therefore, this study aims to show the harm suffered by women due to the influence of power relations by centralizing the analysis on Lady Margaret Beaufort, the main character of a noble woman in the context of the 14th and 15th centuries in England. The type of research used is qualitative research that is supported by library technique. The research findings shows that power relations in the 14th and 15th centuries are very strong in the life of the royal community, and it gives birth of injustice to the main character such as: (1) Stereotype, (2) Subordination, (3) Symbolic violence and, (4) Marginalization.

Keywords: Power Relations, Woman, Main Character, Injustice

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

Gender issues are complex issues that have taken root in the social life of the community, so

the discussion on this subject seems to continue to branch out, therefore it is endless. From the past until now it can be said that women have always been the corners of this problem. Differences in rights and obligations born from this gender mapping process, then often place women in disadvantaged positions.

Gender injustice towards women is clearly seen in various domains, although many assume that this does not apply to some circles such as the royal family, nobility or other distinguished people. This thought is based on the views of people who are actually respected by the community, in plain view have a life that is far better, organized and judged to have more control than the community at large.

Philippa Gregory is one of the many female writers who explicitly answer the people's big questions about gender injustice experienced by women from the royal family. Of the many numbers of novels produced, almost all of them mostly contain themes related to the power underlying the occurrence of injustice. Through the characters in his works, Gregory openly explained things that were visible to some people in vague terms. In the series of her stories, Gregory represented the injustice experienced by noble women of royal family.

Gregory's work is one of the series from *The Cousins' War*, a novel entitled *The Red Queen*, which was published in 2010. The series of stories from the novel illustrates major themes regarding power, politics, ideology, and women and injustice. This novel revives the story of one female character who has a major influence on the history of the British empire, Lady Margaret Beaufort. She was a victim of gender injustice caused by the existence of a system regarding to power relations in the 14th and 15th centuries.

1.2 Identification and Formulation of Research Problem

A form of power or control possessed by men, especially in a royal environment can affect injustice for a woman even though she is in the same scope and social class (a woman who is a member of the royal family). Therefore, in order to avoid expanding the discussion of the issue in Philippa Gregory's *The Red Queen*, the author limits the research problem only to the problem of power relations that bring loss in the form of injustice to the main character, Lady Margaret Beaufort.

1.3 Research Problem

Based on the identification and limitations of the existing problems, the problems are formulated into several points, namely; (1) How the influence of power relation raises injustice to the main character (2) What are the forms of injustice experienced by the main character in the novel *The Red Queen* by Philippa Gregory (3) How do the main character overcomes the problems of injustice in the kingdom that happened to her. It is intended to facilitate the author in describing the findings in accordance with the focus of the problems that have been formulated.

1.4 Research Objectives

The objectives of this research is to show the disadvantages experienced by women due to the influence of power relations by focusing the analysis on Lady Margaret Beaufort, the main character of nobility in the context of the 14th and 15th centuries in England.

1.5 Research Methods

In analyzing *The Red Queen* novel by Philippa Gregory, the author uses descriptive analysis method according to Nazir (2005), which is to make a description systematically, factually and accurately, related to facts or relationships between phenomena that are being investigated.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Power Relations and Injustice

Foucault's work on power relations deserves special attention. With his historical analysis, he relativized something that had been considered absolute. Foucault places truth, ratio, knowledge, academic discourse, medicine, education, hospitals, human beings, and so on in power relations. For Foucault, power is not something that "exists". Power is equal to many power relations that work in one space of time, and it transforms the notion of power which is conventionally understood that power is oppressive, that power produces truth because truth is in relations - circular relations with a system of power that produces truth and keeps that truth. Therefore, the truth does not exist by itself, the truth is not something outside the power, but within. Thus the truth is power (Shimogaki, 2007: 39).

2.2 Power Relations in Patriarchal Society

Patriarchy is a society structure in which power is always in the hands of the dominant men, while other men are placed in the order of subordination where the majority of the weakest men are in the lowest order. In a structure such as this, women have no place, except to hang on to the position of their father, husband, or son. Thus the identity, dignity and self-esteem of a woman depends on the social status of her father, husband or son (Kristiyanto, 2005: 88)

In general, a person or object of power, especially women, seems to understand the system that exists and can take it for granted, but behind that silence sometimes rejection appears within itself. Whinship argues that "*femininity is not just a passive acceptance by women of patriarchal domination*"; *femininity "maneuvering" inside and fighting masculine hegemony; represent what is called "active subordination"* (1978: 134-135). The statement

implies objections and resistance, and returns us to Jacqueline Rose's argument that femininity is a position that has never been fully achieved (Thornham, 2010: 117).

2.3 Power relations give rise to gender injustice

Gender differences are actually considered not to be a problem as long as they do not produce gender inequalities. However, the problem is that gender inequality has resulted in injustice for both men and women. Gender injustice manifested in various forms, namely marginalization or the process of economic impoverishment, subordination, stereotyping, violence, excessive workload, and socialization of the value of gender roles (Fakih, 2013: 12)

The social structures and structures of production and reproductive activities are derived from the schemes that exist in the habitus through generative formulations. The existence of positions in the realm that are capable of producing practice will have an impact on dominance towards the dominant position. Schemes of thought which are products of the formation of power relations and expressed in the opposition underlying the symbolic order. The application of these schemes is an act of recognition of practice, recognition of doxa and beliefs without reproduction of further thinking is symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 2010: 48). Symbolic violence and power do not use physical restraints but through domination of recognition and agreement that is detached from consciousness and carried out as habitus (Bourdieu, 2010: 54). The use of the word high / short, beautiful / ugly, strong / weak is an example of a small portion of symbolic violence (Taqwa & Sadewo, 2016: 5).

3. Analysis

In a relationship, both between individuals and groups in the social life of people in various domains (domestic or public), it can be ascertained that one or several members in the circle of relations have more power or control over other members, in other words, relations or relationships always have power in them.

The power possessed by one party, of course, causes one has the authority and the right to control the movements of others, as it is known that a view of entrenched power, whether it is realized or not, has an influence on most people. Without realizing it, it seems that they have a system that works automatically to feel disinclined to someone with a higher position. This then directs them to follow or obey the rules or orders that have been set. This view is true considering that in a relationship, it cannot be headed by more than one person, but sometimes a power can be felt to be detrimental if it is misused in the sense of utilizing the power to control other people.

The novel *The Red Queen* by Philippa Gregory, in broad outline, provides an overview of the character Lady Margaret Beaufort who is a part of a power relation. Her position is no stronger than some people in the royal family so that Margaret is always cornered. The ideology or the view that is closely attached to the people around Margaret makes her unable to break the rolling system. Margaret's inability trailed her in the workings of the system within the kingdom.

The issue of power relations not only dwells on the control of others, but also on the creation of injustice for one party that is controlled, in this case women, like Lady Margaret Beaufort. The large number of controls received from both, the core family and the broader structural scope of the kingdom, have led to various forms of injustice such as stereotyping, subordination, workload, physical and non-physical violence to

marginalization which of course harms Margaret.

Although the character Margaret herself is seen to carry out everything ordered by people who incidentally have a position on it, it cannot be said that Margaret took for granted the system of power relations and all forms of injustice against her. Often there is an inner struggle in her rejecting things that she feels are burdensome and unwanted, even several times trying to convey her objections even though it doesn't work. At other times, she has even managed to free herself from the control of others around her, but the system that has been imprinted in such a way keeps bringing Margaret back to the vortex of power relations.

4. CONCLUSION

The normal assumption that the power relations system as a normative problem has an impact on injustice especially for women, this makes it difficult for the character Margaret to escape from the entanglement of the system that has been entrenched.

Thus, it can be concluded that the influence of power relations raises losses in the form of injustice on the part of women, which in this case, is experienced by the main character, Lady Margaret Beaufort in the novel *The Red Queen* by Philippa Gregory. The disadvantage in question is that Lady Margaret is always in the control of others, so she loses the freedom to live the life she wants, as a result of the system in power relations that demands Margaret to always submit and obey all the rules set by others with higher position than her. In the end, automatically this power relations system gave birth to forms of injustice such as stereotype, subordination, violence (both physical, psychological, and symbolic), and also marginalization as happened to the main character, Margaret. Power relations caused

Lady Margaret, in compulsion, to follow the prevailing rules in the royal environment, but actually she carried out passive resistance in her, because she opposed the rolling system in the kingdom.

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