



WOMEN'S STRUGGLE AGAINST OPPRESSIONS IN "THE CASE OF THE MISSING MARQUESS" BY NANCY SPRINGER

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ABSTRACT

The Victorian era was closely related to the patriarchal system. During this era, many women were oppressed because their activities were so restricted. The women during the Victorian era were not brave enough to fight but Enola Holmes was the only exception. Enola was portrayed as a brave young girl who fought for the patriarchal system in order to gain her freedom as a woman. The approach of this research is feminism approach which is explained by the theory of Sara Ahmed (2017). This research is designed with the descriptive qualitative method because the data source is taken from a novel entitled "The Case of the Missing Marquess" by Nancy Springer. The first aim of this research is to find out the main character's oppressions toward the patriarchal system and the second aim is to reveal how the main character struggles against the patriarchal system during the Victorian era in the novel. (1) The first result of this research shows that there are eight data that have been found to answer the oppressions toward the main character and (2) the second result of this research shows that there are five data that have been found to answer how the main character struggles against the patriarchal system. To sum up, there are oppressions and there are struggles against the patriarchal system in the Victorian era portrayed by the main character.

Keywords: Feminism, Women's Struggle, Women's Oppression, Patriarchy.

1. INTRODUCTION

Literature can be explained as all written works that can be used as the references in various activities in the field of education and other fields. The term literature is used by Klarer (2004) to describe literature as the entire expression of written words, but not every written words can be characterized as literature. Generally, literature is classified into three genre, they are prose (fiction and non-fiction), poetry, and drama. There are six type of prose and novel is one of them. The chosen data of this research is a novel. The chosen novel takes time during the Victorian era. This era is described as an era which the wives were claimed as the properties for their husbands because the husbands could claim their wives' earnings and bodies. In opposite, the wives could not make the same upon their husbands, according to Shanley (1989). Also, Victorian women were not allowed to have their freedom. According to Satria (2017) as shown in Emma, during the nineteenth century, British society emphasized marriage as a method of increasing social status.

Women all around the world still oppress because they cannot have the freedom the way men have. In the context of biology, there are facts regarding to how women's bodies are weaker than men. These facts cannot be denied, but there is no significance that the muscles strength can be used as the reason for the dominance towards women (Beauvoir, 1949). Also, according to Cole (2003) all societies have used women's oppression to maintain its power. Men have always dominated the world, and no reason has ever seemed adequate to explain this when in fact sex should not be a distinction between both men and women. However, women still struggle for change up until today. Cole (2003) describes that fighting for a change is not waste of a time as the movements in the nineteenth and twentieth have put women in better situation—it was worse than the current situation.

Women who strive for their freedom are anti-patriarchy. Because the patriarchal culture still exists, many women do not have their freedom despite the fact that as human beings, both men and women should be given for the right for their freedom. Walby (1990) explains patriarchy as a social structure and practice that reveals how men are always the ones to dominate, oppress, and exploit. Moreover, patriarchal culture is the main reason why feminism exists. Ahmed (2017) describes feminism as a movement where someone develops feminist tendencies in order to speak out against racism and sexism. Hooks (2000) also states that feminism is a movement that strives to eliminate sexism, oppression, and exploitation. No women in this world should experience racism and sexism as the purpose of feminism itself is to fight for the negative stereotypes for both men and women. One example of the phenomenon is a husband who spends most of his time at his workplace without having to help his wife at home is considered responsible yet a wife who has children and still works is considered irresponsible. This social phenomenon is also supported by the theory of Arianto (2018) by stating that in the family, decision making is dominated by men, as well as in the wider society.

The researcher has decided to choose a novel entitled “The Case of The Missing Marquess” by Nancy Springer as the data source. The novel brings out the story of Enola Holmes, the youngest child of the Holmes family. Right on her fourteenth birthday, Enola discovered that her mother went missing. She asked her brothers—Sherlock and Mycroft—for a help in finding their mother but it did not work. Then, she made a decision to find her mother alone without them knowing. Instead of finding her mother, Enola ended up

involving herself in the case of the missing Marquess. The novel is focused in how women should behave toward the oppressions. Enola was against that society's misogyny and she was not the typical of person who would submit the demand of the others toward her as she had been taught by her mother how to be an intelligent and independent woman.

As references, the researcher has decided to choose several previous studies related to the same topic. The first research has been done by Nur (2017). The aim of this research is to know and describe the feminist character of the short story. The researcher has stated that the result of this research is to show that the feminist character of the novel is Edna Pontellier and she is considered as the feminist character because she has the contribution to develop the stories. Another research has been done by Rosida & Rejeki (2017). The aims of this research are (1) to find the struggles of the female characters living in the patriarchal culture and (2) to show how the gender discrimination is strengthened by the social. The results of this research show that the female characters of the novel still experienced unnecessary stereotypes, subordination, and violence.

The aims of this research are (1) to find out what are the oppressions toward the main character in the patriarchal culture during the Victorian era in the novel "The Case of the Missing Marquess" by Nancy Springer and (2) to reveal how the main struggle against the patriarchal culture during the Victorian era in the novel "The Case of the Missing Marquess" by Nancy Springer. This research focuses on the feminist approach followed by the theory of Ahmed (2017) and the theory of Cole (2003) which explains the women's oppressions and is supported by the theory of Kent (1999) and Marcus (2007). The theory of Cole (2003) is also used to explain the women's struggle.

2. METHOD

A researcher's framework for selecting the research methods and techniques is known as the research design. The research design that has been applied for this research is descriptive qualitative method. According to Creswell (2014) qualitative method employs distinctive data analysis procedures, draw inspiration from a variety of designs, and most importantly, qualitative method focuses on text. This research is designed in the descriptive qualitative method because because the data source has been chosen from a novel entitled "The Case of the Missing Marquess" by Nancy Springer that has been formed into paragraphs.

According to Creswell (2014) the steps of collecting the data are collecting the data through both unstructured and semi-structured observations, interviews, documents, and

visual materials including recording the information. As for this research, the documentation method is used as the data are found from a novel which contains texts. The steps are (1) the researcher reads the novel entitled “The Case of the Missing Marquess” by Nancy Springer to get the specific information of the novel (2) the researcher highlights the data sources that are related to the topic that will be analyzed, and (3) the researcher writes down the data sources that have been found in order to make it easier to be analyzed.

Analyzing the data is one of the processes that intended to set the data into information that can be understood by the readers. In the research process, the data can be found in many ways. This research applies descriptive qualitative method as this research focuses on analyzing the text in the novel (Creswell, 2014). There are steps in analyzing the data. (1) First, the researcher needs to read the novel entitled “The Case of the Missing Marquess” by Nancy Springer in order to find specific information related to the topic (2) write down the data sources that have been found, and (3) explain the data sources that have been found.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 The oppressions toward the main character in the patriarchal system during the Victorian era

During the Victorian era, there were stereotypes that limited women’s activity during the Victorian era to maintain their innocent, meek, and pure image. For the example, the young girls were supposed to play only with girly-stuffs. Even if the studies show that young girls naturally wanted to play toys that engaged them socially, it did not mean that young girls were allowed to play with toys which boys usually played with, and vice versa. The quotation that proves how Enola was supposed only to play with girly-stuffs is shown below:

Data 1:

Girls are supposed to play with dolls. Over the years, well-meaning adults had provided me with various dolls. I detested dolls, pulling their heads off when I could, but now I had finally found a use for them. (Springer, 2006)

Women were powerless. They would always be blamed when something did not turn well as what men had expected. Moreover, men took a huge role in their lives as they were always being told to do something by men. In other words, they must listen to what men have said and it caused oppression toward them. The proof can be seen from the quotation below:

Data 2:

Then Sherlock turned to Mycroft and said softly, “It’s my fault. There’s no trusting a woman; why make an exception for one’s mother?” (Springer, 2006)

Moreover, during the nineteenth century in England, women were obligated to marry a man and they needed to be depended toward men. Women were also restricted from going outside alone as they needed to take a good care of the household. It is proven by the quotation below:

Data 3:

*I had observed, however, that **most married women disappeared into the house every year or two, emerging several months later with a new child, to the number of perhaps a dozen, until they either ceased or expired.*** (Springer, 2006)

The Victorian era is also described as an era which the wives were claimed as *the properties* for their husbands because they could claim their wives' earnings and bodies but the wives could not do the same. See the quotation below as a proof that the husbands could claim their wives' earnings.

Data 4:

If a woman labored to write and publish a book, for instance, any money it earned was supposed to go to her husband. How absurd was that? (Springer, 2006)

Women were not allowed to have children at late age and Enola's mother gave birth to her when she was in her late age. Thus, Enola was considered as a disgrace and a burden to her family. She thought that her brothers—Sherlock and Mycroft—left her and her mother and had never visited them for years afterwards because of their embarrassment toward her. The proof is quoted below:

Data 5:

*I wondered whether my brothers would recognise me after ten years. Why they had not visited Mother and me, and why we had not visited them, of course I knew: **because of the disgrace I had brought upon my family by being born.*** (Springer, 2006)

Enola was born from an upper-class family—the Holmes family. During Victorian era, upper-class women were expected to wear decent outfits and long skirts. One of the outfits was a white dress. Among all the colors, white was chosen so it could expose the dirt fleck on their dress. To conclude, they were not given the freedom to dress themselves. The quotation as a proof has been written below:

Data 6:

*In the morning I brushed my hair a full one hundred strokes, trying to render it glossy then tied it back with a white ribbon to match my frock—**girls of the upper classes must wear white, you know, to show every fleck of dirt.*** (Springer, 2006)

The daughters of the family needed to accomplish some social graces in order to fulfill the society's expectations toward them. What a young lady also needed during the Victorian era was a proper education, especially if they were coming from the upper-class family. The young lady from the upper-class usually preferred governesses (taught by a

woman who came to their house and teaching the basics) for education rather than boarding schools. See the quotation below as the proof:

Data 7:

“What is to become of you if you do not acquire some accomplishments, some social graces, some finish? You will never be able to move in polite society and your prospects of matrimony—” (Springer, 2006)

Upper-class women who were taking the boarding schools were forced to wear tightened-corsets that caused them hard to breathe. However, wearing a tightened corset was considered as a moral, and it also helped women to show their charming side. It is proven by the quotation below:

Data 8:

This was considered “charming.” It was also considered moral, the corset being “an ever-present monitor bidding its wearer to exercise self-restraint”—in other words, making it impossible for the hapless victim to bend or relax her posture. (Springer, 2006)

3.2 The main character’s struggles against the patriarchal system during the Victorian era

As her brothers returned to their house, Enola was forced by her brothers to be sent to a boarding education for girls knowing that their mother did not “take care” of her well. Enola herself did not like the idea of attending a boarding education. Instead, she would love getting a governess education. Enola hated boarding school because while taking the education, women needed to wear a tightened corset that caused women hard to breathe. Thus, she insisted that she would not go for a boarding school. Instead, she preferred having a governess education.

Data 11:

“I have always been a disgrace, I will always be a disgrace, and I am not going to be sent to any finishing establishment for young ladies.” “Yes, you are.” I raised my voice. “No. Get me a governess if you must, but I am not going to any so-called boarding school. You cannot make me go.” (Springer, 2006)

As an intelligent and a free-spirited child, Enola would always think that an increased level of boldness was needed in the women’s struggle as she was considered as an open-minded young lady as she who would not submit the demand of the others toward her. For example, Enola would always ignore the unnecessary stereotypes toward women. These statements are proven in the three quotations below:

Data 12:

It was perfectly all right for him to say it. “As the cannibal asked the missionary’s wife, are all your women so deformed? Well, there is no accounting for the ways ladies choose to adorn themselves. The whims of the fair sex defy logic.” (Springer, 2006)

To maintain their pure, meek, and innocent image, Victorian women were taught to depend themselves on men by the society. Enola, on the other hand, was against that kind of nonsense. Why would the society expect Enola to fulfill their expectations? She was raised by a feminist mother in her entire life. Here is the quotation as the proof:

Data 13:

Mum was, you see, very much a free thinker, a woman of character, a proponent of female suffrage and dress reform, including the soft, loose, Aesthetic gowns advocated by Ruskin—but also, whether she liked it or not, she was a squire's widow, with certain obligations. (Springer, 2006)

Her mother would always tell her that she could do well on her own. Hence that is why she is named as Enola which backward spells *alone*. Both Enola and her mother were women with characters—they fought and struggled for their freedom of rights. See the quotation below as the proof:

Data 14:

Mum had sent me to school with the village children, and after I had learned all I could there, she had told me I would do quite well on my own, and I considered that I had. (Springer, 2006)

The way Victorian women dressed themselves were very restricted. Adolescents were not allowed to wear the fashion is adopted from the mothers because it could cause a conflict later. However, as a feminist, Enola's mother remained ignorant to this stereotype. Here is the quotation as the proof:

Data 15:

So there were walking costumes and "rationals" but also formal visiting dresses, a low-necked dinner dress, an opera cloak, and a ball gown—the same rusty-purple one Mum had worn for years; she did not care whether she was in fashion. Nor did she throw anything away. (Springer, 2006)

CONCLUSION

The Case of the Missing Marquess is a novel written by Springer (2006) that tells the life of Enola Holmes during the Victorian era. She was merely fourteen years old when her journey of life was just begun. It all started when she found out that her mother had disappeared right on her birthday. The novel does not only focus on her journey while finding her mother, but it also focuses on how she experienced the oppressions in her life as the result of the patriarchal culture in the Victorian society. However, instead of living her life with accepting and following the wrong stereotypes and mistreatments, she struggled for her freedom. Enola fought for something that seemed right for her.

After analyzing the novel, the researcher has found the results of the research questions. There are eight results that have been found as the results to answer the first research question (1) what are the oppressions toward the main character in the patriarchal culture during the Victorian era in the novel “The Case of the Missing Marquess” by Nancy Springer; and there are five results that have been found as the results to answer the second research question (2) how does the main character struggles against the patriarchal system during the Victorian era in the novel “The Case of the Missing Marquess” by Nancy Springer? To sum up, there are thirteen results in total as the results that there are oppressions and there are struggles against the patriarchal culture during the Victorian era portrayed by the main character in the novel.

The researcher hopes that this research will be able to encourage the next researcher who wants to explore more about feminism approach especially if the chosen data comes from the novel “The Case of the Missing Marquess” by Nancy Springer. Furthermore, the researcher hopes that the next researcher who wants to use the same data will use different theories as there are many theories that have been explained by the other experts related to the topic.

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