

SOCIAL ISSUES IN JACQUES LOB'S "SNOWPIERCER"

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Abstract. This study is entitled about social issues between passengers in front sections to tail sections, depicted through the story and characters in this novel. In this study, there are two questions to be answered: The depiction of social issues shown in Jacques Lob's novel *Snowpiercer* and the individuals involved. The purpose of this study is to look at the many forms of social issues and the persons that are involved in them using numerous characters from the novel. The author applies Michel Foucault's (1977) theory to illustrate how passengers in the front and back sections interact in terms of power. The descriptive technique is used in this study, and extrinsic approaches are used. The findings reveal that there are two distinct forms of power relationships. To begin with, sovereign power is a sort of authority that has total control over all persons in a community. Second, disciplinary authority seeks to establish discipline bodies. The outcome also exposes that certain characters have manipulated information and truth via the use of power relationships.

Keywords: *social issues, power relation, sovereign power, disciplinary power*

INTRODUCTION

As people with a hierarchy of demands, they require a relationship that can drive and transform all of life's negative aspects (Pramesti & Caesar, 2020). A power relationship is one that develops as a result of the existence of power. Nelson & Quick (in Rahmasari, 2016) define power as the ability to influence others. One must live out the *essere avere* expression; one must act in accordance with one's personality. Or, to put it another way, one is what one does (Rudi & Muanah, 2018). Only when power is suggested in a relationship can it be affective, are a series of acts on top of other actions. Power is a collection of acts on conceivable actions; it incites, induces, seduces, simplifies or complicates, completely constrains or bans. Power may

compel someone to obey the orders of another person who has power over them, either freely or coercively (Foucault, 2002: 341). Power relations, according to Foucault, are another facet of human social relationships. It is, in his opinion, pervasive and present in all human relationships, whether or not spoken communication is involved. Power relationships may exist everywhere, even inside a family, an institution, or an administration (Foucault in Mills, 2003: 35).

The writer will exclusively employ Foucault's idea of power relations in this study. Foucault argues in his work *Power/Knowledge* that power relations are present in every human connection (Foucault, 1978: 93). Power is not a thing or something that can be possessed, given,

swapped, or regained, but rather something that is exerted, hence power only exists in action (Foucault, 1980: 89). Furthermore, he associates power with a number of dimensions of human existence, including knowledge, truth, speech, discipline, and resistance. Moreover, Knowledge is always a source of power, and knowledge is always a source of power (Eriyanto, 2001:66).

The writer analyzes the problem in Jacques Lob's novel *Snowpiercer* using a sociological approach as the technique and Michel Foucault's power relation as the theory. The writer chooses novel as the target of analysis from three types of literature that are authorized to be studied: novel, poem, and play. A novel is distinct from a poetry or a play. Novels are more than just a collection of words strung together to tell a tale; they are also an expression of profound meaning that may be read thoroughly and enjoyed by readers. The author draws on Jacques Lob's *Snowpiercer* to explore the issue of power relations. Because this work deals with issues of power, we know that this type of societal problem still exists in our time. As stated in the novel, the many sorts of power relationships are based on Sovereign and Disciplinary authority. The author wishes to examine the characters in Jacques Lob's *Snowpiercer* who are engaging in a power struggle.

The writer focuses on the characters because characters are people who appear in dramatic or narrative works and are seen by the

reader as having moral and dispositional traits manifested in what they say in conversation and what they do in action (Abrams, 1957:20). In literature, a character is one of the most crucial elements. A character has an identity that the author creates in order for the character to reflect the message to the audience through their look, discourse, behavior, and so on (Gill, 1995:127).

There are two thesis discuss about power relation. First, *The Analysis of Power Relation Between Institution and Individuals in the Novel "Never Let Me Go by Kazuo Ishiguro"* that is written by Yunia (2016). Yunia employs Michel Foucault's idea of power, and the results demonstrate that in the novel, numerous agents are involved, Hailsham and the rehabilitation center are significant sources of power, and human clones are the most weak bodies. Second, there is the *Power Relationship. Febriyanti is the author of Tahmima Anam's The Good Muslim* (2013). She employs Foucault's idea of power relation to determine the type of power connection that occurred between powerful and powerless people. The findings reveal that power relationships between people based on familial ties, religion, and culture may push people to use or be exploited by power. How powerful characters dominate lesser characters demonstrates the exercise of power over the individual's body.

As a result, the purpose of this research is to provide an example of a power relationship in literary writing. To

put it another way, the author expects that this thesis will make a significant addition to the area of literary studies, particularly in the subject of power relation analysis. Based on the background above, this study has two problems to answer, what are the depiction of social issues reflected in Jacques Lob's *Snowpiercer*, and What characters are involved in power relations existed in Jacques Lob's *Snowpiercer*?

METHOD

Because the data collected by the writer is in the form of sentences, this study employs descriptive research methodologies. The descriptive technique is a form of research approach that is used to narrate and investigate social, social phenomena by describing a unit that is connected to the subject being studied. It obtains, analyzes, and interprets data content analysis of visual and textual material using interviews, journals, and open-ended surveys (Mohajan, 2018). Moreover, This study takes an extrinsic method. The extrinsic method examines literature and its relationship to knowledge as well as other external aspects such as biography, history, religion, psychology, and others. The extrinsic approach might include considering aspects like the book's history, gender issues, the author's aims, societal concerns, and more (Eaglestone in Gerdin, 2016).

The goal of this study's descriptive methodology is to correctly

explain current facts, as well as to construct categories and classify research topics. All information or subjects that would be collected and selected through study are considered data sources. The novel *Snowpiercer*, published in 2014, is the data source for this study. The novel is 158 pages long and is broken down into five chapters. In Jacques Lob's *Snowpiercer*, various characters engage in oppression, violence, conspiracy, and clandestine education, all of which are shown in this research.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In Jacques Lob's *Snowpiercer*, the power relationship is represented. There are two subchapters to the debate. In Jacques Lob's *Snowpiercer*, the first subchapter explores the many sorts of power relationships, while the second subchapter discusses the characters that are involved in power relationships. This research analyzes and describes how the power relationship happens in the book utilizing Michel Foucault's (1977) theory.

A. THE DEPICTION OF SOCIAL ISSUES IN THE NOVEL

a. Sovereign Power's Depiction in *Snowpiercer*

The sovereign authority is harsh, prohibiting and punishing, stopping and limiting some behaviors by suppressing them and directing others. Resistance becomes a question of defying such directives or repression in this context. Because it demands complete compliance, the techniques involved are to conduct things that are unlawful or to undermine power centers' sovereignty. Based on the story in this novel, the acts of sovereign power can be seen in the quotation below:

"Alright, get in line. everybody sit down.. One, two, three, four, five, six. keep going. go on." All passengers obey but there's one person who ignore the soldiers. "Hey you, sit down !! Sit down, I said sit down or I'll shot your fucking face !! " and he obey him. (Lob, 2014:8)

The above statement demonstrates the existence of sovereign authority. The troops in the tail portions say the lines above to the passengers. The troops attempt to discipline the passengers, but they do it in an unprofessional manner. The sentence that demonstrates the exercise of sovereign authority is "I said sit down or I'll shot your fucking face!". The term alludes to coercing individuals or groups to obey commands or face punishment if they do not. It is based on Foucault's idea of sovereign power, which is harsh, forbidding, and punishing.

b. Disciplinary Power's Depiction in *Snowpiercer*

Disciplined Power is the second sort of power relationship shown in Jacques Lob's *Snowpiercer*. Disciplinary power is a type of energy technology that is used to train the body to be more obedient and helpful. This model's effectiveness may be seen in places like mental hospitals and rehabilitation centers, as well as educational institutions and schools. The strength of this approach lies in its ability to create a setting in which the individual body may absorb submission and pass it off as normal. The normalizing process of wielding power over individual bodies is what Foucault refers to. (As stated by Foucault in Mughis, 2013)

Meanwhile, Lilja (2014) summarizes Foucault's ideas on Disciplinary Power: it builds up, trains, and develops persons through institutions and scientific discourses while simultaneously punishing, pedagogically, in proportion to

the transgressions. We are given a program on how to accomplish things, and individuals are then supervised, taught, and assessed in order to develop self-control and the use of force more effectively. Based on the novel, the acts of disciplinary power can be seen in the quotation below:

"Look you see that ? I see that woman before. She was the maid in the lead section. An Inuit. An Eskimo, actually. She knew all about the ice and snow. She believed she can survive outside. So if we ever go outside the train ?.. WE'D ALL FREEZE AND DIE.. exclaimed the children together. "If the engine stops running ?" - WE'D ALL DIE... "And who takes care of the Sacred Engine?" MR. WILFORD...(Lob, 2014:31)

The above line illustrates a circumstance in which a teacher is demonstrating someone who has revolted. The teacher tries to demonstrate that even if individuals are aware of the dangers of ice and snow and feel they can live outside the train, they would eventually freeze and die. When a teacher asks, "So, if we ever get outside the train?" the pupils might respond, "WE'D ALL FREEZE AND DIE." Based on Foucault's idea of disciplinary power, which is used to control the body and make it obedient and useful, the students' responses infer that they have a good understanding of what the instructor has taught them and that they follow the rules that their teacher has given them.

B. THE CHARACTERS INVOLVED IN POWER RELATION

Three people are mentioned in this work, as they are in Jacques Lob's *Snowpiercer*, who are embroiled in a power struggle. The first is the power dynamic between Gilliam and Curtis, the second between Minister Mason and

passengers in the rear part, and the third between Wilford and Curtis.

a. Power Relation Between Gilliam to Curtis

Gilliam is the most well-liked and respected member of the tail section. He is one of those persons that wields a lot of power. Curtis considers Gilliam to be a father figure. Curtis and all of the passengers in the tail section trust Gilliam because he is smart, always takes sides and offers good comments, gives strength and hope to all passengers so that one day they can have a better life. It's no surprise that he has the ability to influence, control, and incite in ways Curtis is unaware of. As we can see in the quotation above:

"The water supply section. It's where the water's cleansed and recycled. It's one of the most crucial sections in the train, Curtis. If we take it, we'll have the upperhand. We control the water, we control the negotiation." (Lob, 2014:97)

When the passengers from the tail portion reached the water supply section, Gilliam established a power relationship with Curtis. "We control the water, we control negotiation," says Gilliam, implying a power dynamic that incites people subconsciously. Curtis will be more confident in dominating water supply now that the motivational statement has been spoken. Gilliam's power relationships have automatically proven successful in achieving his objectives.

b. Power Relation from Minister Mason to Passengers in tail Section

Minister Mason is one of the cynical and arbitrary characters in Snowpiercer's literature. Minister Mason, who has been entrusted by Wilford to keep an eye on the passengers in the rear section, enjoys disciplining them in inhumane ways. As may be observed from the quotation,

"You filthy ingrates! You people who if not for the benevolent Wilford, would have frozen solid 18 years ago today. You people... we would suck up the generous titties of Wilford ever since for food and shelter. And now, in front of our hallowed water supplies section no less you repay his kindness. With violent hooliganism. You scum!! Precisely 74% of you shall die." (Lob, 2014:98)

When passengers in the back portion rebel and wish to take control of the water supply section, the expression above is used. Soldiers and passengers slaughtered each other with axes in a horrific conflict. That is what infuriated Minister Mason about the actions of passengers in the tail section, who were thought ungrateful for Mr. Wilford's assistance in saving them. Minister Mason curses and threatens to kill up to 74 percent of people in the rear section. As a penalty for the severe revolt, which is termed insubordination, some of the children and elderly adults in the tail area were killed.

c. Power Relation from Wilford to Curtis

In Jacques Lob's novel Snowpiercer, Wilford is the major antagonist. He is a brilliant inventor and the creator of Wilford Industries, his own company. He also oversees operations on the globe-trotting Snowpiercer railway, which transports humanity's remaining survivors. He is the one who has full power and regulates all the regulations on the train, thanks to his prowess. As may be observed from the quotation,

".... And now you have the sacred responsibility to lead all

humanity. Without you, Curtis, humanity will cease to exist. You've seen what people do without leadership. They

devour one another ..Curtis, this is your destiny." (Lob, 2014:115)

Wilford's sentence above suggests that he is trying to persuade Curtis. According to Foucault's theory of power, incitement, inducement, and seduction are all actions that Wilford is doing on Curtis. Curtis, according to Wilford, has been chosen to carry out the holy role of leading the rest of mankind aboard the train. It implies that Wilford orchestrated everything and provoked it in a subtle manner, such as the praise indicated in the preceding paragraph.

CONCLUSION

According to the findings of this study, there are two types of power relationships that are exhibited. Sovereign power is a sort of authority that exerts control over all members of a community. It is aggressive, forbidding, and punitive, and it restricts and limits some behaviors by suppressing them and directing others. Passengers who breach the rules and try to rebel are severely punished by the troops in the story. The second type of authority is disciplinary power, which is used to keep bodies in line. To do this, the teacher in the novel uses disciplinary power and disciplinary procedures such as rule enforcement and normalization. As depicted in this novel, the teacher teaches the youngsters about an uprising known as The Revolt of the Seven. It is indicated that the instructor wishes to demonstrate that if a student disobeys or rebels, he would suffer a dreadful end.

The outcome also exposes that certain characters have manipulated information and truth via the use of power relationships. The first character is Gilliam, who manipulates the situation by posing as a compassionate and intelligent guy, but it turns out that he plotted with Wilford to

exterminate the train's overcrowding. The second position is that of a child's instructor. Teacher employs disciplinary methods and manipulates information and truth. Wilford is the rescuer, and he must not resist, according to the teacher. The instructor imparts this knowledge by storytelling and singing a song that might cause youngsters to get captivated and comply without even realizing it. Other characters in the narrative, such as Wilford and Minister Mason, engage in power interactions as well, although in different ways.

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