

The Representation of Power Dynamics in Sylvia Day's '*Bared to You*'

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Abstract

The aims of this study entitled “The Depiction of Power Relation Represented in Sylvia Day’s Bared to You” to analyze the depiction of power relation experienced by Eva as main character represented in Sylvia Day’s Bared to You. The object of this study is novel entitled Bared to You by Sylvia Day (2012). Bared to You described about childhood trauma experience in the main character. When she was ten years old, her step-brother named Nathan started raping her. Eva’s childhood trauma experience made her feeling out of control of her emotions and visited a therapist to recover her mental health. This study conducted by applying descriptive qualitative method framed by Foucault’s theory (2002) about power relations perspective. The results of analysis are power relations between parents and step-brother, childhood traumas are sexual abuse and neglect by her close persons, namely her stepbrother, mother, and stepfather, and servants who are expected to protect her. Eva’s traumatic childhood made her suffer for her whole life. The writer found the character of childhood trauma based on the theory developed by experts.

Keywords: *power relations, childhood trauma, neglect, sexual abuse.*

A. Introduction

Power relation is the thing that used to show powerful people in human life. Power is the ability of a person or group of people to influence the behavior of another person or group, in such a way that the behavior becomes in accordance with the wishes and purpose of the person who has that power. Many conflicts are caused by power relation. This symptom of power is a common event in all societies and forms of living. In addition, power usually takes the form of relationship, in the sense that one party is superior and the other is subordinate. One party gives the command, and the other party obeys the command. There is no equality of dignity, there is always one higher than the other and there is always an element of coercion in power relations.

According to Weber (1922, p. 185) states that “Power is the ability to exercise one’s will over others. Power as the chance an individual in a social relationship can achieve his or her own will even against resistance of others”. It means that the individual uses power relation to influence others to reach certain goals. People tend to misunderstand and misuse their power. People tend to power to repress or coerce others in everyday life. Power relation also used in many ways. Some of it includes mocking, bullying, complaining, criticizing, and manipulation. The definition shows that power is the ability or right to control people or things. It can be conclude that power relation is very board. Sometimes power relation creates an opportunity for an individual to achieve the goals but also creates resistance for other to blow it.

According to Morgenthau (1978, p.7) states that “power relation consist of what create and defend the control of someone on the other people, includes the entire relationship social who supports the goal, ranging from the physical violence up to the relationship psychological most smooth used by the thought of someone to control the minds of others”. Power relations have three important elements there are force, influence, and authority. It means that power relations is the relationship between the people who is have a power or people who is capable and powerful, and have an impact to get the desire.

In addition, power relations always give the impact on society either in positive or negative ways. Furthermore, the occurrence of power relations in a child by one of the family members, such as in this novel, which describes power relations to the main character carried out by her stepbrother and parents. Foucault (1978, p. 95) states that “where there is power, there is resistance”. It means that the impact of power relation can be seen from the resistance arise around the power. Vinthagen & Johansson (2013, p. 2) states that “resistance is about how people act in their lives in ways that might undermine power”. It means that the resistance to power defines the conditions in a society. Therefore, if a rule or wisdom does not run correctly on the social life, so there will be resistances a defense to the power.

The power relation does not only found in the real world, but also in literary works. Moreover, there are so many kinds of power relation can be found in the novel. Such as in the novel *Bared to You* written by Sylvia Day, the novel shows how power relation covered the story of the novel. The power relations are the issues that appear in the *Bared to You*. *Bared to You* tells about trauma experience represented in the main character. There is a power relation between brother and sister, and another part of power relation between parents and daughter. When she was ten years old, her stepbrother started raping her named Nathan. Nathan is defined as a superior because his power as a stepbrother can take control of a subordinate. Power relation and resistance are related to each other. Power resistance depicted in the novel: power resistance between daughter and parents related to emotional response; and the resistance of the protagonist's power that impacts mental health. The novel “*Bared to You*” by Sylvia Day is an interesting novel because the novel is showing about power relation and trauma experience, the story so imaginative and the main character in this novel also can make the reader curious.

The writer chose analyze one of the best seller novels in USA “*Bared to You*”. Sylvia Day self-published the novel on April 3, 2012, then Barkley Books re-released it on June 12, 2012, with a print run of 500,000 copies. *Bared to You* was nominated for the 2012 Goodreads Choice Award for Best Romance, while Day's was nominated for Best Goodreads Author. "Day creates two interesting characters in Eva and Gideon, whose professional and handsome exteriors cover traumatic pasts," according to RT Book Reviews. Especially notable is Day's portrayal of Eva". *The Guardian* also criticized that “the book as banal”. Meanwhile *The Independent* criticized that “some of the book's elements as easy to mock”.

This study analyzes this novel using the theme of Eva Trammel as the main character who has power relation experiences in her childhood as the basic of this study and concerning about trauma experiences influence psyche circumstance and relationship to the other in adulthood. Therefore, the writer chose this novel can be analyzed according to the power relation theory.

B. Method

The writer used qualitative as a method of the study because the based on library research which was conducted in library and searching catalog like book, and the other's journal. Process in collecting data in words and or sentences not a numeric and the data were analyzed based on theory. The writer chooses childhood traumatic as a study because it is phenomena sometimes occur in a daily life. According to Creswell (2009, p.22) states that “The qualitative approach means of exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or group ascribe to social or human problem”. It means that qualitative research take the data from experience people and based on what happen in daily life and this study related to the literary works. The data taken by the analysis from *Bared to You* novel. *Bared to You* novel is a romance erotic fiction novel written by Sylvia Day which published by Berkley books in 2012 as the main data of this thesis. The data form of quotations focusing on the main character Eva Trammel's dialogue, minds, and behavior that reflects on power relation in the novel. To get appropriate data the writer did the some steps. First, the writer read the novel from Sylvia Day “*Bared to You*” several times to understand the whole story. Second, the writer identified the text that answered the statements of the problem. After that, the writer marked the factors causing power relation which found in this novel. Finally, the writer classified the factors causing of power relation and power resistance contained in the novel with providing explanation. The data had been collected from identified the main character of that novel related to power relation were analyzed using Foucault's theory (2002). The writer explained power relation between brother and sister, and part of another power relation between parents and daughter, and power resistance of the protagonist in *Bared to You*. Furthermore, the data were described in the form of essay and followed by the analysis. The data were presented in the form of power relation theory related in the object novel based on theory of Foucault (2002) by using the concept of power relation perspective.

C. Findings and Discussion

1. Power resistance of the protagonist in *Bared to You*

This sub-chapter analyzed the power and resistance implied in Eva's trauma in *Bared to You*. Power and resistance are related to each other. There are two kinds of power resistance depicted in the novel: power resistance between daughter and parents related to emotional response; and the resistance of the protagonist's power that impacts mental health. The effects of the trauma experienced by Eva in childhood made it difficult for her to control and manage her emotions, mental health, and feelings of unwanted. These behaviors are reflected as she grows into adulthood. Eva's trauma experiences will have several effects on her behavior and life. And the analysis is as follows:

1.1. Power resistance between sister and brother

The resistance of power that oppresses Eva's trauma is also the resistance of sister over brother. It means the forms of resistance are investigated to understand what power relations are, such as the power of parents and children, or brothers and sisters. However, this resistance has an impact on Eva's trauma mental health because of her childhood trauma experiences that always appear in her mind until adulthood, surviving trauma or abuse as an adult who has experienced trauma in her childhood. She has been linked with higher rates of anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, and etc. In addition, Eva has mental health problems that usually have symptoms such as stress, difficulty sleeping or imagining events that have occurred too often in the past. She will feel anxious and threatened in a situation. The analysis is as follows:

...Nathan, who was also a young child at the time, raped her for several years when she was still a child. The servants who are aware of this do not dare to defend Eva since Nathan is ruthless, and his super-rich father holds such terrifying power. Eva said "I hated myself but wanted other people to love me" (Day, 2012, p. 8).

Based on the above statement, Eva is a victim of sexual abuse who wants to overcome a traumatic experience. One of the powers that oppress her is own her stepbrother. Nathan threatens Eva's condition for fear of fighting him. However, Eva's trauma experienced as a child affected her mental health as an adult. It is also supported by Bartlett (2019) that the threat faced by child could bring a huge trauma because they were scared it happens again. It implies that childhood trauma had an effect on someone behavior in adulthood. Eva suffers from her mental illness. She needs time to recover from childhood trauma. Eva was willing to discuss the painful event because she decided to forget the incident. In Eva's effort to be free from the power that dominates her, Eva visits a therapist to heal her mental health.

In addition, the result of sexual abuse in childhood and bad memories of the past sometimes appear in her dreams and memories. The analysis is as follows:

“You’re not going to be a victim ever again, Eva. It was just a nightmare. My God . . . what I almost did to you . . .”

He looked at me with such longing it brought tears to my eyes. “I’d kill myself before I hurt you”.

“You’d never hurt me”.

“You’re afraid of me”.

“I’m afraid of me”. (Day, 2012, p. 284).

The statement above, it can be concluded that Eva has not been able to escape from the power that dominates her. Eva's fears and anxieties about her traumatic experience manifest themselves in her nightmares from time to time. It is one of her fears. Eva makes an effort to maintain self-control. Moreover, because of her own anxiety, she was frightened to do anything that might destroy her relationship with Gideon. However, Gideon tries to reassure Eva by assuring her that as long as they are together, they are secure. Eva believes that as time passes, traumatic experiences can only leave scars and bad memories.

“How do you feel about taking drugs?”

“I feel it’s necessary. I have to be with you and you have to make that safe for me, whatever it takes. Dr. Petersen says the drug combined with therapy has been successful for other (atypical sexual parasomniacs). I have to believe that.”

Taking medication was a big step, especially for someone who’d avoided facing her problem for a long time (Day, 2012, p. 301).

From the above statement, it can be concluded that Eva’s trauma makes her mental health worse. The biggest influence on Eva's mental health comes from family and close people. However, the people who were closest to Eva's life ignored her. They are Eva's parents and Nathan is her stepbrother, who controls Eva as an object of sexual pleasure.

Childhood trauma dominates Eva's life into adulthood even the image of sexual abuse is always a shadow that makes her anxious and frightened in a situation. However, Eva still visits a therapist named Dr. Petersen. Moreover, Dr. Petersen gave her a prescription to calm her thoughts and fears. Gideon hopes that Eva feels comfortable with him and can overcome the fear that haunts her life. Eva has been traumatized for nearly a quarter of her life as a result of the sexual abuse incident. However, Eva still strives to be free from the trauma experience. Even though, she was physically and emotionally exhausted. Eva's attempt to be free from trauma experiences is one of her own ways by avoiding the person who caused her grief. The writer assumes that in Eva's life, Gideon is needed for moral support.

1.2. Power resistance between daughter and parents

This part is about how Eva responds to her parents through her expressions and attitudes. It can be seen that there is a form of power over children, and there is also resistance from children over parents. Eva tries to be free from the power that dominates her. However, Eva's parents dominated Eva's life into adulthood. Moreover, Eva gets very emotional and sometimes gives up on her mother.

In addition, Eva has been through a traumatic experience often finds it difficult to identify, express, and manage her emotions, so her emotional responses are unpredictable. She has also learned to distrust others. Especially, Eva has had traumatic experiences from childhood into adulthood. Besides, Emotional response is one of expression or effect from traumatic events. This resistance appears when Eva is an adult.

Furthermore, Eva's way of expressing her emotions was unexpected. As a result of her traumatic experience, she also acts out of control when someone bothers her and makes her feel uncomfortable, either intentionally or unintentionally. The analysis as follows:

“How did she know where I was?”

“She tracked your cell phone.”

“No way,”

Your mother use one of your company phones. But it also gives her peace of mind. Peace of mind? To spy on her grown daughter? It's not healthy, Richard.

We need to give her a little latitude. “Latitude? She's a stalker!” My mind Spun. How could my mom invade my privacy like that? Why would she? She was driving herself crazy, and me along with her. “This has to stop.”

“Don't try to twist this around to being for my benefit. I'm a grown woman. I make my own decisions!!”

You're enabling her. You're keeping her sick, and you're making me sick, too.

“She worries about everything, Richard. That's the problem” (Day, 2012, pp. 35-36).

The above statement is part of the fact that Eva expresses an emotional attitude towards her mother as a form of resistance. Eva is annoyed with her own mother's treatment of her, but that is her way of expressing her emotions. She prefers to live without her mother's overprotective and anxious attitude following her. Eva feels like

an adult who makes decisions about what she wants to achieve with her life to forget her traumatic experiences. However, her interest in krav maga is something that makes Monica overprotective. Even Monica also intrudes on her privacy. Moreover, Eva does not trust her own mother. It shows that this event is considered as resistance to parental power over their child, because of her mother's behavior.

“I was going to cave and let my mom have her way, because it hurt my heart to think of her suffering any more than she already did. She was so emotional and fragile, and she loved me to the point of being crazy about it. My mood was still dark when I got back to the Crossfire. I needed work to distract me from my crazy family” (Day, 2012, p. 37).

Based on the statement above, it can be concluded that Eva becomes too emotional and sensitive with her mother. Specifically, this is the daughter's real resistance to her mother. It is supported by Foucault (2002) that where there is power, there is resistance. It implies that Eva fights against her mother because she wants to be free from the power that dominates her life and mind. It shows that Eva wants to get her mother out of her life because she feels very disappointed with her mother's behavior. Eva also lets her mother do whatever she wants. Eva chooses to occupy herself with her job. It's Eva's way of taking her mind off her mother. Eva needs to be quiet to feel better.

D. Conclusion

Based on the data analysis in the previous chapter, the writer concluded based on the statements of problem. In the first analysis, the writer found the power relation between family member such as power relation between parents and daughters, and also power relation between step-brother and sister. This reveals power relation related to the parental treatment towards Eva as their daughter. Step-brother's treatment of her sister, who is supposed to be a good brother figure for her sister. However, her stepbrother destroyed her younger sister's life till she became traumatized as a result of sexual abuse. Power relation can define someone into a subject and object. Eva can be defined as an object in a power relation. The second analysis, the writer concluded that there is some power relations found in the Sylvia Day's novel. The writer found two causes of power relations such as sexual abuse and neglect. Eva's character was abused by her stepbrother. It is classified to the causes of power relation between brother and sister found in the novel. The other one, Eva was neglected by her parents. It can be seen from power relation between daughter and parents. It can be concluded that power relation is very close to the daily life, not only in the society, but it can happen in a family. Parents can determine the children's attitude in the relation to society. The third analyzes are the power resistance depicted in the novel: power resistance between daughter and parents; and the resistance of the protagonist's power that impacts mental health. The writer found the effects of traumatic events such as emotional response and mental health main character. This

reveals the effects of traumatic to show the psychological behavior for expressing emotion. It can be concluded that power relation can impact in people life into adulthood such as attitude and behavior. This study focuses on power relation in a family in the novel. There are much more aspects that can be analyze from this novel with other criticism theory. The writer suggests for the next researchers to analyze this novel more detail using different criticism and point of view. Therefore, the writer provides several recommendations for the next writer and reader. It can be analyzed about the theory or different concept. The one of issues suggested are gender stereotype approach, parental neglect, sibling neglect and the others. The writer expects that the study will be useful to the readers especially for students who want to analyze this novel or any kind of literary works by using theory of power relation perspective.

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