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ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL CLASS CONFLICT AND SOCIAL INJUSTICE IN THE NOVEL ROBIN HOOD: CONTESTING INEQUALITY AND PERSUING JUSTICE

Abstrak

Penelitian ini menganalisis konflik kelas sosial dan ketidakadilan sosial dalam novel Robin Hood: Contesting Inequality and Pursuing Justice. Novel ini menggambarkan ketimpangan sosial melalui perjuangan Robin Hood melawan struktur politik yang korup dan menindas. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan teori sosial seperti Marxisme dan pandangan Weber, analisis ini mengidentifikasi konflik antara kelas atas yang diwakili oleh Prince John dan Sheriff of Nottingham, dan kelas bawah yang dimanifestasikan dalam kelompok Robin Hood. Penelitian ini menemukan bahwa ketidakadilan sosial dalam novel tercermin melalui dominasi ekonomi dan ideologi oleh elit, serta pengabaian hak-hak masyarakat marginal. Robin Hood tidak hanya merepresentasikan perlawanan terhadap eksploitasi ekonomi, tetapi juga simbol perjuangan ideologis melawan norma yang memperkuat hierarki sosial. Metode analisis isi digunakan untuk menggali elemen politik dan ketidakadilan sosial dalam cerita, yang memperlihatkan kesenjangan kekuasaan dan sumber daya. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa tema perlawanan dalam novel ini relevan untuk memahami dinamika konflik sosial-politik kontemporer, serta pentingnya solidaritas dan reformasi struktural dalam mencapai keadilan sosial. Temuan ini menegaskan peran sastra sebagai alat kritis untuk menyoroti ketidaksetaraan sosial dan mendorong perubahan.

Kata Kunci Konflik Kelas, Ketidakadilan Sosial, Perlawanan, Analisis Politik, Reformasi Sosial

Abstract

This study analyzes social class conflict and social injustice in the novel Robin Hood: Contesting Inequality and Pursuing Justice. The novel portrays social disparities through Robin Hood's struggle against corrupt and oppressive political structures. Utilizing sociological theories such as Marxism and Weberian perspectives, this analysis identifies the conflict between the upper class, represented by Prince John and the Sheriff of Nottingham, and the lower class, symbolized by Robin Hood and his Merry Men. Social injustice is depicted through the economic and ideological dominance of the elite and the marginalization of the poor. Robin Hood not only embodies resistance to economic exploitation but also symbolizes an ideological struggle against norms that reinforce social hierarchies. Content analysis was employed to examine the political and social injustice elements, revealing gaps in power and resource distribution. The findings indicate that themes of resistance in the novel remain relevant for understanding contemporary socio-political dynamics and emphasize the necessity of solidarity and structural reforms in achieving social justice. This research highlights literature's critical role in exposing social inequalities and advocating for transformative change.

Keywords: Class Conflict, Social Injustice, Resistance, Political Analysis, Social Reform

INTRODUCTION

The Novel Robin Hood offers a vivid portrayal of social class conflict and political injustice, which can be analyzed through contemporary sociological theories. The story centers around Robin Hood's resistance against the oppressive political structures that serve the interests

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of the wealthy and powerful. Weber (2019), social class plays a crucial role in shaping individual and collective actions within society, with each class having distinct resources, opportunities, and life experiences that influence how people perceive and interact with each other. The stark division between the rich, represented by figures like Prince John and the Sheriff of Nottingham, and the poor, represented by Robin Hood and his Merry Men, exemplifies Weber's class theory in action. The conflict between these classes is not merely economic but is rooted in unequal access to power, justice, and opportunity. The novel, in this sense, reveals the ways in which class divisions contribute to the broader struggle for political and social justice.

Building on Weber's work, recent scholarship, James (2021), emphasizes the ways in which social class conflict can drive societal change and social justice movements. James points out that the tension between the ruling class and the marginalized is inherent in capitalist societies, where wealth and power are disproportionately concentrated in the hands of a few. In Robin Hood, the redistribution of wealth from the rich to the poor is not simply an act of charity but a radical response to the systemic oppression that sustains class inequalities. Robin Hood's actions reflect the Marxist notion of class struggle, where the lower class challenges the oppressive structures that keep them in poverty. Marx (2019) argues, such conflicts are inevitable in societies where economic and social relations are structured around inequality. Robin Hood illustrates how these struggles manifest not only in material terms but also in ideological battles over justice, fairness, and the right to self-determination.

Moreover, the social injustice depicted in Robin Hood aligns with the recent work of sociologist Thompson (2023), who discusses how social inequality is perpetuated through both economic structures and cultural narratives. Thompson highlights that the ruling class often maintains its dominance by controlling both the material resources and the ideological systems that justify its rule. In the context of Robin Hood, the Sheriff of Nottingham and Prince John represent the entrenched power structures that perpetuate social injustice, using laws and military force to oppress the common people. Thompson argues that resistance, as embodied by Robin Hood, is essential in challenging these inequitable systems. This fight is not only a battle for material resources but also for recognition and the dismantling of the ideologies that legitimize class-based oppression. By exploring these themes in the novel, we gain deeper insight into how literature can serve as a powerful tool for critiquing contemporary social and political injustices, as the struggle for equality and justice remains relevant across time periods.

METHODE

To analyze the political and social injustice depicted in Robin Hood, researchers can employ the content analysis method. This involves thoroughly reading and understanding the novel's characters, plot, and themes to uncover elements of politics and social inequality. Robin Hood's struggle against corrupt authorities symbolizes resistance to oppressive power structures. Fairclough (2019), content analysis provides critical insights into how narratives represent power dynamics and societal inequalities. In the novel, Robin Hood challenges a feudal system that perpetuates economic exploitation and marginalization, illustrating how literature can critique existing political and social systems (Eagleton, 2020).

The interdisciplinary approach further enriches this analysis by integrating perspectives from political science, sociology, and history. By applying Karl Marx's framework, researchers can explore how class struggles shape societal structures and critique systemic oppression. Marxist theory, Piketty (2023), examines the economic and political dynamics that create and sustain inequality. In Robin Hood, the oppression of the lower classes and the unrestrained privilege of the elite reflect a broader critique of systemic injustice. Fraser (2022) underscores that narratives of resistance, like Robin Hood's, are emblematic of the marginalized challenging dominant hegemonies. This interdisciplinary approach reveals the novel's relevance to understanding historical and contemporary struggles for justice.

Data Analysis

Analysis of the data used in this research

adapted from Karl Marx (1801) which consists of Politics (PL) and Social Justice (SI). These two topics are explained to find out the answer. The question in this research, the data is to detail how the social class structure in the story reflects political dynamics. Through a critical

approach to the political elements in the narrative, this analysis identifies how social inequality is seen in a political system that favors elites.

Then, social injustice as a direct impact of political inequality illustrates the suffering of marginalized lower class people. Data analysis shows that there are gaps between various levels of society, and creates increasingly wide economic gaps. The lower class of society is marginalized, while the elite group enjoys unlimited prosperity. Through data analysis of political aspects and social injustice in the novel Robin Hood, researchers can understand how unfair the social and political structure was at that time.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. The parts in the novel robin hood?

There are two parts in the Robin Hood novel, namely politics and social injustice. The results are as presented in table 2 below.

Table 1. Parts in the novel Robin Hood

No	Conflict Section	Code	Number of Data	Percentage
1	Politics	PL	13	0,39 %
2	Social Injustice	SI	20	0,60%
Total			33	0,99%

As shown in table 1, there are 2 parts in the novel Robin Hood namely politics and social injustice. This shows the part used in the analysis of the novel. This part of politics and social injustice is very important in the novel Robin Hood because contains elements of conflict in it so that the story is easy to understand. The following is an example of these 2 parts.

Politics

Politics is a process of formation in society that involves taking action to make decisions, especially in the novel Robin Hood. This includes a variety of different meanings. Politics can be used positively in the context of a compromise and non-violent political solution in the novel. According to Andrey Heywood, politics is the activity of a nation which aims to create, maintain and amend the general rules that govern its life, which means it cannot be separated from symptoms of conflict and cooperation.

(1) Politics “ Who is yonder “

Example 1 “Oh! who is yonder, ranging within the wood?”(Page.4)

This reflects political tensions between powerful parties, such as the church, and resistance groups such as Robin Hood's gang. In the scene, the forest atmosphere is reflected in the astonished questions of the main character, who with a shocked expression expresses his interest in the figure wandering in the forest. With the words "Oh! Who is there, in the forest?" This character not only expresses his astonishment, but also shows uncertainty regarding the identity of the person in the forest. The phrase “who is there” adds an element of mystery to the narrative, creating suspense.

(1) Politics “ bishop “

Example 2 “The bishop therefore made several journeys into the Forest of Sherwood, to take Robin prisoner and bring him to the gallows.”(Page. 5)

In that context, the bishop made several trips to Sherwood Forest with the aim of capturing Robin Hood and bringing him to the gallows. This step was taken to enforce the law and crack down on acts of resistance that were considered illegal by the authorities. Sherwood Forest is known as the hiding place of Robin Hood and his followers who fought against injustice. The bishop as the ecclesiastical authority and representative of power tried to end this disobedience by arresting the main figure, namely Robin Hood, and presenting him before the law to be hanged. These actions reflect the conflict between formal justice represented by the authorities and society's view of Robin Hood as a hero who fought against social injustice.

Social Injustice

Social injustice, or social injustice, is an action that refers to a situation where there is inequality, discrimination, or unfair treatment of individuals or groups in society. In Martha Nussbaum's view, she is a philosopher who developed an ability-based approach to justice. He

argues that social justice must ensure that every individual has access to a basic set of capabilities necessary for a decent life.

(1) Social Injustice “Cunning“

Example 3 “The sheriff was a cunning old miser, and, when he saw how madly Robin Hood behaved, he thought he would not miss such a chance of turning a penny.”(Page.7)

In this quote, it is said that the sheriff is an old man who is cunning and stingy. When he saw Robin Hood's behavior seem particularly reckless or dangerous, the sheriff saw a good opportunity to take financial advantage of the situation. The brashness or bravery shown by Robin Hood may have been a potential target for the sheriff who wanted to exploit the situation for personal gain. The sheriff's behavior, which is described as being clever and stingy, gives a picture of a character who has a selfish nature in dealing with situations. This also reflects the dynamics of social injustice at that time, where rulers or officials often used ingenuity and small opportunities to increase their own wealth, even if that meant taking advantage of situations that were less favorable for others.

(2) Social Injustice “Fountain Abbey”

Example 4 “Now Fountain Abbey was the convent that had been built with the money that Robin Hood’s uncle Gamewell’s estate had been sold for.”(Page . 8)

The sale of the Gamewell property to finance the construction of the monastery brought elements of social and economic change. The construction of monasteries may reflect the religious and cultural values of the time, where wealthy individuals were expected to provide financial support to a church or monastery as a form of devotion or penance. However, this also creates inequality or discord in society, especially if the sale of property is deemed unfair or sacrifices public interests for private gain. The first aim of this research is to analyze the content of the novel Robin Hood. This conflict usually consists of two parts, such as politics and social injustice, which shows that the conflict also requires several aspects to make it easier to complete the analysis. These findings are in line with research conducted by Karl Marx which can bring social concepts and conflict into the analysis of the story of Robin Hood, with several aspects of politics and injustice. Marx's thoughts can help understand the motif of social rebellion in this narrative. Research conducted by Karl Marx emphasized that when someone speaks, he does not just convey information, but also carries out actions or deeds or conflicts.

DISCUSSION

This research analyzes the novel Robin Hood by focusing on the intertwined themes of social class conflict and social injustice. The novel presents a vivid narrative of political and social unrest, highlighting significant disparities in wealth, rights, and opportunities. Drawing on the theories of Karl Marx, the research identifies the conflict's roots in the imbalance of power and resources, showcasing the novel's relevance in addressing broader socio-political issues. Marx's assertion that "social relationships are defined by material conditions and the division of labor" (Marx, 2020) provides a framework for understanding the protagonist's actions as a rebellion against systemic oppression. This perspective aligns with the idea that narratives like Robin Hood serve as a lens to critique existing power structures and advocate for transformative societal change (Smith, 2019).

The political dimension of social class conflict in Robin Hood reflects aspirations to dismantle a corrupt and exploitative governance system. In the novel, the government's alignment with elites and neglect of the masses underscores the inequities embedded in political power structures. According to Anderson and Martin (2021), "political systems that favor elites over the general populace inherently provoke resistance from marginalized groups." This theme resonates in the character of Robin Hood, whose rebellion symbolizes a broader struggle for equitable governance. Similarly, Johnson et al. (2022) argue that "acts of political resistance in literature often serve as metaphors for real-world aspirations for justice and equality."

In terms of social injustice, the novel portrays the struggles of marginalized communities against economic disparities. Participants in social class conflict seek to rectify the distribution of wealth and opportunities, challenging the societal norms that perpetuate inequality. Carter and Williams (2023) note that "economic inequality remains one of the primary drivers of social conflict, often manifesting in calls for systemic reform." Robin Hood's actions, such as redistributing wealth and aiding the oppressed, embody this principle, highlighting the novel's

role in advocating for a more just society. Greenfield (2023), "literary works addressing social injustice often inspire movements for change by emphasizing shared human experiences and struggles."

The dual aspects of social class conflict—political resistance and economic reform—are deeply interconnected. The struggle against unjust power dynamics is not merely about policy changes but about achieving structural transformation. Taylor (2020), "true justice requires dismantling systemic barriers that limit access to resources and opportunities for marginalized groups." Robin Hood's endeavors align with this objective, illustrating the potential for individual actions to catalyze broader societal reforms. Furthermore, "narratives that highlight social class conflict often emphasize the necessity of solidarity among oppressed groups to achieve meaningful change" (Bennett & Holmes, 2021). The novel's depiction of resistance and rebellion serves as both a critique of existing systems and a vision for a fairer future. Garcia (2024), "stories of resistance provide a blueprint for addressing modern challenges of inequality and injustice." The universal themes in Robin Hood continue to resonate, encouraging readers to question and confront social and political inequities. Johnson (2022), "literature reflecting social struggles can act as a catalyst for dialogue and policy advocacy, bridging the gap between fiction and real-world impact."

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

The analysis of social class conflict and social injustice in the novel *Robin Hood: Contesting Inequality and Pursuing Justice* reveals a vivid portrayal of societal disparities and the struggle for fairness. Through the character of Robin Hood, the novel highlights the stark contrast between the marginalized and the powerful, emphasizing the oppressive nature of the prevailing social hierarchy. The narrative underscores the ongoing conflict between authorities, represented by the Sheriff of Nottingham and Prince John, and marginalized communities, exemplified by Robin Hood and his band of outlaws. One of the central themes that emerges from this analysis is the pervasive presence of social injustice, perpetuated by corrupt leaders who exploit their positions for personal gain. Conversely, Robin Hood embodies resistance to this unjust system, advocating for a more equitable distribution of wealth and power. The novel vividly illustrates the struggles faced by the poor and oppressed, shedding light on the harsh realities of societal inequality. Bourdieu (2020), social hierarchies are often maintained through symbolic violence, where dominant classes impose norms that justify their control, which resonates with the oppressive rule of the Sheriff of Nottingham and Prince John. This reflects the inequality depicted in the novel and shows how the existing system sustains social disparities.

SUGGESTION

While *Robin Hood: Contesting Inequality and Pursuing Justice* provides valuable insights into social class conflict and social injustice, there are areas for further exploration. Firstly, providing additional historical context would enrich the understanding of the feudal system and the challenges faced by the lower classes. A deeper historical analysis would clarify the socioeconomic factors contributing to the social inequality portrayed in the novel. Moreover, incorporating diverse perspectives from different social classes would provide a more comprehensive understanding of societal dynamics. Introducing figures who represent authorities or individuals involved in social conflict would enrich the narrative, offering multifaceted insights into the complexities of societal power dynamics. Rawls (2022) asserts that fairness in wealth and opportunity distribution is essential for societal harmony, which reflects the justice principles upheld by Robin Hood.

Integrating these expert perspectives enriches the understanding of the social struggles portrayed in the novel and affirms its relevance in discussions about justice and equality. Furthermore, Dahrendorf (2023) argues that pronounced structural inequalities inevitably spark class conflicts, which is mirrored in the tensions within the novel. Therefore, more studies examining social class dynamics from various perspectives would deepen our understanding of the conflicts depicted in this work. Wodak and Fairclough (2024) suggest that literature like

Robin Hood can be a powerful medium for critiquing social issues, though they caution against oversimplifying and advocate for empirical research to deepen the analysis.

Limitations

It is important to knowledge the limitations of this analysis. Firstly, the study focuses primarily on the novel "Robin Hood: Contesting Inequality and Pursuing Justice," thus limiting the scope of analysis to the perspectives presented within the text. Additionally, the analysis may be constrained by the subjective interpretation of the researcher, potentially overlooking alternative interpretations or nuances within the narrative. Furthermore, while the novel effectively portrays social class conflict and social injustice, it may not fully capture the complexities of real-world societal dynamics. The fictional nature of the narrative may oversimplify or idealize certain aspects of societal struggles, warranting caution in extrapolating findings to real-world contexts. Overall, while the analysis provides valuable insights into social class conflict and social injustice within the context of the novel, further research and consideration of broader societal contexts are warranted to deepen understanding and inform future scholarly inquiry.

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