



**WOMEN SUBORDINATION AND STRUGGLE
AS DEPICTED IN *QUEEN CHARLOTTE: A BRIDGERTON STORY SERIES***

THESIS

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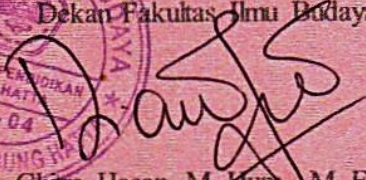
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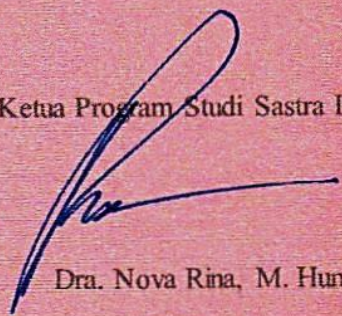


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STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY

This is to certify the originality of this thesis I submitted to fulfill a requirement for an S1 degree in the English Department Faculty of Humanities Universitas Bung Hatta. This thesis is entirely mine and there are no works or opinions written or published by other people except as references or quotations by following the usual scientific writing procedures.

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WOMEN SUBORDINATION AND STRUGGLE AS DEPICTED IN *QUEEN CHARLOTTE: A BRIDGERTON STORY SERIES*

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ABSTRACT

This study examines how women subordination and struggle depicted in *Queen Charlotte: A Bridgerton Story* series. The writer employs feminism theory in doing the research. This study is engaged with qualitative descriptive approach. The data were gathered using a non-participatory and observational method. The writer finds a total of 28 data in this study, 18 data come under category of women subordination, and 10 data come under category of women struggle. For women subordination, there only two forms found: men control over women and disregard. The first form serves as dominant category, and manifests into: 1. Men Control over Women's Body and Sexuality with 2 data; 2. Arranged Marriage with 2 data; 3. Women Belonging to Husband after the Marriage with 8 data; 4. Lack of Inheritance and Property Rights with 2 data. The second form is disregard with 4 data. For women struggle, there are five forms represented: 1. Damaging Properties with 1 data finding; 2. Voicing Opinion, which serves as dominant category with 6 data; 3. Threatening to Perform Self-Harm with 1 data; 4. Escaping with 1 data; 5. Legal Empowerment Tactics with 2 data. In conclusion, the series consistently depicts men control over women at all social status. Simultaneously, it remains the same for women struggle. This persistent struggle manifests in various forms, highlighting how women keep trying to stand up for themselves and hold onto their identity, even when facing subordinated situations.

Keywords: *Queen Charlotte: A Bridgerton Story, Feminism, Women Subordination, Women Struggle*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENT	i
ABSTRACT	ii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	iii
TABLE OF FIGURES	iv
CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background of the Study.....	1
1.2 Research Questions	5
1.3 Objective of the Study.....	6
1.4 Scope of the Study.....	6
1.5 Significance of the Study.....	7
CHAPTER II REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE	8
2.1 Previous Study.....	8
2.2 Theoretical Frame work.....	9
2.2.1 Feminism and Patriarchy.....	9
2.2.2 Women Subordination	13
2.2.3 Women Struggle	20
2.2.4 Historical Approach.....	25
CHAPTER III RESEARCH METHOD	26
3.1 Approach.....	26
3.2 Source of Data	28
3.3 Research Technique	29
3.3.1 Data Collection Procedure	29
3.3.2 Data Analysis Procedure	31
CHAPTER IV RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS	34
4.1 Women Subordination in <i>Queen Charlotte: A Bridgerton Story</i>	34
4.1.1 Men Control over Women	34
4.1.1.1 Men Control over Women's Body and Sexuality.....	34
4.1.1.2 Arranged Marriage	38
4.1.1.3 Women Belong to Husband after the Marriage.....	44
4.1.1.4 Lack of Inheritance and Property Rights.....	57
4.1.2 Disregard.....	60
4.2 Women Struggle in <i>Queen Charlotte: A Bridgerton Story</i>	67
4.2.1 Damaging Property	67
4.2.2 Voicing Opinion	68
4.2.3 Threat of Self-Harm.....	78
4.2.4 Escaping	80
4.2.5 Legal Empowerment Tactics	83
4.2.5.1 Seeking for Solicitor's Help	83
4.2.5.2 Bringing the Son as Legal Inheritor	85
CHAPTER V CONCLUSION	89
5.1 Conclusion	89
5.2 Suggestion.....	91
WORKS CITED	92

TABLE OF FIGURES

Figure 1: <i>The Illustration of Theoretical Framework</i>	25
Figure 2A: <i>Lady Danbury repeatedly forced to fulfil the husband's sexual demand</i>	34
Figure 2B: <i>Lord Danbury's frequent sexual demand</i>	35
Figure 3: <i>Adolphus denies Charlotte's ownership of her own bodies</i>	37
Figure 4A: <i>Adolphus signs the betrothal of Charlotte's arranged marriage</i>	38
Figure 4B: <i>Charlotte's arranged marriage is derived by political reason</i>	39
Figure 5: <i>Agatha Danbury's confide of her marriage situation</i>	42
Figure 6: <i>King George orders Charlotte to live separately</i>	44
Figure 7A: <i>Charlotte asking for clarification</i>	47
Figure 7B: <i>King George yells against Charlotte, asserting his control</i>	47
Figure 8: <i>Lady Danbury repeatedly forced to fulfil the husband's sexual demand</i>	48
Figure 9: <i>Lord Danbury's control over her wife, Agatha</i>	50
Figure 10: <i>Queen Charlotte can only do things or activities approved by the King</i>	51
Figure 11: <i>Queen Charlotte's belonging to her husband</i>	53
Figure 12: <i>Princess Augusta's confession of family relatives issue after marriage</i>	54
Figure 13: <i>Charlotte's sudden arrival to Kew</i>	56
Figure 14: <i>Agatha Danbury's concerning the inheritance</i>	57
Figure 15: <i>Agatha Danbury being desperate for the inheritance issues</i>	59
Figure 16: <i>Charlotte thoughts being disregarded by the brother, Adolphus</i>	61
Figure 17: <i>Agatha Danbury being disregarded by the husband</i>	63
Figure 18: <i>Coral doubting whether the solicitor would come to see a woman</i>	64
Figure 19: <i>Solicitor suggesting the only way to deal with the peerage's issue</i>	65
Figure 20: <i>Charlotte's act of damaging property</i>	67
Figure 21: <i>Charlotte voicing her disagreement's opinion of the arranged marriage</i>	69
Figure 22: <i>Charlotte voices her confusion regarding the husband's act</i>	70
Figure 23A: <i>Queen Charlotte's sudden arrival</i>	72
Figure 23B: <i>Charlotte breaks and enters the observatory</i>	72
Figure 24: <i>Charlotte's attempt to voice her thoughts of coming back home</i>	75
Figure 25: <i>Charlotte benefits her new role as the queen to voice her opinion</i>	76
Figure 26: <i>Charlotte voicing her disagreement's opinion of the arranged marriage</i>	78
Figure 27A: <i>Charlotte tries to manage her escape</i>	80
Figure 27B: <i>Charlotte's act of escaping by climbing over a wall</i>	82
Figure 28A: <i>Agatha Danbury is about to write to the solicitor</i>	83
Figure 28B: <i>Agatha Danbury writes for the solicitor to pay a visit</i>	84
Figure 29A: <i>Agatha Danbury informs her son about Lord Danbury's death</i>	85
Figure 29B: <i>Agatha Danbury shows her legal son to Princess Augusta</i>	86
Figure 29C: <i>Lady Danbury asserting her son the identity he belongs to</i>	87

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Queen Charlotte: A Bridgerton Story is one of the most popular British TV Series. The series premiered on May 4, 2023, and aired on the Netflix platform, with six episodes released. The series *Queen Charlotte: A Bridgerton Story* is based on the original story idea written by a female author named Julia Quinn. She is known as one of the best-selling historical romance authors who has successfully authored over 30 novels and sold over 10 million copies of her books worldwide. The series *Queen Charlotte: A Bridgerton Story* serves as the prequel spin-off of the previous British TV series entitled *Bridgerton*, which premiered in 2020 and was also authored by Julia Quinn.

It is reportedly known that the series *Queen Charlotte: A Bridgerton Story* went viral in the middle of 2023 due to the iconic dialogues of the main characters, Queen Charlotte and King George, which flooded such social media platforms as *TikTok* and *Instagram*. During that period, it turns out that the dialogue became the primary focus of most content creators on social media platforms, namely *TikTok* and *Instagram*. Later, it caused many social media users to create content related to romantic relationships based on the dialogue of the main characters in the series, Queen Charlotte and King George. Interestingly, not only does the series depict the element that represents romance, but the series indeed depicts women-related issues such as women subordination and struggle.

The story of *Queen Charlotte: A Bridgerton Story* is set in 1761 in Great Britain. It is a time when the British Empire was greatly influenced by patriarchal ideology, which shaped the men's dominance system over women in many spheres

and became the reason behind the subordination of women in the society, including the family, the workplace, and the state (Griffin 39–40; McKeon 301–05). In 1761, the British society was rigidly divided into social classes. At the top were wealthy noble landowners who lived luxuriously on large estates. The middle class consisted of urban professionals and business owners, while the bottom class included poor workers like farmers and servants. Women across all classes faced severe disadvantages. They had few legal rights, especially when married, and couldn't own property, work without their husband's permission, or even have rights to their own children. This system, known as patriarchy, gave men power over women in all aspects of life, from education to social interactions. To sum up, social life and culture of Great Britain were dominated by the aristocracy, who set the standards of refined taste, manners and morality that the rising middle classes aspired to compete with (Paul 65–92; Stretton and Kesselring 18–41).

The story of *Queen Charlotte: A Bridgerton Story* centres on a young woman named Sophia Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz. In order to secure a political alliance between Great Britain and the region, her brother, Adolphus, agrees to set a marriage of convenience, pledging the young woman Sophia Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz to King George of England and Ireland. Eventually, Charlotte finds that although she is unhappy with her brother's choice, she grudgingly accepts it since she genuinely has no other choice. On her wedding day, Charlotte is unaware of who George is, so they joke around until she finds out that King George will be the man she marries. After that brief exchange, she becomes more receptive to marrying King George.

In the series *Queen Charlotte: A Bridgerton Story*, the writer finds how female characters are mistreated in such a different way compared to the male characters, as

subordinate or secondary position in a society that is mainly influenced by the patriarchal system. For instance, the subordination against women is depicted through women characters in the series *Queen Charlotte: A Bridgerton Story*. As can be seen from the main character, Sophia Charlotte who appears to be a queen of Great Britain and an aristocratic woman, and Agatha Danbury who appears to be lower class woman. Both indicate that the patriarchal ideology has put women into such subordinate positions, which remain unacceptable concerning the equality and rights that women should possess. In fact, women possess the rights and control over themselves and should not be considered as secondary or mere sexual objects.

In regard to women subordination, Jóhannsdóttir points out that over time, patriarchy has typically had the effect of shaping and even directing people's opinions and thoughts. In the fashion industry, TV, mass media, and other domains, men have, ironically, possessed greater influence than women. Therefore, the unjustified subordination of women that has existed from ancient times and continues to this day is all due to the patriarchy. Moreover, Jóhannsdóttir also denotes that having women always lagging behind men is a result of patriarchy. Women's status in previous ages was barely superior to that of a beast. Almost all of their choices were dictated to them, and their fate was to become virtuous wives to their husbands and have a large family (31–32). Dillon also highlights that not only do women and men experience different realities, but women also have to interpret and experience it through the lenses of male-constructed images, language, expectations, and laws, as well as the dominant discourse of femininity that governs and structures women's daily objectification and subordination to men (334–36).

Wootton states that “Women have to struggle at every level with culture to find their voice in the narrative. By every measure, the struggle for gender empowerment,

or even gender equality is unremitting and must go on” (44). In the context of women’s struggle, the series *Queen Charlotte: A Bridgerton Story* depicts how female characters struggle, resist and fight against subordination by the men's dominance in society. It is reflected in women characters in the series, such as Sophia Charlotte, and Agatha Danbury. Moreover, Wootton denotes that the main problem that requires women to struggle is the need for marriage that burdened them. Marriage remains the main obstacle. It makes clear that women's potential is restricted by the stereotype that encompasses marriage as something that every woman is in need of. It is impossible for married women to pursue careers in their fields, grow as individuals, or take control of their rights.

The unique of *Queen Charlotte; A Bridgerton Story* as the study object is that the series portrays such women-related issues as subordination faced by a powerful woman, like a queen, being treated as less important than men. This is very relevant for understanding the problems women face in society today. Even though the world has made progress in treating women more equally, the long history of seeing women as inferior to men continues to affect the lives of women around the world. Women still face unfair treatment and are denied the same rights, opportunities, and freedom that men have, even in countries where women hold important political leadership roles. Even though there have been efforts to create a more equal society, the long-held beliefs and systems that give men more power and control over women are still present. Therefore, the interesting point of taking this series as a research object is that the way it represents how a powerful woman, like a queen, is treated as less important and subordinate to the men in a society. This provides valuable insight into the complex and multi-layered ways that women continue to face discrimination and marginalisation. It shows how women in high positions navigated challenges within

male-dominated societies. By looking at these issues, the writer is able to gain understanding of gender inequality both then and now. Furthermore, investigating the unique element of the series, such as how women are portrayed as secondary in a society that is mainly influenced by patriarchal ideology, is essential for understanding the interpretations of women in media such as film or TV series. Through an in-depth analysis, the writer is able to gain understanding of the lived experiences of women, both in the past and in the present day. This understanding can then contribute to understanding and valuing women's representations in such media as film or TV series.

In light of the preceding statements, the writer is interested in analysing women's subordination and struggle as depicted in the Netflix series entitled *Queen Charlotte: A Bridgerton Story*. The writer considers choosing the object to analyse due to the writer's interest in women-related issues, namely women subordination and struggle and the indications of the men-centred society represented in the series. Therefore, in order to analyse the object of this study, which is a Netflix TV series entitled *Queen Charlotte; A Bridgerton Story*, the study is engaged with feminism theory. In regard to the research topics, the feminism theory remains suitable to be applied in conducting the research due to the focus of this study, which is the analysis of women in a men-centred society. Accordingly, "Women Subordination and Struggle as Depicted in *Queen Charlotte: A Bridgerton Story* Series" remains a suitable research title chosen by the writer in this study.

1.2 Research Questions

In accordance with the background of this research, research questions are formulated as follows:

1. How is women subordination depicted in the series *Queen Charlotte: A Bridgerton Story*?
2. How is women struggle toward the subordination depicted in the series *Queen Charlotte: A Bridgerton Story*?

1.3 Objective of the Study

In accordance with the research question, as stated in the previous section, the objectives of research are formulated as follows:

1. To describe how women subordination is depicted in the series *Queen Charlotte: A Bridgerton story*.
2. To describe how women struggle toward the subordination is depicted in the series *Queen Charlotte: A Bridgerton story*.

1.4 Scope of the Study

The scope of the study is limited to the analysis of women's subordination and struggle, which is found and represented in the object of study, a Netflix TV series entitled *Queen Charlotte: A Bridgerton Story*. The story mainly takes place at St. James's Palace, located in the City of Westminster, in central London, England. Given that the research object, the series, is primarily set within the confines of St. James's Palace, the scope of this analysis will be similarly delimited. The writer's examination of women-related issues portrayed in the series will therefore focus specifically on those that arise within the context of central London, rather than attempting to extrapolate to the entirety of Great Britain. To make it clear, the writer will not try to make claims about the entire country of Great Britain but will instead examine the women-related themes and experiences portrayed within the central London context of the story. Therefore, the writer will focus on women's issues that emerge in that specific setting.

In this study, the female characters will be the main focus of analysis, regardless of each female character's status. The male characters will also be examined, as understanding how they view and treat women is the key to analysing the subordination of women portrayed in the series. This series provides opportunities for analysis from various academic perspectives, such as psychology, sociology, and beyond. However, this study specifically focuses on the feminist sub-field, examining the themes of women's subordination and struggle as depicted through the female characters. Therefore, the writer refers to feminism theory in order to analyse how the series portrays the subordinate status and struggles faced by women characters in the series.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study is expected to be useful in both theoretical and practical aspects:

1. Theoretically, this study is expected to benefit in broadening one's understanding in the feminism sub-field, especially in the study of women subordination and women struggle, since this study functions to learn and find out about how are women subordination and struggle depicted in the Netflix TV series entitled *Queen Charlotte: A Bridgerton Story*.
2. Practically, this study is expected to benefit by providing references for other students, particularly English Department students who are interested in literary criticism fields such as feminism or feminist criticism.