



## **THE FAILURE OF AMBITION TO BE A QUEEN AS SEEN IN PHILLIPA GREGORY'S THE OTHER BOLEYN GIRL**

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### **Abstract**

*The Other Boleyn Girl is a historical novel written by British author Philippa Gregory loosely based on the life of 16<sup>th</sup> century aristocrat Mary Boleyn (the sister of Anne Boleyn) of whom little is known. Inspired by Mary's life story, Gregory depicts the annulment of one of the most significant royal marriages in English history and conveys the urgency of the need for a male heir to the throne.*

*The writer took Anne Boleyn's ambition to become a queen as a center of the thesis. Technique of collecting data of this analysis is by library research. It means that the writer applies the data which the writer takes from library and other written material from book store, internet or even motion picture.*

*In analyzing this data, the writer uses psychological theories by Sigmund Freud. Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory of personality argues that human behavior is the result of the interactions among three component parts of the mind: the id, ego, and superego. This theory, known as Freud's structural theory of personality, places great emphasis on the role of unconscious psychological conflicts in shaping behavior and personality.*

*The result show that although it's good to have ambition to drive someone to reach their goal to succeed but ambition without limit could destroy everything and everyone around you. And it even could destroy yourself too.*

**Keywords:** *Boleyn Girl, Ego, Ambition, Queen*

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### **I INTRODUCTION**

In the analysis of failure strategy of ambition to be a queen, the strategies by Anne has become the background in choosing this problem. Anne is a strong character that can do anything to achieve her ambition, even by betraying her won sister, having an incest relation with her own brother, and persuading King Henry to break the relation from the church. All of these are to fulfill her desirous ambition, and all are performed in the most polite way possible, Anne has performed strategies carefully in pursuing her ambition.

A common view in the 18th and 19th centuries was the image of Anne as a romantic victim, a strong-willed and beautiful woman who

was destroyed by her husband, who was presented as a brutal tyrant by most popular historians. In the latter half of the 20th century, academic historians who were determined to study Henry VIII's government and court as serious political and cultural institutions argued that Anne Boleyn was one of the most ambitious, intelligent and important queens in European history.

Anne Boleyn is presented as cold, vindictive, ruthlessly ambitious, vain, and given to physical violence; this is not supported by contemporary accounts. She was certainly complex: highly intelligent, fluently bilingual, politically astute, artistically gifted, loyal to her

family, generous to friends, and known for her charm and elegance, not withstanding arrogance and a notorious temper when stressed.

A tale of unbounded ambition and cloying competition, The Other Boleyn Girl offers a fascinating look into the era of England's feudal caste system where bloody ruthlessness, corrupt politics, decadent luxury, vicious rivalry, and superstition are the norm. Although most people are aware of Anne Boleyn's fate, Gregory has fleshed out the story for us with human emotions and obscure historical detail, bringing life to each character. Philippa Gregory does a masterful job of taking what is known as recorded fact, and drawing logical assumptions about the personalities of the characters involved.

## II RESEARCH METHODS

In analyzing The Other Boleyn Girl, the writer needs systematic ways to write this thesis, which are initially begun with the procedure of data collection and then continued with the procedure of data analysis. The writer uses primary data as source of the research and qualitative method to collect the data. The qualitative method that used is based on Pradopo in book *Metodologi Penelitian Sastra*. Qualitative research is a broad methodological approach that encompasses many research methods. The aim of qualitative research may vary with the disciplinary background, such as understanding human behavior and the reason that govern such behavior.

### 2.1 Method of Collecting Data

In this research, the data source that the writer uses is the primary data. The primary data take from novel The Other Boleyn Girl by Philippa Gregory and also from movie The Other Boleyn Girl.

### 2.2 Method of Analyzing Data

Data analysis is an action of analyzing data acquired from the result of the study. In analyzing the data, the data that collected is processed and presented in this research. The data are interpreted by the writer based on the literature interpretation and the data take from novel by quoting some dialogue which connected to the analysis.

### 2.3 Technique of Collecting Data

The reasons the writer chooses this novel by Philippa Gregory because she was one of the best writer in English historical genre. This novel also won awards and has been adapted into two separate films. Audio File Magazine has called Gregory as the queen of British historical fiction.

The identification of problem is the ambition of Boleyn girl, Anne Boleyn. She is Mary's elder and more ambitious sister . Anne makes her first appearance at the beginning of the story when she was fifteen. At first, she is instructed to guide Mary in seducing Henry, but later steals Henry's affections when she aims to overthrow Catherine as queen. Anne is portrayed as coldhearted and selfish, but will occasionally show affection to Mary and her family.

In the collecting data, the writer applies library research. It means that the writer applies the data which the writer takes from library and other written material from book store, internet or even motion picture. Pradopo in *Metodologi Penelitian Sastra* (2001:153) states: *Penelitian pustaka adalah observasi yang dilakukan dalam pustaka, dimana penulis mendapatkan data dan informasi tentang objek penelitian melalui buku dan media audiovisual yang berhubungan dengan topic*. The library research is the observation that is executed in the library, which the writer gains the data and information about his object through the books and other audiovisual equipment that related and relevant to the topic (translated by writer).

Through this library research activity, the writer gains some aids to develop the research theory and even the perfection of problem analysis, or the modification for the research problem which is done before. In order to gain more information, the writer also executes the internet research as to support the data from library research, the data is received in files form. Roberta Markham in *10 Steps in Writing the Research Paper* states: "A computer library research is ideal for basic research for a term paper or project. It has the great advantage of saving time, providing the most current information, and allowing for detailed subject specificity."

### 2.4 Technique of Analyzing Data

The data analyzing procedures concern with the way of the writer to conduct the analysis of the data. This analysis uses genetic structuralism, it looks the external factor of the literature that conveys the internal element of literary work such the actions of the main character, such as characters and author. Pradopo in *Metodologi Penelitian Sastra* (2001: 54) state that “*Peneliti bertugas menjelaskan karya sastra sebagai sebuah struktur berdasarkan unsur-unsur yang membentuknya, seperti masyarakat dan kehidupan sosial.*” The researcher has a chance to explain literary work as structure base on the

elements that formed them, which are society and social life.” (translated by writer).

From the explanation, structural method has two functions which explain the internal factor of literature and show the relation of this internal factor with the external factor such as sociology. In the procedure of analyzing the data, the primary data is taken from novel itself, the writer tries to analyze it by using the information based on the novel itself. In doing this research, the writer starts by analyzing some intrinsic elements of this novel, after that tries to find extrinsic element which becomes the basic of the problem that will be analyzed.

### III RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Sigmund Freud’s psychoanalytic theory of personality argues that human behavior is the result of the interactions among three component parts of the mind: the *id*, *ego*, and *superego*. This theory, known as Freud’s structural theory of personality, places great emphasis on the role of unconscious psychological conflicts in shaping behavior and personality. Dynamic interactions among these fundamental parts of the mind are thought to progress through five distinct psychosexual stages of development. Over the last century, however, Freud’s ideas have since been met with criticism, in part because of his singular focus on sexuality as the main driver of human personality development.

According to Freud, our personality develops from the interactions among what he proposed as the three fundamental structures of the human mind: the *id*, *ego*, and *superego*. Conflicts among these three structures, and our efforts to find balance among what each of them “desires,” determines how we behave and approach the world. What balance we strike in any given situation determines how we will resolve the conflict between two overarching behavioral tendencies: our biological aggressive and pleasure-seeking drives vs. our socialized internal control over those drives.

The *id*, the most primitive of the three structures, is concerned with instant gratification of basic physical needs and urges. It operates entirely unconsciously (outside of conscious thought). For example, if your *id* walked past a stranger eating ice cream, it would most likely

take the ice cream for itself. It doesn’t know, or care, that it is rude to take something belonging to someone else; it would care only that you wanted the ice cream. The *id* remains infantile in its function throughout a persons life and does not change with time or experience, as it is not in touch with the external world. The *id* is not affected by reality, logic or the everyday world, as it operates within the unconscious part of the mind. The *id* is the impulsive (and unconscious) part of our psyche which responds directly and immediately to the instincts.

The *id* operates on the pleasure principle (Freud, 1920) which is the idea that every wishful impulse should be satisfied immediately, regardless of the consequences. When the *id* achieves its demands, we experience pleasure when it is denied we experience ‘unpleasure’ or tension. The *id* engages in primary process thinking, which is primitive, illogical, irrational, and fantasy oriented. This form of process thinking has no comprehension of objective reality, and is selfish and wishful in nature. The personality of the newborn child is all *id* and only later does it develop an *ego* and *super-ego*.

The *superego* is concerned with social rules and morals—similar to what many people call their “conscience” or their “moral compass.” It develops as a child learns what their culture considers right and wrong. If your *superego* walked past the same stranger, it would not take their ice cream because it would know that that would be rude. However, if both your *id* and your *superego* were involved, and your *id*

was strong enough to override your superego's concern, you *would* still take the ice cream, but afterward you would most likely feel guilt and shame over your actions. The superego incorporates the values and morals of society which are learned from one's parents and others. It develops around the age of 3 – 5 during the phallic stage of psychosexual development.

The superego consists of two systems: The conscience and the ideal self. The conscience can punish the ego through causing feelings of guilt. For example, if the ego gives in to the id's demands, the superego may make the person feel bad through guilt. The ideal self (or ego-ideal) is an imaginary picture of how you ought to be, and represents career aspirations, how to treat other people, and how to behave as a member of society.

In contrast to the instinctual id and the moral superego, the *ego* is the rational, pragmatic part of our personality. It is less primitive than the id and is partly conscious and partly unconscious. It's what Freud considered to be the "self," and its job is to balance the demands of the id and superego in the practical context of reality. So, if you walked past the stranger with ice cream one more time, your ego would mediate the conflict between your id ("I want that ice cream right now") and superego ("It's wrong to take someone else's ice cream") and decide to go buy your own ice cream. While this may mean you have to wait 10 more minutes, which would frustrate your id, your ego decides to make that sacrifice as part of the compromise–satisfying your desire for ice cream while also

avoiding an unpleasant social situation and potential feelings of shame.

The ego develops to mediate between the unrealistic id and the external real world. It is the decision-making component of personality. Ideally, the ego works by reason, whereas the id is chaotic and unreasonable. The ego operates according to the reality principle, working out realistic ways of satisfying the id's demands, often compromising or postponing satisfaction to avoid negative consequences of society. The ego considers social realities and norms, etiquette and rules in deciding how to behave.

Like the id, the ego seeks pleasure (i.e., tension reduction) and avoids pain, but unlike the id, the ego is concerned with devising a realistic strategy to obtain pleasure. The ego has no concept of right or wrong; something is good simply if it achieves its end of satisfying without causing harm to itself or the id. Often the ego is weak relative to the headstrong id, and the best the ego can do is stay on, pointing the id in the right direction and claiming some credit at the end as if the action were its own. Freud (1923:15) states : "*The ego is 'like a man on horseback, who has to hold in check the superior strength of the horse.'*"

Freud believed that the id, ego, and superego are in constant conflict and that adult personality and behavior are rooted in the results of these internal struggles throughout childhood. He believed that a person who has a strong ego has a healthy personality and that imbalances in this system can lead to neurosis (what we now think of as anxiety and depression) and unhealthy behaviors.

#### IV RESEARCH FINDING

In *The Other Boleyn Girl*, Anne Boleyn is presented as cold, vindictive, ruthlessly ambitious, vain, and given to physical violence; this is not supported by contemporary accounts. She was certainly complex: highly intelligent, fluently bilingual, politically astute, artistically gifted, loyal to her family, generous to friends, and known for her charm and elegance, not withstanding arrogance and a notorious temper when stressed. During her time abroad, she was reported to have been sweet and kind. Feminist

scholars objected to Gregory's characterization and praise Anne Boleyn as a feminist icon.

If we are to speculate that Anne's ambition was the sole reason for her decision to marry Henry, we must take into account that she was from an ambitious family. Even if she did not court Henry for herself she could have easily done it at her father or uncle's bidding. Yet if Anne did love Henry she would have had some degree of ambition to push for marriage and a coronation. She had very strong ideas about what to do with her power as Henry's favourite,

bringing about the Reformist changes, the favours for her family and her patronage of Hans Holbein the younger and the arts.

It is also possible that Anne could have seen the potential that her sister Mary passed by. Throughout her years as Henry's mistress, Mary never asked for anything. The Boleyns received some advantages nonetheless, but Anne could have realised that Henry might have been inclined to give more if it was requested in the right way. As she later demonstrated during the seven year wait, she knew precisely how to play him. It was a tactic that worked so well it would later be copied by Jane Seymour.

Even if Anne was not overly ambitious, she would have been well aware of the fickleness of Henry's love and for this reason may not have given her heart up. She had seen his affection pass from Catherine of Aragon to Mary Boleyn to herself within a relatively short period of time. She would have been wary of it passing on again sooner or later.

Ambition is a strong desire to do or achieve something, typically requiring determination and hard work. In this case, Anne's ambition makes her do everything possible in her power. Because of her ambition to be a queen, she stole Henry's attention from her own sister and made Henry infatuate with her so she could persuade him to do what she wants. She starts to complaining about Henry's marriage to Catherine of Aragon and demands him to divorce her because Anne doesn't want to be a mistress like any other woman. She wants to be a legal queen that could be beside him and have a royal title.

Even after she suffered miscarriage three times and failed to give birth to a son, because of her ambition to stay a queen she decided incest

with her own brother is her next strategies. Even though that doesn't end well for her, and she got a death sentence for adultery, incest and treason toward the king.

What makes The Other Boleyn Girl interesting is the conflicts and family ambition in them. It based on history of King Henry VIII and his infamous reputation to have a six wives. The Boleyns who are a family that so ambitious and long for a higher social status, and used their kin as negotiable assets. They are determined to acquired power and influence as well as titles and estates from the king even if it means that Mary must become his mistress. Their son George is made to work on his sister's behalf and to live a life not of his choosing. Mary bears the king a son, but Anne soon after uses all her wiles to make Henry divorce the Queen and marry her. The Boleyns who more ruthlessly functional than dysfunctional, continue to plot and push to achieve their ends.

Anne Boleyn is his second wife after he annulled his first marriage just because his first wife couldn't give him a male heir. And it's really amazing how Anne stayed in control of Henry and their relationship for as long as she did, for a while she could ask Henry whatever she wants and he will comply. Although at the end Anne's ambition gives her nothing but death.

The climax to this story is unfortunately not a very good one. Anne Boleyn got beheaded after she sentenced to death because she was accused of adultery, incest and treason. Despite everything that she has done to become a queen, Anne Boleyn got to face a humiliating death because of her ambition that doesn't have boundaries.

## V CONCLUSION

This chapter serves as the answer to limitation of the problem in the introduction chapter, which is the psychological analysis of the ambitious character Anne Boleyn :

1. With Henry's become Supreme Head of the Church of England, he has the greatest power of all in England. From the government even in religion, so he could do whatever he wants including divorcing his first wife Catherine of Aragon which is a first in royal history of

England. And this open opportunity for him in his next marriages to do the same.

2. Ambition could even destroy relationship between family, in this case between two sisters. Anne stole Mary's position to be a King's Mistress because she knows that she more ambitious than Mary who was happy with the things where they are.

3. Although it's good to have ambition to drive someone to reach their goal to succeed but

ambition without limit could destroy everything and everyone around you. And it even could destroy yourself too. Anne must face her own death with humiliation and leave her name tarnished to the whole England.

This analysis might not be perfect, so the writer wants certain inputs and critics from the readers

in perfection of this writing. The writer hopes this analysis can add a new expression in literature world, especially English Department, Faculty of Literature, Ekasakti University. For the reader, the writer also hopes that this writing will give the contribution to the English Department students and whoever may be interested in the subject being discussed.

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