

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHOD

This chapter will discuss the research methodology of the paper. It will cover the research design, data collection, data analysis, data presentation, and the research subjects or characters of the novel that are used in the study.

Research methodology

1.1. Statement of Research Problem

This research was conducted to analyze the portrayal of power dynamics in Leigh Bardugo's young adult novel *Six of Crows*, as well identify the figures that exert power and resist against it.

1.2. Research design

This study uses qualitative method in describing the interplay of power that occurs in Leigh Bardugo's novel *Six of Crows*. The data from textual evidences was collected and analyzed to see the forms of power between the powerful and the powerless as well as how the characters use their power to each of their own advantages.

3.3. Data collection

The data was collected from excerpts of Leigh Bardugo's novel such as narration, characterization, and dialogue; which will serve as textual evidence. These excerpts were collected based on context of conflict in the form of events that consist of fights and arguments. The research also analyzed the novel's theme of power interplay through setting and plot. These were collected and analyzed to indicate how power dynamic is portrayed between the six characters and the ones that oppress them. Bardugo's novel has earned critical acclaim among critics and general readers, intrigued by the story of six outcasts who

band together for a suicide mission. Since its release, *Six of Crows* was nominated for the Goodreads Choice Awards in 2015 for Young Adult Fantasy as well as the top spot on the New York Times Bestseller List as of October, 2015. Each of the six main characters, particularly their leader, holds some form of social power and resistance against those in higher power. Each of the novel's six main characters have their own backstories in which they have experienced being both the person in power and the victim of power; resulting in various motivations as to why they accepted the dangerous mission. The motivations vary from personal gains, revenge, and returning home.

3.4. Data analysis

Using Foucault's (1982) theory of power as framework, this study aims to identify power interplay between the characters of *Six of Crows*, identifying the power that they have against one another and the affect it has on the characters that are oppressed due to the power used against them. In order to do so, excerpts have been collected in the form of narration, characterization, and dialogue; and categorized based on the four notable character pairings that indicate the portrayal of power dynamics. The table is then analyzed to identify the figures that exert or go against a form of power and how they exercise power in the novel.

3.5. Data Presentation

The data were categorized and presented in the table as follows:

Table 3.1 Data Presentation of Power Dynamics in *Six of Crows*

Textual Evidence	Characters interplaying power	Notes
<i>They'd been badly shaken by his betrayal- both the revelation and the way Kaz</i>	Figure(s) exerting power: Kaz Brekker	Kaz Brekker is an influential figure in the Dregs, and holds the highest power in his

had delivered punishment. Beneath all the jostling and whooping, there was fear. Good. Kaz relied on the fact that the Dregs were all murderers, thieves, and liars. He just had to make sure they didn't make a habit of lying to him.

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Figure(s) affected by power: The Dregs

organization. Kaz exercises power towards his organization by striking fear to his men of the consequences should they try to betray him, as his men know of his ability in combat and manipulation.

“What if I say no, Brekker?” It was mere posturing, Matthias knew that. The time for protest had long passed.....Matthias disliked how well this low thief could read him. “What if I don't give you this last bit of myself and my honor?”

“You will, Helvar. Nina is on her way to the White Island right now. Are you really going to leave her stranded?”

(p. 342)

Figures(s) exerting power: Matthias Helvar

Figure(s) resisting against power: Kaz Brekker

Out of the members of the group, Kaz is the one Matthias dislikes the most, hence Matthias' constant attempts to assert power by questioning Kaz's intentions. Kaz however, resists Matthias' attempt to assert power by stating that Matthias will follow his orders regardless of his dislike.

“Ask her what she did then, this honorable ally, this girl who stands in judgement of me and my kind.”

No one said a word, but they were watching, waiting.

“Tell them, Nina,” he demanded. “They should know how you treat your friends.” (p.243)

Figure(s) exerting power: Matthias Helvar

Figure(s) affected by power: Nina Zenik

Matthias attempts to exercise power by coercing Nina to admit her crimes towards him. To assure that she will admit, Matthias involves other characters as witnesses. In doing so, Matthias is able to assert dominance over Nina by way of humiliation.

As seen above, the table analyzes figures that exert power as well as figures that are affected or resist against the power. The table also contains notes that explain the narrative context behind the two figures involved in the power dynamics.

3.6. Synopsis of *Six of Crows*

Six of Crows is a fantasy story about six former criminals who band together for a dangerous mission. These six outcasts consist of an influential gang leader, a stealthy assassin, a once glorified soldier, a magic user, a sharpshooter, and the disgraced son of a wealthy yet corrupt businessman. The leader of this group is Kaz Brekker, who is also the leader of a gang named The Dregs, leading him to gain full authority over his members. Kaz begins recruiting his members when he is informed of a heist mission to retrieve a valuable asset from a high-security Fierdjan prison, with a reward that is more than enough to fulfill the desires of each member. However, it is a highly dangerous mission, even for Kaz. Fierdjan soldiers are known to be brutal to their enemies, particularly to the Grisha, a race of magic users, one of them being Nina Zenik.

The motivations of the characters in carrying the mission vary from personal gains, revenge, and returning home. Two of the six main characters, Kaz Brekker and Inej Ghafa, for instance; intend to use the mission's reward as a way to gain power against the people who once held it against them. Brekker, once a victim to the power that the rich possesses over him, agrees to lead the mission is solely due to the reward of great fortune he will receive if he manages to accomplish the job, which he plans to use as a way to seek revenge against the man who once destroyed his life. One of his accomplices, Inej Khafa, a former showgirl and current assassin who was forced into the job of seducing men and taking beatings as punishment if she does not do her job, therefore eager to receive her share of the money from the mission to return to her true home and seek revenge from those who took her away from it.

Moreover, each of the six members have different morals that cause them to constantly engage in arguments. Some of the members often question one another, whether it is their due to their vastly different backgrounds or their loyalty to the group. They are then forced to accept the fact that the success of their mission lies in their mutual cooperation.