



## Patriarchy Depiction through the Female Main Character's Relationship in Marie Lu's *The Kingdom of Back*

(Pengejawantahan Patriarki pada Relasi Tokoh Utama Perempuan dalam Novel *the Kingdom of Back* Karya Marie Lu)

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**Abstract:** Literary works are reflections of society's nature in real life, and writers often emerge the issue regarding patriarchy in their literary works. Patriarchy is not a new topic and often depicted in literary works, especially in how women of patriarchy are portrayed. This study aims to determine how the practice of patriarchy is represented through the relationship between characters in *The Kingdom of Back*. In this qualitative research, Stuart Hall's representation theory, particularly Michel Foucault's discursive approach is employed to analyze the data. In addition, Sylvia Walby's concept of patriarchy strengthens the basic assumption. The findings of this study show how *The Kingdom of Back* presented patriarchy that limits women's freedom and influences the relationship between the characters, which puts women to bear the damage and stand in an unequal position. The novel portrays a woman's struggle through male domination, oppression, and exploitation in the relationship as a consequence of her desire to resist patriarchal culture, which barred her from achieving her dreams to leave a legacy through her music and composition. Nannerl finally succeeds to overcome the patriarchy barrier and struggling to live as an composer. Furthermore, as the author and diasporic subject, Marie Lu is still influenced by the deep-rooted value of patriarchy from her home country.

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**Keywords** culture, discourse, patriarchy, representation, *The Kingdom of Back*

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**Abstrak:** Karya sastra merupakan cerminan dari sifat masyarakat dalam kehidupan nyata, penulis seringkali mengangkat isu patriarki di dalam karya sastra. Patriarki bukanlah topik baru dan sering direpresentasikan melalui karya sastra, terutama tentang bagaimana perempuan di bawah budaya patriarki digambarkan dalam karya sastra. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui bagaimana praktik patriarki direpresentasikan melalui hubungan antar tokoh dalam novel *The Kingdom of Back* karya Marie Lu. Melalui penelitian kualitatif ini, teori yang digunakan untuk membentuk interpretasi adalah teori representasi yang dikemukakan oleh Stuart Hall, khususnya pendekatan diskursif Michel Foucault. Selain itu, penelitian ini juga menggunakan konsep patriarki oleh Sylvia Walby untuk memperkuat asumsi dasar penelitian ini. Hasil temuan penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa melalui novel *The Kingdom of Back*, Marie Lu sebagai pengarang menghadirkan patriarki sebagai penghalang kebebasan perempuan dan mempengaruhi hubungan antar tokoh, yang menempatkan perempuan pada posisi yang dirugikan dan tidak setara. Novel ini menggambarkan perjuangan perempuan melalui dominasi, penindasan, dan eksploitasi dari tokoh laki-laki dalam hubungan sebagai konsekuensi dari keinginannya untuk mencoba melawan budaya patriarki yang menghalangi jalan untuk mencapai mimpinya untuk meninggalkan warisan melalui musik dan komposisi. Akhirnya, Nannerl berhasil mengatasi pembatasan di masyarakat patriarkal dan menjadi seorang musisi. Selain itu, faktanya, Marie Lu sebagai pengarang dan subjek diaspora masih dipengaruhi oleh nilai patriarki yang mengakar di negara asalnya yaitu China.

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**Kata Kunci** budaya, diskursus, patriarki, representasi, *The Kingdom of Back*

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## INTRODUCTION

Marie Lu's first novel she wrote after college graduation, *The Kingdom of Back* (2020), was finally published after being kept for around 12 years. It was published in March 2020 and filled with some gender-related issues, such as; sexism, gender roles, feminism, patriarchy, and misogyny. This novel tells the story of Maria Anna Mozart (nicknamed Nannerl) and her struggle to resist patriarchy which limits her achieving her dreams. Consequently, she went through domination, oppression, and exploitation in her relationship with the male characters in the story. Nannerl is the older sister of the Classical period's prolific and influential composer, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. She is a young woman living in the 18th century of Europe who desired to leave a legacy through her music and composition. Despite her incredible skill and musical experience, the classical gender norms of Europe have dismissed her prodigious musical talent to obscurity. Begin with the limitation placed on her, she met Hyacinth, a male stranger with the magical power to make her wish come true. She takes the risk and goes through unexpected events, misfortune, betrayal, and struggle to achieve her dreams.

Despite of the growth of the human mindset and modernized society, gender inequality, the gap, and the notion of men's superiority remain flourishing in society. Since the existence of deep-rooted patriarchy continues to inherit from generation to generation, it implies that this phenomenon is still relevant to discuss. Additionally, patriarchy often Depicted in literary works, especially how women of patriarchy are portrayed and treated in literary works. In other words, literary works are the reflection of society's nature in real life (Wellek & Warren, 1942).

As part of society, the author expresses their thoughts through cultural values and practices in various ways and forms exhibited in their literary works. Female authors often highlighted about issues surrounding women. Comparatively, [Muyassaroh \(2021\)](#) declared that literary work is the result of the author's creative process, which originates from human life. As a result of the creative process, the author usually has their own touch and style for their literary works. Moreover, the author tends to contemplate and reflect on various phenomena or real-life issues of the social life surrounding the author's environment.

Furthermore, throughout her novel, Marie Lu wants to express her disappointment toward patriarchal culture, which tends to limit women and never give them equal chance as men. It could be summed up that conducting research based on the social issue depicted in literary works is necessary. In this case, Marie Lu stated that she desired to write about the reflection of real life-issue that women need to experience nowadays ([Tome, 2020](#)). It implies that society and the social issues around her influence her work. Hence, the problem of this paper is to reveal the practice of patriarchy portrayed through the female main character's relationship in Marie Lu's *The Kingdom of Back*.

The problem in the story emerged due to the act of resisting patriarchy which barred women from pursuing their dreams. Consequently, she went through dominant, oppressive, and exploitative relationships. A woman who struggles and is caged by patriarchy is the result of the deep-rooted patriarchal culture in society. The struggle could be in the forms of discrimination, domination, oppression, and exploitation from men, consequently for trying to achieve the same treatment or equality as men enjoyed ([Gunawan, 2020](#); [Walby, 1990](#)). The studies on social issues, especially regarding women and patriarchy, have been carried out by other researchers, including [Amussen & Poska \(2012\)](#), [Anggara \(2019\)](#), [Chowdhury \(2009\)](#), [Ferdoos & Zahra \(2016\)](#), [Gunawan \(2020\)](#), [Hossen \(2020\)](#), [Said-Foqahaa & Maziad \(2011\)](#), [Sugiarti \(2021\)](#), [Zaenab \(2015\)](#). Gunawan's analysis focuses on the representation of patriarchal discourse presented throughout the gender-related issues in Marie Benedict's *The Other Einstein*. Gunawan's analysis shows that the patriarchal discourse is portrayed through discrimination, oppression, and exploitation towards women who seek equality in the domestic and public spheres. Therefore, the other previously mentioned research also shares the similarity in the topic but with a different research focus. For instance, firstly, Hossen's analysis focuses on patriarchy and women's subordination in the society of Bangladesh. In his research, he disclosed

that in Bangladesh's patriarchal system, men control women's lives in various areas, such as production, reproduction, and economics. Secondly, [Ferdoos & Zahra](#) researched the influence of patriarchy on women's decision-making power. The finding revealed that even though women claim to have the right to make their own decisions, but they always ask for permission from someone close to them, notably for decisions related to education, mobility, recreation, and marriage. Thirdly, [Said-Foqahaa & Maziad](#) addressed the challenges that impeded the full participation of Arab women in decision-making processes.

Moreover, [Sugiarti](#) researched the portrayal of patriarchal culture in folklore, especially in East Java folklore. This research explained the pattern of East Javanese folklore that portrays patriarchal culture and the factors beyond the existence of patriarchal culture, including economic, cultural, and people's mindsets. The result shows that male characters of East Javanese folklore are fully empowered. However, the female characters are powerless in the context of making decisions.

All of the research mentioned before will be used to assist in conducting this research because of the similarity of topic shared between them, which is women and patriarchy. Furthermore, despite of the widely discussed topic, the researcher who conduct how patriarchy is represented in Marie Lu's works is yet to be found, especially in the first historical fantasy novel of Mozart's sister. Therefore, this study aims to reveal the practice of patriarchy represented through the female main character's relationship in *The Kingdom of Back*.

This research is framed through the representation theory proposed by Stuart Hall, especially Michel Foucault's discursive approach. Hall described representation as the production of meaning through language as a medium to convey something meaningful or represent the world meaningfully to others ([Hall, 1997](#)). Thus, we can say that representation is the production of meaning through a language based on the concepts or ideas we have in our heads. By adopting the discursive approach, the data in the forms of sentences and quotations are examined to find the discourse beyond the story. The discourse of *The Kingdom of Back* is examined by connecting the text's analysis from the novel and the contextual background. The contextual background for this research means the real condition or the situation in real life based on the novel's setting, in this case, the 18th century European patriarchy. Additionally, the author's critical position might be presented through her opinion and how she depicted the issue of patriarchy throughout her works.

## METHOD

This qualitative research is concerned with qualitative data. Qualitative research obtains and examines non-numeric data, such as words or images as a focus of the analysis. Moreover, concerning with exploring the details ([Blaxter, Hughes, & Tight, 2010](#); [Denscombe, 2003](#)). Correspondingly, the data are the expressions related to the patriarchal practice and behavior in the form of sentences retrieved from the manuscript of *The Kingdom of Back* written by Marie Lu. In addition, to support the primary data, the secondary data are obtained from journal articles, theses, or books relevant to this research.

This research employed the documentary method to collect the data. [Blaxter et al., \(2010\)](#) quoted in [Purwitasari & Setiawan's](#) article stated that the documentary method is applied by the process of reading, understanding, and analyzing critically to classify the relevant information regarding this research. The data are collected through several phases. First, for primary data, the researcher closely and comprehensively reads the novel to obtain the dialogue and quotations that depict patriarchy's practice throughout the relationship between the characters. Second, highlighting and classifying the data based on the forms of patriarchal practice and behavior in the novel.

Stuart Hall's representation theory is used to dismantle the practice of patriarchy represented by the female main character's relationship through the constructed language in the novel. Additionally, to find the discourse constructed through the novel, the analysis of the practice of patriarchy represented by the female main character's relationship will be connected with the contextual background in the 18th century European. Moreover, the information regarding the author's opinion on the issue are examined along with the discourse of patriarchy through the text and contextual analysis to get the critical position of the author.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Patriarchy is a system in which the power relation and distribution between men and women are unequal. Men dominate, oppress, exploit, and subordinate women in several ways (Shokri & Asl, 2015; Walby, 1990). According to Sakina (2017), patriarchy which dominates the culture of society, causes gaps and injustices between gender, affecting the various aspects of human activities. Men who hold the greater power and role in society have rights and great influence in the economic, social, political, psychological, and law spheres. Moreover, as a blind belief, patriarchy only lets women have less control upon their ideology, resources, and authority in their lives than men. Men held an overwhelming number of upper hierarchal positions in society with hierarchies (Goldberg, 1993; Hossen, 2020).

Patriarchal society believes that men are the first holder of power and are positioned at the top of the hierarchy. Additionally, patriarchy promotes or encourages males with privilege by being male-dominated, male-identified, and male-centered. On the contrary, women are marginalized and subordinated (Johnson, 2005; Shokri & Asl, 2015). The women who struggling to meet their dream is usually outcasted from the social standard (Bugden et al., 2023). This phenomenon of women's subjugation also happens in the object of this research within the portrayal of female character in *The Kingdom of Back*. Based on the setting of the novel, the European 18th century is still influenced by the spirit of patriarchy. In the 18th century, the only identity reserved for women was only as a wealthy man's wife. Women's life was solely dedicated to finding a husband, serving them flawlessly, and reproducing (Güven, 2022).

### Types of Patriarchal Behavior Against Women

Throughout the female main character's relationship with male characters in *The Kingdom of Back*, she is disadvantaged by the patriarchal behavior she went through as a consequence of trying to resist patriarchy. Nannerl intends to oppose the patriarchal culture that influences the surrounding society to limit, discriminate, oppress, and exploit women who want to be equal to men (Gunawan, 2020; Sugiarti, 2021). Moreover, Sugiarti's research quoted from Bachrin et al., (2024); Soghe & Pangau (2023) stated that patriarchal values have been acculturated and adopted by society and applied in various aspects of life. Additionally, according to Wardani et al., (2023), citing from Darojatin's view, stated that women cannot achieve the freedom they seek if the society has agreed and become accustomed to the values and norms of patriarchy.

Therefore, Sugiarti et al., (2022), quoting from Taylor's view, declared that in the development and modernized human life, women experienced injustice in positioning their roles. Women are regarded to be positioned in inferior groups, and they must comply with the men's superiority. Besides, men's desire to obtain such social power, an acknowledgment in society, and they are being privileged is undeniable. This happens because of the fact that men need to have power to boost their self-esteem (Shokri & Asl, 2015). Then in line with that, quoted from Johnson (2005), patriarchal society promotes male privilege by being male-dominated, male-identified, and male-centered. It is also organized around the obsession of control and contributed as the one of the critical aspects of women's oppression. It seems like patriarchy gives absolute priority to men, on the contrary, to some extent limits women's human rights (Sultana, 2011).

The patriarchal behavior possessed by male characters in the story is portrayed upon practicing domination, oppression, and exploitation towards the female main character, Nannerl. In addition, the relationships between the characters are; 1) the relationship with Johann Georg 'Leopold' Mozart, which their relationship defined as a father-daughter relationship, 2) the relationship with Hyacinth, they are in a mutually beneficial relationship, and their relationship is bound by the promise and bargaining that they agreed. They promise to help each other's wish, Nannerl with her wish to leave a legacy as a professional musician. On the other side, Hyacinth wishes to regain the throne of the magical land. The following discussion will explain about male characters' patriarchal behavior toward Nannerl as the female main character of *The Kingdom of Back*.

### Domination

The patriarchal behavior possessed by the male of patriarchy is portrayed upon the act of asserting and practicing the dominant behavior in the relationship between the female main character and the male

characters in the story. The male characters, namely Johann Georg “Leopold” Mozart and Hyacinth, show the different acts of domination. Leopold as Nannerl’s father portrays the domination in their father-daughter relationship through the act of making decisions for her and the rest of the family. Otherwise, Hyacinth, a male stranger with magical power that Nannerl met, shows domination towards Nannerl through the act of controlling.

Dominant is the basic instinct possessed by men. Patriarchy which is constructed socio-culturally always gives men more privileges compared to women. Therefore, men are considered superior and stronger than women. Otherwise, women as inferior and weaker than men. In accordance with that, men of patriarchy are believed to have power over females. This kind of power refers to power as the power to dominate, in which one side is believed to be superior and has a greater influence on another (Barnett & Duvall, 2005; Haugaard, 2012). Throughout the men’s domination over women the various problems emerged, namely gender inequality, sexual oppression, and they need to go through such disadvantages and discrimination due to their gender. Women must seek a way to presence in male environment (Pitti, 2019).

In the family sphere, women are regarded as passive dependents and their spouses' property. It is implied that women are viewed as followers and belong to their spouses. Therefore, with the existence of men’s superiority notion, gender stereotypes, and the patriarchal culture believed by society, men are benefited through the authority to make decisions. In fact, Said-Foqahaa & Maziad's research discovered that throughout history, men had the authority to make decisions in all aspects of life, in public as well as private settings. During the decision-making process, the participation of women has consistently been limited by the majority of the patriarchal system that enforces at various aspects of life. Similarly, this phenomenon occurs in the object of this research, male characters occupy the authority and rights to be controllers, decision-makers, and are positioned in the top of the hierarchy.

Firstly, Leopold, the head of the household and man of patriarchy, occupies the position of decision-maker and controller for the rest of the family members. In the story, when Mozart’s family faces struggle in the midst of Wolfgang’s absence from their schedule due to his scarlet fever. Moreover, Leopold is in the middle of an economic struggle because of the archbishop is cutting his salary. He decides for the rest of the family members and orders Nannerl to perform alone (Lu, 2020, p. 115). Furthermore, Leopold’s depiction of women appears to be underestimating and supporting the notion that women are not reasonable enough to make decisions. It can be seen in the action performed by Leopold during his argument regarding the smallpox epidemic in Vienna, and he addresses that women must be reasonable and obedient within male’s orders (Lu, 2020, p. 275).

More of Leopold’s acts to emphasize the authority towards Nannerl is shown when he orders Nannerl with his eyes holding a silent warning, “Go sit with Wofelr in his room. I will come and get you when I’m ready” (Lu, 2020, p. 276). Then, he decided only to take his son to a safer place during the broke out of the smallpox epidemic, leaving his wife and daughter. Leopold warns Nannerl, “You cannot come,” and he continues with, “Stay here with your mother” (Lu, 2020, p. 279). Then, the arguments ended badly, and Leopold left his daughter and wife to evacuate Wolfgang. In this part of the story, Leopold does not hesitate to address her daughter as selfish girl and involves physical violence to make Nannerl obey him. It could be seen in the quotation below:

“Papa slapped me. I gasped, suddenly dizzy, and touched my cheek with my hand. “You are a selfish girl,” he said. His eyes burned me. “Go back inside. I will not tell you again. Wait for me—I will come back for you and your mother.” With that, he turned away one last time and stepped into the coach.” (Lu, 2020, p. 280)

The quotation above shows that he asserts dominance by making decisions only with his voice, addressing her as a selfish girl, and even involving violence toward his daughter. It is implied that Leopold does not even hesitate to do violence to make his daughter obey him. This is in line with Dutt's (2018) statement, she stated that violence against women strengthens the sociocultural beliefs of patriarchy, which tends to preserve male dominance through the legitimation, normalization, and justification of violence. Under the patriarchal order, gender-power relations directly impact women's subordination role in society.

Men are permitted to employ brute force to gain control, command, and respect from females, it is allowed under the socially determined norms that society believes.

Secondly, the other male character with a mutually beneficial relationship with Nannerl, Hyacinth is represented as men who controls Nannerl. There is an event when Nannerl is severely ill after declining the next tasks from him and discovers her six sonatas have been published without her permission under her brother's name. Later, two weeks passed, and he started encountering Nannerl and reminding her about their promise. He invented a story about Wolfgang's betrayal over Nannerl. He stirred confusion to convince Nannerl while she was in a bad state. Hyacinth reminds Nannerl that he could be her guardian if she let him be. The acts of convincing perform indirect controlling towards the female main character. It can be seen from the quotation below:

“You and I are one, Nannerl. I am your friend. Friends help each other, and dislike seeing each other in distress. I can help you become what you want to be, help you heal, or I can let you die tonight, mourned only by your father and mother and brother. But I can only be your guardian if you let me help you. Now, what is you want?” (Lu, 2020, p. 212)

Additionally, the act of convincing could be seen in the part when Hyacinth tells Nannerl that he still can hear the echo of Nannerl's first wish. Nannerl's wish to attain immortality through her music and composition (Lu, 2020, p. 213). Furthermore, the portrayal of Hyacinth as a male with magical power, it is clear that he is considered superior and stronger than Nannerl. Realized that her father would not hesitate to sacrifice her work for money after witnessing her sonatas stolen by her father, and she could never publish her dozen finished pieces of music under her name. Moreover, she understood that she could not fulfill her wish without Hyacinth's help and power, and wanted to achieve her dreams (Lu, 2020, p. 212-213). She has no other choice but to agree to continue their promise. Nannerl's action of agreeing to continue their bargain also implied that she let Hyacinth control her, notably, she let Hyacinth order and command her through the tasks that Nannerl must fulfil. It is shown in the following passages:

“Hyacinth tilted his head at me in approval. “Then do not tell your brother,” he answered. “Meet me at midnight in two weeks, here in this room, and we shall help each other, as friends do.”” (Lu, 2020, p. 213)

Right after both of them agree and decide to continue their bargain, Hyacinth immediately gives Nannerl command for the next tasks that she needs to do. Moreover, Nannerl should obey and follow his order because she let Hyacinth control her by agreeing to continue their bargain. The act of domination portrayed by Hyacinth is shown through his order to Nannerl and his power to make Nannerl obey him. As for Leopold, he portrays the act of domination by ordering, controlling, and making decisions to assert and emphasize his dominance as a male patriarchy and the head of the family.

### ***Oppression***

The second patriarchal behavior possessed by male of patriarchy are portrayed upon the act of practicing the oppressive behavior in the relationship between the female main character and the male character in the story, especially Leopold. The forms of oppression represented in the forms of limitation, invalidation, discrimination, and disadvantages towards the female main character in the story. The use of authority and law also contributes to prevents Nannerl from being equal to her brother, Wolfgang.

Women's oppression and exploitation has been one of major effects of the existence of patriarchy. Oppression could be defined as the act of dehumanizing and denying people language, education, and other opportunities that causing them become less humane in both their minds and their bodies (Astuti & Harry Kistanto, 2021; Simanjuntak et al., 2021). Additionally, according to Nirwinastu's study cited from Weber's view the practice of oppression have been continuously practiced for decades, have adjusted to cultural changes, and have gradually become parts of daily behavior. Women are individual who belong to the non-dominant and subordinate group which make them more prone going through oppression. It could defined as using authority, law, or unjust physical force to prevent others to achieve freedom or equality. Moreover,

this practice of oppression is maintained within variety mechanisms, including those found in social norms and stereotypes. Furthermore, the oppression's key characteristics are altered by the social groups (Napikoski, 2021; Taylor, 2016).

The oppressive relationship in this story is presented upon the relationship of the female main character and her father, particularly Nannerl and Leopold. In which, the male figure plays a role as an oppressor. The act of oppression mostly through mental oppression. One factor that exerts influence on Nannerl's oppression is that she is a woman living in patriarchal society, and she discovers what she wants to do for her career. However, she is a woman of the 18th century and it is not proper for her to become a professional musician, women are expected to marry, become housewife. Then, she tries to resist the society rules which assign women with domestic area's works.

The act of discrimination towards Nannerl performs as the oppression in the story. Nannerl always gets different treatments from her father, her father praises Wolfgang as a miracle that their family owns with a whole adoration, but he never mentions Nannerl. In her teenage years known as a musician and child prodigy in the patriarchy society, she is distinguished from her brother's fame as a gifted child prodigy skilled in composing since his early life. Whereas, Nannerl is only treated as an accompaniment to her brother's performance. There are some events that show that Leopold underestimates Nannerl's ability and talent. It could be seen in the following quotation:

“That is because what others cannot do, Wofelr can,” he said, turning to my brother with a rare smile. “It is the miracle that they seek, and you are it.”  
I waited for Papa's glance to fall on me too, to include me in his good mood and the miracle that was out of family. But he ignored me and went back to his conversation with Mama.” (Lu, 2020, p. 2012)

The part of the story above happens when the Mozart family rides to Dutch, and Leopold tries to convince his wife that they will offer the well-worth payment as they ask their children to perform for them. Therefore, from the data quoted before, it is clear that Nannerl experiences discrimination and invalidation of her musical talent. Later, she discovers that a bound volume of Wolfgang's composition commissioned by the Dutch finished quickly. Then, she discovered that her father stole her stored composition and sold it into the bound of volume under Wolfgang's name.

“Six of *my* sonatas, with minor changes. They had been published in a bound volume, like I'd always dreamed of, but they did not have my name anywhere on them. Instead, they were signed by Wofelr.  
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart had stolen my music.” (Lu, 2020, p. 204)

The narration shows that Nannerl is disadvantaged by the published stolen music without getting credit and appreciation for her works, and her father is the one who bears the blame for publishing Nannerl's sonatas under her brother's name without her consent. The piece of evidence that could confirm that her father's actions are disadvantageous and invalidated Nannerl's feelings is happening when she had a chance to ask her father the reason beyond her father's action and did not ask her beforehand. However, Leopold believes that telling her would not make any difference and she would feel miserable in the end, either sooner or later. He assumes that Nannerl's music would be useless if Leopold did not publish it under Wolfgang's name because she could only store her work and could not publish it under her own name (Lu, 2020, p. 246). It implies that Leopold ignores his daughter's feelings and violates Nannerl's rights as the owner of the music he stole.

Nirwinastu (2021) declared that the limitation towards women's ability to develop their leadership and intelligence is another manner of oppression. Comparatively, the act of limitation towards Nannerl's musical talents is represented when she realizes that the sight of paper tempted her to compose her own variation of melodies. She hesitates due to the existing women's stereotype that women should run the household and do all of the domestic work. She was aware that the composition belonged to man's realm, was not her place, and her father had never hinted otherwise. The limitation is not only portrayed through

the social rules and gender stereotypes that prevent her from achieving her desire and prohibit her from developing Nannerl's musical talent, Leopold, as the father and man under patriarchy, would never allow her daughter to do so. There is a part of the story when Wolfgang discovers about Nannerl's music and tells her to show it to Leopold. However, Nannerl hates that idea because she thinks that their father would not like it. Leopold might prevent her from publishing or performing for an audience since it is not proper for a lady like her (Lu, 2020, p. 130). Therefore, the other proof can be seen below:

“Papa would not approve, if he saw me. What would he do? Take away my notebook, perhaps. He might ban me from future performances and let Wofel go alone. But most likely of all, he would destroy my compositions as punishment for my disobedience. A daughter who went around her father's lessons, who stepped into a realm that he never gave her permission to enter? He would be embarrassed at my brashness and angry at my rebellion. I imagined him tossing the music into the stove, both of us watching the delicate paper curl into ash.” (Lu, 2020, p. 68)

Nannerl was truly aware that women of the 18th century of European patriarchy were treated differently, underestimated, and positioned lower than men. It proves that patriarchal society almost never offered women the same amount of opportunities and positions as men enjoyed at that time. Therefore, women were expected to marry and become housewives. Some stereotypes regarding women's presence outside the house, according to the nature, were considered as corrupting both the women themselves and the society, and the only way for women to achieve a “successful life” at that time was through marriage. It is in accordance with the traditional gender roles, which forbid women from engaging in the public sphere since women are regarded to be incapable of carrying out the roles (Amussen & Poska, 2012; Cama, 2022; Nirwinastu, 2021). By pursuing and earning as a professional musician was believed to reduce the opportunities for marriage because it would flaws the women's reputation through her musical career.

### ***Exploitation***

The last patriarchal behavior possessed by the male of patriarchy in the story is portrayed upon the act of practicing exploitative behavior in the relationship between the female main character and the male characters in the story. Both of Leopold and Hyacinth are exploiting Nannerl for their own benefit. Leopold exploits Nannerl's energy and thoughts to gain Wolfgang's money and fame. At the same time, Hyacinth manipulated and used Nannerl's energy and trust to help him claim the magical land's throne. The exploitation of women is a problem that frequently emerges in human life because of the mistreatment experienced by women. Simanjuntak et al., (2021) defined exploitation as making use of someone's vulnerability unfairly in order to gain advantages from them. In other words, it is the act of utilizing others to satisfy themselves and obtain a certain amount of profit or benefit without fairly compensating them. The exploitative relationship in this story puts Nannerl in the position of the victim of exploitation in the patriarchal society. On the contrary male characters plays the role of an exploiter.

The first portrayal of exploitation towards Nannerl is conducted throughout her father's action, who uses her talent and energy after discovering that she is capable of composing as well as Wolfgang. She worked on composing under Leopold's order without getting credit and appreciation for her works, and her name was never mentioned in her composition. It started when the archbishop stopped Leopold's wage because of his extended absence, when he was back the archbishop lowered his wage and prohibited him from leaving again. Furthermore, after negotiating his wage and keeping Leopold's salary during his absence, they ask for another proof of Wolfgang's talent by commissioning an oratorio to Wolfgang within a week. However, Leopold's acknowledged that his son could not finish such work in a week, and he makes Nannerl help Wolfgang do an oratorio commissioned by the archbishop to maintain Wolfgang's reputation as a child prodigy that he earned across Europe (Lu, 2020, p. 243).

“I want you and Wofel to do nothing else in these eight days, to go nowhere, until you have finished the oratorio. I will check on you both twice a day, at morning and at night, and your mother will bring you food. If Wofel tires, you will take his place.” (Lu, 2020, p. 248)



The quotation points out that she agrees to her father's command since her father has the authority as a head of the household. Thus, as a daughter and woman in the family, Nannerl was expected to be obedient to her father. The following morning Leopold locked Wolfgang and Nannerl in the music room with writing equipment and a clavier. They were not allowed to leave the room until nighttime. There was the part of the story when Nannerl understood that her name would not appear in the oratorio's title next to Wolfgang's name (Lu, 2020, p. 248), and makes the assumption about Nannerl's exploitation emerges.

Later, the stronger arguments could prove that Nannerl is going through exploitation by her father. Nannerl is upset and hurt by what her father has done to her. Leopold only lets Wolfgang sign the oratorio with his name and does not even feel guilty but mutters about the time that Mozart's sibling needs to finish the whole oratorio (Lu, 2020, p. 254-255). The other evidence that shows that exploitation impacts her mind can be found when Nannerl argued with her mother about Leopold's unsatisfied act towards his children's hard work (Lu, 2020, p. 255). This implies that Nannerl is pissed and upset concerning her father's order. Moreover, her mother is aware of Leopold stealing and selling Nannerl's composition to Princess Carolina, however she remains silent and never questions Leopold's decision for them (Lu, 2020, p. 256). It means that Nannerl's mother is indirectly involved and participated in her daughter's exploitation, and Nannerl's mother, as a wife prefers to obey her husband's orders and decisions over her own conscience.

Leopold utilizes Nannerl to compose for Wolfgang's fame, she is working to gain recognition for her brother's name. Nevertheless, she does not draw every single appreciation she deserves. She does it solely for her brother and to fulfill her father's order. Leopold's action in exploiting Nannerl makes him get profit and prestige as a father of the child prodigy Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, although he sacrifices his daughter's feelings. Correspondingly, Susilowati (2021) specified the reason beyond men should be respected and obeyed by women. She stated that men are considered as the figure who is responsible for fulfilling the whole family's needs, capable of being the breadwinner and the backbone of the family. Additionally, men are stronger through their physically built bodies which supports them to work harder and earn more money than women.

Furthermore, the exploitative relationship is also presented by Hyacinth towards Nannerl. Hyacinth expresses exploitation through the act of manipulating and using Nannerl's energy to help him claim the throne of the magical land. Nannerl keeps her promise to do the tasks from Hyacinth as the fulfillment of their bargain and Hyacinth orders her to carry out tasks beyond her capability. Actually, it is related to gender stereotypes. In traditional gender construction, women are fed with the notion that women are expected to be weak and passive. Following that, Nirwinastu's study quoted from Showalter's view stated that women are reserved the passivity, ignorance, and docility roles. On the contrary, Nannerl must perform tasks involving physical strength, courage, and the ability to use weapons to fight the monster, ogre, and mysterious creatures. The fetched treasures, weapons, and Nannerl's actions in executing the tasks reflect masculine traits since it is not something that women should have or do regarding traditional gender roles. All of Nannerl's tasks that she needs to do in order to keep her promise to Hyacinth and in return, Hyacinth would help her leave a legacy in her career as a musician as she wished to be.

The tasks Nannerl carried out included (1) drawing a night flower growing inside the underwater cave and stealing it from The Queen of the Night (Lu, 2020, p. 98), (2) stealing a sword from the castle on the hill where the great ogre lives, a sword that sharp enough to cut away the thorns around the castle (Lu, 2020, p. 140), (3) finding a golden crossbow fitted with a single arrow from the rock pillars circled by the poisonous ground with tall blueish grass that chafing whatever and whoever who tries to pass it (Lu, 2020, p. 164), (4) penetrating through the poisoned river around the castle using the golden arrow and slaying the monster swimming patrols in its depths (Lu, 2020, p. 178), (5) cutting through the thorns on the other side of the river using the sword (Lu, 2020, p. 218), (6) reaching and melting the locked door in the highest tower from the spell by crushing the night flower into powder (Lu, 2020, p. 219). According to traditional gender roles, Nannerl does not perform feminine traits but masculine traits. Beauvoir (2012) specified the social construction of femininity and masculinity traits, and she argued that being feminine implies being weak, futile, and docile...any self-assertion will dismiss her femininity and seductiveness. To manifest her wish, Nannerl needs to do as Hyacinth told her, all the tasks, weapons, and treasures that reflect masculine traits. It is implied that if she wants to retrieve the same career or position as men enjoy, she must be a man by

doing some traits possessed by men according to gender stereotypes. She must be strong, brave, and aggressive.

Therefore, the practice of exploitation performed by Hyacinth also shows through the act of manipulating. [Simanjuntak et al., \(2021\)](#) declared that exploitation occurs when an oppressor controls someone's effort in order to gain advantages from the oppressed by manipulating them. In this case, Hyacinth is the one who controls Nannerl's effort to gain an advantage from the act of manipulating her. Nannerl realizes that Hyacinth lied and might betray their bargaining after meeting the princess at the highest tower and experiencing familiarity after all the occasions she went through while fulfilling the tasks.

“The Queen of the Night was not a wicked witch, but the queen herself. The ogre in the clearing had not been an ogre at all, but the king's champion, who had failed to find the queen and her son. And Hyacinth . . . I thought of the river monster that guarded against him, the bundles of dead grass tied all along the castle's gates. They were the same grasses Hyacinth couldn't touch in the clearing with the arrow, the same that were poisonous to him. The grass was protection for the castle, meant to keep him out.

Hyacinth was never the princeling of the kingdom, the queen's missing son. He was the faery creature that had stolen the boy, the monster that the kingdom had tried to keep out.” ([Lu, 2020, p. 227-228](#))

The realization that Hyacinth consistently lies to her throughout their bargaining. She acknowledged that Hyacinth is not the princeling of the kingdom, but he intends to destroy the kingdom. She is aware that she has been manipulated to help him. She understood that Hyacinth's wish to claim his birthright, his throne, and reunite with his sister was his other lie. She never knew Hyacinth's true wish and what he had bargained with her ([Lu, 2020, p. 230](#)). It shows that Hyacinth manipulated Nannerl by telling lies and hiding his true wish for his own benefit. Besides, he utilizes Nannerl to gain his desire to rule the kingdom, he also threatens Nannerl and her family until she complies with his order when he does not get what he wants. His behavior could be assessed as a practice of exploitation due to using Nannerl's energy and trust to benefit him through manipulating and threatening.

### **The Critical Position of the Author**

Marie Lu was born in China in the year of 1984. Xinwei Lu was her birth-given name ([Bell, 2016](#)). In 1989, Lu and her family immigrated to the United States as a young child. Although she settled in the United States at the age of 5, her early life in China greatly influenced her writing process. During the Cultural Revolution, Lu's mother lived under the Chinese government's repression. Now, she is a full-time writer and lives in Los Angeles, California, with her husband, son, and dogs. She stated that she has been interested in child prodigies since she grew up playing piano, especially Mozart's music. Then, her interest in Mozart's music triggered her to write a new narratively connected story of a historical novel with *The Kingdom of Back*.

*The Kingdom of Back* is her piece of work from rewriting the first novel she wrote after graduating from college. The novel tells the story of Mozart's older sister (Maria Anna Mozart, nicknamed Nannerl), she was the child prodigy and woman composer at that time. Moreover, Lu assumed the role Nannerl might have played in Mozart's music and composition through her novel. In fact, throughout the online article written by [Sophia Hall \(2022\)](#), she reported that an Australian professor discovered a shred of evidence that Mozart claimed credit for Nannerl's compositions. There is also an indication that Nannerl composed her own music, but none of them survived, especially under her name. Later, it turned out that Martin Javis, the retired Australian professor declared that Nannerl actually wrote three out of five Mozart's violin concertos. The professor also proposed that the reason beyond Mozart's claims the sister's works, Nannerl might choose to have her work published under her brother's name at that time, due to the gender restrictions prohibiting grown-up women from pursuing the career of professional composer or musician.

In the story, Lu portrays the female main character as a talented woman who highly desires to leave a legacy through her music and compositions. However, women of the 18th century of European patriarchy were limited by culture and social rules. Additionally, a woman pursuing a career as a musician in the 18th century was considered inappropriate, could harm her reputation, and make her unsuitable for marriage

(Grey, 2023). Moreover, the existing image of ideal women at that time, the portrayal of ideal women was women who were domestically focused and submissive to their husbands.

Through the portrayal of Nannerl as the female main character in the novel, Lu tries to convey her thoughts and feelings regarding women's talents that have been silenced by history. Nannerl is equally talented as her brother. Leopold even acknowledged her talent in writing composition without saying it directly, and he knew that Nannerl could write a composition (Lu, 2020, p. 246). However, in the process to achieving her dream, male characters dominate, oppress, and exploit her as a consequence of trying to resist the patriarchal culture. Nannerl never imagined in a state of such limited, invalidated, underestimated, and used as a tool to gain Wolfgang's fame and money, but she has no other choices. It implies that Lu attempts to depict how strongly the ideology of patriarchy influences Nannerl's life in the story. Furthermore, no matter how talented and strong women are, they cannot resist the rules of society and must obey men's orders.

The characteristics of the female main character in the story were constructed based on Lu's understanding and perspective towards the actual story of Mozart and the society of the town they lived in, particularly Salzburg. The characterization of Nannerl is based on the portrayal of a woman from the 18th century who desires to resist patriarchy by trying to pursue her dream of becoming a professional musician. In addition, she also represents how rules bind women and cannot be separated from the culture of patriarchy. The representation of difficulties and miseries that Nannerl needs to experience proves that no matter how hard she tries to have equal rights as her brother in the patriarchal society, she will fail in the end.

Marie Lu as the writer understands how it must feel to love something that the world refused to let her pursue. She could relate to it as telling stories became a part of her, she could not perceive the agony of being barred from writing because of her gender. Similarly, Nannerl experienced in her life. Additionally, through her story, she wants to criticize people who discriminate, oppress, exploit, and limit women, especially women who want the same opportunities and rights as men. It could be seen from the regret that she shows towards the limitation placed on Nannerl. She imagined what legacy she could have left if she had been given the same amount of attention and access as her brother enjoyed. It is such a shame that we lost the beautiful creations because Nannerl was a woman silenced by history, whether through her gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, or socio-economic circumstances (Lu, 2020, p. 319).

Marie Lu stated in her biography that she lives in Los Angeles and writes about patriarchy in Austria. The author is Chinese-American, and the novel sets in Europe. Despite the differences of the setting of the novel and the author's world, the patriarchal culture shared between Nannerl and Marie Lu shares the same characteristics. For instance, how society views and treats career women working in the public sphere. They tend to discriminate against women and consider women to focus on domestic chores. In the author's world, women are paid less than men, underrepresented in the public sphere, and face limited opportunities to get suitable jobs. The same thing occurs in the novel's setting. This is in accordance with the author's intention within her works, she wants to emerge the reflections of real-life issues that women face nowadays and hopes that her story could encourage women to overcome difficulties to fulfill their dreams.

The critics towards patriarchy are voiced within the act of trying to resist patriarchy by the female main character of the story. Since patriarchy is a strong culture, at the end of the story, she fails to oppose the oppressing and dominating patriarchal culture. As the author and diaspora subject, she is still influenced by the deep-rooted value of her home country. Her early life in China greatly influenced her work, such as the value of deep-rooted patriarchy. Even though Nannerl cannot completely resist patriarchy which prevents her from pursuing her dream, she is able to resist exploitation and domination by male characters when she considers the worth of her wishes and the things she needs to sacrifice to make her wish come true (Lu, 2020, p. 270).

## CONCLUSION

Marie Lu portrays the narrative from the perspective of Maria Anna Mozart (Nannerl), the female main character of the novel, telling the story of Nannerl's journey and desire to leave a legacy as a professional musician in a patriarchal culture. She intends to oppose the patriarchal culture which limits women to pursuing their dreams. As a consequence, she went through domination, oppression, and exploitation by the

male characters of this story. *The Kingdom of Back* is more than the product of the author's imagination based on Mozart's sibling story, the author attempts to emerge the social condition that women need to face nowadays and during the 18th century European patriarchy. The story represents women's subordination or subjugation portrayed by the female main character. Moreover, the female main character also experienced patriarchal sphere in her relationship with male characters, notably, she is dominated, oppressed, and exploited throughout her relationship.

*The Kingdom of Back* depicts women's subordination and the limitation that women needs to struggle in order to pursue their dreams. Women have experienced men's patriarchal behavior, miseries, and pressures from trying to oppose the patriarchal culture. Furthermore, Marie Lu intends to present the continued existence of patriarchy through the construction of the female main character's relationship with male characters. Thus, Marie Lu does not blatantly show the rejection of patriarchy and the act of women's subordination.

The implications of the results of this study inspire all women's readers to keep going pursue their dreams. They must aware that patriarchy is a fact and exist in our culture. I hope the next researcher will discuss about how women struggle to remove the barrier of patriarchy to have a granted life. In addition, women have awareness towards the issue of patriarchy and encourage women to improve and continue to remove the barriers to their dreams like the portrayal of Nannerl's story in the novel.

### DECLARATIONS

<b>Author contribution</b>	: L.D.P. Wardani leads and is responsible for this project. She collaborated with H. Salikin to guide Nadia MP Nisrina composing draft article and wrote the manuscript. Erna Cahyawati and Imam Basuki participated in collecting data. Meanwile Ghanesya H Murti helped to proofread the manuscript. All authors revised and approved the final manuscript.
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