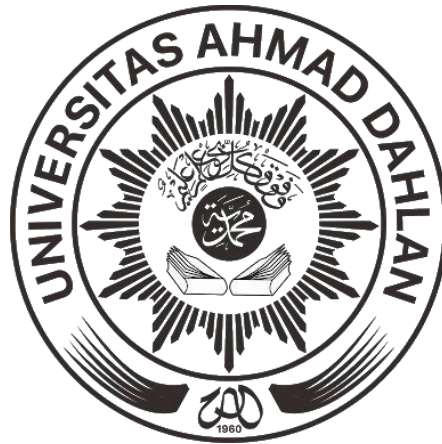


**THE INTERSECTIONALITY OF GENDER DISCRIMINATION
IMPACTS ON BETH HARMON'S IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT
IN *THE QUEEN'S GAMBIT***

Undergraduate Thesis

**Submitted as a Partial fulfillment of Requirements
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ABSTRACT

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The Queen's Gambit (2020) raises issues about the intersectionality of gender discrimination against women in male-dominated fields such as chess. *The Queen's Gambit* shows a structural and representational patriarchal judgment towards women. Gender discrimination has a big impact on the career, identity formation, and development of women. Thus, the study aims to examine the form of intersectionality of gender discrimination and its impact on the white young woman character named Beth Harmon with a low social class. This study uses a qualitative approach using pictures and dialogues from the series as the main data. Intersectionality theory is also employed to analyze the data regarding form gender discrimination and stages of development theory to examine the impact on the character's identity development. The result shows that Beth Harmon faced not only gender but also age, race, class, stereotypes, and appearances that intersect and impact Beth's complex identity formation. Also, the form of discrimination impacted Beth's stages of development during her school age, adolescence, and young adulthood stage as both a chess player and a woman, creating a dystonic (negative) and syntonic (positive) outcome. Stereotypes and inequality are the roots of discrimination issues, and the multiple forms of individual identities and backgrounds should be acknowledged to prevent a "double burden" of discrimination against people with different identities that affects one's development.

Key Words: Intersectionality, gender discrimination, identity formation

ABSTRAK

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The Queen's Gambit (2020) mengangkat isu tentang interseksionalitas diskriminasi gender terhadap wanita di bidang yang didominasi pria seperti catur. *The Queen's Gambit* menunjukkan penilaian patriarkal struktural dan representasional terhadap wanita. Diskriminasi gender memiliki dampak besar terhadap karier, pembentukan identitas, dan perkembangan wanita. Oleh karena itu, studi ini bertujuan untuk meneliti bentuk interseksionalitas diskriminasi gender dan dampaknya pada karakter wanita muda berkulit putih bernama Beth Harmon yang berasal dari kelas sosial rendah. Studi ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan gambar dan dialog dari serial tersebut sebagai data utama. Teori interseksionalitas juga digunakan untuk menganalisis data mengenai bentuk diskriminasi gender dan teori tahapan perkembangan untuk memeriksa dampaknya terhadap perkembangan identitas karakter tersebut. Hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa Beth Harmon menghadapi tidak hanya masalah gender, tetapi juga usia, ras, kelas, stereotip, dan penampilan yang saling berkaitan dan mempengaruhi pembentukan identitas kompleks Beth. Selain itu, bentuk diskriminasi ini mempengaruhi tahapan perkembangan Beth selama masa sekolah, remaja, dan dewasa muda baik sebagai pemain catur maupun sebagai seorang wanita, menciptakan hasil distonik (negatif) dan sintonik (positif). Stereotip dan ketidaksetaraan adalah akar dari masalah diskriminasi, dan berbagai bentuk identitas individu dan latar belakang mereka harus diakui untuk mencegah "beban ganda" diskriminasi terhadap orang-orang dengan identitas yang berbeda yang mempengaruhi perkembangan seseorang.

Kata Kunci: Interseksionalitas, diskriminasi gender, pembentukan identitas.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Women are one of the marginalized groups in society. As one of the most disadvantaged groups of people, women are often faced with discrimination due to their gender resulting in gender discrimination. Gender discrimination is defined as the unequal treatment of an individual based on their gender identity (Page, Montgomery, Akinbayo, Huey, & Stangle, 2022). The issue of gender discrimination, differences in status, and power between men and women persists to this day. It resulted in unequal treatment and limited participation in societal activities, leading to exclusion, limited resources, and affecting their decision-making and it has been an ongoing issue worldwide.

The deep-rooted patriarchal culture is one of many gender discrimination factors especially among women in a male-dominated field. Women who work in male-dominated fields often face unique challenges in the workplace, including “workplace backlash” and other forms of discrimination (Page et al., 2022). Women with higher levels of education and break into physically demanding male-dominated fields are represented as successful and hardworking. However, women should work harder than men to prove their capability to fit in. Women in male-dominated fields often experience a lack of support from their male colleagues. They may feel the need to adopt male behaviors to establish interpersonal relationships with them to address gender discrimination. Discrimination faced by women has different levels of strength that are determined by intersectional systems of society, such as race, ethnicity, social class, and others (Delavande & Zafar, 2013 as cited in Rosida & Rejeki, 2017).

The term intersectionality is often mentioned in topics about inequality. Intersectionality refers to multiple forms of discrimination such as racism, sexism, and classism that intersect or combine in the experience of marginalized groups like women. The term and theory of “intersectionality” was initiated by Kimberle Crenshaw. Theories make the facts of life comprehensible (Robertson, 1977, as cited in Wahab et al., 2023). According to a study by Utami (2021), the theory of intersectionality is the idea that when it comes to inequality, categories such as gender, race, and social class are best understood as overlapping and constitutive of one another, rather than being isolated and distinct. There is limited research about how ethnicity or race impacts a person’s identity development. However, the impact of gender on identity development has received much attention in psychological research

(Chae, 2001). However, there is a limited research that connects a form of inequality with one's identity development. Gender stereotypes, sexism, and gender discrimination have an important impact on the career, identity formation, and development of women (Yang, 2016). Therefore, addressing the complex problems posed by gender discrimination in an increasingly varied and dynamic environment requires a thorough understanding of how intersectionality affects a character's identity development.

The Queen's Gambit (2020) is a Netflix limited series with seven episodes based on a novel written by Walter Tevis and adapted to a series by Scott Frank, William Horberg, and Allan Scott. The show tells how Beth overcomes multifaceted challenges, ultimately shaping her personality through her mastery of chess. As a female chess player, Beth defies gender discrimination by asserting herself as a brilliant and determined player. Beth's journey starts in an orphanage when she goes to the basement and meets a janitor named Mr. Shaibel taught Beth how to play chess from the beginning. It shows Beth's capacity to overcome social and personal hurdles, providing an empowering story of a young woman's ambition in a male-dominated field. Furthermore, chess in the late 1950s and early 1960s was not familiar to be played with a woman and was known as a game traditionally played by men. Beth's character is known as an ambitious, independent, and intelligent woman. However, she received many forms of discrimination that eventually impacted her identity development. The feeling of insecurity about her skill is familiar to Beth. *The Queen's Gambit* (2020) successfully portrays the isolated feelings and struggle of being a woman in chess, dealing with obstacles, and the development of identity experienced by women.

Furthermore, there are some previous studies regarding intersectionality, gender discrimination, identity development issues, and *The Queen's Gambit*. The first previous study examines the representation of women in sports. It highlighted three representations of women in the world of chess. Agustian (2021) stated that women in the chess world are often underestimated, discriminated against, and not considered to have skills equal to men. It proves the potential of the series to influence audience views through messages containing a reflection of social reality. There is also a study in relation to *The Queen's Gambit* that focused on its character ambition in struggle and character development. It highlights Beth's character as a woman in a male-dominated world and how it shapes her character development. Putri (2022) states that Beth's personality, who is always neglected by the people she loves, becomes an orphan, lives with a lack of money, and does not like the feeling of being defeated, is

the background of her ambition to become a grandmaster. Secondly, the research identifies how her ambition positively affects her character development.

Compared to the previous studies, the present study examine on the multiple factors of gender discrimination based on a person's identities and how it affects one's identity development. Nurbaliza (2023) stated that psychosocial theories believe that continuing interactions between people and their social settings are what lead to development. By recognizing it with the urgency of illuminating the discrimination faced by women in traditionally male-dominated fields to examine Beth's intersectionality of gender discrimination and the personality development stages that Beth experienced as a woman. This study complement the gap from the previous studies that did not explore the gender discrimination of female characters from the perspective of intersectional feminism by considering the identity development dimensions of the main character. Therefore, the present study intends to assist future researchers in understanding the intersectionality of gender discrimination and identity development as depicted in *The Queen's Gambit* (2020).

CHAPTER 2

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a certain approach to data collecting, data analysis, and data interpretation through three aspects including data sources, methods, and techniques for collecting and analyzing data. According to Yin (2016) in his book *Qualitative Research from Start to Finish*, The term "collecting" describes gathering or assembling materials (documents, objects, and archive records) relevant to the chosen study topic. The primary data of the research is a limited TV series entitled "*The Queen's Gambit*" (2020) directed by Scott Frank which was published on the streaming platform 'Netflix'. In addition to supporting primary data from the film, the researcher also has collected other data from related studies that the researcher found from online sources such as the script of the series from the official Netflix script provider.

Data collection was carried out in total of seven episodes of *The Queen's Gambit* (2020). Yin (2016) stated that one of the potential data collection methods is observing. The data collection starts with observing, gathering, and taking notes of the scenes related to the topic discussed in each episode. To decide what to observe, the relevant categories are the characteristics of individual people, interactions between or among people, the "actions" taking place, and the physical surroundings (Yin, 2016). Besides observing, Yin (2016) stated that the researcher will have taken such notes in reviewing the literature as part of the preparation for designing a qualitative study. The researcher collects the relevant data from the observations by capturing the scenes, subtitles, and minutes of the scenes related to the intersectionality of gender discrimination and the main character's identity development.

This study uses qualitative methods in this study to apply feminism and a psychosocial approach. In conducting the data observations, the researcher draws a connection between the data that have been collected. Yin (2016) stated that the analytical process will lead directly to the ability to draw the needed findings. This study aim to examine the forms of intersectional discrimination and the impacts on Beth Harmon's character in *The Queen's Gambit* with intersectionality theory by Kimberle Crenshaw and Erik Erikson's stages of development theory.

CHAPTER 3

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Discrimination is one of the forms of inequality. Crenshaw (1989) stated that inequality can be caused not only by a single identity factor but also by multiple identity factors, namely several social identities that intersect with each other. Beth faced many challenges as a woman and someone who came from an orphanage background with a low economic class. She was mostly discriminated against by the people around her based on her gender, age, social class, socioeconomic, and stereotypes represented in *The Queen's Gambit*.

Beth as the main character is depicted as a quiet, genius, independent, complex, and ambitious. Beth has been an orphan since she was nine years old and has been faced with discrimination at a young age. Gender-based discrimination is a common feature of girl's developmental years (Leaper&Brown, 2018). The conflicts faced by Beth Harmon in the form of gender discrimination affect her identity development psychologically. Gender discrimination is a common experience for adolescent girls and has implications for their mental health and identity development (Rogers, Cook, & Guerrero, 2022). Each of life stages is characterized by a conflict and an individual must experience both sides of the conflict. "Social experience was valuable throughout our life, with each stage recognizable by the specific conflict we encounter between our psychological needs and the surrounding social environment" (Sutton, 2020). Erikson (1982) substitutes the terms syntonic and dystonic for initially used terms positive and negative, but they will be used interchangeably.

A. Intersectionality of Gender Discrimination in The Queen's Gambit.

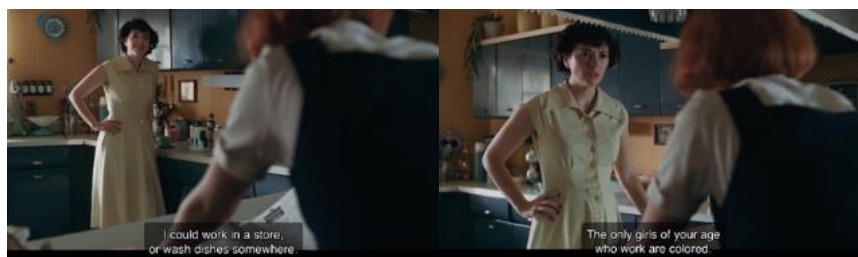
In *The Queen's Gambit* (2020) Beth Harmon experiences the intersectionality of gender discrimination due to her gender, age, and class in episode 1. In *The Queen's Gambit* (2020), Beth Harmon experiences the structural intersectionality and representational intersectionality of gender discrimination. The opening of *The Queen's Gambit* shows Beth's time at the orphanage where she faces discrimination from the staff due to her intelligence and unconventional interests. Beth Harmon is a young girl who starts her independent life and chess journey at the orphanage. She is often isolated and treated differently because of her interest in chess, which is not typical for girls in the show, especially in the late 1950s. She barely talks to her

friends at the orphanage, but chess grabs her attention quickly when she sees Mr. Shaibel (the janitor) playing chess in the basement.



Picture 1 EPS 1

Mr. Shaibel's statement "*Girls do not play chess,*" reflects the structural barrier within our society that traditionally marginalizes girls from certain things such as Beth's hobby, chess. In the late 1950s which is the setting of "The Queen's Gambit", chess was considered a male pursuit, not a woman. Structural intersectionality refers to the understanding that the experiences of individuals within a specific identity category are qualitatively distinct based on their intersecting identities (Dennissen, Benschop, & Brink, 2020). This is an example of the structural intersectionality of gender discrimination because Mr. Shaibel limits opportunities for girls like Beth to play chess. Moreover, Beth's status as an orphan adds another layer of structural intersectionality. This is because of Beth's disadvantaged background as an orphan who is considered incapable of intellectual skills and interest and limited opportunity to the outside world. Mr. Shaibel's dismissing attitudes toward Beth's interests are the effects of intersecting gender discrimination, age, and class. As previously stated by Crenshaw, discrimination is caused by the combination of multiple identities of each individual. Furthermore, the scene reflects representational intersectionality about how the scene represents that girls are unable to play chess. The representation of chess as a masculine activity marginalizes the experiences and achievements of women in chess. Therefore, this representation contributes to women's exclusion in male-dominated fields.

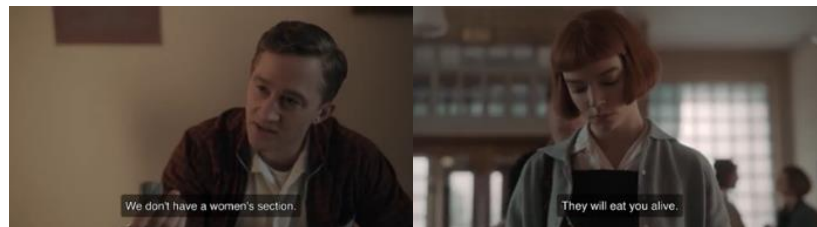


Picture 2 EPS 2

Beth's adolescent age as a white young girl, faces intersecting discrimination due to her gender, race, and social class. As Beth grows up into a teenager and lives with the Wheatley family, they are going through financial difficulties. Therefore, Beth is trying to get a job to support herself and her adoptive mother. Beth also wanted to join a chess competition but it has a registration fee, with this financial condition, she wouldn't be able to enroll. Therefore, Beth told her mother that she wanted to work part-time between school so they could earn money or work as a cleaning lady.

However, according to the scene above, Beth's mother forbids her to work by saying that "*the only girls of your age who work are colored*". The "colored" people in this context mean African American, Native American, Asian American, Latino American, and other mixed race. From *The Queen's Gambit* took place in the late 1950s and early 1960s until the late 1960s, white women were considered as ladies who deserved respect because of their gentleness and modesty while women of color were not considered unworthy to receive any form of respect because they were known as capable, independent, and immodest, unlike white women. Sigelman and Welch (1994) stated in the early 1960s, there were more employed white women than black women, however, by the mid-1960s, there was a higher number of black women who were employed. As more white women entered the workforce, the gap narrowed.

Beth's identity as a white woman in the 1960s is at a disadvantage in the context of her position as an adopted daughter of Mrs. Wheatley who is trying to get a job. Beth's desire to work part-time shows responsibility and challenges traditional gender roles and expectations that dictate women's role as dependent which could be considered as representational factors. Meanwhile, Beth's mother's response highlights the impact of society's perceptions of structural inequalities on employment which is evidence for the intersection of race and social class.



Picture 3 EPS 2

Stereotypes represent social attitudes regarding marginalized or minority groups. The existence of disparities between one individual and another demonstrates the existence of a stereotype. These differences cause each individual to experience

discrimination and inequality from other individuals (Hall, 1997). The scene above shows years after Mr. Shaibel's discriminating comments. Beth still struggles with her economic situation even though Beth is adopted, the Wheatley family has a financial struggle. Later, Beth got re-introduced to chess and told Mrs. Wheatley that she wanted to join a chess competition to win a prize of \$100 for the winner of the competition. Beth tries to register for a Kentucky Chess Tournament for the first time when she's 15. In the first picture, it can be seen that the committee doubted Beth's decision to participate in the chess tournament because Beth did not have a rank yet, she was placed in the beginner section but Beth refused.

Matt, one of the committee undermines Beth by telling her that most of the opponents she would face were men who were older and more expert than her and also because she is a woman and there were no women's sections available because female players were still rare that time in the 1960s. The organizer unconsciously puts Beth in a lower position than men and assumes that her skill is only comparable to other women. The phrase “*women's section*” negatively affects Beth. It refers to Beth's gender which is a woman who is considered weak in an intelligent sport like chess and threatening Beth that she will lose badly against the boys in the chess tournament. This scene reflects representational norms and stereotypes about gender and skill level. The assumption that Beth should be placed in a beginner section is not only because she's an unranked player but it is also because her gender aligns with the stereotype that women are less skilled in chess. Therefore, Beth's gender and stereotypes intersect and create multiple barriers in a competitive space like chess.



Picture 4 EPS 4

The picture above illustrates how Beth is inside the elevator and overhears Borgov and his team talking negatively about Beth and trying to strategize using Beth's weakness. Fortunately, Beth understood what were Borgov and his team saying because she had learned Russian. The full dialogue can be seen below:

Man 1 = “*In Moscow, she'll be jet-lagged. We can destroy her then.*”

Man 2 = “*She’s getting better, have to deal with her here or in Paris before she gets too strong.*”

Man 1 = “*There’s talk she’s a drunk, her game is almost all attack, so she doesn’t always watch her back when she blunders, she gets angry, and can be dangerous.*”

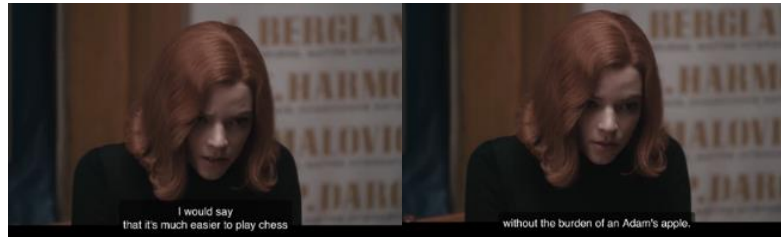
Borgov = “*Like all women. She’s an orphan, a survivor. She’s like us – losing is not an option for her. Otherwise, what would her life be?*”

(Frank, 2020, *The Queen’s Gambit* 00:33:56 – 00:34:25)

The societal perceptions and representations of women, specifically women who are doing great in a male-dominated field, show how gender could intersect with other factors such as class in shaping perceptions and judgments about women. Moreover, the specific dialogue that represents the structural intersectionality of gender discrimination is the negative remarks by Borgov’s team about Beth’s weaknesses. They assume that Beth’s game is “*almost all attack*” and “*doesn’t always watch her back*” which reflects the beliefs of women being driven emotionally or lacking the ability to strategize in competitive games like chess. This marks that women are inherently inferior chess players.

The line about how Beth as a woman does not always watch her back, is a drunk, and is an orphan reflects how societal representations can influence judgments and behaviors toward individuals. Gender and social class intersect in this context creating a complex experience for Beth. This particular scene shows the intersectionality of gender, representation, and structural factors in shaping individuals' experiences and perceptions in competitive chess.

What brings attention to the representational intersectionality is shown in Borgov’s comment about Beth being an orphan and “*survivor*”. He brings up Beth’s identity as an orphan and links Beth’s identity with her determination. Borgov implies that Beth’s disadvantaged background is what shapes her resilience and approach to chess. Crenshaw (1991) argues that women’s lives, particularly in the context of discrimination, cannot be fully comprehended by considering only the social class or gender dimensions separately, but by considering them combined. Borgov underestimates Beth as a woman and orphan.



Picture 5 EPS 6

The context of the scene above is Beth Harmon at the conference hall in Paris where Beth is having an interview with other male chess players including the Russian chess master, Borgov. In an entire room filled with men, Beth is being questioned by one of the reporters about what is her opinion of the Chess Federation who accuse her of being too glamorous. The reporter's question implies that "*too glamorous*" indicates gender biases and stereotypes about women's appearance and has nothing to do with chess suggesting that Beth is not credible to be a serious chess player.

From the previous analysis, Beth's background is known as an orphan and poor, therefore she can't buy anything she wants such as a dress that she fancies and a chess board to practice and follow her passion. However, Beth is now a skilled and famous chess player who makes money on her own and can buy anything she wants. Beth's response to the reporter's question points out how absurd the accusation is as she dismissed the question by saying "*I would say that it's much easier to play chess without the burden of an Adam's apple.*" This response confronts the stereotype that women are not as serious or capable in intellectual fields like chess. Beth feels like many male chess players still won't accept an extraordinary chess player and it's a woman. It seems Beth's gender and appearance are intersected and discriminated against due to societal representations with certain norms and expectations. Therefore, this scene illustrates how structural bias depicts how women must have certain appearance standards to be taken seriously in the chess community.

Moreover, the representational intersectionality shown by the reporter's question that includes gender stereotypes about women's appearance, implying that Beth as a female chess player must sacrifice her femininity in order to be successful in chess. The intersection of gender and appearance in Beth's career as a woman in chess creates an obstacle for her and how Beth's response to the reporter's question defines her identity by standing her ground and implying that Beth being "*too glamourous*" has nothing to do with her chess skill.

B. Stages of Identity Development of Beth Harmon

Gender-based discrimination is a common feature of girl's developmental years (Leaper&Brown, 2018). Beth Harmon is a passionate and ambitious girl when it comes to chess, however, the intersectionality of gender discrimination that she faced in her life challenged her identity development as a woman and a brilliant chess player.

The conflicts faced by Beth Harmon in the form of gender discrimination affect her identity development psychologically. Gender discrimination is a common experience for adolescent girls and has implications for their mental health and identity development (Rogers, Cook, & Guerrero, 2022). Each of life stages is characterized by a conflict and an individual must experience both sides of the conflict. Erikson (1982) substitutes the terms syntonic and dystonic for initially used terms positive and negative, but they will be used interchangeably. It is important for a person experiencing both syntonic (positive) and dystonic (negative) depending on the circumstances.

1) School Age (Industry vs. Inferiority) Stage 4 of Beth Harmon



Picture 6 EPS 1

In *The Queen's Gambit*, Beth's introduction to chess begins in Methuen's orphanage and she is mentored by Mr. Shaibel. Previously, in Picture 1, Mr. Shaibel gives a discriminating comment when Beth tries to learn chess with the potential of crushing Beth's passion for chess and limiting her choice to learn a new hobby. This is the conflict that Beth faces in this stage which could affect Beth because inhibition threatens a child's ability to master this stage since children learn to take pride in their work and acquire the attitude to do well in their work (Muss, 1996).

Fortunately, in the scene above, Mr. Shaibel finally agrees to teach Beth all about chess even though he acts cynical and cold, "Now or never". Beth is very fortunate because even though she got discriminated against at the beginning, Mr. Shaibel is

eventually willing to teach her how to be patient and accept the rules in chess. However, in this learning process, Beth tends to be impatient in playing chess. It could be seen from this dialogue:

Mr. Shaibel : “You resign now”.

Beth : “Resign?”

Mr. Shaibel : “That’s right child. When you lose the queen that way, you resign”.

Beth : “No”.

Mr. Shaibel : “Yes, you have resigned the game”.

Beth : “You didn’t tell me that in the rules”.

Mr. Shaibel : “It’s not a rule, it’s sportmanship”.

Beth : “I wanna finish.”

Mr. Shaibel : “No.”

Beth : “You’ve got to finish.”

Mr. Shaibel : “No, you lost.”

Beth : “Please!”

Mr. Shaibel : “The game is over.”

(Frank, 2020, The Queen’s Gambit 00:25:05 - 00:25:32)

The dialogue shows that Beth is struggling with her impatient traits and is quite ambitious to finish the game. However, in this stage, the child must learn to follow and respect rules and to become committed to the ideas of cooperation in team effort and fair play (Muss, 1996). Mr. Shaibel is a knowledgeable and skill-oriented role model in Beth’s life. Mr. Shaibel taught Beth how to play nicely, minding the game rules, and giving her a chess book. Because of this, she eventually learns how to be more cooperative and learns to anticipate the behavior, roles, and feelings of others while develop a sense of competence. Therefore, in this stage, Beth Harmon successfully passed the stage on industry vs. inferiority stage.

2) Adolescence (Identity vs. Role Confusion) Stage 5 of Beth Harmon

This stage is the beginning of Beth’s insecurity is the conflict that develops because no matter how intelligent Beth is, she is faced with the intersectionality of discrimination which could affect Beth’s mental condition and changes in behavior, emotion, and decisions about her life. Beth is never been scared of other chess players, but as she joins more competitions, and gets deep into the chess world

which is filled by men, she develops a new concern which is insecurity. It is illustrated below:

Mrs. Wheatley : *“What about, um, What’s his name? The one you told me about. Bobby something?”*

Beth : *“Benny Watts.”*

Mrs. Wheatley : *“Yes, him.”*

Beth : *“No losses, but one draw. I’ve seen him a couple times. Always got a crowd around him.”*

Mrs. Wheatley : *“Well, of course, he’s the US Champion.”*

Beth : *“He’s Benny Watts. Some people say he’s the most talented American player since Morphy. I read about a game he played in Copenhagen, a draw against Najdorf. That was in 1948, which means that Benny was eight years old. I’ve seen picture of him at 13 in front of a whole bunch of sailors. He played against the entire team at Annapolis without losing a game”*

Mrs. Wheatley : *“Sounds like someone else I know.”*

Beth : *“When I was nine, I was playing Mr.Shaibel in the basement. Anyway, I’m not afraid of him.”*

Mrs.Wheatley : *“I don’t suppose there’s anyone you’re afraid of.”*

Beth : *“There is one player that scares me.”*

Mrs.Wheatley : *“Who?”*

Beth : *“The Russian, Borgov.”*

(Frank, 2020, The Queen’s Gambit 00:32:40 – 00:33:46)

Beth admitted that she’s not afraid of Benny Watts but she’s afraid of the Russian player named Borgov because he is older and more experienced than Beth herself in chess. However, Beth loses to Benny Watts in the U.S. Open. Beth also deals with drinking a lot of alcohol and self-destructing as a coping mechanism due to her losses in chess between her and Benny, her first heartbreak, questioning her chess skills and identity, and lastly the discrimination and obstacles that happened in her life. Beth’s self-destructive behavior shown below:



Picture 6 EPS 3

In the next competition at Mexico City, Beth wins the game one by one until one day she overhears what Borgov and his team say inside of the elevator while strategizing against Beth in Picture 4. Unfortunately, Beth's game strategy was not strong enough to beat Borgov in Mexico City which made her feel more insecure and questioning her ability among all those men.

In the identity vs. role confusion stage of Beth Harmon, she is aware of the recognition that she gains as a chess prodigy when she beats Harry Beltik at Kentucky Chess Tournaments and makes it her identity. The recognition gave her self-confidence through her achievements. However, the insecurity and discriminating treatment faced by Beth create an isolated feeling. She felt insecure about her skills among all the male players, struggled to make friends, and failed in romantic relationships.

Poole and Snarey (2011) stated the question "Who am I?" is often articulated and if individuals master this stage, they will have a sense of ego identity. Beth's conflict makes her question her purpose as a chess player. Beth seems to fail to solve the questions of "Who am I?", "Where am I going?", and "Who am I to become?" In this stage, Muuss states that the adolescent who fails in the search for an identity will experience self-doubt, role diffusion, and role confusion; such an individual may indulge in a self-destructive one-sided preoccupation or activity. They continue to be morbidly preoccupied with the opinions of others or may turn to the other extreme of no longer caring what others think and withdraw or turn to drugs or alcohol to relieve the anxiety that role diffusion creates.

Only when individuals develop the crucial aspects of their ego-identity as knowing who is one's identity and role, can they engage in intimate relationship, deep friendships, and personal growth without fearing the loss of their sense of self. Therefore, in this stage, the researcher concluded that Beth Harmon failed the stage on identity vs. role confusion, creating unresolved identity confusion to deal with in the next stage.

3) Young Adulthood (Intimacy vs. Isolation) Stage 6 of Beth Harmon

Beth's age is now reaching the young adulthood stage that would require her to reach a balance between the intimacy vs. isolation. In this adulthood stage, the focus of one's individual is between finding intimacy or isolation in interpersonal relationships. Erikson (1959) stated that "only after a reasonable sense of identity has been established that real intimacy with the other sex is possible." The positive outcome of this stage is intimacy, including sexual intimacy, genuine friendship, stable love, and lasting marriage. However, to gain a positive outcome from this stage, one must first find an answer to the question "Who am I?" before one can find a partner to become complementary to this "I" (Muss, 1996). In contrast, the negative would be isolation, loneliness, and separation.

In this stage, Beth has faced many obstacles in her life including discrimination from the chess community, facing her multiple game losses, losing her mother, and engaging in unhealthy behavior such as pills and alcohol abuse from the adolescent stage. In *The Queen's Gambit*, Beth's next chess competition that she attends is a US Championship located in Cincinnati where she meets Benny Watts and plans on beating him. Beth wins all of the games she plays and beats Benny for the U.S. Championship. This shows that Beth is competent and a skillful player with the right training, motivation, and support from her friend, Harry. These relationships, by enhancing one's own identity, further the growth of personality (Miller, 2011). Benny is also accepting his loss and after the competition, he suggests Beth come with him to New York for chess training for the next competition where Beth will face Borgov in Paris. It is illustrated below:

Benny : *"Well, you'll need a good trainer. Not Harry Beltik. Someone better, someone more mature."*

Beth : *"Who'd you have in mind?"*

Benny : *"Can you come to New York?"*

Beth : *"I don't know."*

Benny : *"You can sleep in my living room, and you can leave for Paris from there."*

Beth : *"That's very nice of you, but I'm not even so sure I wanna go to Paris anymore."*

Benny : *"What are you gonna do instead, huh? Get drunk?"*

Beth : “Now that you mention it, yeah, sounds pretty good.”

Benny : “Beth...”

Beth : “Borgov made me look like a fool.”

Benny : “That’s cause you weren’t ready.”

Beth : “I don’t know if I’m good enough.”

Benny : “You’re the best there is. You beat me.”

(Frank, 2020, *The Queen’s Gambit*, 00:44:00 – 00:44:53)

From the dialogue above, Beth’s insecurity still exists inside her by stating “I don’t know if I’m good enough” when asked about her next competition with Borgov because Beth thinks he made her look like a fool despite Beth winning against Benny Watts. As the only woman standing as the representation at chess championships, male players sometimes give Beth discriminating, condescending, and sexist comments and Beth’s mental state and personality are sometimes not strong enough to counter the conflicts. Beth also always works 10 times harder on chess so that she can finally receive her recognition as a skilled and genius chess player. The fear of failure made her insecure about herself, skills, identity, and purpose leading to an unhealthy behavior.

Furthermore, Beth accepted Benny’s offer to train with him and his friends in New York to beat Borgov in the Paris tournament. At the Paris tournament, Beth concentrating and avoids alcohol to clear her head to be focused. However, Beth meets one of Benny’s friends, Cleo. Cleo asks Beth to drink alcohol together and it ends very badly. It results in Beth getting late on her last game with Borgov and playing the game with hungover. As a result, she loses the game and decides to isolate herself at her house in Kentucky even though Benny offers Beth to accompany her so that Beth doesn’t go spiraling into alcohol. The dialogue is illustrated below:

Benny : “There’s a rumor you were drunk.”

Beth : “I wasn’t drunk.”

Benny : “Or hungover, then.”

Beth : “I could have been stone-cold sober. It wouldn’t have made the slightest difference.”

- Benny** : “I don’t believe that. What time do you get in? I can come pick you up.”
- Beth** : “I’m going back to Lexington. I need to be alone.”
- Benny** : “That is the opposite of what you need. Beth please just come to New York. We can talk it out. Beth?”
- Beth** : “Thank you, Benny. For everything.”
- Benny** : “You shouldn’t be by yourself. You know what happens.”
- Beth** : “Maybe that’s what I want.”
- Benny** : “What, to get drunk?”
- Beth** : “Yeah, good and drunk. Fucking bombed and maybe high, too. Why not?”
- Benny** : “You wouldn’t if you were with me.”
- Beth** : “I know.”
- Benny** : “What if I said, go ahead, get drunk. Would you come then?”
- Beth** : “Benny, I don’t know what I’m doing or going to do.”

(Frank, 2020, The Queen’s Gambit, 00:33:32 – 00:34:35)

As shown in the dialogue above, Beth is starting to lose her sense of identity and motivation. Therefore, she chooses to avoid everyone and isolates herself with alcohol and pills. Benny, her friend who also has a romantic attraction, still reaches out to her. Harry Beltik is also trying to reach out by phone because Beth is spiraling at her house in Lexington, Kentucky due to her losses. Beth eventually loses her connection with all of her friends because she avoids any affection that her friends give and becomes isolated.

All of Beth’s friends are gone except Jolene, her best friend back at the orphanage. Beth got on track and felt that Jolene's support was impactful and she considered Jolene as her only family left in her life. Therefore, Beth decided to go to Moscow, Russia to play an international chess master tournament. She still being perceived as the minority because, in this tournament, she is the only woman who joins and represents in the competition. Beth also feels lonely in Russia because Benny, Harry, and her other friends won’t accompany her because Beth decided to cut their friendship by isolating herself and avoiding them.

However, Beth's first love and friend, DL Townes came to Russia as a newspaper journalist and accompanied her. Therefore, Beth feels better about this tournament because she is not alone and has gotten enough support since Beth and Townes's friendship has rekindled. It is illustrated below:

Townes : *"I know you were angry with me. And I'm sorry. I should've told you the whole story."*

Beth : *"No, I'm sorry. I should've let you"*

Townes : *"I will admit... I was a little confused. You really are something. But, um, what I really wanted was for us to be friends. And you kind of broke my heart."*

Beth : *"I have a way of doing that. Do you forgive me?"*

Townes : *"Clearly. Consider me your second. What do we need to do to help you beat Borgov?"*

Beth : *"Well, what I need are... the pills, the booze, I need my mind cloudy to win. I can't visualize the game without them."*

Townes : *"Really? You think that's what brought you here?"*

Beth : *"I think that's what I'm used to."*

Townes : *"Yeah, but you've been doing fine without all that. Haven't you?"*

Beth : *"Yes, I... threw away the pills, and then I asked the front desk where I could get more. I just really need them right now or I thought I did."*

(Frank, 2020, The Queen's Gambit, 00:49:26 – 00:50:59)

Peer support is important in this stage so that one individual does not feel isolated and lose their identity. Townes's role as a close friend is to pull Beth from the dystonic (negative) outcome which is isolation and loneliness. In *The Queen's Gambit*, Benny, Harry, Matt, Mike, and two of Benny's friends surprise Beth through the phone on the day Beth faces Borgov in the final game. They gather to help Beth as a team and help her strategize to find a way to beat Borgov in Russia regardless of Beth's isolating them in the past. Beth is finally accepting their presence and effort to help as a friend and not isolating herself from social

interaction due to her losses in chess, losing her mother, and the gender discriminatory acts that happened to her throughout her journey as a chess player.

Beth's friends gather and decide to help Beth through the phone by strategizing and predicting all of the chess movements possible. The support from her peer groups is one of the things that matters during Beth's time grappling with loneliness and isolation. The role of the peer group and deep friendships successfully woken up Beth from being isolated and appreciate the deep connection Beth has with each of her friends personally.

Finally, Beth won against Borgov and received the title of the first World Chess Champion who is a woman. Beth's journey as a chess player and finding her true identity and purpose is a rough one because of the discriminatory act towards her that caused many problems such as Beth's insecurity, alcoholism, and pill addiction that caused her to feel lost and isolated at times. Fortunately, she can resolve all of her problems and find her way back again as a chess player and a world chess champion. Therefore, in this stage, Beth Harmon successfully passed the Identity vs. Role Confusion stage.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

In the limited series “*The Queen’s Gambit*” (2020), Beth’s social identities at issue are gender, age, race, social class, stereotype, and appearance which are connected to structural and representational intersectionality. Meanwhile, the political intersectionality data is not available in the series. Moreover, the analysis from the collected data that shows the forms of the intersectionality of gender discrimination towards Beth are categorized into five forms. The category of the analysis result shows; gender, age, and class, gender, race, and class, gender and class, gender and stereotypes, and gender and appearance. Therefore, based on the data analyzed in the previous chapter, it can be concluded that the majority of many forms of the intersectionality of gender discrimination towards Beth intersect with her social class.

Discrimination impacted Beth’s identity development. Beth’s stage of Industry vs. Inferiority outcomes is majority positive by gaining a trait of competence, wanting to succeed, and love being recognize by her work. Furthermore, in the adolescent stage (Identity vs. Role Confusion) stage, Beth is faced with discrimination, challenges in losing her game multiple times, developing insecurity, and having an unhealthy coping mechanism by consuming pills and alcohol. The majority of Beth’s adolescent stage outcome is negative (dystonic) since Beth lost her identity and purpose in life after being faced with too many obstacles and decided to isolate herself. Therefore, it can be concluded that Beth has failed to pass the adolescent stage. Lastly, the analysis of Beth’s stages in Intimacy vs. Isolation still includes how Beth grapples with discrimination and her self-destructive habits. Beth isolated herself with alcohol and pills, cut almost all of her relationships and friendships, and went spiraling because she lost her identity and herself. However, at the end of *The Queen’s Gambit*, Beth decides to throw her bad habits into pills and drinking and focusing on beating Borgov to gain her title as the World Chess Champion. Furthermore, Beth’s friendships rekindle and their supports, love, and connection is what pull Beth from a hole that she digs up on her own.

This study concluded that many forms of the intersectionality of gender discrimination faced by Beth Harmon through her multiple identities, create a mixed result in her identity development. In addition, this study can complement the gap of the previous study to acknowledge the multi-layered discrimination and its impact on an individual.

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