



The Social Discrimination in Alice Mead’s “Girl of Kosovo”

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Abstract

This study aims to describe the discrimination found in Alice Mead’s novel *Girl of Kosovo*. The author uses the sociology of literature approach as a field of study of literary works. This approach is an approach in literary studies whose goal is to get a picture of the state of society through literary works. The research method applied to *Girl of Kosovo* is qualitative research. The primary data source used in this research is the novel *Girl of Kosovo* by Alice Mead. Data collection technique used is the technique of reading notes. This study uses reading techniques and note-taking techniques as data collection techniques. A qualitative descriptive analysis technique was used in this study by analysing data on the description of social discrimination contained in the *Girl of Kosovo* novel accompanied by quotations to clarify and strengthen the problem under study. The results of the research show that there are several types of discrimination contained in the novel *Girl of Kosovo* by Alice Mead. Every form of discrimination raised is directly proven through textual data derived from excerpts from the novel.

Key words: Discrimination; Sociology of Literature; *Girl of Kosovo*; Alice Mead

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INTRODUCTION

The cultural background and social environment of the community are the driving factors that produce literary works. Literary work is essentially an embodiment of life, the result of observations by writers on the life around them (Istiqomah, Nuriana, 2014). Efforts to express ideas or ideas through literary works can be said to be a creative effort of a writer to invite the reading public to discuss the problems that are happening in life. As a cultural product, literary works are believed to communicate an inner human experience in the form of humanitarian problems born from the author as the creator, as well as part of the local community group. A literary work exists as an activity to create writers based on creative imaginative power. Literary works offer two main problems, namely understanding about life and pleasure (Juanda, 2018).

The novel as a literary genre contains an important issue that occurs in society, both from the experience of a novelist himself and from the experiences of others. Semi says that the novel is a work of fiction that expresses aspects of humanity that are deeper and are presented subtly (Budianingsih, 2014). Novel is a work of fiction, written prose and narrative usually in story form. Novel writers are called novelists. The word novel comes from the Italian novella which means “a story, a piece of news” (Rahayu, 2014). The novel is an imaginative literary work that tells the complex problems of human life with various conflicts, so that readers gain new experiences about life. One of the problems contained in the novel is the problem of discrimination. This is because literature is born, grows and develops in the midst of society which is a social creature that interacts with each other which can cause various kinds of social problems.

The novel *Girl of Kosovo*, published in 2001 by Alice Mead, in her depiction raises the issue of discrimination cases experienced by ethnic Albanians in Kosovo. In this novel, the author, through the characters shown, tries to

express various acts of discrimination, be it ethnic, caste, verbal discrimination and so on.

Discrimination is the act of treating individuals or groups differently based on characteristics such as origin, race, national origin, religion, political or religious beliefs, social customs, gender, sexual orientation, language, age and others. Discrimination is the principle that all people are not equal. According to Ihromi, discrimination is a form of attitude and behavior that violates human rights (Unsriana, 2014).

Any action that discriminates against a person or group is referred to as discrimination (Fadhlina Kurnia Ridha, Yasnur Asri, 2022) pompa air mini DC, motor servo, motor DC. Hasil pembacaan sensor ultrasonik dipantau melalui antarmuka website. Rancang bangun pengolah pakan otomatis Sugar Glider menerapkan konsep teknologi Internet of Things (IoT). The difference in treatment can be due to skin color, social classes and can also be due to economic status and ethnicity or social caste. According to Fulthoni, the lowest social caste is considered the scum of society and is impoverished or marginalized, so they lack access to enjoy their human rights. Therefore, discrimination is an act of treating other people unfairly just because they come from a certain social group (Yulinar, 2021).

According to Theodorson (Abdullah, 2018) discrimination is unequal treatment of individuals or groups, based on something, usually categorical as based on religion, race, social class, or ethnicity. The term is usually used to describe an action that is accepted by the weak (minority) for what is done by the dominant (majority). Acts of discrimination are considered disgraceful and immoral behavior. From Theodorson's point of view, it can be said that discrimination is also the treatment of individuals differently based on factors of race, religion, and gender. Any harassment, restriction or exclusion of another person or group includes discriminatory actions.

According to Newman (Patiraja, 2017) verbal discrimination (verbal expression) is discrimination carried out by insulting or with words. Avoiding or keeping away a person or group or community you don't like is a form of avoidant discrimination. Meanwhile, this discriminatory exclusion is carried out by way of an action that does not include a certain person or group of people into a group which is called expenditure discrimination. Physical discrimination (physical abuse) discrimination carried out by hurting, hitting, or attacking. Discrimination through extinction, discriminatory treatment by exterminating or carrying out large-scale killings. This is in line with Fulthoni's view (Saludung & Juanda, 2019) various discriminations occur in society, including: (1) discrimination based on ethnicity/ethnicity, religion/belief, and race, (2) discrimination based on sex and gender (social roles due to gender), (3) discrimination against people with disabilities, (4) discrimination against

people with HIV/AIDS, (5) discrimination because of social caste.

Based on the description of the forms of discrimination above, the forms of discrimination described in the novel *Girl of Kosovo* by Alice Mead include ethnic discrimination, verbal discrimination, extermination discrimination, physical discrimination, and social caste discrimination.

1. THE NATURE OF THE SOCIOLOGICAL LITERARY APPROACH

The Nature of the Sociological Literary Approach

The novel *Girl of Kosovo* by Alice Mead will be studied using the sociology of literature approach as a field of study of literary works. Literary sociology is considered a literary study that examines the relationship between literature and social reality (Wulandari & Maridja, 2018). Definitely the sociology of literature is the analysis, and discussion of literary works by considering their social aspects (Tamaraw, 2012).

At the basic stage, sociology and literature put forward the same overview. Sociology is the objective study of humans in society, institutions, and social processes that are carried out to determine their existence and patterns of work. Literary works, like sociology, also talk about human life, how to adapt, and their desire to change. This is in line with Ratna's opinion (Ratna, 2013) sociology and literature have the same object, namely literature in society, but in essence, there are differences between sociology and literature, sociology only limits itself to what is happening today, not what should be happening. while literature is more evaluative, subjective, and imaginative. Literary sociology departs from the principle that literary works are a reflection or reflection of society at the time the literary work was written (Didipu, 2018).

Concerning literature and society, Swingewood (Swingewood, 1972) presents three concepts in his literary work approach, namely literature as a reflection or reflection of the times, literature seen from the production process of its authorship, and history literature. This research focuses on the first concept, namely literature as a reflection or reflection of the times.

Literary works according to Swingewood are socio-cultural documents that can be used to see a phenomenon in society at that time (Swingewood, 1972). This is what is then termed literary documentation which refers to the reflection of the times. Swingewood quotes Luis De Bonald's statement "who thinks that by doing a close reading of a work of national literature one will know what is happening or happening to that community. Likewise, Stendhal's statement that the novel is a mirror journeying down the big road" (Swingewood, 1972). Literature is a reflection or reflection of the times, it can also be assumed that literature is a mimesis (imitation)

of the times to see a social phenomenon. This view is in line with Plato's opinion, that the sociology of literature departs from mimesis (imitation) theory and considers literature as an imitation of reality (Ardiono, 2019).

Using Swingewood's theory of sociology of literature as an analytical approach to reveal forms of discrimination in Alice Mead's *Girl of Kosovo* novel. The important thing in the sociology of literature approach is the mirror concept. In this regard, literature is considered a mimesis (copy) of society.

2. METHOD

The researcher applies a qualitative descriptive research type as a research method. According to Sugiyono, a qualitative descriptive method is a type of research that positions humans (researchers) as the main instrument, the data collection technique used is based on the philosophy of postpositivism, where the condition of the object studied is natural, not experimental, data analysis is inductive/qualitative, and the value of meaning is more emphasized rather than generalization on the results of qualitative research methods (Sugiyono, 2016).

In the first stage, the writer explores as much information as possible to explore the chosen topic. Then the author determines the focus of the research, as well as limits the formulation of the problem. In the next stage, the researcher collects relevant data sources as the basis for the description to be written. In the book "Qualitative Approaches to Human Behavior Research", Poerwandari states that the types and methods of collecting qualitative research data vary widely, adjusting the objectives and nature of the object to be studied, along with the flexible and open nature of qualitative research (Poerwandari, 2016).

This descriptive approach is used to describe forms of ethnic discrimination, verbal discrimination, physical discrimination, and forms of caste discrimination. This type of research is used to reveal forms of discrimination against Albanian society in the novel *Girl of Kosovo* by Alice Mead. Therefore, this study uses Swingewood's theory of literary sociology as a theoretical basis for revealing forms of discrimination against society.

Data collection techniques used in this study are reading techniques and note-taking techniques. The reading technique is a method used by a researcher to collect data in research. According to Tuloli (Tuloli, 2000) "studying literature must be through reading because reading is the beginning of analysis". While the note-taking technique used is by recording text in the form of words, quotations or dialogues, and paragraphs related to the subject matter.

The primary data source used in this research is Alice Mead's *Girl of Kosovo*. This captivating novel tells a story through the eyes of a young girl, 11-year-old Zana

Dugolli, who sees her father and brother killed during one of the Serb attacks on her village. Her leg was crushed, and she spent months alone in the hospital shocked and depressed. When she returned home, she saw assassins gathering people on her school grounds. She was angry with his older brother because he joined the KLA (Liberation of Kosovo Army). But Zana always hears her father's voice in her head: "Don't let them fill your heart with hate!". She doesn't care about Serbia or Albania or NATO. She knows that in war everyone becomes an enemy (Azizah, 2005).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

It is the description section of the research data, namely the types of discrimination found in the novel *Girl of Kosovo* by Alice Mead. There are ethnic discrimination, verbal discrimination, extermination discrimination, physical discrimination, and social caste discrimination.

3.1 Ethnic Discrimination

Ethnic discrimination is an act of differential treatment of certain groups based on differences in heredity. In the novel *Girl of Kosovo*, this form of discrimination is found in the following quote.

Example Data 1

They were taking money from people. A few were drunk, probably because it was their New Year's and they had been celebrating with lots of beer. They took whatever they wanted from the Albanian farmers who had come to town— watches, fruit, anything. I guess Milosevic, the Serb leader, didn't pay them enough, so they had to take from us Albanians. (Mead, 2001)

Based on the quotation above, we can see that there are differences in the treatment that was carried out arbitrarily by the Serbian soldiers toward the Albanian people. Apart from the above quotations, there are other quotations that contain the same form of discrimination.

Example Data 2

"Fifteen," he answered in Serbian. They would have beaten him for sure if he had answered in Albanian. All the people on the bus held their breath, sensing trouble. The police studied Ilir's ID card. (Mead, 2001)

The quote above indicates how influential ethnic differences are on the actions that the character will receive. This can be seen from the influence of the language used. If Ilir uses Albanian, then he will immediately get bad action from the Serbian soldiers. Therefore, Ilir chose to answer in Serbian, to cover up his identity.

Example Data 3

How was it that foreigners could come take pictures of us when we were dead, but couldn't come to help us stay alive? I wanted to let the air out of their fancy tires so they would be stuck here, trapped the way we were. Maybe the Serbs would kill them, too, when the time came. (Mead, 2001)

The excerpt above is the contents of Zana's mind, who is annoyed and saddened by the attitude given by foreigners to what happened to her residence. When their homes were attacked and many victims fell, usually the reaction given was sympathy and condolences, but ironically, the foreigners were busy taking pictures. Zana questioned how they were there to capture the moment but they disappeared when they needed help.

Example Data 4

Sometimes I got up on my knees on the sofa and stared out the window at Lena's house up the hill. Her father wasn't dead, and she could do whatever she wanted to. She wasn't about to be killed for being a terrorists like us. But she didn't come outside much either. (Mead, 2001)

In this quote, Zana expresses a comparison of the life experienced by her and Lana, her Serbian friend. Serb life is so free, they can do whatever they want, without having to worry about life and death. Unlike the Albanians, as Zana experienced. He had to feel a lot of pain just to survive.

3.2 Verbal Discrimination

Verbal discrimination is a form of discrimination in the form of speech, which is carried out by insulting, ridiculing, and so on. As contained in the following quote.

Example Data 5

Having a gun scared me. If a group of twenty soldiers came and searched the house, how could our father protect us? And if they found the gun, they would take Papa to prison and torture him for days. Maybe they would even shoot him on the spot. They were allowed to kill terrorists that way, without a trial or anything. Calling Albanians terrorists gave them the right to kill us anytime they wanted to. (Mead, 2001)

The discrimination that Albanians receive does not only occur in policies that are detrimental to them, the discrimination they receive also occurs in the form of labelling. Albanians are considered dangerous terrorists. This label makes them a target whose existence must be eliminated.

Example Data 6

"Count to twenty," the voice said. "Come on." I thought someone in the room said jokingly, "Terrorists can't count." The room tilted sideways. The huge light went on, and I floated up and into it. (Mead, 2001)

In the quote above, it is clear that Zana was insulted by Albanian medics. The terrorist nickname mentioned refers to Zana as someone of Albanian origin. They despise ethnic Albanians by assuming that Albanians are not well educated and therefore cannot count.

3.3 Extermination Discrimination

It is a discriminatory treatment by eradicating or carrying out large-scale killings. As the goal of the Serbs was ethnic cleansing, the discrimination against this annihilation is illustrated in the following quotations.

Example Data 7

The Serbs said they would kill us just as they had killed the Bosnians before us. Kosova was theirs and for Serbs only, they said, even though most of the people living here were Albanians. They wanted us all to leave. (Mead, 2001)

From the fragment of the quotation above, it can be seen that the extermination carried out by the Serbs was not the first time. Previously they had done this action on the Bosnian tribe. The Serbs want to fully rule over the Kosovo area, which is the reason behind the annihilation movement carried out by the Serbs.

Example Data 8

But in the first few days of March, we saw on the news that Serb forces had attacked some nearby villages early in the morning. They killed Adem Jashari and fifty-four members of his family, then burned down their houses. They shot the women and children, uncles, cousins—everybody. Only a girl of my age was found alive. She was hiding under a table, too afraid to go for help. The Jashari family was destroyed. (Mead, 2001)

The extermination carried out by the Serbs was first realized by killing Adem Jashari's family. Without compassion, they killed dozens of members of Adem's family. This shows how cruel the treatment of the Serbian tribe was towards the Albanian tribe.

3.4 Physical Discrimination

Physical discrimination is discrimination that is carried out by hurting, hitting, or attacking someone directly physically. Forms of physical discrimination can be seen in the following quotations.

Example Data 9

They twisted his arm up so high that he stood on his tiptoes. Then they began to beat him in front of everybody. They punched his stomach. He tried to bend over, but he couldn't. Four of them were beating him. One took out his club and cracked it against the side of the old man's head near his eye. Blood begins to flow. (Mead, 2001)

The physical discrimination in the quotation above is marked by twisted, beat dictionaries. The violence expressed in the quotation above is displayed explicitly through clear dictions such as hitting, twisting, punching and so on.

Example Data 10

"Hey!" said the big paramilitary, hitting Mehmet in the back with the butt of his rifle. Mehmet staggered from the blow. "Where are you going, old man? Did I tell you to move?" And then, in front of us all, he shot him in the back of the head. Mehmet flopped to the ground. A dark pool of blood spread under his head. His daughters screamed. (Mead, 2001)

Based on the quote above, physical violence is characterized by the expressions hit, stagger, and shot. These three dictions are included in acts of violence. That way, the victim will experience pain in the body. This action is categorized as physical discrimination because it directly injures another person's body. This violence was even continued by shooting the victim in the back of the head which caused the victim to die.

Example Data 11

"They began pushing us down with the rifle barrels. I got out of the wheelbarrow and lay down as well. I was sure they would shoot us all, and I began to cry. The children were crying, Ardi, too." (Mead, 2001)

The act of pushing by the Serbian soldiers indicated the physical discrimination that Ardi received. The pushing that was carried out by the Serbian army was not just pushing in the usual form, but had an element of violence. This can be seen from the tools used to carry out the push.

3.5 Social Caste Discrimination

Example Data 12

"I was a country girl. When Albanian kids in Prishtinë made fun of us village kids and called us "stupid peasants," I didn't care. They didn't know what they were missing in their noisy city full of boutiques and discos bars. As far as I was concerned, city kids were a bunch of snobs." (Mead, 2001)

In the quote above, it can be seen that there is a social caste grouping between children who live in Pristine and children who live in the village where Zana lives. Albanian children who live in Pristine feel they have a higher caste because they live in the capital city area, so they mock the children who come from the village as stupid peasants.

Example Data 13

"And I suddenly realized how little my family had and how poor we were. In Kosova, my mother had never even learned to read. I was sure that everyone in Belgrade knew how to read." (Mead, 2001)

The social caste described in this quote is people who live in Kosovo have a lower social rank compared to people who are in Belgrade. This can be seen from how Zana compares the educational opportunities that people living in the two places get. Her mother, who is from Kosovo, never learned how to read at all, unlike the people of Belgrade, who certainly do.

CONCLUSION

Novel is a prose genre that displays the most complete elements of the story, has the widest media, besides that the novel also presents the widest range of social problems.

Sociology of literature is considered as a literary study that examines the relationship between literature and social reality. Sociology of literature is a branch of literary research that is reflective in nature. The basic assumption of sociology of literature research is that the birth of literature is not in a social vacuum. Social life will be the trigger for the birth of literary works. Successful or successful literary works are those that are able to reflect the era.

Sociological approaches can be used to help understand gender, feminists, role status, social discourse, and so on. Through the sociology of literature approach, social aspects of the literary work can also be sought.

In this research, the writer focuses on the study to examine one of the social problems contained in the novel, namely discrimination.

Based on the research results, there are several types of discrimination contained in Alice Mead's novel *Girl of Kosovo*. Among them are ethnic discrimination, verbal discrimination, extermination discrimination, physical discrimination, and social caste discrimination.

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