

**SOCIAL DISCRIMINATION REFLECTED IN LAKSMI PAMUNTJAK'S  
THE QUESTIONS OF RED NOVEL (2014):  
A MARXIST APPROACH**



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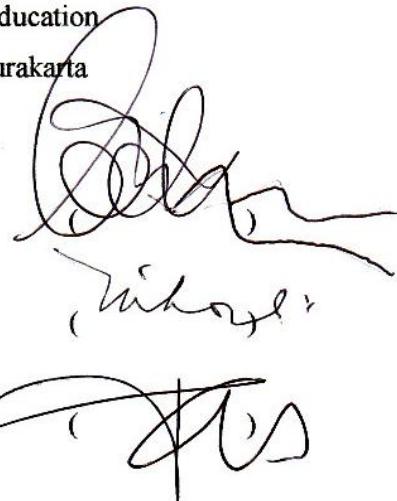
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Surakarta, 19 October, 2016

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Herewith, I testify that in this Publication Article there is no plagiarism of the previous literary work which has been raised to obtain bachelor degrees of university, nor there are options or masterpiece which have been written or published by others, except those in which the writing are referred manuscript and mentioned in the literary review and bibliography.

Hence, later, if it is proven that there are some untrue statements in this testimony, I will hold fully responsible.

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## **SOCIAL DISCRIMINATION REFLECTED IN LAKSMI PAMUNTJAK'S THE QUESTIONS OF REDNOVEL (2014): A MARXIST APPROACH**

### **ABSTRACT**

This research aims to analyze social discrimination, which reflected on Laksmi Pamuntjak's *The Questions of Red* Novel, to reveal what is social discrimination which reflected in the novel using Marxist Approach. The type of this research is qualitative research. The researcher gets the data from the novel includes the narration, monologue, and dialogue. The techniques of collecting the data is using library research, and the technique of the data analysis is using descriptive analysis which comprises procedures: data collecting, data display, and conclusion. The result of this research show: 1) Social discrimination happen because human is different from each other, 2) there is two kind of social discrimination 3) the resolution of social discrimination problem is that we cannot divide people, we should see people equal each other.

Keyword: *Social Discrimination, marxist approach, The Questions of Red.*

### **ABSTRAK**

Karya ilmiah ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis Diskriminasi Sosial yang tercermin dalam novel *The Question of Red* karya Laksmi Pamuntjak, karya ilmiah ini menganalisis masalah diskriminasi sosial menggunakan *Marxist Approach*, jenis karya tulis ilmiah ini adalah kualitatif, dimana peneliti mengambil data dari novel berupa narasi, monolog dan dialog. Teknik pengambilan data yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah teknik deskriptif. Hasil dari penelitian yang di dapat oleh peniliti adalah: 1) diskriminasi sosial terjadi karena manusia diciptakan berbeda-beda 2) 2 jenis diskriminasi sosial yang tercermin dalam novel 3) penyelesaian masalah diskriminasi yang terjadi adalah dengan tidak membeda-bedakan manusia, dan memandang semua manusia setara.

*Kata kunci: Social Discrimination, Marxist Approach, The Questions of reds*

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

In this research, researcher takes issue about social discrimination in that occur in *Question Of Red* novel, everybody have different status in their life social class appear in life that make people different one to another. Marx Stated that “all society that had ever existed had been class societies of one kind or another” (Saunders, 1990: 5). And because of this difference discrimination accour Ansel said that “Discrimination refers to unfair treatment of some sort”. (Ansel, ET all, 1988: 290), Ansel also mentions that “discrimination is costly both to individual and to society” (Ansel, et all, 1988: 304).

Marxism is a loose term describing literary criticism based on socialist and dialetic theories, Marxist criticism see literary work as reflections of social institutions which they originate. According to Marxists, even literature itself is a social institution and has a specific ideological function, based on the background and ideology of the author.

According to Inman, Baron, and Rodin in (Nelson 2009: 94) discrimination is prototypically viewed as an *intergroup* phenomenon, that occurring between members of different groups rather than within the same group

Social conflict and social problem is interesting to analyze because we could learn about how the society works and the social dynamic. Marxist is literary criticism analyze a literary work from social side and economic impact to the social function in society, one of conflict which the researcher want to reveals is about a social problem using Marxist theory, in Indonesian author Laksmi Pamuntjak’s novel entitled *The Questions of Red*. This novel is also published in Indonesian entitled *Amba*.

Based on the background above, the researcher proposes to conduct a research entitled **“Social Discrimination in Laksmi Pamuntjak’s The Questions of Red Novel (2014): A Marxist Approach.”**

## **2. Method**

### **2.1 Participants**

The subject of this study is novel from Laksmi Pamuntjak's *The Questions of Red Novel* (2014). The object of the study is social discrimination reflected in Laksmi Pamuntjak's *The Questions of Reds Novel* (2014). It is analyzed using Marxist approach.

### **2.2 The Data**

There are two types of data sources that are needed to do the research, they are primary data sources and secondary data sources. The primary data source in this research is the novel of *The Questions of Reds* by Laksmi Pamuntjak's (2014). The sources of secondary data are taken from other sources related the study, such as: website, dictionary, and some books which support the research. The researcher uses some steps to collect the data. The technique of collecting data are reading novel and note taking, the steps are as follows: Reading the original *The Questions of Reds* Novel several times, determining the characters of novel. Taking notes of important things for both of primary and secondary data sources. Classifying data by determining the relevant data, technique of Data Analysis

### **2.3 Procedure**

The technique that writer used in analyzing the data is descriptive qualitative analysis of content. The analysis concerns with the structural elements and analysis of the novel on Social Discrimination reflected in Laksmi Pamuntjak's *The Questions of Reds* (2014) novel based on a Marxist approach.

### **2.4 Result**

The result of the research based on Marxist approach is separated into two section first is Analyzed the novel using Marxist Approach which related with the social discrimination and the second is determined what kind of social discrimination which reflected in the novel. "Marxist is a thought based on Karl Marx idea and a political practice that develop by change in the world" (Forgacs, 1987:166). From several definitions above, Marxist can be refer as an ideology that based on the Karl Marx thought that study about the relation between

economic, social and politic in society. Marxist Approach is divided into several parts there are: dialectical materialism, historical materialism, alienation, class struggle.

Here below the result of the analyzed which provide by the researcher:

### **3. Dialectical materialism**

In dialectical materialism, the history of society consists of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. Thesis is the first idea, concept or argument deals with the problem. Sometimes people accept thesis and sometimes people deny thesis. The contrary of thesis will Create antithesis. Thesis and antithesis will formulate synthesis. Background in the bloody tragedy in 1965's and the mass kill of communist people in Indonesia also the uprising attempt against the government by Indonesia Communist Party, the novel *The Questions of Red*, express the process of dialectical materialism, it can be seen when the rebel is begin and end with the captured and imprisoned of all communist people in in Indonesia at Buru island. Thesis comes when the Indonesia Communism Party begin with the uprising movement against the Government, and kidnapping and execute 6 great general and also taken Presidents Sukarno under their protection, and antithesis begin with when The Government begin to captured and annihilated the communism people, and the synthesis is when captured people release after several years struggle to get their right, they surrender and begin to accepted the life of being imprisoned in the distinguished island of Buru and begin new life.

#### **a. Thesis**

“something big has happened in Jakarta in the early hours of this morning, something to make 1 October 1965 a day history will remember,” he said gloomily,” At 7 a.m. a Lieutenant Colonel Untung announced on the radio that a group of calling itself 30 september movement had kidnapped and executed six generals of the Indonesian Army including its highest commander. The group claimed that it was pre-empting a coup and took over control of all media and communication outlets. The groups also take Presidents Sukarno under its protection.” (TQOR, page, 206)

### **b. Antithesis**

The antithesis happen when the government with the Red Beret Army begin to annihilated and captured the communist people and also the CGMI a student's organization which affiliated with communist party (PKI)

“thousands gathered to listen to the Red Beret Commander, Colonel SarwoEdhieWibowo, rounded up hundreds of the enemy in one night, and there was no doubt's in the people's mind that those murdering Communist rebels with their retarded 30 September Movement, and those sniveling People's youth scoundrels and their kind, were annihilated once and for all”  
(TQOR, page, 324)

### **c. Synthesis**

The synthesis begin with the new government decision to release all the prisoner in early 79's and with eks-tapols were given priority land.

“Jacko explained that the place was a special transmigration area, where the *eks-tapol* who chooses to stay on Buru in after '79 were given priority land”  
(TQOR, page, 396)

#### **1. Historical Materialism**

Historical materialism here means an event that occurs in the past while materialism is a philosophy that studies about possession from both definition historical materialism in Marxist point of view is a system of thought that emphasizes the relationship between social, politic and economy. The fact is the primary purpose and motivation of people existence is economic in other word economic is based and most crucial factor in people life.

The determination of historical materialism can be reflected on in the main character of this novel life and the background of their family.

Amba family is not poor not also rich, its balance but Amba life when she still a girl show that her family is not a rich family, she have to cook, wash her own cloth, even she have to wash her twin sister clothes, In economic Amba is in middle class, because her father is only a teacher and

a principal in school on the small town but in social class, she have high class in society because her father still a priyayi.

“Life was already so hectic. Day and in day out she fetched water from the well, swept the floor, helped her mother cook, washed her own and her lazy twin sister’s clothes. No life for a princess” (TQOR, page, 78)

Different from Salwa, his father only have a small furniture shop and Salwa mother which is the daughter of *akyai* and both of his parents is head of the local chapter of religious organization, in the economic structure Salwa is in the middle class, but in society he have a high class because his parents is head of local chapter of two biggest religious organization in Indonesia.

“His father owned a small furniture shop was the head of the local chapter of Muhammadiyah” (TQOR, page, 104)

“his mother was the daughter of a *kyayi*-a religious leader-and was herself a leader of the local chapter of NahdlatulUlama, known as NU” (TQOR, page, 104)

Another main character in this novel is Bhisma he have a proper family, and from high class so he can continue his study in Holland and Germany, on social class both economic and social Bhisma have a high class social status.

“This feeling followed him to the first year in Holland, when he was sent at seventeen, to Leiden to finish his secondary schooling” (TQOR, page, 215)

Bhisma also came from a respective family, her mother was a noblewoman and his father is a success publisher even the have a new ford car

“My father, Asrul Rashad, may had a family pedigree and reputation as a Respectable publisher of high-quality books”  
(TQOR, page, 239)

In this novel show us that there is some different from the background of the main character family, Amba and Salwa is from the middle class family in economic but Bhisma have a high class on economic status, because of his status Bhisma can studies in foreign country and have a car its express the historical materialism that the higher the economic status they can enjoy a good life and study in foreign country, but there is also the same aspect from the main character they raised from a high social status family. Bhisma and Amba from the culture aspect, and Salwa is from the religious aspect.

## **2. Alienation**

Alienation is a system of result of stratified society. Alienation is also part of a social class. The basic theory of alienation is that the worker is invariably loses ability to determine his or her life destiny. Karl Marx in (Fromm, 2001:60) argues that “Alienation means the existence of world is strange for human being”. Alienation can also, mentioned that the condition where someone is separated from their self, their family, their friend, and also society. Alienation makes the people alienated their life. In this novel alienation is expressed when Amba feel sad after she quarrel with Bhisma her lover

“Back in her room at her aunt and uncle’s house later that afternoon, after her shameful tears had been spent and emptiness had taken hold, Amba dug out her tattered copy of Mahabharata, the part where Bhisma refused Amba. She stared them down, those two pages, stared at them long and hard, feeling she might crush those words. No more poetry, she vowed. She would read no more poetry until she had killed that story, that Amba and Bhisma story, hers and his. Killed it with the bare fists of her will” (TQOR, page, 307)

## **3. Class Struggle**

In Marxist perspective society is divided into two classes, the bourgeois and the proletariat. Because of lack of power the proletariats have to struggle in order to get equality.

In this novel bourgeois and proletariat is reflected as the government with the nationalist and the communism, in this novel communist is a bad thing or if you're a communist is a negative person, because the biggest communist party in Indonesia is trying to uprising the government in 1965's. Although it failed because the fast act of the government, it makes Indonesiandivide in two mass of group, first is the nationalist and the second its communist, because the political chaos a lot of conflict is happen in the society. The struggle life of communist people which imprisoned in Buru is the process of class struggle, and the result of class struggle is when government decided to give the prisoner a brand new life and land after they free.

"In late '77, after Suharto administration first announced plans to put an end to the prison camp..." (TQOR, page, 58)

"Jacko explained that the place was a special transmigration area, where the *eks-tapol* who chooses to stay on Buru in after '79 were given priority land" (TQOR, page, 396)

After analyzing the novel based on the Marxist Approach the researcher conclude that social discrimination happen because there is Dialectical materialism, Historical Materialism, Alienation and Class struggle.

Here the result of analysis of social discrimination based on the fact above

Discrimination happen because every person in the world is different from one and the other, even in the same race or religion and nation, discrimination still can be happen. According to the theory discrimination happen because there is a Majority against Minority

*The Questions of Reds* novel show us about a lot of social discrimination which happen in late 1965 until 1979, the social discrimination which happen in Indonesia to the communist is because the political chaos which happen in Indonesia, Indonesian people divide into two mass group of people, the first is Nationalist and the second is

Communist. It makes Indonesia political condition unstable a lot of group conflict happen between the two mass of group, not just in small scale, the clash and conflict happen because the different political view that the believe, the Nationalist and Military is against the revolution, but the communist is pro to the revolution, and the peak of this problem is when the Indonesian Communist Party is trying to uprising the government and named their movement G30S movement, but failed because of the fast act of Military forces and the Nationalist mass. After the tragedy and mass murder which happen in society a lot of communist is captured and imprisoned in Buru island.

In beginning of 1969, the Buru penal colony is built by the prisoner first batches in Buru

“The Buru penal colony,” Zulfikar said, “was broken into twenty-two units across where we are now, the *Waeapo* Valley. All the barracks and infrastructure were built by prisoner who arrived in batches beginning in mid-1969.” (TQOR, page, 385)

And the researcher also find two kind of social discrimination which happen inside the novel it is group to group social discrimination and person to person social discrimination:

There is a lot kind of discrimination in this world, discrimination happen not just in one to another person but in group also according to (dovidio,2010:9) Discrimination is generally understood as biased behavior, which includes not only actions that directly harm or disadvantage another group, but those that unfairly favor one’s own group (creating a relative disadvantage for other groups)

Kind of discrimination in social group or in the society for the example there is caste, language, nationality, race or ethnicity, region, religious belief, and employment and political view.

Example of discrimination from one group to another group:

“Another clash between the youth militia groups, It’s the usual suspects around here, the people’s Youth supporting the communist, and *Banser*, representing NahdlatulUlama. Twelve were wounded, seven and five respectively and two are dead” (TQOR, page, 203)

Another Social Discrimination which express by this novel is the religious believe discrimination, which happen in Buru in late 1999 between Muslims or *Acang* with Christian people, it's happen because some groups of Muslims is murder Christians in plywood factory related to the burning of a Muslims house, a lot of clash is happen between Christian and Muslim that year.

"I was here when that group of Muslims murdered the Christians in the plywood factory, scores of them retaliating for the burning of a Muslims house by Christians the day before. It was a God-awful time, so many clashes, so much suspicions. So much hatred between people who had said good morning to each other for years, played football with each other. I have a poor memory for stats, but I think more than 170 homes and building were destroyed by Muslims youths, some forty to fifty people killed and many injured. Some people escaped inland, seeking refuge in the woods and mountains. Others fled Buru, over eight hundred refugee I thinks. Then the chain of violence between Muslims and Christians continued in Ambon city- with at least forty died" (TQOR, page, 512)

#### **4. Conclusion**

The researcher deduces several conclusions after analyzing *The Questions of Reds* novel using Marxist approach. First, the structural analysis of this *The Questions of Reds* novel involve the character and characterization, setting, plot, point of view, style, and theme related solid unity. LaksmiPamuntjak's employs some complex plots which combine real event story that makes the story more alive, and put some of conflict in many different setting and place, which the story have a up and down story, it makes the novel are very interesting to read, with the unique characterization and contradictive to each other, Laksmi's bring us to another dimension of love story.

Based on the problem statement and the analysis the researcher writes the following conclusion, that social discrimination happen because human is different each other, it makes the society system is divide into Majority and

Minority. The result of the divide society class is makes the Minority class which lack of number is discriminates with the larger community or Majority of the society

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