

A MARXIST ANALYSIS OF THE SHORT STORIES SOCIAL ASSISTANCE AND THE MOON THAT FELL ON A RUMBIA ROOF

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Abstract

Poverty and social inequality remain persistent realities in modern society, particularly affecting marginalized groups who are often excluded by unfair economic and political systems. This study aims to analyze the representation of marginalized social classes in the short stories "Social assistance" by Satmoko Budi Santoso and "The Moon That Fell on a Rumbia Roof" by A. Warits Rovi through a sociological approach to literature using Marxist theory. The research employs a descriptive qualitative method, with primary data derived from the narratives of both short stories and supported by secondary data from theoretical and relevant literary studies. The results show that "Social assistance" portrays the marginalization of Karmin through discrimination in the distribution of social assistance caused by an unjust bureaucratic system, while "The Moon That Fell on a Rumbia Roof" highlights the suffering of Salma, a single mother who experiences labor exploitation and political discrimination. Both stories reveal the inequalities experienced by marginalized classes in economic, social, and political aspects, as well as their diverse responses ranging from submission to symbolic resistance. These works reflect real social disparities and serve as critiques of systems that maintain the dominance of the ruling class. Thus, literature plays an essential role as a reflective medium capable of raising social awareness about issues of injustice. The contribution of this research lies in its effort to enrich sociological studies of literature in Indonesia by examining the representation of marginalized classes and forms of social resistance in contemporary literary works. Future research is suggested to expand the scope to other literary texts with different social and cultural contexts and to combine Marxist theory with interdisciplinary approaches such as feminism or postcolonialism to provide a more comprehensive understanding of social inequality in literature.

Keywords: *marginal class, marxism, sociology of literature; social inequality; social criticism,*

INTRODUCTION

Socioeconomic inequality remains a structural problem that continues to exist in society today. Social inequality is a global issue, not just in Indonesia. The issue of social class, in particular, has been the subject of lengthy discourse by Marxist thinkers. For Marxism, literature and art are forms of the superstructure of society, along with social ideology (Sugiarto & Martini, 2022). This inequality causes various social impacts, one of which is poverty. Literature is a medium that is often used to reflect social reality, including the marginalization of certain social classes in an unjust system. This view is in line with Hayduk et al. (2020): social and economic inequality cannot be understood solely

as a result of individual circumstances, but rather as the outcome of social and political structures that perpetuate the dominance of certain groups over others. Within a structural framework, migration and social mobility often reveal how the global economic system and national policies create and perpetuate the marginalization of low-income groups. These inequalities are not merely economic phenomena but also part of the ideological mechanisms at work within the social order (Daud et al., 2024).

Literary works emphasize that literature is not only a product of art but also a reflection of society, from social, cultural, or historical perspectives that influence social, cultural, and political conditions (Ummah, 2019). Literary works serve as a medium for social criticism and aspirations. Literature is a form of creativity related to humans and their lives, possessing its beauty that can be conveyed through language as a medium, both verbally and in writing, and is imaginative in nature (Febry et al., 2020). These days, individuals are becoming more aware of the existence of literary works, including novels, short stories, poetry, films, and more. These works are not only a form of entertainment but also a medium for conveying criticism, aspirations, and life lessons. In writing literary works, an author indirectly records the social phenomena around them. One short story that highlights the phenomenon of social inequality in society is “social assistance” by Satmoko Budi Santoso and “The Moon That Fell on a Rumbia Roof” by A Warits Rovi. Previous research conducted by Oleo (2024) shows that literary works play an important role in representing various social issues that arise in modern society, including inequality, discrimination, and marginalization. Through a study of Hanifa Vidya's novel *Mereka Bilang Aku Kemlinthi*, the research reveals that social conflicts in literary works describe social realities and serve as a form of criticism of social structures that oppress certain classes. This finding reinforces the view that literature functions as a reflection and critique of structural injustice in society while also providing a theoretical basis for this study in examining the representation of marginalized classes in contemporary Indonesian literary works. Similar findings were also presented by Sella et al. (2025) in an article entitled “Representation of Social and Gender Conflict in Lenn Liu's Novel "Home for Alie" from a Sociological Perspective of Literature,” which shows that literary works are an effective medium for reflecting social realities, particularly the conflicts and injustices experienced by marginalized groups. Through literary sociology analysis, the study reveals how social inequality and gender marginalization are depicted in the relationships between characters and the narrative structure of the novel. These findings confirm that class and gender issues in literature reflect the social conditions of society and serve as a form of criticism of social systems that oppress certain groups. The third study by Hasibuan (2021) in an article entitled "Portrait of Poverty of the Marginalized in Andrea Hirata's Novel "Ordinary People” shows that the poverty experienced by marginalized groups is not solely due to individual economic limitations but is the result of an unequal social structure and an oppressive economic system. Through a sociological approach to literature, the study asserts that the characters in the novel reflect the powerlessness of the lower classes in the face of an unjust system and show how poverty is socially inherited through mechanisms of structural inequality (Salsabila, 2024; Safitri et al., 2024; Silfia, 2020). These findings are relevant to the current study because they both highlight the representation of social inequality and economic marginalization in Indonesian literature as a form of criticism of the dominance of the ruling class. This research reinforces the view that literature has an ideological function in highlighting social inequality while also broadening our understanding of the representation of marginalization in a broader socio-cultural context.

This study aims to analyze how socioeconomic inequality is represented in the short stories “social assistance” and “The Moon That Fell on the Thatched Roof” through a sociological approach to literature using a Marxist perspective (Goldmann, 2024). Specifically, this study will discuss the depiction of marginalization in the short stories, the social realities reflected in them, and the attitudes of the marginalized classes in facing the socioeconomic inequality they experience. The urgency of this study lies in its relevance to contemporary socioeconomic conditions, where structural inequality remains an ongoing issue with a broad impact on people's lives. This research arises from the limited number of contemporary Indonesian literary studies that deeply examine the representation of the marginalized class through Marxist analysis, which focuses on the underlying socio-economic structure and ideology (Nurhikmah, 2024). Most previous studies tend to highlight moral aspects, general social conflicts, or humanitarian messages without exploring the relationship between economic inequality and the reproduction of the ruling class ideology in literary texts. Therefore, the novelty of this research lies in its approach, which combines literary sociology analysis with Marxist theory to interpret forms of marginalization, resistance, and class consciousness in the two short stories. Through this analysis, the study seeks to show that literary works not only function as social reflections but also as a means of ideological criticism of the system that maintains socio-economic inequality in society.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Sociology of Literature

Literary sociology studies view literary works as reflections of social life that represent the values, norms, and dynamics of society. Lucu et al. (2020) assert that literary sociology not only serves to explore the relationship between literary works and the social conditions of their authors but also has a strategic role in instilling character education values in readers. According to him, literary works are a medium for social learning that describes patterns of behavior, value systems, and cultural structures that exist within society. In his study of the short story collection *Si Kabayan Manusia Lucu* by Achdiat K. Mihardja, Jamaludin found that the elements of characters, characterization, and cultural setting not only provide entertainment but also convey moral messages and human values such as honesty, hard work, simplicity, and social solidarity. Through literary sociology analysis, Jamaludin assesses that literature functions as an effective means of character education because it can instill moral and social awareness in a contextual manner, in accordance with the local culture of the community. He also emphasizes that literary works, especially those sourced from traditional culture, reflect the social system of a community that is rich in local wisdom and mutual cooperation values. Therefore, literary sociology is not only a tool for understanding the social phenomena presented in texts but also an educational approach that contributes to the formation of national character through the representation of characters and cultural values contained in literary works. This study uses a literary sociology approach with Marxist theory as its analytical framework. Literary sociology is an approach that examines the relationship between literary works and the social reality that surrounds them. In this study, the main focus is on the sociology of literary works, which examines the social conditions, class conflicts, and economic inequalities depicted in the short stories “Social assistance” and “The Moon That Fell on a Rumbia Roof.”

Marxist Theory

Marxist theory in literary studies is rooted in Karl Marx's ideas, which highlight the class conflict between the bourgeoisie, the group that owns capital and controls the means of production, and the proletariat, the working class that depends on selling its labor to survive. This conflict forms the basis for analyzing social structures and economic inequality in society. In the context of literary studies, social class is understood as groups of people who occupy certain positions in the social system based on capital ownership, economic status, and access to power. Therefore, Marxist theory seeks to reveal how literary works represent power relations, exploitation, and injustice arising from differences in class positions in the social order (Magnis-Suseno, 1999). The study of Marxist theory in literary studies has undergone significant development in line with the emergence of increasingly complex social, political, and economic contexts. Fyfe & Fyfe (2020) explain that the contemporary Marxist approach remains relevant in modern literary studies, especially in examining the relationship between literary texts, political economy, and colonial heritage. In the postcolonial world, literary works often become an arena for ideological struggles that reflect the structures of economic inequality and cultural domination inherited from the colonial era (Yunitamurti, 2015). This approach not only highlights the exploitation of the working class by the bourgeoisie but also traces how global economic power influences social representation in literary works. Fyfe asserts that contemporary Marxist criticism serves to reveal new forms of global capitalist hegemony manifested in cultural practices and literary representations. Meanwhile, Bashir et al. (2020) emphasize the importance of applying Marxist theory in literary analysis as an effort to understand the social and ideological contradictions contained in the text. Through an analysis of Katherine Mansfield's *The Garden Party*, they show how social class and economic structure play a role in shaping characters, conflicts, and narratives in stories. The Marxist approach is used to identify how socio-economic realities are reflected in the narrative and symbolic structures of literary works. Therefore, literary works are viewed as ideological products that reflect and criticize the capitalist system that gives rise to social inequality. From these two perspectives, it can be concluded that Marxist theory in literary studies functions as an analytical tool that highlights the dialectical relationship between social structure and literary texts. This approach opens up space to understand how class conflict, economic domination, and capitalist ideology shape discourse and characterization in literary works. Thus, Marxist theory is used to interpret the representation of social and economic inequality in the short stories "social assistance" and "The Moon That Fell on the Thatched Roof" in which literary works not only become a mirror of social reality but also a means of criticizing the structural injustices that occur in society.

RESEARCH METHODS

In this study, the researcher used a qualitative method with a descriptive approach to analyze the collected data. The qualitative approach was chosen because it focuses on the narrative and description of data in the form of literary texts. Ahmadi (2019) states that qualitative research focuses on the narrative and description of data, which usually takes the form of speech, human texts, or observable behavior. By collecting data in the form of words, images, or objects and analyzing them interpretively, qualitative research is usually exploratory in nature and emphasizes understanding the context, meaning, and perspective of the phenomenon being studied. This study uses this method to describe and analyze the social reality of the marginalized class in two short stories that are the

subjects of this study, namely “social assistance” by Satmoko Budi Santoso and “The Moon That Fell on the Thatched Roof” by A. Warits Rovi. This study uses a literary sociology perspective by applying Marxist theory.

Data collection techniques were carried out through reading and note-taking. Primary data consisted of texts from the short stories “social assistance” and “The Moon That Fell on the Thatched Roof” while secondary data came from various scientific references, such as journals, theoretical books, and articles relevant to the study of literary sociology and Marxist theory. Data was collected through in-depth reading and systematic recording of elements in the short stories that describe social marginalization, economic conditions, and the attitudes of characters in the short stories towards socio-economic realities. The two short stories, “social assistance” and “The Moon That Fell on the Thatched Roof,” were chosen because they depict the lives of marginalized communities in line with Marxist studies. The data analysis technique in this study was carried out through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The collected data was reduced to select the parts relevant to the research objectives. Next, the selected data were presented systematically with reference to Marxist theory and literary sociology. The researcher then drew conclusions based on the interpretations and analyses that had been carried out to answer the research questions related to the representation of the social reality of the marginalized class in the short stories “social assistance” and “The Moon That Fell on the Thatched Roof”.

DISCUSSION

Depictions of Marginalization in Short Stories

Through the characters and social situations presented, both short stories depict forms of exclusion against lower-class communities that are economically and socially marginalized. Marginalization is caused by poverty and an unjust social system that excludes those without power and resources.

Short Story “Social Assistance”

In Satmoko Budi Santoso's short story “Social Assistance,” marginalization is experienced by the main character, Karmin, who is always overlooked in the distribution of social assistance (Social Assistance). Karmin is poor but doesn't get his rights, while others who shouldn't get help get more than one. This short story describes how the social and bureaucratic systems in villages are not always fair. There are practices of social indifference, manipulation of aid recipient data, and a lack of courage among marginalized people to demand their rights. In this short story, Karmin experiences several forms of marginalization that are evident in social, economic, and political aspects.

Economic Marginalization

In the short story “Social Assistance,” economic marginalization is the main form of injustice experienced by the character Karmin. He is a poor citizen who lives in extreme poverty. This concept is clearly illustrated in the following excerpt:

Data 1

In fact, he is also classified as poor. This is evident, for example, in his ordinary house. It hasn't been tiled, and the electricity is still at the lowest level. He also works odd jobs." (Santoso, 2024).

From a Marxist perspective, Karmin's situation reflects the reality of the lower class, or proletariat, a group of people who do not own the means of production and must survive by doing odd jobs with uncertain income. In a capitalist system or a society with an unequal social hierarchy, this class often experiences exploitation and neglect of their rights, including the right to distribution of resources, in this case social assistance (Social assistance). According to the view (Fyfe & Fyfe, 2020) that economic marginalization in literary works often reflects social mechanisms in which the proletariat is excluded not only because of material poverty but also because of structural powerlessness shaped by the dominant ideology.

The economic marginalization experienced by Karmin is not only a result of poverty itself but also a consequence of an unjust socio-economic structure that perpetuates inequality through biased administrative mechanisms. When Karmin did not receive social assistance, it showed that he was not only poor but also systematically deemed unworthy because he had no power or bargaining position in his community.

Social Marginalization

In the short story "Social Assistance," Karmin experiences not only economic marginalization but also social marginalization. Although he lives in a village, Karmin's existence is ignored by the local community. This phenomenon is evident in the following excerpt.

Data 2

The villagers also seemed unconcerned about whether Karmin's family could eat every day or not. (Santoso, 2024).

From the perspective of Marxist theory in the book (Magnis-Suseno, 1999), this condition reflects a form of social alienation. Alienation occurs when individuals feel separated from their community or environment as a result of unfair social and economic structures. Karmin became alienated in a society that should have been a space for social solidarity (NurhikmahN, 2024). When society is indifferent to Karmin's economic suffering, it shows a breakdown in human values due to class structures. Furthermore, the passive attitude of citizens towards the inequality they witness exacerbates their indifference. Even when they receive excessive social assistance, they do not feel guilty towards Karmin, who receives nothing. The following quote clarifies Karmin's sense of alienation.

Data 3

"If a villager passes by Karmin's house carrying a Social Assistance plastic bag, Karmin can only stare, drooling."

"If a villager passes by Karmin's house carrying more than one Social Assistance plastic bag, Karmin can only stare, dumbfounded." (Santoso, 2024).

In Marxism, this is a form of degradation of social relations due to the logic of ownership and individualism, which is instilled by the capitalist economic system or social systems that prioritize the interests of certain groups. People prioritize their personal gains over the pursuit of collective justice. Karmin, despite living in the midst of a community, became "the other," a figure who was ignored, without solidarity from his social environment. This condition reflects how class structures and economic systems can create significant social distance, where the individuals who need it most are

marginalized. The alienation experienced by Karmin is not just an individual problem but also reflects the collective failure of society to uphold human values and solidarity. In this context, the short story “Social Assistance” invites readers to reflect on the impact of social and economic injustice, as well as the importance of rebuilding more inclusive and caring social relationships. [Bashir et al. \(2020\)](#) emphasize that literary works with a Marxist approach have the potential to become a means of social reflection to foster collective awareness of the structures of injustice that shape people's lives.

Political and Administrative Marginalization

In the short story “Social Assistance,” marginalization occurs not only in economic and social aspects, but also in politics and administration. The character Karmin experiences injustice as a result of the passive and negligent actions of village officials, who should have the authority to distribute aid fairly. The following quote shows the indifference of the authorities:

Data 4

The RT head and the hamlet head also seemed to pretend not to want to know. ([Santoso, 2024](#)).

From a Marxist perspective, village officials such as neighborhood association leaders and hamlet heads are part of the local power structure, which in practice often favors groups that have access to or proximity to power. When they act as if they are unaware, this reflects the function of the state or government institutions as tools of certain classes, rather than as protectors of the common people. According to Karl Marx in [Magnis-Suseno \(1999\)](#), the state is not a neutral institution but rather a tool of domination for the ruling class. In this context, the passive attitude of officials creates conditions in which the lower classes are not politically represented, even in basic administrative matters such as social assistance data collection. Karmin became a victim of this system; he received no help and had no effective channel to fight for his rights. Karmin's decision to remain silent, despite encouragement from residents, further worsened the situation.

Data 5

In fact, many other residents encouraged him to protest. At least they conveyed this to the neighborhood head and hamlet head. But he refused to do so either. ([Santoso, 2024](#)).

The book “The Thoughts of Karl Marx” ([Magnis-Suseno, 1999](#)) also reflects political powerlessness due to ideological domination. Poor people like Karmin have been shaped by a system that makes them feel they have no power or right to speak up. They have become internalized in their subordinate position so that even when oppressed, they feel unworthy or unable to fight back. This feeling is further emphasized in Karmin's statement that he does not need to put himself forward.

Data 6

Karmin is no longer bothered with all the issues related to being recognized as poor. He feels that village officials should be more concerned. He doesn't need to put himself forward; he already knows he's clearly poor. ([Santoso, 2024](#))

This view shows that there's a broken administrative system that doesn't favor poor people. In this kind of structure, recognizing poverty depends on bureaucracy, not the actual reality. Karmin is a symbol of ordinary people who are excluded from decision-making mechanisms, either because of power imbalances or because of bureaucracy that doesn't work fairly.

Short Story “The Moon That Fell on a Rumbia Roof”

The short story “The Moon That Fell on a Rumbia Roof” by A. Warits Rovi depicts the life of a poor family experiencing social and economic inequality. The main character, Salma, is a single mother who must struggle to provide for herself and her child after her husband dies in a work accident. Her poverty is exacerbated by rising prices for basic commodities, especially rice, forcing her and her child to survive on cassava.

Economic Marginalization

Data 7

The ever-rising price of rice makes Salma's throat feel like a desert in the scorching heat of the dry season: parched and dusty. Luckily, her dilapidated house is near a well. At least she can drink water instead of rice (Rovi, 2024).

This situation shows that Salma and her child live in poverty. They do not have enough money to buy staple foods, so they have to rely on other less nutritious foods and well water to satisfy their hunger. Marginalization is also evident in the way Salma is treated at work. She experiences physical and mental abuse from her employer, Sahmo, who treats her harshly and arbitrarily.

Data 8

Similarly, she often experienced rough treatment from Sahmo. Sometimes, Salma's face would be in pain when Sahmo threw cassava stalks at her. If there were other work, she would actually want to move from the farm. But that was the only work she could find (Rovi, 2024).

This situation shows that Salma has no choice but to continue working even though she is treated badly. This is a form of exploitation experienced by the poor working class, who have no bargaining power in an oppressive economic system.

Social Marginalization

In addition, Salma had to work hard to get food. The only job available to her was manual labor on Sahmo's cassava field, which did not pay her in cash but only half a sack of cassava.

Data 9

Before Rudi woke up, Salma was already climbing the rough, winding village road, littered with angular stones and knee-high grass that often rubbed wet and itchy against her calves. Braving the cold and darkness, she headed to Sahmo's cassava field. She worked pulling cassava and cutting it into sacks until the

midday call to prayer (zan) arrived. The reward she received wasn't money, but half a sack of cassava (Rovi, 2024)

Marxist theory views society as divided into two classes: the bourgeoisie, who own everything and can be referred to as employers, and the proletariat, who are workers who strive to provide their services to these employers. Salma's situation represents marginalized people who do not have access to decent work and therefore cannot earn enough income to meet their basic needs. This is also mentioned in Marx's theory of labor exploitation, where workers do not receive the full value of their labor.

Political Marginalization

The marginalization experienced by Salma in this short story is not only in the form of economic poverty but also social and political discrimination. Salma does not receive the social assistance she is entitled to due to political factors in the village head election.

Data 10

The hamlet head, accustomed to enduring shame, deliberately removed Salma's name from the list of aid recipients simply because she was caught voting for the elected village head's rival in last year's village head elections (Rovi, 2024).

This case shows that the political system at the village level can be used by those in power to corner certain groups who are considered not to support them or not to be of one voice with them. Aid that should be given to the poor instead becomes a political tool to maintain power. In addition, the surrounding community is aware of the extortion in the distribution of aid but can only curse, yet they continue to accept the situation without meaningful resistance.

Data 11

Villagers who understand the collusion sometimes curse, 'Dogs! If the administration were a physical entity, it would surely punish those who deliberately use it as a disguise to commit extortion. (Rovi, 2024).

This quote shows that people are actually aware of the injustices that occur, but they are powerless to change the existing system. This reflects the internalization of the ideology of the marginalized class; they accept injustice as something that is inevitable and will continue to accept it even after experiencing it repeatedly.

The Reality of Short Stories in Community Life

The short stories "Social Assistance" and "The Moon That Fell on a Rumbia Roof" clearly depict the reality of marginalized communities, where social and economic inequality are the main factors that trigger internal conflict among the characters. In "Social Assistance," Satmoko Budi Santoso depicts the life of Karmin, a poor and isolated villager who is even denied access to social assistance that is rightfully his. This reality reflects a common phenomenon in society, where the distribution of assistance is often influenced by nepotism and a lack of concern from village officials. This trend can be seen in the following data.

Data 12

The neighborhood head and hamlet head also seemed to pretend they didn't know. That's just how village life is. (Santoso, 2024).

The above quote describes the indifference of village officials to their citizens' problems. The neighborhood association leader and village head did not attempt to resolve the issue of aid distribution, as if they had accepted this situation as something normal in village life. When viewed from a Marxist perspective, this apathetic behavior reflects an unjust power relationship. Village officials, who are in a higher structural position, maintain their dominance over lower-class people such as Karmin. Not only do they neglect their responsibilities, but they also indirectly perpetuate inequality through their silence. In this system, small communities such as Karmin's are not only economically disadvantaged but also lose their rights as a result of biased policies and nepotism. The above excerpt shows that marginalization occurs not only because of economic factors but also as a result of a culture of apathy and structural injustice that is deeply rooted in society. This phenomenon demonstrates that economic poverty is not the sole cause of marginalization. Other factors that reinforce inequality include a culture of apathy and an internalized system of injustice within the social structure. The book is a social critique of a system that is unable to create equality and instead further worsens the conditions of marginalized communities. In Satmoko Budi Santoso's short story "Social Assistance," the social reality presented not only highlights the injustice in the distribution of social assistance but also reflects the lack of social awareness in society. Karmin, the main character, experiences structural discrimination that demonstrates the inability of the village system to cover all levels of society. This phenomenon can be proven by the data cited below.

Data 13

Sometimes Karmin thinks Javanese people are strange. They can pretend not to know. But that's what he has to live with. He meets many people who are gentle, innocent, and easygoing but who can also be secretly vicious (Santoso, 2024).

The above quote shows that Karmin lives in a society with contradictory characteristics. On the one hand, they appear friendly and polite, but on the other hand, their actions often do not support the principles of social justice. In the context of village life, the "pretending not to know" attitude described above becomes a form of neglect towards the injustice experienced by individuals such as Karmin. From a Marxist perspective, the above quote reveals that Karmin, as part of the lower class, experiences alienation from the social structure around him. The seemingly friendly community actually becomes an effective tool of control to maintain social inequality. Those who have power or access to the distribution of aid prefer to maintain a situation that benefits them through passive or manipulative behavior, creating a situation where Karmin is marginalized not only economically but also socially. The above quote illustrates how a society that appears friendly on the surface may actually engage in actions that contradict their stated support for justice. This phenomenon is not only experienced by Karmin but also reflects the reality of social life that tends to ignore other people's problems. This culture shows that marginalization arises not only from systemic injustice but also from the internalization of an apathetic culture that allows injustice to continue without any effort to improve it. In this context, the short story "Social Assistance" conveys social

criticism of a society that seems to have become accustomed to inequality and made it a part of everyday life. Meanwhile, in the short story “The Moon That Fell on a Rumbia Roof” by A. Warits Rovi, he describes the suffering of Salma, a poor widow who becomes a victim of local political manipulation. Her situation worsens when the village head removes her from the list of aid recipients simply because she voted for a different candidate for village head. Rovi uses this reality to show that local politics often has a direct impact on the lives of the less fortunate. In this short story, social inequality is depicted through Salma's struggle to work tirelessly just to provide cassava as a substitute for rice for herself and her child. This information is revealed in the data below.

Data 14

Rice aid at the village hall was directed to specific individuals who voted for Mr. Subhan in last year's village head election. (Rovi, 2024).

The above excerpt shows how social assistance is used as a political tool to reward support or remove those who are considered disloyal. Assistance that should be the right of the poor has instead become a commodity controlled by those in power. Salma, as one of the victims, is forced to live in poverty as a result of this unfair policy. In a critical view of the local political system, this phenomenon shows that power is often used to strengthen the dominance and maintain the influence of the political elite. Such manipulation illustrates the unequal relationship between the rulers and the common people, with the basic rights of the community often being ignored for the sake of personal or group interests (Suganda, et al., 2025; Tamphu, 2024; Umar, 2025). Salma, who should have been protected and assisted, was instead marginalized because of her political differences, reflecting the transactional political practices often found in rural communities. The short story “The Moon That Fell on a Rumbia Roof” by A. Warits Rovi reveals the suffering of poor people who are ignored by government officials. Despite facing numerous challenges, Salma, a victim of political injustice and poverty, bravely perseveres. The following data reinforces this situation.

Data 15

Rudi approached the gap in the wall of his gedek house. Then, with one eye, he peered out, scanning the eastern sky intently, gazing at the waning moon, hoping that Ramadan would soon arrive (Rovi, 2024).

This quote describes Rudi's inner feelings, which are full of hope despite his limited circumstances. The cracked walls of his house represent his fragile physical and social conditions, but even in his vulnerability, he is still able to look up at the sky and hope for the arrival of Ramadan. The waning moon symbolizes the passage of time and the desire for change for the better. This concept can be linked to the struggles of the lower classes, who often use religious moments as a starting point to find happiness and assistance. In a social context, Ramadan is not only a spiritual symbol but also a hope for social generosity from the surrounding community. The change that Rudi hopes for is not only individual but also reflects the collective need of the community to escape their limitations. This narrative serves as a critique of a social system that still does not provide enough space for small communities to develop. Rudi's hopes reflect a lingering optimism but at the same time show the dependence of poor communities on external conditions that are often beyond their control. This episode reminds us of the importance

of solidarity that is not only seasonal but also sustainable in order to support the lives of those who are marginalized.

These two short stories not only describe social inequality but also highlight how marginalized communities deal with this reality. In "Social Assistance," Karmin's resignation to the injustice he experiences reflects the limited ability of the lower classes to fight for their rights, while also showing the social hegemony that oppresses marginalized classes. On the other hand, Salma in "The Moon That Fell on a Rumbia Roof" presents a narrative of struggle that is full of bitterness, yet still colored by optimism, as seen in the hopes of her son, Rudi, who believes that the moon falling on the roof of their house is a symbol of the happiness they dream of. Both short stories suggest that the conditions of marginalized communities are influenced not only by economic poverty but also by socio-political structures that perpetuate inequality. In the context of community life, these works serve as a mirror that critiques systemic injustice while highlighting the humanity that persists even in conditions of deprivation.

The Marginal Class Stance Toward Socio-Economic Conditions in the Short Story "Social Assistance" highlights the protagonist's resistance to poverty

The short story "Social Assistance" by Satmoko Budi Santoso depicts the reality of social inequality in the distribution of social assistance, where the protagonist, Karmin, faces and fights against the poverty that ensnares him. Through his story, the short story criticizes the unfair bureaucratic system and shows that a person can carry out resistance against poverty through awareness, attitude, and concrete actions. The following aspects illuminate the resistance to poverty in this short story.

Karmin's Critical Awareness of Social Inequality

At the beginning of the story, Karmin is described as a poor resident who frequently fails to receive social assistance, even though he economically meets the criteria for aid recipients. His house does not yet have ceramic floors, his electricity usage is low-grade, and his employment is irregular. However, instead of merely complaining, Karmin realizes that there is injustice within the social assistance distribution system. Village officials, such as the Neighborhood Head (Ketua RT) and Hamlet Head (Kepala Dusun), act as if they are unconcerned about their residents' conditions, while other residents who are supposedly less in need receive more than one aid package. This awareness constitutes Karmin's initial form of resistance against poverty. He understands that the existing social system does not entirely favor the poor, and those in positions of power often prioritize their own or their group's interests.

Refusing to Apply for Recognition as a Poor Person

One form of Karmin's resistance to poverty is his reluctance to present himself as a recipient of social assistance. Although many residents suggested that he report this injustice to the neighborhood association chairman or village head, Karmin chose not to do so. He believes that village officials should automatically be aware of the conditions of their residents, without him having to beg for recognition as a poor person. This attitude shows that Karmin refuses to submit to a system that requires people to humble themselves to obtain their rights. In a sociological context, this can be linked to the concept of the dignity of the poor, which means that poor people often have to struggle not only economically but also socially in order to have their rights recognized. Karmin chooses to maintain his dignity, even if it means he must continue to live in hardship.

Resistance Through Hard Work and Independence

After realizing that he would not receive social assistance, Karmin finally chose to stop hoping for a system that did not favor him. He no longer waited for social assistance to arrive but instead began to work harder to meet his family's needs. This decision was a form of active resistance against poverty. Whereas before he could only resign himself to his fate and lament his circumstances, now he took control of his own life. This attitude shows that resistance to poverty does not always take the form of physical resistance or open protest but can also be in the form of independent efforts to escape difficult conditions. In the end, Karmin's hard work paid off. He managed to improve his standard of living, even achieving a much better level of welfare than before.

Social Irony: Karmin, Who Was Once Poor, Now Provides Assistance To Others

The most interesting part of this short story is Karmin, who was often ignored in the distribution of social assistance but has now become someone who is able to provide assistance to other residents, including the neighborhood association chairman and the village head. Even after becoming successful, Karmin does not hold a grudge against those who ignored him in the past. He continues to be generous, even to those who previously did not care about him. However, Karmin's statement, "Javanese people must help each other," contains a subtle criticism of a culture that often pretends not to know or is indifferent to social injustice. This statement shows that Karmin understands how the social system works, but he chooses to respond to it in a more thoughtful way.

Karmin Engaged in Symbolic Resistance To Poverty and The Social System

In addition to economic resistance, Karmin also engaged in symbolic resistance to poverty. He refused to feel sorry for himself, refused to depend on social assistance, and he refused to submit to an unjust system. Instead of following the existing pattern of poor people who continue to hope for assistance and rely on pity, Karmin proves that he can escape poverty on his own. His action is a form of criticism of the passive mentality that is often found among the poor. In addition, this short story also depicts how the surrounding community tends to become increasingly individualistic. Karmin feels that in the era of technology and cell phones, social awareness is declining. This novel is a clear illustration that poverty is not only related to economics but also to how people treat each other.

The Short Story "The Moon That Fell on a Rumbia Roof" Illustrates Resignation as A Form of Hegemony

Expectations For Poverty

Despite living in difficult conditions, Salma continues to try to offer her son, Rudi, hope. One form of this hope is seen in the metaphor "The Moon that Fell on the Rumbia Roof," which Salma uses to promise her son a better life. The moon symbolizes the holy month of Ramadan, when many people who are more fortunate share their blessings with those who are less fortunate.

Data 16

We'll be eating normally soon. The moon will touch our roof

The use of religious symbols as a tool to accept suffering shows that hegemony works through ideology. Salma does not teach her children to demand their rights or fight for justice but instead builds their hopes on the generosity of others. This episode reflects how religion or tradition can be used as a tool to maintain the status quo, teaching poor communities to be patient and accept their circumstances instead of fighting against an oppressive system.

Social Solidarity

Data 17

When the month of Ramadan arrived, Rudi was delighted, jumping up and down. The first night of Tarawih, he came to the mosque before the Maghrib Azan sounded. His face beamed. There is hope in my heart that feels like it will soon be achieved; the moon will fall on the roof of his house.

This section shows that social solidarity within society can still offer hope to marginalized groups. However, it also illustrates the extent to which the lives of the poor rely on the kindness of others instead of a system that should ensure their welfare.

Resignation to Labor Exploitation

As a farm laborer, Salma had to work tirelessly in the cassava fields for inadequate compensation: half a sack of cassava instead of money. The farm owner, Sahmo, not only forced her into labor but also treated her harshly. Despite the frequent mistreatment, Salma continued to work there without protest.

Data 18

Working on the Sahmo farm is not an effortless job. Apart from being hit by the heat or rain, Salma also often almost gets bitten by snakes and centipedes, while her hands and feet bleed almost every day from scratches from thorns. Likewise, he also often received harsh treatment from Sahmo.

In a capitalist system, capital owners often exploit the working class, leaving them with no choice but to accept their circumstances. Salma persevered despite knowing she was receiving unfair treatment, as she had no opportunity to find another job.

CONCLUSION

The short stories “Social Assistance” by Satmoko Budi Santoso and “The Moon That Fell on a Rumbia Roof” by A. Warits Rovi represent the social reality of the marginalized class, with socioeconomic inequality as the main theme. Both short stories reveal how an unfair bureaucratic system and a culture of apathy among the community affect the lives of the poor, both in terms of the distribution of social assistance and access to decent work. Through a sociological approach to literature using Marxist theory, this study finds that marginalization occurs systematically, involving interrelated political, economic, and social aspects. In the short story “Social Assistance,” the character Karmin reflects the alienation and powerlessness of the poor against the manipulative village bureaucratic system. Meanwhile, the short story “The Moon That Fell on a Rumbia Roof” highlights the struggles of a single mother, Salma, who faces political discrimination and labor exploitation as part of her reality. Both stories not only present criticism of injustice

but also describe how marginalized classes respond to their social conditions, whether through resignation, hope, or hard work to survive. Thus, these two short stories not only reflect the portrait of social inequality in real life but also serve as a medium for criticism of the system that perpetuates oppression against marginalized classes.

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