
WOMEN'S INEQUALITY AS INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL DISCRIMINATION IN *MEMOIRS OF GEISHA* BY ARTHUR GOLDEN

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Abstract	Article Information
<p><i>This Thesis explored the features of women's inequality as the influence of social discrimination in the novel <i>Memoirs of a Geisha</i> by Arthur Golden. There are two objectives in this research; 1) To find out the forms of women's inequality in the novel <i>Memoirs of Geisha</i> by Arthur Golden. 2) To examine how women's inequality is influenced by social discrimination in Arthur Golden's novel <i>Memoirs of Geisha</i>. The theory used in this research is Rosemarie Tong's Marxist Feminism, and the research methodology used is qualitative research in which the researcher presents the issues descriptively. As for the data, they were collected from the narration and dialogue in the novel. The result of the research, the researcher found the forms of women's inequality which are Sexual Harassment, Slavery, Subordination, and Violence. Furthermore, the researcher shows that every form of women's inequality can influence social discrimination which are Dialectical materialism, Historical materialism, Class Struggle, Alienation, and Revolution.</i></p> <p>Keywords: Feminism, Marxist, Inequality, Social Discrimination, Geisha</p>	<p>Received: 30/09/2023</p> <p>Revised: 23/02/2024</p> <p>Accepted: 24/02/2024</p>

INTRODUCTION

Women are men's equal partners in improving development and family life, so there is no reason for men to place women as a second class or marginalize women, let alone dominate and discriminate against women. However, not all women are lucky and get justice for their rights. Violence against women is a global reality that cannot be denied throughout the history of human civilization, especially those experienced and felt by women. For centuries, women have experienced acts of violence either through words or physical suffering by men; some cases are carried out by their people (women). From time immemorial until now, the female gender has been the object of oppression compared to the male gender. Many women

have experienced discrimination and abuse by men and a culture that prioritizes men or what is called patriarchy. Women are also underestimated because of their social status, especially women from the lower middle social class. They are more likely to receive unpleasant treatment, such as sexual harassment and other acts of violence. Culture makes women subordinated, and inferior, and patriarchal culture makes this notion of gender inequality still exist in people who commit acts of violence against women, as in the novel *Memoir of a Geisha* by Arthur Golden.

The topic of gender inequality between men and women has been an exciting study to discuss since men have physically and psychologically exploited women. According to Burke and Stets (2001: p 32), people put men as a central authority in the social structure and community, even in this modern era. Women are set in an unjustified position in social life; for example, there are still many slavery cases, exploitation, and prostitution involving women as the main objects. Women are used to fulfilling men's needs, especially in terms of sexual demands. Meanwhile, prostitution is quite contrary to women's rights to gain a respectable position in society as men.

The novel used in this study is the novel *Memoirs of a Geisha*. This novel by Arthur Golden is a literary novel that describes social and life situations. This novel tries to convey the inequality of women that occurs due to the patriarchal system caused by capitalism and the stereotype of women developed in Japan, and how the inequality of women during and after World War II Japan. There are many portraits of women's inequality which in the novel are represented by a main female character named Sayuri. The life stories of Sayuri from her childhood that she is being sold by her parents, being a slave, and then being forced into a Geisha because she has no other options in life are the real implications of women's inequality in the world.

The researcher is interested in studying *Memoirs of a Geisha* novel as an object of study with the background of women's inequality, which in this case is represented by a Geisha named Sayuri who lives in the nineteenth century in Japan. Her life story is a real example of women's inequality caused by many factors. In this study, the researcher wants to examine and criticize the practice of women's inequality presented in *Memoirs of a Geisha*. The researcher decided to use the theory of feminism as the ground theory of the study. The researcher believes that the theory of feminism is the most suitable study to analyze and scrutinize women's inequality. Researchers are interested in using this novel as an object of research. In addition, the researcher is interested in analyzing this novel with a feminist approach and takes the title "Women's Inequality as Influence of Social Discrimination in the Novel *Memoirs of Geisha* by Arthur Golden."

The study of the novel includes various aspects. However, to be more specific, the research focuses on analysing the book *Memoirs of a Geisha* as the object of this research material. In contrast, the formal thing is focused on Women's Inequality as an influence of Social Discrimination by using Marxist feminism as the theory. Marxist feminism theory provides enlightenment on how Chiyo or Sayuri can exemplify woman inequality in this novel. It

defines her struggle for keeping her survive while she is a Geisha. Also, it explains how women's Inequality influences social discrimination

LITERATURE REVIEW

Marxist-Feminist

Marxist views about the problem of women in the framework of criticism of capitalism. In this assumption, it is argued that the method of production and class exploitation are sources of oppression for women. Marxist and socialist feminism views the existence of capitalism as an injustice for women, with various losses to be borne. In addition, there is an assumption that men will be dominant in controlling production implementation programs so that they will have a much higher position. Men control production, whereas women are considered to be part of the property women are considered workers. (Tong, 2013)

Women's Inequality

Gender inequality is a form of treatment difference based on gender reasons, such as limiting roles, exclusion, or favouritism, which results in violations of the recognition of human rights, equality between men and women, as well as basic rights in the social, political, economic, cultural and other fields. Other. In this concept of gender, it can be concluded that it is an inherent trait of men and women that can be constructed socially and culturally. For example, women are gentle, beautiful, emotional, or motherly, and men are considered strong, rational, manly, and mighty. Gender inequality occurs because of beliefs and justifications instilled throughout human civilization in various forms that afflict women and are also experienced by men.

a. Sexual Harassment

Sexual Harassment is an act of humiliating, insulting, harassing, or attacking a person's body and reproductive function. After all, inequality in power and gender relations can result in psychological or physical suffering, including those that interfere with one's reproductive health and lose the opportunity to carry out education safely and optimally.

b. Subordination

Subordination due to gender occurs in different forms from place to place and from time to time. according to researchers, Subordination is an assessment or assumption that a role performed by one sex is inferior to the other. It is known that the values prevailing in society have separated and separated gender roles, male and female. Women are considered responsible and have a role in domestic or reproductive affairs, while men are in public affairs or production.

c. Slavery

Slavery happened long ago due to the strong patriarchal system in society and the influence of the capitalist era in the early eighteenth century worldwide. At that time, two classes of society were known: the bourgeoisies and proletariats (Goran, 1991: 21). The bourgeoisies were conducted as the economic officers. They had full power in twisting money on a business within the society. Meanwhile, the proletariats are labourers and rough workers in their businesses. When the capitalist era began in the United Kingdom and the United States in the

mid of eighteenth century, the practices of slavery extended out along with the need for numerous labourers at the factories and the other business sectors. The proletariats were absorbed with the consideration that they could be hired with low salaries during long working hours.

d. Violence

Violence is caused by the inequality of power in society (Fakih, 2013, p17). Violence means acts of violence, both physical and non-physical, perpetrated by one gender or a family, community or state institution against the other gender. Gender roles have distinguished the characters of women and men. Women are considered feminists and men masculine. This character then manifests in psychological characteristics, such as men being considered brave, strong, brave, etc. On the other hand, women are considered soft, weak, obedient, etc.

Discrimination

Discrimination still exists now, God gives every human being the same capability, and women only want to be equal in any aspect but discrimination between men and women become commonplace in society. Discrimination is an unfair and unequal treatment that is carried out to distinguish between individuals, or groups, based on something, categorical, or distinctive attributes, such as based on race, ethnicity, religion, or membership of a social class, the term usually refers to describing an action of the dominant majority about a weak minority, so that it can be said that the behaviour is immoral and undemocratic.

Social Discrimination

When there is a social change, everything in the social environment will change, including norms and values. This is felt in the individual or social group that is in it. Some individuals or groups are ready, and some are not. Those who are not ready later experience cultural shock or cultural lag. This cultural shock and lag can then lead to social discrimination. There is a different treatment of fellow human beings based on social position. Without realizing it, discrimination often occurs in the social environment. Some people think minority groups are no better than them. In addition, this discrimination occurs because individuals look different from others.

Women's Inequality as an Influence of Social Discrimination

Marxism consists of four major issues. There are Dialectical materialism, Historical materialism, Alienation, Class struggle, and Revolution:

a. Dialectical Materialism

Dialectical materialism is a philosophical approach to reality derived from the writings of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. Materialism means believing that only money, possessions, and something that can be seen is essential. So dialectical Materialism is the process that builds reality through the process of contradiction to reach the absolute truth and movement.

b. Class Struggle

Class Struggle focuses on the struggle of the oppressed class against the oppressor. It focuses on the way the class oppressed face the oppressor. This class of struggle is economic because economics can determine the social class level such as the elite (the aristocrats and the bourgeois), the proletariat. The oppressed that make the proletariat struggle is they work for the elite, but it makes them exploited.

c. Alienation

Alienation Karl Mark views humans as alienated from his society because of his work in the capitalist economy. The basic human alienation is work. Because the fundamental human activity is work, and work makes a human being actual. Human nature is the aspect of alienation—humans work to appropriate their needs. Humans are different from animals because humans need to produce food or goods by work. Alienation happens both in humans and in the world in which it is separated from the object.

d. Revolution

The Social revolution is the rapid and fundamental changes in society and the class structure of a country. In other words, social revolution was coupled with the rebellion of the lower classes or the oppressed class. The lower classes or proletariat change the social structure from the old into the new one. Through the revolution that is made by the lower classes, the lower classes sweep the class stratification to stop discrimination exploration, then make a new society for a better life.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The researcher applies a descriptive qualitative research methodology, in which qualitative data in the form of words is analyzed and described descriptively. The novel *Memoirs of Geisha* by Arthur Golden is used as primary data in this research to determine the forms of This novel provides the study's primary data through sentences and circumstances containing, reflecting, or correlating with women's exploitation. Moreover, the data taken becomes the basis for the analysis of the study related to women's Inequality as the influence of social discrimination. While the secondary data were taken through library sources and the internet such as journals, e-books, and other literature sources relevant to the object of research. In the researcher's data analysis procedure, the researcher analyzed through several processes: determine what problems will be presented by the chosen novel in order for the description to form a coherent sequence, compile relevant novel quotations that reflect the research topic for analysis, analyze the data found using theories relevant to the main research topic and the data is interpreted in light of the chosen research objective, which is to discover the forms of to women's Inequality as the influence of social discrimination in the novel. The researcher uses triangulation techniques by Denzin (2018, p.779) to test the validity of the data related to the research problem being investigated by the researcher and hopes the compatibility between the data and the results will generate appropriate answers and reduce the risk of incorrect interpretation.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The Form's of Women's Inequality

Here, the researcher describes the forms of women's inequality found in the object research. There are four forms of women's inequality which are; (1) Sexual Harassment (2) Slavery, (3) Subordination, and (4) Violence.

a. Sexual Harassment

All types of these Women's inequality are found in the novel *Memoirs of Geisha*. Sexual harassment is every act of humiliating, insulting, harassing, or attacking a person's body and reproductive function, because inequality in power and gender relations can result in psychological or physical suffering, including those that interfere with one's reproductive health and lose the opportunity to carry out education safely and optimally. Although it has been said that a geisha is an artist whose only job is to entertain guests and not have sex. However, it is undeniable that job is at risk of being "harassed" by the "dirty" minds of men. Just as a geisha who must try to liven up the atmosphere by opening a conversation with her guests must be willing to attend to the conversation of her male guest, which often leads to sexuality. In addition, it is undeniable that the guests invited the geisha to come because they saw a woman as a means of satisfaction, who had to serve men as well as possible and keep the men above the clouds. The researcher finds the type of sexual harassment that happened to Geisha was divided into two sub-categories: a) Suffering from the mizuage auction and b) Forcing people to do sexual activity. An explanation of the types of sexual harassment is presented in the following excerpt:

Everything seemed so strange and frightening to me; I couldn't have been comfortable no matter what I'd done. There must have been a very grail of blood because the air had an unpleasant metallic smell. I kept reminding myself how much the Doctor had paid for her privilege and I remember, ping at one point that he was enjoying himself more than I was. I felt no more pleasure there than if someone had rubbed a file over and over against the inside of my thigh until I bled. (Golden, 1997: p 219)

The excerpt captures how terrible the mizuage process is for Sayuri. This was the first time she had sexual activity with a man and she couldn't deny her feelings that she didn't like Dr Crabs. Sayuri didn't have the strength to refuse because she remembered how much Dr Crab was for the mizuage. After the mizuage ceremony, Sayuri is officially recognized as a professional geisha who is free to entertain guests without her sister's guidance and has the right to have a Danna (protector). Meanwhile, leaving bad memories in her mind. She kept thinking about the Chairman and felt bad for him. As a woman, Sayuri feels her heart is broken when she doesn't have her first sexual experience with the man she loves.

b. Slavery

Slavery has existed for a long time because of society's cultural solid solidarity system and the influence of capitalism at the beginning of the eighteenth century around the world. The practice of slavery expanded along with the need for more labour in factories and other business sectors. The proletariat is absorbed into thinking that they can be employed at low wages during long working hours. The type of slavery that Sayuri experienced was divided into three subcategories: a) being sold to the Okiya, b) being overworked in the Okiya, and

c) being forced into a cash machine in the Okiya. An explanation of the types of slavery is presented in the following excerpt:

We all watched her float away, and then Mr Bekku handed me over to the older women in the entryway. He climbed back into the rickshaw with my sister, and the driver raised the poles. But I never saw them leave because I was tearfully slumped down the entryway. The older women must have taken pity on me; for a long, I lay there sobbing in my misery without anyone touching me. (Golden, 1997:p 50)

The excerpt shows that Sayuri is crying because she has to face her nightmare of losing her family. Sayuri was sold to the Nitta Okiya, one of the largest Okiya in the Gion district owned by Nitta or Mother. Okiya is a place where girls are trained to be geisha. Back then, in Japan, it was typical for a young girl to become a geisha as part of their society and culture. There, Sayuri met Pumpkin, who was also sold by her uncle to the Okiya. Sayuri and Pumpkin are being groomed by Mother to be trained as geisha. It takes powerful mental and physical strength to go through these stages until the girls succeed in becoming professional geisha.

c. Subordination

Women do not have complete freedom to act and do their will as men due to the solid patriarchal system. The limitations of women's liberation cover almost all aspects of life. The patriarchal system puts women as less important figures, for example, in getting a job where women are not allowed to leave home to work. It happens to Sayuri, whose mobility is limited by Mother. Although Mother, who governs the Okiya, is also a woman, she keeps treating Sayuri with strict regulations. It is caused by the patriarchal system entrenched in the geisha tradition created by men. This condition is demonstrated in the following excerpt:

Unfortunately, part of my punishment for ruining Mameha's kimono was confinement in the Okiya for fifty days. I was permitted to attend school as long as Pumpkin accompanied me, but I was no longer allowed to run errands. (Golden, 1997: p58)

The excerpt above shows that it is tough for Sayuri to secretly go out of the Okiya to meet Satsu. The risk is considerable because a maid in the Okiya next to her Okiya who ever tried to escape was caught and tortured badly. Finally, Sayuri keeps trying to escape but fails and instead falls from the roof of the Okiya. Her arms are seriously broken, and her Mother burdens her with medical expenses. She is punished for being a maid because she is marked as a foolish girl who loses her opportunity to become a geisha. Although she is claimed to be a maid, she does not give up on finding a way to make her a better fate.

d. Violence

Physical or psychological violence against women happens because of women's societal stereotypes. Women's stereotype describes women as weak, powerless, and fragile figures. In *Memoirs of a Geisha*, Sayuri suffers from physical and psychological violence done by Hatsumomo, their mother, and even Mameha, her adopted sister. This condition is demonstrated in the following excerpt:

She tried to spread my knees apart, she had to slap me on the leg, she put a finger between my legs and gave what felt to me like a pinch, in such a way that I cried out. She looked around to be sure no one was watching and then hit us on the tops of our heads. (Golden, 1997: p 33)

The excerpt shows Sayuri got hit, slapped, and pinched by Mrs Fidget who is not even her family or the person that knows Sayuri personally, she is a fortune teller but she treated Sayuri like that even when they first met. Sayuri also got pinched again when Sayuri tried to ask where she was going to the person next to her, but Mrs Fidget pinched her to make Sayuri shut up. Sayuri did not make any mistake but she got pinched and slapped, it is because she was a poor kid from a really poor family and she was being sold by her father to be a geisha, so she got these bad treatments from the people who have more power than her

Violence as the influence of social discrimination

After the researcher succeeded in identifying the forms of women's inequality by Karl Marx the researcher selected several data findings to answer the second research question. The researcher identified that data is finding that Violence is the influence of social discrimination.

a. Violence as Revolution

This condition is demonstrated in the following excerpt:

“Now listen to me! I'm sure you've heard over and over that your job as an apprentice is to impress other geisha since they're the ones who will help you in your career and not worry about what the men think. (Golden, 1997: p 167)

The excerpt shows, Mameha tries to ensure Sayuri that she does it because she wants Sayuri to be a success as a geisha. Sayuri does not know if Mameha does it for the sake of the high price of her mizuage auction. Mameha does not offer the opportunity for Sayuri to protest and continues to carry out her plan. She thinks she is the only one who knows what is best for Sayuri's future. Mameha is very kind, but sometimes her ambition makes her cruel. Here Mameha tried to change her future.

“I came to tell you that this time next month you'll have a Danna.” “Mameha thinks I should establish my reputation first, just for a few years.” “Mameha! What does she know about business? The next time I want to know when to giggle at a party, I'll go and ask her.” “Leave the business decisions to me,” Mother went on. (Golden, 1997: p 291)

The excerpt explains when Mother told Sayuri that Nobu wanted to be her Danna (a wealthy man who wants to accommodate a geisha's life by sticking with him), but Sayuri refused by saying that she said she was only eighteen Mother said “Leave the business decisions to me”, she said about a Danna as a business while actually, it was about Sayuri's future and life because a Danna will be like a husband to a geisha. It means that Mother is still the one who controlled Sayuri's life and her financial

b. Violence as dialectical materialism

This condition is demonstrated in the following excerpt:

"Sayuri, we're going to put a little cut in your skin," Mameha said. "Just a little one, so you can go to the hospital and meet a certain doctor..."

"We only need to make you bleed a little, just enough so the Doctor will be willing to look at you." (Golden. 1997: p 164)

The excerpt show, that Mameha forces Sayuri to cut her leg to find an opportunity to go to the hospital and meet Dr Crab. Sayuri is afraid of seeing blood, so she refuses to cut her leg, but Mameha insists on her plan.

"you may recall how I fainted after cutting my lip when I met Mr Tanaka. So you can probably imagine how I felt when I twisted around and saw a rivulet of blood snaking down my leg onto a towel Mameha held against my thigh. (Golden, 1997: p 166)

The excerpt show that Sayuri falls to be faint after her leg is cut. Mameha convinces Sayuri that this step is crucial to make an impression that will guarantee her future.

c. Violence as Alienation

This condition is demonstrated in the following excerpt:

He had taken me from my mother and father, sold me into slavery, and sold my sister into something even worse. I had taken him for a kind man. I had thought he was so refined, so worldly. What a stupid child I had been! I would never go back to Yoroido, I decided. Or if I did go back, it would only be to tell Mr Tanaka how much I hated him. (Golden, 1997:82)

The excerpt show, Sayuri has sent to Gion to be a geisha by Mr. Tanaka, it can be said that Mr. Tanaka was the cause of Sayuri being sold to be a geisha. Mr Tanaka has controlled Sayuri's life by selling her to be a geisha without her permission and has forced her to leave her family, Sayuri said if she would go back to Yoroido and meet Mr Tanaka she wanted to tell him how much she hated him, it can be shown that Sayuri held her anger towards Mr Tanaka which can be mean that she holds her angry, upset, and even hateful feeling towards Mr Tanaka and it concludes that she got psychological violence.

Soon began to unwind the broad obi, wrapping and unwrapping his arms around my waist. . . In a moment the Baron let the obi fall in a pile on the floor and then unfastened the datejime—the waistband underneath. I felt the sickening sensation of my kimono releasing itself from around my waist. I clutched it shut with my arms, but the Baron pulled them apart. (Golden, 1997: p. 204)

From the excerpt above, it is proved that Sayuri got unwanted touching and was forced to undress because it can be said that Baron wanted to rape her. Sayuri did not want to have a sexual interaction with Baron but Baron wanted to have it with Sayuri, he tried to undress her. Sayuri as a woman can do nothing when a man approaches her intending to rape her.

d. Violence as Class Struggle

This condition is demonstrated in the following excerpt:

She tried to spread my knees apart, she had to slap me on the leg, she put a finger between my legs and gave what felt to me like a pinch, in such a way that I cried out. She looked around to be sure no one was watching and then hit us on the tops of our heads. (Golden, 1997: p 33)

And then just as I'd feared, she reached out and began pinching me so hard on the side of my neck that I couldn't even tell which part of me hurt. (Golden, 1997: p 33)

The excerpt shows, Sayuri got hit, slapped, and pinched by Mrs Fidget who is not even her family or the person that knows Sayuri personally, she is a fortune teller but she treated Sayuri like that even when they first met. Sayuri also got pinched again when Sayuri tried to ask where she was going to the person next to her, but Mrs Fidget pinched her to make Sayuri shut up. Sayuri did not make any mistake but she got pinched and slapped, it is because she was a poor kid from a really poor family and she was being sold by her father to be a geisha, so she got these bad treatments from the people who have more power than her

"The girl should be beaten and made to repay the kimono cost, and that's that. Where's the bamboo pole?" I'll beat her myself," Auntie said. "I won't have your joints flaring up again, Granny. Come along, Sayuri." (Golden, 1997: p 67)

The excerpt describes how Sayuri gets punched by Grandmother because of Hatsumomo's slander. When Sayuri catches Hatsumomo with her secret lover, Koichi, in the dark room before the Okiya, Hatsumomo is very angry with her. Hatsumomo beats her because she fears Sayuri will tell Mother about her secret relationship.

She worked her finger down to my scalp; all at once, she clenched her teeth in a fury, took a great handful of my hair, and yanked it to one side so hard I fell to my knees and cried out. I couldn't understand what was happening, but soon Hatsumomo pulled me to my feet again and began leading me up the stairs yanking my hair that way and that. (Golden, 1997: p 67)

The excerpt shows that Hatsumomo is very angry because she is afraid that Sayuri reports to Mother that she has a lover. A geisha is prohibited from having a lover because every man who wants to touch a geisha is supposed to pay the amount of money according to the rules in the Okiya. Hatsumomo does not only physical violence to Sayuri but she is often a trickster so that she will be expelled from the Okiya and does not harm her position. The proof that Hatsumomo wants Sayuri to be removed from the Okiya.

"Hatsumomo's little trick with that kimono is going to cost you more money than you've ever imagined in your life. That's what I mean about debt." Auntie had told me never to trust Hatsumomo, even if she offered to help me. (Golden 1997: p 58)

The excerpt show, Auntie tells Sayuri that Hatsumomo wants her to be trapped in a massive debt until she cannot pay for it and should be expelled from the Okiya. Auntie asks Sayuri not ever to believe any little kindness offered by Hatsumomo to her. Hatsumomo only wants one thing: Sayuri to be expelled from the Okiya. She feels threatened by Sayuri's beauty in the future that she predicts Sayuri will be her tight competitor in the geisha existence in Gion

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings on the limitation of this research which is stated in the research question number 2, it states that women's inequality as influence of social discrimination. So it can conclude that the influence of women's inequality toward social discrimination is dominated by class struggle which is representation. While the form of women's inequality is dominated by violence.

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