

SOCIAL CLASS OPPRESSION IN ALLY CONDIE'S *CROSSED* NOVEL: A MARXIST CRITICISM

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ABSTRACT

This study examined social class oppression in Ally Condie's *Crossed* novel as the object of the research. This research applied Tyson's social class and Young's types of oppression theory. This research used qualitative research as a method and used a Marxist approach to conduct research. This research showed five indicators of social class: Aristocracy is portrayed as an Institution that has unlimited jobs and financial security. The upper class is the people in Tana provinces who are economically privileged which is they had small facilities for production. The middle class referred to the Officer, they worked with Institutions to oppress the lower class. The types of lower class refer to Ky, Vick, and Eli they were in dirty and disheveled clothes. Underclass refers to the Anomalies, they are alienated from society. This research also showed the third type of oppression; Exploitation was the Officers, and who get oppressed in this novel is the Aberration. In Marginalization, types of society that marginalize the Anomalies. In Powerlessness the oppressor is the Institution, and those who get oppressed are the Aberration, Anomaly, and the decoy. The existence of oppression was caused by social class and portrayed implicitly in society.

Key Words: *Crossed*, Social Class, Oppression, Marxist Theory.

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengkaji tentang penindasan kelas social di dalam novel Ally Condie yang berjudul *Crossed* sebagai objek penelitian. Penelitian ini menggunakan teori kelas sosial dari Tyson dan teori penindasan dari Young. Penelitian ini menggunakan kualitatif sebagai metode dan menggunakan pendekatan Marxist untuk melakukan penelitian. Penelitian juga menunjukkan lima indikator tentang kelas sosial; Institusi yang menggambarkan sebagai Aristokrat yang memiliki pekerjaan yang tak terbatas dan kehidupan yang terjamin. Kelas atas yang digambarkan oleh orang-orang provinsi Tana yang mana ekonomi mereka stabil dan memiliki fasilitas untuk memproduksi. Kelas menengah digambarkan oleh petugas yang bekerja dengan Institusi dan menindas kelas bawah. Kelas bawah diperankan oleh Ky, Vick, Eli menggunakan pakaian kusut

dan kotor. Kelas paling bawah ditujukan kepada Anomali, mereka teralienasi dari masyarakat. Penelitian ini juga menunjukkan tiga tipe penindasan; eksploitasi yang digambarkan oleh petugas, dan yang mendapatkan penindasan adalah Aberasi. Terakhir, Marginalisasi yaitu masyarakat yang memetakan Anomali. Kemunculan penindasan yang dikarenakan oleh kelas sosial dan digambarkan secara tidak langsung di dalam masyarakat

Kata Kunci: *Crossed*, Kelas Sosial, Penindasan, Teori Marxis.

A. INTRODUCTIONS

Literature is a reflection of events in society such as politics, economics, diversity, and social class. The issues of social class are interesting to discuss because there is social injustice within a society where some people are divided based on class in society. Therefore, in many cases oppression can be the result of a few people's choices that cause embedded unquestioned norms, habits, and symbols. In addition, oppression has several types of oppression. According to Young, cited by Heldke and O'Connor, oppression, they have types of oppression including violence, exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, and cultural imperialism (1). The condition of social class issues is also portrayed through literary works, one of the novels which portrayed these issues is the *Crossed* novel written by Ally Condie.

Related to the discussion above, Ally Condie is the author of the international bestseller *Matched* and its sequel, *Crossed*. Ally Condie's also a former English teacher, she lives with her husband and four children outside of Salt Lake City, Utah. *Crossed* is a fantasy novel that describes social conditions that indirectly depict oppression by the upper class. In the novel, the classes are described as Institution, Abrasion, and Anomaly. Institutions are people that describe a powerful person, Abrasion people describe a weak, and the anomaly people describe the weakest of the weak. The main character in this novel is Ky, Cassia, Vick, and Eli, who were oppressed by the upper class, tried to find the pilot who could change their lives better by leaving the Institution.

Based on the study, this research use significance of the research as follows, theoretically and practically. First, this research is expected to provide a better understanding of the theories that the researcher used in this research. Second, practically this thesis can be referenced for the further researchers who are planning to research by using a similar theory and the aims of this study are to portray how social classes in the *Crossed* novel and to describe how social class causes oppression in the *Crossed* novel.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Characters

A character refers to the persons that experience in fantasy fiction, the characters may not be human, they may be animals, or robots, given human abilities and traits. According to Klarer,

characters in a text can be rendered either as a type or as individuals. A typified character in literature is dominated by one specific persona with more complex and differentiated features (17). From the statements above, a character is a person or other creature as a human being in narrative work who has the identity and moral quality as expressed in their dialogue and action. The character has to be suitable to the story situation that happens in it and the character will be just changed if there is something that causes it and make persona characters and character can be illustrated by appearance, behavior, emotions, intellect, and morality.

2. Characterization

Characterization is the technique authors use to show the personality or the characters of a fictional character. According to Kennan, characterization as one construct within the abstracted story can be described in terms of a network of character traits. Characterization is divided into two types; they are Direct Definition and Indirect Presentation.

a. Direct Definition

The direct definition is a description of the character that is done directly by mentioning the original traits of the character in the story. According to Kennan, the direct definition is a characterization process that explains the direct naming of a character's quality through accurate voice in the text (62). Therefore, it can be said that direct definition is when an author conveys information about a character by telling the information directly to the readers.

b. Indirect Presentation

Indirectly presented rather than mentioning a trait, it is represented in various ways. According to Kennan, the type of characterization is divided into four aspects of indirect presentation; action, speech, external appearance, and environment. A character's speech, whether in conversation or a silent activity of the mind can be indicative of a trait or traits both through its content and through its form. The form or style of speech is a common means of characterization in texts where the characters' language is individuated and distinguished from that of the narrator (65-66). The character is explicit through another character's eyes to describe the motives and qualities of the characters. This technique is very simple because it does not require a lot of description. The third is external appearance where the character has remained a powerful resource in literary work. For example, characters might be described as tall, thin, fat, and pretty. The color of hair or something about the clothing of the character might reveal something about the character. According to Kennan, external appearance was used to imply character traits. At times the external description speaks for itself; at other times its relation to a trait is explicated by the narrator. Such explanations may function as disguised definitions rather than as indirect characterization (67-68). The last, environment is the character's physical surroundings (room, house, street, town) as well as his human environment (family, social

class), are also often used as trait-connoting metonymy. As with external appearance, the relation of contiguity is frequently supplemented by that of causality (68). The environment itself has a big influence on constructing character traits in the narrative text that shows through social class and family.

In this research, the theory of characterization is used to help the researcher in interpreting the personality of the character which helps the researcher to understand how social class and class oppression are portrayed through the character in the novel.

3. Marxism Theory

Marxist Criticism is the theory of analysis literature that examines economic and class social issues within society. According to Tyson, the bourgeoisie and proletariat have come to refer to everyday speech in society, with no distraction between owners and wage earners. In society, they refer to the groups as upper class, middle class, lower class, underclass, and aristocracy (54). Marxism is concerned with economic power, which is the motive behind every social activity and politics such as government, science, philosophy, religion, and education. Although Marxism itself was not designed as a method of literary analysis, its principles were applied to literature early on. Marxism is Marx's protest against capitalism that aims to fight for the proletariat in opposing the bourgeoisie.

4. Social Class

The social class consists of a large group of people who share similar economic or social positions in a society based on their income, wealth, property, ownership, job status, education, skills, or power in the economic and political sphere. For Marx, there were two social classes, the bourgeois, and the proletariat. According to Tyson, Marxism is the word bourgeoisie and proletariat has come to refer in everyday speech to the middle class in general, with no distraction between owners and wage earners. That can refer to five groups the underclass, lower class, middle class, upper class, and aristocracy. Groups of the underclass and lower class are economically oppressed. They suffer from the difficulty of economic recessions and have limited chances to change their fortune. In sharp contrast, groups of the upper class and aristocracy are economically privileged. They enjoy a luxurious lifestyle. At least, affected by economic recessions and have a great deal of financial security (55). As seen from this statement, the upper class and aristocrats continue to enjoy their lives, even though they are influenced by economic recessions, compared to the lower classes and underclass which are very unstable and do not have a choice in future life. Furthermore, the middle classes are the people who are both economically oppressed and economically privileged.

The lower class and underclass also have significant comparisons with each other. As quoted by Tyson in his book *Critical Theory Today: Second Edition*, the middle class is economically oppressed or economically privileged. Their socioeconomic lifestyle is certainly

better than the class below them, but they will probably never own a mansion and they benefit from initializing forms of economic security, such as good medical insurance and a pension plan (55). From this view, the middle class has more financial stability than the lower classes. Besides that, they worry about finances in the future because they endure an overtax that is relatively less of their income.

5. Oppression

Oppression is not taboo when we discuss social problems, whether in society or in daily life activities. According to Young as cited in Heldke and O'Connor, oppression is when people make other people less human. This could mean treating them in a dehumanizing manner. It means denying people's language, education, and other opportunities that might make them fully human in both mind-body (1). Moreover, oppression is an act that is very detrimental to someone whom they will feel alienated and excluded from society. This affects their economic value and oppression could occur everywhere, everyone, and every time.

6. Type of Oppression

a. Exploitation

The exploitation of labor is not by buying cheap and selling expensive, but from work done by workers. According to Young as cited by Weil, Exploitation is explained if the class structure can exist in the absence of legal and normative sanctioned class distinctions (45). The indicator of exploitation is bad living conditions, no education, search, and dangerous work. Exploitation makes the proletariat work under pleasure from the upper class and the work they do is very disproportionate to the wages they receive.

b. Marginalization

Marginalization is the system of labor that cannot or will not use. marginalization has characterized racial groups whose circumstances are weaknesses in the economic system, gender, age, or due to differences in skin color even mentally and physically. According to Young cited by Heldke and O'Connor, marginalization is somehow worse than exploitation because society most commonly people are marginalized based on race (2). The indicator of marginalization is stereotypes about race and discrimination. In this society, there are a lot of people who often compare the black race who is considered dirty, and the white race who is considered clean.

c. Powerlessness

Powerlessness is linked to Marx's theory of socialism: some people "have" power while others "have not". According to Young cited by Heldke and O'Connor, the powerless are dominated by the ruling class and situated to take orders and rarely have the right to give them(2). The indicator of powerlessness is a human experience. Where the upper class has a high social status and can easily get something while people who have a lower-class social status

find it very difficult to get what they want even though the smallest thing they deserve, so the upper class will be arbitrary with their actions towards the lower class.

d. Cultural Imperialism

Cultural Imperialism means experiencing the dominant society renders the particular perspective of one group invisible at the same time as they stereotype one group. According to Young cited by Weil, the universality of a dominant group's experience and culture, it is established as the norm (54). The indicator of cultural imperialism is when a foreign culture enters a country and unknowingly follows a lifestyle, beliefs, or thoughts of the foreign culture that causes the country's original culture to be replaced and adapted to the foreign culture.

e. Violence

Violence is something that society must know that they randomly and unprovoked attack on their person or poverty. According to Young cited by Heldke and O'Connor, violence is the direct result of xenophobia (the intense and irrational fear of people that seem strange or foreign). All forms of sexual violence and hate crimes are prevalent examples of violent oppression (4). The indicator of violence in social class is the most common in society. Violence can also injure, destroy property, or death.

7. Theory of Social Class Cause Oppression

Social class causes oppression according to Liedauer, the forms of oppression can be seen by both the oppressor and the oppressed, the causes of systematic oppression are often related to politics, culture, and religion that are considered normal so that form of oppression is almost unrecognizable (6). The existence of oppression was caused by social class. Both the oppressors and the oppressed thought that was a normal condition, because the upper class who has a privileged condition gets wealth from oppressed the lower class.

C. RESEARCH METHOD

1. Research Design

In this study, the researcher uses qualitative methods and focuses on the issues that happened in social or personal situations in this novel. According to William, qualitative data that is represented in words, pictures and even sounds cannot be analyzed by mathematical means such as statistics (132). Therefore, the qualitative method is relevant to social research, and the result of the data focuses on the conversation between the characters in the novel. This study also uses a Marxist approach to analyze the data.

2. Data and Data Source

The data source of this research is the *Crossed* novel written by Ally Condie. The researcher also uses historical data and social content data to analyze the novel. The data are taken in the form of narration and dialogue in the *Crossed* novel that contains the Marxism

values of social classes and kinds of class oppression.. The data source is taken from social content that related information such as; journals, articles, and other internet sources which can help understand the contexts of primary data.

3. Data Collection

In this research, there are some steps to collect the data. First, the researcher reads the novel closely several times close reading. Second, the researcher underlines the possible data that is related to the research question. The third step is for the researcher to collect the data. The last step is for the researcher would write down all the data that have been collected, these data which are related to Marxist values of social class and class oppression.

4. Data Analysis

The researcher analyzes the data use Dobie's theory, there is a component of data analysis including, clarifying, identifying, and conclusion (95). In identifying first, the researcher clarifies the raw data that had been collected from the *Crossed* novel. In this step, the researcher re-checks the data that have been collected are suitable or not with the issue of social classes and class oppression. Second step, the researcher identifies the data. In this step, the data are selected or classified based on the issue of social classes and class oppression. Last, after the researcher analyzes the data, the next steps are a conclusion. In this conclusion, the researcher obtained clear information about the result and concluded to answer the research problem that has been formulated.

D. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

1. Social Class Portrayed in the *Crossed* Novel

This part shows the social class that is portrayed in the story using Tyson's social class theory. The obtained data showed several types of oppression based on the theory, such as aristocracy, upper class, middle class, underclass, and lower class.

a. Aristocracy Class

In the novel, the Institution has decent job opportunities. So, they can live comfortably in the Center of the city. In It's the last night before a transfer; this next work assignment will be my final one. I have been informed that **I will go on to Central, the biggest city in the society, for a final work position in one of the sorting centers there. A real work position, not this digging in the dirt, this hard labor.** My three-month work detail has taken me to several camps, but so far all of them have been in Tana provinces. (Condie the novel, it is told that the Institution is one of the social classes, the Institution has a place that is the main point called the central city.

It's the last night before a transfer; this next work assignment will be my final one. I have been informed that **I will go on to Central, the biggest city in the**

society, for a final work position in one of the sorting centers there. A real work position, not this digging in the dirt, this hard labor. My three-month work detail has taken me to several camps, but so far all of them have been in Tana provinces. (Condie 12)

The character's social class is portrayed through the environment. The Aristocracy class depicted in the indirect presentation was obvious through the data above which pointed to the Central as the biggest community city where they will work in real positions, not like when Cassia's condition is working outside this province, which has inadequate camp space with furniture; bed, wasteful, chair, and one pillow and blanket. The comparison of the facility between the Central and outer provinces was obvious.

b. Upper Class

At the beginning of the novel, Cassia and Xander have their first face-to-face meeting after the five-month match in Maple tree borough and they decide to go to town. And when Xander mentions the condition of the place in Tana Provinces has similar facility from the Institution.

“But we can go into town. Where would you like to go?”

“I don't even know what's there,” I say.

“**The facilities are smaller here,**” Xander says.

“**But they have what we did in the Borough—a music hall, a game center, a showing theater and museum.**” (Condie 22)

Related to the condition in Tana provinces they have a small facility that is different from the outer provisional area which does not have any facilities and the Institution has advanced technology. From the evidence, social class is portrayed with the indirect presentation, which is seen through the character's environment. In this case, Xander mentioned the advantages of being upper class so they had the facilities in Tana province which they have small facility.

c. Middle Class

When Ky, Vick, and the decoys come to the Outer Provinces. The Officer wants the enemy to think the Outer Provinces are still inhabited and viable, although the only people. While in this camp Ky saw someone similar to him Aberration, dropped down from the sky with just enough to keep us alive until the enemy destroyed Aberration.

The Officer still keeps us thirsty and the water tastes like the inside of our canteens. The closest river now is poisoned and rain doesn't come often.

“You going, Vick?” someone called out.

Vick stood up, shielded his hard, blue eyes with one hand, and spit down into the frosted sagebrush. “No,” he said.

“Ky says it'll melt before we get there. And we've got graves to dig.”

“You’re always making us dig”, one of the decoys complained.

“You’re supposed to act like farmers. That the Institution said” The Officer answers to decoy (Condie 19)

From the data above, the Institution wants Aberration and Anomalies to do dirty work using shovels and seeds from the village. The Officer who works with the Institution has the authority to oppress the class under the Officer, the character’s social class is portrayed through the direct presentation. This data represents that the Institution is the dominant class and the Officer in charge of Aberration is Ky, Vick, and the decoy to work to dig graves after the Institution has exterminated the enemy and the people in the area to expand the Institution’s territory

d. Lower Class

With a sufficient supply of drinking water, Ky, Vick, and Eli continue their journey to the fields to do some farm work. Outside the province, it is very good to plant cotton trees but they are very unlikely to grow due to infertile soil conditions. So, the quality of the cotton is thin and of low quality. But the tree had good wood for carving.

I start talking to Eli to keep from wanting what’s too hard to have.

“It’s stupid,” I tell Eli

“But it’s more realistic than some of the stuff the Institution has done. A few of the villages around here start as farming communities for Aberrations. **Cotton was one of the crops the Institution had them try to grow. This was back there was more water. So, now it’s completely impossible that someone would be farming here**”.

“Oh,” Eli says. And then he falls silent. I don’t know why I’m trying to give him hope. (Condie 35)

The data mentions the character’s indirect presentation of the character’s speech. The data showed when Ky and Eli had a conversation about how geographical conditions of the area village farm which has abundant water supply conditions for planting cotton trees. However, due to polluted river water, access to water is hampered, making it very difficult to grow cotton in the area.

e. Under Class

After Cassia worked for three months work in several camps, all of them in Tana provinces never work in the outer provinces. On Cassia’s last night before being transferred to the Outer Provinces, the final work assignment. Then Cassia remembered her current condition, which was much different from when she was with her parents at the Institution.

What if I could get to him with this transfer, stay hidden on the airship, and drop myself like a stone from the sky down into the Outer Provinces? If I did, what

would he think if he saw me after all this time? Would he even recognize me?

I know I look different. It's not just my hands. Despite full meal portions, I've grown thinner from all the work. My eyes have shadows because I can't sleep now, even though Institution doesn't monitor our dreams here.

(Condie 13)

Social class is portrayed through the indirect presentation, which is seen through on character's external appearance. The data mentioned that "I've grown thinner from all the work." the data showed how there were drastic changes in her condition which were due to the work of the society, which was because the society did not provide enough protein for its workers.

2. Social Class Causes Oppression in the *Crossed* novel

a. Exploitation

The dialogue between Ky and Vick is about Aberrations who want to be free from the Institution's rules and try to escape from the territory of the Institution. Ky and Vick are the same way but they are different purposes.

"Ky says it'll melt before we get there. And we've got graves to dig."

"**You're always making us dig**", one of the decoys complained.

"We're supposed to act like farmers. That is what society says". He was right.

They want us to use the shovels and seeds from the village sheds to plant winter crops and I've heard other decoys say that that's what they do in the other villages. They leave the carcasses for the society or the enemy or any animals who might want them." (Condie 19)

From the evidence, one of the decoys knew that society was stronger than any of them and the Institution control the workers from the administration from the domination. The exploitation of social class causes oppression can be seen in the indirect presentation through action. The data mentioned rudely because they should dig for graves and shed the plant in the winter with the risk they will die and they can be the next carcasses for the enemy or any animals who want their bodies. The oppressor in exploitation is the Officer, and those who get oppressed are the Aberration.

b. Marginalization

Marginalization showed toward Cassia's monologue which began in the morning, she hears booths crunched in the frost. Cassia's condition saw the villagers being sorted and sent out of the area to be employed by society. The Officer needs the Aberration and the Anomalies

to cover them. They need more people to shoot the enemy. They want the Enemy to think the Outer Provinces are still inhabited and viable.

They're always sending new people out here to the villages from the camp. We die faster and faster these days. I knew even before they pushed me onto that train back in Oria, that society would never use us to fight. **They have plenty of technology and trained Officers for that. People who aren't Aberrations or Anomalies.** (Condie 18)

This data marginalized the people that are not allowed to train become officers in the Institution this portrayed a clear unequal toward classes. The data mentioned that Aberration and Anomalies are people illiterate and uneducated. It is explained in the indirect presentation that there is the technology and trained personnel so that only the selected can operate it. Additionally, Aberration and the Anomaly get oppressed by the Institution. The characterization in this data is shown indirect presentation through external appearance.

c. Powerlessness

Powerlessness is portrayed when Ky and Vick devise a plan to escape their camp. The community sent administrators to post a large number of news feeds. When they found out that the next new bait the public would work on was a woman, they were furious.

“What do you think he means?” Eli asks after the others have gone.

About the new villagers being different? Vick sets his mouth in a firm line and I know we've had the same thought.

“You're right,” Vick says. Looking at me.

“They're getting rid of aberrations.”

“And I bet they let all the Anomalies get gunned down before us come”

(Condie 51)

This showed the anomalies who did not have power. The portrayal of powerlessness showed in indirect presentation through on character's actions. The action “the anomalies get gunned” indicates that Anomalies are powerless oppression, it was clear that the Officers are dominant. So that the oppressor is The Officers, and who gets oppressed is the Aberration and Anomalies.

In this research, the researcher discusses how social class is portrayed and social class causes oppression portrayed in the novel. In this analysis, the researcher used Tyson's theory about the social class which has several types they are aristocracy, upper class, middle class, lower class, and underclass. Moreover, the researcher also used Iris Marion Young's theory which has several types of oppression that are exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence. The researcher uses indicators for each type of social class

and type of oppression to categorize the data found in the novel. The character's social class and causes of oppression were portrayed using characterization. Based on Kennan's characterization theory, there was a showing through direct presentation and indirect presentation. The indirect presentation includes speech, action, external appearance, and characterization of the environment.

On the contrary, among the five types of oppression, two types of oppression were not found in the novel. Imperialism and cultural violence cannot be found because their characteristics of oppression are not found. Thus, data on indicators of cultural imperialism and violence are not found because no group takes their culture to another place and replaces it and violence is also not available because the data in the novel shows that they have no power.

E. CONCLUSION

The researcher found that the novel consisted of several types of social classes they are aristocracy, upper class, middle class, underclass, and lower class. The causes of oppression have also appeared in the *Crossed* novel. In this section, the researcher analyzed and found that in the novel there are several types of oppression they are exploitation, marginalization, and powerlessness.

Social class causes oppression the character was portrayed using characterization from the direct presentation and indirect presentation through their action, speech, external appearance, and the environment in which the author describes the character in the novel to answer the two research questions. By analyzing the characterization, the researcher discovered that the characters belonging to the bourgeoisie characters were Institutions, and the characters who the proletariat is the Aberration and the Anomaly.

After the study, the researcher suggest to other researcher for further research. The first suggestion is this topic is more developed by using conduct more research by using Marxism theory but using different literature work that more discussion about social class. The second suggestion, this research can suggest another researcher that will analyze the different aspects of his novel. The existence of feminism is acceptable to be analyzed.

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