



Social Reality in Heru Kersawa Murti's Play

Dhemit: A Perspective by Ian Watt

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Article Info	Abstract
Received: 2026-04-07 Revised: 2026-05-19 Accepted: 2026-08-20 Keywords: <i>Dhemit play, Ian Watt, social reality</i> DOI: 10.24256/ideas.v14i1.11082 Corresponding Author: Winangsih Sumba winangsihsumba@gmail.com Prodi Pendidikan Bahasa dan Sastra Indonesia, Universitas Negeri Gorontalo	<i>Drama, as a literary work, serves not only as a form of entertainment but also as a representation of various social realities within society. While the sociology of literature has been widely studied, research specifically examining the representation of social injustice and marginalization in Heru Kersawa Murti's play Dhemit through the lens of Ian Watt's sociology of literature remains limited. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the representation of social realities in the play using Ian Watt's approach. The research focuses on various forms of social injustice and marginalization depicted through characters, dialogue, conflict, and the narrative setting. A qualitative approach with a descriptive method is employed. Data were gathered through an intensive reading of the script, the recording of relevant excerpts, and the categorization of data based on forms of social reality. Subsequently, the data were analyzed with reference to Ian Watt's concepts of the sociology of literature. The results indicate that Dhemit represents various social issues, such as worker exploitation, power imbalances, the disregard for the rights of rural communities, and environmental degradation caused by development. Furthermore, the characters Dhemit and Lelembut represent marginalized groups resulting from unequal power relations. These findings confirm that Dhemit functions not merely as a literary work but also as a medium for social criticism regarding injustices in society. This study contributes to the development of the sociology of literature, particularly by enriching the understanding of how social realities are represented in drama through Ian Watt's</i>

perspective.

1. Introduction

The social life of a community often serves as a source of inspiration for authors creating literary works. Issues ranging from poverty, social inequality, and power struggles to beliefs in the mystical are frequently portrayed in literature as reflections of real-life conditions. Through the depiction of characters, conflicts, and settings, authors aim to illustrate the various social conditions present within the community. According to Solichin (cited in Wachyudin & Deliani, 2023:2), literary works are products of creativity originating from members of society, which are subsequently utilized and appreciated by that same society. This demonstrates that literature emerges from the community, driven by both the emotions and rational thoughts that evolve within social life. Aligning with the views of Sumardjo (cited in Wachyudin & Deliani, 2023:2), a sociological or social science approach is essential for a deeper understanding of literary works.

Drama is a form of literature that is closely linked to the social life of a community. It is capable of portraying social reality in a tangible manner through the dialogue, actions, and behaviors of its characters. As a performative literary work, drama serves not only as entertainment but also as a medium for representing various social phenomena occurring in society. Issues such as poverty, social inequality, power struggles, beliefs in the mystical, and social pressures faced by marginalized groups can be presented through dialogue, characters, conflict, and setting. Asep Firdausi (2024) states that drama scripts can serve as a means to expose various social problems and inequalities within society.

One play that addresses these various social issues is *Dhemit* by Heru Kersawa Murti. This play depicts a society still influenced by beliefs in the mystical realm, social injustice, and power dynamics within social life. The portrayal of community life in *Dhemit* reveals a close relationship between the literary work and social reality. The characters experience various conflicts that mirror societal conditions such as economic pressure, power imbalances, and the influence of tradition on social life. Through these conflicts, the play highlights issues concerning the position of ordinary people amidst the dominance of groups holding power and specific vested interests.

From the perspective of the sociology of literature, literary works are viewed as reflections of social life, embodying the values, norms, and problems of a society. According to Ian Watt in *Literature and Society* (1964) (cited in Diwa & Septiana, 2025:2), literature serves as a mirror of social life, demonstrating its capacity to depict the state of society at the time of the work's creation. Watt's approach focuses on three interconnected key aspects. The first is the author's social background the social and cultural conditions that influence the author's life and play a role in the creative process. The second is literature as a reflection of society

works that mirror the values, norms, and social issues prevalent during a specific period. The third is the social function of literature the role literary works play in exerting influence, shaping understanding, and even altering societal views and behaviors. In this study, the aspect of literature as a reflection of society serves as the primary basis for examining the representation of social reality in the play Dhemit.

Beyond representing social reality, drama can also serve as a medium for critiquing various forms of injustice in societal life. Putri et al. (2024) explain that dramatic scripts can incorporate social critiques and moral values concerning human roles, rights, and obligations within the social sphere. This perspective is relevant to the play Dhemit, which critiques power dynamics, greed, development projects that disregard the common people, and the erosion of humanitarian values. The conflicts presented in the story reveal unequal social relations between those in power and marginalized groups. Social critique in the drama is also evident in its portrayal of issues such as poverty, bureaucracy, and social inequality. Afrilla (2021) demonstrates that dramatic scripts can be used to voice criticism regarding poverty and bureaucratic practices that fail to serve the public interest. This aligns with the play Dhemit, particularly in its depiction of ordinary citizens and vulnerable groups facing pressure due to the dominance of power. Conflicts between characters in the drama expose an unjust social structure that tends to overlook the interests of the lower classes.

The sociology of literature approach is relevant to this study because it enables a connection between the literary work and the social conditions that form its backdrop. Leksono et al. (2023) emphasize that a sociological study of drama allows for an understanding of the relationships among characters, personalities, conflicts, and the social conditions that shape the narrative. The characters in the drama function both as agents of the story and as representations of specific social groups such as the common people, those in power, and the marginalized. Social reality in literature reflects the actualities of societal life, which can be either positive or negative in nature. Baqiyah et al. (2024) explain that social reality within a literary work can be analyzed through the words, sentences, conflicts, and events found in the text. This perspective reinforces the basis for the study of the play Dhemit, as the work encompasses various forms of negative social reality such as social injustice, marginalization, exploitation, abuse of power, and environmental degradation resulting from development.

Previous studies indicate that Ian Watt's sociology of literature approach has been widely employed to examine various forms of social reality within literary works. Generally, these studies demonstrate that literature particularly drama is capable of representing poverty, labor issues, social stratification, and social injustice, as well as offering critiques of unbalanced social structures (Tyas & Parmin, 2022; Kadir et al., 2025). These findings suggest that Ian Watt's theory is relevant for uncovering the relationship between literary works and societal reality. However, existing research has largely focused on broad depictions of social reality

and has not specifically examined the representation of social justice and the marginalization of communities in the play *Dhemit* by Heru Kersawa Murti. Furthermore, studies of *Dhemit* utilizing Ian Watt's sociology of literature perspective remain relatively limited. Consequently, there is a research gap warranting further investigation: specifically, how social justice and community marginalization are represented in *Dhemit* when analyzed through the lens of Ian Watt's sociology of literature.

The play *Dhemit* addresses social issues that remain relevant to contemporary society. Beyond presenting a dramatic narrative, the play critiques various forms of social injustice, the marginalization of communities, the abuse of power, and the consequences of development projects that fail to consider the interests of marginalized groups. As these issues remain prevalent in social life, examining them is essential to understanding how literature depicts, represents, and critiques social reality. Moreover, given the scarcity of research specifically addressing social justice and community marginalization in *Dhemit*, this study is significant for enriching the field of the sociology of literature, particularly within the framework of Ian Watt's perspective. This study aims to describe and analyze the representation of social reality regarding social justice and the marginalization of the community in the play *Dhemit* by Heru Kersawa Murti, drawing upon Ian Watt's perspective on the sociology of literature. To achieve this objective, the research focuses on two problem formulations: (1) How is social reality regarding social injustice represented in the play *Dhemit* by Heru Kersawa Murti? and (2) How is social reality regarding the marginalization of the community represented in the play *Dhemit* by Heru Kersawa Murti?

2. Method

This study employs a qualitative approach using descriptive methods to analyze the representation of social reality in Heru Kersawa Murti's play *Dhemit* through the lens of Ian Watt's sociological theory of literature. According to Sukmadinata (in Zulkhairi, Arneliwati, & Nurchayati, 2019:148), qualitative descriptive research aims to present and explain various phenomena, whether they occur naturally or are the result of human creation. This approach places greater emphasis on understanding the characteristics, qualities, and relationships between the activities or events being analyzed.

This method is used to describe various forms of social injustice and the marginalization of society as represented through characters, dialogue, conflict, and the story's setting in the play. The research data source is the 1987 play *Dhemit* by Heru Kersawa Murti. The research data consists of dialogue excerpts, words, sentences, and narratives related to social reality, social injustice, social marginalization, and the social function of literature in the play.

Data collection was conducted using intensive reading techniques and noting sections relevant to the research focus. Meanwhile, data analysis was carried

out in several stages, namely reading the play's script repeatedly, identifying and grouping the data, analyzing the data using Ian Watt's sociological perspective on literature, presenting the results of the analysis, and drawing conclusions regarding the representation of social reality in the play Dhemit by Heru Kersawa Murti.

This study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive method to analyze the representation of social reality in the play Dhemit by Heru Kersawa Murti, drawing on Ian Watt's sociological perspective on literature. A qualitative approach was selected because the study focuses on understanding and interpreting the meanings embedded in the literary work specifically those concerning social reality as represented through the play's characters, dialogue, conflicts, and events. According to Sukmadinata (cited in Zulkhairi et al., 2019:148), qualitative descriptive research aims to describe and explain various phenomena, whether naturally occurring or man-made. This approach emphasizes understanding the characteristics, qualities, and interrelationships of the activities or events being analyzed. The method is used to describe various forms of social injustice and community marginalization represented through the play's characters, dialogue, conflicts, and setting.

The data source for this study is the script of the play Dhemit by Heru Kersawa Murti, published in 1987. The research data consist of dialogue excerpts, sentences, and narrative passages that illustrate social reality within the play. Data selection was conducted purposively focusing on text segments that directly or indirectly depict social reality while ensuring alignment with the study's research focus. The selected data include excerpts representing social injustice such as worker exploitation, abuse of power, and the disregard for community rights as well as excerpts illustrating community marginalization, such as the sidelining of specific groups, the loss of living space, and the powerlessness of vulnerable groups in the face of domination by those in power.

Data collection was carried out using the "read-and-note" technique. The researcher read the play script Dhemit intensively and repeatedly to gain a deep understanding of the story's content, characters, conflicts, and the social issues raised by the author. Subsequently, the researcher noted down and gathered excerpts relevant to the research focus. The collected data were then grouped into two main categories: social realities concerning social injustice and social realities concerning the marginalization of the community. This categorization was performed to facilitate the analysis and interpretation of data in alignment with the research objectives. Once the note-taking process was complete, each data item was assigned a code to simplify identification, grouping, and retrieval during the analysis. Coding was based on the research finding categories: KS (Social Injustice) and MM (Marginalization of the Community). Each code included a sequential number and the data's location within the script—for example, KS-01/Page 12 indicated the first data item regarding social injustice on page 12, while MM-03/Page 27 indicated the third data item regarding the marginalization of the

community on page 27. This coding system allowed for the systematic identification of each excerpt, thereby streamlining the analysis and the presentation of research findings.

Data analysis proceeded through several stages: reading and comprehending the entire play script, identifying relevant data, grouping data according to the finding categories, and analyzing the data using Ian Watt's sociology of literature perspective. The analysis focused on the concepts of literature as a reflection of society and the social function of literature, aiming to reveal the relationship between events in the play and the social realities present in the community. The analysis results were then presented descriptively and systematically to explain the forms of social injustice and community marginalization represented in the play. To ensure data validity, the study employed persistent observation through repeated text readings, supported by relevant theories and prior research, ensuring that the resulting interpretations were academically sound.

3. Result

Based on an analysis of the play *Dhemit* by Heru Kesawa Murti, various forms of representation of social reality related to social justice and the marginalization of communities were identified. These representations are evident through conflicts between characters, power dynamics between capital owners and the lower classes, the disregard for the rights of rural communities, labor exploitation, and the displacement of the *Dhemit* people from their living spaces due to development projects. This study employs Ian Watt's sociological perspective on literature, which views literary works as reflections of social life.

Social Realities Related to Social Injustice in Heru Kersawa Murti's Play Dhemit

Social injustice often arises from the protection of power and actions that prioritize personal interests over humanitarian values. This condition is evident in the unfair treatment of vulnerable groups such as workers or the underprivileged—whose rights are frequently disregarded for the sake of specific interests. Such social phenomena are also depicted in literature, serving as a reflection of societal reality.

Data 1:

Rajegwesi: "Handle it in the most appropriate and cost-effective way. I

have a suggestion: what if we just put makeup on the faces of the workers who suddenly

fall ill? So they look sane. Then

make them work hard during the visit.

After that, it doesn't matter if they die."

Suli : "I disagree! That's murder!" (Dhemit, 2010)

The data above illustrates the exploitation of sick workers. Rajegwesi views the workers merely as instruments to serve the project's interests, disregarding their well-being or safety. In contrast, Suli rejects this conduct, regarding it as tantamount to murder and a violation of humanitarian values.

The dialogue demonstrates how power dynamics can drive the exploitation of those in a weaker position. Rajegwesi exercises his authority to uphold the project's interests without regard for the workers' right to life and safety. Conversely, Suli's opposition embodies the humanitarian values that stand against such actions. Through this conflict, the author critiques the abuse of power that sacrifices workers for economic gain. These findings are significant as they highlight a form of social injustice, revealing how power is wielded to disregard human dignity. Beyond the exploitation of workers, social injustice in the play is also depicted through the unequal relationship between those in power and the village community.

Data 2:

Village Elder: "Mr. Rajeg, I have already fulfilled your request."

Rajegwesi: "So what do you want?"

Village Elder: "Fulfill my request!"

Rajegwesi: "For what?"

Village Elder: "For the villagers!"

Rajegwesi : "I can't!" (Dhemit, 2010)

The data above illustrates a power imbalance between the village community and those in authority. Requests made by the community represented by the Village Elder were rejected by Rajegwesi, leaving the villagers' rights and interests unfulfilled.

The dialogue demonstrates how differing social positions influence each character's ability to advocate for their interests. Although the Village Elder complied with Rajegwesi's demands, the community's interests were still disregarded, as the decision-making power rested entirely with the authority figure. This situation reflects structural injustice, wherein a group holding greater power can ignore the interests of a weaker group. The issue of power inequality is significant, as it serves as the root cause of various other forms of injustice experienced by the community in the play. The social injustice depicted in the drama manifests not only in human relationships but also in the relationship between humans and the environment.

Data 3:

Gendruwo: "Those humans are truly cruel,

lurahe.”

Preh Tree Spirit: “That’s right. It seems we really are outmatched.”

Gendruwo : “They greedily devour everything.”

Preh Tree Spirit: “That is indeed their nature, Gendruwo.”

Gendruwo : “Oh, the green of the leaves and the warmth of the full moon’s light on Friday Kliwon night they have replaced them with the roar of bulldozers and machinery. Look, Lurahe, they devour everything mountains, forests, islands, rivers, land, lakes..... and they devour their own consciences as well.” (Dhemit, 2010)

The data above illustrates the exploitation of nature by humans through development. Nature and the environment suffer damage due to profit-oriented activities that disregard the consequences.

An analysis of the dialogue reveals a critique of development that prioritizes profit while ignoring environmental sustainability. The expression that humans “devour their own consciences” suggests that environmental degradation is not merely a matter of physical damage to nature but also reflects a loss of human moral responsibility. Although this issue is conveyed through non-human characters, the author employs this symbolism to represent the social reality of environmental exploitation. The presence of this issue broadens the meaning of social injustice within the play, as it concerns not only human-to-human relationships but also the relationship between humanity and nature.

Based on these three pieces of data, social injustice is represented through the exploitation of workers, power imbalances, and environmental exploitation. These three forms are interconnected, underscoring the author’s critique of the exercise of power that disregards human values, justice, and environmental sustainability.

Social Realities Related to the Marginalization of Society in the Play Dhemit by Heru Kersawa Murti

According Ian Watt’s perspective, literary works serve as a reflection of the social realities present in society. Consequently, the conflict depicted in the play Dhemit can be understood as a representation of the clash between those holding power and those in a position of weakness. This conflict not only illustrates unequal social relations but also reflects the various issues arising from the domination of the powerful over marginalized groups. Furthermore, the play voices concerns regarding the future of the next generation. Through its dialogue, the author demonstrates that social conflict impacts not only contemporary society but also threatens the continuity of identity, social values, and the lives of future generations.

While the previous discussion analyzed social injustice through the lens of power abuse by dominant groups, this section focuses on the impact on the weaker

party specifically, the marginalization experienced by the Dhemit group. This marginalization manifests as various forms of exclusion, the restriction of rights, and the loss of opportunities for equal treatment in social life. Such conditions reveal that practices of social injustice not only create disparities but also perpetuate the subordinate status of marginalized groups within the social structure.

Data 1

Genderuwo: "But, our self-respect, chief! We cannot just
stand idly by and watch this reality unfold. We must
resist them! We must!"

Wilwo : "That's right, lurahe! If we just stay passive, then where will the
young generation

of Dhemit end up, lurahe?" (Dhemit, 2010)

The data above demonstrates the Dhemit group's awareness of their current situation. The figures Genderuwo and Wilwo express a desire to uphold their dignity and ensure the group's survival. Concerns regarding the future of the younger Dhemit generation indicate that the changes taking place affect not only their present circumstances but also threaten the group's future existence. This data portrays a group under pressure, a situation that compels them to defend their rights and their very existence.

The dialogue reveals that marginalization impacts not only the Dhemit group's current state but also raises concerns about the future continuity of their identity. Their efforts to preserve their dignity and existence constitute a form of resistance against pressure from a dominant group. This issue is significant as it illustrates how persistent marginalization can threaten a community's survival. This marginalization is further reinforced by the stigma continuously attached to the Dhemit group.

Data 2

Preh Tree Spirit: "Enough, Genderuwo, don't talk about conscience. That's
not our problem. We spirits are by nature without a
conscience. Conscience is a human concern."

Genderuwo: "It is precisely because it is a human concern that I am
worried. If their natural world is disrupted or damaged, leading
to a disaster, we'll be the ones blamed again. We're being
pushed further into a corner, scapegoated by humans." (Dhemit,
2010)

The data indicates that spirits are frequently made scapegoats for various events. Even though environmental damage stems from human actions, spirits remain the targets of blame when disasters strike. This situation highlights the

vulnerable position of these spirits, who lack the power to defend themselves or alter public perception. The data reveals a social dynamic in which certain groups are consistently made to bear the negative consequences of actions taken by others.

Analysis of the dialogue demonstrates that marginalized groups are often blamed for issues actually caused by other parties. Such conditions reflect a social stigma that perpetuates the marginalization of the Dhemit (spirit) group. The significance of these findings lies in the illustration of "scapegoating" as a form of marginalization that reinforces discrimination against specific groups. Beyond stigma, marginalization is also manifested through the labeling of groups perceived as deviating from prevailing societal norms.

Data 3

Wilwo: "Hey, you're crazy! Why are you suddenly talking like a leftist?"

Genderuwo: "What did you say? 'Left-leaning'? Know this: 'left-leaning' and 'right-leaning' are human terms from the coarse world. We Dhemit do not recognize such terms. For Dhemit is universal!" (Dhemit, 2010)

This data illustrates the labeling of viewpoints perceived as different. The term "left-leaning" is used to denote a specific mindset, thereby creating social divisions. Meanwhile, Genderuwo rejects this label, asserting that the Dhemit do not recognize divisions created by humans. This data highlights a societal tendency to categorize individuals or groups based on the specific viewpoints they hold.

Genderuwo's rejection of the term "left-leaning" serves as a critique of the practice of labeling within society. Such labeling can foster prejudice, create intergroup boundaries, and reinforce discrimination against those perceived as different. Although the issue of labeling does not appear as frequently as power conflicts in the drama, its presence reinforces the representation of marginalization by demonstrating that distinct groups are often judged based on stereotypes attached to them.

Based on these three pieces of data, marginalization in the drama is represented through threats to a group's survival, stigmatization, and social labeling. These three forms demonstrate that marginalized groups not only face limitations in gaining social recognition but also encounter various forms of discrimination that perpetuate their status as marginalized entities.

4. Discussion

Social Realities Related to Social Injustice in Heru Kersawa Murti's Play Dhemit

The initial data reveals the exploitation of workers as a vulnerable group. Workers' rights to humane treatment are disregarded in favor of economic interests and the exercise of power aligning with Soekanto's view (cited in Lestari, Balawa, & Badara, 2019:5) that injustice constitutes an arbitrary act. The author reflects on the social reality regarding the protection of power structures and the injustice faced by workers scenarios frequently encountered in real life. The

dialogue involving Rajegwesi who suggests forcing a sick worker to labor illustrates a power dynamic that reduces the worker to a mere instrument of production rather than a human being possessing rights and dignity. This phenomenon resonates with research (Arezha, Huda, & Susanto, 2024:370) identifying "eco-social exploitation" encompassing worker exploitation, the dispossession of communities from their living spaces, and the disregard for public interests within literary works analyzed through the lens of Ian Watt's sociology of literature. Suli's refusal highlights the conflict between humanitarian values and the interests of power. Beyond reflecting social reality, the excerpt demonstrates the social function of literature as defined by Ian Watt. The author employs assertive dialogue to articulate a social critique regarding worker exploitation and the erosion of humanitarian values within power dynamics. Thus, the play *Dhemit* serves not merely as entertainment but as a vehicle for social critique and for raising public awareness about the importance of social justice and respect for human rights.

The second set of data indicates that the village community occupies a vulnerable position, lacking the power to assert their own rights. The Village Elders appear as representatives championing the residents' interests, whereas Rajeg Wesi represents the ruling power, prioritizing project objectives over community welfare. This dynamic aligns with research (Mafiroh & Purwanto, 2025:315) suggesting that drama can serve as a medium for social critique regarding politics, power, corruption, public manipulation, and the dominance of private interests over the public good. The rejection by Rajeg Wesi illustrates the exploitation of the village community used merely for development purposes without securing their due rights consistent with Weber's view (Rahman, 2017:47) that power is the capacity of an individual or group to impose their will on others, even in the face of resistance or opposition. Such resistance is typically mounted by individuals or groups who feel oppressed, pressured, and subjected to injustice in their lives. The cited dialogue serves as a societal mirror; the play *Dhemit* reflects a common social reality—the power imbalance between capitalists or those in authority and the common people. The author depicts how village communities often fall victim to injustices stemming from development projects that fail to serve the people's interests. Furthermore, this excerpt exemplifies Ian Watt's concept of the social function of literature; through the conflict between the Village Elders and Rajeg Wesi, the author conveys a social critique of exploitation and inequitable development practices.

The third set of data reveals social injustice, as development and the exploitation of nature benefit only specific groups, while ordinary people and the environment bear the consequences. The "dialogue of spirits" representing forests, mountains, rivers, and the land being drowned out by the roar of bulldozers and machinery serves as a critique of human greed in exploiting nature. This aligns with research (Inderasari, 2022:5) regarding environmental defense against capitalist exploitation in literature, specifically how environmental degradation stems from economic interests that disregard ecological balance. From Ian Watt's perspective,

literary works are deeply connected to societal conditions; thus, the play *Dhemit* acts as a medium to critique unjust and environmentally destructive development practices. This excerpt also illustrates the social function of literature as defined by Watt. The author does not merely present a story about supernatural beings but also conveys a social critique of human behavior characterized by greed and a loss of conscience.

From a more critical standpoint, these three data points demonstrate that the social injustice in *Dhemit* is represented not only as conflict between characters but also as a critique of the social structures that enable exploitation to persist. Worker exploitation, power imbalances, and environmental degradation do not appear as isolated events; rather, they are interconnected, forming a system that benefits the powerful while disadvantaging the vulnerable. Consequently, the play does not simply reflect social reality but also invites readers to question the power dynamics that legitimize injustice.

The social and cultural implications of this representation suggest that development disregarding human values and environmental sustainability risks widening social disparities and eroding the values of mutual cooperation and social responsibility within the community. Through the conflicts depicted, Heru Kersawa Murti conveys that progress should not be measured solely by the success of physical development, but also by the extent to which such development respects human rights and environmental balance.

When compared to the study by Arezha, Huda, and Susanto (2024), this research shares a common approach in viewing literary works as a medium for critiquing social and environmental exploitation through the lens of Ian Watt's perspective. However, this study differs by going beyond merely highlighting exploitation as a consequence of economic relations; it also reveals the interconnectedness of worker exploitation, power imbalances, and environmental degradation as a unified social critique within the play *Dhemit*. Thus, this research offers a more comprehensive understanding of how social injustice is represented in dramatic works.

Social Realities Related to the Marginalization of Communities in the Play Dhemit by Heru Kersawa Murti

The third data point represents the social reality of the struggle to defend the rights, dignity, and survival of a community group that feels threatened by power structures or social change. It demonstrates a spirit of resistance against the injustice experienced by the *Dhemit* group. This attitude reflects the social reality that arises when a group perceives its rights and existence to be under threat, thereby prompting a drive to resist. Within the framework of Ian Watt's sociological approach to literature, this illustrates the social reality regarding the importance of a group upholding its existence and right to survive amidst ongoing social change. Ian Watt (cited in Damono, 1978:3) posits that literature serves as a reflection of

society, referring to the capacity of literary works to mirror societal living conditions. Sugiarto and Martini (2022:257) explain that literature can reflect the marginalization of the lower class, social class struggles, rural poverty, and the impact of modernization and industrialization on the lives of vulnerable groups. Beyond merely reflecting society, this excerpt also highlights the social function of literature. The author employs dialogue between characters to convey social criticism regarding passive attitudes toward injustice. Through the characters Genderuwo and Wilwo, the reader is invited to understand the importance of solidarity, the courage to fight for one's rights, and concern for the future of the younger generation.

The second set of data reveals that supernatural groups are portrayed as powerless and marginalized. According to Murniati (cited in Septiani, 2021:123), marginalization is the process of relegating individuals or groups to the periphery. They become targets of stigma and accusations whenever damage or disaster strikes, even though the root cause lies in human behavior that destroys nature. This situation reflects the social reality of marginalized groups within society, who are frequently made scapegoats for prevailing problems.

Furthermore, the dialogue critiques irresponsible human behavior regarding environmental degradation. Humans are depicted as controllers who destroy nature, yet when disaster occurs, blame is shifted onto others; this demonstrates that marginality in the play *Dhemit* is represented through the status of supernatural beings as marginalized, scapegoated, and powerless in the face of human dominance. The resistance mounted by the characters Genderuwo and Wilwo against human dominance illustrates the determination of marginalized groups to uphold their dignity, living space, and generational continuity. This stance aligns with research (Idayatiningsih, 2017:45) examining resistance to dominant power, which shows that resistance in literary works can manifest through language, attitudes, and discourse structures that challenge injustice and arbitrary actions. This reflects a societal reality where vulnerable groups are often marginalized and made targets for various social issues.

The third set of data represents a social reality concerning marginalization resulting from labeling and ideological differences within society. Wilwo's mention of the "left wing" highlights the stigma attached to views perceived as deviating from those of the majority, whereas Genderuwo's response rejects the categorization of identity and ideology, asserting the universal nature of the *Dhemits*. From the perspective of Ian Watt's sociology of literature, this dialogue embodies the concept of literature as a mirror of society, reflecting actual social conditions regarding discrimination, social labeling, and the marginalization of groups or individuals holding divergent views. This aligns with Theodorson's view (cited in Pratiwi et al., 2024:4) that discrimination constitutes unfair or unequal treatment directed at specific individuals or groups on a categorical basis such as race, ethnicity, religion, or social class.

Symbolically, characters such as the *Dhemit*, Genderuwo, the Preh Tree Spirit,

and other supernatural entities serve not merely as supernatural elements within the narrative but also as representations of groups marginalized in social life. Their displacement from their habitats, the fact that they are scapegoated for various issues, and their lack of opportunity to defend themselves mirror the experiences of groups frequently subjected to discrimination and social exclusion. The author employs these supernatural figures as an aesthetic strategy to convey social criticism symbolically, without directly depicting any specific real-world group.

The social and cultural implications of this portrayal demonstrate that marginalization results not only in a loss of access to resources but also impacts the identity, self-worth, and continuity of a community. The play serves as a reminder that labeling, stigma, and the scapegoating of specific groups can perpetuate social injustice and reinforce the dominance of those in power. Consequently, the play *Dhemit* encourages readers to cultivate an awareness of the importance of respecting diversity and protecting groups vulnerable to marginalization.

This study shares similarities with the research conducted by Sugiarto and Martini (2022) and Idayatiningsih (2017) in highlighting the representation of marginalized groups and forms of resistance against dominant power structures. However, this study offers a distinct perspective by demonstrating that marginalization in *Dhemit* is represented through supernatural characters; these figures serve as symbols of a community that has lost its living space due to development, stigma, and unequal power relations. This approach illustrates how the use of symbolism in the play expands the scope of the social critique conveyed by the author.

This study contributes to the sociology of literature, specifically through the application of Ian Watt's perspective to Indonesian drama. It demonstrates that the representation of social reality in *Dhemit* is not merely conveyed through dialogue and interpersonal conflict but is also constructed via the symbolization of supernatural characters as representations of marginalized groups. Thus, the study enriches the understanding that literary works can serve as both a reflection of social conditions and a medium for critiquing injustice, exploitation, and marginalization issues that remain relevant in society. Beyond reinforcing the concept of literature as a mirror of society, the study highlights the significant role of symbolic elements in drama in conveying social criticism with greater depth.

5. Conclusion

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that Heru Kersawa Murti's play *Dhemit* represents various social realities occurring in society. Through a sociological analysis of literature from Ian Watt's perspective, depictions of social injustice were identified, including the exploitation of workers, power imbalances between authorities and marginalized communities, the disregard for the rights of rural communities, and environmental damage resulting from development that

disregards the people's interests. Furthermore, the characters Dhemit and Lelembut serve as symbols of marginalized social groups who lack a platform to voice their interests. These findings indicate that the play Dhemit serves not only as a work of art but also as a medium for social criticism that reflects societal conditions and encourages readers to be more attuned to the various forms of social injustice still occurring in real life.

5. References

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