

DISCRIMINATION TOWARD THE MONSTER CHARACTER IN MARY SHELLEY'S *FRANKENSTEIN* NOVEL

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian kualitatif ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis aspek diskriminasi yang diterima oleh tokoh monster dengan menggunakan teori diskriminasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa karakter monster mendapat perlakuan diskriminatif dari karakter lain berupa alienasi. Jenis diskriminasi yang ditemukan adalah diskriminasi langsung dan tidak langsung. Diskriminasi langsung adalah jenis diskriminasi yang dilakukan seseorang terhadap orang lain dalam tindakan langsung, seperti bullying, dan membuat seseorang ditolak dalam masyarakat. Sebaliknya diskriminasi tidak langsung adalah diskriminasi yang berupa kebijakan atau sikap, yang berdampak tidak langsung pada seseorang tetapi juga tidak mendapatkan kesetaraan dalam masyarakat. Penggunaan dua jenis tersebut menunjukkan bahwa makhluk tersebut didiskriminasi karena penampilan luarnya yang sangat jelek dan menyeramkan serta tidak dapat diterima oleh karakter lain yang bertemu dengan monster tersebut.

Kata kunci: *diskriminasi, diskriminasi langsung, diskriminasi tidak langsung, monster, penampilan luar*

ABSTRACT

This qualitative study aims to analyze discrimination aspects received by the monster character using discrimination theory. The result of this study showed that the monster character received discriminative treatment from the other characters in the form of alienation. The types of discrimination found namely direct and indirect discrimination. Direct discrimination is a type of discrimination committed by someone against another person in direct action, such as bullying, and making a person is rejected in society. On the other hand, indirect discrimination is discrimination that takes the form of a policy or attitude, which has an indirect effect on someone but also does not get equality in society. The indication of two classifications reveals that the creature is subjected to discrimination owing to its grotesque and eerie external features, which lead to its rejection by other characters who encounter the ostracized monster.

Keywords: Discrimination, direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, monster, external appearance

A. INTRODUCTION

In a fictional novel, many phenomena or occurrences happen, and many aspects of the story can be analyzed. Literature can also give entertainment and education depending on the story that happened and the point of view of the reader. One interesting phenomenon to be discussed in the literature is discrimination. According to Allport (51), discrimination is characterized by the denial of equal treatment to individuals or groups. This occurs when there is a deliberate choice to exclude certain individuals or groups from participation in community life, educational settings, professional environments, or national contexts. Various instruments of discrimination include restrictive covenants, boycotts, community pressure, and the enforcement of legal segregation in certain jurisdictions.

According to Khaitan (69), discrimination is classified into two primary types: direct and indirect discrimination. It is important to understand that direct discrimination involves any treatment that can be characterized as either an action taken or an omission such as being rude and ostracizing someone from group members. Indirect discrimination is distinct from direct discrimination in that it manifests when an individual acts in opposition to prevailing norms or is guided by certain regulations, policies, practices, or criteria, which the accused discriminator cites in reference to an individual who has been subjected to unfair treatment (Khaitan 74). An example of this phenomenon can be observed in decisions made within a workplace that result in differential treatment of a specific person or group.

Discrimination manifests not only in real-world scenarios but also within narrative forms, such as novels. Such narratives can reflect social realities similar to those experienced in the real world, and the storytelling within these novels can facilitate an analysis of the discrimination faced by individuals or groups, as illustrated in the plot. This study aims to explore the representation of discriminatory aspects directed toward a monstrous character in Mary Shelley's novel, *Frankenstein*.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Discrimination

Discrimination is characterized as an unjust and unfavorable action directed towards a specific group or its members (Penner et al. 85). It is defined as the unequal treatment of individuals predicated on their belonging to a specific group. Such treatment may be driven by prejudicial beliefs, which can lead to negative judgments and, ultimately, hatred (Baumeister 343). Thus, discrimination encompasses negative behaviors or unequal treatment of individuals due to their group membership, often fueled by prejudice that can escalate into hatred. Consequently, any form of discrimination represents an unjustifiable action.

2. Types of Discrimination

According to Khaitan (69-73), discrimination can be categorized into two distinct types. To effectively examine the phenomenon of discrimination, it is essential to understand these categories. The two types identified are direct discrimination and indirect discrimination.

a. Direct Discrimination

Disparate treatment, commonly referred to as direct discrimination, involves unfavorable treatment directed at individuals based on protected attributes such as race, gender, or religion, and may also arise from a combination of these characteristics. This type of discrimination can be expressed through both actions and omissions (Khaitan 69). Khaitan points out that it is essential to understand that direct discrimination encompasses any form of treatment, whether it is an active engagement or a lack of action, thereby establishing the anti-discrimination standard as a normative response to such behaviors (69). Examples of direct discrimination include exhibiting racist behavior, displaying rudeness, or showing hostility towards individuals of different racial backgrounds, as well as belittling members of the opposite gender (Lipper-Rasmussen 21). Consequently, direct discrimination is characterized by overt actions such as aggression, bullying, and exclusion, with immediate repercussions for those affected.

b. Indirect Discrimination

Unlike direct discrimination, which is overt and explicit, indirect discrimination refers to seemingly neutral policies or practices that inadvertently disadvantage certain individuals or groups (Khaitan 73). According to Khaitan, indirect discrimination occurs when actions are taken that contravene established norms or rules, based on a specific provision, policy, practice, or criterion, which results in unfair treatment of an individual (74). This form of discrimination is recognized only when the differential treatment within a community is evident. For instance, in a workplace setting, indirect discrimination is not identified until it is linked to a specific intervention, such as the enforcement of a policy or regulation (Khaitan 74).

3. Types of Discrimination

The earlier description of discrimination indicates that it involves unjust or differential treatment of individuals based on their association with particular groups. To grasp how discrimination manifests in society, it is crucial to understand its various classifications. Unlike direct and indirect discrimination, which pertain to the manner in which discriminatory actions are executed, there are multiple forms of discrimination. The specific characteristics of the phenomenon help to determine the type of discrimination that is present.

a. Race

A race is typically defined as a group of individuals, such as a family, tribe, community, or nation, that shares a set of common interests, beliefs, behaviors, or traits. The primary methods of racial classification are genealogical and biological. Genealogical classification pertains to concepts of ancestry and heritage, while biological classification focuses on physical and anatomical differences (Wolfrey 204). As noted by Romero, race encompasses both biological distinctions and cultural traits that are perceived as foundational to the formation of racial groups, with humans emerging from these racial classifications (238).

“Race discrimination is the first named category of prohibited discrimination in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and domestic legislation such as Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 in the United States” (Lipper-Rasmussen 196).

Racial discrimination refers to the practice of treating an individual or a group unfavorably due to characteristics associated with their race or ethnicity. This form of discrimination typically involves a comparison between individuals, where one is subjected to different treatment based on their membership in a specific group. Such treatment can be classified as racial discrimination when the distinguishing characteristic of the comparison group is race (Lipper-Rasmussen 197). Instances of racial discrimination manifest when individuals receive less favorable treatment than others under similar circumstances, specifically due to their race, color, descent, national or ethnic origin, or immigrant status. A pertinent example of this is the refusal to lease a property to an individual solely based on their racial background or skin color (Racial Discrimination Book 2).

b. Ethnicity

The concept of ethnicity and race is different. Ethnicity is best viewed as a relational construct rather than an inherent attribute of a group. It encompasses the interactions among social agents who perceive themselves as belonging to a culture that is distinct from others with whom they engage (Miles 95). Schafer posits that individual culture and heritage play a crucial role in the classification of people into various ethnic groups, thereby influencing their ethnic identity (1103). Discrimination within the framework of ethnicity arises when individuals experience differential treatment based on their ethnic affiliation, where culture and heritage are utilized to define this affiliation. A clear illustration of this is the expulsion of certain ethnic groups, such as the unjust prohibition of Black individuals from working in the same environments as White individuals, highlighting the unacceptable nature of such practices.

c. Religion

The role of religion is pivotal in conversations about discrimination. Discrimination, in a broad sense, involves the differential treatment of individuals based on certain characteristics. In many contemporary social and political contexts, the relevance of religion has grown, leading to a more frequent categorization of individuals according to their religious beliefs. The challenge of defining religion becomes particularly pronounced when considering lesser-known faiths, such as various pagan traditions, as well as emerging religions whose beliefs and practices may not be well-documented or widely recognized. A straightforward approach to defining religion involves identifying a set of core beliefs that are typically associated with any religious system. For instance, in the United Kingdom, religion is often characterized as a belief in a deity or a supreme being (Vickers 13-14).

As outlined in the previous discussion, religious factors frequently play a role in discriminatory practices within society. A clear example of such discrimination is the requirement for individuals to work on Saturdays and Sundays, days that are significant for worship in multiple religions. This issue can also extend to enforced dress codes and a general disregard for religious customs. Furthermore, a Muslim woman might find herself at a disadvantage in the job application process if she chooses not to engage in handshaking during interviews, and she may be treated unfavorably because of her headscarf (Vickers 6).

4. Characterization

According to Griffith, characters are the individuals depicted in narratives, while characterization encompasses the author's approach to presenting and evolving the traits of these

characters (60). He notes that in certain literary forms, particularly fantasy fiction, characters may not be actual humans. They can manifest as animals, robots, or extraterrestrial entities, yet the author attributes to them human capabilities and psychological features, thus making them human in essence, albeit not in form (60).

Each character in a narrative is unique and distinct. In a different perspective, a character can be viewed as a specific human being, as every character assumes various roles influenced by the reader's perception (Bal 105). Bal asserts that the focus of this section is not on identifying the characters themselves, but rather on understanding the nature of their characterization (105). Kenan, in his analysis in *Narrative Fiction*, delineates two primary types of textual indicators that serve to characterize the figures within a narrative: direct definition and indirect presentation.

a. Direct Definition

The direct definition serves as a method for the narrator to convey character traits explicitly, allowing for clear interpretation regarding a character's nature. For instance, stating that a character was "good-hearted and modest" provides a straightforward label that encapsulates their qualities. Alternatively, characters may be described using nouns, as in phrases like "there were no bounds to her goodness," "she was a complete jerk," or "he spoke as if he only cared about himself" (Kenan 61). Ultimately, the essence of direct definition lies in the author's or narrator's ability to reveal character attributes in an overt manner, either through explicit statements or through vivid descriptions.

b. Indirect Presentation

Indirect presentation represents the second form of characterization. This approach does not merely articulate a character's traits; rather, it showcases and exemplifies them through diverse methods, compelling the reader to infer the underlying qualities (Kenan 61). A characterization is deemed indirect when it refrains from explicitly stating a trait, opting instead to illustrate it through various representations. The following analysis will detail some of these illustrative techniques (Kenan 63-68).

1. **Action:** A character's traits can be indicated through both one-off (or non-routine) actions and habitual behaviors, including acts such as murder, as well as the character's consistent practices. One-off actions are likely to highlight the character's dynamic features, often contributing to critical moments in the plot. In contrast, habitual behaviors reveal the character's more fixed or unchanging traits, which can create comic or ironic outcomes, particularly when a character clings to outdated habits in circumstances that expose their inadequacy (Kenan 63).
2. **Speech:** A character's verbal expressions, whether they occur in dialogue or as introspective reflections, can serve as a reflection of their personality traits, conveyed through both the message and the manner of delivery. For example, I maintain that every person deserves recognition, regardless of their faith or any other factors. I do not harbor negative feelings towards Jewish people on an individual level; my issues lie with the concept of race itself (Kenan 65).
3. **External Appearance:** The concept of external appearance is utilized to suggest character traits, highlighting the relationship between physical features and personality. For instance, hairstyles and attire can represent various aspects of an individual's personality (Kenan 67)
4. **Environment:** A character's surroundings, whether they be their room, house, street, or town, as well as their social environment, including family and social class, are often employed as

metonymies that suggest particular traits. In the case of Miss Emily, her rundown home, marked by dust and a damp scent, serves as a metonymy for her decline. This state of decay is indicative of both her decadence and the consequences of her poverty and morbid nature (Kenan 68).

C. METHOD

1. Research Design

The researcher employed a qualitative research method for this study, which was selected due to its relevance in exploring the nuances of social life through the dialogue presented within the novel (Cochran 2). The qualitative approach adopted in this research is narrative qualitative, which is considered highly suitable for the investigation of human experiences. Giovannoli states that "narrative methodology is a most appropriate means for the study of human beings" (2). The researcher opted for this method because it effectively organizes various episodes and actions. According to Giovannoli, "the narrative is a way of organizing episodes, actions, and accounts of actions; it is an achievement that brings together mundane facts and fantastic creations; time and place are incorporated. The narrative allows for the inclusion of actors' reasons for their acts, as well as the causes of happening" (3). Therefore, this study employs qualitative research methodology, with a specific emphasis on narrative qualitative design.

The theoretical framework employed in this research is centered on the concept of discrimination. Discrimination represents a critical area of inquiry, as it consists numerous adverse effects and forms of disrespectful treatment that individuals have historically faced. A comprehensive understanding of discrimination is essential for addressing the broader issues of social inequality within political contexts and the historical narratives of various societies. Given the persistent manifestations of discrimination in contemporary society, the exploration of this phenomenon may become increasingly vital in the future (Lipper-Rasmussen 1). This study specifically aims to examine the dimensions of discrimination experienced by the character of the monster in Mary Shelley's novel, *Frankenstein*.

2. Data and Source of Data

The data source in this study was Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* novel which was published in 1818 and revised in 1831 consisting of twenty-four chapters. This research distinguishes between two categories of data: primary data and secondary data (Kothari 95). Primary data refers to information that is gathered for the first time, making it original in nature. In contrast, secondary data consists of information that has been collected by others.

The primary data were comprised of words, phrases, sentences, narratives, and paragraphs, which are expressed through various characters in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. These components provide insight into the discriminatory treatment faced by the monster character. Additionally, the secondary data consists of a variety of sources, including books, journals, articles, websites, and other relevant literature associated with the study.

3. Research Instrument

In qualitative research, the researcher serves as the primary tool for data collection and analysis. As noted by Ary et al. (424), the human investigator plays a crucial role in the qualitative study process.

4. Data Collection

The process of data collection was executed in three sequential steps. In the first step, the researcher conducted an in-depth reading of the novel multiple times to fully grasp the intricate meanings behind the events depicted. This initial phase aimed to identify key issues and significant elements within the narrative. In the second step, the researcher compiled notes that captured data relevant to the research problem, ensuring that all relevant information was documented thoroughly. This careful note-taking was essential for gathering detailed insights without omitting any critical details. In the final step, the researcher systematically identified and organized the data that aligned with the research problem.

5. Data Analysis

The researcher analyzed the data in the following phases: data collection, data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification (Miles, Huberman & Saldaña (14). After collecting the data, data condensation was performed. It refers to the method of choosing, concentrating, simplifying, abstracting, and modifying relevant data found in written field notes, interview transcripts, documents, and various other empirical sources. The researcher delineated the types of discrimination that manifest, determining whether to classify them as direct discrimination or to categorize them as indirect discrimination, in accordance with the theoretical framework proposed by Lipper-Rasmussen and Khaitan. Data display refers to a systematically arranged and condensed set of information that facilitates the derivation of conclusions and the initiation of actions. The researcher discerned the character that embodies the discriminatory treatment, drawing upon the actions of the characters. In this phase, the researcher illustrated which narratives, behaviors, and thoughts exemplified the discriminatory elements as the central theme, through the lens of Kenan's characterization theory. During the phases of conclusion drawing and verification, the researcher systematically assembles the presented data and seeks to derive conclusions that correspond to the central problem of the study.

D. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

FINDINGS

1. Representation of Discrimination toward the Monster Character

This research focuses on the monster character as one of the most important characters and its association with the theme of discrimination, the primary subject of this study. Specifically, the analysis focuses on how the discrimination aspects are represented in the story. The researcher also identifies the types of discrimination, direct discrimination or indirect discrimination. Moreover, characterization theory is utilized to analyze the data and support the discrimination theory, incorporating two forms of characterization to depict the character. The discrimination experienced by the monster is enacted by Victor Frankenstein, the creator, as well as by the local citizens and the

family residing in a modest dwelling. Consequently, the subsequent analysis elucidates the discrimination directed at the monster character by other figures in the narrative.

a. Representation of Discrimination by the Creator

The first discrimination aspect is identified by the researcher in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* novel was from the creator. In the story, the creator of the monster character is Victor Frankenstein. Victor is a citizen of Geneva, Switzerland. He shows himself as someone who has a love for science and an interest in ancient science, and he wants to find the answer about how humans can create other creatures. By integrating modern scientific principles with the ancient knowledge he has studied, he creates a monster who has an ugly body from human organs collected from dead bodies.

In one of the data, Victor's speech represents that the creature is different from other humans. He believes that in the world, no human could endure the presence of the creature due to its terrifying nature. This reflects a form of indirect discrimination, as the creator has established criteria that define the monster's character. Victor's evaluation of the monster is influenced by its external appearance and the nature of its speech, which are manifestations of his internal perceptions, thus contributing to the **indirect presentation**.

“ Oh! No mortal could support the horror of that countenance. A mummy again endued with animation could not be so hideous as that wretch.” (Shelley 60)

Victor perceives the monster as an entity that will never be accepted by society. He depicts his creation in a highly unfavorable manner. His statements imply that the creature's presence is one that no human could accept, which exemplifies indirect discrimination. While Victor does not commit acts of **direct discrimination**, his mental and verbal expressions reveal a discriminatory stance towards the monster, leading to differential treatment. The creature, in turn, voices his experiences of discrimination, asserting that society tends to discriminate against and despise individuals who are physically unattractive.

‘I expected this reception,’ said the daemon. ‘All men hate the wretched; how, then, must I be hated, who am miserable beyond all living things! Yet you, my creator, detest and spurn me, thy creature, to whom thou art bound by ties only dissoluble by the annihilation of one of us. You purpose to kill me. (Shelley 113)

The negative perceptions surrounding him stem from his unattractive physical appearance, which influences societal judgments. The expression "it has a bad" is indicative of the monster's characterization. This quotation illustrates the monster's understanding of how society categorizes individuals based on their appearance; those who are perceived as unattractive often face rejection. This situation symbolizes the monster's own feelings of isolation. The data presented thus reveals an **indirect characterization** of the monster through his external appearance. The creature subsequently questions the basis for the hatred he experiences, especially from his creator. This inquiry reveals the **direct discrimination** that the creator displays, as he cannot accept the monster's existence. Victor's actions and statements further showcase this harsh treatment, highlighting the discrimination faced by the creature.

2. Representation of Discrimination by the Other Characters

Another section that highlights the prejudice directed at the creature is when he shares his experiences with Victor, expressing, "They spurn and hate me. The Desert Mountains and dreary glaciers are my refuge" (Shelley 115). The quotation conveyed that the creature's experience is marked by a pervasive rejection from others, leading it to search for sanctuary in the Desert Mountains. This situation is indicative of direct discrimination, as the characters in the story dismiss the monster and label its actions as impolite, as referenced in the aforementioned quotation.

.....but I had hardly placed my foot within the door before the children shrieked, and one of the women fainted. The whole village was roused; some fled, **some attacked me, until, grievously bruised by stones and many other kinds of missile weapons** (Shelley 123).

The excerpt indicated that the monster character experiences discriminatory treatment from the villagers. This form of discrimination is classified as **direct discrimination**, as it involves differential treatment that is overtly unfavorable. The quotation illustrated that certain villagers physically assault the monster, resulting in significant injuries. Consequently, the monster was compelled to seek refuge in a pigpen, exemplifying the practice of direct discrimination. The mere sight of the creature instilled fear in the onlookers, with some individuals even fainting at the sight of its grotesque appearance. This reaction highlighted an **indirect presentation** of the negative treatment directed at the monster based on its external characteristics.

3. Representation of Discrimination by the Family

The character of the monster experiences discrimination from a family member, as evidenced by the data presented below.

At that instant, the cottage door was opened, and Felix, Safie, and Agatha entered. Who can describe their horror and consternation on beholding me? Agatha fainted, and Safie, unable to attend to her friend, rushed out of the cottage. Felix darted forward, and with supernatural force tore me from his father, to whose knees I clung, in a transport of fury, he dashed me to the ground and struck me violently with a stick. (Shelley 161)

The subsequent aspect of discrimination depicted in this narrative is illustrated above, where the monster, having acquired comprehensive knowledge about the family, secretly gathered firewood each night to assist them. However, when the creature attempted to approach the family in hopes of acceptance, all aspirations were dashed. Felix, Safie, and Agatha were taken aback upon encountering the monster; Agatha fainted, Safie fled, and Felix resorted to attacking the creature. This violent response was prompted by the monster's frightful appearance, which deviated from that of typical humans. The family's fear drove them to assault the creature, representing a clear instance of **direct discrimination**. The community's perception of the monster as a terrifying figure is conveyed through **indirect presentation**, as the citizens act on their prejudiced assumptions based solely on the creature's outward appearance, leading them to label it as inherently evil.

DISCUSSION

Discrimination is characterized by the unequal treatment of individuals based on their association with a particular group. It is also described as an unfair and negative action directed at a certain group or its individuals (Penner et al. 85). The core of *Frankenstein* revolves around the creature, portrayed initially as a target of societal bias. His appearance, deemed unattractive, is the principal factor leading to his alienation, significantly affecting how he is viewed and treated by others. The analysis of the findings reveals that the creature in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* experiences discriminatory treatment from its creator, various characters, and its own family. The creature faced discrimination in both direct and indirect manners. The findings suggest that the characterization is largely influenced by indirect presentation, which manifested predominantly in the portrayal of external appearance.

Victor Frankenstein's creation is initially characterized as a being whose looks provoke fear and aversion in others. The detailed and vivid descriptions of his repulsiveness by Victor establish the foundation for the creature's later rejection by society. This emphasis on the monster's physical form becomes the main rationale for the discrimination he faces, despite his inherent abilities for reasoning, emotional expression, and moral judgment. A particularly notable element of the monster's experience is the collective nature of his rejection. The individuals he meets—be they townsfolk, villagers, or even his own creator—view him as an outcast, solely due to his physical appearance. This pattern of discrimination highlights a severe societal norm that dehumanizes those who do not conform to conventional ideals of beauty, virtue, and social acceptance. The creature's inability to alter his appearance serves as a metaphor for the disenfranchised, whose value is frequently assessed by superficial criteria rather than their inherent worth.

D. CONCLUSION

The discrimination that the creature endures in *Frankenstein* serves as a profound critique of societal norms and illustrates the dangers inherent in marginalizing individuals based on their physical characteristics or differences. Mary Shelley's novel remains relevant to contemporary discussions about discrimination, prejudice, and the ongoing struggle for acceptance. By examining the creature's experiences of rejection and solitude, the narrative encourages readers to reflect on the significance of empathy, moral duty, and the human capacity to recognize and value diversity. Ultimately, *Frankenstein* stands as a powerful reminder that discrimination—whether it arises from appearance, ability, or identity—can have far-reaching and devastating effects, not only on the individual but also on society as a whole.

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