THE SOCIAL DISCRIMINATION IN LARSEN'S
PASSING

THESIS

***Submitted to the Faculty of Cultural Sciences Hasanuddin University
as Partial Requirements to Obtain Bachelor's Degree In
English Literature Study Program***

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ENGLISH LITERATURE STUDY PROGRAM

FACULTY OF CULTURAL SCIENCES

HASANUDDIN UNIVERSITY

MAKASSAR

2023

ENGLISH LITERATURE STUDY PROGRAM

FACULTY OF CULTURAL SCIENCES

HASANUDDIN UNIVERSITY

LEGITIMATION

THESIS

THE SOCIAL DISCRIMINATION IN LARSEN'S PASSING

BY

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It has been examined before the Board of Thesis Examination on 14 April 2023
and is declare to have fulfilled the requirements.

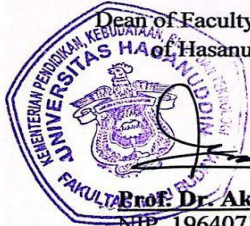Approved By

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With reference to the letter of the dean of Faculty of Cultural Sciences
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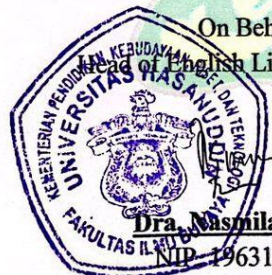
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AGREEMENT

On Friday, 14 April 2023, the Board of Thesis Examination has kindly approved a thesis by Ilham Amir (F041181504) entitled *"The Social Discrimination In Larsen's Passing"* submitted in fulfillment one of the requirements to obtain Sarjana Degree in English Literature Study Program, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Hasanuddin University.

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The thesis by Ilham Amir (F041181504) entitled *The Social Discrimination In*

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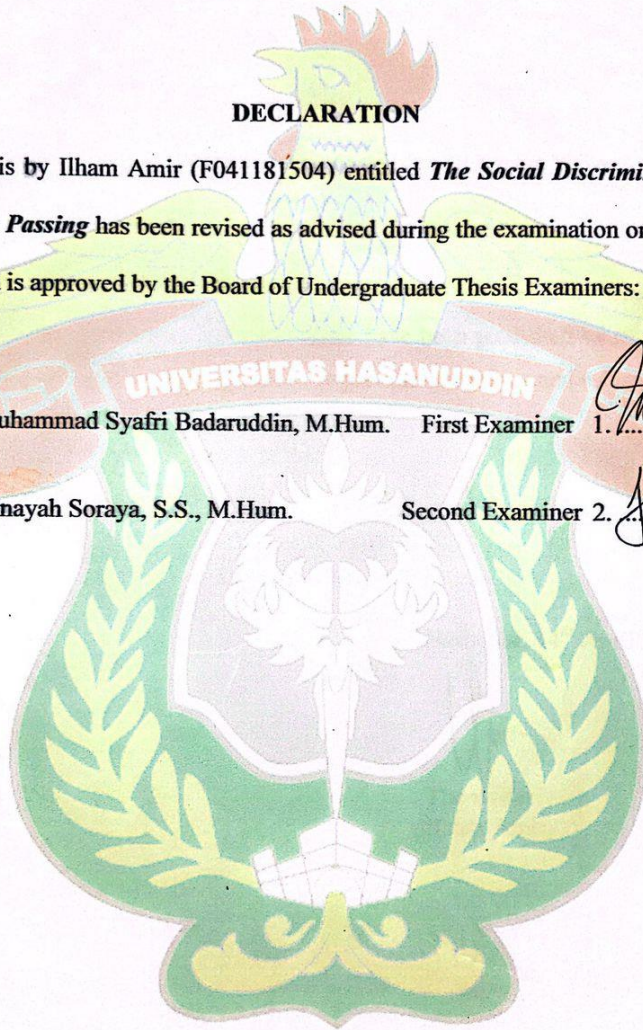
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The undersigned;

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Hereby, the writer declares that this thesis is written by himself. This thesis does not contain any materials which have been published by other people, and it does not cite other people's ideas expect the quotations and references.

Makassar, 14th April 2023

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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ABSTRACT

Ilham Amir. 2023. *The Social Discrimination in Larsen's Passing* (Supervised by **Abbas** and **Rezky Ramadhani**)

The aims of this research are to analyze the racial act of the character John Bellew in the novel *Passing* by Nella Larsen and to explain the racial discrimination impacts that experienced by Irene and Clare Kendry in the novel. The writer analyses a novel by Nella Larsen entitled *Passing* which was published in 1929. The novel tells the story of black women's lives and their lives during an era of segregation that required them to perform passing.

This thesis research uses qualitative methods in processing data obtained from the novel *Passing*. The analysis of this novel is carried out using a Structural Approach which it focuses on the intrinsic elements such as character, plot, setting and theme. The writer uses the theory of discrimination to reveal issues that occurred in the novel.

Based on the discussion, the writer finds discrimination experience by black characters in the novel is dominated by verbal discrimination. John Bellew was using a lot of racist words when he came to find Clare who was having tea with Gertrude and Irene. The impacts of discrimination are shown early in scene which John Bellew, Clare's husband, is using extremely offensive language to describe Negroes gives the first glimpse of Irene's mental destabilization and the other hand Clare Kendry becomes reckless and does not think of the consequences that she will encounter after passing for white.

Keyword: *discrimination, passing, racial, structuralism.*

ABSTRAK

Ilham Amir. 2023. *Diskriminasi Sosial Pada Novel Larsen* (Dibimbing oleh **Abbas** dan **Rezky Ramadhani**)

Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menganalisi diskriminasi rasial oleh tokoh John Bellew dalam novel *Passing* karya Nella Larsen dan menjelaskan dampak dari diskriminasi rasial terhadap tokoh Irene Redfield dan Clare Kendry dalam novel tersebut. Penulis menganalisis novel karya Nella Larsen berjudul *Passing* yang terbit tahun 1929. Novel ini bercerita tentang kehidupan wanita kulit hitam selama era segregasi yang mengharuskan mereka untuk melakukan passing.

Penelitian skripsi ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dalam mengolah data yang diperoleh dari novel *Passing*. Analisis pada novel ini dilakukan menggunakan Pendekatan Struktural dan Skripsi ini juga menggunakan teori diskiriminasi untuk mengungkap isu yang terjadi di dalam novel.

Berdasarkan pada pembahasan, penulis menemukan diskriminasi rasial yang dialami oleh tokoh-tokoh kulit hitam adalah diskriminasi verbal. John Bellew menggunakan sejumlah perkataan rasis ketika dia datang mencari Clare yang sedang minum teh bersama Gertrude dan Irene. Dampak dari diskriminasi ditunjukkan di awal adegan di mana John Bellew, suami Clare, menggunakan bahasa yang sangat ofensif untuk menggambarkan orang Negro memberikan pandangan pertama tentang destabilisasi mental Irene dan di sisi lain Clare Kendry menjadi ceroboh dan tidak memikirkan konsekuensi yang akan dia hadapi setelah menjadi orang kulit putih

Kata kunci: *diskriminasi, passing, rasial, strukturalisme.*

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of the background of study, identification of the problem, scope of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of study, significances of research, and sequence of writing.

1.1. Background of Study

The United States of America also known as USA is a country that has a diverse racial population. However, it does not promise that America is free from discrimination or racism. One of the largest racial groups in the United States that most affected by racism is African-American. The African American has been struggling and experience racial discrimination that affected their life as citizen in the United States and put them in unfavorable situation for a very long time. According to Feagin (2010:142), being an African-American in the United States society means that the person needs to prepare themselves for anti-black actions from the Whites. As an African-American, a person has to live and experienced various types of racial discrimination.

Discrimination is actually still vulnerable in the United States for example, on May 25, 2020 to be exact in Minneapolis; the case was the murder of George Floyd by police officers named Derek Chuavin and some of his friends. Chuavin placed his knees in the area around Floyd's head and his neck for almost a minute and Floyd died from suffocation from Chuavin knee pressure. This incident started with Floyd shopping at the Cup store Foods and paid with $20 counterfeit money George Floyd's Death which resulted in a Black Lives Matter protest

(Evan Hill,2020). According to Ciamparella A (2022:123-145), the black lives matter born since it has strong foundation of a strong and collective organization that have desire for a social justice in resulting of the continuous police brutality against black people. This racially motivated violence as a systemic episode in the last decade or so in United States is not that different from racial tension that inspired the production of the Harlem Renaissance. This literary activity is also known as the New Negro Movement, attracting many international and also domestic followers that supporting the idea of reassessing, by means of cultural redevelopment, mainstream description of black people. Like the Black Lives Matter Movement today, the Harlem Renaissance have many boundless values that black individuals had in the fabrics of American history and society.

Therefore, According to History.com Editors (2009), Harlem Renaissance is a black cultural mecca also known as the Negro Renaissance. This event occurred in the 1920s and 1930s located in Harlem New York. During this time many African-American Writers, singers, and dancers, are burst forth with diverse contributions to American Literature. Most of them spoke about their own experience or story of their fellow African-American brothers, and the problem or issue that occurred in African-American community faced in America. In era of the Black movement, readers can find some literature that have theme related to racism issue. Those literature are Written by African-American author that discusses about the inequality between white and black. Those literary works are influenced by African-American Struggle against discrimination and exploitation covered by Slavery practice in United States.

A literary works that has Racism theme provides a kind of dogma in a society that initially changes people mindset towards racism and have certain message to help people to understand more about life lesson. As cited in Ogene (2013:77), African-American literature is mostly focused on the role of African-American in Society and what it means to be American. It often talks African-American Freedom, Slavery, Racism and lack of equality in the United States

Furthermore Racism theme novel tells a story of a black character life that is a low-class, uneducated and often experiences discrimination in his lifetime. This racism type of novel is to make people who initially do not know about racism or have experienced it before can emotionally feel the characters life by reading the novel, which is where the function of literacy itself is not only to get entertainment but also to get an education. According to Wellek and Warren (1989:26), literary work has two functions, the both of them are entertainment and to gain education benefit and those literary work function appropriates its nature must not only exist but also complement each other.

One of the novels that were published during the rise of the Harlem Renaissance is *Passing* (1929) written by Nella Larsen. She is also known for her contribution in the Harlem Renaissance for her two Novels such as *Quick Sand* and *Passing*. She is also recognized as one of the most influential writers in Harlem Renaissance. Larsen was a mixed race, like the character in her novel *Passing*. Her mother was Danish and her father was West Indian. When she was young, Larsen spent some of her time in Denmark. In The USA, she briefly attended Fisk University, although she did not graduate, and later became a nurse

and worked at the Tuskegee institute, but later left to become a librarian. In 1919, Nella Larsen married and moved to Harlem, where she worked as a librarian and began to write short stories. Although she did not publish much, her work has been very influential. Her first novel was *Quicksand*, published in 1928, followed by *Passing* in 1929.

This study focuses on the second novel of Larsen's *Passing* which depicts racial segregation, discrimination and the act of Passing by the Characters Irene Redfield and Clare Kendry in the novel that is a mulatto and passing for white and married to a rich white man who is also a racist. Therefore the writer decided to choose this novel as an object of research for his thesis based on its story which is interesting to be studied, also the writer analyzes the novel *Passing* using structuralism approach in his study entitled *Social Discrimination In Larsen's Passing*.

1.2 Identification of problem

In this research, the writer mainly focuses on structural aspect that emphasizes the intrinsic element, specifically the racist act of the charater John Bellew reflected in the novel and the impact of John racist act to Irene Redfield and Clare Kendry, after reading the novel writer found some problems that appeared in the novel that interesting to be analyze as follows:

1. Racism theme novel often portrait a racist character. In this case, the racist act in the novel is can be seen done by John Bellew

2. The novel reflects racial discrimination that has happened to black people at that time in the novel.

3. The Novel *Passing* tells a story about problem of racial identity and the experience of passing as white in 1920s in America.

4. The struggles faced by women in patriarchal society, the constraints of class and social status, and the experience of being a marginalized member of society.

5. Racist behavior that experienced by character of Irene impacted her psychological and emotional behavior.

1.3   Scope of Problem

According to identification of problem that found in this novel, the writer focusing mainly on intrinsic elements of the novel, and racial discrimination that showed by characters in the novel *Passing* by Nella Larsen.

1.4   Research Questions

Based on the Scope of problem above, the writer constructs the research questions as stated below:

1. How John Bellew racial act portrait in the novel *Passing* by Nella Larsen?

2. What are the impacts of racial discrimination that Irene Redfield and Clare Kendry experienced in the novel?

1.5   Objectives of the Study

Relating to the research questions, the writer decided the objectives of the research as follows:

1. To describe racial act by John Bellew in the novel *Passing* by Nella Larsen.

2. To explain the racial discrimination impacts that experienced by Irene Redfield and Clare Kendry in the novel.

1.6   Significance of the Research

The writer hope that academically, the results of this research are to be used as additional information related to structuralism approach for the student of the English literature study program, Faculty of the Cultural Science of Hasanuddin University that is implied in this research.

1.7   Sequence of Writing

This thesis contains five chapters such as introduction, literary review, methodology, analysis, and conclusion. The Introduction contains of the background of analysis, identification of problems, the research question, objectives of writing, and sequence of writing. The second chapter explains the literature review which is consisting of previous study, structuralism approach, discrimination theory, characterization, plot, setting, and theme. The third chapter consists of methodology contains of the Methodoligcal design, Data Sources, techinique of data analysis and research procedure. The fourth chapter of analysis consists of the structural aspects of the novel *Passing* and Racial Discrimination issues that occurred in the novel. The final chapter consists of the conclusion and suggestion for the next research.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter consists of the previous studies, the theory of structuralism included intrinsic aspect such as character, plot, setting, themes, and theory of discrimination.

2.1 Previous Study

Based on observations made by the writer in various sources, there are several other writers who have discussed the issue in this analysis. The writer finds some theses related with this thesis such as Lestari and Anik Budi (2013) From Kristen Maranatha Universty, Andi Lintang Pertiwi (2017) from Sanata Dharma University Yogyakarta, and Virsa Amanda Pricilla Ndiba from Sam Ratulangi University (2016).

The first one is Lestari and Anik Budi the thesis entitled Analysis of The Portrayal of The Protagonist in Nella Larsen's *'Passing' and* Frances Ellen Watkins *Harper's 'Iola Leroy,* Or*, Shadows Uplifted'.* It analyzed the portrayal of the protagonist and the purpose of the author in creating such character in each of the novel. This thesis discussed the protagonist in the novel who are both hereditary women The mixing of black and white, or commonly referred to as mulatto, in United States. At that time the rule was that mulatto was including blacks (Negroes) despite their appearance as befits white people. The result of this research that women who have Blacks and whites descents face can choices two option in determining their identity. First, they can take advantage of their

physical condition and enter into whites or secondly, recognize that they are of skin descent black and living as a black woman. The author of this research used library research that includes reading and understanding the primary texts which are the novels and other references, in order to make an objective and a non-superficial analysis. The similarity of this research and the writer's research is both have same object of research and the different of this research is the method of research.

The Second is Andi Lintang Pertiwi the research entitled *The Impacts of Racism On Pecola Breedlove's Ways of Seeing Herself In Toni Morrison's The Bluest Eye.* This study discusses one of the Toni Morrison's novels entitled *The Bluest Eye.* It is a story about an eleven-year-old girl, Pecola Breedlove. She is a black and ugly girl and always gets different and unfair treatment from people around her as the result of her ugliness. Therefore, Pecola wants to look like white girls who have blue eyes to make her world better. In this research, Andi Lintang Pertiwi applies the theory of perception, theory of discrimination, and theory of racism. This research also used socio-cultural historical approach and psychological approach to analyze the novel. This research also used library research to gain the data related to the topic of the study, she used the novel Toni Morrison entitled *The Bluest Eye* books, journal, article, and the on-line references. The differences of this research with the writer's research are the object of research, and the use of theory of perception and racism theory. The similarity of this research and the the writer's research is both applies theory of discrimination to answer the research question.

The Third one is Virsa Amanda Pricilla Ndiba *"Diskriminasi Ras Dalam Novela Heart of Darkness Karya Joseph Conrad"*. This thesis aims to analyze the reflection of racial discrimination by the white people in the novel and to analyze the social effect of racial discrimination to the black people in Africa. The writer used theory from Aristotle, Wellek and Warren, and De Bonald to describe how the racial discrimination in Africa and what the effect to the people who face discrimination. The similarity of this research with the writer's research is the two researches are explained the same issue, that is Discrimination. On the other hand, the differences of this research with the writer's research are the object of research and the approach.

All these studies before are studying about discrimination feature in each object of the research, meanwhile this study will still be focusing on discrimination that is found in Larsen's *Passing.* After the writer conducts a literature review of several theses whose discussion is relevant to this research, the the writer can see the differences contained in the previously existing thesis with the discussion of this research such as its theories and the object of research and different method of study.

2.2   Structuralism Approach

Structuralism appeared around the second half of the 20th century and developed into one of the most popular approaches in the academic field related to the analysis of language, culture, and society. Ferdinand de Saussure's activity in linguistics is considered to be the starting point of structuralism. In structuralism analysis, a literary text is considered as a structure consisting of interrelated

elements. These elements can include characters, plot, setting, themes, language style, and symbols. Each element in the text has its own role and function that forms the overall structure Wellek and Warren (1989:26). Thus the context of modern literature, structuralism analysis can also be used to analyze literary works in more detail. For example, structuralism analysis can be used to reveal themes, characters, plot, and style in a novel, or to analyze related elements in a poem.

The structural study does not separate the elements in its own discussion, but simultaneously looks for the relationship between the elements that form a literary work as Aminuddin said in Pradopo (1993:45), that from the results of the discussion of each element, the reader further tries to understand how the mechanism of the relationship of each element in the framework creating a literary creation. Structural studies are very important to uncover the strangeness of a literary creation, so that its presence is not ignored.

A basic concept that is characteristic of structural theory is the assumption that in itself a literary work is an autonomous structure that can be understood as a rounded unity with interwoven building elements (Pradopo, 1993:6). Therefore, in order to understand its meaning, a literary work must be studied based on its own structure, independent of the historical background, independent of the writer's identity and intentions, and independent of its effect on the reader (Beardsley in Teeuw, 2013:60).

Based on the various opinions above, the writer concludes that Structuralism is an analysis of literary works that is assumed to examine structures that are interrelated with each other, that cannot stand alone outside of that structure; also

the writer believes that Structuralism is a theoretical approach that aims to reveal the underlying structures and patterns in a literary work. This approach emphasizes the relationship between elements in a work, such as plot, characters, themes, and language

2.2.1 Characters and Characterization

In literary works, a character is a person or an animal portrayed in a story, play, or other creative work. Characters are often used to represent particular qualities or traits, and they can serve as vehicles for conveying the themes and messages of a literary works. According to (Abrams in Nurgiyantoro, 1994: 164) figures (characters) are people who are featured in a narrative work or drama that the reader interprets as having certain moral qualities and tendencies as expressed in speech and what is done in action. "Characterization" has a broader meaning than "Character" or "Representation" because characterization includes various elements, and how it is represented and how it is painted in a story so that the reader understands and has a clear picture. Representation relates to the characteristics or how the characters dispositions are, whereas characterization relates to the way the author determines and selects the characters and names them (Herman, 2002: 164).

Characterization is a way of clearly describing the characters contained in a story (Jones in Nurgiyantoro, 2005: 165). By function, figures are distinguished over central figures and subordinate figures. According to Robert Stanton (1965:17) a character is an individual in a story that has combination of interests,

emotions and moral principles that form the character or in other words describes the behavior itself or the course nature of the story.

The central character is divided into protagonists and antagonists. The protagonist is the main character who plays an important role as well as a leader. Antagonistic characters are subordinate characters which are not central to their position in the story, but their presence is very necessary to support or support the main character which is often referred to as an auxiliary character, this character usually has ugly and evil traits.

There is a close relationship between characterization and representation. Characterization relates to the way the author determines and selects the character and names the character. Representation relates to the characteristics to disposition. Herman (2002: 165) states that the term characterization here means the way the author displays the characters, the types of characters, the character's relationship with other stories, the character's disposition, and how the author describes the characters' disposition.

Furthermore Nurgiyantoro (2010: 176-194) distinguishes figures in several types of plantings based on from which angle the naming is carried out. Based on the point of view and review, a character can be categorized in several types such as the main character and minor characters, Protagonists, antagonists, static and dynamic character.

1. The main character is the one whose storytelling takes precedence in the short story while the minor character is the one who is not

important in the story, in the whole story there are fewer appearances. The distinction is based on the role. Protagonists and antagonists.

2. The protagonist is a character we admire called a hero. The figure causing the occurrence of the conflict is called the antagonist. This distinction is based on the function of the appearance of the figure.

3. Static character and dynamic character. A static character is a character that has only one side quality of personality that the author expresses while dynamic character experience representation development.

As conclusion of characters and characterization, the writer concluded that characterization is a way in which the author describes characters or characters displayed clearly through the story and writer also believe that a character cannot stand alone or behave alone without the presence of another character. There are many characters inside a story that can be categorized based on their role, and each one them is have different role in a story such as the protagonist, the antagonist.

2.2.2 Plot

Plot is a series of stories formed by the stages of events presented by the actors in a story. The term plot in this case is the same as the term story structure (Aminuddin, 1991: 83). Furthermore, Herman (2002: 164) also stated that the plot in the events of the story must state the logical and coherent relationships that form unity or wholeness. Thus, it is hoped that the reader can catch the common

thread in the story that runs from the beginning to the end of the story. The common thread that spans the whole story is called the plot of the story.

Aristotle stated in Nurgiyantoro (2010: 142), the plot divided into three parts, namely the initial stage (beginning), the middle stage (middle), and the final stage (end). The initial stage is also called the introductory stage which functions to provide information and explanations about the setting, such as the name of the place, the natural atmosphere of the time, which in the outline as description of the setting. In addition, the early stage is also often used for the exploration of characters in stories such as physical descriptions and representations

The middle stage or so-called stage of infighting, featuring conflicts and conflicts that have already begun to arise in the previous stage, becomes increasingly increasing. These conflicts can be in the form of internal conflicts that occur within a character or external conflicts that occur between stories. In this stage the climax is shown when the conflict (main) has reached its highest intensity (Nurgiyantoro, 2010: 145).

The final stage is referred to as the stage of denouement that presents a particular scene as a climax, so, this section for example (among other things) contains how the story is or the end of a story, or it is about how a story ends (Nurgiyantoro, 2010: 146-147)

Freytag in Herymawan (1993: 18) showed the structure of a plot named the Freytag's Pyramid, which includes of exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution.

1. Exposition is the foundation of the story or simply background of the

story and characters, so the reader can understand the story.

2. Rising Action is building up moment where all the conflicts are introduced to the readers quickly before the climax.

3. Climax is the most dramatic moment in the story because this is the turning point for the main character and the story.

4. Falling Action is where all of the conflicts begin to be solved or simply where the story leads to an end and the character slowly solved the problems.

5. Denouement phase is the last phase where all of the characters both protagonist and antagonist have solved their problems and the solution might affect the story. Whether the story ends with a happy ending or sorrow.

From the explanation above, the writer concludes that plot is the chronology of events that arrange the story structure. Basically there are five main parts of plot based on Freytag pyramid, namely exposition, raising action, climax, falling action, and resolution, and the function of plot is to connect all parts of a story to show the read that all events that occurred inside the story is correlated between one and another.

2.2.3 Settings

The setting, also known as the foundation, and refers to setting of place, setting of time, and setting of social environment where the narrated events occurred (Abrams in Nurgiyantoro, 2010: 216). The elements of the setting can be

divided into three main elements, namely the setting of place, the setting of time, and the social setting.

The setting of the place is related to the problem of the location of the events told in a fiction literary work. The use of a setting of place is with a certain name must reflect, or at least not contradict the nature and geographical state of the place in question because each place certainly has its own characteristics that distinguish it from other places. The lifting of the regional atmosphere, something that reflects the element of local colour will cause the setting to become the dominant element in the relevant literary work (Nurgiyantoro, 2010:227).

The setting of time relates to the issue of when the events told in a work of fiction occur. The issue of when such is usually associated with historical events. In the sense that something told must correspond to historical developments. However, it is possible that the setting may actually seem absurd and not clearly shown, perhaps because it is not important to show the logical link of the story. The absurd of the historical time in the novel is indeed unnecessary (Nurgiyantoro, 2010: 232).

The social setting focuses on things related to the behavior of the social life of the community in a place that is mention in literary works. The procedures for the social life of the community cover a variety of issues in a fairly complex scope. It can be habits of life, customs, traditions, beliefs, outlook on life, ways of thinking and behaving. The social background is also related to the social status of the figure in question. In addition, the social setting can indeed convincingly depict the regional atmosphere, local colour, local color of a particular area

through the social life of the people. In addition, it can be strengthened by the use of certain regional languages or dialects (Nurgiyantroro, 2010: 233-235).

As the conclusion based in definition above, settings is one of the important foundation structure inside a story that support other intrinsic structure. the settings have or types, that setting of place which discuss a specific location, setting of time that describe for events that occurred at that moment, and social setting that explain sociological history or a relation between a group of the community in some culture.

2.2.4 Theme

As a literary work, the novel has a theme that has been determined by the author and can be understand after reading the whole story and every literary works that are created must have theme. According to Richard Gill (1995:195) stated that every literary work should have a theme. These themes are found with how the author visualizes their interest, their moral behaviour. Themes have an important role in creating a story based on the author's ideas that often influenced by real life experience. Hartoko and Rahmanto (1986: 67) stated that themes are the structure of literary works that have an important role in a story. Usually the author formulates a theme before writing a story of a literary work because the idea that the author has made will be returned and the story created does not go out of the theme. Themes can be defined as a general basic idea that sustains a literary work contained in a text as a semantic structure and that concerns similarities or differences (Nurgiyantoro, 2010: 68).

Themes are filtered from the motives contained in the work in question that determine the presence of certain events, conflicts, and situations. Themes are the presence of certain events, situations or conflicts, including various other intrinsic elements because these things must support the clarity of the theme conveyed. The theme is the basis for the development of the whole story, so the theme is animating the entire story. Herman (2002: 141) suggests that each period or generation in literature reveals a dominant theme as a hallmark of literary works for that period.

A theme is a particular view of life or a certain set of values that form or build the basis or 15 main ideas of a literary work (Tarigan, 2003: 125). It is added by Nurgiyantoro (1994: 12) that a novel can have more than one theme, namely the main theme and the additional theme, but the additional theme must be supportive and related to the main theme to achieve the effect of cohesion. This is due to the existence of the main plot and sub-subs that feature one main conflict and supporting (additional) conflicts.

Based on the above opinions, it can be concluded that a theme is a general basic idea or idea in a literary work that builds the main idea and becomes the basis for the development of the whole story. Also the writer understands that the theme is not conveyed casually but is conveyed through the stories.

2.3 Discrimination Theory

The first clear evidence of Discrimination occurred at the end of the 16th century, with the start of the slave trade from Africa to Britain and America. The slave trade begins when people started dividing others into groups and dividing

that the Africans were in inferior race and that they were below all other groups of people (James, 1973: 127).

Discrimination is a social problem that resulting in disrupted or damaged relationships, interactions and communication between human inside a community. This discriminatory behavior is often not realized by the subject or person who receive such discriminatory treatment and by those who treat the act the discrimination. Discriminatory practice is an act of humiliation that excludes citizens from obtaining their rights and services to the community based on skin color, class, ethnicity, religion, nation, gender and so on (Liliweri, 2005; 218).

Discrimination according to Sears, et al (1985: 149) is the behavior of accepting or rejecting someone based on (at least influenced by) group membership. The point of being influenced by group membership is the position of the group in society. Furthermore, Theodorson in Fulthoni (2009: 3) said that discrimination is the unbalanced treatment of individuals, or groups, based on something, usually categorical, or distinctive attributes, such as based on race, ethnicity, religion, or membership of social classes. It would normally describe an act on the part of the dominant majority in relation to a weak minority, so it can be said that their behavior is immoral and undemocratic.

The discrimination that occurs in society is usually individual discrimination and institutional discrimination. Individual discrimination is the act of a prejudiced perpetrator. Institutional discrimination is discrimination that has nothing to do with individual prejudice but rather the impact of the wisdom or practice of various institutions in society (Sunarto, 2004: 161).

In addition to individual and institutional discrimination according to Pettigrew in Liliweri (2005:221) discrimination is divided into direct and indirect discrimination. Direct Discrimination is the act of restricting a certain area, such as settlements, types of work, public facilities and the like and also occurs when decision makers are directed by prejudices against certain groups. Meanwhile, indirect discrimination is implemented through the creation of policies that prevent certain races/ethnicities from being connected freely with other racial/ethnic groups where the rules and procedures they follow contain an invisible discrimination bias and result in systematic harm to a particular community. Individual discrimination is direct discrimination, while institutional discrimination is indirect discrimination (Liliweri, 2005: 222).

As conclusion, to understand the theory of discrimination is to conceive form of oppression that people does based on social status or race, just like in the novel *Passing*. This discrimination was conducted by Clare Kendry's Husband John Bellew when in the hall of Drayton hotel. Based on definition above, it can be concluded that the essence of discrimination is unequal treatment of individuals, or groups, based on something, usually categorical, or distinctive attributes, such as based on race, ethnicity, religion, or social class membership.