



Power, Violence, and Human Rights Violations in Mei Hwa and Sang Pelintas Zaman

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ABSTRACT

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This article analyzes the novel Mei Hwa dan Sang Pelintas Zaman by Afifah Afra through the lens of New Historicism, examining how the narrative reflects historical events and human rights violations in Indonesia. The novel is set against the backdrop of significant historical periods, including the Dutch and Japanese occupations, the G30S/PKI events, and the 1998 riots. By employing the theoretical framework of New Historicism, the article emphasizes the necessity of contextualizing literary works within their historical milieu, thereby elucidating the intricate interweaving of individual experiences with the broader tapestry of societal concerns. By offering a multiplicity of perspectives on historical events, the novel encourages readers to engage in critical discourse surrounding historical narratives and their implications for contemporary human rights issues. This approach is consistent with the tenets of New Historicism, which emphasizes the contextualization of literary works within their socio-political landscapes. In conclusion, the article demonstrates how New Historicism provides valuable insights into understanding literature as a reflection of historical realities through its exploration of human rights violations within Mei Hwa dan Sang Pelintas Zaman. The novel not only recounts personal tragedies but also offers a critique of the societal structures that perpetuate violence and discrimination. By situating individual narratives within a broader historical context, Afifah Afra's work serves as a compelling illustration of the enduring influence of historical events on personal experiences and social norms.

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1. Introduction

The history of Indonesia proves that human rights violations are not uncommon. Since the colonial period until the reform era, various cases of human rights violations have been recorded, ranging from deprivation of people's rights, discrimination, to systematic violence (Eddyono & Abidin, 2016; Wahyuni, 2022). In the past, events such as the 1965 tragedy and various human rights violations in Papua, Ambon, Sampit and other cities have left deep wounds in the nation's history (Fadhil et al., 2020; Nasution, 2018). Nevertheless, efforts to uphold justice and fight for human rights continue to be made by various parties, including the government and human rights activists.

Human rights violations in literature are often depicted as a reflection of social injustice, oppression, and violence experienced by individuals or groups in society (Lestari, 2021; Putri & Sukmawan, 2024). Through various forms of narrative, literature raises issues such as discrimination, deprivation of freedom, torture, and marginalization of vulnerable groups. These depictions of human rights violations not only aim to present a painful reality, but also to invite readers to understand the



complexity of the problem and arouse moral awareness and empathy for the suffering experienced by victims.

Furthermore, this depiction serves as a moral call that evokes awareness and empathy. By feeling the suffering of the victims, readers are expected to be moved not only to feel sympathy, but also to reflect on their position in the effort to uphold justice and defend human rights. This can trigger concrete actions, whether in the form of advocacy, social support, or personal reflection on the importance of safeguarding the human rights of every individual. Ultimately, this depiction wants to convey the message that human rights violations are not an issue that is far from everyday life, but a universal problem that requires attention and collective action.

Various forms of human rights violations are depicted in the novel *Mei Hwa, The Crossing of Times* by Afifah Afra (Afra, 2014). This novel tells of various forms of human rights violations that occurred during the Japanese era, the New Order, and the Reformation Order experienced by the main female characters named Sekar Ayu and Ong Mey Hwa. Mey Hwa and her family received very unfair treatment by several individuals during the reformation period in the form of confiscation and rape. Mey Hwa had to lose her mother who committed suicide due to stress, her father who had a mental disorder and her two brothers who were so stressed that they were hospitalized in a mental hospital. When Mei Hwa decides to live in Solo, she meets Sekar Ayu who has also experienced various forms of human rights violations. A few days after being hospitalized, she decides to escape to Central Java where she meets Sekar Ayu who gives her a new zest for life. This novel not only tells the events of 1998 but also tells other events through the life experiences of Sekar Ayu, a woman who has experienced the bitter sweetness of life from the Dutch, Japanese, G30S PKI, to the tragedy of 1998 so that it provides many lessons for Mey Hwa.

In the novel *Mei Hwa Sang Pelintas Zaman*, human rights violations are depicted through various historical events that occurred in Indonesia. Afra (2014) presents various characters of social reality ranging from racial discrimination, oppression, to injustice towards minority groups. These human rights violations occur in historical contexts such as colonization, revolution, and political and social conflicts that are imprinted in the collective memory of the nation.

The presentation of human rights violations in this novel not only depicts the suffering of individuals, but also depicts their impact on the wider community. However, it also invites readers to reflect on how structural violence and inter-group conflict have created deep wounds, especially for certain ethnic groups such as the Chinese ethnic group in Indonesia. By packaging the story in several historical periods, this novel shows that human rights violations are not only past events, but an integral part of the long journey of Indonesian history that needs to be recognized and repaired.

This study aims to describe the representation of forms of human rights violations using the theory of new historicism. This approach emphasizes the relationship between the text and its historical context, where every work, event, or document is understood as a product of the social, political, and cultural conditions that surround it. In other words, new historicism sees the phenomenon of human rights violations not only as a stand-alone act, but also as a reflection of the dominant power structures, ideologies, and narratives at that time. This study seeks to explore the reciprocal relationship between human rights violations and historical discourse, and how both influence each other in shaping understandings of justice, power, and human rights.

The novel *Mei Hwa dan Sang Pelintas Zaman* has been studied by various literary researchers from various perspectives, such as those conducted by Basid & Sari (2018)) and Apriyani & Safitri (2021). Basid & Sari (2018) examined social conflict based on Ralf Dahrendorf's perspective, while Apriyani & Safitri (2021) examined the existence of Javanese female characters using feminist literary criticism. Various forms of human rights violations in novels using a sociological literary approach were found by Lestari (2021) in the novel *Laut Bercerita* by Leila S. Chudori; Azizah et al. (2022) in the novel *Maryam*; Purba et al. (2022) in the novel *Orang-orang Oetimu*; and (Putri & Sukmawan, 2024) in the novel *Rasina* by Iksaka Banu. In contrast to the three studies, (Sulistyo & Lestari, 2023) examined human rights violations using Marianne Hirsh's Postmemory perspective in the novel *Orang-orang Oetimu*.

All of the studies found have not yet studied human rights using the new historicism approach. By using the New Historicism approach, human rights are not only viewed as an isolated and universal

concept, but also as a product of social, political, and economic forces that apply at a certain time. Previous studies tend to focus more on the legal-formal or philosophical approach, without exploring how historical narratives and ideologies play a role in shaping the understanding and implementation of human rights in various historical periods. Therefore, further research using new historicism can open up new insights into the historical dynamics behind human rights policies and violations.

2. Method

This research is a qualitative, descriptive literary study. It focuses on understanding and interpreting textual data rather than quantifying it. Research on human rights violations in the novel *Mei Hwa dan Sang Pelintas Zaman* uses archaeological methods such as those used by Greenblatt (Greenblatt, 1980). This method is used to explore layers of meaning and social practices hidden in the text. Researchers can identify and analyze the power structures that exist in the narrative, as well as how human rights violations can occur in certain social and cultural contexts.

Through archaeological methods, researchers can explore the historical context in which the novel was written, including historical, political, and social events that may have influenced the writing and depiction of human rights violations in the story (Gallagher & Greenblatt, 2000; Hickling, 2018). This involves analyzing the background of the author, readers, and social conditions when the novel was published. Researchers can utilize historical sources, such as documents, archives, and other literary works, to enrich their understanding of the human rights violations raised in the novel and how they relate to broader realities.

Furthermore, archaeological methods also allow researchers to explore the ways in which the text creates, maintains, or even challenges the narrative of human rights violations. By analyzing the language, symbols, and narrative structures in the novel, researchers can highlight how human rights violations are displayed and shaped in the text. This creates a deeper understanding of the social and political implications of the narrative, as well as how readers can understand and respond to issues of human rights violations through a literary lens. Very likely, a novelty from a study is in the method section, even though the topic is the same as previous studies. New methods that are simpler but have the same ability to answer research questions are superior so that they can be replicated or applied by subsequent researchers. In addition, if the equipment has accuracy tolerance in reading data such as thermocouple, transducer, air flow meter, etc., it must also be stated clearly and honestly in the method section.

3. Result and Discussion

The forms of human rights violations presented in the novel *Mei Hwa dan Sang Pelintas Zaman* cannot be separated from the social, political, and cultural context of the time in which the narrative was created. Through this historical perspective, readers are invited to see how the power of ideology, power relations, and social realities influence the representation of human rights violations in the text. In this section, we will discuss how the oppression, injustice, and structural violence experienced by the characters in the novel reflect the social conditions of the time, as well as how the text offers a critical discourse on human rights violations in the broader history. Discussion can be made as a whole that contains research findings and explanations.

3.1. Amid the horrors of Japanese colonialism; Sekar Ayu's story of resistance

In *Mei Hwa dan Sang Pelintas Zaman*, Sekar Ayu Asmara vividly portrays the struggle and resistance of Mei Hwa, a Chinese-Indonesian woman, amid the oppressive Japanese colonial regime. The novel delves into Mei Hwa's fight for survival and identity as she navigates the horrors of occupation, the violence of war, and the complex dynamics between colonizers and the colonized. The narrative is rich with symbolic elements, showing the stark realities of Japanese rule. Sekar Ayu's resilience against both personal and societal oppression becomes a powerful reflection of resistance, highlighting the agency of women during a time of historical violence. Sekar Ayu paints a detailed picture of how Japanese colonialism affected individuals, especially women who were often caught in the crossfire of cultural, racial, and political struggles.

The horrors of Japanese colonialism are evident in the way the author portrays the brutality Sekar Ayu faces. The systematic violence inflicted by the Japanese military on both the local population is meticulously described, from forced labor to sexual exploitation. Sekar Ayu's personal story of resistance intertwines with the broader historical struggle for freedom. Through her experiences, readers witness the human cost of colonial domination and the relentless spirit of those who resisted.

During the Japanese occupation, Indonesia was subjected to a multitude of intricate human rights violations. One illustrative example is the arrest of individuals occupying prominent positions, such as Harjanto, the adoptive father of Ayu, who held a significant role within the government apparatus.

"The little girl ran as fast as she could. She really didn't know why the people in brown uniforms with red circles on their arms and hats suddenly caught her adoptive father, and dragged her mother into a room and locked her in. (Afra, 2014, p. 127)."

Harjanto's prominent role within the government became a target for the Japanese military. The Japanese army's objective was to exert control over all aspects of Indonesian life. However, Harjanto's fate was not limited to himself; his wife was also affected. She was compelled to serve the Japanese military as a *jugun ianfu*, a term used to describe a woman forced to serve the Japanese army. This incident exemplifies the human rights violations that were prevalent in Indonesia during this period, where numerous individuals endured suffering and became victims of the invasion and oppressive power.

"When Ayu grew up, she understood what Keiji had done. He had ruined her honor many times, when she was not even 7 years old. (Afra, 2014, p. 133)."

The data above illustrates the extent of sexual violence perpetrated during the Japanese occupation, which affected individuals of all ages. Ayu, a minor, was also subjected to sexual violence by Japanese soldiers, in a similar manner to that experienced by Keiji. This illustrates the tragic reality that children were also subjected to exploitation and violence, reflecting the harsh circumstances endured by many individuals during the Second World War. This message underscores the significant and far-reaching impact of sexual violence on the lives of victims, particularly children who are entitled to protection. Acts of sexual violence against minors constitute a grave violation of human rights. In addition to irreparably harming the lives of children, such acts inflict physical and psychological damage upon the victims.

"I pay you with one kilo of pure gold!"

"One kilo of pure gold for the 'first night'. Then, one by one, men stopped by to taste the beauty of her flapping wings. Jeng Palupi had made her a statue of male idols. (Afra, 2014, p. 136)"

The Japanese occupation of Indonesia saw cruelty and human rights violations, not just from the Japanese government but also from some indigenous people. The character of Jeng Palupi serves as a tangible example of an individual who has lost their moral compass, opting to exploit Indonesian women for personal and material gain. In this context, Jeng Palupi transformed Indonesian women into commodities to gratify the appetites of the Japanese military, exemplifying the depths of depravity and inhumanity that could be perpetrated in the face of adversity. The character of Ayu, who was still very young, was among the victims of this exploitation practice. Her attractive appearance resulted in a high price being paid by the Japanese government, reflecting the considerable demand from the Japanese army. The presence of a character like Ayu within this narrative serves to illustrate the brutal conditions under which Indonesian women were compelled to exist during that period. They were subjected to the horrors of human trafficking and became objects of lust, losing their freedom and dignity.

"Since the age of 7, I was forced to make a man fly to heaven. Then, at the age of 12, when the physical revolution hit our country, I officially became a prostitute. When the war was over, I was 14 years old, and a Japanese sailor took me home to his country. However, the dream that I had imagined was so beautiful, turned out to be shattered. I ran away from the sailor's house, then ended up in Tokyo, returning to being a prostitute (Afra, 2014, p. 195)."

From 1942, when Japan occupied Indonesia, until 1949, when the physical revolution occurred, prostitution continued to exist in Indonesia. Many Indonesian women were forced into marriage with Japanese men and taken back to Japan. The character Sekar Ayu has experienced a multitude of traumatic events throughout her life, from being sold by Jeng Palupi to the Japanese to engaging in

prostitution voluntarily to satisfy the sexual desires of men. Similarly, in Japan, the character Ayu also entered into a voluntary transaction with a client to meet her basic living expenses after being compelled to leave her husband's residence, Yasashi. The violation of human rights is evident in the coercion of early childhood to satisfy the sexual desires of Japanese colonizers, which indoctrinated their minds to engage in such acts until adulthood. The act of selling oneself is perceived as a common and accepted practice.

3.2. Sekar Ayu's struggle against discrimination and injustice in Indonesia's Old Order era

In Mei Hwa dan Sang Pelintas Zaman, Sekar Ayu's character represents the challenges faced by Indonesian women during the Old Order era, particularly under the authoritarian rule of President Sukarno. Her experiences mirror the harsh social and political discrimination that women.

“Ahmad saw clearly that in the midst of the chaos that hit the Murong Islamic boarding school, Ayu was among them. Not as a victim like dozens of blood-soaked bodies that had died, among them was Kyai Murong, but as part of the perpetrators. So, a powerful earthquake struck deep into his heart. Cold sweat poured out from every pore, making the crushing of his soul even more pronounced (Afra, 2014, p. 233).”

In the context of the Old Order, the figure of Ayu, who had previously been subjected to human rights violations (HAM), subsequently became complicit in similar violations. In this tumultuous historical context, Ayu was involved as a member of Gerwani, an organization under the auspices of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI). Together with members of the PKI, Ayu perpetrated a heinous and inhumane act of human rights violation by burning down the Islamic boarding school owned by Kyai Murong, who was her own grandfather. This act of violence was not merely a symbolic gesture; rather, it was an expression of profound animosity towards religious figures and institutions. As a consequence, the Islamic boarding school owned by Kyai Murong was also affected by the unrest, with numerous students and visitors to the school becoming casualties of the chaos, covered in blood and dying. In the midst of the chaos, Kyai Murong, the proprietor of the Islamic boarding school and a venerated figure, also became one of the unfortunate victims of the brutal acts perpetrated by Ayu and the PKI activists.

“Jakarta was in turmoil after the G 30 S PKI incident which made them prisoners. General Suharto, now holds the reins of power after eliminating all of the PKI's lackeys. All of the PKI's underbouw mass organizations were also eliminated. Including Gerwani. This happened, supposedly because the PKI had betrayed them. The PKI carried out a Gestapu by kidnapping the generals and torturing them at Lubang Buaya. (Afra, 2014, p. 277).”

The September 30th Movement of the Indonesian Communist Party (G 30 S PKI) incident that occurred in 1965 represents a pivotal moment in Indonesian history. On that day, numerous high-ranking military officers were abducted and subsequently subjected to brutal mistreatment at a location known as Lubang Buaya by members of the PKI. As a result of this brutal action, many of them lost their lives, thereby causing chaos and instability in the country. In the aftermath of the tragedy, General Suharto took decisive action to confront the threat posed by the PKI. He spearheaded a comprehensive initiative to eradicate all PKI members who had perpetrated numerous human rights violations, including their accomplices and mass organizations with ties to or supporting the movement, such as Gerwani.

“Dono shook his head sadly. “I want to go to school, but I have no money. My father was crippled because his right leg was shot by a stray bullet when ABRI killed PKI.” (Afra, 2014, p. 345).”

In 1965, the political situation in Indonesia reached a critical point due to the ambitions of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) to gain control of the country and eliminate the influence of religious leaders. In this context, there were significant confrontations between the PKI and the Indonesian Armed Forces (ABRI). The human rights violations that occurred during this period not only affected those directly involved in the conflict but also had a detrimental impact on innocent bystanders. The resulting tension led to numerous innocent individuals becoming victims. One such victim was the father of the character Jono, who was fatally wounded by a stray bullet when the ABRI attempted to neutralize PKI members in action and suffered a leg injury due to the chaotic circumstances. This physical impairment had a profound impact on their daily lives. Consequently, Dono and his family were compelled to confront significant economic challenges. The family was compelled to grapple with the challenge of meeting their basic necessities, which constrained Dono's

ability to fully experience the typical aspects of childhood. The circumstances he endured had a profound psychological and social impact, influencing his outlook on life and future aspirations.

Throughout the novel, Sekar Ayu is confronted with the limitations imposed by systemic barriers and societal injustices, which restrict her personal autonomy and prospects. These challenges not only illustrate the societal norms of the time but also serve to highlight the pervasive gender discrimination that was a significant feature of Indonesian culture during the 1950s and 1960s. As Sekar Ayu struggles to establish her position, the novel illuminates the profound extent to which these social inequalities were embedded in the social fabric, further compounded by the prevailing political tensions. As articulated in the novel, Sekar Ayu was constrained by traditional norms that compelled her to submit to patriarchal authority and the silencing of women's voices.

3.3. Sekar Ayu and Mei Hwa's Experiences of Human Rights Violations during the New Order Era

The two female characters in Mei Hwa and Sang Pelintas experienced various human rights violations during the New Order era. Sekar Ayu, a native Indonesian, experiences political oppression, which is reflected in her enforced silence and social restrictions on her expression. Mei Hwa, of Chinese descent, faces racial discrimination, especially during the anti-Chinese sentiment under the regime, where her identity makes her a target of suspicion and violence.

“His house was burned. His shop was looted. His father was stressed and put in a mental hospital. And his mother committed suicide, unable to bear the sadness.(Afra, 2014, p. 62).”

Mei Hwa, a young woman of Chinese descent, experienced suffering and injustice during the 1998 riots. The riots were triggered by various factors, including the long reign of the New Order regime, which lasted 32 years and was full of oppression and injustice, and the currency crisis that crippled the entire Indonesian economy. During this time, economic conditions worsened, causing many people to feel depressed. In this tense atmosphere, Mei Hwa became the target of mob violence, particularly because of her ethnic background. The Chinese ethnic group, which was very unpopular with most people at the time, was often scapegoated for the various economic problems facing the country. When the riots hit Jakarta, Mei Hwa felt the impact of the widespread hatred of her community, making her an easy target in a wave of horrific violence and attacks. This experience reflects not only her suffering as an individual, but also the broader suffering of the Chinese community in Indonesia at the time, and illustrates how fragile life was in the midst of the social upheaval that was occurring. The violation of human rights is shown here by the inability of people to enjoy life with a sense of security, to the point of disturbing the psychology of the victims of human rights violations.

“I wanted to be strong in the face of all that. But 2 car dealerships, 3 clothing stores, 2 electronics stores, and my parents' house in Jakarta that were burned by the masses, looted goods, and the rape.... have crushed me.(Afra, 2014, p. 103).”

Mey Hwa became a victim of a very tragic human rights violation when she experienced a terrible incident where she was raped by a group of irresponsible people during the riots that hit Jakarta in 1998. This cruel act not only damaged her sense of security and dignity as a woman, but also destroyed her life as a whole. In a situation already filled with sadness and uncertainty, Mey Hwa was forced to be separated from her family. These bitter and painful experiences illustrate the depth of the impact of the 1998 riots, which not only caused her to lose her honor, but also caused her severe trauma. Every memory of the event is a reminder of the loss she experienced and the struggle she had to face in trying to recover from that low point.

“My tears flowed heavily. The cathartic scream bubbled up again. I struggled, screamed, raged, as if I saw the figures who had taken my honor wandering before my eyes, and for that I intended to tear them apart, crush them. I still clearly remember when they banged on our house, then looted everything there was. Some of them, when they saw the flash of my figure, apparently felt that just looting was not enough. 'Just rape her! She's Chinese! Chinese. Just crush her...!'.(Afra, 2014, p. 104)”

The assumption that ethnic Chinese dominated the Indonesian economy at that time resulted in a sense of dislike and hostility towards this group, leading to looting, mob violence, and the abduction of a girl of Chinese descent. A number of human rights violations were identified, including ethnic discrimination. This was based on the assumption that ethnic Chinese dominated the economy, which resulted in stigmatization and discrimination against the group. The acts of looting and mob violence directed at ethnic Chinese were also forms of violence that violated the right to security and protection. This is because every individual has the right to live without fear of violence. Furthermore, the taking away of honor or the committing of sexual violence against women constitutes a serious violation of women's human rights.

“After the medicine started working, I felt a little calmer. Sleepiness gripped me hard, but I didn't want to close my eyes and even tried hard to stare alertly. No! I didn't want the wild men to come back when I closed my eyes, looting, burning, and raping.(Afra, 2014, p. 110).”

The physical and sexual violence experienced by Mei Hwa, including rape, arson, and looting, indicate a violation of her fundamental human right to live safely and peacefully. Such actions not only contravene human rights but also inflict considerable trauma and anxiety on victims, as evidenced by the case of Mei Hwa. The riots rendered the surrounding environment unsafe, thereby precluding individuals from living their daily lives without fear. The psychological impact of this experience cannot be overlooked, as evidenced by the trauma experienced by Mei Hwa as a result of the incident, which represents a violation of the right to live safely. This experience demonstrates that human rights violations have not only physical consequences but also have a significant impact on an individual's mental health and overall well-being.

In the 1998 rebellion in Glodok, West Jakarta, a number of human rights violations (HAM) were perpetrated against the local community (Afra, 2014, p. 321). The violence perpetrated by the violent mob constituted a violation of the right to life and safety of individuals. The actions of burning, storming, and looting shops demonstrated not only the loss of property rights but also created a sense of fear that violated an individual's right to live in security. This situation became more complex when the character Zak, Mei Hwa's brother, nearly lost his life due to the flames. This serves to illustrate the infringement of the right to receive protection from threats that endanger life. In this context, the inability of the state to protect its citizens from violence and civil unrest constitutes a grave violation of human rights. In conclusion, this incident exemplifies a crisis in which fundamental individual rights are infringed upon, both by the actions of the general public and by the authorities tasked with maintaining order and safeguarding the community.

“As soon as he heard that people of Chinese descent were being targeted by mob violence, he immediately bought a plane ticket to Singapore.(Afra, 2014, p. 323).”

In this tense and chaotic situation, a significant number of ethnic Chinese individuals perceived a threat to their safety and were compelled to seek refuge in more secure locations. Some of them, including individuals such as Leo, Mei Hwa's brother, elected to safeguard their interests by relocating to foreign countries. This decision reflected not only fear of violence but also illustrated the uncertain social and political conditions at that time, during which human rights violations in the form of discrimination and violence against minority groups were increasing. This illustrates the precarious position of the Chinese community in Indonesia during the crisis.

The experiences of the two characters are conveyed through a dual lens of personal trauma and collective suffering. To illustrate, Mei Hwa's family experiences violence during the anti-Chinese riots, which reflect the racial tensions that escalated under the New Order regime in reality. "Riots broke out, targeting Chinese-owned businesses and families" (Abdullah & Lopian, 2012, p. 515; Ricklefs, 2005), and Mei Hwa's experiences reflect these accounts. The novel intertwines the protagonist's personal loss with the broader context of political upheaval, underscoring the fact that

the violation of human rights was not merely an attack on individual freedoms but rather a systematic issue that affected entire communities. In contrast, Sekar Ayu's political activism results in her persecution, exemplifying the severe consequences of dissent during this period, when the government frequently silenced opposition voices through imprisonment and surveillance (Anderson, 2013; Chandra, 2017; Roosa, 2008).

The portrayal of human rights violations in *Mei Hwa dan Sang Pelintas Zaman* resonates with the broader socio-political conditions of the New Order, particularly the oppressive measures against political dissent and ethnic minorities (Fitrya, 2013). The experiences of the characters demonstrate how state apparatuses were utilized to enforce control and suppress resistance. Mei Hwa's narrative particularly exposes the racialized violence that was institutionalized during the regime, aligning with historical documentation of discriminatory policies, such as the 1967 Presidential Instruction that restricted Chinese culture and traditions in public spaces (Anggraeni & Purwaningsih, 2022; Fitrya, 2013). Such literary portrayals serve as a crucial reflection on the enduring impact of such violations on individual lives and communities. Furthermore, the novel's utilisation of these historical contexts provides a poignant critique of the era's authoritarian rule.

4. Conclusion

The novel *Mei Hwa dan Sang Pelintas Zaman* by Afifah Afra is a reflection of the historical and social context that shapes its narrative. The author presents the character of Mei Hwa, a woman of Chinese descent, as a symbol of resilience and struggle against the discriminatory practices and human rights violations that have occurred throughout Indonesia's history of racial conflict. By employing a new historicism approach, it becomes evident that this novel not only portrays the experiences of individuals but also elucidates the manner in which the system of power, culture, and history shape the social dynamics encountered by its characters. The novel depicts human rights violations that extend beyond physical abuse to encompass symbolic violence embedded in social structures. Discrimination against ethnic Chinese, stereotypes, and negative prejudices are forms of violations that are structured and legitimized by historical processes and discourses. From the perspective of new historicism, the text demonstrates that violence and human rights violations against minorities in Indonesia are not isolated occurrences, but rather are embedded within a larger narrative of power shaped by political, economic, and social interests at the time. In this manner, the novel serves as a vehicle for critiquing dominant historical narratives and creating space for voices that are frequently marginalized in mainstream historical discourse. *Mei Hwa dan Sang Pelintas* effectively addresses the issue of human rights from both a historical and contemporary perspective, prompting readers to consider the continued impact of past events on contemporary social structures. This novel serves not only as a literary document that records the experience of oppression, but also as a tool for understanding the manner in which history shapes collective consciousness and power structures that remain relevant in discussions about human rights in Indonesia.

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