

**THE ECONOMIC DOMINATION OF BOURGEOIS OVER  
PROLETARIAT AS REFLECTED  
IN THOMAS HARDY'S *TESS OF THE D'URBERVILLES***

**A Thesis**

**Submitted in Partial Fulfillment to the Requirement  
For the Degree of Sarjana Sastra**

**By**

**Enda Eko Citra  
04185071**



**English Department - Faculty of Letters  
Andalas University  
2008-2009**

## ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini membahas tentang kontradiksi – kontradiksi yang disebabkan oleh masalah ekonomi dimasyarakat Inggris pada awal abad 19, yang melibatkan dua kelas ekonomi yang berbeda yaitu kelas atas (borjuis) dan kelas bawah (proletar), yang digambarkan oleh Thomas Hardy dalam novelnya *Tess of the D'urbervilles*.

Penelitian ini bersifat kualitatif. Data yang digunakan merupakan gabungan dari buku – buku dan artikel yang berhubungan dengan masalah yang dikaji oleh penulis, baik dari media cetak maupun media digital. Dalam menganalisa kontradiksi – kontradiksi tersebut, penulis menggunakan teory *Refleksi* yang dikembangkan oleh Georg Lukacks, yang merupakan pengembangan dari teory Marxist oleh Karl Marx. Teory ini menganalisa tentang dampak – dampak buruk yang ditimbulkan oleh system ekonomi kapitalis.

Dari penelitian ini, penulis menyimpulkan bahwa dominasi ekonomi yang dilakukan oleh kaum borjuis terhadap kaum proletar menimbulkan kesenjangan sosial dan perilaku buruk terhadap proletar, seperti ketidakpedulian akan hak para pekerja, perlakuan buruk terhadap pekerja dan rakyat miskin serta pemanfaatan tenaga kerja yang berlebihan oleh kaum borjuis.

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the Research

Literary is a reflection of life through the medium of language. In literature, an author can illustrate various aspects of life in his work freely. As Abrams states in his book *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and Critical Tradition* in the following quotation:

Literature is a vital record of what man have seen in his life, what they have experienced of it, what they have thought and felt about those aspect of it which have the most immediate and enduring interest for all of us. It is, thus, fundamentally on expression of life through the medium of language. (1976:10)

Novel as one kind of literary work illustrates various events in human life. One of those aspects is the condition of a society in a certain time and place. Actually there are some novels that can be regarded as portrayal of social condition in a particular society. For example, *Tess of the D'urbervilles*, written by Thomas Hardy. It is one of those works that reflects the social phenomena in England in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.



In the scope of literary studies, to see the reflection of social phenomena in the novel, a researcher needs literary theory. There are many literary theories to analyze the social phenomena as a reflection of society through the novel, for instances: Sociological, Postcolonial, Historical, Feminist and Marxist. In this research, the writer applies Marxist theory. In general point of view, Marxist theory of literature deals with socio-economic phenomena problem in society between two different major social classes – Upper class and lower class as reflected in the literary works.

Basically, there are many researchers analyzing Marxist theory in literary works. Experts who are great in their field write some of them. For instance, Fredrick Jameson in *Political Unconscious* (1981) and Elliot Krieger in *Twelfth Night* (1979) – summarized from Peter Barry (*Beginning Theory* 165-168). Those researchers deal with the domination of working class by upper class as seen in literary works.

Hardy lived and wrote in a time of difficult social change, when England was having its slow and painful transition from an old-fashioned, agricultural nation to a modern industrial one. Businessmen and entrepreneurs, or “new money,” joined the ranks of the social elite, as some families of the ancient aristocracy, or “old money,” faded into obscurity. Tess’s family in *Tess of the d’Urbervilles* illustrates this change. Tess family represents the old feudal family who still holds the family relationship to the top. Meanwhile D’urbervilles family reflects the capitalist family who sees somebody from the

material aspect. For the result of this situation, Tess is exploited by the D'urbervilles family.

The writer has some reasons for choosing *Tess of the D'urbervilles* to be analyzed. The first reason, *Tess of the D'urbervilles* is considered as a great novel. It is stated by Sarah Parneby in "*Tess of the D'urbervilles* in Victorian Age" <http://www.sparknotes.com/literature/author/famouswork/content/article>.

*Tess of the D'urbervilles* is one of the famous novels in Victorian Age. Thomas Hardy made a phenomenal breakthrough in English Literature at the time and soon became the best seller novel in the late of Victorian Age. This novel leads the readers get into the real condition of two opposite classes, upper and lower class. Thomas Hardy and his *Tess of the D'urbervilles* reached the degree where the readers could feel the affliction of the inferior class. That's what makes *Tess of the D'urbervilles* very popular. (Online January 22, 2008)

The second reason that *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* is considered as a realist work, by means the literary work reflects the real condition that happens in society, therefore the readers can see the situation and condition in a certain society through the realist novel since it depicts the real condition of a society. It is stated by Georg Lukacs as quoted by Raman Selden and Peter Widdowson in their book *A Reader's guide to contemporary Literary Theory* in the following quotation:

Lukacs' use of the term 'reflection' is characteristic of his work as a whole. Rejecting the 'naturalism' of the then recent European novel, he returns to the old realist view that the novel reflects reality, not by rendering its mere surface appearance, but by giving us a truer, more complete, more vivid and more dynamic reflection of reality. (2002:76)

Meanwhile, for the last reason the writer finds the influences of economy in separating two major different classes and the contradiction that caused by the social imbalances between two different classes which become the major concern of Marxist critics.

## **1.2 Identification of the Problem**

*Tess of the D'urbervilles* is a novel by Thomas Hardy which reflects the situation of social classes on England in early 19<sup>th</sup> century. It also represents some points of Marxist criticism, such as the division of two different classes and the domination by the ruling class. In this research, the writer concerns to the imbalance of social classes: the bourgeois and proletariat.

In one side the bourgeois is regarded as the higher class, who has a dominant role in the society, they have money, power, and monetary assets to employ the workers. By this dominant role the bourgeois can easily exploit the proletariat. In the other side, the proletariats who work for the bourgeois have no power to defend themselves, being the employees they must work to earn money to feed their family. This situation leads the exploitation of the workers.



## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION

Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the D'urbervilles* is the novel which portrays the socio-economic in English society in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Hardy describes England as having its slow and painful transition from an old-fashioned, agricultural nation to a modern industrial one. Businessmen and entrepreneurs, or "new money," joined the ranks of the social elite, as some families of the ancient aristocracy, or "old money," faded into obscurity. Tess's family in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* illustrates this change. Tess family represents the old feudal family who still holds the family relationship to the top. Meanwhile D'urbervilles family reflects the capitalist family who sees somebody from the material aspect.

After analyzing *Tess of the D'urbervilles* as discussed on the previous chapters, the writer finds there are some contradictions in English society in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The first is the domination in economy by the bourgeois. Having a good position as a land owner, production controller or monetary asset makes the bourgeois treats their workers at will. This condition is illustrated by the figure of D'urbervilles family and Durbeyfield family. As the employer, D'urbervilles family tends to treats his workers badly. For instance, the employer's wage will

be given on a liberal scale. Here the worker's wage is not paid based on his skill but it depends on the mood of the bourgeois.

The second is negative attitudes of bourgeois towards proletariat. Having a position as the upper class, employer, monetary asset or production controller makes the bourgeois tends to treat lower class badly. Some of those negative attitudes are dishonorable treatment, uncaring and exploitation of proletariat.

The third contradiction which is depicted in the analysis is Commodification. In a capitalist economic system, bourgeois views everything as an object, it does not matter who they are, and the bourgeois will take the advantage from them, even if though they belong to the same family.

The writer concludes that the famous *Tess of the D'urbervilles* is a portrayal of a capitalist economic system that leads the contradictions in the society of England in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The economic power that the bourgeois has created the imbalances among the human race, such as exploitation, dishonorable treatment, and Commodification. After all, having an economic power will trigger the violent of human rights.



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