

## A GENETIC STRUCTURALISM ANALYSIS ON UTILITARIANISM IN CHARLES DICKENS' HARD TIMES

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### Abstract

*Hard Times* is one of Charles Dickens works which becomes the satirical novel in eighteenth century. This novel criticizes the British social condition in England in the late of Eighteenth Century which is set in industrial revolution. The British society struggle to get advantages in their lives. They live and do activities to reach things materially. Thus, an ideology appears among them which is called as "Ideology of Utilitarianism". It influences the society's idea to get more advantages in every of their actions without thinking the consequences. This article has three problems to discuss. The first is the ideology of utilitarianism in the novel *Hard Times*. The second is the author's worldview towards utilitarianism, and the last is the social structure that prevails in Victorian Society of Britain. We use qualitative research method for this article to examine the analysis. This article begins with the analysis of the novel and uses genetic structuralism theory. We analyse the structure of *Hard Times*, the worldview of the author and Victorian social structure. Therefore, there are some results of this article namely We break the analysis of the binary opposition between some characters who apply the ideology of utilitarianism and another characters who do not apply it in their life, the worldview of the author towards the ideology of utilitarianism and the socio-cultural condition in Britain in Eighteenth century.

**Keywords:** Utilitarianism, Genetic structuralism, Victorian social structure

### Abstrak

*Hard Times* adalah sebuah novel karya Charles Dickens yang menjadi sebuah novel kritik sosial pada abad ke-18. Novel ini mengkritik kondisi sosial di Inggris pada akhir abad ke-18 tepatnya pada masa revolusi industri. Masyarakat Inggris berjuang untuk mendapatkan banyak keuntungan dalam hidup mereka. Mereka hidup dan melakukan beberapa aktivitas untuk mencapai beberapa hal secara material. Sebuah ideologi muncul di antara masyarakat Inggris yang disebut "ideologi utilitarianisme". Ideologi ini mempengaruhi pemikiran masyarakat untuk mendapatkan lebih banyak keuntungan pada setiap tindakan mereka. Artikel ini mempunyai tiga masalah. Pertama, ideologi utilitarianisme dalam novel *Hard Times*. Kedua, pandangan dunia pengarang terhadap utilitarianisme, dan terakhir struktur sosial yang berlaku dalam masyarakat Victoria di Inggris. Kami menggunakan metode penelitian kualitatif untuk menguji analisis. Artikel ini dimulai dengan analisis novel dengan menggunakan teori strukturalisme genetik oleh Lucien Goldmann. Kami menganalisa struktur novel *Hard Times*, pandangan dunia pengarang dan struktur sosial masyarakat Victoria. Oleh karena itu, ada beberapa hasil dari artikel ini, Kami menganalisis oposisi biner antara beberapa tokoh yang mengaplikasikan ideologi ini dan beberapa tokoh lain yang tidak mengaplikasikannya dalam kehidupan mereka, pandangan pengarang terhadap utilitarianisme, dan kondisi kultur sosial di Inggris pada abad ke-18.

**Kata Kunci :** Utilitarianisme, strukturalisme genetik, struktur masyarakat Victoria

### Introduction

*Hard Times* is a novel written by Charles Dickens. It is one of Charles Dickens' works which becomes a masterpiece. It is written in the mid-1800s in England. This period is called as the Victorian era. He writes *Hard Times* as utilitarianism which is applied during British

industrialization. This industrial revolution gives bad impacts to the society's life. such as poverty, jobless, and moral decadence.

*Hard Times* offers a critique of the Utilitarian ideology in British society. It influences the society's economic

system that most of them live prosperously. It also influences the educational system that make some children have worse future. They are forbidden to develop their imaginative thing to be a creative children. Charles Dickens as the author resists this ideology in his society. He explores the utilitarianism through the main character, Thomas Gradgrind who tend to reject fancy and imaginative thing. He just considers everything based on fact and material. However, he does not think the consequence of his own action whether it is good or bad.

To know how the ideology of utilitarianism influences the main character in *Hard Times* by using the world view of the author through the main character. We formulate some questions. The research questions are how does *Hard Times* novel describes the Utilitarianism, how is the author worldview toward utilitarianism in *Hard Times*, and why does Victorian society apply the ideology of utilitarianism.

We hope the result of this study will benefit the readers and those who are interested in the study of genetic structuralism analysis. This study has four goals. They are to understand the structure of the novel which constructs the ideology of Utilitarianism, to understand the author's world view towards Utilitarianism that is constructed in *Hard Times*, to analyze the reason of Victorian society who apply the ideology of Utilitarianism

### Research Methodology

This research is conducted by using the qualitative research method. Warren and Wellek (1977:50) state that since the majority of students can find their source materials in libraries, knowledge of most important libraries, and familiarity with catalogues as well as other reference books in undoubtedly an important equipment of almost every student of literature. This research uses deductive method to analyze the data of *Hard Times*. All of the data of *Hard Times* are categorized and classified to understand the novel which construct the ideology of utilitarianism. The type of data applied in analysing *Hard Times* is qualitative data since the data are in the form of sentences or words. Then we analyze the utilitarianism by conducting genetic structuralism to find the binary opposition between characters who agree with utilitarianism and the other character who do not agree with it. Therefore, genetic structuralism from Lucien Goldmann becomes the theoretical foundation to understand the structure of the novel which constructs this utilitarianism, the world view of the author towards the utilitarianism in the novel and the Victorian social structure.

### Result

The data which have been collected and analyzed. It finds result that there is the binary opposition among the characters in their ideology as the structure of *Hard Times*.

Some characters agree with the ideology of utilitarianism. Besides, the other characters disagree with it. One of characters in *Hard Times*, Thomas Gradgrind who applies this ideology in his daily life. Gradgrind as the utilitarian in the novel by considering his attitude and his thinking of fact in life. He instills his students the ideology of utilitarianism to measure this life by getting some advantages. In the end of the story, Dickens explores the impact of the ideology of utilitarianism towards some characters in *Hard Times*. Especially, it gives bad impact in their social life. This utilitarianism shows the negative impact in applying it.

### Discussion

This article discusses about the analysis of the ideology of utilitarianism in *Hard Times*. The main character in the novel, Thomas Gradgrind, applies the ideology in his daily life. Besides, he also instills it through his students and his two children. There is a binary opposition between the characters who agree with the ideology and the other characters who disagree with it. The theory of genetic structuralism is used to analyzes those conflicts in the novel.

The first discussin in this article is the ideology of utilitarianism in *Hard Times*. It is constructed as a structure in *Hard times*. It becomes the literary structure which represents the social structure in Victorian period. Goldmann via Faruk (2012:165) states that the literary structure is known as an imaginary that is created by the characters, environment, culture, social, ideology, and the relationship among others. In this case, *Hard Times*'s structure represents the social structure that happens in Victorian period that is set in industrial revolution. The British society struggle to get advantages in their life. They live and do activities to reach things materially. They want to get most prosperous life.

*Hard Times* shows the different characters presenting different ways and degrees of this ideology that is so important in this novel. Dickens wants to expose the binary opposition in applying the ideology of utilitarianism that give much influences in their life. Some characters in apply this utilitarianism in their environment. Thomas gradgrind is the main character who applies this ideology. He is one of the central figures whom Dickens explains as a man who struggles to convey and to instill the ideology of utilitarianism.

“THOMAS GRADGRIND, sir. A man of realities. A man of facts and calculations. A man who proceeds upon the principle that two and two are four, and nothing over, and who is not to be talked into allowing for anything over. Thomas Gradgrind, sir - peremptorily Thomas - Thomas Gradgrind. With a rule and a pair of scales, and the multiplication table always in his pocket, sir, ready to weigh and measure any parcel of human

nature, and tell you exactly what it comes to. It is a mere question of figures, a case of simple arithmetic”.

(Dickens, 1854:2)

He applies it in his school in Coketown. He is a firm believer in utilitarianism and instilled this utilitarianism into his students at the school from a very young age. Gradgrind not only instills this ideology to his students but also instills this utilitarianism into his two children. Louisa and Tom are his children. They become the victim of their father's principle. Gradgrind forces Louisa to marry Bounderby. Although Bounderby is an old man and Louisa is still young and also she does not exactly love Bounderby. Mr. Bounderby has everything materially. He has some employees who work in his factory and bank. He has a power to decide the system that is applied in his factory.

Mr. Bounderby, a friend of Gradgrind who also applies this ideology in his factory for his employees. Stephen Blackpool is one of Bounderby's employees. Blackpool tells Bounderby about his problem with his wife. His wife is a drunkard. She often drinks an alcohol and she never care for her husband, Blackpool. He conveys Bounderby to marry another girl whom he loves. Her name is Rachel. She is also the Bounderby's employee. Bounderby gives Blackpool some requirements to marry Rachel. Bounderby explains that there is a law that Blackpool must pass. He needs to pay fee to process his marriage. He is a victim of Bounderby's action in deciding thing without thinking the consequences.

In the end of the story, Dickens explores the impact of the ideology of utilitarianism towards some characters in *Hard Times*. Especially, it gives bad impact in their social life. This utilitarianism shows the negativism in applying it. Gradgrind realizes that his principle that he instills to his students and his children influence their life to be sorrowful.

“It was a fundamental principle of the Gradgrind philosophy that everything was to be paid for. Nobody was ever on any account to give anybody anything, or render anybody help without purchase. Gratitude was to be abolished, and the virtues springing from it were not to be. Every inch of the existence of mankind, from birth to death, was to be a bargain across a counter. And if we didn't get to Heaven that way, it was not a politico-economical place, and we had no business there.”

(Dickens, 1854:229)

It is proved that the ideology of utilitarianism influences much the social condition in the novel *Hard Times*. This ideology influences people to get more advantages in every their action. Thus, other people who have helped need to purchase it materially. Gradgrind thought what he had done by his instilling the ideology of

utilitarianism that has made him worry about the effect of his principle. Louisa is unhappy with her marriage. Gradgrind knows what he does to Louisa is wrong. He forces Louisa to follow his desirability without thinking Louisa's feeling. Louisa frustrated in his father's enforcement. Tom also becomes the victim of his father's principle. He becomes a thief to fulfill his own need. His life becomes tragic. He dies in hospital which is caused by fever. He also dies in regretting what he has done in his life. However, the other characters who do not apply the ideology of utilitarianism. They live happily. Sissy Jupe's finally marries and she has a child. It is contradictory with the life of Louisa that is not as happy as Jupe. Sissy Jupe wants to teach her children's growth in right way. She will teach them how to be natural person and learn as childish do and certainly becomes a good people in their life.

The second discussion is the world view of the author. Goldmann (via Faruk, 2010:65-66) describes the world view as a kind of ideas, aspiration that relate the members of certain society and appose to another society. Thus, this world view not only an idea, but also it is a way and life style to integrate member of class society that differentiate them to another society. Charles Dickens as the author is a part of the collective subjects. This collective subject is a group of society. Goldmann (in Faruk, 1999:15) specifies them as a social class in the Marxist sense, because that's the group that is proven in history as the group that has created a complete and comprehensive view of the life and that has influenced the development of human history. The position of Charles Dickens is a member of society. He is not as individual subject. He becomes the representative of society in his own environment to criticize the social phenomenon that is happened in Victorian period. He abuses the ideology of utilitarianism. He thinks that this it gives the bad impacts for the society's life. They tend to measure their actions will give them benefits by getting some advantages. Dickens explores how this ideology of utilitarianism applies through the main character in the novel *Hard Times*.

The third discussion is about Victorian Social Structure Constructed in *Hard Times*. Victorian period is a period of Queen Victoria in eighteenth century. This Victorian period is largely associated with the growth of cities and the expansion of the economy. In this periods, a Britain is transformed by the industrial revolution. It not only gives the good impact towards the economic system and the prosperous life of society but also gives the bad impact for society. There are many hard workers and child labors that influenced by the existence of industrial revolution. Some factory owners pushed up their own profits by pushing down the wages of their workers. The conditions for the working classes in the industrializing cities continued to be appalling. Men, women, and children worked long hours for little pay, often in dangerous conditions. It took many years for wages and working environments to improve.

“In the period between 1815 and 1848 it began as purely utilitarian and piecemeal movement,

thriving on the mild modifications of import duties carried out by men like Huskisson: it ended as a doctrinaire force making for complete freedom of trade, backed by a whole philosophy of commercial liberalism and a new popular faith in the virtues of free competitive enterprise.”

(Thomson, 1950:78)

To get most benefits in life by pushing down the other people that make the ideology of utilitarianism spreads out in Britain. This ideology influences society's thinking to employ other people to get more benefits in their actions. They think that their actions will be good when it gives some benefit for them without thinking the consequence.

*Hard Times* is the product of human fact. Goldmann states that the presence of human facts will show the relation between historical actions and cultural works (literary work) as human facts (1981:42). *Hard Times* becomes a human fact because it has the relation between this novel and the historical background which is set in Victorian period. This relation can not be separated each other. Goldmann (via Faruk 2010:64-65) describes the concept of homology between literary work and social structure is different from the concept of reflection. The concept of reflection means the literary work structure is reflected the real social structure directly. However, the concept of homology relates the literary work structure and the real social structure in different way. The literary work does not represent the real social directly. In fact, both has the same structure. The structure of novel *Hard Times* relates the structure of Victorian society by determining the world view of the author. Because the author is one of the members of society who writes his work based on the social phenomenon around him.

The condition of Victorian social structure shows in the description about the condition that happen in the novel *Hard Times* is an unstable condition. The condition in Coketown is unnatural. There are much factory smokes that fulfill the air in Coketown. The air are soiled. Not only the condition of the Coketown city that is ugly. But also the condition of the educational and the economic system that becomes the main problems in Victorian social structure. The explanation about the educational and economic system will be explained as follows.

Many educators at the time shared Dickens's view of what was wrong with the schools. They believed there was too much emphasis on cramming the children full of facts and figures, and not enough attention given to other aspects of their development. Some teachers are often strict and by modern standards very scary. Children soon learn to do what the teacher asks, otherwise they would get a rap across the knuckles with a ruler, or a clip around the ears.

“The scene was a plain, bare, monotonous vault of a school-room, and the speaker's square forefinger emphasized his observations by underscoring every sentence with a line on the schoolmaster's sleeve. The emphasis was helped by the speaker's square wall of a forehead, which had his eyebrows for its

base, while his eyes found commodious cellarage in two dark caves, overshadowed by the wall. The emphasis was helped by the speaker's mouth, which was wide, thin, and hard set. The emphasis was helped by the speaker's voice, which was inflexible, dry, and dictatorial.”

(Dickens, 1854:1)

Victorian period deals with the rise of economic system in England. It shows the industrial revolution that happened in Eighteenth century. This industrial revolution influences the economic system in England.

The economic system rises in the late of eighteenth century by the growing of industry, trade and agriculture. The development of industry is depicted by the appearance of factories in Britain and there are some inventions of the technology and machine. The development of trade is depicted by the productivity of clothes in textile factories. Some traders exports their product to other countries. And the development of agriculture is able to produce increasingly cheap food supplies.

The effort of manufacturers to take advantages of these markets, particularly in the clothing industry. By the early eighteenth century, clothing manufacturers increasingly devoted their attention to lightweight, cheap, easily-colored fabrics, rather than the high-quality wools that had dominated the medieval textile industry. For example some merchants needed more cost-effective methods of production, which led to the rise of mechanization and the factory system. The larger machinery also required a new approach to managing labor. The new machines required close management in order to repay their heavy costs. The factory owners encourage a new degree of labor discipline. They require workers to work at exact hours and control the workers' paid based on their skill.

### Conclusion and Suggestion

*Hard Times* is one of the master piece novels written by Charles Dickens which is published in 1854 in England. This novel criticizes the British social condition in England in the late of Eighteenth Century. This social condition is set in industrial revolution. In this period, the economic system was transformed from 1750s to 1830s. It was characterized by the growth of a new system comprising factories and new technologies.

An ideology appears in the late of eighteenth century. This ideology is called as “Ideology of Utilitarianism”. Utilitarianism is the main philosophical ideology in Victorian period which considers human being action is weighing the profit, advantages, benefits and happiness. In this case, The Victorian society struggle to get advantages in their life. They live and do activities to reach things materially. They want to get most prosperous life. Thus, This ideology influence the society's idea to get more material in every their action without considering the consequence that will happen later.

(Downloaded on Thursday, March 12 2015, 10.30 WIB).

Dickens abuses the ideology of utilitarianism. His purposes in writing *Hard Times* is to attack the conditions of life in England's industrial cities. He tries to satirize the utilitarian ideology that recognized only the value of human reason, neglecting the values of the human heart. He warns society of the consequences associated with abandoning human emotion. Because, industrial period brings capitalists to conquer the economic system in British society. They have big role in economic system. They can do some actions to get most advantages without thinking the consequences. In fact, the lower class gets the consequences. They are jobless and poorer.

[7] <https://TheVictorianSchool.htm>

(Downloaded on Thursday, March 12 2015, 11.00 WIB)

*Hard Times* deals with the contrary of ideology of utilitarianism. There is the binary opposition between the utilitarian and non-utilitarian. Dickens shows this binary opposition among the characters in *Hard Times*. Some characters are utilitarian. They agree with this ideology of utilitarianism. However, some other characters are non-utilitarian. They do not agree with this ideology. Dickens wants to give a message to the readers about the negativism of the ideology of utilitarianism. In the end of the story, Dickens explores the impact of the ideology of utilitarianism towards some characters in *Hard Times*. Especially, it gives bad impact in their social life. This utilitarianism shows the negative impact in applying it. Grandgrind realizes that his principle that he instills to his students and his children influence their life to be sorrowful.

#### Acknowledgement

My sincere gratitude is hereby extended to the following people who never ceased in helping until this article is compiled: Dr. Hairus Salikin, M.Ed. as Dean of Faculty of Letters, Jember University; Dr. Eko Suwargono, M.Hum and Drs. Imam Basuki, M.Hum. as the reviewer of this article; All of the lecturers of English Department who have taught me precious knowledge during studying in Faculty of Letters; All of the staff of Central Library and Faculty of Letters' library for helping me to borrow some books.

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