

SOCIAL DISPARITY AND CLASS STRUGGLE AGAINST DICTATORSHIP IN SUZANNE COLLINS' *MOCKING JAY*

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Abstract

Mocking jay is a novel which talks about the oppression and the rebellion of the class' system in the modern culture where the ideology and the system belong to the ruling class. Class struggle that is implied in the *Mocking jay* is a kind of class conflict which exists to gain the new class' system and bring down the dictatorship in the society. The dictatorship contributes to the social disparity that concerns with the separation between the domination of the ruling class and the working class. In this problem, the capitalist system leads class rebellion to gain the freedom and the equality in human right. In this qualitative research, Marxism is used to explore how the ideology, economic power, and class structure determine the consciousness and the false consciousness of society implied in the literary work. The goals of this research are to prove the occurrence of social disparity, dictatorship system which oppresses the working class and evokes the class struggle in the *Mocking jay*, and to reveal how Suzanne Collins considers the ideological position of the *Mocking jay*.

Keywords: *Class conflict, class struggle, social disparity, dictatorship, Marxism, capitalism.*

Abstrak

Mocking jay adalah novel yang berbicara tentang penindasan dan pemberontakan sistem kelas di dalam budaya modern yang mana ideologi dan sistemnya menjadi milik kelas penguasa. Perjuangan kelas yang tersirat dalam *Mocking jay* adalah jenis konflik antar kelas yang muncul untuk mendapatkan sistem kelas baru dan menghilangkan kediktatoran di masyarakat. Kediktatoran menyebabkan kesenjangan sosial yang berkaitan dengan pemisahan antara dominasi kelas penguasa dan kelas pekerja. Dalam masalah ini, sistem kapitalis menyebabkan perjuangan kelas untuk mendapatkan kebebasan dan kesetaraan dalam hak asasi manusia. Dalam penelitian kualitatif ini, Marxisme digunakan untuk mengeksplorasi bagaimana ideologi, kekuatan ekonomi, dan struktur kelas menentukan kesadaran dan kesadaran palsu masyarakat yang tersirat dalam karya sastra. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk membuktikan terjadinya kesenjangan sosial, sistem kediktatoran yang menindas kelas pekerja dan membangkitkan perjuangan kelas dalam *Mocking jay*, dan untuk mengungkapkan bagaimana Suzanne Collins menguraikan posisi ideologis di *Mocking jay*.

Kata kunci: *konflik antar kelas, perjuangan kelas, kesenjangan sosial, kediktatoran, Marxisme, kapitalisme.*

Introduction

This research focuses on the social disparity and class struggle related to ideological position in Suzanne Collins' *Mocking jay*. This novel is about the rebellion to gain freedom and revolution between districts and Capitol. This novel largely explores the rebellion and war between districts and Capitol, leading to districts' revolution against the dictatorship system. The districts' revolution exists in order to bring down the dictatorship and changes the system. This research studies the social and political condition

through the fictitious society that makes class struggle exist. Concerning with the social and political condition in the novel, I try to find the social disparity and its impact, the ruling class' way in oppressing the working class and evoking the class struggle, the working class' way to resist against the ruling class' system to get revolution.

This research uses Marxism theory to analyze how the societies go through the process of change. Marxism has been recognized as a scientific theory of human societies and the practice of constructing social event. Marxism is a form of critique or discourse with identifying the history of the

societies and the ideology through literary work (Williams, 1977:52-53). Marxism is used as an instrument to explore the class structure, economic power, consciousness and false consciousness implied in the literary work. Williams (1977:77-78) argues that the dominant class maintains its control over the society by reinforcing its ideology through its art. Marxism in the literary work mostly talks about the ruling class which has strong contribution in shaping human event. It becomes increasingly important to ask how a given text contributed to the solution of social problems based on Marxist principles.

Marxism criticizes the class relation and class interest (Marx, 1887:7). Class interest is determined by objective interests that subsume each individual to the general interests of the class. Class interest, in here, related to the political and economic life. According to Marx, political life and the ideas are determined by the character of economic life (1887: 31).

“Dominant class is the character that determines the economic and political life. Dominant class takes control of the economic system as the ruling class. Economic system forces the people movement. This system forces the working class. The device that is used to force the working class movement is means of production. The means of production includes foods, goods, clothing, wealth, shelter, and other such necessities that become the foundation of culture. In other words, the force of production is an example that structures the society. The force which determines the creation of classes is the other class interest which exists prior to the political constitution of the class.” (Marx, 1887:10-11)

In Marxism assumptions, Force of production is the factor that brings conflict such as social disparity and class struggle. The class struggle takes place between dominant classes and working class. The class struggle is realized as a clash of ideology between classes. This conflict exists to gain the new structure of the system in the society. The power of literary work is actually to strengthen the ideologies brought by the writer related to the class system. This ideology gives an influence to the writer's mind and it can be seen from their works. The ideologies that filled the literary works will contain the history of the society from the real life. Consequently, people's view about the society and the structure of society will change.

this research is appropriate to enrich the knowledge about Marxism criticism through literary work. This Study describes the causes of social disparity and the class struggle, trough the fictitious society in the *Mocking jay*. This research is needed since this will be good contribution to the English department student majority in literature to gain the knowledge of Marxism, and it is hoped to make the readers to be more aware of implicit meaning about the ideology that implied in the literary work.

Research Methodology

This research uses qualitative research. Denzim and Lincoln (2005:2) quoted in Rosdiana's thesis, define qualitative research aiming to interpret the phenomena, and are done by involving various methods. It is kind of data which is in form discussion, statement, exploration, information, argument and opinion. This research is arranged by primary data including the data from *Mockingjay* in the form of quotation and operated by secondary data in the form of Marxism theory.

The collection of the data uses documentary method. Documentary analysis is used to give classification about important or relevant information to this research by close reading, understand, and critically analyze (Blaxter et al, 2006:208). The analysis is started from collecting data which later be used in the process of analysis. The research uses Raymond Williams Theory (1977) entitle Marxism and Literature.

In data processing, this research starts to analyze the novel by close reading and understanding the novel. Then, this study is conducted in several steps. First, I compile, classify, and verify the data from Books review of *Mockingjay*, Suzanne Collin's biography and *Das Capital I* to see the social and political condition implied in the story. The second step is gathering information and data from the novel to show the social and political condition. This research is done by applying Williams' theory of ideology in *Marxism and Literature*. All of the data and information are gathered and analyzed using the theory by Williams which leads to find the ideological position in the *Mockingjay*.

Result

This research analyzes social disparity and class struggle related to ideological position in the *Mockingjay*. There are some problems of social and political conditon. In the novel, The dominant class exists to rule, oppress, and control the districts. *Mockingjay* portrays the way dominant class' capitalism and the other communism system take control the Panem. The dictatorship system between double power Capitol and District 13 makes the class struggle exist. The working class fight against the ruling class in order to end the oppression. The class struggle is the result of the revolution process to gain the human right, equal and better life. In this case, the result exposes the systems of dictators and the ideological position in the *Mocking Jay* itself. Hence, this research wants to resolve the social and political problems through the story of the novel.

Discussion

This article intends to present the social disparity that occurs in the society in Suzanne Collins' *Mocking jay*. The second, this research explains the ruling class' way in oppressing the working class and evoking the class struggle. The third, this research describes the working class' ways to resist against the ruling class systems to get revolution which

emerges in the *Mocking Jay*. The last, this study explores the ideological position in the novel.

In this novel, Collins tries to employ the struggle that she intended as a critique of society's obsession with the media, fashion, power, authority and personal comfort. *Mocking jay* is a war novel. This story tells about social disparity, dictatorship, and the rebellion to gain freedom and revolution between the dominant class and the working class in Panem. The class distinction in Panem exists when the authority of the dominant class takes apart. The dominant class plays as the ruling class that determines the ideological, political, and economic system. Panem is distinguished into the Capitol as the dominant class and the Districts as the working class. The social condition in Panem is contradiction one another. There is no fairness in the economic condition and social status between the Capitol and the districts. Capitol oppresses the districts and gives them more fear with some strict rules. Capitol forces them to obey and keep their duty in the production. There is no chance for the other districts to live freely. Capitol grasps everything, include of the transportation, electricity, food, technology, etc. Capitol has the political and economical power that gives bad meaning to the districts. In this interpretation, the districts are assumed as the object of oppression, and Capitol takes control the object entirely. Capitol exploits the districts; determines their salaries and working condition, and other elements of their lives. Capitol, through its system, has been successfully manipulate the districts' view of life. Capitol's system is applied to harass the district implicitly. Capitol, leads by President Snow, uses some ways to keep the mode of production. He governs the Panem through each district using the annual game Quarter Quell, terror, propaganda and oppression.

Quarter Quell is made as the reminder of the rebellion, that evens the strongest, cannot, overcome the power of the Capitol. This death game has no mercy and purposed to control the districts; to show that the districts are still in Capitol's authority.

"The tributes – who are the actual children involved here, not your trio of freaks – are forced to fight to the death? That you were going into that arena for people's amusement? Was that a big secret in the Capitol?"

"No. But they don't view it the way we do" I say. (Collins, 2010:54)

Meanwhile, the other terror from Capitol is bombing. Bombing is the Capitol's way to show its great power. Capitol's bombs were raining down to destroy the districts.

"... The sky's an empty, cloudless blue. The street clear except for the people hauling the wounded to the hospital. There's no enemy, no alarm. Then the siren begin to wail. Within seconds, a low-flying V-shaped formation of Capitol

hover planes appears above us, and the bombs begin to fall..." (Collins, 2010:92)

Capitol's dictatorship system operates freely in Panem. Snow still makes the districts can't go out from their line. The brutal justice gives to them who belong to the rebels' side. Propaganda program is arranged by the Capitol in order to control and grasp the districts. President Snow uses this program as a media to influence the district and to grasp the districts' attention.

"It's always the same. War footage. Propaganda. Replaying the bombing of District 12. An ominous message from President Snow. So it's almost entertaining to see Caesar Flickerman, the eternal host of the Hunger Games, with his painted face and sparkly suit, preparing to give an interview. Until the camera pulls back and I see that his guess is Peeta." (Collins, 2010:21)

The program shows the bombing of district 12. This program aims to make the districts have a fear of the Capitol's power. This is also the President Snow's way to send a message to the rebels. He tries to scare them off and stops the rebellion.

On the other hand, District 13 is the last district in Panem. Under the command of President Coin, District 13 gains its authority through its systems. District 13 designs their readiness and waits for their second chance to rebel. Unfortunately, there is no different among Capitol and District 13. They are both using the rebels' participant and the victors against each other for the authority of Panem. The rebels' participants are pawns of the dictator to grasp their authority. District 13 is thriving, strict, and structure society. President Coin in this district governs the population in District thirteen through the strict rules. The oppression, unconsciously, grasps the citizens in this district. The population lives under the President's command. Not only President Snow but President Coin in 13 uses propaganda program as well. The dictator system is clearly described in District 13 that influences the victors' and the other districts' view of life. The analysis shows that the authority of Coin leads the society in the trouble condition. From what Coin's system has been given to the society, she thinks that the society is the pawns.

There is political system monopolized by Capitol and District 13. The way to analyze their political system is by grouping their ideological possession. Both Capitol and District 13 use their own oppression rules to control the citizens. Capitol and District 13 are two kinds of dictators who can be stated as the exact opposite political ideologies that contradict each other in every possible way. The system of each dictator has their own weakness. Capitol's capitalist system has some weaknesses that brings its antithesis, in this case is working class' socialism. Finally, thirteen's communism is the synthesis that founded by the thesis and

antithesis (Marx, 1887:354). One of the major matters in this case is the districts' ideology itself. By knowing the political system through both Capitol and 13, the districts realize their own position and power.

“... Snow thought the Hunger Games were an efficient means of control. Coin thought the parachutes would expedite the war. But in the end, who does it benefit? No one. . . .” (Collins, 2010:377)

Marxism perspective states that between capitalist and communist, society lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other (Marx, 1848, 521-527). There corresponds to this also a political transition period in which the State can be nothing but the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat. The districts got their class consciousness and gain their authority. They use their power to bring down the form of dictatorship systems in Panem.

The dictatorship leads the working class into class struggle. The districts allies with the other, holds the leading position in the society and the state. Political consciousness and awareness make the districts united. Victors' dictatorship allows the districts to consolidate political power, suppress all opposition, gain control of the means of production, and destroy the machinery of the ruling class in Capitol. They share their means of production and the mode of production, and give their whole authority to Coin in district 13. They struggle the ruling class and the system. Working class needs Panem without any oppression systems for a certain length of time. It is not the elimination of the state as a final aim that separates the citizens from the anarchists and struggle. It is the process of the revolution.

Mocking Jay does not mention any ruling class that win. Districts' power gains their freedom in their life. They abolish the oppression. The time was change. The new government makes districts life becomes better. There is no oppression, discrimination, and force. The citizens gain their freedom period in the end, where the liberties belong to their life.

“Oh, not now. Now we're in the sweet period where everyone agrees that our recent horrors should never be repeated” he says.

“The time it sticks. Maybe we are witnessing the evolution of the human race. Think about that. (Collins, 2010:379)

There is no restriction to move to the other district. The new President gives them freedom to live. The Hunger Games is abolished. The arenas have been destroyed, and the memorials built. The citizens live normally with no fear anymore, even the history of the Hunger Games and the war are still taught at the school.

“The questions are just beginning. The arenas have been completely destroyed, the memorials built, there are no more Hunger Games. But they teach about them at the school, . . .” (Collins, 2010:389)

It can be described that the working class' system replaces the ruling class' political systems with a system expanding democratic rights and liberties to the exploited classes.

Conclusion

Mocking jay is approached using Marxist criticism to find the distinction of social, economic, and politic relations and its effects through the characters' life and social condition in the story. Marxism is applied to find some impacts of the class struggle and the dictatorship of the ruling class in the novel. The result shows that the districts in Panem realize the political power of the Capitol and the district 13. They recognize that they have been manipulated, oppressed and tricked by the double powers both of Capitol's capitalism system and district 13's communism system. There is a correspondence that political transition period in which the Capitol and 13 can be nothing, but the revolutionary dictatorship of the victors and the other rebels' participants take apart.

Mockingjay does not emphasize that capitalism system or communism system has been successfully takes control of Panem's authority. Marxist critic demonstrates how capitalism and communism system in *Mockingjay* have been successfully brought down. Suzanne Collins succeeds to show how the ruling class' ideologies of care, suffering, cover over the true sources of capitalist and communist oppression and exploitation. The systems in Panem collapse. There is no strict rule through the dictator anymore. The districts choose to live normally with no class structure, oppression, or any strict command. The new governments change the system. The liberty belongs to people. Without dictatorship, citizen's view of life belongs to communism, where it can be proved through the way they think of the classless, equality, and class division. The districts' ideology stand still like it is. There is balance collaboration between the new system and ideology of districts after the revolution.

Suzanne Collins succeeds to show the ideological position in the *Mockingjay*. No one of both dictators from Capitol or District 13 led and take control the system of Panem at the end. No one of the dictators' system operates in Panem. The new president is chosen. There is no oppression, no radical rule, no tricky manipulation or discrimination. The result shows that there is no dominant class anymore. The citizens live in the district where they want to belong. The people have their voice to choose for their life. The system in Panem is changed. The new system displaces the dictatorship system in Panem, but the ideology of the people could be the same. The ideology including classless, equal life, human right, sharing commodity, belong to the citizens. In conclusion, Collins' novel holds out the hope that revolution can be won within labor's movement. In

Mockingjay, society is capable of reform and improvement without structural transformation. Collins emphasizes that classless society and equal life is the chosen one that the citizens belong.

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