



**THE REPRESENTATION OF PROLETARIAN FRENCH
WOMAN'S OPPRESSIONS IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY IN
VICTOR HUGO'S *LES MISÉRABLES***

THESIS

**Presented to the English Department, Faculty of Letters, Jember
University, as one of the requirements to obtain the Award of Sarjana
Sastra Degree in English Studies**

Written by:

ELOK DAROJATIN

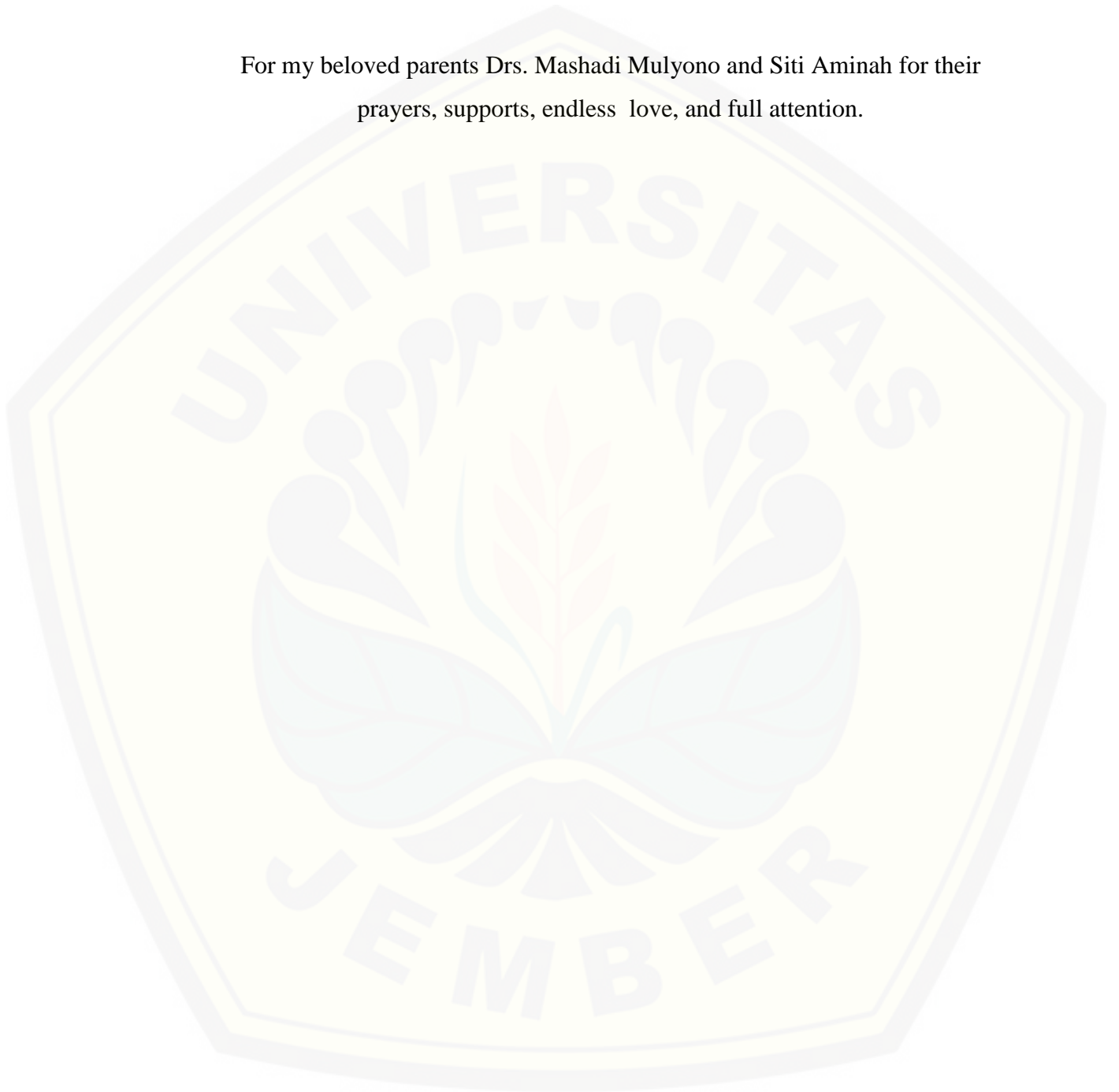
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**ENGLISH DEPARTMENT
FACULTY OF LETTERS
JEMBER UNIVERSITY**

2015

DEDICATION

For my beloved parents Drs. Mashadi Mulyono and Siti Aminah for their prayers, supports, endless love, and full attention.



MOTTO

You do not have to be anti-man to be pro-woman

(Jane Galvin Lewis)



DECLARATION

I hereby state that the thesis entitled *The Representation of Proletarian French Woman's Oppressions in the Nineteenth Century in Victor Hugo's Les Misérables* is an original piece of writing. I certify that the analysis and the research described in this thesis have not already been submitted for any other degree or any publications.

I certify to the best of my knowledge that all sources used and any help received in the preparation of this thesis have been acknowledged.

Jember, 25 March 2015

The Candidate,

Elok Darojatin

090110101002

APPROVAL SHEET

Approved and accepted by the Examination Committee of English
Department, Faculty of Letters, Jember University, on:

Day, Date : 25 March 2015

Time : 12.30

Place : Faculty of Letters, Jember University

The Examination Committee:

Chairman,

Secretary,

Dr. Ikwana Setiawan, MA.
NIP.197806262002121002

Dra. Supiastutik, M.Pd
NIP. 196605141998032001

The Examiners:

1. Prof. Dr. Sutarto, M.A (.....)
NIP. 194909211975031001

2. Hat Pujiati, S.S., M.A (.....)
NIP. 198009082005012001

Approved by
The Dean,

Dr. Hairus Salikin, M. Ed
NIP. 196310151989021001

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

All praises to Allah SWT, the Lord of the universe, I can finish this thesis well as one of the final requirements to obtain Sarjana Sastra Degree because of His great blessing and care for me. The thesis has been completed with the involvement and assistance of many people. Thus, at this best time, I would like to dedicate my deepest appreciation to:

1. Dr. Hairus Salikin, M.Ed, the Dean of The Faculty of Letters, Jember University;
2. Dra. Supiastutik, M.Pd, both as the Head of English Department, Faculty of Letters, Jember University and my second advisor who totally encourages me patiently and gives great solutions for every single obstacle I experience along this way;
3. Dr. Ikwan Setiawan, S.S, M.A, as my first advisor who shows and gives me beneficial guidance in conducting this thesis during his busy time;
4. All staffs of The Faculty of Letters who have helped me in the process of my study;
5. My dearest brother Amri Furqoni and sister Deta Tutu Aulia for their smiles and joy along my life;
6. My lover M. Sahibi Rotib, S.Ei for all hearted love;
7. All of my friends, especially Fitri Aningsih, Johan, Monafisa, and Fahad, in The Faculty of Letters, Jember University, for the warm hug to me along my study;
8. My second University (HMI Cabang Jember, KOHATI-HMI Cabang Jember, HMI Cabang Jember Komisariat Sastra, and alumni) which gives knowledges, experiences, and trust to my life that I never have before. I do love you all;
9. My big family in Pondok Wirani, Jalan Jawa 4 b No. 5. Thank you so much for your supports until I finish my study;

10. Rhonera English Club and UKM Paduan Suara Melodi Sastra. Thank you for welcoming and giving me the best knowledge;
11. My Alma mater.



SUMMARY

THE REPRESENTATION OF PROLETARIAN FRENCH WOMAN'S OPPRESSIONS IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY IN VICTOR HUGO'S *LES MISÉRABLES*; ELOK DAROJATIN; 090110101002; 2015; 42 PAGES; ENGLISH DEPARTMENT; FACULTY OF LETTERS; JEMBER UNIVERSITY.

This research analyzes the woman's oppressions represented in *Les Misérables*. This novel tells about oppressed proletarian people in the nineteenth century in French because of social and political conflict at that time. The woman character named Fantine is characterized as a victim of the France's situation. Her life is miserable since child until the end of her life. This research aims to gain the portrayed representation of proletarian French woman's oppressions in *Les Misérables* and the ideological position of the author toward it.

Simone de Beauvoir's perspective about woman's oppressions and the relation between literary work and the social life written in *The Second Sex* is employed in this research. Collecting the data, qualitative research needs documentary technique. The data come from *Les Misérables* by Victor Hugo (1862) which is used as a material object. While the formal object is Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1953); *Western Civilization: Their History and Their Culture* by Edward McNails Burns (1958); *Simone de Beauvoir* by Claudia Card (2003); and *Simone de Beauvoir* by Ursula Tidd (2004). A thesis entitled "A study of the Main Character Leading to the Social Conflict in Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables*" by Khoirudin (2005) and a dissertation by Badja Fariza (2011) entitled "The Position of Women in Thomas Hardy's Poetry" are also used as the previous researches. The additional data from internet which are available in the references are also used to consolidate the discussion in this research. Due to the usage of inductive method, the explanation comes from the specific to the general one. The inductive method here refers to the grouped and analyzed particular data

in the novel which relate to the woman's oppressions in order to conclude the general one.

The result of this research shows that the woman character in *Les Misérables* by Victor Hugo (1862) represents the proletarian French Woman's Oppressions condition in the nineteenth century. Victor Hugo describes it through Fantine, a character who lives in the miserable condition since she was child until the end of her life. The factors of her oppressed condition come from social and her own condition. Social condition forces her to be the victim and shapes society to have a perspective that woman is the Other, not the One. The surrounding people who oppress woman means the bourgeois class and even the woman proletarian class itself. Victor Hugo's ideology is criticizing the government about the social condition especially woman's oppressions. Through *Les Misérables* he breaks the mystery of common people life and protests the executive government about the arbitrarily government toward common people.

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I am going to explain the reasons of choosing the subject and the object matters to be discussed. I also explain the problems to discuss and the goals of the study as well. This chapter consists of the background of the study, the research topic, the research problems, the problems to discuss, the scope of study, and the goals of the study. The following explanation guides us to understand what is discussed in this thesis.

1.1 The Background of the Study

Feminist problems often have not been only discussed and debated in the academic community but also common people. Their discussion is related to the problems such as, woman rights, the leadership of woman, woman trafficking, and also the violence toward wife. All kinds of the oppression above caused by the injustice roles between man and woman in society, such as the man is superior than woman in every single aspect of life (Ichwan, 2013:2). Even, the public roles are dominated by man rather than woman in society. Feminism is grounded on the belief that women are oppressed or disadvantaged by comparison with men. In fact, their oppression in some way is illegitimated or unjustified. Under the umbrella of this general characterization there are, however, many interpretations of women and their oppression, so that it is a mistake to think of feminism as a single philosophical doctrine, or as implying an agreed political program (James 1998, 576).

The domination of man towards woman in every single aspect of life is used as a chance to oppress woman in order that the man takes the profit through it. The oppression towards woman may happen in the family between husband and wife. One of the kinds of woman's oppressions phenomena in the family is

woman physical abuse. A husband subjected his wife in an improper treatment mocking such as hitting and beating.

The oppressions also happen in the work place between worker and owner or even among workers themselves. The industrialists usually oppress the workers through the monthly salary. The workers often get an unequal salary than what they do in a month. The powerlessness of the worker and the daily needs of money is used by the industrialists to exploit them improperly. Moreover the worker does not have any enough knowledge to strive their proper monthly salary for themselves.

The oppression towards woman is the old phenomenon in the world including France. The kinds of the oppression can be physical, psychological, social, and others. The subject of the oppression can be done by the man or the woman herself in the work place, surrounding society, or even the family such as husband and parents. “More importantly, the analysis of the cause of woman’s oppressions form the basis for any assessment of just what would have to be changed in order to achieve a society without gender hierarchy” (Gayle in Rayna: 2005:534).

The kinds of oppression in the nineteenth century were recorded in the fiction novel by Victor Hugo entitled *Les Misérables*. “Literature represents life; and life is, in large measure, a social reality, eventhough the natural world and the inner or subjective world of the individual have also been objects of literary imitation” (Warren, 1978: 94). The quotation shows that literary work can be used as a reference of how the human behaviour and problem in society is. For those, I use *Les Misérables*, a novel which tells about French society after the French Revolution, to be discussed in my thesis. *Les Misérables* is a novel which was first published in 1862 in France. It tells the miserable life of common people who live in the reign of Louis XVIII. It is comprised of eight parts and each part consists of three to fourteen chapters.

A woman main character in the novel, Fantine, is described as a woman who lives in the oppressed condition along her life. She is an uneducated woman who has an educated boyfriend. Their social status is widely different. One day,

her boyfriend, Felix Tholomyes, left her with a sheet of letter. He wrote that he left her forever. Unfortunately, at that time Fantine was pregnant an illegitimate child. Later, Fantine entrusts her daughter named Cossette, to The Thernadiers family with a monthly payment. Fantine begins to live in the oppressed situation. Thernadiers family, who adopt Cossette, always ask the money more than the agreement before. Fantine tries to do everything in order to get a lot of money, including being a prostitute.

The woman character in the novel is described as a woman who is always oppressed along her life. If I look at the year of writing the novel, nineteenth century, it can be an interesting thing because there is a big social change in France at that time which is caused by the result of French Revolution. That is why I am interested in doing the research related to the woman's oppressions in *Les Misérables* by Victor Hugo. The title is "The Representation of Proletarian French Woman's Oppressions in the Nineteenth Century in Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables*".

1.2 Research Topic

The research topic in this thesis is feminism. In line with Murray (2005:42), a research topic is the broad subject matter addressed by the study. It means that I have to explain first what I want to explain generally in my thesis in order to get an understanding of the readers. As it is explained in the background of the study above, this research studies about woman's oppressions phenomena in France in the nineteenth century represented in *Les Misérables*. This woman's oppressions make woman becomes the victim in social life.

1.3 Research Problem

Analyzing the literary works is necessary to have a formulation of the problem. It is used to facilitate the researcher to analyze the things that become the main focus of the study. The main focus of this research is about the oppression toward French women in the nineteenth century in *Les Misérables* by Victor Hugo.

1.4 The Problems to Discuss

Problems to discuss are aimed to formulate the discussion in the following chapter. This is important to write in order to arrange the research easily. My problems to discuss are:

- a. How is the representation of proletarian French woman's oppressions portrayed in the novel?
- b. How is the representation of French society in the nineteenth century in *Les Misérables*?
- c. How is the ideological positions of the author?

1.5 The Scope of the Study

I limit the scope of the study in my thesis in order to make it brief and not too broad in the discussion. The first is my focus on the analysis in Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables* in Volume 1: Fantine. Here, I highlight that I limit the study only in volume 1: Fantine. In analyzing the study above, I use Simone de Beauvoir's concept of femininity in *The Second Sex*.

The second one is the object character in the novel I search for. I am only looking for the proletarian woman character that gets the oppression even though there are some characters that also get the oppression.

The last scope of my thesis is about the limited time. Based on the title of my thesis, I discuss the kind of woman's oppressions only in the nineteenth century in *Les Misérables* by Victor Hugo.

1.6 The Goals of the Study

Every research has the purposes that I searched for. By the research above, these are the purposes of my research:

- a. To know the representation of Proletarian french woman's oppressions portrayed in the novel;
- b. To know the representation of French society in the nineteenth century in *Les Misérables*;
- c. To know the ideological positions of the author.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Previous Researches

Previous researches are needed by me to find the gap between the other researches before and my research. Before I begin to write this thesis, I find some researches that are related to the title of my thesis. The first is a thesis by Khoirudin (2005) entitled “A Study of the Main Character Leading to the Social Conflict in Victor Hugo’s *Les Misérables*”. This research has the same object to be researched, *Les Misérables*. The second one is the dissertation by Badja Fariza (2011) entitled “The Position of Women in Thomas Hardy’s Poetry”. I use this dissertation as a previous research because Badja Fariza used the same theory to analyze the research, Simone de Beauvoir’s *The Second Sex*.

The goal of the first previous research is to describe how Hugo creates social conflict of the main character in the novel (Khoirudin, 2005:4). By using sociological approach, the discussions of his thesis focus on the struggle of the main character and its impact toward his life. In the first discussion, Khoirudin explains that Valjean does two kinds of struggle: against people at Digne and the penal law. Valjean does three efforts to fight the penal law: escaping from jail, protecting Champmathieu, and fighting against Javert. In the second discussion, the impact of the struggle toward the main character’s life, Khoirudin writes three kinds of impact. The first is Valjean would be a fugitive at Digne. After that, Valjean would be a revolutionist. The last is Valjean’s hidden struggles are finally known by Marius. Although I have a different topic to be discussed in my thesis, which is about woman’s oppressions, I use Khoirudin’s thesis as a previous research because he uses the same novel. I use Khoirudin’s thesis as a proof that my research has not been done by anyone and this is not a plagiarism. In other side, Khoirudin’s thesis will help me to look at the structure and intrinsic elements of the novel clearer.

The second previous research is the dissertation written by Badja Fariza entitled “The Position of Women in Thomas Hardy’s Poetry”. Badja Fariza’s dissertation is an attempt to a close examination and study of Thomas Hardy’s poems (Fariza, 2011:13). It is published by Department of English, Faculty of Letters and Humanities, Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi Ouzou in 2011. Badja Fariza focuses on the Hardy’s female characters through feminist approach. In analyzing the problems, Badja Fariza uses Simone de Beauvoir’s theory of woman’s oppressions which is written in *The Second Sex*.

Badja Fariza takes the poem entitled “The Ruined Maid” as one of the discussed poems. The poem tells about a ruined girl named Melia that moves from country to the city to get out from poverty. It has the same story to the novel *Tess of the D’urbervilles*. This phenomenon is suitable to Beauvoir’s statement, the hard living conditions undergone by some people in line with, especially women, may urge them to choose the profession of prostitution as the easiest and the most accessible work. The next poem is “The Market Girl” which tells the bad living condition of a girl who works as a prostitute to get a little money to live with.

By reading Badja Fariza’s dissertation, I know that he applies Simone de Beauvoir’s theory in the research on Hardy’s poems. It has the same theme as written into one subchapter, then he writes Simone de Beauvoir’s statement after Hardy’s poems. Each subchapter consists of some Hardy’s poems then it is followed by Simone de Beauvoir’s statement that is related to the theme of the poems. Fariza’s dissertation gives the contribution to my research related to the Beauvoir’s theory of woman’s oppressions. By studying it, I know deeply how Beauvoir’s perspective of woman’s oppressions is. In other side I also know how to apply it to my research appropriately.

2.2 Theoretical Frameworks

In this subchapter, firstly, I discuss how Simone de Beauvoir’s writing is related to the woman’s oppressions. Secondly, I write Simone de Beauvoir’s perspective related to her opinion about literary work in the social life.

2.2.1 Simone de Beauvoir's Theory of the Woman's Oppressions

In *The Second Sex* chronicles Simone de Beauvoir attempts to locate the source of these profoundly imbalanced gender roles. "She asks how female humans come to occupy a subordinate position in society" (<http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/secondsex/summary.html>) accessed on [February 21, 2014]. It discusses the differences between men and women but provides no justification for woman's inferiority. Beauvoir's book concerned to the woman's oppressions and the femininity construction by the men, how woman are seen by men (Sugihastuti and Suharto, 2005:12). The popular statement of Beauvoir: one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman. This statement is reputed as a declaration of women freedom upon men domination in society especially in politics and government. Woman's oppressions are caused by how men look her existence and women are not the absolut subject like the men. Moreover, men are seen as the One but women are the Other.

"Among feminist critics, we can cite Simone de Beauvoir who explored this issue in her work *The Second Sex* (1949). Simone de Beauvoir argues that men and women had never shared life equally and that if women lived under males' domination, it is only due to their inactive resistance and the will of some women to remain the 'other' since they fail to change their conditions. For de Beauvoir, women's agitation and way of claiming their rights was not strong and efficient enough to ensure get rights beyond those that were offered to them. De Beauvoir explains that women's inability to react and their acceptance to keep on living as they are is due to the fact of their being dependent upon males and their satisfaction to remain the 'other' and their emotional life."

(Fariza, 2011:10)

Through reading closely to *The Second Sex*, in my opinion, there are three processes at women of being The Others. First, it begins from biology data such as reproductive role, the inequality of hormone, the weakness of body, etc. Second, the biology data form the women psychological process derived from the hormonal factor and her reproduction role that effect to the individual emotion of the women. By this case, people think that women have a psychological disorder but Beauvoir rejects this thought that cause the women concept be the mechanic

personality products. Beauvoir thinks that the prime cause of the women development is when women are taught to lose her identity. Since a child, a girl is given a doll rather than a car toy. Thirdly, Beauvoir discusses the emergence of male superiority in society, from nomadic hunter-gatherers through the French Revolution and contemporary times. She finds the examples of women which are being the subordination but it has no persuasive justification for them.

The woman's oppressions in France after the Industrial Revolution occurred in the job and the vote in general election. It is not an immutable fact, but a reflection of certain attitudes, preconceptions, and injustices. Here is Beauvoir's statement:

“..... A woman of the people could go out, frequent taverns, and dispose of her body as she saw fit almost like a man; she was her husband associate and equal. It was on the economic, not on the sexual plane that she suffered oppression.”

(Beauvoir, 1953: 131)

The quotation above explains that women were oppressed by their society even though they got the freedom to go outside. In other side, Beauvoir said in *The Second Sex* (1953), women workers were exploited than men workers. Women workers got the lower wages but they worked better. More than two hundred women workers in France got less than fifty centimes a day. The factories preferred women workers than men because women were less paid than men. But women still wanted to be the women workers in order to get the dignity as human. Those factors were merged with the patriarchy history in order to push the women into the domestics and reproductive roles.

Unconsciously, people thought has been constructed to define women as the unconscious creatures. Historical materialism has shown that men always dominate the world in many aspects of life rather than women. In psychoanalytic view Beauvoir said:

“...Woman is shown to us as enticed by two modes of alienation. Evidently to play at being a man will be for her a source of frustration; but to play at being a woman is also a delusion: to be a woman would

mean to be the object, The Other – and The Other nevertheless remains subject in the midst of her resignation.”

(Beauvoir, 1953: 77)

The special thought of Beauvoir is that history and conviction about women definition is the disablement of existensialist toward women condition. In Fact, a woman is educated to accept, to wait, and to depend her life toward the man. The parents still have a dream that one day a man will come to their girl to save and to protect her forever like a fairy tale and a myth in society. The women dependence factor of people thought is not only from the myth but also from other factors in history that make the impossibility of women to be the independent one.

“... Beauvoir hopes society to ignore the negative thinking of the eternal feminine by showing that it arose from male discomfort with the fact of his own birth. Throughout history, maternity has been both worshipped and reviled: the mother both brings life and heralds death. These mysterious operations get projected onto the woman, who is transformed into a symbol of “life” and in the process is robbed of all individuality. To illustrate the prevalence of these myths, de Beauvoir studies the portrayal of women by five modern writers. In the end of this section, de Beauvoir examines the impact of these myths on individual experience. Beauvoir concludes her ideas that the eternal feminine fiction is reinforced by biology, psychoanalysis, history, and literature.”

(<http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/secondsex/summary.html>) accessed on [February 21, 2014]

In the second volume, entitled *Lived Experienced*, Beauvoir discusses the concrete realities of the situation above. She finds that female development through its formative stages: childhood, youth, and sexual initiation. She wants to share that actually women are not born feminine but they are shaped by the external processes. “She shows that in her upbringing, a girl is conditioned into accepting passivity, dependence, repetition, and inwardness” (<http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/secondsex/summary.html>) accessed on [February 25, 2014].

In the borgeous family, Simone de Beauvoir agrees to Engels’ argumentation that in bourgeois family, women are reputed as the private property. It means that the women bourgeois may be the sacrifice for the private

property. There are many arguments that when the economic condition of the husband is higher, the level of the wife dependence is higher as well. The bourgeois women have three major functions: being a wife to her husband, being mother to her children, and being an entertainer (<http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/secondsex/summary.html>) accessed on [February 25, 2014]. Those roles inevitably lead to the immanence, incompleteness, and profound frustration toward women. Beauvoir also reflects on the trauma of an old age, for example, when a woman loses her reproductive capacity then she loses her primary purpose and her identity as well. Beauvoir rewords that the controversial claim of woman's situation is not a result of her character but woman's character is a result of her situation. The condition of mediocrity, complacency, lack of accomplishment, laziness, passivity are the consequences of woman's subordination rather than the cause.

2.2.2. Simone de Beauvoir's Perspective toward Literary Work and Social Life

After discussing Simone de Beauvoir's book *The Second Sex*, I discuss the relationship between literary work and the social life in Beauvoir's perspective. Simone de Beauvoir has an argument about the relationship between literature and social life. "Beauvoir argues that the metaphysical novel functioning as a bridge between literature and philosophy can represent the concrete singularity of human experience in its historical and eternal dimensions" (Tidd, 2004:100). The quotation above means that the literary work has the engagement toward human activity. Here is the expression of Beauvoir in her essay "literature et metaphysique" that is quoted by Ursula Tidd in her book *Simone de Beauvoir* (2004):

"The metaphysical novel, at its best, honestly engaged with by both writer and reader, represents human beings and events in their relation with the totality of the world It achieves what pure philosophy and pure literature cannot, namely the representation of the living unity and fundamental ambiguity of our human destiny within both its historical and eternal dimensions."

(Tidd, 2004:85)

In this quotation, Beauvoir stresses that metaphysical novel relates the reader and the writer. It represents the kinds of human living in the world. Metaphysical is derived from metaphysics, according to *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (1995:793), means the branch of philosophy dealing with the nature of existence, truth, and knowledge. Metaphysical novel means a novel which has a philosophy dealing with the nature of existence, truth, and knowledge. It is growing genre of stories that explore or based on some of philosophy or system of thought, including some aspects of the inner, incorporeal, supernatural, spiritual, archetypal, or transcendent aspect of human experience (<https://www.tahlianewland.com/2012/11/28/what-is-metaphysical-fiction.html>) accessed on [March 3, 2015]. When a literary work is created, it will never be far from the social life at that time. Literary work can be defined as the historical record of human behaviour. Beauvoir attempts to engage the world by her works.

According to Sirridge (in Card, 2003: 129), “one could, she says, produce more works of this kind, technologically we could record and present information about the daily inner workings of all sorts of social units.” Beauvoir also states “the difference between information and literature, she says, has to do with the basic features of the human condition and with the distinctive way in which literature functions” (Card, 2003:129). Those sentences mean that Beauvoir agrees to link human behaviour in the particular time with the literary works in order to give the information to the people in the future.

In the end section of chapter two, I can find the conclusion that Simone de Beauvoir's perspective about the woman's oppressions come from the surrounding condition there. It creates a condition that being a woman is only a susceptible object to be oppressed, even when a woman in a young age. It is the unconscious thing of woman case even by the woman herself. The second perspective of Simone de Beauvoir is about the relation of literary work and social life of the writer. Beauvoir completely believes that there is a bridge between social life to the literary work that can be learned by the readers. Social life means the political condition, human behaviour, and family background of the writer.

For those, literary work can be the opinion of how the condition of the social life in a certain age and certain place named representation.



CHAPTER 3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Research design and methodology are important to concern about how this thesis is formulated. It also concerns about how the data are properly used. This chapter consists of four subchapters. The first subchapter discusses about the type of research then the second one talks about how the data are collected. The data processing in the third subchapter is used as the explanation about how the data are processed, afterward the fourth subchapter is about how to analyze the data.

3.1 The Type of Research

In accordance to this research, qualitative research is used as the type of research. In a qualitative research, the using of method is through interviews, observations, and the utilization of documents. “Qualitative research tends to be associated with words or images as the unit of analysis” (Denscombe, 2007:248). The data are in the form of written text in the research as quotations that can be direct and indirect quotations or paraphrasing. The used data in this thesis are narrative. Best and Kahn (in Blaxter *et al.*, 2006: 60) said “it can describe any events, persons and so forth scientifically without the use of numerical data”. Qualitative research method is employed in this thesis because I want to know the representation of French society in *Les Misérables* novel by Victor Hugo in order to analyze the oppressed women characters in the novel.

3.2 Data Collection

This research needs information from primary sources and secondary sources. Those primary and secondary sources are used to collect data and information related to the topic discussed in this research. Each of data is collected in the form of written material and it is non-numeric datum. I use close reading and documentary technique in collecting the data which are applied in the

research. Blaxter *et al.* (1996: 141) said, “documentary technique is used for collecting data by using documents or written materials as a basis for the research”. According to Poedjawijatna in Faruk (2012:23), “before collecting the data the researcher has to determine the material object and formal object of the research itself”.

“Material object is the field object of the research and formal object is the object that is seen by the particular point of view” (*ibid*). In this thesis the material object is the novel entitled *Les Misérables* by Victor Hugo (1862). Faruk (2012:24) said, “in the scientific terminology the point of view can be formed by what is called paradigm, approach, or moreover the theories in the research itself”. By this statement, the formal object used is the theory of Simone de Beauvoir’s *The Second Sex* (1953); *Western Civilization: Their History and Their Culture* by Edward McNails Burns (1958); *Simone de Beauvoir* by Claudia Card (2003); and *Simone de Beauvoir* by Ursula Tidd (2004). The other sources are a thesis by Khoirudin (2005) entitled “A study of the Main Character Leading to the Social Conflict in Victor Hugo’s *Les Misérables* ” and a dissertation by Badja Fariza (2011) entitled “The Position of Women in Thomas Hardy’s Poetry” that I use as the previous researches. The additional data that I found from internet such as article and online journal which are available in the references are also used to consolidate the discussion in this thesis.

3.3 Data Processing

The collected data above are processed before written in the chapter four. This is the part of a research where all of data are categorized whether important or not. The whole important data which are taken from the novel and social condition at that time are categorized in order to understand the novel better. Those data are written in the discussion as quotations to strengthen the explanation. It is also used as a proof of the study. The quotations can be from direct quotation which is came from the experts about the condition of the women workers in the nineteenth century in France and the quotations taken from *Les Misérables* novel itself, about the action and condition of the characters or

society. Based on the explanation before, this research uses Simone de Beauvoir's theory of woman's oppressions written in her book *The Second Sex* (1953), to process the collected data in Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables*. The data which are used is only those which have significance to the problems to discuss and to get the specific or detailed explanation in the discussion.

3.4 Data Analysis

The collected data above are analyzed by using inductive method. The inductive method is the process of reasoning that is applied to conclude the subject matter. "It means that the discussion goes from particular to a whole group of ideas, phenomena, or situations" (Young, 1982:10).

Thus, for the beginning, this research analyses the novel and concerns with the woman's oppressions analysis of *Les Misérables*. Woman's oppressions theory from Simone de Beauvoir (1953) is used as a framework, specifically the social factors of woman's oppressions. It makes the general description to analyze it. This research is not only explain the idea of Simone de Beauvoir's woman's oppressions, but also how the literary work can represent the society in the particular time.

The particular data in the novel which relate to the woman's oppressions are grouped and analyzed in order to conclude the general data. The particular data of the novel are the life journey of Fantine and the social condition of France in the nineteenth century. Beauvoir's theory of femininity in *The Second Sex*, discusses the differences between men and women but provide no justification for women's inferiority. There are three processes in women of being the other: firstly, it begins from biology data then secondly, it forms the women psychological process derived from the hormonal factor and her reproduction role that effect to the individual emotion of the women. Thirdly, is the emergence of male superiority in society, from nomadic hunter-gatherers through the French Revolution and contemporary times.

Beauvoir's perspective on the relation between literary work and social life is used to discuss how Beauvoir argues about it. Beauvoir states that literary

work has an engagement to human activity. The creation of literary work is related to the surrounding life of people there. It can be defined as a historical record of human behaviour. She agrees to link human behaviour in the particular time with the literary works in order to give the information to the people in the future.



CHAPTER 4. THE REPRESENTATION OF PROLETARIAN FRENCH WOMAN'S OPPRESSIONS IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

In this chapter, the data collected are analyzed by using the theory written in the second chapter of this thesis. The source of data in this research are taken from Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables*. This chapter is divided into three subchapters in order to classify each category of the discussion. The discussion begins from the first subchapter which tries to map the representation of Proletarian french woman's oppressions in the novel in the particular condition. I also analyze the representation of French society in the nineteenth century which is composed in the second subchapter. In the third subchapter, I explain the ideological positions of the author.

4.1 The Representation of Proletarian french Woman's Oppressions Portrayed in the Novel

Before further discussing about woman's oppressions, I define what the definition of woman's oppressions are through the particular perspectives first. According to *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (1995:1372), "woman is an adult female human being". While oppression is derived from oppress (verb) means "to rule or treat somebody in a continually cruel or harsh way" (Hornby, 1995: 814). Based on the meaning of the literal word, woman's oppressions mean an adult female who is ruled or treated in a continually cruel or harsh way. Here are some definitions of oppression derived from the various sources:

"Oppression is a type of injustice. Oppression is the inequitable use of authority, law, or physical force to prevent others from being free or equal. The verb oppress can mean to keep someone down in a social sense, such as an authoritarian government might do in an

oppressive society. It can also mean to mentally burden someone, such as with the psychological weight of an oppressive idea.”

(<http://womenshistory.about.com/od/feminism/a/oppression.htm>)
accessed on [May 23, 2014]

“Oppression of women is the result of removing their rights. Islam gives men & women rights that are different in some aspects to those they have in the western world. The principle difference in the way these rights came about is also important. In the West rights became part of the law only after women had been through great political struggles and also partly due to the necessity of women working in factories during wars.”

(<http://www.islamic.org.uk/women.html>) accessed on [May 23, 2014]

“...woman’s oppression is the oldest oppression and will be the most difficult to overcome as the roots are located in an institution that shapes the most intimate sphere of human life, in relationships between men, women and children in the family”

(<http://www.isj.org.uk/?id=885>) accessed on [May 23, 2014]

Based on the various perspectives above, I can define the understanding of woman’s oppressions itself. In my opinion, woman’s oppressions are a condition in which woman is treated differently and unnaturally than man in every aspects of life, such as sexual despising, giving a low wage to the woman worker, etc. After that I discuss the woman’s oppressions represented by Victor Hugo in his novel *Les Misérables* which has grounded the early nineteenth century in France. This novel tells the depravity of legal case that cause various social problems in society, including woman’s oppressions.

Through close reading to the novel, I can discover who are the oppressed charaters in the novel. The oppression that is experienced by the women characters in *Les Misérables* comes from the physical condition, the social status in society, and also their low education. In *Les Misérables*, the character that gets many kinds of oppression is Fantine. She is a young beautiful girl who lives in the miserable condition since she was child to the end of her life. She is an orphan who never knows where her parents live, whether she was thrown away or her parents have died. Her parentsless life becomes the cause of her oppression in the future. When she was ten years old, she wander about the town. At fifteen years

old she came to Paris to seek her fortune with some farmers in the neighborhood. She finds her fortune in the factory as a woman worker without thinking where her parents are.

The condition of woman's oppressions discussed in the nineteenth century cannot be described through one character of the novel. I have to describe and analyze the other women characters of the novel in order to discover the real condition of women. There are some other characters who get the oppression, but this research only focuses on Fantine character as an object of woman's oppressions. Here are the little discussion of some kinds of woman's oppressions.

Zephine, Dahlia, and Favourite are the beautiful women who work in a factory in Paris. Their life condition resemble to Fantine's life. They do not have any parents and work as women workers in the factory. The four young women have the same oppression in love story which would be discussed in the discussion below.

4.1.1 Oppression in Love Relationship

The love relationship between the four young women and the four men in the novel is one of the representations in society about how women were oppressed at that time. The young women named Fantine, Favourite, Dahlia, and Zephine have the lovers who are the university students. The couples are Fantine and Felix Tholomyes, Dahlia and Listolier, Favourite and Blachevelle, and the last is Zephine and Fameuil. I see that the love relationship between the four young women and the four men are caused not only by feeling but also the economic factor. The four young women are the workers of the factory in Paris who get a little monthly salary. On the contrary, the four men are the bourgeois class who live in Paris as the university students. Their life conditions are widely different in finance or family background point of view. Fantine and friends depend their life on the four men.

The physical appearance of the four young women is used to attract the interests of the bourgeois class eventhough the four men are ugly physically. Here is the appearance of Fantine:

“Brilliant of face, delicate of profile, with eyes of a deep blue, heavy lids, feet arched and small, wrists and ankles admirably formed, a white skin which, here and there allowed the azure branching of the veins to be seen, joy, a cheek that was young and fresh, the robust throat of the Juno of A Egina, a strong and supple nape of the neck, shoulders modelled as though by Coustou, with a voluptuous dimple in the middle, visible through the muslin; a gayety cooled by dreaminess; sculptural and exquisite such was Fantine; and beneath these feminine adornments and these ribbons one could divine a statue, and in that statue a soul.”

(Hugo, 1862: 141)

The beauty of the four young women is unequal with the four men's appearance. The four men are ugly and old, more than thirty years old. This data can be analyzed that the women do not look at the physical appearance of the men anymore to be loved but the women look at the other side of the men. The dependence toward men moreover become the chance of men to exploit women. According to the dictionary, the terminology of dependence is “the state of needing the help and support of others” (Hornby, 1995:311). By looking at the dictionary, the dependence of women toward men in my analysis means that the condition in which women need the help and support of the men in life economically and mentally. While exploitation terminology means “using or treating someone in an unfair and selfish manner for one's own advantage or profit” (Hornby, 1995:406). Related to the characters in the novel, Fantine and friends are treated by their lovers in an unfair manner, such as having a sex then left them unexpectedly. As the proletarian class, the four women are impossible to live in the luxurious life such as having expensive in Summer holiday at a so called costly resort Saint Cloud and having dinner in the high priced restaurant. Here is the four couples Summer holiday:

“That day was composed of dawn, from one end to the other. All nature seemed to be having a holiday, and to be laughing. The flower-beds of Saint-Cloud perfumed the air; the breath of the Seine rustled the leaves vaguely; the branches gesticulated in the wind, bees pillaged the jasmynes; a whole bohemia of butterflies swooped down upon the yarrow, the clover, and the sterile oats; in the august park of the King of France there was a pack of vagabonds, the birds.

The four merry couples, mingled with the sun, the fields, the flowers, the trees, were resplendent.

And in this community of Paradise, talking, singing, running, dancing, chasing butterflies, plucking convolvulus, wetting their pink, open-work stockings in the tall grass, fresh, wild, without malice, all received, to some extent, the kisses of all, with the exception of Fantine, who was hedged about with that vague resistance of hers composed of dreaminess and wildness, and who was in love.”

(Hugo, 1862:144)

What Tholomyes and friends have written in the last letter, which contains the explanation about why Tholomyes and friends left them, to Fantine and friends is not totally true. Their reason is just about the wide difference of social status. Beside that, Tholomyes and friends have been bored to life together with their women. Leaving the four women is the only way to get out of this love relationship. A moment they are still laughing after reading the letter, unexpectedly Fantine wept in her room an hour later. Eventhough the condition of Zephine, Favourite, and Dahlia is not described in the novel but their condition is not far from Fantine, feeling sad deeply. It can be seen from what Favourite said some days before when Blachevelle left her. The sentences below explain that Favourite does love her man, she will also do the particular extreme action if Blachevelle left her.

"I!" cried Favourite. "Ah! Do not say that even in jest! If you were to cease to love me, I would spring after you, I would scratch you, I should rend you, I would throw you into the water, I would have you arrested." "Yes, I would scream to the police! Ah! I should not restrain myself, not at all! Rabble!"

(Hugo, 1862:150)

The four young women are aware enough of their physical beauty in men's sight. For that, the women use it to attract men's attention in order to make a love relationship. From this love relationship, the proletarian women can fulfill the daily need and high class lifestyle like a bourgeois people. The dependence of the women toward men is sensitive to the kind of oppressions. But unfortunately, the bourgeois men are not stupid to take a chance from this through doing an unmarried sexual intercourse with their women. For the information, doing

unmarried sexual intercourse is a forbidden thing to do at that time. This is proved by Napoleon Bounaparte's rule about it. Beauvoir (1956:132) said, "Napoleon Bounaparte forbade the investigation of paternity, he set stern condition for the unwed mother and natural child".

The student who has a high level of education is expected to be a revolutioner to the nation and society. On the contrary, Felix Tholomyes and friends are not doing that but they damage the society. Damage means making something broken or out of order. Related to this case, Felix Tholomyes and friends make Fantine and friends' life become broken or out of order. According to the description of the characters in the novel, Felix Tholomyes and friends are the unkind men eventhough they have a high class of education. Their immorality is influenced by the social and political condition at that time. The unkindness of Felix Tholomyes and friends is indicated by their intoxicated habit. For example, oneday, when Felix Tholomyes is under the influence of the intoxication, he makes a mistake that is embracing Favourite not Fantine. Another indication of the unkindness of Felix Tholomyes is his opinion about women. Tholomyes said,

“... No quarter, war to the death! a pretty woman is a casus belli; a pretty woman is flagrant misdemeanor. All the invasions of history have been determined by petticoats. Woman is man's right.”

(Hugo, 1862:155)

Tholomyes judges women as the bad creatures in the world. Looking at his status as a boyfriend of Fantine, his saying about women indicates his bad opinion about women. So that, it is proper when he released his idea to leave the four women toward the three other men because Felix Tholomyes only thinks about his own pleasure rather than feeling love.

The kind of oppression in this relationship between man and woman can be seen in Fantine characters. She is oppressed badly by Felix Tholomyes through leaving her in the unmarried pregnancy condition. This is a very miserable condition of Fantine. She is forced to be a victim of the love story in a very young age. She never thinks that her love story will be sad ending because of her being left by Tholomyes and her unmarried pregnancy. The first thing that she

experienced is sadness. “An hour later, when she had returned to her room, she wept. It was her first love affair, as we have said; she had given herself to this Tholomyes as to a husband, and the poor girl had a child (Hugo,1862:162)”. It is followed by the miserable life continually until her death because of the incident above.

According to Simone de Beauvoir’s perspective about woman’s oppressions written in her book *The Second Sex*, I opine that the oppression toward Fantine is caused by the biological factor of her body (biology data). Her illegal pregnancy makes society ignore her, then it would be a psychological pressure toward Fantine’s individual emotion.

Related to the real social condition of France at that time, Beauvoir (1956:132) said, “Napoleon Bounaparte forbade the investigation of paternity, he set stern condition for the unwed mother and natural child”. in addition, Hugo also writes about the political condition in 1817. Below is the political description in the novel:

“.....What separated two men more than an abyss was to say, the regicides, or to say the voters; to say the enemies, or to say the allies; to say Napoleon, or to say Buonaparte. All sensible people were agreed that the era of revolution had been closed forever by King Louis XVIII., surnamed The Immortal Author of the Charter.”
(Hugo, 1862: 132)

From the analysis above, there is an oppression in Fantine and friends’ love relationship from men toward women. The oppression toward Fantine and friends are not only caused by the Felix Tholomyes and friends but also caused by the women’s coquetry toward men.

4.1.2 Oppression of the Bourgeois towards the Proletarian Class

In this subchapter, I discuss Fantine’s being oppressed by The Thernadiers family, the bourgeois class and inn-keeper at Montfermeil. Prior to the further discussion about the kind of oppression to the character in the novel, I define the terminology of bourgeois and proletarian class first in order to avoid the misunderstanding in the hereafter discussion. According to Hornby (1995:129),

“bourgeois is the middle class in society”. Finding the deep definition of bourgeois, according to the historical texts, bourgeois word is derived from the Latin word ‘burgensis’. Long time ago, a synonym of it is ‘le marchand’ means the traders. In addition, there is a special meaning of it, a class of people who does not want to be equated with other French residents jobs, who are mostly farmers. Then at the beginning of XI century, the term is considered to find the true meaning of the word along with the proliferation of new towns and the increase of population due to urbanization called ‘bourg’ became to be a center of trade. “The inhabitants came from the various cities which is in the beginning was wandering merchants, but ultimately they are trying to settle down and organize themselves in those cities named Bourg” (Sungkar:2007). While proletarian originated from proletariat, according to Hornby (1995:926) “proletariat is the class of workers who do not own the means of production and who earn their living by working for wages, especially in industry.”

The strict difference between bourgeois and the proletarian is about their daily life style. By having a lot of money, the bourgeois’ life style is higher than the proletarian and disposed to be consumptive. The bourgeois becomes arrogant toward the proletarian and treats them arbitrarily. In contrast, the proletarian’s life is miserable and oppressed because of their limited money. Their life is depended on the capital owner, the bourgeois. This situation makes the imbalance to the society.

I found the quotations which describe the social class of the character which becomes the object of oppression and the subject of oppression. The object is Fantine and the subject is The Thernadiers family. Below is the quotation that proves each of their social class:

“Fantine was one of those beings who blossom, so to speak, from the dregs of the people. Though she had emerged from the most unfathom- able depths of social shadow, she bore on her brow the sign of the an- onymous and the unknown. She was born at M. sur M. of what parents? Who can say? She had never known father or mother. She was called Fantine. Why Fantine? She had never borne any other name. At the epoch of her birth the Directory still existed. She had no family name; she had no family; no baptismal name; the Church no longer existed. She bore the name which pleased the first random

passer-by, who had encountered her, when a very small child, running bare-legged in the street. She received the name as she received the water from the clouds upon her brow when it rained. She was called little Fantine. No one knew more than that. This human creature had entered life in just this way. At the age of ten, Fantine quitted the town and went to service with some farmers in the neighborhood. At fifteen she came to Paris "to seek her fortune." Fantine was beautiful, and remained pure as long as she could."

(Hugo, 1862: 138)

Here is the statement of Madame Thernadiers which describes her self as an inn-keeper: "My name is Madame Thenardier," said the mother of the two little girls. "We keep this inn" (Hugo, 1862: 168). Based on the quotations above, Fantine is categorized into the proletarian class. She never has the means of production and she earns her living by working for wages, especially in industrial factory. While The Thernadiers family is categorized into the bourgeois class by their possession of the inn. In the story of the novel, Fantine and The Thernadiers family have a close relationship. After Fantine bears her daughter, she goes to her hometown, M. Sur M. But in the mid of journey she meets Madame Thernadier and entrusts Cossette to her. This decision is expected to help Fantine's life because it is impossible for her to care Cossette in M. Sur M while she works there. Fantine and The Thernadiers family make an agreement about the month paid of keeping Cossette there first. Here is the conversation between Fantine and The Thernadiers family:

"....Will you keep my child for me?"

"I must see about it," replied the Thenardier.

"I will give you six francs a month."

Here a man's voice called from the depths of the cook-shop: "Not for less than seven francs. And six months paid in advance."

"Six times seven makes forty-two," said the Thenardier.

"I will give it," said the mother.

"And fifteen francs in addition for preliminary expenses," added the man's voice.

"Total, fifty-seven francs," said Madame Thenardier.

And she hummed vaguely, with these figures: "It must be, said a warrior."

"I will pay it," said the mother. "I have eighty francs. I shall have enough left to reach the country, by travelling on foot. I shall earn

money there, and as soon as I have a little I will return for my darling."

(Hugo, 1862: 170-171)

Through the conversation above, The Thernadiers family are the materialistic people. They are the lower middle class who oppress the proletarian people greedily in order to get a lot of money. Mr. Thernadier says that he will use the money to pay the credits and take the profit on the existence of Cossette in the family. If The Thernadiers family are the higher middle class people, they will not take a chance about the existence of Fantine and Cossette as a way to get a lot of money. Here is Mr. Thernadier's statement:

"That will serve to pay my note for one hundred and ten francs which falls due to-morrow; I lacked fifty francs. Do you know that I should have had a bailiff and a protest after me? You played the mouse-trap nicely with your young ones." "Without suspecting it," said the woman."

(Hugo, 1862:171)

Discussing the oppression of The Thernadiers family toward Fantine, the untrue story about Cossette which is created by The Thernadiers family is not humane. Cossette is reputed as a slave in The Thernadiers family's house by all members of the family. The Thernadiers family oppress cruelly toward the proletarian women, both Fantine and little Cossette. The Thernadiers family reluctant the agreement that they make before. By the explanation above, I conclude that The Thernadiers family are the immoral people. The oppression by The Thernadiers family towards Fantine and Cossette comes from the impropriety of Fantine herself. Fantine believes The Thernadiers family to care Cossette without searching the morality of who people that will care Cossette first. She is a woman who can be lied easily by the immoral people. She just believes about what The Thernadiers family say about Cossette wholly. "The controversial claim of woman's situation is not a result of her character but woman's character is a result of her situation" (<http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/secondsex/summary.html>) accessed on [April 25, 2014]. Madame Thernadier, a bourgeois woman, oppresses Fantine and Cossette which is also becomes the result of situation at that time.

“The bourgeois woman performs three major functions: wife, mother and entertainer” (<http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/secondsex/summary.html>) accessed on [April 25, 2014]. In this condition, Madame Thernadier roles herself as a wife of her husband.

In *M. sur M.*, Fantine lives in the miserable financial condition. She confuses to manage her daily necessity, in other side The Thernadiers family send a letter to ask a lot of money continually. Fantine still has the bad habit consumptive life style, whom she has ever before. She is shocked by the changing of her lifestyle from the luxurious lifestyle in Paris to be the miserable life style in the small city, M. Sur M. While the monthly salary from her working place is too little to fulfill her daily necessity and Cossette at Montfermeil. As far as Fantine makes a decision to sell her splendid hair, two front teeth, and being a prostitute to fulfill it.

The little Cossette also gets the oppression phisically and mentally eventhough she never knows what happen to her mother in *M. Sur M.* The wages she got cannot suffice her need and Cossette. According to Beauvoir, more than two hundred women workers in France get less than fifty centimes a day. “....only a bourgeois class at that time who enjoy the comfort life because of their wealthy they can get what they want” (Sungkar:2007). The oppression of what Fantine experienced is a kind of psychological oppression. It means that Fantine’s psyche is being down because of The Thernadiers’ behavior. The Thernadiers are doing a lie about Cossette’s condition. They told that Cossette is sick in the Winter season. For those, Fantine has to send a lot of money to The Thernadiers family by selling her two fronth teeth and splendid hair. Here are the quotation about what Fantine did in the novel:

“One day she received from the Thenardiens a letter couched in the following terms: "Cosette is ill with a malady which is going the rounds of the neighborhood. A miliary fever, they call it. Expensive drugs are required. This is ruining us, and we can no longer pay for them. If you do not send us forty francs before the week is out, the little one will be dead.”

(Hugo, 1864:208)

The quotation above told about the letter from The Thernadiers which give an information that Cossette is ill. Below is Fantine's effort to get a lot of money to The Thernadiers:

"...The tooth-puller espied the lovely, laughing girl, and suddenly exclaimed: "You have beautiful teeth, you girl there, who are laughing; if you want to sell me your palettes, I will give you a gold napoleon apiece for them."

....

That evening she went out, and was seen to turn her steps in the direction of the Rue de Paris, where the inns are situated.

....

At the same time she smiled. The candle illuminated her countenance. It was a bloody smile. A reddish saliva soiled the corners of her lips, and she had a black hole in her mouth. The two teeth had been extracted. She sent the forty francs to Montfermeil. After all it was a ruse of the Thenardiers to obtain money. Cosette was not ill."

(Hugo, 1864:208-210)

Fantine's life is the result of the oppressed condition. Actually she never wants to sell her splendid hair, two front teeth, and being a prostitute but it because of the situation. She is just forced to be a bad woman or to do the bad thing by society.

The bad moral of The Thernadiers family is caused by the social condition after the French Revolution. The middle class society in the novel has the immoral behavior because they want to have a lot of money. The Thernadiers Family never think how Fantine condition in M. Sur M but only think how to ask much money. In reality, the middle class society has a good job or business. In contrast, the middle class characters in the novel takes a chance to get a lot of money from the bourgeois rather than doing a good bussiness.

4.1.3 Oppression in the Work Place

The oppression toward woman can happen everywhere including in the work place eventhough all of there are women. In this subchapter the subject of woman's oppressions is not only a man but also a woman. As the women workers, they do not feel that they have to be united to fight their rights that are carried away by the industrialists. In my opinion, the women workers compete the

attention from the manager of the factory in order to get the award. This kind of unkind condition traps them in to the stagnant life as the workers rather than chasing the prosperity of life.

After the French Revolution, the economic, social, and political condition give impact to the society especially woman. The subordination of woman makes them to be the object of oppression. Fantine as an uneducated woman, gets the impact of it to her life from she was child to adult. One case, Fantine cannot read and write except sign her name. It damages her life. When Madame Victurnien finds out the secret life of Fantine about her having a child at Montfermeil, she finds the secret life of Fantine from a public writer. If Fantine can write by her own, she does not spend her money twice a month to the public writer to write the letter to The Thernadiers family. Furthermore, Madame Victurnien will never find Fantine's secret about her lovely daughter at Montfermeil. The debility of woman in science makes her goes back one step than man. Furthermore, the degeneration of morals society can damage another people. Madame Viecturnien character is the representation of the degeneration of woman moral which damages another woman named Fantine. Damage means making someone broken or out of order. The lack of science of Fantine, especially writing and reading, makes her life miserable and being an object of oppression by another people.

Through the discussion above, it can be concluded that the oppression toward woman in France is represented in *Les Misérables* novel. The kinds of representation are the oppression in love relationship, in social life between the proletariat and the bourgeois, and also in the work place.

4.2 The Representation of French Society in the Nineteenth Century in *Les Misérables*

Les Misérables is based around the turning point in French history. Exploring the society of France is used as a basis to explain the revolution. This novel is written after the French Revolution and during the nineteenth century in France. There are many social changes in French people after the French

Revolution. The background of the novel begins from 1815 to 1832, which Hugo's life begins to touch down the political world in France.

“1815 is marked as the year of the discomfiture of Napoleon's army in Waterloo. They opposed the alliance of England's army and another European states. The discomfiture of Napoleon ended the era of The First Republic (1792-1804), and back to The Kingdom Era under the reign of Louis XVI.”

(Esfand, 2012:xi)

This era was called as The Restorian Bourbon. In the restoration era, the church had a big role in France political world eventhough the church did not has any absolute powers like before. The Restorian Bourbon was the era when the revolution struggler and the common people were prevented for a while, but one day they inspired the social fire from 1830 to 1832 to fight the monarch.

According to the year of writing the novel, *Les Misérables* is grounded by The Romanticism Era. “Romanticism in France as in England wavered between a mystic irrationalism, on the one hand, and a gallant defense of individual liberty and social reform on the other” (Burns, 1958:624-625). “Hugo began writing *Les Misérables* twenty years before its eventual publication in 1862. His goals in writing the novels were as lofty as the reputation it has subsequently acquired” (<http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/lesmis/context.html>) accessed on [22 January 2015]. It was not the first three decades of the nineteenth century, but the second three decades of the nineteenth century.

“.... After the beginning of the nineteenth century romanticism flourished apace, attaining the zenith of its growth about 1830. No longer was it confined to literature, but, as we shall presently see, it was a vital force in painting and to a considerable extent also in music. Though it still had to complete in some fields with classicism, especially in France during the era of Napoleon, it was by far the most viorous literary and artistic influence in the first three decades of the nineteenth century.”

(Burns, 1958:622)

Discussing about the representation, in the beginning part of the novel, Victor Hugo tells some cases that represent about what happened in the reality at that time. Here are the cases about it: firstly, the main character named Jean

Valjean, in 1815 got the freedom after nineteen years in the convict. It means that he was convicted since 1796. Secondly, the third chapter, Hugo wrote the title of the novel “1817”, which tells the social condition of the French lower class and also the love relationship between the women workers and the students in Paris. Through this chapter Victor Hugo described the representation of social condition, especially how women are oppressed by society. Because of the discussed topic in this thesis is about the oppression toward the women, so I would like to make the limitation of the year until the death of Fantine. As a writer of the literary work and also the one who has the role in the political system in France, Hugo wrote the description of social reality of the lower class people through the novel. The discussion below shows how Victor Hugo represents French society.

4.2.1 The Social Context

The social context of the novel is necessary to be discussed in this research in order to complete the understanding toward novel as the representation of society at that time. The social context, called as the social environment, means the circumstance surrounding people including the cultures and the situations of where the story takes place. Related to the novel, the social context of the novel is defined as the circumstance of French’s cultural life and the situation of the social life. It can be said that every nation has different cultures and situations in a moment. In this thesis I would like to discuss how the situations and cultures of French people are, especially woman, in the nineteenth century.

The woman condition in France in the nineteenth century was still divided by the social classes between the proletarian and the bourgeois class. Based on the definition of the proletarian before, the proletarian society is comprised by the workers of the factory who use the body to get salary. Related to the discussion of the research, here I discuss the social condition of the woman of the lower class society or proletarian woman. The proletarian class is consisted of the slaves and the workers. Before I discuss the two classes above, I would like to tell the history of slavery which brings up the origin of the oppression towards the proletarian woman. Engels wrote:

”... Through the discovery of copper, tin, bronze, and iron, and with the appearance of the plough, agriculture enlarges its scope, and intensive labour is called for in clearing woodland and cultivating the fields This was ‘The great historical defeat of the feminine sex’. It is so be explained by the upsetting of the old division of labour which occurred in the consequence of the invention of new tools. ‘The same cause which had assured to woman the prime authority in the house – namely, her restriction to domestic duties – this same cause now assured the domination there of the man; for woman’s housework henceforth sank into significance in comparison with man’s productive labour – the latter was everything, the former a trifling auxiliary.”

(Beauvoir, 1953:80)

Through the quotation above, Engels explains that in the Stone Age, the emergence of underestimating the domestical work of woman in the house came since man became the propertier. Then woman was not needed anymore because of the coming of the technology in agricultures.

In the nineteenth century, women were able to obtain employment as seamstresses, domestic servants, and factory workers. Being a seamstress was the most highly respected job for woman. This was the least well paid of all the options open to women, and it could often be sporadic, or sometimes nonexistent. The second most respected work was a domestic servant. Many domestic servants used their opportunity to associate with the upper classes to study and learn upper class manners and mannerisms, which served them well on the social scene. Some of them married to men from a higher class that they met while working as a domestic servant. They would be well supervised, and had less chance of being taken advantage of or becoming pregnant as Fantine did. The third kind of working was being a worker of factory which was the best paying job a woman could obtain. The wages were also paid much more consistantly and reliably than the other jobs. In addition, factory work was attractive to some women because of the relatively high degree of freedom it allowed them. Their working times were supervised, of course, but after work they were free to do as they pleased. As with the other occupations, becoming a factory worker also had important downsides to considered. The most important was that society considered the women who worked in factories to be morally suspect. And even those women who never engaged in

other suspect activities could have their marriage prospects permanently darkened because it would often be assumed that they ever had (<https://www.mtholyoke.edu/courses/rschwart/hist255/1a/womenwork.html>) accessed on [November 23, 2014]. Victor Hugo provides us with an instructive example here when he talks about Fantine and her friends from the factory, and the grisettes. They are considered to be the type of women that a man sow his wild oats with, but then move on to marry a respectable woman.

The power of woman was needed in some kinds of working. In the Industrial Revolution, the woman power had a lot of contribution to the economic rotation along the nineteenth century. The freedom of working indoor or even outdoor had been get by the woman such as being a shop keeper, home tailor, home servant, factory labor, and others. This was a good chance for woman to use their power to get profit financially. Society had accepted them in the public domain. But this condition could not totally solve the problem of woman's oppressions, especially the woman proletarian classes. The freedom of working toward woman was used to exploit the woman power by the man.

“At the beginning of the nineteenth century woman was more shamefully exploited than were male workers. Labour at home constituted what the English called the ‘sweating system’; in spite of constant toil, the working-woman did not earn enough to satisfy her needs. Jules Simon in *L’Ouvriere* and even the conservative Leroy-Beaulieu in *LeTravail des Femmes au XIX*, published in 1873, denounced odious abuses; the latter says that more than two hundred thousand women workers in France earned less than fifty centimes a day.”

(Beauvoir, 1953:135)

The explanatin above shows the miserable condition of the woman worker in France in the nineteenth century is. This miserable condition closely related to the industrialists that did not give a good treatment to their worker, especially woman. The industrialist only pressed badly the power of woman and benefitted the social condition when woman want to work in outdoor to get the dignity from the society. The exploitation here means about paying the inequality wages between woman and man. Beauvoir (1953:134) in her book *The Second Sex* wrote, “The

woman worker in France, according to a study made in the years 1889-93, received only half the pay of the man for a day's work equal to that of a man". This is a scary fact of woman condition in the nineteenth century. The woman's oppressions still haunt the woman life eventhough woman had got the freedom in the economic sector. The subordination of woman in society had been ended but not in the physical oppression through the exploitation toward woman power in working class. Unfortunately, the woman was unconciouss to the matter that they get. The working woman still became the pride and prestige to get the acknowledgment of the society as a human. In the middle of century, the woman worker began to be united in order to get the equality as the worker and to disappear the woman's oppressions. The feminist woman was struggling their political rights through the writings and the feminism movements. The movement of the association was so late as the data below: "In 1905, there were 69.405 women out of 781.392 unionized workers; in 1908 88.906 out of 957.120; in 1912, 92.336 out of 1.064. 413 (Beauvoir, 1949: 136)". One of the factors of this was a lack of solidarity and collective conciousness of the woman worker to face the opening new chances for them. As the result, the female labour was regulated slowly by the government. Beauvoir (1953:137) said that only in 1874, when the campagne under the empire, there were only two provisions related to the woman:

1. For the immature woman: no time for working in the night; on Saturday, Sunday and another holiday, they must be free of working; and their time of working was not more that 12 hours a day.
2. For the over twenty years old woman: nothing but to forbid the woman working underground in mines and quarries.

Some informations above mean that there are no woman movement at that time. It is suitable to Fantine character. She is oppressed by the condition at that time in the working and social life.

4.2.2 The Condition of Woman Worker

Woman worker is a woman who works in a factory to get wage for what they do in a month. Based on the definition in the dictionary (Hornby,1995:926), the working class is classified into the proletarian class in society because they do not have any means of production to generate money except their powers. Proletarian word originated from proletariat, according to Hornby (*ibid*) “proletariat is the class of workers who do not own the means of production and who earn their living by working for wages, especially in industry.”

In France at that time, there was the beginning of many emerging industrial plants requiring women workers to complete the production work. Some companies prefer to employ women than men because women are more thorough in their work and their salary is lower than men. This course can save the production costs of the company itself. While the women at that time find the social recognition by working outside of the house although they get a very low salary (Beauvoir, 1953:134).

Nineteenth century was a period when women get the freedom to express their life. Women could go out of house to earn money from the factory, doing a business, and so on. “It is important to emphasize the fact that throughout the Old Regime it was the women of the working classes who as a sex enjoyed most independence” (Beauvoir, 1953: 131). The quotation above explains that along the Old Regime, women get freedom to work in the outside or inside without any particular rules. It means women want to get freedom to express and earn money for their own living. Women also want to get the equality to the men in the work. Women of the lower class earn money by working at the factory to get month paid for their living.

Along the Old Regime, the women working class can do it freely without any particular rules. But in other hand, this independency of women does not provide a solution toward the social problems in France.

“...It was on the economic, not on the sexual plane that she suffered oppression. In the country the peasant woman took a considerable part in farm labour; she was treated as a servant; frequently she did not eat

at the table with her husband and sons, she slaved harder than they did, and the burdens of maternity added to her fatigue.”

(Beauvoir, 1953:131)

Beauvoir explains that women did not get the freedom in whole aspects. There were some aspects of life that oppress them especially women in the country who had an important role in a family. Behind the physical condition of women, which was inclined worse than men, women work harder than men. This condition indicated that the daily roles of women in the family were so hard then it made the women condition was oppressed.

In this chapter, the representation of women workers in France created by Victor Hugo in *Les Misérables* is discussed. Victor Hugo creates a character named Fantine who becomes the central woman character in the description of this novel. Actually there are some other characters that also become the representation of how the behaviour of French women workers at that time is.

In 1817, Fantine and her three other friends who work in a factory in Paris have their own lovers. The girls are very flirty and use the flirty to seek the attention of the men in Paris. The girls enjoy their life as the women workers of the factory. They spend the holiday with their lovers on vacation.

“... Poverty and coquetry are two fatal counsellors; one scolds and the other flatters, and the beautiful daughters of the people have both of them whispering in their ear, each on its own side. These badly guarded souls listen. Hence the falls which they accomplish, and the stones which are thrown at them. They are overwhelmed with splendor of all that is immaculate and inaccessible. Alas! what if the Jungfrau were hungry?”

(Hugo, 1862:137)

According to the quotation above, one of the factors of their relationship is about their economic. As Beauvoir (1953:138) wrote in her book that women workers just earn low wages from their company, but Hugo tells that the four girls life in the luxury with their lovers. It indicates that the women workers condition are not sufficient to live in moderate circumstance financially. The girls need a lot of money to dress up and satisfy the extravagant nature, while as the description in the novel that their men are the bourgeois class. It is clear that most

of the girls life hung on their lovers. Such a part of the story when they are dinner in the high priced Bombarda cafe, the four men left Fantine and three other girls with a letter which noted a statement that the food ordered was paid previously. Bombarda cafe is a place which is far from Paris. They visit the Bombarda in order to spend Summer holiday.

In the work place, women workers are not completely happy. There are several things that make them mentally oppressed. Oppression does not always come from men, but among women also can be the protective oppressive reference. The nature of women workers in the work place is not very conducive Fantine. They do not protect the suffering of women, instead they are oppressive. As Hugo told in the novel, Fantine is oppressed by her friends in the work place. Fantine looks special than other workers there because of having a pretty face. It makes the jealousy toward other colleagues in the factory. One of the kinds of their jealousy is Madame Victurnien's effort to know Fantine's daily behaviour and make it as a gossip. Madame Victurnien's goal is to discharge Fantine from the work place. Below is the kind of Fantine's oppression:

“Certain persons are malicious solely through a necessity for talking. Their conversation, the chat of the drawing-room, gossip of the ante- room, is like those chimneys which consume wood rapidly; they need a great amount of combustibles; and their combustibles are furnished by their neighbors. So Fantine was watched. In addition, many a one was jealous of her golden hair and of her white teeth.”

(Hugo, 1862: 204)

This makes Fantine being oppressed psychologically. The women workers there have a bad habit that always talking the private life of others. They talk it only for daily gossip in the workroom. It begins when one of them knows that Fantine's behaviour to wrote a letter to someone in other city. One day, Madame Victurnien spends thirty Francs to know Fantine's life mystery.

Madame Victurnien is a figure who represents how the behavior of women workers in France is. Madame Victurnien looks for the secret life of Fantine in fact she was willing to spend some money to satisfy their curiosity of the private life of others. This phenomenon is an indicator that women workers are not

respectful to fellow women. Especially if one of them have an overbalance among them, such as Fantine who is the most beautiful woman among other workers. These are categorized as the oppression toward women workers. Indeed, there are several factors that led to the investigation of Madame Victurnien toward Fantine's personal life. In general, the habits of the proletarian class, especially the women, can be represented to Madame Victurnien character. The most vicious form of repression was after Madame Victurnien know about Fantine's personal life, which was considered taboo and negative at that time. She reports it to the head of her company to immediately dismiss Fantine.

Fantine's friends in the work place want to discharge Fantine from the work place. After knowing the existence of an illegitimate child of Fantine, Madame Victurnien is successful to do that, Fantine is discharged from the work place without knowing of M. Madeleine. After the discharging of Fantine because of her friends, once more she gets the oppression psychologically. She feels shameful to go out of home. The quotation below shows Fantine's condition that is oppressed by society.

“When she was in the street, she divined that people turned round behind her, and pointed at her; every one stared at her and no one greeted her; the cold and bitter scorn of the passers-by penetrated her very flesh and soul like a north wind. It seems as though an unfortunate woman were utterly bare beneath the sarcasm and the curiosity of all in small towns.”

(Hugo, 1862: 205)

Fantine, as a woman worker character in the novel, is exploited by the employers and get the low paid. Victor Hugo creates Fantine character in the novel which has the particular goal toward the readers. By analyzing it, I conclude that through Fantine character, Hugo tries to describe the miserable condition of women workers in the nineteenth century in France.

4.3 The Ideological Positions of the Author

After discussing the representation above, here I discuss the ideological positions of the author in French society. According to *Oxford Advance Learner's Dictionary* (1995:589), "ideology is a set of ideas or beliefs that form the basis of an economic or political theory or that are held by a particular group or person". Related to the novel, ideological positions mean the positions of the ideas in *Les Misérables* that form the basis of an economic or political theory or that are held by French society.

Discussing the ideological position, the biography of the Victor Hugo is necessary to know in order to understand his life background. Victor Hugo, as a writer of *Les Misérables*, is a high class man in society at that time. He did not only a writer of the literary work, but also he was a member of National Assembly in France. As the member of National Assembly, he knew and near to the miserable life of common people like he wrote in his novel. In addition, his father had role in government who was being a Napoleon's army. For those, Hugo had a wide knowledge about how the political condition in France at that time.

Hugo also had a great attention to the development of woman's emancipation. His thought was realized into his literary work. As Beauvoir (1953:134) said, "the lofty notion of woman the regenerating influence persisted through the nineteenth century and appears in Victor Hugo". Victor Hugo realized his lofty notion of woman in *Les Misérables* through some characters, they are Fantine, The Thernadiers Family, Madame Victurnien, and Jean Valjean.

Firstly, Fantine is being a victim of the oppression by French society. Fantine is a parentless girl who tries to find the prosperity of life in Paris by working at factory. When she has an illegitimate child from her bourgeois boyfriend, she is ignored by society. Her oppressed condition makes her never feels happy to the death because of her condition that is being a proletarian class. Secondly, The Thernadiers family describe the voracity of the lower middle class people toward the proletarian class. The Thernadiers family oppress Fantine cruelly. The Thernadiers family give a lied to Fantine that Cossette is ill then The Thernadiers family ask her a lot of money. This is a kind of oppression that is get

by a woman character in the novel. Thirdly, Madame Victurnien is a woman worker of a factory in M. Sur M. city. She is described as a woman character who is jealous to the physical beauty of Fantine. Her jealousy aims to dismiss Fantine from the work place by break in the secret life of Fantine that she has an illegitimate child. This is a representation of a bad behaviour of women worker in France. Forthly, the injustice law is represented by Jean Valjean character who is jailed for nineteen years. This character represents the proletarian character that is being a victim of the injustice law and the complicated of the political system.

Through the discussion above, the ideology of the author is criticizing the government about the social condition including woman's oppressions. *Les Misérables* comes to break the mystery that happens to the common people life in France at that time. The ideological position of Victor Hugo is in the position where he has a full support to the remove the oppression toward proletarian French woman. The conclusion is Hugo wants to protest the executive government that the common people are the victims of the arbitrarily government through *Les Misérables*.

CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSION

Les Misérables novel is one of Victor Hugo's masterpiece literary works. Through reading this novel the readers can know what happened in France in the nineteenth century. This novel represents the social condition of the lower class society especially in Paris. Victor Hugo portrayed the way of life of women worker in Paris and how the women were oppressed by society and political condition well.

In the first part of chapter four, I discussed how the representation French woman's oppression in love relationship, the oppression of the borgeouis toward the proletarian class, and in the work place are. According to the analysis, I conclude that the representation of woman's oppressions above can be seen in Fantine character mainly. It begins from Felix Tholomyes' leaving from Fantine's life when she is pregnant an illegitimate child. Then, Fantine gets the oppression from The Thernadiers family who always asks her a lot of money by giving a lie about Cossette's condition. The last is Fantine's miserable life which is added by her friends in the work place who treat her badly. Their aim is to dismiss Fantine from the work place because their jealousy of Fantine's physical beauty.

In the second sub chapter of chapter four, I divide the discussion into two parts. Those are the social context of the novel and the condition of woman worker. This novel was written after the France Revolution, the second three decades of the nineteenth century. The social context at that time, especially the broken political condition, gives a big influence to Victor Hugo's writing. The society's perspective toward woman position also gives the impact to woman's life. The given chance toward woman to participate in social life did not solve the problem of woman's oppressions at that time. Woman still experienced the miserable life in the work place and society. Furthermore, the unconcious woman to be united increased the miserable life of woman worker at that time.

The last discussion is the ideological position of the author in society. *Les Misérables* is a literary work that is aimed to criticize the social condition of people. Victor Hugo tells the miserable life of common people and how woman is oppressed by society. This is a kind of good work to protest the executive government through literary work.

Finally, this thesis shows how woman's oppressions in France in the nineteenth century is represented by Victor Hugo through his novel, *Les Misérables*. The oppression towards woman in France in the nineteenth century is caused by the unstable executive government condition of France, economical condition of the women themselves, and the social class in society.

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