

**SOCIAL STRATIFICATION IN WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S
CYMBELINE (1623): MARXIST PERSPECTIVE**



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SOCIAL STRATIFICATION IN WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S *CYMBELINE* (1623): MARXIST PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

This study aims at analyzing Cymbeline drama based on the structural elements of drama and analyzing Cymbeline drama using Marxist perspective. The study uses qualitative method. The object of the study is Cymbeline drama written by William Shakespeare in 1623. The theoretical approach uses Marxist perspective. The technique of data collection is library research and the steps are as follows: determining the character that will be analyzed, taking note on important parts in both primary and secondary data, classifying and determining the relevant data, and taking notes from the material and some other resources related to the drama. The outcome of the study shows the following conclusions: (1) based on the structural analysis, it is clear that in this drama, the author wants to send the message to the reader that "Love does not care for social stratification" and (2) based on the Marxist perspective analysis, it is evident that in this drama, the author reflects the social situation of the English society in early seventeenth century that emphasized the social stratification.

Keywords: Social Stratification, Love, Power, Cymbeline

INTRODUCTION

Social stratification becomes the issue that happens in society. There are some definitions about social stratification. The first, according to Kerbo (2003:11), social stratification is a concept of class, involving the classification of persons into groups based on shared socio-economic conditions; it is looked from economic, social, political and ideological dimensions. The second, according to Abraham (1973:112), social stratification is the problem that happens in economic dimension, social, and politic, it is concerned in society order, societies are divided into classes (economical), status group (social), and parties (political). The relations of them are on both sides that economical dimension is determined

by another dimension. The last, according to Soekanto (1993:227), social stratification is layer society which has different position of person or group in different position vertically. From definitions above, it can be concluded that social stratification is the difference of class or level of person or groups that happens in society, the levels are looked from economic, social, political and ideological dimension.

Social stratification is not only studied in social and political science but also some of man of letters or women of letters who are interested social stratification's issue in their works. One of them is William Shakespeare. William Shakespeare is the greatest writer in England. One of William Shakespeare's works reflecting the social stratification is *Cymbeline*. *Cymbeline* is one of the most popular drama which is written by William Shakespeare. The written *Cymbeline* drama cannot be precisely dated. According to Craig (1991), in Shakespeare Complete Works by W. J. Craig, M. A. There are three versions of the written of this drama. The first, according to Malone *Cymbeline* was written in 1609. The second is Furnivall, *Cymbeline* was written in 1611. The last, according to Modern Critics, *Cymbeline* was written in 1610. It can be concluded, *Cymbeline* was written in the early 17th century. This drama was published in 1623 as part of the First Folio. It is published after passing away of William Shakespeare.

Cymbeline drama tells about a low class men marries king's daughter. The king disagrees with this marriage but they keep their love and their faith each other. Because they have different stratification class so this study chooses social stratification as an issue and Marxist perspective as the approach of the study. Because love does not care for social stratification.

The benefits of the study are divided into two parts. The first is theoretical benefit; the study is expected to give a new contribution of knowledge, particularly the literary study on *Cymbeline* drama. The second is practical benefit; the study is expected to enrich knowledge and experience of the writer study on the drama from Marxist perspective.

The objectives of the study are to analyze Cymbeline drama based on the structural elements of the drama and to analyze Cymbeline drama by using Marxist perspective.

A Marxist theory is the conceptual constellation constituting its analytic dimension. Marxism is concepts such as the relations of production (i.e., the foundation of Marxist definitions of class), surplus value and exploitation, and the tendency for the rate of profit to fall, among others (Barrow, 1993:11).

According to Callinicos (2004:139), the most basic proposition of Marxism is that capitalism creates the material and social conditions of communism. There are five basic principles of Marxism, namely: dialectical, historical, class struggle, alienation and revolution.

RESEARCH METHOD

Based on the data, this study is categorized as qualitative research. The steps to conduct this research are determining the type of the study, determining the object of the study, determining data and data source, determining technique of data collection, and determining technique of data analysis.

The object of this study is *Cymbeline* drama written by William Shakespeare in 1623. This drama tells about a low class man marries king's daughter. They are separated by social stratification and differences of power or authority but they are united by love.

There are two sources that are needed to do this research. The primary data source is the data taken from the text *Cymbeline*. It covers such thing as words, phrase, sentence and dialogue in the drama. The second data source is the data taken from some materials selected in the relation with the problem exposed such as biography of William Shakespeare.

The technique of data collection is library research and the steps are as follows: reading *Cymbeline* drama script, determining the character that will be analyzed both major characters and minor characters of *Cymbeline* drama, taking note on important parts in both primary and secondary data, classifying and

determining the relevant data, and taking notes from the material and some other resources related to *Cymbeline* drama.

The technique used in analyzing the data is descriptive analysis. It focuses with the structural elements of the drama and Marxist perspective. That is describing the structural elements of *Cymbeline* drama that is characters, setting, plot, style and theme and describing the basic principles of Marxist that is found in *Cymbeline* drama that is dialectical materialism, historical materialism, class struggle, alienation and revolution.

RESEARCH FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Based on the issue this study is reflected in Marxist perspective. There are five basic principles of Marxist perspective, namely dialectical materialism, historical materialism, class struggle, alienation and revolution. This study tries to discuss them and correlate all of them. William Shakespeare in *Cymbeline* drama generally wants to express that social stratification can motivate someone action to do something.

1. Dialectical Materialism

The dialectical method to reach the truth of a problem, it does not need to move slowly and with patience perfect initial conceptions, get rid of what is wrong, defend what is right and add what is lacking (Jon, 2000: 47). Dialectical process is a contradiction and absorption process that results new position. This position is called as synthesis. Synthesis is the result from contradiction between thesis and antithesis.

Thesis appears in *Cymbeline* drama when Cymbeline plans to make a marriage partner for Imogen his daughter. He wants Imogen to marry to Cloten because Cloten is the son of Queen. Cymbeline refuses the marriage of Imogen to Posthumus. This is the manner of Cymbeline in order the throne as a King is not given to lower class that is Posthumus. The second position of dialectical materialism is antithesis. It appears when Imogen chooses Posthumus as her husband. She is sure that Posthumus has good qualities and she can prove it. The last position is synthesis. Finally Cymbeline knows that Posthumus is a

low class man who is a loyal husband for his daughter. He knows that Posthumus is a loyal husband from Iachimo when Iachimo admits his fault.

Cymbeline knows that happiness cannot be looked from the big power. He is also aware that someone who he loves is Queen. Queen deceits Cymbeline's love. She only wants to get his throne. He knows that the happiness of his daughter is to live with someone who she loves that is Posthumus. Although, Posthumus is from low class man, he has good quality that makes Imogen falls in love to Posthumus.

2. Historical Materialism

The concept of historical material can be found when Marx believed that for understanding human societies must know the material condition of human subsistence, or the economic producing the necessities of life. The key of historical materialism is the historical progression or development of the material condition of production (Kerbo, 2003: 90-91). Historical materialism appears after dialectical materialism. It is caused by dialectical materialism. Historical materialism is to measure the power distribution and material against and what profit of doing the action.

Historical materialism appears in *Cymbeline*. The first, Cymbeline wants Imogen to marry Cloten. Because Cloten is the son of Queen so if Imogen marries to Cloten the throne will not fall to a low class. So, he tries to break up the relation between Imogen and Posthumus. The second, Imogen refuses Cymbeline's order because she knows a man who is given in marriage by Cymbeline is a wicked person. So she refuses that order she does not want the throne fall to a wicked person. The third, Cloten wants to marry Imogen. If he marries to Imogen, he will be the King in Britain. So he will get the throne from Cymbeline. The fourth, Queen makes a plan to Cloten that he must marry Imogen. If the planning is successful she will take over the throne. And she has big power to take Britain from Cymbeline and Imogen. The last, Belarius is the kidnaper Cymbeline's sons. He kidnaps Arviragus and Belarius to gain the revenge against Cymbeline for banishing him.

3. Class struggle

The class struggle is the conflict between debtors and debtors-creditors or landlords of small and large (Elster, 2000:183-184). Class struggle is an exertion to get freedom in order to appear a development of the new historical from laborer to get the same position in economic from bourgeois and proletariat. Social stratification appears as the cause of class struggle. In here, class struggle is divided into two parts that are bourgeois class and proletariat class.

The first part is bourgeois class; the bourgeois class tries how the proletariat class cannot participate or include to bourgeois class. The member of bourgeois class is Cymbeline, Queen and Cloten. Bourgeois class here, the first is Cymbeline. Cymbeline is the King in Britain and he has a big power in Britain. He does not want Imogen to marry to Posthumus. So he tries to separate their relation. Cymbeline orders Posthumus to go away from Britain before Posthumus loves Imogen moreover. The second bourgeois is Cloten. He disagrees Imogen has special relation with Posthumus moreover. So, he decides to kill Posthumus. If he kills Posthumus, Imogen will love him. The last bourgeois class is Queen. Queen does not want Imogen to marry Posthumus, she wants Imogen marry Cloten. She chases away Posthumus.

The second part is proletariat class, the proletariat class tries how they can participate or include to the bourgeois class. The member of proletariat class is Posthumus, Pisanio and Belarius. Proletariat class here, the first is Posthumus. He is a lower class man who marries Imogen. He promises to Imogen that he will not leave her. So, he marries Imogen. The second proletariat class is Pisanio. He is the servant of Posthumus. Because Posthumus goes from Britain, he orders Pisanio to take care of Imogen. So Pisanio becomes Imogen's servant. The last proletariat class is Belarius. He is kidnapper of Cymbeline's sons to meddle in the Britain kingdom by kidnapping Cymbeline's sons, so he can revenge to Cymbeline for his banishment.

4. Alienation

Alienation is based on society isolation (Suseno, 1999:89). Alienation is the case of someone, especially from lower class who is doing something to get a freedom but they are not success to get it.

In *Cymbeline* drama, alienation condition is undergone by Belarius. He is an ex-soldier from Britain. Belarius is hurt by Cymbeline. Finally, Belarius kidnaps Cymbeline's sons. They live in cave. He kidnaps Arviragus and Guiderius because he revenges for his banishment. But he admits to Cymbeline that he has kidnapped his sons.

5. Revolution

Proletariat can be understood as the total class because of the oppressed total, which in contradiction to existing social structure not partially, but totally, so that if they evolve, they will be total evolve. It means that revolution will make society free from classes, and make human free as human itself (Suseno, 1999: 83-84). Revolution is being the way of proletariat to sweep class stratification, to stop exploitation and to create ne society. There is no revolution in *Cymbeline* drama.

CONCLUSSION AND PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATION

Based on the analysis and discussion. This study wants to the conclusion such as:

1. Based on the structural analysis, it is clear that in this drama, William Shakespeare wants to send the message to the reader that "Love does not care for social stratification." He uses of the story of Cymbeline as the king of Britain. He creates the major characters and minor characters in the setting of England at the early of the seventeenth century. He creates the characters of Imogen and Posthumus as the major characters, that tells social level between Imogen and Posthumus. That a lower class man Posthumus marries to the king daughter that is Imogen. William Shakespeare takes the setting in Britain and Rome. He also uses traditional plot to make the reader easy to read the drama script. Shakespeare combines all the elements of drama to make the drama be colorful. Because the elements support the plot of drama.

2. Based on the Marxist perspective analysis, it is evident that in this drama, Shakespeare reflects the social situation of the English society in early seventeenth century that emphasized the social stratification. Social stratification reflected in *Cymbeline's* character and characterization. In his works Shakespeare always creates the different level that happened in society. Because he likes to take the characters from high class and lower class in his work. Social class between Bourgeois and Proletariat, they always keep their love each other. Although, Cymbeline always tries to break up their relation. Cymbeline's throne is not hoped by Posthumus because he loves Imogen purely. His love only for faithful but not for greed in wealth. Cymbeline knows that his throne is usurped by his wife that is Queen and Cloten but the struggle of Imogen and Posthumus result happy ending because love cannot be separated by the difference of social stratification.

Related to this study above, this study is hoped can give a new contribution in pedagogical implications such as:

1. This study is hoped to give contribution in developing literature aspect in English education.
2. This study is hoped can be a new reference study in study of literature.
3. The study can build the students character especially the differences of social stratification in society so it means to anticipate the social stratification.

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