

CLASS CONFLICTS
IN THOMAS HARDY'S *THE MAYOR OF CASTERBRIDGE*:
A MARXIST APPROACH



RESEARCH PAPER

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

The Mayor of Casterbridge is a novel written by England author Thomas Hardy. The first publication of the novel was appeared in serial form concurrently in *Graphic* magazine in England and in *Harper's Weekly* in the United States from January to May 1886. It was first published in book form in 1886 (<http://www.soarknotes.com/lit/casterbridge>). The publisher is Smith Elder in England and Henry Holt in America. The full title of the novel is *The Life and Death of the Mayor of Casterbridge: A Story of a Man of Character*. The novel was the writer read is published by Peacock Books, New Delhi in 1969. *The Mayor of Casterbridge* has 45 chapters, 300 pages, and this novel is fourth edition. In this research, the researcher uses paperback England edition.

The Mayor of Casterbridge tells about a man whose name is Michael Henchard. He is an itinerant hay-trusser, reaches Weydon Priors looking for a work. He is accompanied by his wife Susan and their baby Elizabeth-Jane. Though there are no jobs available, they head toward a spot where a fair is in progress and make their weary way to a tent where furnity is being sold. Michael Henchard quietly signals to the 'furnity woman' to lace with rum. When he has imbibed more than enough liquor, he rashly auctions his wife and child to a sailor for five guineas. The next day, when he recovers from his them, he leaves, vowing not to touch liquor for twenty-one years. Henchard

tells to the 'furmity woman' his destination. Michael Henchard goes to Casterbridge for looking a work, at there him as a labor but for a long time he becomes a mayor in Casterbridge.

Eighteen years later, Susan and Elizabeth reach Casterbridge to find Henchard, she wants to tell him about their child Elizabeth-Jane is not Henchard's daughter but she is Newson's daughter. Henchard's daughter died three months after Henchard sold them and Elizabeth-Jane then is the child of Susan with other husband that is Richard Newson. Before Henchard met with Susan, he has a lover whose name is Lucetta Templeman a woman from Jersey. His planning is will marry with her, it was cancelled because Henchard was met with Susan and want to remarries. It cancelled again because Susan soon dies.

Farfrae is a Scotsman who has renovating process for restoring bad wheat. Henchard is greatly impressed with him and persuades him to stay in Casterbridge as his corn manager. Later Farfrae is dismissed by Henchard, and the two of them become business rivals. Lucetta then meets Farfrae, and they fall in love and marry. Farfrae continues to prosper in business. He and Henchard now become rivals both in business and in love. Henchard goes into a period of great decline. His business fails due to his rash decision, and he must declare bankruptcy. He has no option but to work for Farfrae.

Then the 'furmity woman' appears and exposes Henchard's past crimes. He loses all credibility in Casterbridge. Elizabeth was effected reconciliation with him, but he has also started drinking. Lucetta returns all of

love letters she had written to Henchard by Jopp. But Jopp reads and opens the letters to the townspeople, and then they arrange a 'skimmity-ride' through Casterbridge with Lucetta's and Henchard's effigies parading through town. Lucetta felt shocked and it made her get epileptic which kills her. Henchard now became extremely poor, living together with Elizabeth-Jane and starts to accept her as his own daughter. He feels that she is the only one source of joy in his life at this time. One day, Newson comes looking for his wife and daughter, but Henchard lies to him and says that she is dead. Hearing that Elizabeth-Jane died, Newson goes away. Henchard begins to fear he will lose Elizabeth-Jane to love. Farfrae, now as a widower, he renews a courtship with Elizabeth-Jane. Newson returns to Casterbridge again, when he learns the truth about his daughter. Elizabeth-Jane is shocked when she learns the truth about her past and disowns.

Therefore, Henchard leaves Casterbridge, he was a penniless man and then work as a hay-trusser. A few months later he hears about wedding between Farfrae and Elizabeth-Jane. Henchard desperately wants to see his daughter and apologizing for lying to her. When he reappears in Casterbridge, Elizabeth feel annoyed with him and receives like stranger. Henchard heartbroken, he goes away and says nothing in self defense. He dies alone in despondency, only Able Whittle his former employer, is there to fulfill his needs. He dies in his acuter depression and despair of his life.

Thomas Hardy is a famous and great English author. He was from the southern part of London, which is Dorset. His life was from 1840-1928. He

started write novel when he was twenty years old. Thomas Hardy produces much great novels during his life time. His works are: *Far from the Madding Crowd* (1874), it is considered successfull. *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886), he wrote his novel when become a well known figure in London's literary circles. The setting of story is England Victorian era. The era when the Industrial Revolution happened in England. *The Woodlanders* (1887), is his greatest tragic novel. *Wessex Tales* (1888), as his first collection of short stories. *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (1891), *Jude the Obscure* (1895).

The interesting things in *The Mayor of Casterbridge* can be seen from the story because this tell about the effect of Industrial Revolution in economic condition, as the main problem is class conflict between the upper class and the lower class. The upper class is the oppressor who exploits the oppressed. They come from upper class which is having much money. They have power and authority to push the oppressed, they were capitalist. They have money and the owner of the property. The lower class is the oppressed who effort to against social segregation in area of living (social) and segregation in the law and economic. They are which does not have money and low education, they are called labor. This story shows much conflict between the upper class and the lower class. It happens because the existence of social difference in England during Industrial Revolution in 19th century. The other interesting side is the value given in *The Mayor of Casterbridge* that is Industrial Revolution in England during in 19th century did not only give good effect but also gave bad effect.

The opinion of societies about his novel is very immeasurable, there is pro and contra. One of them who agrees and takes a fancy to this novel are: the first opinion from Kevin Holtsberry said,

“The Mayor of Casterbridge is famous novel for its scandalous beginning in which a traveling hay trusser named Michael Henchard sells his wife to another man. The story then follows him from seeming redemption ultimate downfall. It is a story of unbridled emotions, rivalry, betrayal, and tragedy. It may not be a page turner in the traditional sense but it is a fascinating portrait of human weakness and emotions”, retrieved from (http://www.collectedmiscellany.com/2004/04/the_mayor_of_casterbridge.html)

Kevin Holtsberry has opinion if *The Mayor of Casterbridge* is a famous novel because in the beginning of this story we can read what Michael Henchard does to his wife. Henchard sells his wife to another man. Then follows Henchard’s destination to get Susan.

Second opinion is from Liz, *“The Mayor of Casterbridge is very interesting novel because the story tells about Michael Henchard’s rise and downfall. It has an amazing storyline and is much like a modern-day soap”*, (retrieved from <http://www.online-literature.com/hardy/casterbridge/>).

Liz has opinion if *The Mayor of Casterbridge* is a very interesting novel because it tells how the main character rises and downfalls his life. According to Liz, *The Mayor of Casterbridge* has an amazing story line.

Third opinion is from RayS,

“The Mayor of Casterbridge is a novel and a mood piece. The mood is of futility, irony, and despair, that sees life as primarily tragic, punctuated by occasional moments of happiness. Character is fate. Our mistakes in the past strike back at us in the present. Life is not to be lived, but to be endured. A mood of pessimism. Vengeance might be the theme of the novel, that vengeance that seeks us out and punishes us for our actions in the past. The wheel of fortune, from being poor, to achieving wealth, back to destitute poverty in both physical circumstance and mind, (Retrieved from booksyouneverread-rays.blogspot.com/2007/07/mayor-of-casterbridge-thomas-hardy.html).

RayS thinks that *The Mayor of Casterbridge* shows about the tragic life of Michael Henchard as the major character. From poorer people then

become a mayor and he becomes a poor man again. In this story tells the regret of major character in the past time when he sold his wife and the daughter.

The other opinion from society disagrees with what Laura said,

“I’m really sorry, but MoC was REALLY boring! I had to read it for English and not only did it go on and on! But it was very confusing and I had trouble understanding it! Yes, it probably is well written and maybe is enjoyable if you can waste time trying to understand it and aren’t dreading on exam on it at the end of the year!” (Retrieved from <http://www.online-literature.com/hardy/casterbridge>).

Laura’s thinks that *The Mayor of Casterbridge* is boring. She is confused and can not understand the story, even though it’s well written. She said if other readers enjoyed it this can waste time to know what *The Mayor of Casterbridge* tells about.

Marxism refers to the philosophy and social theory based on Karl Marx’s work on one hand, and to the political practice based on Marxism theory on the other hand (namely, parts to the political First International during Marx’s time, communist parties and later states). According to Marx in Forgacs, “Marxism is a living body of thought and set of real political practices that influenced by changes in the world as aims to interference to change the world Marxism approach seeks to expose the dominant class”

Marxist theory limits the upper class in society to own properties and power because it is harmful for as the lower class. According to Suseno, “Marxism is the term for ideology about the relation between economic, social, and political concept” (Suseno, 2001: 5). Economic condition in real life relate to the politic concept in a country and it is also social condition in society. Marxism is an ideology that studies about the social, economical,

historical, revolutionary problems based on the social conflicts in the society (<http://www.marxism.com/marxisttheory.asp>). However Marxism always deals with the history of society in a country, the traditional Marxism criticism shows history in general point and it is discussing about conflict among social classes and large historical movement ([http://course.lib.ed/eng\(brooke/oacra/m2.htm\)](http://course.lib.ed/eng(brooke/oacra/m2.htm))).

Depending on several definitions above, Marxism is an ideology which is based on the basic thought the relation between economic, social and political concept that is influenced by change of the world. Marxism offers to humanity a social, economic, and cultural understanding of the nature of reality, society, and the individual.

The researcher is interested in analyzing *The Mayor of Casterbridge* novel because this story shows many portrays of the conflict existing between the lower class and the upper class. It is beneficially matched to analyze the novel by using a Marxism approach to comprehend well the conflict between the upper class and the lower class in England during Industrial Revolution. Accordingly, the researcher conducts a research entitled “**CLASS CONFLICTS IN THOMAS HARDY’S THE MAYOR OF CASTERBRIDGE: A MARXIST APPROACH**”.

B. Literature Review

After searching and observing, the writer did not find a research in Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta which has the same or similar title as she makes Class Conflict in Thomas Hardy's *The Mayor of Casterbridge* using Marxist Approach.

She found other researches which discuss Thomas Hardy's *The Mayor of Casterbridge*. The first is Renggani with anxiety in Thomas Hardy's *The Mayor of Casterbridge: A Psychoanalytic Approach*. She analyzed the anxiety experienced by the major character using psychoanalytic approach (1999). The second researcher is Fitri Kurniawan with Thomas Hardy's *The Mayor of Casterbridge: A Genetic Structuralism* (2007). This research identifies Thomas Hardy's world view in *The Mayor of Casterbridge* using genetic structuralism. The third researcher is Idhun Wirawati with Social Changes in Thomas Hardy's: *The Mayor of Casterbridge: A Sociological Approach* (2007). This is about social changes as reflected in Thomas Hardy's *The Mayor of Casterbridge* using sociological approach. The researcher now applies Marxist approach to analyze Thomas Hardy's *The Mayor of Casterbridge*. This research is to complete the previous study.

C. Problem Statement

The main problem of this study is "How are class conflict reflected in Thomas Hardy's *The Mayor of Casterbridge*"

D. Limitation of the Study

The study is focused on the class conflict as reflected in Thomas Hardy's *The Mayor of Casterbridge* by using Marxist approach.

E. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are as follow:

1. To describe the structural elements of the novel.
2. To analyze the novel using Marxist approach to know the class conflicts in England as reflected in Thomas Hardy's *The Mayor of Casterbridge*.

F. Benefits of the Study

The benefits of the study are that, through this study, the writer hopes that the study will give benefits as follow:

1. Theoretical Benefit
 - a. The result of the research may add a literary criticism on novel, especially analysis of Marxism approach on the novel.
 - b. The result of the research is expected to be useful for those who want to make a further analysis on the novel.

2. Practical Benefit

The result if the research is to fulfill partial requirements for getting bachelor degree of education in the English Department of Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta.

G. Research Method

1. Object of the Study

Object of the study is *The Mayor of Casterbridge*.

2. Type of Data Source

It consists of:

a. Primary Source

The primary data of the study is the novel of *The Mayor of Casterbridge* such as words, phrases, sentences events, dialogues, character action and narration.

b. Secondary Source

The secondary data source is obtained from all information related to the novel, the writer also collects information about Thomas Hardy's background and his work *The Mayor of Casterbridge* from such of books and sources.

3. Method of the Data Collection

This study uses library research in which the data are taken from the library, which uses some steps as follow:

- a. Reading the novel repeatedly
- b. Taking notes of the important parts from primary and secondary data sources.
- c. Classifying the data into some categories.
- d. Drawing conclusion.

4. Technique of the Data Analysis

In analyzing the data, the writer uses descriptive qualitative analysis of the content. The analysis starts from the structural analysis of the work and finish in Marxism analysis of the literary works.

H. Research Paper Organization

Chapter I is introduction, which consists of the background of the study, literature review, problem statement, limitation of the study, objectives of the study, benefits of the study, research method, and research paper organization. Chapter II shows the underlying theory, presents the theory of Marxist Approach. Chapter III covers social context and background of the English society in nineteenth century. Chapter IV covers the structural analysis of the novel, which includes the structural elements of character and characterization, setting, plot, point of view, theme, and style. Chapter V discusses the analysis of class discrimination in Thomas Hardy's *The Mayor of Casterbridge* based on Marxist approach. Chapter VI explains conclusion and suggestion in the research paper.