

LOPAKHIN'S CAPITALIST POINTS OF VIEW DEALING WITH SOCIAL CLASS AND CLASS STRUGGLE IN ANTON CHEKHOV'S *THE CHERRY ORCHARD*

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Abstract

The research entitled Lopakhin's Capitalist Points of View Dealing with Social Class and Class Struggle in Anton Chekhov's The Cherry Orchard aims to find out Lopakhin's capitalist points of view dealing with social class and class struggle in Anton Chekhov's The Cherry Orchard. This research focuses on the drama entitled The Cherry Orchard as primary data. The writer uses several theories in this research; they are theory of marxism, capitalism, social class, and class struggle. Moreover, library research is used as a method of collecting the data. In addition, descriptive research is applied in order to understand and learn the conditions, habits, opinions of some characters in Anton Chekhov's The Cherry Orchard. Furthermore, the sociological approach is used to explain Lopakhin's capitalist points of view presented in The Cherry Orchard.

Key Words: Capitalism, Social Class, Class Struggle.

1. INTRODUCTION (Times New Roman, 12, bold)

Rees states that literature is writing which expresses and communicates thoughts, feelings and attitudes towards life (1973: 20). It shows that literature is a way for mankind to express their arguments and also can be used as equipment for living.

Likewise, Wellek states that literature is thus frankly didactic and even idealizing in the sense that it shows us life not as it is but as it ought to be according to Marxist doctrine (1963: 347). Consequently, in Marxist interpretations, through literature people can establish their own lives according to what they have in minds.

Furthermore, literature is divided into three groups, namely prose, drama, and poetry. According to Reaske, drama is work of literature composition which delineates life and human's activity by means of presenting various action and dialogue between group or characters (1966: 14). It can be said that through drama people can express their feelings, emotions completely. Moreover, drama is performed by some actors and actresses through some actions, and dialogues on the stage. Drama is loved by a lot of people because it can make the reader feel and see more effectively the main point of the story.

In this research, the drama entitled *The Cherry Orchard* is chosen as the primary data. Drama entitled *The Cherry Orchard* is written by Anton Chekhov. He started writing *The Cherry Orchard* into paper in spring of 1903. *The Cherry Orchard* was premiered at Moscow Art Theatre and it was on Chekhov's forty-fourth birthday, January 17th, 1904.

This research describes Lopakhin's capitalist points of view dealing with capitalism. It begins with Ranevskaya returns from Paris to fetch her home in Russia. Her property is enforced to be sold at the auction during her presently bankruptcy. Lopakhin, the son of a serf, but now a wealthy business man offers a way out of her difficulties, which lead her to cut down the cherry

orchard and build cottages for holiday on the cleared land. However, Ranevskaya rejects Lopakhin's solution. Consequently, Ranevskaya's decision lead her to loss her property. Meanwhile, Lopakhin with his eagerness successfully buys the property of Madame Ranevskaya at the auction and he is well known as the 'positive hero' demanded by capitalism.

In the early of twenties, Marxism became one of the theories that give a huge impact to the society. In this case, the economy conditions not only for the laborers but also for private owners are considerable. Therefore, Lynn says that... Marxism's drive to see the world in terms of economic classes, to identify who is being oppressed and exploited, and by whom (Lynn, 1952: 131). Consequently, through Marxism people can identify who is the boss and who is the worker and everything is based on material and economic point of view. Marxism spread abroad in the late of 19th century, and it becomes a devotion and also dedication for some people in most nations.

The Marxists' obsessions about economy are powerful and they have an ability to predict the condition of the future about economic presence. Besides, in the book entitled "*Backgrounds of American Literary Thought*" Marxism is perhaps best understood as the extension into the fields of politics and sociology of the scientific attitude and methodology of Darwinism. Marx saw human society as being shaped by vast, impersonal forces and all social evolution as the result of the struggle for existence under adverse conditions (Horton, 1967: 203). In other words, through Marxism people automatically enforce to be adapting with the politic conditions in the society and they have to fight for their lives in order to fulfill their needs in economic perception.

Furthermore, Marx's theory about Marxism also provides a detailed explanation of the struggle between capitalists and workers over the size of the surplus value. According to Marx, the only in which a profit (i.e., the illusion of a commodity increasing in value as a result of repeated sale) is possible (Horton, 1967: 215). In other words, since the workers produce more commodity than the capitalist needs to fulfill his necessity, he will sell the remaining of commodity to the employee who gets the surplus for nothing. As he studied the course of history, it seemed to him that there have always been two opposed classes in society, the "haves" and the "have nots," master and slave, feudal lord and serf, guild master and journeyman, and now the capitalist employer and the exploited worker (Horton, 1967: 208). Hence, from the action of Marxist appear in social life simultaneously, turn up a new class structure that is capitalist who live their lives based on theory of capitalism.

Generally, capitalism is desirable for people, especially for capitalist. Capitalism is the most advanced theory which gives so many effects and has so many followers because people have the right to buy what they want as long as they have money to pay for it and it works not only for people but also for countries which apply this theory in order to establish their economic conditions.

Marxism asserts that capitalism can bring someone's life into the brighter one and as a capitalist he can own and control the productive resources. Marx says that under capitalism, the modes of production would reach their highest state of development and would become concentrated among the fewest possible owners. Meanwhile, the workers, whose labor makes all this wealth possible, would become increasingly unified and disciplined as a revolutionary force (Horton, 1967: 210). It means that capitalist makes and sells goods and services only for profits while the workers do all the working things for themselves.

Theory of capitalism is related with two different classes. First, the capitalist class and second the working class. Marx states that capitalism has destroyed the feudal aristocracy, the artisans, and the petty bourgeoisie (small shopkeepers), but the workers cannot be destroy,

because the workers are necessary to the existence of capitalism (Horton, 1967: 211). It seems that both of them are related to each other. Clearly, the capitalists with plentiful resources and also as the owner of the companies could not produce and sell goods in the markets without the working class.

Moreover, Marx also says that capitalism is increasingly faced with the enormous problem of finding profitable outlets for all the capital that is constantly accumulating (Trainer, 2010: 7). This problem has influence a capitalist looking for every opportunity for profitable investment. For example, in drama entitled *The Cherry Orchard*, Lopakhin as a capitalist buys Ranevskaya's land at the auction and one of his purposes are bringing down the cherry orchard. After that he wants to build a new cottage as business property. He is also looking for people who want to work for him.

Nevertheless, the writer concludes that, both capitalist and the working class are related to each other. The working class is needed because capitalists could not stand alone. Consequently, even the capitalists make decision and also operate the companies, they still need the working class to supply their goods and establish their economic condition.

Occasionally, people always depend on each other. A person cannot undergo his own life by himself, each person always needs and supports each other in order to gain a meaningful life. Karl Marx says that the class or social class is not defined in terms of work function, income or consumption, but rather by the relations it bears with the mode of production (Swingewood, 1975: 113). It can be concluded that social class emerges because some people converge together in the same place and have common interests. This condition automatically unites them into specific class.

Furthermore, Marx also says a social class is thus defined both in terms of property ownership or non-ownership and thus the degree of control over, or subservience to, exploitation, and the degree of personal freedom its members enjoy (Swingewood, 1975: 114). In this case, it is important to note that the evolution of class consciousness in a capitalism era makes a huge difference between one side of classes to another. There are two decisive classes; they are the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.

The bourgeoisie is well known as the owners of slaves. This class controls the course of economy in a modern capitalist society. The exploitation toward the proletariat by the bourgeoisie creates a class conflict which injures both sides of classes. Marx says the industrial bourgeoisie had conquered the entire bourgeois class, subordinating both finance capital and the landed interest to its domination (Swingewood, 1975: 143). Of course, the bourgeoisie contain many of wealthy men that owned factories, industries, and operated business. It drives the bourgeoisie to develop a modern industry and establish the productions of their industries. Therefore, the bourgeoisie take more profits from the proletariat and enforce their rules upon them.

In the other case, the proletariat have an important role in society. This class contains of exploited men who work in factories and any other business places which the bourgeoisie own. The bourgeoisie cannot stand alone. They need the power of the proletariat to work for them. It makes both of these classes are related to each other. Marx had commented on this tendency in the Paris Manuscripts, he says the worker becomes an ever cheaper commodity the more goods he creates. The devaluation of the human world increases in direct relation with the increase in value of the world of things (Swingewood, 1975: 100). It means that capitalist production enforces the proletariat to produce goods as many as they can. Undeniably, the life of the proletariat are dominated and exploited.

Furthermore, it is important to emphasize that class struggle is well known as class conflict. Both, Social change and social movement are frequently taking part in class struggle. Karl Marx also says that class conflict is thus a necessary element of capitalist civilization, for as the working classes are brought together within large-scale factory organization they find it impossible to live without developing a sense of solidarity, collectivism, and mutuality (Swingewood, 1975: 21). Accidentally, the exploitation toward the proletariat by the bourgeoisie brings great wealth, productions, and also much more innovations. However, the social consciousness begins to arise among the proletariat. Their togetherness leads them to realize that it is impossible for them to develop their conditions and make a great social mobility.

Engels in the book entitled *Marx and Modern Social Theory* states that . . . subordinate class in a society dominated by a persuasive ideology the workers find it increasingly difficult on their own to achieve a revolutionary class consciousness. They become bourgeoisified (Swingewood, 1975: 182). It extremely shows that the struggle of proletarian brings them into a better social class. Their positions are not the same as the old proletariat and this kind of action is well knows as social mobility.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

The method that is used for data collecting is library research. In *The Element of Library Research: What Every Student Needs to Know*, George states that library research is a form of structural inquiry with specific tools, rules, and techniques (2008: 1). It means that library research is a method that contains some specific techniques in order to collect some data in written materials.

In order to find some information clearly, the play entitled *The Cherry Orchard* is analyzed by using descriptive research. Johnson states that the primary purpose of descriptive research is to provide an accurate description or picture of the status or characteristics of a situation or phenomenon (2010: 366). In other word, descriptive research is learning about the opinions, beliefs, behaviors, and attitudes of some characters to get more information that is needed.

Moreover, sociological approach is applied in order to analyze Lopakhin's capitalist points of view dealing with social class and class struggle with the condition of society around him. Scott states in *Five Approaches of Literary Critism* as follows: "Sociological criticism starts with a conviction that art's relations to society are vitally important, and that the investigation of these relationships may organize and deepen one's aesthetic response to a work of art (Scott, 1962: 123)". It is clearly said that sociological approach gives an attention more to the relation between a character and other characters.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Lopakhin's Capitalist Points of View Dealing with Social Class and Class Struggle in Anton Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard*

Lopakhin as the wealthy merchant in *The Cherry Orchard* is the character who follows the rule of capital system. Moreover, the writer intends to explain Lopakhin's capitalism point of view dealing with social class and class struggle in Anton Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard*. Social class discusses Lopakhin's social status condition in society. Meanwhile, class struggle discusses Lopakhin's struggle from being proletariat to being bourgeoisie.

a. Social Class

In the play entitled *The Cherry Orchard*, a capitalist namely, Yermolai Lopakhin highly pays attention on his social class. Although, he was born into a family of serfs, he could manage himself and make a great advantage to become a wealthy merchant. The society rapidly changes, so does Lopakhin. Lopakhin's social class can be shown through the following quotation:

Lopakhin : Madame Ranevskaya's lived abroad five years now, I've no idea what she'll be like . . . She's a fine woman.

Straightforward, easy-going. I remember when I was a lad of about fifteen, my late father – he had a little shop in the village at that time – well, he hit me with his fist so hard my nose started bleeding. We'd come up here to the yard for something or other, and he'd been drinking. Anyway, Madame Ranevskaya – I remember even now – she was just a slip of a girl, she took me over to the wash-basin in this very room, in the nursery. 'Now don't cry, little peasant, 'she said, 'It'll heal up in time for your wedding.'

A pause

'Little peasant' . . . Well, true enough, my father was a peasant, but here I am now in a white waistcoat, and tan leather shoes. A silk purse out of a sow's ear, you might say. Plain fact is I'm rich, I've pots of money, but when you get right down to it, I'm a peasant through and through (TCO. Act I, 1998: 4).

It shows that Lopakhin's condition was in pain. Undeniably, he was troubled with his former status as a peasant in the past. He remembers that his sad condition irritates him and his family life. Unfortunately, he was a servant in Ranevskaya's house when he was a child. However, he believes that through hard working and good skill in business he can earn a huge amount of money and make him to be a better man someday. Now, Lopakhin's social class is included into the bourgeoisie class. Economically, he becomes so strong that he has bought the cherry orchard at the auction which used to be Ranevskaya's. He has succeeded to maintain his current status as a capitalist. The rest is that he wants to prove to Ranevskaya that he is better than his ancestors.

Moreover, the next quotation is a proof that Lopakhin is one of successful capitalists. He has succeeded to change his social class and belongs to the bourgeoisie as a wealthy merchant:

Lopakhin : . . . Yes, I've bought the land on which my father and grandfather were slaves, where they weren't even allowed into the kitchen (TCO. Act III, 1998: 69).

The quotation above explains that social class is included in one of the most important aspects for a capitalist, Lopakhin. Even though, he was son of a serf, he has managed to prove that he is a successful man who finally develops his social class from a slave of the estate to its owner.

b. Class Struggle

Lopakhin in *The Cherry Orchard* shows that his struggle is an action of a servant who dares to change his social status. Lopakhin is well dressed and respected by people around him. It happens because he has a lot of money. He believes that money comes to those who work so hard for their life. Moreover, his enthusiasm to be a successful person can be seen from the following quotation:

Lopakhin : You know, I get up just after four, I work from morning till night, I'm dealing constantly with my own or somebody else's money, and I see what kind of people there around me. You only have to start doing something to realize how

few decent, honest men there are (TCO. Act II, 1998: 45).

Lopakhin's struggle is not an easy part for him. His struggle to become a wealthy man guides him to do whatever it takes in order to acquire what he deserves the most. Lopakhin's talent for business also becomes the main factor of his success. His preoccupation over money and success is his trademark. His intelligence allows him to manage the amazing personal finances. He possesses the property he was born into and becomes the landowner. It shows that his point of view about class struggle is obvious.

Furthermore, he has done the remarkable action for himself and his family. He bought the land in which his grandfather and his father were used to be slaves:

Lopakhin : I bought it! Ladies and gentlemen, please, wait – I've a bit of a thick head, I can't speak . . . (*Laughs.*) When we got to the auction, Deriganov was already there. Leonid Andreyich had only fifteen thousand, and straight away Deriganov bid another thirty, on top of the mortgage. Well, I could see how things were going, so I waded in with forty thousand. He went up to forty-five, so I bid fifty-five. He would go up by five, you see, and I'd bid another ten. Well, it finished eventually. I bid ninety thousand roubles over and above the mortgage, and it was knocked down to me. The cherry orchard's mine now. All mine! (*Laughs.*) (TCO. Act III, 1998: 69).

The dramatic moment takes place inside of Ranevskaya's house. Lopakhin's speech about his success buying the cherry orchard occurs in front of so many people when Ranevskaya carries out a party. It is totally impressive. It shows that the justice of Lopakhin's act or struggle as a capitalist succeed to make everyone in the party speechless. One of Lopakhin's purposes is to erase the memory which their ancestors used to be slaves in that house. Therefore, he buys the cherry orchard along with memory inside of it. Besides that, Lopakhin also uses his success as a wealthy merchant to help others. Consider the quotation:

Lopakhin : You know, I sowed nearly three thousand acres of poppies in the spring, and that's forty thousand clear profit now. And when my poppies were in flower, well, that was some sight! Yes, as I was saying, I've made forty thousand, so I'm offering you a loan, if you like, because I can afford to. So why turn up your nose at it? I'm a peasant, let's face it . . .

Trofimov : Your father was a peasant, mine had a chemist's shop – that proves absolutely nothing (TCO. Act IV, 1998: 75-76).

Lopakhin's struggle is worth to remember. He believes that people need to struggle first in order to be successful. Besides that, Lopakhin also teaches people to work so hard to earn some money. Money is important for everyone, especially for a capitalist, Lopakhin. He thinks that with money he can do anything he wants and it gives him a better life physically or psychologically.

4. CONCLUSION

Lopakhin's capitalist points of view dealing with social class and class struggle in Anton Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard*. A capitalist is an individual who has capital, a person of great wealth, and usually a capitalist owns a business place and employs some people to work for him in order to establish his business. Lopakhin's points of view as a capitalist in *The Cherry Orchard* show some of his purposes. First, he wants to be respected. All he wants is to be respected by other people around him. Undeniably, he is son of a serf. People underestimate him that he cannot escape from his fate and become a slave like his ancestors. However, after all of

his struggle he can rise up and upgrade his social status. He proves that he is different from his ancestors. He is now a wealthy merchant and people will not look down upon him anymore. Second, his purpose is to enlarge his business places. He is a wealthy merchant but that is not enough for him. In this play, at the first time Lopakhin tries to help Ranevskaya by giving her some suggestions and plans in order to save her estate. Unfortunately, she refuses Lopakhin's ideas.

Consequently, Lopakhin buys Ranevskaya's land at the auction and chops down the entire cherry orchard to the ground in order to build a summer holiday cottage. He knows how to maintain and upgrade his wealth. Hence, by building a summer holiday cottage in that land, it will grant a new income for him and make him a great capitalist in that era. Therefore, Lopakhin's wealth leads him to have a great personal success financially. However, by having abundant wealth, he should not forget the important aspect of humanity, such as love and friendship.

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