

## **The Gap in Social Stratification in Mark Twain's Novel The Adventure of Huckleberry Finn based on Marxist Sociological Review**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This research journal describes the Novel The Adventure of Huckleberry Finn (1885) by Mark Twain with a review of Marxist Sociology. This research focuses on the field of sociology of literature. The Adventure of Huckleberry Finn (1885) by Mark Twain tells the story of the adventures of Huck with his clever and brave character and his best friend, Jim. The story's atmosphere is set in the early era of America with the conditions of social problems at that time. This study analyzes the structure and social class based on the study of Marxism because the plot of the novel contains several narratives that describe social inequality, one of which describes slavery and racism, causing the impact of social class stratification. This study takes the primary data in the form of several descriptive narratives taken from the Novel The Adventure of Huckleberry Finn (1885) by Mark Twain. It analyzes through the Marxist Sociology approach initiated by Karl Marx, who divides society into two social classes, the bourgeois class and the proletarian class (upper class). Furthermore, lower class). The research method used is descriptive qualitative, it is research procedures that focus on descriptive data in writing or text. The analysis technique used is based on qualitative data analysis methods, with collecting data by reading and observing the narrative text in the novel, reducing data that is considered relevant to the issues raised, presenting data systematically and explaining it based on Marxist sociology studies and drawing conclusions from the data that has been explained in detail. Whole. The novel The Adventure of Huckleberry Finn (1885) even became a debate and received much criticism because it seemed to show racism in the narrative used.

**Keywords:** Sociology of Literature, Marxist theory, Social inequality, and Social class.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Novel is one of the products of literary works that indirectly describe aspects of the lives of several figures who reflect society. A literary work has a role in society that cannot be separated from existing social aspects and

values. In sociology, the literature contains the value of social criticism. Because literary works are part of a society, it cannot be denied that literature cannot be separated from human existence because literature reflects the life of society itself.

The theory of Marxism influences many aspects of scientific disciplines; in addition to entering into philosophical, social, political, economic, and other social humanities studies, Marxism also has such a significant role in the development of literary theory. In Marxism's view, social reality is a disjointed unit and, in the end, gives rise to structuration, which is closely related to literature, where literature is a unified structuration whose contents contain various values, imagination, and experience (Emzir, Rohman, 2015: 98). Marx describes his view of his theory in terms of metaphorical architecture: "Superstructure" (political ideology), which rests on "base" (Socio-economic relations) (Selden, Raman). Widdowson Peter. Brooker, Peter, 2005:83).

Marxism became the originator of the discourse to equalize social and economic status between the proletarian and bourgeois classes. Marxism has a relationship with the history of economy, revolution, and society. The scope of Marxism towards literature has a comprehensive aspect. Several traditions of Marxist criticism literature refer to the writings of Marx and Engles on literature (Noor, Redyanto, 2007: 122). The theory of Marxism discusses many social issues, society, ideology, and social structure, so that this theory is considered very relevant in describing the existence of literary phenomena.

Literature is a social product so it will be directly tied to the existing social system. The community's conditions and the author's thoughts created a literary work. It is a significant reference point that the theory of Marxism can describe the relationship between literature and social elements, which at first was more inclined to economic theory.

In general, Marxism relates to several things in the realm of literature, including (1) judging from the form and content of a literary work, it is quoted from social reality, which has its origin in a fundamental form of production; (2) The strength of a literary work refers to the extent to which the work can be understood as well as the broader structure of the life of the author's society; (3) Reification in the realm of literature distinguishes between content and form of literature, form relates to works and readers, while content relates to aspects of the value of using literary works in social life.

In Marx's view, literature and other socio-cultural phenomena reflect economic relations because literary works have attachments between social classes in society. From this view, it can be interpreted that literary works can be understood if they are related to these relations (Van Luxemburg, 1986:24-25).

These reflections and social phenomena can be illustrated in novel "The Adventure of Huckleberry Finn" by Mark Twain (a famous American

novelist in the classical era). The storyline of this novel is that there are social stratification gaps in the characterizations, which illustrate the American era in the early period with its social conditions such as still spreading issues of racism, slavery so that it is divided into several social classes/groups.

Social stratification is the differentiation of society based on stratified classes, which divides society into the upper, middle, and lower classes, which becomes the reference for social stratification in society is an imbalance in the grouping between the rights and obligations, and responsibilities of each individual or group in a social system of society. (Sorokin, Pitirin, 1998: 36).

In Marx's view, literature and all other cultural phenomena reflect the pattern of economic relations because literature is bound to the classes that exist in society. Therefore, literary works can only be understood if it is associated with these relationships (Van Luxemburg, 1986:24-25). According to Lenin, a figure who is seen as the founder of Marxist literary criticism, literature (and art in general) is an essential and strategic tool in the proletariat's struggle against capitalism. Wholly, the theory of Marxism talks a lot about social and community issues, ideology, and social structure; this theory is seen as very relevant to explain the emergence of literary phenomena. As a social product, literary works are tied directly to the social system, society's environment, and the authors' thoughts who produced the work. Herein lies the significance of the theory of Marxism, which was initially an economic theory to explain the relationship of literature with social elements.

## **METHOD**

This research is oriented towards the sociology of literature and uses the theory of Marxism that Karl Marx thought. The data used in this study include primary data and secondary data. Primary data sources are taken from the novel *The Adventure of Huckleberry Finn* (1885) by Mark Twain, and secondary data sources are textbooks, journals, and e-books. The method used is descriptive qualitative. It is called descriptive because it describes the social class gap of the story characters from the data analyzed based on a review of Marxist theory, and is called qualitative because it explains the data using sentences instead of statistics and numbers.

The data analysis technique uses Marxist theory, which discusses the division of social classes in society to analyze the social conditions of the characters in the novel. The analysis was carried out by describing and identifying each sentence in the narration and dialogue as data based on a review of Marxist Sociology and concluding the results of the data analyzed.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Adventure of Huckleberry Finn is a historical novel that tells about the adventures of Huck and his friend Jim and describes the dark facts of American history, where social inequality is rampant, such as racism and slavery. Marxism is an ideology that follows the views of Karl Marx. Marx compiled a primary theory related to economic, social, and political systems. The theory of Marxism is an important phenomenon in the history of the development of world literary theory. This theory explains social class classification between the bourgeois class and the proletarian class, where there is a gap between these social classes.

➤ **Slavery of black people and racism is a problem of social inequality in this novel.**

Some of the narratives in the Adventure of Huckleberry Finn novel that depicts inequality and social stratification are:

*Miss Watson she kept pecking at me, and it got tiresome and lonesome. By and by they fetched the niggers in and had prayers, and then everybody was off to bed. I went up to my room with a piece of candle, and put it on the table. (Twain,1885:7)*

*We scrouched down and laid still. Miss Watson's big nigger, named Jim, was setting in the kitchen door; we could see him pretty clear, because there was a light behind him. He got up and stretched his neck out about a minute, listening. (Twain,1885: 10)*

*Jim was monstrous proud about it, and he got so he wouldn't hardly notice the other niggers. Niggers would come miles to hear Jim tell about it, and he was more looked up to than any nigger in that country. Strange niggers would stand with their mouths open and look him all over, same as if he was a wonder. Niggers is always talking about witches in the dark by the kitchen fire; but whenever one was talking and letting on to know all about such things, Jim would happen in and say, 'Hm! What you know 'bout witches?' (Twain,1885: 12)*

The narration above tells of Mrs. Watson's treatment of Huck and Jim (a negro). When viewed from history throughout the 17th century to the 19th century in America, the practice of slavery took place throughout the European colonies in America, especially against the Negro (people who were black). They were often despised. Negroes are primarily African and African-Americans owned by white people. Negroes made into enslaved people were generally exploited to work as contract servants or labor in producing crops such as tobacco and cotton. Because of their work, most enslaved people lived on plantations or farms. Each employer generally has less than 50 enslaved people. Based on Marxism's theory, the narration

implied above proves social inequality, the Negro who was exploited as an enslaved person was the lower class (proletarian class) in American society at that time.

Excerpt from the narration above also indicates racism against black people; here, it is seen that the figure of Mrs Watson enslaves blacks, and the issue of blacks and whites creates inequality and social stratification.

For more than three centuries, the United States has had a dark history of racial conflict between whites and blacks. It is because black people are often victims of discrimination against white people. White society in the United States is difficult to assimilate black people because the initial arrival of black people to the United States was only as slave workers, so a mindset was formed about black people as second-class citizens who became an attitude in social stratification.

Racial discrimination is not a new phenomenon in the US; it has been happening for hundreds of years. The stereotype of society still thinks that white people are superior and black people are inferior, and this is still difficult to get rid of today. The emphasis of the story conveyed by the author of this novel is very inclined to the issue of racism that occurs, as in some of the quotes above alluding to black people who are enslaved. In the construction of US society, racism is a pattern of thinking that views one group as different from another. This racist attitude is reflected by labelling minority groups and giving them social discrimination.

In the fragment of the novel above, there is the term Nigger / Negro, for black people from Africa or of African-American descent. Racism has created a social history shaped by prejudice and discrimination. Even these racist activities are manifested in intimidation, physical violence, and socio-economic segregation, as experienced by the figure of Jim and other negroes.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that the concept of Marxism in The Adventure of Huckleberry Finn Novel is in the gap and social stratification between the white race class or Native Americans and the black or Negro race; the gap and social class lead to racism and slavery. The form of discrimination shown in the story in this novel is the segregation carried out by white people against black people by openly highlighting physical and biological differences, which creates the view that the social status of black people is lower, inferior, minority and backward. Binary opposition has become commonplace. It creates racism that separates black-dominated and white-dominated societies from the social structure; there is a gap between the two races or classes. As is the case with

the gap between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat in Marxist theory.

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