

Chapter I

Introduction

This chapter presents a general description of the paper. It covers the background of the research, scope of the research, research questions, aims of the research, research method, clarification of terms and organization of the paper.

1.1 Background of the Research

In economic life, people may start to colonize others, build a factory and try to monopolize the goods. Almost without them knowing it, they have distinguished the social class of society according to their economic condition. When a person understanding of others and their action is determined by economic conditions, then a few will be the employers or bourgeoisie but many more will be the employees or proletariat (Marx and Engels, 1848 *see* Blunden, 2004). It means, when people engages to the production of goods, there will be a different social class; the employers and the employees. As the consequences of the occurrence of two layers of social classes, one is upper class and another is lower class, then oppression will exist. Those who had economic power will oppress the powerless in various ways.

The capitalists, as the upper class, will force their beliefs, values and even their arts upon the working class (Marx, 1867 *see* Blunden and Clayton, 2008). Even though in such a system the rich become richer while the poor become poorer and

oppressed, but the working class will simply accept those ideas to improve their economic condition. It makes the working class trapped in an economic system that emphasizes on how much money they will earn. Besides, the capitalists will exploit the working classes, determining their salaries, and their working conditions, among a host of other elements of their lives (Bressler, 1994).

Consistent with the issues of capitalism and working class, Marxism then offers the working class of society an opportunity to change their world and therefore their lifestyle, because the capitalists had successfully enslaved the working class through economic policies and control of the production of goods (*see* Bachrudin, 2007 and Blunden, 2004).

However, the issue of oppression by the capitalists to the working class is the main issue of Marxism. Marxism also explains that the history of all hitherto existing societies is the history of class struggles (Marx, 1848 *see* Blunden, 2004). It means, history wrote that the society exist because of the struggle of the lower class to the upper class. Commonly, when people feel oppressed or exploited by others, they will fight back or at least struggle against it. For example, the working class celebrates May Day since early 19th century. This event occurs because of the capitalists exploit the working class; very long work hour, low salary or very bad work condition. In other word, all of the working class should fight for their rights especially for not being oppressed.

However, some people are doing contradictory. They prefer to be submissive in order to negotiate with the oppression for particular purposes, as presented in one

of the literary works as in the novel *The Devil Wears Prada* by Lauren Weisberger. The novel portrays that the working class, who is represented by Andrea Sachs is submissive to be oppressed by the capitalist, who is represented by Miranda Priestley. This issue is interesting to be investigated to discover why she is trapped in such condition while Marxism offers the working class of society an opportunity to change their world and why the negotiation approaches used for their main purpose. Based on those considerations, this research focuses on the capitalist's oppression towards the working class and how Andrea as the oppressed is struggle to negotiate with the oppression practices at work.

1.2 The Scope of the Research

The limitation of the research will be discussed around the issue of the oppression of the capitalist (Miranda Priestley) to the working class (Andrea Sachs) and the struggle of the working class in the novel entitled *The Devil Wears Prada* (2003) by Lauren Weisberger using a Marxist approach.

1.3 Research Questions

To conduct the research, the writer formulated the problem into research question as follow:

1. How do the main characters reflect Marxism?
2. How does Miranda as the capitalist exercise power as form of oppression?
3. How is Andrea's struggle to negotiate with her workplace culture revealed?

1.4 Aims of the Research

Based on the mentioned research question, the writer intended to identify:

1. How the main characters reflect Marxism.
2. How Miranda as the capitalist oppressed the working class.
3. How Andrea's struggle to negotiate with her workplace culture is revealed.

1.5 Research Method

The method use in this research is qualitative descriptive method, particularly text analysis. The data in qualitative research takes the form of word or pictures rather than number. Often the descriptive data contains quotations said by informant to illustrate and substantiate the presenting findings (Bogdan and Billken, 1997). The collected data are analyzed using Marxist analysis as theoretical approach.

1.5.1 Data Collection

The data are collects from the novel Lauren Weisberger's *The Devil Wears Prada* is in the form of words, utterances, expressions, thoughts that are purposively selected and directed to answer the research question.

1.5.2 Data Analysis

The collected data are then analyzed using the Marxism theory. In analyzing the data the following steps were taken:

1. Reading the novel thoroughly and carefully to get the deeper understanding.
2. Identifying textual evidence from the text which is related to the types of oppression by the employer to the employee and subject positioning taken by the employee in her workplace.
3. Classifying the data based on research question requirement.
4. Analyzing and interpreting the collected within the framework of Marxism to answer the research questions.
5. Making conclusions and suggestions for further research.

1.6 Clarification of Terms

In order to avoid unnecessary misinterpretations, some terms are clarified as follow:

1. Alienation; a systemic result of capitalism (Marx, 1848 *see* Blunden, 2004).
2. Capitalism; the ideas and habits that support the rational pursuit of economic gain. Without the restraints of religion, greed and laziness lead to making the maximum amount of money for the minimum effort (Webber, 1905 *see* Morrison, 2006).
3. Exploitation; one person benefits another without the second benefiting the first in return (Marx, 1848 *see* Blunden, 2004).
4. Marxism; a great idea which covered philosophy, social theory and politic as a pragmatic view of history that offered the working class of society an

opportunity to change their world and therefore their lifestyle (Bachrudin, 2007).

5. Oppression; the exercise of authority or power in a burdensome, cruel, or unjust manner. It can also be defined as an act or instance of oppressing, the state of being oppressed, and the feeling of being heavily burdened, mentally or physically, by troubles, adverse conditions, and anxiety (Merriam Webster, 2010).
6. Working class; individuals who sell their labor power for wages and who do not own the means of production (Bressler, 1994).

1.7. Organization of the Paper

The research paper consisted of five chapters, and each chapter is divided into subtopics as follow:

Chapter I (Introduction)

This chapter is the introduction that consists of the background of the research, scope of the research, research question, aims of the research, research method, and clarification of the terms and organization of the paper.

Chapter II (Theoretical Foundation)

This chapter covers the theoretical framework that is relevant to the research. This chapter includes the concept of: 1) Marxism; its history and definition, 2) the

issue of oppression in Marxism; abuse, exploitation and Alienation 3) negotiation, and 4) The synopsis of the novel *The Devil Wears Prada* by Lauren Weisberger.

Chapter III (Research Methodology)

This chapter presents the procedures and techniques of the research, which includes an explanation of the research question, the research subject and context, the research procedure, and the data presentation.

Chapter IV (Finding and Discussion)

This chapter provides the findings and the discussion. It reports the result of the research. This chapter presents the analysis, findings, and discussions of the findings of the present research.

Chapter V (Conclusion and Suggestion)

This chapter presents the conclusion of the research and suggestions for further research on Marxism research.