



# **The Role of Mode of Production Depicted in Dr. Seuss' *The Lorax* Movie**

**A FINAL PROJECT**

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement  
For S-1 Degree in American Studies  
In English Department, Faculty of Humanities  
Universitas Diponegoro

Submitted by:

Muhammad Isyraqy Putra

13020114140090

**FACULTY OF HUMANITIES  
UNIVERSITAS DIPONEGORO  
SEMARANG  
2018**

## **PRONOUNCEMENT**

The writer sincerely stated that this project is compiled by himself without taking any result from other researchers in S-1, S-2, S-3, and in diploma degree of any university. The writer also emphasizes he does not quote any material from the existed someone else journal or paper except from the references mentioned later.

Semarang, 28 Agustus 2018

Muhammad Isyraqy Putra

## MOTTO AND DEDICATION

“Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better.  
It's not.”

— Dr. Seuss' *The Lorax*

*This Thesis is dedicated to my beloved parents*

## **APPROVAL**

**The Role of Mode of Production Depicted in  
Dr Seuss' *The Lorax* Movie**

**Written by:  
Muhammad Isyraqy Putra  
NIM: 13020114140090**

Is approved by Project Advisor  
On August 28<sup>th</sup>, 2018

Project Advisor,

M. Irfan Zamzami, S.S., M.Hum.  
NIK. 198609230115091086

The Head of English Departement,

Dr. Agus Subiyanto, M.A.  
NIP. 196408141990011001

# VALIDATION

Approved by

Strata 1 Project Examination Committee

Faculty of Humanities Diponegoro University

On 24<sup>th</sup> September 2018

Chair Person

First Member

Ariya Jati, S.S., M.Hum.  
NIP.197802282005021001

Rifka Pratama, S.Hum., M.A.  
NPPU. H.7.199004282018071001

Second Member

Third Member

Arido Laksono, S.S., M.Hum.  
NIP. 197507111999031002

Dr. Nurhayati, M.Hum  
NIP. 196610041990012001

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Praised be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds, the most Gracious, and the most Merciful who has given strength, health, and spirit to me, to complete the project “The Role of Mode of Production Depicted in Dr Seuss’ *The Lorax* Movie”. I would like to thank for all the people who have contributed in completion of this project.

My deepest gratitude and appreciation are addressed to Mr. M. Irfan Zamzami, S.S.,M.Hum as my project advisor for his expertise, guidance, encouragement, and and support in finishing this final project. My gratitude is also addressed to these following people:

1. Dr. Rediyanto Noor M.Hum., as the Dean of Faculty of Humanities, Diponegoro University.
2. Dr. Agus Subiyanto M.A., as the Head of the English Department, Faculty of Humanities, Diponegoro University.
3. All the lecturers in the English Department, Faculty of Humanities, Diponegoro University. Thank you for all the shared experiences and valuable knowledge.
4. My beloved family, my mother Yuli Wahyuni, and my father Hendri Eka Putra, my younger siblings Nikki Aprily Putri and M. Rezqy Septiandri Putra, and also my ten cats who always give their support to complete this final project.

5. All of my friends in English Department whom I know from the first day of my college life. My gratitude is given for your solidarity. We walk together, struggle in college life together, and give each other support.
6. My special one, Nadhifa Azzahra Irawan. Your companion, support, kindness, and everything she did—including the duck talk—bring me joy and happiness.
7. My very best friends since high school, Justisia Maharani Navis and Aini Bening Srikandini. They give me motivation to finish this project from distance.
8. Alumnus SMPIT Al-Qalam 7<sup>th</sup> Generation who aid me in completing this project by doing proof reading, and giving motivation in a Whatsapp chat group titled “?”

I realize that the project is far from being perfect. Thus, I will be glad to receive any advice, suggestion, and recommendation in order to make this project better. I hope that this project will be useful for the readers.

Semarang, 31 July 2018

Muhammad Isyraqy Putra

## TABLE OF CONTENT

TITLE.....	i
PRONOUNCEMENT .....	ii
MOTTO AND DEDICATION .....	iii
APPROVAL.....	iv
VALIDATION .....	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT .....	vi
TABLE OF CONTENT .....	viii
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK .....	4
3. RESEARCH METHOD.....	6
4. THE ROLE OF MODE OF PRODUCTION DEPICTED IN DR. SEUSS’ <i>THE LORAX</i> MOVIE.....	7
5. CONCLUSION .....	14
REFERENCES .....	15



## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background of Study

Movie in this era is the most attractive entertainment in literary works. It visualize the narrative story into a screen so people can enjoy and understand what the story of a movie is. Many popular novels are adapted into movies due to their popularity.

Dr. Seuss' *The Lorax* is a movie which is adapted from the novel with the same title. The first movie came out in 1972 with the duration of 30 minutes. The new version of *The Lorax* came out in 2012 starring Zac Efron and Taylor Swift as the voice actors. This study will use the 2012 version as the primary source.

This movie is about Ted Wiggins who lives in Thneedville, a walled city where everything is artificial and contaminated. The heavily polluted air forcing the people to buy fresh air in a gallon from Mayor O'Hare. He has a crush on Audrey, a local environmentalist who wants to see a "real tree". Trying to impress her, Ted tries to find out the tree by asking the Once-ler, the one whom Ted's Grandmother Norma secretly tells about. Once he finds Once-ler, he finally understands why there's no more tree. It is all because of Once-ler's business in his past life.

According to BBC News Magazine (2012) this movie criticize capitalism practice toward industries in that time. In this movie, the trees and air are used to

gain the power to control people and to gain maximum profit. The writer will try to find out which part in this movie contain the capitalism.

This research is aimed at describing the capitalism process done by the antagonists in the movie. The writer will analyze how the bourgeoisie in this movie control the people and gain the maximum profit. This analysis mainly focused on the characters in this movie, specifically the antagonists.

In this research, the writer uses two theses which are *An Analysis Marxism Alienation in The Lorax Movie* by Fajar Amrulloh Ahmad and *Does Enviromental Education Need a Thneed? Displacing The Lorax as Enviromental Text* by Kathleen Pleasants as the previous study. Both theses provide the information required to finish this research.

## **1.2. Problem Statements**

In this paper, the writer will analyze the capitalism as explained in *The Lorax*. This paper concern in:

1. How is the capitalism explained in *The Lorax*?
2. How can controlling mode of production make the capitalists gain the power?

## **1.3. Purpose of the Study**

Based on the problem statements of the paper, the main objectives in this research are:

1. To explain the capitalism system in *The Lorax*.

2. To understand that controlling the mode of production will give the capitalist a power to control the consumers and to gain a power to rule the people.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### 2.1. Definition of Marxism

Marxism is a form of socioeconomic analysis created in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century by German philosophers Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels (Chambre and McLellan, 2018). Marxism mainly critiques capitalism and social class. Karl Marx stated that all political system, culture, and even military movement are the reflection of the condition of the economy.

The idea of this analysis is underlying in the economic structure as the basis of the society. The structure include the labor and means of production as material force of production and the relation of production (McLellan and Chambre, 2018). In capitalistic society, alienation in labor worker is the problem and bourgeoisies are the actor of the political alienation. This result in one class dominating other class.

The aim of Marxism is to provide socialism or communism as alternative social structure (O'Hara, 1999:712). Since Marxism criticize capitalism generated by capitalism itself, most Marxist often severely criticized, attacked, and ignored by capitalism

Karl Marx formulated the social structure hypothesis in a capitalistic society. In his essay *Zur Kritik der politischen Ökonomie*, Marx emphasizes that the basis of the capitalistic society is the mode of production that determine the

general character in the social, politics, and intellectual processes of life. The social existence in this society determines their consciousness (Karl Marx, 1859)

## **2.2. Marx's Capitalist Mode of Production**

According to Terry Eagleton in *Marxism and Literary Criticism*, mode of production is a concept derived by Karl Marx. It is a combination of the social relations and productive force. The social relations—or also we know as superstructure—refers to the relation between the capitalists who owned the means of production and every social relation aspects (e.g. politics, society, etc.). The productive force—the base—refers to any means of production, such as material, animal, labor force, infrastructure (1972:4). These two aspects cannot be separated. Every change in the mode of production is not through people's volition, but by the correspondence between the social productive relation and the level of productive force.

## RESEARCH METHOD

In this research, the writer uses library research method to analyze the object. Library research involves step-by step process (locating, analyzing, and synthesizing existing research) to gather information to write a paper, create a presentation, or complete a project (Mann, 2005). There are two sources for the method, primary and secondary.

In this case, the primary source of this research is Dr. Seuss' *The Lorax*. A movie based from Dr. Seuss' book in its self-titled. For the secondary source, the writer will use journals and textbooks that correlate with the objects and the discussion.

## **THE ROLE OF MODE OF PRODUCTION DEPICTED IN DR. SEUSS' *THE LORAX***

### **4.1 Mode of Production in *The Lorax***

*The Lorax* criticized capitalism at that time although this movie mainly focused on environment. Peter Barnes in *BBC News: Five interpretations of The Lorax* said that *The Lorax* was a brilliant description of capitalism. He said that all the *Thneed* thing in this movie is not what we actually need, but it is the stuff that we are made to think we need (2012). However, it requires further viewing to understand which part that explain the capitalism due the explanation that Barnes gives does not describe how the capitalism works in this movie.

In this study, the writer found that the meaning of the capitalism in this movie is how to control the people and to gain the maximum profit by controlling one crucial resource. Dr. Seuss' used the trees and air as the resources for products. These resources will be used by the two antagonists to gain the maximum profit or to control the people. This way of business has close meaning to the capitalist mode of production.

Stated from the theory in previous chapter, mode of production is a combination of social relation and productive force. By controlling both aspects, the capitalist will gain their profit. In this movie, both aspect are presented,

although some of the aspects are vaguely shown. The relation between social relation and productive force must be presented in capitalist mode of production or else, the business will not run as it should be and there will be no mode of production.

The research started from two antagonists in a different time; O'Hare and Once-ler. In the present time, *Mayor O'Hare* is a CEO for O'Hare Fresh Canned Air. In the past time, Once-ler was a founder of *Thneed*—a multifunctional cloth that can turn into anything is needed. Both of them gained their profit by controlling the mode of production.

#### **4.1.1. Aloysius O'Hare's Mode of Production**

In the present time, O'Hare appears as a short man with a short-tempered man with bob hair, and wears a suit. He is a mayor who also sells the canned fresh air in a city called Thneedville—the only town that stands in a wasteland. He sells that due to the town's poor air quality caused by the smog from a factory in the past time. The situation of the town depicted in the *Thneedville* song by *The Lorax Singers*.

Gooooood Moooooorning!  
 In Thneedville it's a brand new dawn!  
 With brand new cars  
 And houses and lawns!  
 Here in got-all-that-we-need-ville!  
 In Thneedville we manufacture our trees  
 Each one is made in factories  
 And uses 96 batteries!  
 In Thneedville the air's not so clean  
 So we buy it fresh!  
 It comes out this machine!  
 In satisfaction's guaranteed-ville!  
 In Thneedville  
 We don't want to know!  
 Where the smog and



Trash and chemicals go  
 I just went swimming  
 And now I glow!  
 In Thneedville we  
 Have fun year-round!  
 We surf and snowboard  
 Right in town!  
 We thank the Lord for all we've got!  
 Including this brand new parking lot!  
 Parking lot! Parking lot!  
 Ooh look it's  
 Aloysius O'Hare (Aloysius O'Hare)  
 The man who found a  
 Way to sell air  
 And became a zillionaire!  
 Hip-hooray, hip-hooray!  
 Hip-hip-hooray!  
 In Thneedville  
 We love living this way!  
 It's like living in paradise!  
 It's perfect!  
 And that's how it will stay!  
 Oh yeah!  
 Here in love the life we lead-ville  
 Destined to succeed-ville  
 We are all agreed-ville  
 We're happy here in  
 Thhhh--needville!

At this point, the writer can interpret that O'Hare is already in control of the productive force using air as his resource. This has been stated in the lyric of the song. The writer interpret that back before he become a mayor, he invent fresh air in a gallon to breathe in the polluted land and then he becomes a zillionaire. However, it is difficult to sell air since it is supposed to be free and people can use it as they please. It requires another aspect to reach his goal which is the social relation. Otherwise, the productive force will be left in vain.

In further research, the writer found out that to sell his product, he must control the people who will be targeted as the consumers. Thneedville is a perfect option to sell the product since the smog bother the people. The environments in

the town are nothing but artificial, started from the tree that made from the plastic and can turn on the light when night occur to the food that is only made from jelly.

The main role of social relation aspect in this mode of production is his role as a mayor and the CEO of O'Hare Air. Being a mayor means he has an authority to control the people. One of his policies is that no one ever leaves the town. If people set their feet outside the town, O'Hare will loses his income and makes people aware that there is a problem in the town. The policy is shown when the protagonist, Ted Wiggins, leaves the town to find Once-ler, thus his action makes O'Hare mad. O'Hare will make sure that there will be no tree standing in the town. By doing that action, people will not realize that the air can be created by a real tree. In addition to the evidence that the alienation has been applied in this movie, Fajar Amrulloh's conclusion in his thesis stated:

Although they are not O'Hare's worker, but in the capitalist society O'Hare who being capitalist can alienated them, it caused by the difference position between O'Hare and Ted, Audrey and other people in the town. O'Hare uses that to alienated the people in the town with the purpose he will protect his business from threat that may come from other living (Amrulloh, 2014:39)

This following is O'Hare's dialogue when he encounter

[O'HARE]

Oh, Teddy, there's not much that goes on in Thneedville that I don't know about. (Beat). Here's the deal. I make a living selling fresh air to people. Trees, oh, they make it for free. So when I hear people talking abot them, I consider it kind of a threat to my business. (Growls).

Selling the air to the people leaves a good impression to the O'Hare that he is a good mayor. The opening song the writer quoted also the evidence of the people's admiration to O'Hare. Also, he has several people who work for him to gain more profit from selling air.

By controlling those two aspects, it is confirmed that he just made his mode of production as Karl Marx stated in his theory. The first aspect he controlled is the productive force—the air. After that, he controls the social relation. By doing so, he can gain his profit not only as a mayor, but as a capitalist.

#### **4.1.2. Once-ler's Mode of Production**

Once-ler in his past time was an adventurer who wanders to find a material for his invention, the Thneed. After a long journey, he finally found what he need, the Truffula tree. Unlike the present Once-ler who is an old man wearing green coat and top hat, Once-ler in the past was a young skinny man with his shirt and suspender. He can play guitar that later he will do that to sell Thneed.

His journey to find the Truffula tree lead him to the productive force. However, he cannot instantly own the resource since it belongs to the Lorax—the guardian of the forest—and the animals who live there. In order to make Thneed, he must find a way to get the production force, which is the Truffula tree. The Truffula Tree is the only productive force that Once-ler have. Once-ler haphazardly uses one of the trees as his experiment albeit the inhabitants are against him. When Once-ler sees that people acknowledge The Thneed is a beautiful invention and they need it, he continues creating his product.

To expand his business, Once-ler needs another productive force to do his job, which is additional worker to do his job. In order to gain more worker, he ask his parents to help him run his job. They agree to work with Once-ler after receiving the news that Once-ler succeed in his invention. By helping Once-ler, they can feel the profit of this business. Additionally, being millionaire means he can hire a business team consist of public relations and lawyers in order to make people buy more Thneed. This evidence can be seen in a part of lyric in *How Bad Can I Be* song by Ed Helms.

How ba-a-a-ad can I be? A portion of proceeds goes to charity.  
 How ba-a-a-ad can I be? How bad can I possibly be? Let's see:  
 (How ba-a-a-ad can I be?) All the customers are buying!  
 (How ba-a-a-ad can I be?) And the money's multiplying!  
 (How ba-a-a-ad can I be?) And the PR people are lying!  
 (How ba-a-a-ad can I be?) And the lawyers are denying!

These two aspect from Once-ler's mode of production; the Truffula trees as his productive force and his family as his social relation, makes him become a millionaire. This is another proof that there is a Karl Marx's capitalist mode of production practice in this movie.

#### **4.2.The Importance of Aspects of Mode of Production**

As the writer stated, both aspect must be presented in capitalist mode of production. If one of the aspects is missing, the mode of production will not be made. Which means that a capitalist cannot runs his business if one lost an aspect of his business. And we can see how that is happened in both characters.

In Aloysius O'Hare' case, he lost his social relation when people realize there is another source of air that is free to obtained. In minutes (1:15:05), Ted

Wiggins speaks to the people that the world needs trees in order to live with fresh air. After seeing outside the town, people realize the reason why the air is polluted and the evil side of O'Hare. In result, people do not trust Mayor O'Hare anymore. He still has fresh air to sell, but without people supporting it, He cannot sell the air anymore, thus ruining O'Hare's mode of production.

In Once-ler's case, he loses his productive force to make Thneed. Truffula trees are limited, and Once-ler keeps exploiting the tree until it is depleted. Losing the Truffula trees means he cannot make more Thneed. Losing the Thneed means he cannot make a salary. And that means his family cannot work with him anymore since there will be no use working with him. This situation lead him to bankruptcy.

## CONCLUSION

In short, Dr. Seuss' *The Lorax* not only consist of environment, but also about capitalist mode of production. Aloysius O'Hare and Once-ler are the "bourgeoisies" of their own mode of production. To apply the capitalist mode of production, one must own both social relations and production forces aspects, or else the mode of production will not be made.

In Aloysius O'Hare's mode of production, he has air as his resource for his product. The air plays the role as productive force. The people of Thneedville are the consumers of his product and plays the role as his social relations. When he loses the people's trust in the last part of movie, he cannot sell his product anymore and he lost his position as a mayor, thus eliminate his mode of production.

In Once-ler's mode of production, the Truffula Trees plays the role as the productive forces—his resource of his product, the Thneed. His family plays the role as his social relations. When he exploited the resource until depleted, he cannot produce his product anymore. Without a product to sell, his family stopped working with him anymore, thus eliminate his mode of production.

Those two characters are the example how they apply their mode of production. The profit—wealth and power—comes from owning both social relations and productive force. However, maintaining both aspects are required to sustain the profit they get from capitalist mode of production.

## REFERENCES

- Ahmad, Fajar Amrulloh. *An Analysis Marxism Alienation In The Lorax Movie*. Yogyakarta: State Islamic University Sunan Kalijaga, 2014. Document.
- Chambre, David T. Mclellan and Henri. *Marxism*. 2 January 2018. Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc. Website. 8 August 2018. <<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Marxism>>.
- Dailey, Daniel Nasaw and Kate. "Five interpretations of The Lorax." *BBC News Magazine*. Washington, 3 March 2012. Website. 28 April 2018. <<https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-17224775>>.
- Eagleton, Terry. *Marxism and Literary Criticism*. London: Routledge Classics, 1976. Digital.
- "How Bad Can I Be." *Dr. Seuss' The Lorax: Original Songs From The Motion Picture*. Prod. Tricky Steward. 2012. Digital. <<https://genius.com/Ed-helms-how-bad-can-i-be-lyrics>>.
- Mandel, Ernest. *The Laws of Motion of the Capitalist Mode of Production*. 22 July 2011. Document. 11 October 2017. <<https://web.archive.org/web/20110722154036/http://www.isg-fi.org.uk/spip.php?article139>>.
- Mann, Thomas. *The Oxford Guide to Library Research*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005. Document.
- O'Hara, Phillip Anthony. *Encyclopedia of Political Economy*. London: Routledge Classics, 1999. Digital.
- The Lorax*. Dir. Christ Renault. Perf. Zac Efron and Taylor Swift. 2012. Digital.
- "Thneedville." *Dr. Seuss' The Lorax: Original Songs From The Motion Picture*. Prod. Tricky Steward. 2012. Digital. <<https://genius.com/The-lorax-singers-thneedville-lyrics>>.

