

## THE CHILD EXPLOITATION IN LEWIS CARROLL'S *ALICE'S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND* (VIEWED FROM MARXIST THEORY)

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### Abstract

This research discusses the exploitation of children in the novel *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll viewed from Marxist Theory. The research focused on the kinds of exploitation to the child labor and the after effects that happen in Industrial revolution.

The method of this research is Descriptive Qualitative to describe problems in the forms of narration and analysis. This research used Marxist Theory to help understand the allusions, or satires in the primary data, then to match with the real condition in nineteenth century from the library research and internet search about the important events that related to Karl Marx's theory about the social stratifications that into the Bourgeois and Proletariat in the society then caused an exploitation towards child labor.

The research finds that children in Domestic and Industrial sectors of Industrial Revolution are exploited by the dangerous working tasks, bad treatments, and worst conditions of work place. These aspects effects less education and health issues for the children.

**Keywords:** Exploitation, Child Labor, Bourgeois, Proletariat, Industrial Revolution

### Abstrak

*Penelitian ini membahas tentang eksploitasi anak di dalam novel Alice's Adventures in Wonderland oleh Lewis Carroll yang dilihat dari Teori Marxis. Penelitian terfokus pada jenis-jenis eksploitasi terhadap pekerja anak dan efek yang terjadi pada Revolusi Industri.*

*Penelitian ini menggunakan Metode Deskriptif Kualitatif untuk mendeskripsikan masalah-masalah dalam bentuk narasi dan analisis. Penelitian ini menggunakan teori Marxis untuk membantu memahami beberapa sindiran di dalam data primer, kemudian disesuaikan dengan situasi yang nyata di abad ke-19 berdasarkan pencarian pustaka dan internet tentang peristiwa-peristiwa penting yang*

*berhubungan terhadap teori Karl Marx tentang stratifikasi sosial yang memisahkan antara kaum Borjuis dengan kaum Buruh pada masyarakat yang kemudian menyebabkan eksploitasi terhadap pekerja, terutama yang masih anak-anak.*

*Dari penelitian ini didapatkan bahwa pekerja anak-anak di masa Revolusi Industri bekerja di dalam sektor Domestik dan sektor Industri telah tereksploitasi dengan pengerjaan tugas yang berbahaya, perlakuan-perlakuan buruk, dan kondisi tempat kerja yang tidak baik. Aspek-aspek ini lalu memberikan efek atau akibat yang dibagi ke dalam jangka pendek, yakni kurangnya pendidikan, dan jangka panjang, yang terdapat masalah-masalah kesehatan terhadap pekerja anak.*

**Kata kunci:** *Eksploitasi, Pekerja Anak, kaum Borjuis, kaum Pekerja, Revolusi Industri*

## **A. INTRODUCTION**

Since the early years and until these days, the activity of child exploitation still becomes part of every child's life in the world. Every child has his/her own right to have love from parents, friends, school, and the important thing is to have a light and happy childhood to help their growth. In contrast, however, not many children in the world can get them all. In fact, many of them are unfortunately exploited by adults in the form of child labor. The children are being treated so disrespectfully and inhumanely.

Based on the history of England, the period of British Industrial Revolution, children as labor force must work for every family to increase the economy of the lower classes. As in the book of *Western Civilization History* (1981, p 556), said that *most of the worker only concern to the poverty, even with the lowest wages, should live in the squalid overcrowded apartment, suffered from periodic unemployment, and most monstrous of all was the forced to send the children into the factories.*

The adult exploits them for works that hard to reach, such as the chimney sweeper in factory, planting on mines, shoe blacks, or errands. These children do not only work in the difficult positions, they have to work 24 hours every day with the lowest wages. These actions were even used as the regulation from the governments and the politic parties used as an excuse to improve the economy quality.

To fight against this situation, Karl Marx (1818-1883) who was a revolutionary, sociologist, historian, and economist, had contributed his thought to build the great city was not only talking about the profits but it should be good social relation in society, where labors can get the proper wages as like the production and without any exploitation of workers, especially for children. As one of the media and also be the

part of art, Literature comes to educate and at the same time to entertain people or in this case the readers or lovers of literary works from children to adults.

The idea from every literary work can come from many factors. One of the strong factors is the social interaction as it mentioned by Marx, and then become a new stream to analyze literature. There are many authors and poets give their voice to make people notice this situation directly or indirectly, including with Lewis Carroll. Charles Lutwidge Dodgson or known as Lewis Carroll is a lecturer of Mathematics, which has the different point of view for the real condition at the time then makes a realization use on his works (Oxford Dictionary of national biography). One of his biggest and famous works, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* is the proof of his love towards children and his fond of riddle. This novel is categorized in children's literature, and some of the source says as the nonsense literature. The story about a four years old girl who follows a rabbit to go down into a hole that brings her to a mysterious and strange world of Wonderland.

In the whole story, Carroll once again not just makes light jokes for reader, but also inserts the satires and allusions about the case of children's exploitation through the characters in the novel implicitly, about the bad attitudes, rules, works, for the children labor and also the effects to their life. Come from this aspect, the researchers used the story of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll because of the puzzled story line which depicts the other sides of Victorian age. And then, the issue of child exploitation was the big problem at the period of nineteenth century which is influential to the story then can get many things to discuss with the use of Marxist theory as the compliment.

## B. LITERATURE REVIEW

In the nineteenth century, when England was under the authorization of the Queen Victoria, progress happened in many sectors. One of the most important is the Industrial revolution with many inventions of agricultural technology, transportations, mines, and cotton mills. In this Industrial Revolution, there were a lot of competitions between middle class and lower class in getting the job opportunities which is very limited. Many of the lower classes are immigrants still unskilled then made them have to struggles so much to live in factory life for being exploited.

“Throughout history, said Marx, there has been a class struggle between those possessing the means of production and those whose labor has been exploited to provide wealth for the upper class.”

(Perry, Marvin, 1981. *Complete Edition Western Civilization A Concise History* Perry. U.S.A.)The limitation of agricultural technology supply which is on the

control of middle classes, most people, not only men but also women and children from the rural area move to states as the fulfillment of needs.

### 1. Marxist Theory

The very most pr

inciple of Marxist Theory is about how the social interaction in society can tell the fact inside fact then become a community. For this time, because of the economy politics influence, the interest of this theory more about the Capitalist and the exploitation of Proletariat. As Mayer (1994: 62) has said that "The exploitation could appear from the unstable ownership of productive source even without any use of compulsion in the production process" (Ritzer, George. 2014. *Teori Sosiologi Modern* translated from "Modern Sociological Theory", p. 214-215).

Viewed from the Marxist theory, it is clear that in a social life, is not only about the effect of language changes, but also in economy state.

Literature reflects class struggle and materialism: think how often the quest for wealth traditionally defines characters. Marxists generally view literature "not as works created in accordance with timeless artistic criteria, but as 'products' of the economic and ideological determinants specific to that era" (Abrams 149). [It means that] Literature reflects an author's own class or analysis of class relations.

(Delahoyde. 2017)

The theory of Marx used to analyze the way of the author criticized the authority of Victorian Era through the story of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll. As in the novel, all of the intrinsic aspects are served with the satires and allusions style. Instead of taking the moral values, the author showed about the queer events or acts that happen in the actual life.

#### a. Bourgeois and Proletarian

As Marx explained, there are two main classes, bourgeois or capitalist and proletarian. The capitalist including the Bourgeois was a class of authority, which is the owner of factories, mines, also the landowner. The capitalist was the type to get a big income with less spending of money in productions. To press the outcome of production, they hired many workers from the lower class, rarely used the well-men as the workers or labor, instead of using children from parish, orphanage, even still in a family. Not only that, the wages of labors paid in the lowest price and not equally with the productions income which is at that time in the highest seller.

The proletarian is the worker or slave or labor of capitalist. They have no choice to leave but also have no rights at work. They are treated to be machinery, when the

whole of their body are being used to work for 24 hours in a week. The more of workers with less of skills, the more of the modern factory open, then made more of the proletarians population come from the middle class. As the result there was no difference of age and sex in a working class.

(Marx, Karl, Frederick Engles. 1977. *Manifesto of the Communist Party*. Moscow: Progress Publishers)

## 2. Child Exploitation

The word exploitation is from word 'exploit', with the meaning 'to use something for your own benefit' (definition from CACD). Child exploitation refers to the use of children for someone else's advantage, gratification or profit often resulting in unjust, cruel and harmful treatment of the child. These activities are to the detriment of the child's physical or mental health, education, moral or social-emotional development. It covers situations such as manipulation, misuse, abuse, victimization, oppression or ill-treatment.

### a. Child Labor

Children in nineteenth century were forced to do several works as a labor. There are some types of work they do whether in the good condition of work places or the dangerous area.

#### i. Outdoor Jobs

Many children take the outdoor jobs as street cleaners, when they should sweep the mud for pedestrians, as wagon driver, street seller of products to sell flowers, lace, muffins. Besides, they also work as the shoeshine boys, as an errand or courier. Some of them work at crops as bird scarier.

#### ii. Factory Work

The children work in the factory of match dipper. The children should dip the matches into the phosphorous and it has many bad impacts to inhale. The chemical makes their teeth to rot even died. Another factory is cotton mills. Most of orphans are hired here. The children sometimes got injured or even should scalp in the machine factory.

#### iii. Coal Mines

The children here as the trapper to open a trap door with pull on a string when they saw the coal carts has coming. For the older children, work as the coal bearers when they should carry the cart full of coals on their backs. Many children suffered from lung illness even cancer.

#### iv. Domestic

At this rate, children mostly work as the chimney sweeper in factories. Some houses also hired the children from age of 5 to work as the chimney sweeper. This work cause many wounds to them, and respiratory sickness while sweeping the soot particles.

(Koolbreeze, 2017)

b. The Effect of Child Labor in Industrial Revolution

The effect of child labor in the Industrial Revolution have divided into two types, such as the short term effect, and the long term effect. The short term effect that happened to child labor is the less of education. The children from poor family didn't have the chance to take some school because their parents did not make enough money, and prefer for them to work. Besides, most of the child labors are from an orphanage or parish in some churches that they send to factories rather than taking them to school.

The long term effect of child labor is about the health issues, when the children worked in the condition with poorly ventilated buildings, and over inhaled of dangerous materials in factories. Many children would suffer from some illness such as lung diseases, the disorder of limbs, and other complications from bacteria or virus in the unsanitary work places, also from any wounds or injures of accidents. Some children died in a young age, but for the others should suffer from unhealed illness in their whole lifetime.

(MKoren, 2017)

c. The Factory Acts in England

The pro and contract then happen, between some economist and law experts disagree with the full day work hours to child labor. on the other sides, especially from the Bourgeois, they can not accept their ideas because the proletariat should work really hard to fulfill their needs. But the problem is about the participation of children to work, the long of working hours, and the violence they received.

The government then released the act toward the children workers in the cotton mill and other mines about the work hours. First, children under 9 years old should not work in any factories. For children age 9 to 13 should not work more than 9 hours a day, then for age 13 to 18 should not work more than 12 hours a day, and not allowed children to work at night.

(nationalarchives.gov.uk)

This rule comes with several years of investigations in factories, mills, and mines. After the years of 1833, the government keeps improve working conditions of child labor, step by step in the period of times, to reduce the exploitation of children.

“Children are sent down to work in the coal-pits and iron-pits at a very early age and probably much earlier than the proprietors of the great companies can be aware.

... The charter-masters may be induced at the pressing instance of the men working under them to give employment to very young children, and neither the proprietors nor perhaps even their ground-bailiff be aware of it.” (*Children's Employment Commission 1842* page 8)

Besides any bad things for the lives of children in the cotton mills, at the very least, the children still have opportunity to take an ordinary lesson like in school, when children are learning about reading, writing, and arithmetic. As the result, children at that time can have the chance to take school two hours a day. Also in the year of 1847, the government then released the regulation that women and children labor could work for the maximized to 10 hours of a day.

After the Factory Acts in 1833, many reactions also come from activists, and journalists that tried their best to make the *Children's Employment Commission 1842* later become the “Mines and Collieries Act 1842”. This is the collections of the investigation in many factories, for the most if mining field in several land of England.

Besides work, the children have their right to take the *Sunday School* when they could learn reading, writing, account, and also some introduction of Bible to them and can do the Lord's Prayer. However, then various works for children in coal mines that clearly dangerous to do for children and brings to the exploitation, this Acts then approved by the governments and other related sides. It was slowly but sure to turn down the activities for children to be labor in England.

## C. RESEARCH METHOD

The researchers used descriptive qualitative method to describe child exploitation in the novel.

### 1. Technique of Collecting Data

#### a. Library Research

The researchers use the library research to collect the primary and secondary data also accomplish the research. The data that researcher use is the previous study in

form of bachelor and master thesis, related review, dictionaries, and the literary work, also the references to achieve the proper arguments and data of the research.

b. Reading Comprehension

In this research, reading comprehension uses to understand the main idea of the topic that can be analyzed.

c. Internet Search

The internet search use to complete the library research in term of the limitation of data in the library.

**2. Instrument of The Research**

In collecting data, the researchers used note taking, the information included the name of the author and page of the novel.

**3. Technique of Analysis Data**

a. Reading Comprehension

1). Heuristic Reading Method

The method used to find the meaning through the structure of the language or the sentence. This method could help to make easy on understanding the each paragraph. In addition, not all the authors have the same style on writing, as the result, the heuristic method comes to look for the form or the typical of the grammar and structure to make the language more sense.

2). Hermeneutic Reading Method

Hermeneutic reading method is used to know more about the truly meaning of a word in a literary work. Hermeneutic is the last stage of reading comprehension, when it is the continuation from Heuristic. The way it goes by reading the literary work or text back and forth from start to finish. As the result, the researcher can get know more than one meaning of a word. For example in a word the researcher can know not only the literary meaning but also the situational or socio-cultural meaning which is live in the social life and it takes from the author into the text.

b. Explanation

The researcher describes the statement of problem. There are: How the author describes the exploitation of child labor in the novel of "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland" and how the effect of child exploitation to be found the novel.

c. Conclusion

From the explanation, can conclude the research by the several provides data from reading, searching on internet or library, and can be helpful to this preparation.



## D. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### 1. The Representation of Exploitation to the Child Labor

In this section, the representation of child exploitation will be elaborated through many things or events that happened at that time and got presented from the characters speak, manners, and some stuff that has the similar even same with the real one.

#### a. Domestic Sector

Domestic was a kind of work that required child labor to do some stuff or work, and not tied with one factory, because the children are work in a house as slavery or labor.

##### 1). The Obligation of Chimney's Worker

Most of the children worked as the chimney sweeper, when they were the proletariat that worked in a house of Bourgeois, or as a free labor that could call anytime. In the first part of the novel, it introduced to Alice and White Rabbit. The White Rabbit become the represented as the middle class in the social life at the time. It shows from how in his house had not had only one maid, but there were Marry Ann as the housemaid, Pat the goose, Bill the little Lizard, and Brandy.

... 'Now. Who did that? – Nay, *I* shan't! *You* do it! *That* I won't, then! – Bill's to go down – Here, Bill! The master says you're to go down the chimney!'

(Carroll, 2016: 47)

From the quotation above, Bill is a little lizard, which depicts as a little boy, which is more pointed to a child. He worked in the White Rabbit house. From the way White Rabbit talked to him was not in a good manner, Bill also became the only one thing that used to do anything whatever the master (White Rabbit) wanted.

The author tries to show about the struggle of children as a chimney sweeper, with the hilarious way which used the animal character with lizard that we know it can walk in the vertical area or surface.

#### b. Industrial Sectors

##### 1). The Critics of Coal Mine's Worker

The second work that hired by children is coal mines. In the Victorian era, most of the mining works were done by the children.

'Tell us a story!' said the March Hare.

'Yes, please do!' pleaded Alice.

...

‘Once upon a time there were three little sisters,’ the Dormouse began in a great hurry; ‘and their name were Elsie, Lacie, and Tillie; and they lived at the bottom of a well –’  
(Carroll, 2016: 88)

As it was mentioned above, the three little sisters were living in a well. At this point, as a reader, must think this was something that disbelieves. The author used word ‘well’ to disguise the actual fact is in mine, which is when the children have to work in the narrow and tunnel-like place under the earth. As same as a child, Alice must find it frightened to live in the bottom of well and they only do to draw the treacle out from well. As the representation of Bourgeois children, she never heard about that when they don’t need to work as hard as the story of Three Little Sisters. She has a thought that all of the children must spend their childhood life with full of happiness and kindness of people surround them.

As the released of the Factory Acts in 1842, it has improved the social condition at that time, when people especially for parents in the low classes to be careful on sending their children to work by the qualification for the age of children. People at that time then realized about the important things for children to take a school especially in the very young age.

## **2). The Mock Turtle’s Childhood**

In the Industrial Revolution, there were so many inventions on machines to help many factories, and one of the biggest inventions at that time was the steamed machine. Although, in some mills still hired children from parish or orphanage in very young age, and the worse things is the children even got more bad treatment and injured because they had to operate the machine.

‘Yes, we went to school in the sea though you mayn’t believe it –’

‘I never said I didn’t!’ interrupted Alice.

‘Hold your tongue!’ added the Gryphon, before Alice could speak again. The Mock Turtle went on.

‘We had the best of educations – in fact, we went to school every day –’

‘I’ve been to a day-school, too,’ said Alice; ‘you needn’t be so proud as all that.’

(Carroll, 2016: 116)

The conversation or the Mock Turtle story started with asked Alice about school, which is definitely in different context of what is school in the Alice mind.

‘With extras?’ asked the Mock Turtle a little anxiously.

'Yes,' said Alice, 'we learned French and music.'  
'And washing?' said Mock Turtle.  
'Certainly not!' said Alice indignantly.  
'Ah! Then yours wasn't a really good school,' said the Mock Turtle in a tone of great relief. 'Now at *ours* they had at the end of the bill, "French, music, and washing – extra."' (Carroll, 2016: 116)

As she has attended, Alice then mentioned about what she learnt in her school, by mentioning French and music lessons. In a contrary way, the Mock Turtle has another type of school to take that has an 'extra' that totally different from Alice. The Mock Turtle said that in his school there is 'washing and extra' which is referred in the children labor condition in the cotton mill. The hired children lived in a dormitory, when they got some clothes and foods, but as the repayment, they had to work more than twelve hours in a day with the lowest wages, since the cost of the freshmen workers would spend more money.

## 2. The Effects of Child Exploitation in Work Places

### a. Less of Education

At the last of two captures, Alice once again met with the Little Bill at the court. Bill was one of the jurors in the court when they had to write down anything in the court with their slates and pencils.

One of the jurors had a pencil that squeaked. This is of course, Alice could *not* stand, and she went round the court and got behind him, and very soon found an opportunity of taking it away. She did it so quickly that the poor little juror (it was Bill, the Lizard) could not make out at all what had become of it; so after hunting all about for it, he was obliged to write with one finger for the rest of the day; and this was of very little use, as it left no mark on the slate. (Carroll, 2016: 129-130)

In this quotation, Lewis Carroll shows the effect of the less education of children in the nineteenth century with the humorous sense that he has and likes to do. At this time, the author could tell about what would happen if the children were skipped from school. The adults include parents, did not have any time to educate except told them to work. They would not know anything, except their work, they would be the public fond of to make fun, to look them easy, and to drag them down when they are growing up.

The less education itself has resolved by reducing the child labor work hours. As the effect from the being a labor, many children skipped their times to play and learn with friends and mates, instead of working in factories. As the great country, and the most developed country at that time, some sides also think about the future generation that would have a role in the country.

### **1). Suffered of Sickness**

One of the effects from exploitation to the child labor is about the health issues for work in most of the dangerous jobs, the unhealthy condition in the work places, the several injures, or wounds that come from an accident or even the bad treatment from adults. At the time in nineteenth century, there are many diseases that spread in the society, whether from upper class and more over to the lower class which lived in unhealthy condition of buildings, and work places.

### **2). Live in the Bottom of Coal Mines**

The quotation below has the connection on the exploitation that happened when the children should work in coal mine. This is the effect for work in poor condition of the location which is in the narrow and long tunnel-like under the ground.

‘What did they live on?’ said Alice, who always took a great interest in questions of eating and drinking.

‘They lived on treacle,’ said the Dormouse, after thinking a minute or two.

‘They couldn’t have done that, you know.’ Alice gently remarked; ‘they’d have been ill.’

‘So they were,’ said the Dormouse; ‘*very ill.*’

(Carroll, 2016: 88)

From the quotation above, Alice got so much puzzling and confusing problems to the fact that the Three Little Sister should live under bottom of well. She also thinks that they must be feeling un-well to have a life in there. So Alice said “they’d have been ill”, and the dormouse answer it with ‘*very ill*’. These children have to suffer from lungs sickness for many inhales of dioxides in the coals which is very dangerous to human especially for children in the growth process. It does not only happen for once, but in all of their childhood life. Their limbs also have a disorder for pulling the cart in the long, narrow, and muddy trace that hard to pass.

### **3). Cotton Mills’ Punishment**

In the cotton mills there was one of the most terrible acts to the child labor. It has the serious impact which is effected their health condition in a long term.

The Mock Turtle sighed deeply, and drew the back of one flapped across his eyes. He looked at Alice, and tried to speak, but for a minute or two sobs

choked his voice. 'Same as if he had a bone in his throat,' said the Gryphon: and it set to work shaking him and punching him in the back. At last the Mock Turtle recover his voice, and, with tears running down his cheeks, ...  
(Carroll, 2016: 119)

The children in the factory got the restrict rules and hard punishment when they have done something wrong such as going late to work. One of the punishments they have to walk in the whole factory with tied the weight on their neck, then they make then to pull it and walk for round the factory to make the other children see and afraid to make a mistake. Lewis Carroll makes an allusion of this punishment through a character of the Mock Turtle. As it was mentioned, "'Same as if he had a bone in his throat,' said Gryphon" (Carroll, 2016: 119) was the description on how the neck of children's feel when they got punished.

As the representation of the child exploitation, Lewis Carroll describes the Mock Turtle as a character with full of sorrow and sadness. The author tried to make a reflection on what will happen if a child could survive from the Industrial period and still alive till they are getting old. The history that he told to Alice was how he spent his bitter childhood.

#### **4). Lungs Illness**

Children that worked as the chimney sweepers usually had the hot issues of their lungs. It occurred because of the residue toxic of ignition while cleaning the chimney. In the novel, it was slightly showed in the part of Alice trapped in the White Rabbit's house and they sent off Bill to get her out from the house. When she successfully kicked Bill out, then Carroll described his looks in the quotation, 'Last came little feeble, squeaking voice, ('That's Bill' thought Alice,)' (Carroll, 2016: 49). The author use the word 'feeble' for a condition that looks weak from doing 'something', as in this term after going down in the chimney.

The chimney sweeper in real life, children worked without any safety tools, but only with rope and feather duster. Many the children should suffer from lung illness for the rest of their life that almost not past to 50 years old, and the worst one was they had to die in young age. For them who could survive, they still lived their life with struggles cause of the injured from the work place.

## **E. CONCLUSION**

The involvement of children to work is a legal action because people take it as the advantages to increase the welfare of family and for the most to the country. The

regulations of child labor has exploited from the proper conditions to work in many ways, such as the treatments, work places, and age standard of children. Moreover, they have to skip their time to school, play, and making friends as like children from the upper class, it caused many parents would not see them as their child but look into them as the little adults, that could work like an adult in general.

The effects of exploitation for children labor have left about how they should spend the rest of their life by suffering illness form works in those worst work places. As the result, there were many sides that tried their best to speak about the exploitation of child labor. Although They have worked so well in England, the activities of children labor were still found and so do with the exploitation towards children but in another form that could be more dangerous in physical and psychological aspects.

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