

## **THE STRUGGLE FOR EQUALITY OF SOCIAL CLASS PORTRAYED IN SOLOMON NORTHUP'S *12 YEARS A SLAVE*: A MARXIST ANALYSIS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This research aims to determine clearly what relationship that existed between the two social classes, and what struggles the lower classes are doing in gaining equality. Based on this, the researcher decided to analyze the novel *12 Years a Slave* by Solomon Northup, and make it the object of this research. Qualitative descriptive method to fulfill the purpose of this research, and the data in this research used a word, phrase, clause, and sentence taken from the novel *12 Years a Slave*. The results showed a conflicting relationship between blacks and whites, in which whites always oppressed blacks. It is from these oppressions that clearly showed the relationship that exists between two classes and a visible struggle of blacks for equality for them. One of them was the struggled of Northup who comes from black people who fought hard to defend himself when he gets bad treatment from his white employer. White people felt they have the right to do that, because they had a higher economic position in the novel. Then, at the end of the story Northup has managed to get justice for him for what he fought for 12 years he had been trapped in the shackles of slavery.

**Key words:** *Marxism, Social Class, Bourgeois, Proletariat, Class Struggle.*

### **ABSTRAK**

*Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui dengan jelas hubungan apa yang terjalin antara kedua kelas sosial, dan apa saja perjuangan yang dilakukan kaum kelas bawah dalam mendapatkan suatu kesetaraan. Berdasarkan hal tersebut peneliti memutuskan untuk menganalisis novel *12 Years a Slave* karya Solomon Northup, dan menjadikannya sebagai objek penelitian. Metode deskriptif kualitatif untuk memenuhi tujuan penelitian ini. Data dalam penelitian ini menggunakan suatu kata, frasa, klausa, dan kalimat yang diambil dari novel *12 Years a Slave*. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan suatu hubungan yang saling bertentangan antara kaum kulit hitam dengan kaum kulit putih, yang dimana kaum kulit putih selalu menindas kaum kulit hitam. Dari penindasan-penindasan tersebutlah yang menunjukkan dengan jelas suatu hubungan yang terjalin antara kedua kelas tersebut dan suatu perjuangan dari kaum kulit hitam terlihat demi mendapatkan kesetaraan baginya. Salah satunya perjuangan dari Northup yang berasal dari kaum kulit hitam ia membela dirinya saat dia mendapatkan perlakuan yang tidak baik dari majikannya, kaum kulit putih merasa berhak*

*melakukan hal tersebut karena mereka memiliki kedudukan ekonomi yang lebih tinggi dalam novel. Kemudian, pada akhir cerita Northup telah berhasil mendapatkan keadilan untuknya atas apa yang diperjuangkannya selama 12 tahun lamanya dia telah terjebak dalam beleggu perbudakan.*

**Kata Kunci:** *Marxisme, Kelas Sosial, Borjuis, Proletar, Perjuangan Kelas.*

## **A. INTRODUCTION**

Literature is a form of human written and spoken creativity that tries to describe and retell the reality that happens in society. It is created as an entertaining tool. This is in accordance with Kennedy (47) who stated that literature is a kind of art that can offer pleasure and illumination. It gives the beauty, fact, event, imagination born from the process of contemplation or observation of social phenomena as living the impact of the reality and the restlessness of human being. Literature most commonly refers to works of the creative imagination, including poetry, drama, prose, fiction, nonfiction, and song, which are known as literary works.

One of various kinds of literary works is novel. According to Doody (29) novel is a story with the prose form in long shape; this long shape means the story including the complex plot, many characters and various settings. Moreover, there are moral messages and life values that the author want to convey to the readers, besides the structures in a novel. The message in the novel can be appraised by sociological approach. Novel gives variety phenomenon by words, such as economics, politics, social and culture. By reading the novel, the readers can find soul experience of the others and social. Peck stated in his book (178) the sociology of literature emphasize literature as an important tool to convey a message to society about the reality of those around them.

There is a close connection between literature and social life. This is in accordance with Semi (56) who stated that the social function of literature is how it involves itself in the midst of social life. Furthermore, Endraswara (79) stated that sociology of literature focuses on human problem, because it often expresses the struggle of human beings to determine their future, based on the imagination of an author's feeling and intuition, because it appears that the long struggle of human life will always give variation of literary work. One of novel which reflect the social phenomenon of class struggle is *12 Years a Slave*. This novel was written by African American farmer and musician, Solomon Northup. This novel is based on true story that recounts the author's (Solomon Northup) life story as a free black man from the North who was kidnapped and sold by white people into slavery in the pre-Civil. *12 Years a Slave* novel depicts a social condition in which lower society is exploited by upper society. The lower society in this novel is the black people who were kidnapped and enslaved by the white people. They were forced to work even without being paid. If they cannot and do not want to work well, they will be tortured. The upper society in this novel is the white people who had production tool, much money, and they have power to exploit the workers (black people).

The researcher chose this novel because it portrayed the social condition about class struggle. Reading this novel, then motivated the researcher to examine more deeply about

struggle through the novel *12 Years a Slave*. The researcher used the sociological approach to know about the social condition of class struggle and the relationship between bourgeois and proletariat classes in the novel. Furthermore, the researcher also used Marxist theory of Karl Marx to classify a form of class struggle that occurs in this novel.

## **B. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

### **1. Literature and Sociology**

Literature and sociology are two different disciplines that have a close relationship. This is in accordance with Swingewood (11), who stated that at the most basic level, which is the content, literature and sociology share similar conspectus. Where, sociology is an objective and scientific study about humans in society and the review of social institution and process. On the other hand, literature also deals with human beings in society with regard to their undertaking to adapt to and to change society.

### **2. Novel**

According to Goodyer (17) like documentary, novel is hard genre to define because through history, the term 'novel' has been applied to writings that cover a plethora of topics, that employ numerous and varied styles, and that have achieved divergent results - critically, publicly, aesthetically, and economically. In this case, novel is written in the form of prose, which along with its development, becomes one of the most popular form of prose. Generally, novel is written to describe the intimacy of human experiences which have certain purposes. It is in accordance with Abel Chevalley's argument in Forster (17) that novel can be simply defined as a fiction in prose of a certain extent.

### **3. Character**

In a literary work character has various types. The character itself is a description of every action in played. As for the definition of another expert, according to Gill in his book, character is the role of a person in a literary work, while characterization is a way in which characters are created. Character is all the product of a characterization, meaning they are made in a certain way (105).

Character is one of the intrinsic elements in a novel. Character is representation of person, animal, figure in literary works. Specifically, character is a figure that is represented in a dramatic or narrative work. And it is interpreted by the reader as being endowed with particular moral, intellectual, and emotional qualities by inferences from what the persons say, and their distinctive ways of saying in the dialogue and from what they to the action (Abrams 32).

### **4. Characterization**

Characterization in literature is the process of authors used to develop character and create images of the characters for the audience. In the other hand, it is a way in which the author revealed his character in a work of fiction or in another word characterization method of character portrayal" (Bennett 65).

Specifically, according to Kenan in *Narrative Fiction*, there are two common ways that the author can use to characterize the characters in a story. In this case, the characterizations are displayed in the direct and indirect presentation:

(1) Direct presentation provides the names of characters trait by an adjective, an abstract noun, or possibly some other kind of noun or part of speech. (2) On the other side, indirect presentation refers to what the character says or does in the next. In other words, rather than mentioning a trait, it displays and exemplifies in various ways” (Kenan 61).

## **5. Marxism**

Marxism is an ideology that follows the view of Karl Marx. Ideology is a term that often appears in the discussion of Marxism theory, it refers to the belief system that is produced, which is in the theory of Marxism. This ideology is a relationship between different classes in a society, classes that arise because of the mode of production of society (Dobie 85). Ismail and Mohd wrote in their journal entitled *Karl Marx and the Concept of Social Class Struggle*, they said that as an ideology, the teachings of Marxism became a social and political movement in various places and countries. There are two important concepts in the ideology of Marxism, that are Materialism and Dialectic Materialism, both of which are the main ideologies that lead to class concepts in terms of the theory of Marxism (Ismail and Mohd 28).

Furthermore, there is also the stated from Ismail and Mohd they explain in their journal that in the theory of Marxism there is a term known as "the concept of class struggle" which is a reinforcement for the workers to be able to rise up in order to defend their rights and freedoms so that they do not continue to be "riding horses" for the capitalists. Therefore the teachings of Marxism become an important handle for the struggle of the workers in almost all over the world (27).

Marx also argued in Dobie (88) he said that the two classes must have an equal position. In the theory of Marxism at that time the proletariat rose to seize what was their right. Such a revolution will make society a class, where everyone has the same access to goods and every service.

## **6. Social Class**

Social class is a social group in a society, which determines a level of each group of people through positions, race and others formed by the forces of production. Doyle (146) argues in his book that social classes are closely related to Marx's concept of historical materialism, which will be seen to be able to meet various needs depending on how often they are involved in social relations with other people to change the material environment through activities productive. In the sense that there must be a struggle from a class in getting what is the target of life, to live a better life.

These social classes are the main actors in social life. As according to Marx in the book Franz (110) Marx argued that the main actors in society are social classes. For Marx a class can be considered a real class, if it is not only objectively a social group with its own interests, but also subjectively recognizes itself as a class, which has a special group in society with specific interests and willing to fight for it. In all the explanations above, the researcher also explained below about the two classes.

## **7. Bourgeois**

Bourgeois class is people who have everything or are called rich people, who are free and can get workers. The rich at that time felt very powerful in everything, and usually they were dominant. Most of them at that time were oppressors for proletarian people. Solina explained in her journal entitled *Social Economy Class in Society* that the word bourgeois came from a term under the control of the capitalist class. This bourgeois class evolved which was interpreted as traders and entrepreneurs until the 19th century generally known as "middle class". The middle class is that which comes from the landowners, the rulers, the land salaried, the foremen in carpentry, and the rulers in various occupations at that time, the bourgeoisie who controls all the asset of production for their workers (6).

In another description of bourgeois class, Dobie wrote in his book that the bourgeois controls the means of production by controlling and possessing natural and human resources, whereas the proletariat provides labor which enables the owners the bourgeois to benefit (91).

## **8. Proletariat**

The Proletariat class is a class that is considered as a working class to serve the bourgeois class, and a class that is not entitled to everything at that time. According to McLellan in Ismail and Mohd (176), the proletariat class is a class that is considered as an object in the process of expenditure by selling their labor force and wearing wages or wages that are very low, and not in accordance with what they actually do. As for Marx's opinion about the proletarian class itself because of the existence of evidence that the proletarian class is only regarded as a class that is always oppressed. Furthermore, according to Marx in Ismail and Mohd (29), Marx said in poverty of Philosophy, he stressed that the rules of exploitation in the oppressed class have tried to give birth to elements of class antagonism that reinforce the desire to be free from the shackles of oppression.

McLellan stated that the proletarian class is in the theory of Marxism regarded as an object of a process of expenditure and production for the bourgeois class. They are made as oppressed workers and treated with very bad treatment. The distinction between these two classes is at the heart of the struggle and opposition between social classes (Ismail and Mohd 176). As for Marx's statement in a special section, namely *The Communist Manifesto* in Dobbie (88), he said "Let the ruling class tremble at the communist revolution, the Proletariat will not suffer a loss, because they have a world to win." In that quotation it means to say that not always the proletariat must be oppressed and cannot get freedom, they also have the right to be free and make a classless society.

## **9. Relationship between two Classes**

In Karl Marx's theory, the term relations of production refers to the relationship between those who own all the means of production (capitalist or bourgeoisie), and those who do not own the means of production (workers or proletariat). There are several social relations in the relations of production which, according to Marx and Engles, must be implemented, including producing and reproducing the means for their life. The explanation of the relationship between the two classes above is closely related to McLellan's opinion written by Ismail and Mohd in their journal (176). They wrote that the two classes between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat have different social functions. The bourgeoisie has all the means of production and

those who have the right to master the whole process of production expenditure. The proletariat class which is considered as an object or material in the process of expending production output by selling their labor force with a very low salary or pay.

These relations are seen because of the separation between the two classes, including the bourgeois class and the proletariat class, in this case a relationship arises that is detrimental to the other party because it is selfish. Franz stated in his book that the relationship between these classes, namely the upper class (bourgeoisie) and the lower class (proletariat) essentially has a relationship of exploitation or exploitation (115).

## **10. Class Struggle**

Elster argued that the struggle actually comes from the division of class (177). This division can be seen from society classification. As being explained above about proletariat and bourgeois, this can be seen that these two societies are what Elster points as the division of class. The class itself can be divided into two groups, the ruling class and the ruled class. In this case, it is the bourgeoisie that becomes the ruling class and proletariat that becomes the ruled class. The class struggle was explained by Marx and Engels in *The Communist Manifesto* (15). They asserted that “classes, such as, freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, opposed each other”. Moreover, their society was obviously divided by classes. These classes have interests in common. Thus, they are in conflict with those of another class as a whole. Berger points out that this in turn leads to conflict between individual members of different classes (45).

As for the ideas of Marx and Engels described in the Communist Manifesto Party, Dobie's book (85), they identified class struggle as a force that can push behind the scenes of history and they anticipate that encouragement will lead to a change that is very important in the life of slavery. The impulse is where the slaves change the role of the capitalists, in the sense that the workers take control of an economic production, and abolish all private property by giving it to the government in order to discuss the matter fairly.

## **C. RESEARCH METHOD**

### **1. Research Design**

The method used in this study is a qualitative research method, Qualitative research is an investigation that aims to describe and clarify human experiences as they emerge in human life itself. There is also the other explanation Powell and Marcus said that qualitative data consist of words and observations, not numbers. As with all data, analysis and interpretation are required to bring order and understanding. This requires creativity, discipline and a systematic approach (1).

The systematic approach in this research, the researcher uses a Marxist approach to criticize the objects in this study, which are closely related to the experiences experienced by the characters in the novels who are the objects of this research. Denzin and Lincoln in Ospina (3) said that qualitative research involves an interpretative, that qualitative research can lead to an interpretative approach that is naturalistic. It means the qualitative research studies have a natural setting, which seeks to interpret, guess or understand a problem in the sense that others do to them.

The narration and dialogues that were taken as a data marked about the relationship between two classes that happen in the novel, and then the class struggle that carried out by black people in the *12 Years a Slave novel*, by Solomon Northup.

## **2. Data and Source of Data**

The data sources of this research were in the form of words, sentences, dialogues, and narration, which reflected the relationship between two classes, and the struggle of black people. The data source of this research was from *12 Years a Slave* novel by Solomon Northup.

## **3. Research Instrument**

The researcher is the key instrument in conducting qualitative research. This is in accordance with Barret (7) who stated that in interpreting qualitative data, the researcher has a significant role as a primary instrument for making sense of the phenomenon under study. Related to Barret's statement, it can be concluded that the researcher is the main controller in her research.

## **4. Data Collection**

Whitehead and Violeta explained in their book the process of data collection is directly related to sampling and is best viewed as complementary to it (124). For direct data these methods may include interview, observation, open-ended, and diary accounts session. There are several ways to do data collection. In this research, the researcher used a Marxism approach so that researcher must understand and know more about Marxism theory, and must be able to relate the theory of Marxism to the data that has been collected, so that the data can be fulfilled properly. The steps of data collection in this study are as follows:

- a. The first, the researcher had been read the novel comprehensively and understand the contents of the novel more deeply from each chapter in the novel.
- b. Secondly, the researcher focuses on sentences that show the class struggle of black people as the proletariat class, and the relationship between two classes, bourgeois class and proletariat class in the novel *12 Years a Slave*.
- c. The last step, the researcher highlighted and marked the data which contains class struggle that showed the suppression and the relationship between two classes that happen in the novel *12 Years a Slave*. Then, the researcher written is data again in a notebook, to easier the researcher in sorting the data later. In addition, the researcher also written the page and the chapter of the novel, to make the researcher easier to found the data. Therefore, it makes the researcher easier to do the next step in data analysis.

## **5. Data analysis**

After the data has been collected, the next step was data analysis. The qualitative data analysis was divided into three steps. These steps were data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Each of these steps would be a useful way to explore the data examining (Miles and Huberman, 10).

- a. Data reduction, according to Miles and Huberman, data reduction is the stage where the researcher will sort, separate, and transform the data that had been collected by the researcher. Data reduction is a form of analysis that aims to sharpen, categorize, focus,

discard, and organize data until the researcher draw valid and verified conclusions in findings.

- b. Data display, Miles and Huberman suggested that the data display must have been well-organized and it possible to draw conclusions. Then displayed the data which relates to relationship between bourgeois class and proletariat class, and also the data relates in the struggle of black people for equality.
- c. Conclusion drawing and verification, Miles and Huberman also explained that similar to the process of analysis, drawing conclusions also have to be verified. The verification may not be too detail, it only includes thoughts that still block the researcher's mind. After verified the data, the researcher drew conclusions based on the research questions and the purposes of this research.

#### **D. FINDING AND DISCUSSION**

This chapter presents the findings of the research based on the research questions using the theory of Marxism and social class in *12 Years a Slave Novel* by Solomon Northup. In addition, this chapter also consists of a discussion that focuses on the relationship between two classes by the bourgeois class and proletariat class, and also the struggle of blacks to get equality for his live had compared with the previous studies.

##### **1. The relationship between two classes, Bourgeois and Proletariat classes in *12 Years a Slave novel*.**

The purpose of the analysis in this research of this section, it was to find out how the relationship between the upper class as bourgeois class, those who come from the whites, and the lower class as proletariat class, those who come from the blacks. The researcher found a very bad relationship between the two classes, where they contradicted each other.

##### **a. Bourgeois Class**

*“Well my boy, how do you feel now?” Said Burch, as he entered through the open door. I replied that I was sick, and inquired the cause of my imprisonment. He answered that I was his slave, that he had bought me, and that he was about to send me to New Orleans.* (Northup 20)

In the dialogue above, the bourgeois class had the power to control the working class or in this case the slave, it is clearly seen that black people are the target of buying and selling to be made slaves by white people in the novel *12 years a slave*. The black man in the dialogue is Northup, he complains of pain, his pained was caused by a group of white people who managed to trap and kidnap him and imprison him in a very quiet and dark dungeon, without the slightest lighted. It was there that Northup felt that he was being treated very unfairly during his imprisonment, he was in handcuffs and his legs were chained so that he was so helpless that he felt pain all over his body. In finding out about an act of oppression in *12 years a slave*, the researcher identified that there is a sentence that clearly shows that black people have been treated inhumanely, because of the act of buying and selling and an oppression that Northup got. It is clear from the data excerpt above that there is a very poor relationship or it is clear that there is a negative relationship as exploitation relationship that existed between Northup and white people who had confined and tortured him. As contained



in the theory of Marxism that the oppressor class that comes from the whites is usually called the bourgeoisie, which always wants to enslave the lower class which is usually called the proletariat. The relationship between the two classes that seems contradictory and inconsistent, as explained in the theory of Marxism.

During this time Radburn was standing by his business was, **to oversee this human, or rather inhuman stable, receiving slaves, feeding and whipping them, at the rate of two shillings a head per day.** (Northup 21)

The data above showed the mastery that clearly shows oppression, violence, and very inappropriate or inhumane treatment. It is clear from the sentence that the lower class or black people are locked up and tortured with the aim of being traded by other white people or other free people where they have higher economic power. It is also seen that black people are enslaved and employed with very cheap and low wages, which is not in accordance with what they do every day. From all that is seen and happened in the sentence above, it is clear that a negative relationship is again established. Why is that, because of the bad and unnatural treatment that black people got at that time, and the existence of self-interest is seen in the sentence above which is closely related to social class theory in the Marxist approach. Furthermore, it was seen that they were related to each other but there was one party who was always tortured and seemed to deserve the torture. This is what made the white people or what is meant by the bourgeois class is considered very inhumane because it was seen from the actions taken against the proletariat.

## **b. Proletariat Class**

With the paddle, Burch commenced eating me. **Blow after blow was inflicted upon my naked body.** When his unrelenting arm grew tired, he stopped and asked if I still insisted I was a free man. I did insist upon it, and then the blows were renewed, faster and more energetically, if possible, than before. (Northup 21)

In the sentence above, it can be seen how the relationship between the bourgeois class as the upper class and the proletarian class as the lower class, that is the relationship between Burch and one of the black people named Northup, which showed that they were in big trouble at that time, it means that there is again a negative relationship in that event. When Mr. Burch want hit Northup with the oar in his hand, and with a very inappropriate and very in human blow at the time, seen the exploitation relationship was happened. This showed the oppression occurred by Mr. Burch, because he felt that Northup was definitely his slave and made it clear that Northup only deserved to be his slave. He was emotional and couldn't accept Northup claiming to be from a free people who didn't deserve to be slaves, which was where Burch's anger came. It is very clear how the relationship between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat is described in this sentence. In relationship between the two opposing classes, the data above can be one proof of the existence of an oppressed in the form of violence, which should not be appropriate for something like that to happen to every slave.

*"You're the nigger, "he said to me on my arrival- "You're the nigger that flogged your master, eh? You're the nigger that kicks, and holds carpenter Tibebats by the*

*leg, and wallops him, are ye? I'd would like to see you hold me by the leg-I should you're a 'portant charcter- you're great nigger- very remarkable nigger, ain't ye? I'd lash you I'd take the tantrum out of ye. Jest take hold of my leg, if you plesse. None of your pranks here, my boy, remember that. Now go to work, you kickin rascal."* (Northup 85-86)

In the quote above, it is evidence of an action by one of the black people in which he felt that he could not stand his old behavior. He took actions such as self-defense by retaliating against his master, even though he knew in the end he would surely get a more painful torment than before. In that quote we can see the negative relationship, because there is bad treatment that happens. The researcher also had found another oppression in the quote above, when one of the white people who felt that the actions of the blacks were very impudent, he lightly made a threat that he would beat up one of the blacks. It was clear that he was very angry and almost lost control and had time to utter a sentence that was very inappropriate to say. The researcher found conflicting relationships there are very bad relationships, because both of them took an action to defend each other, although still the oppressed were definitely people who came from black people. As seen in the dialogue above, it is clear that those who have a higher position are white people as bourgeois class and those who have a lower position and deserve to be oppressed and enslaved are black people as proletariat class.

## **2. Class Struggle**

In this section, the researcher focused on a struggle carried out by black people to get justice. The struggle of a class that occurs in the novel *12 Years a Slave* is very clearly seen, in order to get a fair and proper treatment. The struggle is carried out by black people in the novel. The black people in the novel fought hard for justice. They were made like slaves by white people, who always thought that black people deserved to be slaves and traded. There are various kinds of evidence that show a black struggle in the novel *12 Years a Slave*.

**Again and again I asserted I was not man's slave**, and insisted upon his taking off my chains at ones. He endeavored to hush me, as if he feared my voice would be overheard. But I would not be silent, and denounced the authors of my imprisonment, whoever they might be, as unmitigated villains. (Northup 20)

Based on the quote above, can be evidence of a struggle going on. There is a little affirmation from one of the blacks, namely Northup, he asserts that he is not a slave and does not deserve to be a slave. He tried to properly explain to one of the whites at the time that he was not a human slave. In this quote, the researcher also finds a struggle that Northup is very serious about. He insisted that the chain wrapped around his hand immediately be released by Mr. Burch then. The quote also shows that there is a bit of oppression by whites against Northup, but Northup is not just silent about it. He still tries to reproach and fight that he feels he does not deserve to be imprisoned and locked up as seen in the quote above. Northup struggled and explained in a low voice the many times he had tried to tell Mr. Burch that he wasn't a slave that he didn't deserve to be in that position. The researcher found a struggle of the proletariat or the blacks at which time Northup as a group from the Proletarian class, Northup, tried to escape from all the oppression and injustice that was obtained by him at that

time. Northup received a very unfair treatment which can be seen in the quote, it is clear that he was in prison and was trying to be silenced by the whites or the bourgeoisie who felt that they had the right to do this to Northup, because they were in power at that time. However, Northup did not give up he kept fighting with all the strength he could at that time.

*“If I was in New England,” returned Bass, “I would be just what I am here. I would say that slavery was an iniquity, and ought to be abolished. I would say there was no reason nor justice in the law, or the constitution that allows one man to hold another man in bondage. It would be hard for you to lose your property, to be sure, but it wouldn’t be half as hard as it would be to lose your liberty. You have no more right to your freedom, in exact justice.”*

The more I saw of him, the more I became convinced he was a man in whom I could confide. Nevertheless, my previous ill-fortune had taught me to be extremely cautious. It was not my place to speak to white except when spoken to, but I omitted no opportunity of throwing myself in his way, and endeavored. (Northup 192)

In the quote above, it can be seen when Mr. Bass spoke his heart all along to Mr. Epps who is the master of the slaves in Bayou which is seen in the story of the novel *12 Years a slave*. Mr. Bass is a friend of Mr. Epps, he felt that slavery was a very cruel thing and does not deserve such a system in this world. Northup accidentally heard all the words of Mr. Bass which made Northup feel that it was something that should not be wasted he felt he had to meet Mr. Bass in that time too. There is also a sentence that Northup accidentally overheard in the conversation between the two relatives, which from the sentence shows that Northup, one of the slaves who came from black people, felt he had to take this opportunity as well as possible and make the best of it. Northup is determined to work hard to fight for his freedom and the adversity he has been going through when he was under slavery. From the quote on page 192, the researcher describes a struggle that had yield good resulted, all of Northup's 12 years of suffering will end when he is reunited with Mr. Bass.

### **3. Discussion**

In this section, the researcher presents the evidence based on the research findings. The presentation of the evidence in this study looks at a struggle that blacks go through as the proletarian class, and the researcher examines a relationship between the two opposing classes, namely blacks and whites, or what is called the bourgeoisie class. and the proletariat class in the novel *12 Years a Slave*. The bourgeois class is that which comes from the whites where they are free to do everything, because they have a high economic level and high position. While the blacks or the so-called proletarian class, those who become workers or slaves who have the right to be traded and oppressed, because they are black and have nothing or a low economy. Therefore, the black people in the story of the novel *12 Years a Slave* are very tormented, they have gone through a lot of life challenges. They are enslaved and put to work and then paid very low wages that do not match what they do every day.

There are several oppressions that occur in the novel *12 Year a Slave* which is described by the researcher in this study. These oppressions caused the relationship between the two classes to be contradictory or far from good. These oppressions are always seen when blacks

are enslaved and treated badly by whites, namely the bourgeoisie. It is often seen that white people become very cruel masters for their slaves, namely those who come from the black class, namely the lower class or the proletariat. In the novel *12 Years a Slave*, black people are tormented every day, and always get inhumane treatment from white people or those who become the upper class in the story of this *12 years a Slave* novel. What was done by the bourgeoisie began when they deceived Northup who came from black people, Northup left his wife and children because there was a job offer from out of town, the job offer came from two of his colleagues who were white at that time, the incident That's what caused Northup to be trapped and locked up in a very dark and stuffy room, and no one was seen in the room. That's where Northup started his new life as a slave for 12 years he had to endure the suffering and torture of the white people who had kidnapped him and sold him to other white people. These sufferings are not only felt by Northup alone, but also by other black people who have become slaves in the novel *12 Years a Slave*.

During the slavery of blacks, whites always felt superior to blacks. Therefore, the whites felt entitled to carry out the oppression against the blacks or the proletariat, because the bourgeoisie owned everything at that time, and it was the blacks who became their slaves at that time because they did not have what the whites had. . In the novel *12 Years a Slave*, the researcher examines using the theory of Marxism, in the theory of Marxism it discusses how social class is and there are differences between the two classes in that social class, including the bourgeois class and the proletariat class, where the bourgeois class is the dominant or ruling class and the proletariat is the lower class who is the worker for the bourgeoisie.

Furthermore, in every torment and misery that black people get in the novel *12 Years a Slave*, it is certain that they have gone through several struggles carried out by Northup and other black people to get an equal position and not be tortured again. It can be seen in the evidence listed that Northup and other black people feel they have to fight for their rights, especially Northup who fought desperately for 12 years he went through that misery and in the end he met a white man, Mr. Bass, who did not love the difference. It was very clear that Northup was struggling to fight back when he was almost tortured by his master at that time, Mr. Tibbeats, while Northup felt that he had done nothing wrong against his master. It was then that Northup was clearly fighting with all his strength and because he had lost control of his anger, from fear turned into a passionate anger that was in his mind at that time, he required him to fight and not have to be silent all the time when he was treated so badly as good as then.

All of his struggles can be seen from the blacks who have succeeded in being bought with different masters, namely those from white people. One of those struggles is clearly seen in Northup's role where he was successfully bought by Mr. Epps, it was his last master before he got the justice that was rightfully his. When Northup fell into the hands of Mr. Epps, that's where he met someone who came from white people who did not like differences and differences, named Mr. Bass. Mr. Bass is a relative of Mr. Epps, he hates slavery and oppression. Mr. Bass was one of those who played an important role in liberating Northup from the shackles of 12 years of slavery that he had experienced.

Regarding the theory as explained by Karl Marx in his explanation that the explanation of this theory of Marxism is to clearly emphasize that there are no longer differences between classes, it means that it must happen, that justice must be fought to get its rightful place. Blacks went through all the struggles for 12 years when they were slaves. In the end, it was Northup who became the bridge for the slaves who came from black people, who at that time struggled to send letters to the government about what he was going through at that time. Starting from his meeting with Mr. Bass he felt very helped, and more confident that he must fight really to get his rightful position and get a real justice.

## **E. CONCLUSION**

After analyzing the relationship between bourgeois and proletariat class also the class struggle in the novel *12 Years a Slave* by Solomon Northup using the Marxist approach, the researcher conclude that :

First, based on Karl Marx's theory, it explained that there are two social classes that had a relationship, but they also have different positions. The two classes are the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, in which the bourgeoisie feels in control of everything and the proletariat class which is the working class over the bourgeoisie. The relationship between the two classes who had differences is that appears in the novel *12 Years a slave*, where, there is an oppression felt by black people called the proletarian class in the novel. From the oppression that has been given by the whites to the blacks, it is what gives rise to a negative relationship that contradicts each other.

Second, based on the theory of Marxism which explains how a class struggle is fought by blacks or the proletariat in order to get justice which is also depicted in the novel *12 Years a Slave*. The struggle carried out by the blacks who bravely tried to fight all the oppression that had been given by them from the whites. In order to get justice, it is illustrated how black people always struggle against their employers who almost every day give bad treatment to blacks, because whites feel they have higher economic needs than blacks in the novel *12 Years a Slave*. . With the persistence of one of the black people, namely Northup who always fights for justice, and in the end he met one of the white people who hates difference, violence, and oppression, that's where Northup managed to be free from the slavery he experienced for 12 years.

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