

**CAPITALISM AS REFLECTED IN ARTHUR MILLER'S
*DEATH OF A SALESMAN***

A THESIS

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BY

RICA HARTAMI

04185107



**ENGLISH DEPARTMENT
FACULTY OF LETTERS
ANDALAS UNIVERSITY
PADANG**

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ABSTRAK

Skripsi ini membahas tentang pengaruh apa saja yang dimunculkan oleh sistem ekonomi kapitalis pada masyarakat Amerika pada kurun waktu awal abad ke-20 yang terefleksi pada drama karya Arthur Miller, *Death of a Salesman*. Penelitian ini juga menjabarkan tentang kondisi perekonomian Amerika yang dipengaruhi oleh sistem ekonomi kapitalis tersebut.

Dalam menganalisis drama ini, penulis menggunakan teori refleksi oleh Georg Lukacs. Pada teori ini, karya sastra dinilai sebagai sebuah refleksi dari realita sosial. Teori ini juga melihat kontradiksi, konflik ataupun sisi negatif dari sistem ekonomi tertentu. Dalam hal ini yaitu system ekonomi kapitalis.

Setelah menganalisis drama dan merujuk pada sumber-sumber yang ada, disimpulkan bahwa ada beberapa pengaruh yang ditimbulkan dari sistem ekonomi kapitalis terhadap masyarakat Amerika yang terefleksi pada drama *Death of a Salesman*. Pengaruh-pengaruh tersebut antara lain munculnya sikap materialistis, individualis dan keputusan.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Background of the Study

Nowadays, there is no one can dispute the super power of capitalism regime that dominates the globalization of world civilization. The ending of Cold War is followed by the falling of the socialism and communism of the Soviet Union and its countries that is often meant as the winning of capitalism. Almost in every aspect of life, the logic of capitalism presents to bring the changing. The critics that are aimed to the capitalism ironically grow the capitalism itself.

According to Romano, the capitalistic system is characterized by private ownership and freedom of individual in the economic activities. Capitalistic production is not organized by the individual decision which determined what is produced, the method of production, and the sharing of output (1975:40).

The statements above explain that in capitalistic economic system, individual is given the freedom in managing his economic activities. In this system, the owner of capital is freely allowed to make his own decision in his company which determined what he will produce, how the method of the production he will use and sharing the output of his factory. Besides that, it also means that the government does not have the important role in this economic system.

Capitalistic economic system is not only an economic system, but also an ideology. That is called capitalism. All of the roles of this economic system make it as a way of thinking of the society that the state applies this economic system.

Capitalistic economic system drives the life of its society. The capitalistic society has been influenced by the culture of capitalism itself. Some examples of this culture are, competition, money-oriented, individualistic and such other characteristics of people have been possessed by the capitalism society. Capitalism becomes the lifestyle in American society.

Based on the explanation above, the writer is interested to analyze about the capitalism in Arthur Miller's drama *Death of a Salesman*. It is a famous drama. Arthur Miller gets the Pulitzer Prize from this play. It tells about American life. This drama reflects the American socioeconomic life at the time this drama was made. Lukacs categorizes this drama as the realist work. This work presents the total description about American socioeconomic life. *Death of a Salesman* consists of the contradiction and conflict in American society as the impact of capitalistic economic systems. Therefore, the writer thinks that this analysis needs to be done to get the more complete understanding about this drama and capitalism itself.

In doing this analysis, the writer uses one branch of Marxist theory. It is reflection theory by Georg Lukacs. The writer uses reflection theory because with this theory, the writer can spell out about the social reality, shows the reality at that time and reality in the story of drama. Abrams states that literary masters are said to reflect the class conflicts, contradictions, crippling economic and intellectual conditions, and alienation of the individual human being under capitalism (1981:179) by using this reflection theory, the writer sees the text as the reflection of social reality in capitalistic economic system.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Drama *Death of a Salesman* by Arthur Miller is a realist work. This drama reflects the "total" description of American socioeconomic life in the early twentieth century. *Death of a Salesman* presents the contradictions and conflicts that are caused by the capitalistic economic system in America at that time.

The Great Depression happened in 1930s is assumed as one of the impacts of the uncontrolled application of capitalistic economic system. It has given the great influence toward the socioeconomic of America. The destruction happened almost in the entire of sectors in America. The destructions that are happened in agricultural and industrial sector have created a big unemployment. It contributes certain way of living, attitude or way of thinking in American. These influences their way of life and the way of make decision in their life.

From this analysis, the writer gets the conclusion that this capitalistic economic system holds the important role in influencing the American life. Capitalistic economic system that is reflected in drama *Death of a Salesman* emerges certain attitudes in American society. They are materialistic, individualistic and despair.

Before the Great Depression, American people used to live in good standard. It happened in all classes of people. Unfortunately, the Great Depression broke his American dream. After that, they did anything to reach again their dream. They tend

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