

THE EFFECTS ON MARRIAGE AND SOCIAL STATUS IN 19TH
CENTURY IN ENGLISH UPPER CLASS PEOPLE AS REFLECTED IN
GEORGE ELIOT'S SILAS MARNER

A Thesis

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ABSTRAK

Penulis dalam penelitian ini, membahas novel Silas Marner yang mencerminkan kehidupan sosial masyarakat Inggris di abad ke-19 mengenai kondisi masyarakat, status sosial, serta efek-efek pernikahan terhadap status sosial yang terjadi didalam masyarakat. Permasalahan yang dibahas dalam penelitian ini dibatasi dalam tiga masalah, yaitu: kondisi sosial, status sosial, dan efek-efek status sosial terhadap pernikahan pada masyarakat Inggris di abad ke-19, dalam melestarikan ketimpangan sosial untuk mempertahankan dominasi sosial.

Didalam analisis ini, penulis menerapkan pendekatan mimetik dan menggunakan teori sosiologi sastra oleh Alan Swingwood. Penelitian ini bersifat kualitatif, data-data yang diambil dalam bentuk kutipan-kutipan dari novel serta buku-buku sejarah dan dijabarkan dalam bentuk deskriptif.

Setelah menganalisis novel ini, penulis menyimpulkan bahwa novel ini merupakan cerminan dari kondisi masyarakat Inggris di abad ke-19, khususnya efek-efek pernikahan terhadap status sosial pada masyarakat Inggris di abad ke-19, dalam melestarikan ketimpangan sosial untuk mempertahankan dominasi sosial bagi kepentingan masyarakat kelas atas, dengan memperbolehkan endogami dan melarang eksogami.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Research

Literature is a part of culture that cannot be separated from human life. Literature not only has tight relationship which reflects the social condition in certain period but also it is an expression of human life, whatever they see, experience, and feel in life reflects in a literary work (Hudson: 10). Literature is a medium of communication to convey the information to the readers about phenomena that exist in society. Literature can be divided into some parts: short story, novel, poetry, and drama.

As Abrams said in A Glossary of Literary Term, that is “The term ‘novel’ is now applied to a great variety of writing that have in common only the attribute of being extended works of fiction written in prose” (190). It can be said that, novel is one of long literary works and good to be read. Novel is one of the most popular literary works in this time. It is not only as a reading to fill spare time but also giving lesson or delivering important information to its readers. By reading a novel, reader not only knows the problem that happen to the main character but also the situation or condition that happen to the society because social condition influences the problem that exist to the main character. Reader may know it by looking the situation that exists in the novel; any kind of activities conducted by society, the way how they behave, etc. Therefore, novel is the

most precise medium as a reading to the students of literature to be analyzed. Furthermore, literary work in this case novel reflects the condition of certain society by the time it is created and it gives knowledge to the readers about events that happen, periodically.

Through this literary work, reader may know any kind of the important information which are in the novel like social condition, social status, some marriages that exist in society in certain period, etc. Therefore, the writer uses George Eliot's Silas Marner because the novel expresses the social condition in English society in 19th century.

English society in 19th century is divided into three classes, which are upper class people, middle class people, and working class people. Upper class people is the superior class in society. Middle class people is the people who get higher education at university and most of them get a job by giving professional service to the people, such as doctor, lawyer, rector, banker, etc. Working class people is the inferior class in England, they do not get higher education like middle class people and most of them use their labor power to fulfill their needs, such as weaver, labor man, servant, etc. Different social classes can be distinguished by knowing some cases such as power, authority, family life, wealth, lifestyle, education, occupation, accent, the ownership of property (Oakland: 1998). It can be said that social status makes someone from what class they are from. Each class, especially upper class people try to maintain or improve their standard of life become stronger, one of them by uniting two families in marriage. It shows that marriage can

partner. In other words, they not only use their time to having fun but also to find the best couple for their life.

The writer is interested in doing the research through this novel because it is Eliot's third novel and the best known of her work. This novel not only gives the information or reflects the social condition in England in 19th century but also shows the social problem that happen at that time, which are some marriages that conducting between classes. Those things represent the real condition in English society in 19th century. Therefore, the writer analyzes social condition, social status, and the effects of marriage and social status, which are in the novel entitle "The Effects on Marriage and Social Status in 19th Century in English upper class people as reflected in George Eliot's Silas Marner."

1.2. Identification of the Problem

In this research, the writer focuses her research on social condition in English society in 19th century, especially in marriage and social status. There are hidden hints in Eliot's Silas Marner concerned with how the upper class people, Cass' family, uses marriage as the instrument to perpetuate their social dominance in upper class people. Nevertheless, such a perpetuation is difficult to reveal. Therefore, it is the main problem to investigate in this research, in which there are the effects on some marriages (exogamy and endogamy) and social status in perpetuating the social imbalances for upper class

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Having analyzed the effects on marriage and social status in Silas Marner by comparing two data between the history of Britain in 19th century and the novel, the writer concludes that Silas Marner reflects the social condition of English society in 19th century.

Through the novel, the writer figures out that the society is divided into three social classes; upper class, middle class and working class which are represented by the characters in Silas Marner. In Silas Marner, the writer finds that upper class society is a society who really respected in Raveloe but the praise for them can be lost if one of their members makes a mistake. Middle class people are an educated and professional people. In Silas Marner, middle class people are people who well educated enough and they are worked by giving a service to the people. Working class people are poor people who work very hard to fulfill their needs by making and selling their goods to the upper class people.

The writer also finds that there are two activities conducted by English society in 19th century as reflected in Silas Marner. These activities are around going to public house (pub) and party. By conducting these activities, all class of society can interact with other people like sharing their knowledge about life and job, finding their couple for

their life, etc. In other hand, pub and party facilitate all people to meet their marriage partner.

The writer also finds the effects of marriage and social status that are conducted by the upper class people. Both of endogamy and exogamy give the effects to the family and the couple. Endogamy makes upper class people can perpetuate their hegemonic power by not allowing the working class people become a part of them. They can maintain and firm the social imbalances for their interests of social dominance by uniting two families who come from the same upper class people. While exogamy results the unrecognized social status in which there is a marginalization of social identity for the sake of upper class people. So that based on the analysis on George Eliot's Silas Marner and the truth of historical social condition in 19th century in England, it can be concluded that this novel is one of the reflections of social condition in 19th century in England, especially the effects of marriage and social status and the perpetuation of social imbalances controlled by upper class people in maintaining their social power.

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