

**THE IMPACTS OF MATERIALISM ON ENGLISH SOCIETY IN EARLY
NINETEENTH CENTURY AS REFLECTED IN WILLIAM MAKEPEACE
THACKERAY'S *VANITY FAIR***

A THESIS

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BY

NICKY AZRENA

(05 985 042)



**ENGLISH DEPARTMENT
FACULTY OF LETTERS-ANDALAS UNIVERSITY
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ABSTRAK

Skripsi ini membahas tentang dampak buruk sifat materialistis terhadap masyarakat Inggris pada awal abad ke-19 seperti yang tergambar dalam novel *Vanity Fair* karya William Makepeace Thackeray. Sifat materialistis adalah salah satu dampak dari Revolusi Industri dimana terjadi ketidakseimbangan antara kelas atas dan kelas bawah sehingga membuat mereka harus berjuang untuk mendapatkan kehidupan yang lebih layak dan untuk mempertahankan status sosial mereka ditengah masyarakat. Berdasarkan kondisi inilah penulis menganalisis sejauh mana dampak sifat materialistis mempengaruhi kehidupan masyarakat Inggris pada awal abad ke-19.

Dalam menganalisis novel ini, penulis menggunakan teori Refleksi yang digagas oleh Georg Lukacs. Untuk membandingkan apakah keadaan yang tergambar dalam novel ini mempunyai persamaan dengan fakta yang terjadi pada masyarakat Inggris pada awal abad ke-19, penulis menggunakan pendekatan mimetik. Data yang diperlukan diperoleh dari penelitian kepustakaan. Kemudian data dijabarkan secara deskriptif.

Dari hasil penelitian, penulis menemukan bahwa di dalam novel ini ada beberapa konflik yang timbul akibat masalah sosial ekonomi yang menggambarkan keadaan masyarakat Inggris pada awal abad ke-19 sebagai dampak dari sistem kapitalisme pada era revolusi industri. Ada beberapa dampak sifat materialistis yang tergambar dalam novel ini, diantaranya adalah ketidakharmonisan dalam sebuah keluarga, tumbuhnya sifat mementingkan diri sendiri dan juga perlakuan yang tidak adil ditengah masyarakat. Penulis dapat menyimpulkan bahwa ternyata orang yang berasal dari kelas atas maupun kelas bawah mempunyai sifat yang sama yaitu materialistis yang merupakan salah satu dampak dari sistem kapitalisme pada era Revolusi Industri. Penulis juga menyimpulkan bahwa novel ini adalah karya *Progressive*, karna melalui novel ini Thackeray berhasil mengkritik sistem kapitalisme yang menyebabkan beberapa dampak buruk di Inggris pada awal abad 19 secara objektif.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1. 1. The Background of the Research

The first purpose of human's life in this world is to survive. To survive, they need food, clothes, shelter and so on, which are called material necessity. To get that material necessity they must have money, because money is a tool used by people for goods exchange or economic activities. The relationship between money and human being is very strong because they need money to fulfill their daily life. Without money they could not do anything to survive. "In Marxist's idea, economy is the important thing in social life, economy as the "base" and others as 'superstructure'" (Sills, 1968:41). It means that economy is the basic in the social system. Everything that people do in the society because of economic and it can influence their life.

Marxist theory is based on the ideas formulated by Marx and Engel as a critique of capitalism in industrial revolution. It focuses its attention on socio-economic life. One of Marx's followers is Georg Lukacs who uses the term 'reflection'. Lukacs believes that a literary work reflects the real of life which focuses on economic system. So here, Marxist theory can clearly be used to analyze the literary works as a representation of social attitudes, and as a product of socioeconomic and historical factors.

Based on the statement above the writer wants to analyze a novel entitled *Vanity Fair* by William Makepeace Thackeray by using Marxist theory. *Vanity Fair* is one of Thackeray's works that was written in the year 1815 and set in England and French. In this time, the imbalance between classes happened on English society as the impact of Industrial revolution that made the lower class or working class has to struggle to survive and get equality in the society. Meanwhile, the upper class tried to get more money from the labor's work.

Vanity Fair presents two young girls who come from different social status. Rebecca Sharp is an orphan who lives in poverty. Her mother is an opera-girl who comes from French and her father is an artist. In contrast, her friend Amelia Sedley is a merchant's daughter who lives in prosperity. Amelia is the only one who makes friend with Becky in the Miss Pinkerton's Academy in Chiswick Mall because she has no money and has bad attitude. Becky has an obsession to be a rich person and gets a place in *Vanity Fair* where the rich people or the upper class lives. She will do anything to make her dream comes true even if she has to marry a rich man whom she does not love. Becky never gives up reaching her dream to become a rich one and lives in the *Vanity Fair*.

After reading this novel, the writer thinks that it is interesting to analyze this novel because in this novel she finds that there are many issues that occur because of money and power. Moreover, she thinks that economy is the object that is still interesting topic to be discussed today. From the research, she finds that the conflicts occurred among characters in this work is caused by the

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

After analyzing Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* by applying reflection theory, there are several similarities between the stories in the novel with English society in early nineteenth century. At that time, the purpose of people's life is to produce money and wealth. It drives them to be materialistic who value and see something from money and material benefit. In this era, there are classes in society; they are bourgeoisie and proletariat classes. Both classes have to struggle to get money to survive, but in the end, they get different result. The rich gets richer, while the poor poorer, because the poor people are oppressed by the rich.

Moreover, this novel presents two different social classes. It can be seen in the character of John Osborne as a bourgeoisie and Rebecca as a proletariat. Both of them have similar character that is materialistic. John Osborne wants to maintain his wealth by marrying his children to people who come from the same status as him. He also views people around him based on economic and power. Meanwhile, Rebecca has a dream to live in Vanity Fair. She wants to be a respectable woman by doing everything without thinking about the effect toward her life and the people around her including her family. From both of characters, the writer finds that for the rich or poor people, money and wealth are important things in their life. So, it drives them to be materialistic who view the people or society based on material value.

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