

**The Bourgeois Ideologies in Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*:
A Marxist Study**

A THESIS

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ABSTRAK

Skripsi ini menganalisa ideologi-ideologi kelas borjuis yang terdapat dalam novel *A Christmas Carol* karya Charles Dickens. Novel ini menceritakan tentang Ebenezer Scrooge, seorang borjuis yang mendedikasikan hidupnya dan menilai segala sesuatu dari sudut pandang materi. Namun, di akhir novel diceritakan bahwa Scrooge mengalami perubahan sikap menjadi seorang yang dermawan. Ideologi dalam novel ini merupakan pemikiran dan penilaian kelas borjuis dalam sistem kapitalisme yang berlatar belakang kehidupan sosial ekonomi Inggris masa Victoria abad 19 yang juga dipengaruhi oleh revolusi industri abad 18.

Penganalisaan novel ini menggunakan pendekatan teori Marxist dari Karl Marx dan Fredrick Engels dengan fokus kajian pada ideologi yang muncul dari sistem kapitalisme. Analisa ideologi dalam skripsi dipahami sebagai kesadaran palsu; kesadaran yang seolah-olah memperjuangkan kepentingan bersama namun berusaha menutup kenyataan bahwa di balik perjuangan tersebut tersembunyi kepentingan-kepentingan egois kelas borjuis untuk meraih keuntungan yang sebesar-besarnya dan posisi kekuasaan sosial dominan.

Dari hasil analisa tersebut, penulis menemukan tiga ideologi sistem kapitalisme dalam novel yang direpresentasikan melalui karakter Ebenezer Scrooge sebagai seorang borjuis yaitu materialisme, ideologi dengan pemikiran yang tidak benar karena menganut anggapan bahwa uang lebih penting dari apapun. Kemudian individualisme, pemikiran dengan prioritas berlebihan pada kepentingan pribadi yang mengabaikan nilai moral bahkan kepentingan orang lain demi memperoleh keuntungan materi membawa ideologi ini pada *image* negatif yang memberikan dampak buruk. Dan yang terakhir, filantropi. Bantuan dan dana yang menjadi ciri khasnya membuat ideologi dengan pemikiran ini dinilai sebagai solusi, namun solusi tersebut bersifat manipulatif. Hal ini dilihat dari bergesernya nilai kedermawanan sebagai tindakan orang-orang yang berhati mulia menjadi bagian dari agenda ekonomi untuk mempertahankan sistem dan kelas sosial. Dengan demikian, melalui tiga analisa ideologi tersebut, dapat diketahui bagaimana karya mendukung kekuasaan dan sistem ekonomi kapitalisme itu sendiri.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

In a broad sense, literature is a type of arts that represent the universe like the human life and their relationship with their thought and feeling as much more supported by Hudson in his book *An Introduction To The Study Literature* says, “Literature is a vital record of what men have seen in life, what they have thought and felt about those aspects of it which have the most immediate and enduring interest for all of us. It is then fundamentally an expression of life through the medium of language” (1960: 10). Thus, from the quotation above describes that as an important record of human life, literature is considered as a part of culture that reflects the social condition in certain period about the experience of what is seen, thought, and felt in life. In addition, the language as the communication medium of it helps the reader in knowing the message or information conveyed by author about the outlook, values, implied assumption, and others.

There are many genres in literature, one of them is novel. Through novel will let us know about the culture or phenomena and recognize human history and existence in certain time and place that is presented in literary work. As a novel, *A Christmas Carol* a work of Charles Dickens is considered as the representation of the condition of its prevailing time and place. Written in 1834, this novel provides the condition of England industrial revolution under the reign of Queen Victorian. The England industrial revolution in the late 18th century that gives influences in every aspects of human life is marked by the transformation of human labor power into industry based on machine. As the expansion of industrialization and the machinery make factories become more expensive that urge for the individuals who have more capital grow increasingly important which bring England into the industrial capitalist society by then.

The capitalistic system is characterized by the freedom to the individual in managing their economic activities where the owner of the capital, of course, freely is allowed to make their own decision to determine what will be produced and how the method of production (Romano: 40). From this kind of production system creates a view point that regards money or capital as the measure of wealth. The capital owner will take the dominant social position which also leads into the development of certain relation of production that is class structure, the bourgeoisie and proletariat. Capitalistic way of thinking guides its people to gain more benefit and focuses on self interest. This condition applied through exploitation, manipulative image and social control. Therewith, it comes along with the writer research reason since those conditions create the way of thinking, idea, image or belief or ideology that hides another absurd or vague problem aimed to cover the bourgeois interests. Therefore, through this research is intended to reveal the hideous problem behind ideology.

The facts of capitalism above can be found in Victorian society through *A Christmas Carol*, one of the most popular novels written in 1843 by one of the most enduringly popular novelists in Victorian era, Charles Dickens. It describes different group of social class between the bourgeoisie as depicted in the character of old, greedy and miser, Ebenezer Scrooge who values everything in the rate of money then blind him of others interest except himself and included the proletariat, Bob Cratchit. Those bad behaviors of Scrooge make him haunted by three ghosts in order to remain him about the worst thing resulted from his behaviors. At the end, Scrooge is transformed to be a charitable person who turns to be a philanthropist. Therein, the writer chooses this novel since the ideologies offered in this novel seems consist of hideous aspect used to manipulate the society to reinforce the capitalistic value which is suitable as the object to be analyzed through Marxist literary criticism.

About the characteristic of the work, William J. Long in his book *English Literature* says, "Charles Dickens, in the creation of his works creates special Dickensian world which, if it does not resemble the real world, at least has its own logic and laws and its own special atmosphere. Dickens's novels are all animated by a sense of injustice, personal wrong or concern with the problem of crime and poverty" (Long: 240). Generally, Dickens used to provide realist literary text portray the wholeness of social existences with focus to reality by showing the contradiction and opposition toward ideology of capitalistic system. However, what is found in *A Christmas Carol* is quite different since the work seems reinforce the bourgeoisie or the capitalism itself. This differentiation is proven through the non realistic elements of the novel that provides the supernatural or superstitious story along with the ghosts that act as the moral agent of the bourgeoisie that take and encourage to the idea of philanthropy. Then, seeing through the theory of Marxist criticism applied in analyzing *A Christmas Carol*, there is no solution that offers the social change except social control and reinforcement to capitalistic value which forms the background of the system in the novel.

Literary works have a role in reflecting ideology which may support the bourgeois interest. The ideology in capitalism is assumed as a false consciousness that made as if it is inevitable, common, and deal with society, but actually hide the implied function to legitimate and maintain the position, economic, and power interest of the bourgeoisie. Therefore, the writer conducts a literary research on the work *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens to reveal the ideologies of capitalistic system in Victorian era viewed through Marxist study by using the ideology concept. Thus, this research is expected to meet its responsibility to give more knowledge and understanding about the concept of ideology and of course to enrich the world of literary criticism.

1.2 Identification of Problem

The character's actions or behaviors of Ebenezer Scrooge in the novel reflect some perspectives of the society about social status, the important of money, self interest, and manipulative solution which are constructed by capitalistic system. These conditions influence the way of thinking and the effort to form certain perspective for certain purpose realized by embedding the ideology in society. Furthermore, the actions or behaviors shown in Scrooge character reflect the ideologies that are created by capitalistic system.

The ideologies somehow can be found in this literary work as the representation of the society they are materialism, individualism, and philanthropy. Thus, in this novel the writer can see the perspectives of the important of money than any other things, the individualistic attitude which regard self interest is important than any other interests that lead into the underestimation of bourgeoisie toward proletariat, then the philanthropy as a manipulative completion of false solution concept regarded to bourgeoisie. Hence, the writer analyzes those three ideologies above as reflected in the text and how those ideologies are represented in the character of Ebenezer Scrooge found in Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*.

1.3 The Objective of the Study

The objective of the study is to reveal the bourgeois ideologies of capitalistic system in this work represented through the character of Ebenezer Scrooge as the bourgeoisie who control the economic power. In addition, by knowing the ideologies exposed in the text, it is possible to identify whether the work reinforces or not the capitalistic value found in *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens.

1.4 The Scope of the Study

To investigate the work, the writer has to limit the problem of the analysis. In this research, the writer focuses on analyzing the bourgeois ideologies represented through the character of Ebenezer Scrooge, they are materialism, individualism, and philanthropy include with their class relationship.

1.5 Review of the Previous Studies

A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens is one of his greatest works published in 1843. In this part, the writer provides the previous studies related to this analysis, the researchers have some different point of views one another such as the first analysis written by Novi Kresnawati (2006) entitled *The Impacts of Industrial Revolution on English Society as Seen in A Christmas Carol By Charles Dickens*. In analyzing her thesis, Kresnawati applies the theory of Allan Swingewood

on sociology of literature that focus on the first of three perspectives that analyze literary work as the reflection or social document of society. Kresnawati starts by describing the social condition of England in Victorian era then relate them with the characters in *A Christmas Carol* who symbolize the social condition and class. In conclusion, Kresnawati finds the reflection of society about the negatives contribution of the industrial revolution that described in the character of Scrooge who symbolizes different social class and the society. Thus, this thesis assists the writer in valuing and digging the more and the real problem of the novel.

The second researcher that the writer finds which discuss about the work *A Christmas Carol* has been analyzed by Dessi Fatrahuty (2007) entitled *Moral Values in Charles Dickens A Christmas Carol*. In her thesis, Fatrahuty applies the theory of Hans Bartens that focus on three moral values as reflected on Ebenezer Scrooge character they are responsibility, obligation, and conscience. The bad behavior of Scrooge as depicted in the first of the novel implies that he does not achieve his responsibility, obligation, and conscience until he warns and transforms to be a good behavior man. In her thesis, Fatrahuty indicate that the transformation of Scrooge has brought him to fulfill the responsibility, obligation, and conscience that refer to moral values. Compared between Fatrahuty's and the writer's thesis is completely different either theory or result; however it becomes the comparative material for the writer in understanding the real or hidden problem behind the frank solution that offer different perception between Fatrahuty's and the writer's.

The third that the writer finds is the thesis of Alex Syahputra (2008) entitled *The Traumatic Experience Of An Accountant In Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol: A Psychological Analysis*. Syahputra reveals the impact of traumatic experiences and analyze how the Ebenezer Scrooge each element of mind (id, ego, and superego) leads to the performing of each his action. This thesis focuses on the traumatic experience which influences the id, ego, and superego then the effect toward his life. Therewith, Syahputra is intended to analyze the mental process of each behavior by relating to Scrooge experience in his life. Thus, the findings of Syahputra's psychological analysis will be much more different with the writer Marxist study that reveal about the bourgeois ideologies in Victorian Era along with the contradictions and conflicts of capitalist society reflected in the literary work.

The last previous study also found by the writer through an article in one website written by Tricia Ellis-Christensen entitled *Who is Ebenezer Scrooge?* (<http://www.wisegeek.com/who-is-ebenezer-Scrooge.htm>). In her article, Christensen writes about the characterization of Ebenezer Scrooge started from his job and the way he behaves to pursuit the wealth through his occupation as a bourgeoisie. Christensen focuses on the transformation of Scrooge behavior with the ghosts who play a big role in Scrooge transformation to be a philanthropist where those ghost show him the life of his past, present and future. Thus, Christensen indicates that Scrooge transformation is interesting as he becomes empathetic and likeable by others. The writing of Christensen about the interesting transformation of Scrooge only help the writer to understand the story generally

since the writer will discuss the novel differently by analyzing the manipulation hidden in the novel in order to criticize the bourgeois ideologies under capitalism.

1.6 Theoretical Framework

Marxist theory is a kind of economic and political theory proposed by the German political philosophers Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels who consider everything is determined economically. Hitchcock says that as a critique toward industrial capitalism, it focuses its attention on class struggle as the social history in relation to political economy. Therefore, it is seen that the theory of Marxist is conditioned by the real society especially in economic point of view. Then, Hitchcock also states there are two ways to understand Marxist theory. First, Marxist theory is a critique toward capitalism promoted by industrial revolution since its injustice system provide social and economic inequality such as the contradictions and conflicts between classes. Second, it is not only analyze its economic relation or the base but also the view point created by the Industrial capitalism itself such as the cultural product or superstructure (Hitchcock: 14-15). On the other hand, Marxist theory also criticize that all the activities in social and political have and hide the motive of getting and keeping the economic power of capitalism to run constantly (Tyson: 53).

Capitalistic mode of production forms base and superstructure model of society where it is the principle of economics determination concept where base determines superstructure. Base consists of the means and relations of production meanwhile, superstructure consists of social consciousness such as education, cultural, politics, religion, where in Marxist called as ideology. The superstructure as the ideology acts as if to struggle for humanity interest however conceals the bourgeoisie or the ruling class interest (Adian: 101). Hence, ideology is the aspect of superstructure which produced by base and functioned to legitimate the base itself.

In relation to literature, Marxists believe that a work of literature is not a result of unreason inspiration or pure attempt, but it arises out of the economic and ideological condition in certain time. Through Marxist literary criticism, literary work emerge as to maintain the author's social class and the prevailing ideology through outlook, values, implied assumption, half realized allegiances and others. In addition, literary work is not only formed by the autonomous inspired individual but it is also constantly formed by the social context in ways they possible do not realize (Barry: 158). It means that it cannot be put simply to judge the author's attitude only if it is analyzed from the ideology found in the novel, since the social context that they belong also need to be considered. On the other hand, in relation to the text, Marxist also tries to reveal the function of ideology within.

Thus, seeing from the relationship shown between the novel and the society found that *A Christmas Carol* is highly reactionary or non progressive text since the novel supports the bourgeois ideologies. Alan Durant and Nigel Fabb says:

“Progressive text are those which contribute to social change toward an egalitarian (socialist) society: non progressive text are those which do not...A Marxist response to them exposes how they lead to or reinforce non socialist social structures...Marxist criticism seeks to show that the applauded human achievements of great literary works can be traced back to a fabric of inhuman social relationship which produced them” (1990: 30-28).

In its practice, the bourgeois ideologies in *A Christmas Carol* attempt to obscure the reality and make their ideas such a rational created for humanitarian in fact; it is only their manipulative way to support the economic system. Then, from Marxist perspective *A Christmas Carol* opposes to the social change and approves or perpetuates the system of class, money oriented, competition, individualistic, manipulative way of thinking and others. About the relationship between Marxism and literature it is also much more supported by Tyson states, “Our goal as Marxist critics is to identify the ideology at work in cultural productions...and to analyze how that ideology supports or undermines the economic system (the power structure) in which that culture production plays a significant role.” (2006: 60).

Since ideology is conditioned by economic system affect the life of the people are no longer freely determined by them but determined by the environment. In his book, *Marxism and Literary Criticism*, Eagleton quotes the statement of Marx states, “The mode of production of material life conditions the social, political and intellectual life process in general. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness” (2002: 4). By comparing two statements above, Marx is trying to put people’s thought in contrary. It seems that people have been led to believe the ideas, fate, cultural life, and legal system of bourgeoisie that should be regarded as the unquestioned guides to human life. In fact, those are determined by the environment where human actually never

freely to choose or determine those social consciousnesses. Therefore, what is aimed in the quotation above will be much more effective in its purpose through the application of ideology.

Ideology is a set of idea, way of thinking, image, or belief derived from cultural conditioning but, not all ideologies are desirable, undesirable ideology promote repressive political agendas. Repressive ideologies are aimed to be accepted in society and to be seen as something common in human life. Then Marxism also shows that repressive ideology are built to blind the way in seeing the world in order to keep the lower class subservient to the ruling power system. The most successful ideologies are when they are not recognized as an ideology but are thought to be natural ways in seeing the world by the people who subscribe to them (Tyson: 56-57). The example of those ideologies will be analyzed here are materialism, the ideology consider money is an important thing than others included the proletariat who used to produce the benefit by the bourgeoisie. Individualism, the ideology where focuses on bourgeois main purpose or interest without caring of anyone else or the proletariat instead of put those proletariat interests to be sacrificed to gain the interest of bourgeoisie. Then, philanthropy, unlike two previous ideologies, it portrays the kindness of bourgeoisie by providing funds to proletariat, both class structure described in assimilating where the bourgeoisie come to mix with the proletariat however, it is just a trick to make the bourgeoisie keep maintaining their position in dominant power and rules from the rebellion of proletariat.

On the other hand, Marxists see ideology as an idea and image arranged in socially system which functions to represent underlying economic and political forces to cover the contradictions, inequalities, or exploitation by mystifying them and makes them seem natural (Durant and Fabb: 30). The existence of ideology is used to support the capitalistic economic structure and maintain the domination in power of the ruling class where according to them directed for collective interest as if it reflects the view of the crowd with the result the proletariat class will not recognize the contradictions, inequalities, or exploitation behind it. Marx calls this as a fabrication way of thinking by certain class to justify themselves or it is also known as false consciousness (Adian: 102). Implicitly, ideology expresses that in certain situation, the ruling class distort social and reality either for themselves or for the reason of adjusting or stabilizing the situation to keep the people in constant situation of capitalistic system.

Hence, another statement about ideology as a false consciousness also stated by Hans Bartens in his book *Literary Theory: The Basic*, "...ideology distorts reality in one way or another and falsely presents as natural and harmonious what is artificial and contradictory..." (2001: 85). Thus, ideology has a system that is to obscure or camouflage the reality and then people will not challenge or realize the inequalities between the rich and the poor in society, so they have no willingness to change it. It is false because the discrepancy between its aim and its reality.

Furthermore, capitalistic system encourages the way people think and the effort to form people perspectives for certain purpose especially regarded to bourgeoisie. This is also much more supported by Eagleton in his book, *Marxism and Literary Criticism* states, "The function of

ideology, also, is to legitimate the power of the ruling class in society; in the last analysis, the dominant ideas of a society are the ideas of its ruling class” (2002: 5). The concept of ideology is used to legitimate the ruling class idea in society and indirectly represent the interest of them. It is aimed to be accepted in society and to be seen as something common in life. It tries to cover or distorts our perceptions of the real and our true social conditions.

What is represented in ideology is not the system of the real situation which governs the existence of individuals, but fabrication to relations and real situation in which they live. Actually, Marxism identifies and analyzes the ideology and how it works in a system. Thus, literary work is effectively in spreading ideology since it reaches so many people.

1.7 The Method of the Research

1. Collecting the data

In conducting this research, the writer uses library research which relates with book and other written source. The primary data is the novel *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens as the object of the object of the study. While some books, the articles and the journal from the internet that have the relationship with this study and secondary data.

2. Analyzing data

In analyzing the data, the referential method will be used to identify the origin or the source of the literary work included the author and historical reality that have a share in supporting the creating process of the work. For this research, the writer will apply the theory of the Marxist literary theory.

3. Presenting the result

In presenting the analysis, the writer applies the descriptive method since the research is the qualitative one and the collected data served in the form of words. Consequently, the written result consists of the quotation taken from the data to illustrate the report or presentation. The quotation also has the important role in supporting the writer’s argument in her analysis.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

A Christmas Carol is a novel that at first started by criticizing the bourgeois ideologies resulted from the capitalistic system then ended by reinforcing the capitalistic value as the background system of the novel. In the beginning, the work seems expose the bad idea of bourgeois ideologies which seek to perpetuate their rule however, in the end of the novel it is ended with the resolution which reinforce the bourgeoisie or the capitalistic system itself. The reinforcement of capitalistic value in *A Christmas Carol* is strongly proven through the ideology of philanthropy. Behind the foundation that provides financial security it wishes to remove the desire of proletariat to question and revolt the unjust capitalistic social system. It is because the solutions offered by this idea precisely oppose to the aim of its purpose.

In addition, the non realistic elements of the novel also support the reinforcement of capitalism where *A Christmas Carol* is used as the tool of capitalistic ideology. Those non realistic elements shown through the supernatural or superstitious story in addition, the ghost characters of the novel also act as the moral agent of the bourgeoisie. It is seen through their way in encouraging and supporting to the action of philanthropy represented by Scrooge. Then, based on the theory applied in analyzing *A Christmas Carol*, the end of the novel that seems act as the solution of the former problems is only a temporary one where it does not solve the entire or the core problem of capitalistic system. In addition, this solution does not offer the social change except social control and reinforcement to capitalistic value which forms the background of the system.

The capitalistic economic system that is reflected in the novel *A Christmas Carol* provides certain way of thinking in 19th century England, they are materialism, individualism, and philanthropy. Materialism is an ideology where everything is valued from material things over all other things. In the novel, materialistic idea is portrayed as the negative way of thinking where Ebenezer Scrooge as the bourgeoisie main character is possessed by a belief that happiness is gained by being rich or having a lot of profit. He is led to forget moral values and the misapprehension between the choices of right and wrong.

The nature of capitalistic system builds the ideology of individualism where this ideology is characterized by the freedom to the individual in managing their economic activities with their own rule. In *A Christmas Carol*, individualistic ideology also promotes the bad effect and implies the negative image where Scrooge's behaviors are guided by his individual interest rather than the consideration on morality. As a way of thinking, individualism lead the bourgeoisie to focus on their main purpose such as the obsession of being more wealthy then affect them not to care about other interests except their own.

The last ideology analyzed resulted from capitalistic system reflected in *A Christmas Carol* is philanthropy. The philanthropy ideology appears as a prevention to neutralize the desire of the lower class that has experienced the dehumanization of the bourgeoisie about having social change. In its practice, this ideology is run to maintain the bourgeois position, economic, and the system. In the novel, the situation is portrayed in different way. The revolt of the proletariat is presented in form of the haunting of the three ghosts that show Scrooge's lonely past, cruel present, and the sad future of his dead. To prevent these revolts happened to him, Scrooge fortifies himself by being a philanthropist. Compared with two previous bourgeois ideologies, philanthropy is quite different by it is used as the economic agenda to provide a view

that social change is possible proven through the assimilation of both classes where bourgeoisie offer the fund to fulfill the proletariat's needs. However, this idea keeps relying on the same purpose of the ideology concept that is support the economic structure.

Related to Marxist study, philanthropy is a kind of deceptive ideology that implies a negative intention because the solution consists of manipulative way, economic agenda, and element of bourgeois hypocrisy. The solution is just a manipulation because the charity or the fund is the way or trick to remove the desire to have revolt toward capitalistic system by the poor and perpetuate the social condition or the system. Philanthropy is no longer valued as the action of caring the poor people but part of economic agenda used to economic interest related to dominant class to strengthen the economic structure and social control (Zizek, *First as Tragedy Then as Farce*). The hypocrisy is seen from the aim that offer the solution which seems intended for goodness in fact it is just a deception used to cover the bad image and the former mistake or the problem caused by them before and display the good image enveloped by hypocritical.

After going through a great struggle of analyzing the novel by applying Marxist criticism, I finally assesses that *A Christmas Carol* is a reactionary or non progressive text by its supporting toward bourgeois ideologies. Besides revealing the false consciousness of bourgeois ideologies of materialism and individualism, the novel ended with the solution of philanthropy ideology which in fact supports the capitalistic system and conceals the hideous manipulation intention of bourgeoisie's interest which leads into non socialist social structures.

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