

Materialism in Ian McDonald's Novel *The Dervish House*

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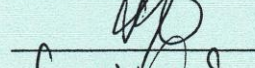
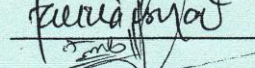
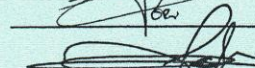

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ABSTRAK

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Pada dasarnya, setiap manusia ingin memiliki kehidupan yang mapan. Tetapi standar kehidupan yang mapan tersebut berbeda – beda pada setiap individu. Sebagian orang merasa puas dengan kehidupannya sebatas tercukupinya kebutuhan dasar mereka, seperti makanan, pakaian, ataupun tempat tinggal. Sebagian lain tidak pernah merasa puas, padahal mereka sudah memiliki lebih dari apa yang mereka butuhkan. Orang – orang ini terus saja berambisi untuk memiliki sebanyak mungkin materi, dan memiliki materi menjadi cita – cita utama dalam kehidupan mereka. Fenomena ini disebut sebagai materialism. Novel *The Dervish House* (2010) yang ditulis oleh Ian McDonald menunjukkan bagaimana hasrat yang berlebihan pada materi, khususnya uang, tergambar dari cara – cara yang digunakan dua orang karakter dalam mencari uang. Penganalisaan novel ini berdasarkan *text* dan *context-based interpretation*. Karakter – karakter tersebut sangat brilian dalam melihat kesempatan dalam bekerja untuk mendapatkan profit yang besar. Kesempatan – kesempatan tersebut lalu mereka manfaatkan sebaik mungkin dengan melakukan beberapa trik. Mereka juga memiliki ambisi yang berlebihan dalam bekerja dengan tujuan mendapatkan sebanyak mungkin uang. Hal tersebut terefleksi dari bagaimana mereka mengabaikan banyak hal dalam hidup mereka untuk pekerjaan. Setting dalam novel ini memberikan pengaruh yang sangat besar bagi kedua karakter dalam melihat kesempatan, dan dalam mewujudkan ambisi – ambisi untuk bekerja tersebut. Selain itu, penganalisaan unsur – unsur sastra tersebut juga dikaitkan dengan konsep materialism itu sendiri, serta teori *human motivation* yang dikemukakan oleh Abraham Maslow.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Having capability to fulfill needs in life is the goal of most of people. Everyone wants to have an established life. However, they have different view about what established life means. Some people have already felt satisfied with their life if they at least can fulfill their basic needs, such as food, clothes, and shelter. Others never feel satisfied, though they have already had more than what they need. These people have high level of desire to have more possession. They do not make effort to control it. This phenomenon is known as materialism.

Materialism refers to someone's belief about the importance of possession in life. Richins in Scott (2009) states that materialism is the importance ascribed to the ownership and acquisition of material goods in achieving major life goals or desired states. It means possessions play significant role in the life of materialistic people. They believe that their major life goal only can be achieved by having possession, such as wealth and money. The pursuit of the material becomes their main focus in life. All of actions and decisions which they make are to fulfill this desire. They presume that having many possessions can give them satisfaction.

Nevertheless, materialistic people will never feel satisfied with their life. Kasser (2002) says

Materialistic people overidealize wealth and possessions and therefore experience discrepancies that cause them to feel dissatisfied and to want further materialistic means of feeling good about themselves. But the satisfactions from

this compensation only temporarily improve their sense of worth, and soon they return to another cycle of dissatisfaction. (p.74)

The quotation shows that these people have high possession expectation. They never feel satisfied with what they have got. They tend to have more to fulfill the desire. It makes them trapped in the sense of dissatisfaction with their life. Therefore, they will not find their ideal life.

However, materialistic people have some goals in their life. Kasser in Scott (2009) states that they have four goals: having nice possession, the right image, the high status, and getting financial success. By having the goals, these people focus on positive evaluation and reward. Kasser defines it as extrinsic goal. He (2002) states that people with strong orientation of materialism frequently feel self-conscious. They highly value recognition and status, which mean concerning others' opinion. Their self-esteem also requires frequent praise from others. They want to impress other, and strengthen their prestige.

Hence, materialistic people might use excessive ways to achieve the goals, especially in the goal of financial success. They are able to see every opportunity in doing their business in order to make much profit. They will utilize the opportunity, and use trick to make it successful. Obsession toward money also makes materialistic people have excessive ambition on working. They focus their life for the job to earn as much as money possible.

The phenomenon of materialism is very common in daily life. One of the examples is done by Bernard Madoff. He can see opportunity to earn money by running an investment firm. He used trick in utilizing the opportunity. According

to his biography (2009), written by Patrick Hinton, Madoff run a “Ponzi Scheme” in his investment firm. He attracted first investor and say that he can get him good return on their investment. He did not invest much of the money but used it for himself and other uses. When it came for him to return the money to the first investor, he attracted the others, and paid of the first one. This carries on in a \$50 billion pyramid scheme with no real money in the business. It was simply being moved from person to person. His trick has affected many people, including celebrities in The United State of America. This trick is considered as investment fraud. He was arrested on December 11, 2008 by federal agent.

The phenomenon of materialism is also found in *The Dervish House* (2010) Novel by Ian McDonald. This novel is interesting to be analyzed. It exposes how obsession in earning money can strengthen the idea of materialism. The characters in this novel are really brilliant on seeing opportunities in doing business. They also have excessive ambition on working.

1.1.1 Materialism

The term materialism refers to people’ dominant desire to pursue material goods in life. Belk (1985) states that

[Materialism is] the importance a consumer attaches to worldly possession. At the highest level of materialism, such possessions assume at the central place in a person’s life and are believed to provide the greatest sources of satisfaction and dissatisfaction. (p.265)

This quotation shows that for materialistic people, possession means anything. They believe that having many possessions can give them satisfaction in life,

otherwise they will get dissatisfaction. Hence, having many material goods is their main goal in life.

Besides, in order to increase their purchasing power, these people tend to work harder to make much money. Kasser in Shrum et al (2012) states that materialistic people focus on extrinsic motivation such as financial success. It means they focus their live in earning money. Moreover, Tang (2012) said that for these people, money is motivator. On positive side, money leads to movement. However, negatively, money prompts them to work proactively. It means they might use excessive way to reach the goal of financial success. In this analysis, it is reflected by two characters that are really ambitious on making money. The characters are really brilliant on seeing opportunities for their business. They also have excessive ambition on working for the purpose of money.

1.1.2 A Brief of Ian McDonald

Ian McDonald was born on January 1, 1960 in Manchester, The United Kingdom. His father was a Scottish, and his mother was an Irish. At age of five, he moved to Belfast, Northern Island, and lived there up to now. He became a fan of Science Fiction from television programs which he watched in his childhood. He began writing when he was nine years old. He sold his first short story, *The Island of the dead*, to local Belfast magazine, *Extro*, at 1982. At 1987 he became a fulltime writer. Then His first novel, *Desolation Road*, was published at 1988. McDonald now also works in the television sector as script writer and consultant.

In his career as author, He has published several novels, and short stories. The selected novels of him are *Out on Blue Six* (1989), *Hearts, Hands, and Voices*, (also known as *The Broken Land*) (1992), *Chaga* (also known as *Evolution's Shore*) (1995), *Kirinya* (1998), *River of the Gods* (2004), *The Little Goddess* (2005), *Brasyl* (2007), *The Dervish House* (2010), and *Be My Enemy* (2012). Some of his short stories are *Empire Dream* (1985), *King of Morning*, *Queen of the Day* (1988), *Speaking in Tongue* (1990), *Some Strange Desire* (1993), *The Days of Soloman Gursky* (1998), *Written in the Starts* (2005), and *Tonight we fly* (2010).

He has won several awards for his work. For *The Dervish house* (2010) novel, he won British Science Fiction Award in 2010 and John W. Campbell Award in 2011. He was also awarded British Science Fiction Award for *Innocence* in 1993, *River of God* in 2004, and *The Djinn's Wife* in 2008. He won Locus Award for *Desolation Road* Novel in 1988 and *Ares Express* in 2001. He got The Sturgeon Award in 1996 for *Sacrifice of Fools*, and in 2001 for *Tendeleo's Story*.

Ian McDonald was often asked about the setting of his science fiction novels which mostly take places in developing countries. In an Interview with Nick Gevers (2000) McDonald affirms: "My point is there is more dynamic for change in "Third World" societies than in the west. Where there is change, there is conflict, and where there's conflict, you have story". He thinks that developing countries provide more space to be explored in his science fiction works. He can create more stories from the problem found in those countries rather than in the

west where most of the setting of science fiction work takes place. In his career, he has written some literary works which are set in developing countries, such as India, Turkey, Brazil and Africa.

Moreover, he states in an interview with The Geek's Guide to the Galaxy team that his works focus on the impact of technology in those countries. He says (2012)

In a sense, a big fat social novel is a fantastic way to explore science fictional future- you're writing about an entire world, not just some technological change, but you're writing about how that change works through an entire society at every level, from top to bottom.

It implies that in his literary work, McDonald does not only make a story about technology and its use, he also shows how those technological changes make impact to the people of the society in many aspects including the change of their way of thinking, ideas, and taste.

1.1.3 The Dervish House

The Dervish House (2010), a novel written by Ian McDonald, reflects about how to earn money related to materialism. Materialism can be defined as a dominating sense of desire to pursue material. People who have materialist characteristic are so obsessed to get money and wealth more than anything in their life. For them, pleasure in their life can be fulfilled only through material. In this novel, materialism is represented by two characters, Adnan and Ayse. The first character is a Gas trader and the second character is the owner of Art gallery.

They both use excessive ways in earning money. Materialism in this novel can be seen through ways used by the characters in earning money.

First, they are really brilliant on seeing opportunities. He does arbitrage with his partner to get more profit punctually. He smuggles gas from a forbidden area which contains much gas, then he sells it in his country so that he can make much profit. He conspires to destroy the major company where he deals to get immunity money by giving the information he has to the authorized party. He makes group with his business partner to ease and smoothen his business tricks. Moreover, he gambles with his friend to earn extra money. Then, Ayse pretend to be employee of a telecommunication firm when she searches the art goods in the hole so that public will not suspect what she is doing.

Second, they have excessive ambition on working. Adnan uses his time as good as possible for his job so that they can make much profit. He focuses on every deal he makes. He tends to use technology to strengthen his concentration quickly. Then, Ayse also uses her time as good as possible for her job. She does something beyond limit to get good for her clients. She accepts every order from the clients no matter how hard an item to be found.

1.2 Problem of Study

There are many issues which can be explored from the novel *The Dervish House* (2010) by Ian McDonald. However, this study explores the issue of materialism. In order to reveal the issue, research question are needed. Those research questions are:

1. How far does *The Dervish House* (2010) Novel reflect the issue of materialism?
2. To what extent do the fictional devices, such as characters, plot (conflicts), and setting give contribution to reveal the materialism?

1.3 Purpose of Study

The aim of this study is to reveal the issue of materialism in the novel *The Dervish House* (2010) by Ian McDonald. Besides, this study is done in order to explore to what extent characters, plot (conflicts), and setting give contribution in disclosing the issue of materialism.

1.4 Previous Study

The study which focuses on *The Dervish House* (2010) Novel by Ian McDonald has not been found yet. However, there are two studies which give contribution and inspiration in analyzing this novel.

The first one is done by Abdourahmane Diouf (2008), entitled *Materialism and inhumanity in John Steinbeck's The Grapes of Wrath and The Pearl*. This study is about the novel *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939) and *The Pearl* (1947) by John Steinbeck. In this analysis, Diouf focuses on the characters, plot (conflict), and setting. This analysis is based on the concept of materialism, capitalism, and acquisitiveness. It analyzes the impact of materialistic behavior in America people during the thirties as shown by the characters in both novels. Diouf states that capitalism is the main factor which causes materialistic behavior. It makes people

have extreme desire to acquire wealth. These novel shows that American culture is over determined by money making attitude so that they are deeply affected by the lack of moral value. It is represented by the characters pearl buyers in *The Pearl* and landlords in *The Grapes of Wrath*. The results of this study, Materialistic behavior cause cruelty to poor people, selfishness, and hypocrisy.

The second study which gives contribution to this analysis was written by Sandra Iulia Ronai (2010), entitled *Materialism and Materiality in F. Scott Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby*. This is a study about the novel *The Great Gatsby* (1993) by F. Scott Fitzgerald. In this analysis, Ronai focuses on the characters, plot (conflict), and setting. This analysis is based on the concept of materialism. The purpose of the study is to show how Fitzgerald's characters are materialistic in their ideals and desire. This is represented by the characters Gatsby, Daisy, and Tom in the novel. Ronai found that for the characters, possession is a mean for attaining happiness. They are really obsessive on luxury. However, the characters lastly realize that money and wealth cannot buy happiness.

The studies above give contributions and inspirations to the topic, materialism in *The Dervish House* Novel by Ian McDonald. Both studies help to analyze the characters of the novel. They also give contribution in understanding the concept of materialism. They expose the characteristic, ideas, and the way of thinking of materialistic people. However, the focus on this study is different from those two studies above. This analysis sees the concept of materialism from how the characters earn money.

1.5 Theoretical Framework

The analysis of this novel is based on the concept of materialism and theory of human motivation by Abraham Maslow. In order to describe the meaning of materialism, Richins and Dawson (1992) conceptualize three dimensions of materialism: acquisition centrality, acquisition as the pursuit of happiness, and possession-defined success. By having acquisition centrality value, materialistic people place possessions and their acquisition at the center of their lives. Then, in acquisition as the pursuit of happiness, they believe that possessions are essential to their satisfaction and well-being in life. Last, they tend to judge their own and other's success by the number and quality of possessions they have. In order to follow these beliefs, these people really focus their life on the pursuit of the possession. The acquisition of possession is the most dominant desire which they have.

Hence, they might make every effort to fulfill this desire. Richins and Dawson (1992) argue that acquisition of possession need motivates materialistic people to work harder in order to increase their purchasing power and living standard. It means they only focus on work for money. Financial success becomes one of their life goals.

In fact, materialistic people have some characteristics. Belk (1985) conceptualized three traits of materialistic people: possessiveness, nongenerosity, and envy. However, this analysis focuses on possessiveness and nongenerosity. Belk (1985) defines Possessiveness as the inclination and tendency to retain ownership of one's possession. This concept of possessiveness also includes a

concern about loss of possession, and inclination to save the possessions for own self. In addition, the possession in this definition includes tangible asset such as money, contract, monetary, obligation and interest, and land. If relating to economic and business aspect, the materialistic people tend to have dominant desire to take and retain the money of their customers. They also make every effort to minimize the possibility of losing their source of income.

The last characteristic is nongenerosity. Belk (1985) defines nongenerosity as “unwillingness to give possessions to or share possessions with others”. He adds that the concept of nongenerosity also includes reluctance to lend and donate possessions to others, and negative attitudes toward charity. This characteristic is merely based on egoistic self-interest.

This analysis is also based on the theory of human motivation by Abraham Maslow. Maslow in Jess Feist and Gregory J. Feist (2006) states that people are continually motivated by one need or another. They do something because it is a need that human naturally must take. When a need is satisfied, it will lose its motivational power, and then replaced by another need. He adds that human needs can be arranged in hierarchy. It is known as hierarchy of needs. Lower level need must be satisfied or at least relatively satisfied before higher level need come. Maslow in Jess Feist and Gregory J. Feist (2006) states that there are five human basic needs: psychological, safety, love and belongingness, esteem, and self-actualization needs. However, in this analysis the characters’ action is motivated by their esteem needs which include self-respect, confidence, competence, and the knowledge which hold them on high esteem.

Esteem needs can be divided into two kinds. Maslow in Jess Feist and Gregory J. Feist (2006) identified two levels of esteem needs: reputation and self-esteem. Reputation includes prestige, recognition, or fame a person achieved in the eyes of the others. This need drives people to act in order to catch people's attention and impress them. Self-esteem, on the other hand, is someone's own feeling of worth and confidence. He says that it include desire for strength, for achievement, for adequacy, for confidence in the face of the world, and for independence and freedom. In other words, self-esteem need motivates people to act based on their own desire in order to achieve goal with their real competence.

The combination of these concepts, materialism and human motivation by Abraham Maslow, can help to reveal the phenomenon of materialism in *The Dervish House* (2010) novel by Ian McDonald. In this novel, the characters, Adnan and Ayse, are businessmen who are really obsessed on money. For them, gaining material success is a way to fulfill their esteem need to get good reputation and the sense of self-esteem. They are really brilliant on seeing opportunities. They also have excessive ambition on working the purpose of money.

This analysis is supported by text and context based interpretation. Klarer (2005) calls text based interpretation as text-oriented approach, and context based interpretation as context-oriented approach. He says that text-oriented approach is focused on the internal textual aspects of a literary work and context-oriented approach does not only regard literary text as self-contained or independent works of art but also tries to place them within a large context. It means this analysis is

done not only by examining what the text serve, such as fictional devices, but also by correlating it with other fields. The fictional devices analyzed in this analysis are character, plot (conflict), and setting.

The first device which is used in this analysis is the character. Klarer (2005) simply defines character as “who acts?” It means character is the ones who are told in story. Characters in a literary work are different with each other. This condition can help to catch the meaning of the text. The characters’ ideas, the way of thinking, and behavior can be known by examining their speech, language, and actions. The characters who show the concept of materialism in this novel are Adnan, and Ayse. They both are really ambitious on making money.

The second device is plot, which is focused on conflict. Guerrin (2005) says that conflict can be divided into two forms: internal conflict, and external conflict. Internal conflict is conflict which occurs between a character and his own self. External conflict is conflict which occurs between two or more characters, and between character(s) and environment. In this analysis, internal conflict occurs between characters and their desire on material goods which drive them to do many ways in doing business. The external conflict occurs between the characters and others who restrict their businesses.

The last devise which is used in this analysis is setting. Klarer (2005) states that in the term “setting”, it includes the location, historical period, and social surrounding in which the actions of text develop. In literary analysis, setting helps to catch the meaning of the text by connecting the story with the situation and condition around the characters. In this analysis, the technological and

economic growths determine the thought and actions of the characters. They become obsessed on money, and make every effort to fulfill the desire.

1.6 Methodology

The analysis of this novel is done through text and context based interpretation. Text-based interpretation is done by examining the interrelation between fictional devices and the context-based interpretation is done by correlating the elements with a large context. The fictional devices used in this analysis are characters, setting, and plot (conflict). These devices cannot be separated in exploring the meaning of the text since they support each other. Characters are used to reveal materialism by analyzing character's behavior, way of thinking, and ideas. Then, setting gives contribution in evoking the meaning through the atmosphere and situation which create conflict. Meanwhile, plot (conflict) plays important role in conveying the meaning of this novel. These devices are analyzed based on the concept of materialism and theory of human motivation by Abraham Maslow.

CHAPTER III

CONCLUSION

The Dervish House (2010), a novel written by Ian McDonald, reflects about how to earn money related to materialism. It is represented by two characters, Adnan and Ayse. They both have high ambition on material, especially money. Financial success is their main goal in life. It is reflected by action and decision they make. The ways they choose in doing business show it.

First, they are really brilliant on seeing opportunities. The setting in this novel refers to the conditions which enable them to find and use it to make money. It means they can see something as beneficial condition for their business. The opportunity is utilized by using trick. For example, the first character can make unused Gas to be profitable one by smuggling it. He also can turn bad condition to be the source of his income. He then gambles with his friend to earn extra money. The second character utilizes the characteristic of local people to ease plan on searching goods for her clients. Besides, the first character faces both internal and internal conflicts. He can release the conflict precisely, and even takes advantage from it.

Second, it can be seen from their excessive ambition on working. The characters are really addicted to work. The setting gives different impact to their action and thought on working. It makes the first character can implement the ambition. For example, dawn azan helps him to start his business activity earlier. The technology supports great concentration for him while dealing. In contrast,

the setting makes the second character faces conflict. She feels intimidated by azan. Besides, it shows how the ambition drives her to ignore god.

Those are how the materialistic people fulfill their desire on money. All action and decision they make show it. They use excessive ways to get the money. They place it as the main focus in life. They are never satisfied with what they already had. They even do something beyond limit to get it.

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