

MATERIALISM IN IAN MCDONALD'S NOVEL *THE DERVISH HOUSE*

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Abstrak

Tujuan penelitian ini adalah (1) menganalisa sejauh mana novel ini merefleksikan materialism, (2) menunjukkan kontribusi elemen fiksi (karakter, alur (konflik), dan seting) dalam mengungkap materialism dalam novel ini. Data penelitian ini adalah teks tertulis yang dikutip dari novel. Kutipan teks tersebut kemudian diinterpretasi dan dianalisa dengan elemen fiksi (karakter, alur (konflik), dan seting), lalu dikaitkan dengan konsep materialism yang dijelaskan oleh Marsha L. Richins, Scott Dawson, dan Russel W. Belk serta teori human motivation yang dirumuskan oleh Abraham Maslow. Hasil analisa menunjukkan bahwa dua karakter dalam novel ini melakukan tindakan-tindakan seorang yang materialistis untuk mencapai tujuan utama dalam hidup mereka, yaitu memiliki sebanyak mungkin materi, khususnya uang. Mereka sangat brilian dalam melihat kesempatan - kesempatan dalam melakukan bisnis. Mereka juga memiliki ambisi yang berlebihan dalam bekerja.

Key words: materialism, materialistic, goal, material, money, brilliant, opportunities, excessive, ambition

A. Introduction

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.

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,

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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.

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.

This analysis is is going to discuss the issue of materialism and investigate to what extend the fictional devices such as character, plot (conflict), and setting give contribution in disclosing this issue in the novel *The Dervish House* (2010) written by 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* (1992), *Chaga* (1995), *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 *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.

The *Dervish House* (2010) 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.

There are two studies that 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 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.

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 donates 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 human needs can be arranged in hierarchy. It is known as hierarchy of needs. 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: reputation and self-esteem.

B. 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.

C. Analysis

In doing business, the characters in this novel are really brilliant on seeing opportunity. They tend to find opportunities which make money from. They utilize it as good as possible by using some trick. The tricks are run systematically so that it can make much profit. This is done by two characters in this novel.

The first character is Adnan. He thinks differently. He can make something to be beneficial. There is a place in other country whose gas is just unused. He can see this condition as an opportunity for his business by smuggling it. It can be seen from the quotation below.

'I've had a look through your more detailed projections,' Ferid Bey says. Water drips from the hem of the pestemel wrapped around his waist. 'The only obvious flaw is you're asking me become a gas smuggler.'

'We think of it as an alternative supply chain.'

'Tell that to the judge if you get caught.'

It's in the air. It's that long ball crossed into the box that the wind gets underneath and floats. Anyone could get to it. Adnan must trust his own skill.

'They're just flaring it off. The Tabriz pipeline can't handle the volume, so that they burn it. Whoosh. Like setting a match to a suitcase full of euro.' (p.201)

When other person thinks that what he is doing is criminal, the first character considers that it is just an alternative to keep the sustainability of his business. He feels that the gas is just wasted away. It actually can be something very beneficial

in his hand. He can have a cheap gas supply to be sold, and then makes a profit from it. The setting in this text refers to condition which enables him to smuggle the gas in order to get much money.

The second character, Ayşe, is a woman who is also smart on seeing opportunity for her business. How she utilizes the opportunity is different from the first character. She utilizes the characteristic of local people to do a trick. In this point, in order to get goods for her art gallery, she sometimes has to search in underground illegally. Public might suspect what she is doing so that she cannot do her plan freely. However, she brilliantly knows the neglectfulness of the people at that time. She pretends to be employee of a telecommunication firm to deceive the public and make them away from her activity.

The white van has been parked on Sidik Sami Omar Cadessi since the early hours. It's an old Türk Telekom Mercedes Sprinter, the logo painted out but still visible, a corporate ghost. The workmen have erected plastic barriers with red and white chevron warnings to keep pedestrians away from the work. People have become litigious about health and safety since the EU. Mistrustful days. There is a little awning with a seat and a gas-hob for a tea-maker. Men in T-shirts, multi-pocket workpants and hi-vis vests stand around sipping tea and and contemplating the hole they have made in the cobblestones of the Street of the Addicts.....

Ayşe Erkoç learned long ago that the secret of doing anything illicit in Istanbul is to do it in full public gaze in the clear light of day. No one ever questions the legitimacy of the blatant. (p. 650)

The quotation above shows that Istanbul people at that time have some characteristic which give benefit for her. The setting in the text refers to condition which change people's way of thinking. They are really sensitive with their health and safety. They don't want to get in touch with something that can bother those aspects without doubting. They, on the other hand, just believe in what they see. They are no longer sensitive toward something that might be suspicious. The second character and her partners utilize it to smoothen the plan by pretending to be the employee of telecommunication firm. By doing so, the public will not suspect them because their work is just like the real one. People also get away from their activity so that they can run the plan without restrictions. This is her trick in utilizing this condition.

Besides, the high level of desire toward material, especially money, makes the characters tend to have excessive ambition on working. They have uncontrollable and unrelenting need to work. In other words, they are obsessively addicted on working. They unconsciously focus their life on their job. Besides, in this case, they work excessively for the purpose of money.

The first character, Adnan, uses his time as good as possible for his job. It can be seen from the quotation below.

It is Deal Day.

The weather on Deal Day is bright and hot hot hot. Shimmering off the highway at six in the morning hot. Tarmac glossy and melting. Turkish flag hanging like a dead bird from the pole on the top of the hill across the highway hot. Adnan has been up since the dawn azan. Prayer is better than sleep. Profit is better than either. There are Deal Day rituals to be observed. (p. 602)

Money motivates the characters to make the best use of his time to work and earn it. The words "Deal Day" implies a day when he is going to do action and give all of his time and ability in order to make profit as much as possible. The sentences, *The weather on Deal Day is bright and hot hot hot* explains that it is a perfect day to deal. It implies that he is eagerly going to use all the day long to work and earn money. He also starts his activity earlier in the morning. The dawn azan is the standard for him. The setting in the text refers to the atmosphere which enables him to get up earlier. However, his main reason to wake up at dawn azan is not to pray anymore. For him, profit is anything. It indicates that while praying, his mind still thinks about profit that he can get that day.

The second character, Ayşe, also has excessive ambition on working. She never thinks about azan and praying. This shows that the ambition makes her ignores God. It also implies her commitment in using time for the business. The quotation below shows it.

The call to prayer blares out from the four minarets of Süleymaniye Mosque as Ayşe Erkoç enters the southern gate of the enclosure. Ayşe has always had a horror of the azan. Not the austere beauty of the human voice, even recorded and amplified as it is in these degenerate days, nor the counterpoint of many calls from different distances across the city, breaking across each other in waves of sound. It horrifies her because it has no respect for her. It says this is not your city and time. This is God's city, this is God's time and God's time is absolute. Your comings and goings and doings and dealings are hung around these five pillars. Five times a day you must stop what you are doing and turn to God. She fears the azan because to her it is the sound of atavism. It denies change and the hope of change. It says that all works of hands are temporary, all hope of progress is futile. All that is necessary is here. This is the perfect way. Come and pray. She fears it because it says that Istanbul, Queen of Cities, Abode of Felicity, is a man's city. The azan says there is nothing for Ayşe Erkoç. (p. 569)

In this context, there is contradiction between the first and the second character. The first character uses dawn azan as the standard of his business time though the

second character feels intimidated by the azan. She thinks that it is God's exclamation to restrict human's activity. For her, those few minutes used to pray can decrease times to do business. It makes human cannot do more for their work. These thought imply that she wants to optimize her time to work and earn money. This is the external conflict occurs between the second character and environment. The setting in this text refers to the atmosphere which enables her to have the thought.

D. 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. 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. 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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