

ABSTRACT

Silvia Octaliana (2003). DICKENS' CRITICISM TOWARDS THE POOR LAW OF 1834 THROUGH THE CHARACTERS *OLIVER TWIST*. Yogyakarta: Department of English Letter, Faculty of Letters, Sanata Dharma University.

This thesis is analyzing a novel by Charles Dickens titled *Oliver Twist*. This novel tells the readers about the life of the poor who get the impact of the 1834 Poor Law. The writer chooses this novel because she is interested in the life of the characters in the story. Most of the characters in this novel are poor people because Dickens wants to tell his readers about the condition of the poor.

There are three objectives which are achieved by the writer in this thesis: (1) to show the application of the 1834 Poor Law in daily life as seen in the novel, (2) to describe the result of that act towards the poor people in the novel, and (3) to show Dickens' criticism towards the Poor Law of 1834.

In doing the analysis, the writer chooses the library research. She collects the data from the books which will support the analysis such as books about the theory of character and characterization. In order to analyze the problems, the writer employs the sociocultural-historical approach by Rohrberger and Woods. This approach is used because she relates the novel with the condition in the nineteenth century as appearing in the story.

The result of the conclusion shows that the Poor Law of 1834 was issued to take care of the poor. There were many unemployment in the nineteenth century because machines had replaced human. It made the condition become very hard for the poor in finding a job. The act stated that the condition in the workhouse must be made very harsh so that the poor did not receive help from the workhouse. Unfortunately, the application of the 1834 Poor Law did not bring good impacts to the poor. Many poor people did not want to live in the workhouse because they were afraid of it. This condition had caused many criminals because the easiest way to get money was by stealing. The condition of the inmates of the workhouse was not better than those who lived outside the workhouse. The people in the workhouse must work hard without given enough food to do such hard work. The matron of the workhouse did not take care of them even when they were dying. It can be said that the application of the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act did not bring good result.

Looking at the condition of the poor in the nineteenth century, Charles Dickens gives his sympathy by criticizing the Poor Law of 1834 through *Oliver Twist*. Dickens gives his comments by saying that this act actually should not be applied because it will make the poor suffer more. Besides Dickens also said that this act had created many criminals since many poor people were afraid of entering the workhouse. In short, Dickens criticized this act as a useless act because it gave nothing to the poor's wealth.

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Skripsi ini akan menganalisa sebuah novel karya Charles Dickens yang berjudul *Oliver Twist*. Novel ini bercerita tentang kehidupan orang miskin yang merasakan dampak dari pelaksanaan ‘The Poor Law of 1834’. Penulis memilih novel ini karena tertarik dengan kehidupan para tokoh di dalamnya. Sebagian besar tokoh cerita adalah orang-orang miskin karena hal inilah yang ingin digambarkan oleh Dickens.

Ada tiga tujuan yang ingin dicapai oleh penulis dalam penulisan ini: (1) menunjukkan pada pembaca tentang penerapan ‘The Poor Law of 1834’ dalam kehidupan sehari-hari, (2) menggambarkan akibat penerapan ‘The Poor Law of 1834’ terhadap para tokoh cerita, dan (3) menunjukkan kritik dari Dickens terhadap ‘The Poor Law of 1834’.

Dalam melakukan analisa, penulis melakukan studi perpustakaan. Penulis mengumpulkan data dari buku-buku yang akan mendukung analisa seperti buku tentang karakter dan karakterisasi. Untuk menganalisa permasalahan yang muncul penulis menerapkan pendekatan sosialbudaya-sejarah dari Rohrberger dan Woods. Penulis menggunakan metode pendekatan ini karena karya sastra ini akan dihubungkan dengan keadaan pada abad 19 seperti yang nampak dalam novel tersebut.

Hasil analisa menunjukkan bahwa ‘The Poor Law of 1834’ diberlakukan bagi orang-orang miskin. Pada abad 19 terdapat banyak pengangguran karena mesin telah mengantikan tenaga manusia. Hal ini membuat banyak orang merasa kesulitan dalam mencari pekerjaan. The Poor Law of 1834 menyebutkan bahwa kondisi di dalam panti dibuat sedemikian keras sehingga para penghuninya tidak bisa mengharapkan bantuan apapun dari panti.

Sayangnya, pemberlakuan ‘The Poor Law of 1834’ tidak membawa dampak yang baik bagi orang-orang miskin. Banyak dari antara mereka tidak ingin tinggal di dalam panti karena mereka takut dengan perlakuan yang akan mereka terima. Hal ini menciptakan banyak kejahatan karena cara termudah untuk mendapatkan uang adalah dengan mencuri. Orang-orang yang tinggal di dalam panti harus bekerja keras tanpa diberi cukup makan. Kepala panti tidak merawat para penghuni panti dengan baik bahkan dia tidak peduli jika ada dari antara mereka yang sekarat. Dapat dikatakan bahwa pemberlakuan ‘The Poor Law of 1834’ tidak membawa dampak yang baik.

Dengan melihat kondisi orang-orang miskin pada abad 19, Charles Dickens menyatakan rasa simpatinya dengan mengkritisi ‘The Poor Law of 1834’ melalui novelnya *Oliver Twist*. Dickens memberikan pendapatnya dengan mengatakan bahwa peraturan ini seharusnya tidak diberlakukan karena ini hanya akan membuat orang menjadi lebih menderita. Di samping itu, Dickens juga menyebutkan bahwa ‘The Poor Law of 1834’ telah menimbulkan banyak kejahanatan karena banyak orang yang tidak bekerja takut tinggal di panti. Pada dasarnya, Dickens menyatakan bahwa ‘The Poor Law of 1834’ tidak berguna karena tidak memberikan dampak yang baik bagi kemakmuran orang-orang miskin.