

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

A. CONCLUSION

This research examines the consumer society and symbolic consumption in the classic novel *The Ladies' Paradise* which became a social phenomenon in the late 19th century by using the support of Baudrillard (1998) in the theory of *The Consumer Society*. This research reveals that Émile Zola's work is not just a classic fiction novel but a phenomenon that can be seen from Zola's narrative which is related to the shifting social phenomena in French society, especially Parisian women.

Zola's narrative employs a diverse cast of characters, each representing a distinct aspect of the evolving system of modern capitalism and the consumption-driven pursuit of self-identity within specific social classes. Mouret, the proprietor of the department store, plays a pivotal role in the evolving patterns of consumption and the emergence of modern industry, which effectively transforms consumption into a means of purchase control. The prevailing logic of contemporary consumption does not prioritize fundamental needs but rather focuses on the acquisition of signs, symbols of social status, and aesthetic pleasures that are obtained through consumption.

This research reveals that the pattern of mass consumption and symbolic consumption found in *The Ladies' Paradise* is not a side symptom, but part of the social and economic system of modern capitalism itself. It is reflected in the

symptoms of price strategy, advertising sensation, store displays, and manipulation carried out by the modern industrial system against the hidden desires of the community, especially women. In this case, women are not only the target of consumption, but their identity is deliberately shaped through this consumption.

In conclusion, *The Ladies' Paradise* shows how consumption patterns and social systems shifted in the late 19th century. Mouret managed to make the consumption of objects into an individual's identity, Mouret's role in creating department stores with the regulation of ideas that the old economic system had never done, changed the new system where women had their own paradise to feel themselves worthy and feel beautiful. Therefore, *The Ladies' Paradise* is not just a classic novel but a narrative that reveals the social construction of consumption culture that transforms into a modern industrial system.

B. SUGGESTION

Several suggestions can be made in further future research ranging from interdisciplinary research, and educational development. First, future research can further explore the phenomenon of consumer society and symbolic consumption in other literary works, especially literary works born during the new capitalism period or when modern industry began to develop. Research analysis that compares *The Ladies' Paradise* with other classic literature that portrays the ideology of consumer society. This approach will further enrich the understanding of the mirroring of socio-cultural and economic phenomena through literary studies.

Second, further research developing Jean Baudrillard's theories can use additional perspectives from other theorists, such as Thorstein Veblen or Pierre Bourdieu. An interdisciplinary approach can more deeply reveal the complex phenomena of consumer society in the era of modern capitalism, especially during its emergence in the early 19th century.

Thirdly, feminist studies of *The Ladies' Paradise* and other classical literature can shed light on the exploitation of the female body in modern industry. By examining the representation of women in the development of the modern economy, further studies can reveal some of the driving forces of commercialism that target women. This study is important for understanding the development of modern consumerism through literary analysis.

Furthermore, the research will be utilized for discussion in an educational context to discuss the development of modern industry, the beginnings of capitalism, the concept of self-image, and mass culture. Literature teachers can use the literary study of *The Ladies' Paradise* to reveal the culture of consumption, modern commercialism, and cultural transformation. This will help students to connect classic literature with the phenomena of socio-cultural and economic changes, so that students' thinking skills become more critical and more sensitive to the phenomena that occur around them and the development of the world.

In Sum, This study ultimately shows the early indications of the culture of commercialism in the late 19th century. It also shows the early symptoms that occurred before modern industry became increasingly prevalent. Zola's narrative of

consumption as self-identity reflects future consumption behavior, so readers can use this literary study as a reflection to avoid being trapped in the illusion of the commercial system and its deliberate strategies to ensnare consumers.

