

ABSTRACT

Mochamad Alif Yasin Mubarak. 1195030137. REPRESENTATION OF MODERN SLAVERY IN THE NOVEL *READY PLAYER ONE* WRITTEN BY ERNEST CLINE. An Undergraduated Thesis, English Literature, Faculty of Adab and Humanities, Sunan Gunung Djati State Islamic University Bandung. Supervisors: 1. Dr. Hj. Ruminda, S.S., M.Hum. 2. Pepen Priyawan, SS., M.Hum.

This study examines the depiction of modern slavery in Ernest Cline's *Ready Player One* through the lens of Marxist theory, specifically Tom Brass's framework on unfree labor. Employing a qualitative descriptive method and content analysis, the research explores the types, causes, and impacts of modern slavery on the characters in the novel. The study focuses on key forms of unfree labor such as debt bondage, forced labor, commodification of labor, and systemic inequality, analyzing their representations in the narrative. Additionally, the causes of modern slavery—economic exploitation, commodification of labor, systemic inequality, deproletarianization, and state complicity—are critically examined to uncover the novel's commentary on capitalist structures. The impacts of modern slavery, including alienation, exploitation, commodification, and resistance, are analyzed to highlight their effects on the characters' autonomy and social consciousness. Using supporting theories from Karl Polanyi, Herbert Marcuse, and others, the research delves into how the novel critiques systemic oppression and labor exploitation. The findings contribute to a broader understanding of modern slavery in literature, particularly its intersection with popular narratives, while also shedding light on the novel's reflection of contemporary capitalist realities.

Keywords: Modern Slavery, Marxism, Unfree Labor, Popular Literature, *Ready Player One*

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ABSTRAK

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Penelitian ini mengkaji representasi perbudakan modern dalam novel *Ready Player One* karya Ernest Cline melalui lensa teori Marxis, khususnya kerangka kerja Tom Brass tentang tenaga kerja tidak bebas. Dengan menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif dan analisis isi, penelitian ini mengeksplorasi jenis-jenis, penyebab, dan dampak perbudakan modern terhadap karakter dalam novel. Penelitian ini berfokus pada bentuk-bentuk tenaga kerja tidak bebas seperti terikat utang, kerja paksa, komodifikasi tenaga kerja, dan ketimpangan sistemik, serta menganalisis representasinya dalam narasi. Selain itu, penyebab perbudakan modern—seperti eksploitasi ekonomi, komodifikasi tenaga kerja, ketimpangan sistemik, deproletarianisasi, dan keterlibatan negara—dikaji secara kritis untuk mengungkap pandangan novel terhadap struktur kapitalis. Dampak dari perbudakan modern, termasuk alienasi, eksploitasi, komodifikasi, dan resistensi, dianalisis untuk menyoroti pengaruhnya terhadap otonomi dan kesadaran sosial karakter. Dengan menggunakan teori pendukung dari Karl Polanyi, Herbert Marcuse, dan lainnya, penelitian ini menggali bagaimana novel ini mengkritik penindasan sistemik dan eksploitasi tenaga kerja. Temuan penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi pada pemahaman yang lebih luas tentang perbudakan modern dalam literatur, khususnya kaitannya dengan narasi populer, sekaligus menyoroti refleksi novel terhadap realitas kapitalis kontemporer.

Kata Kunci: Perbudakan Modern, Marxisme, Tenaga Kerja Tidak Bebas, Sastra Populer, *Ready Player One*.

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