

**ALIENATION AND CAPITALISM: A STUDY OF 'BARTLEBY, THE SCRIVENER'
THROUGH FROMM'S LENS**



A Research Paper (S-1)

Submitted in a Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
an Undergraduate Degree of (SS) in English Language and Literature

By

RIZQI ANDRIA APRIAWAN

20.03.52.0030

**ENGLISH LITERATURE DEPARTMENT
FACULTY OF LAW AND LANGUAGE
UNIVERSITY OF STIKUBANK SEMARANG**

2024

PAGE OF APPROVAL

A Research Paper entitled “**Alienation and Capitalism: A Study of 'Bartleby, the Scrivener' through Fromm's Lens**” is written by Rizqi Andria Apriawan / 20.03.52.0031 has been accepted for approval by the Board of Examiners, FHB Universitas Stikubank (UNISBANK) Semarang upon presentation and oral examination conducted on this

BOARD OF EXAMINERS

Chairperson



Teguh Kasrabowo S.Pd., M.Pd.
NIDN: 0611127805

Secretary



Dr. Agnes Widyaningrum S.E., S.Pd., M.Pd.
NIDN: 0604017201

Member



Endang Yuliani Rahayu, S.S., M.Pd.
NIDN: 0629076801

Dean Faculty of Law and Language



**UNIVERSITAS
STIKUBANK**
DIGITAL YOUTH ENTREPRENEURIAL UNIVERSITY

FAKULTAS HUKUM DAN BAHASA

Dr. Agnes Widyaningrum S.E., S.Pd., M.Pd.
NIDN: 0604017201

SUPERVISOR'S APPROVAL

This is to certify that a Research Paper entitled “Alienation and Capitalism: A Study of 'Bartleby, the Scrivener' through Fromm's Lens” has met the necessary requirements for further examination and approval by the Board of Examiners, FHB Universitas Stikubank (UNISBANK)

Semarang, 19 July, 2024

Supervisor,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Teguh', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Teguh Kasprabowo, S.Pd., M.Pd.

NIDN: 0611127805



SURAT PERNYATAAN KEASLIAN TUGAS AKHIR/ SKRIPSI

Yang bertanda tangan di bawah ini, saya menyatakan bahwa TUGAS AKHIR / SKRIPSI dengan Judul :

CAPITALISM AND ALIENATION: A STUDY OF 'BARTLEBY, THE SCRIVENER' THROUGH FROMM'S LENS

yang telah diuji di depan tim penguji pada tanggal 13 Agustus 2024, adalah benar hasil karya saya dan dalam TUGAS AKHIR /SKRIPSI ini tidak terdapat keseluruhan atau sebagian tulisan orang lain yang saya ambil dengan cara menyalin, atau meniru dalam bentuk rangkaian kalimat atau simbol yang saya aku seolah-olah sebagai tulisan saya sendiri dan atau tidak terdapat bagian atau keseluruhan tulisan yang saya salin, tiru atau yang saya ambil dari tulisan orang lain tanpa memberikan pengakuan pada penulis aslinya.

Apabila saya melakukan hal tersebut diatas, baik sengaja maupun tidak, dengan ini saya menyatakan menarik TUGAS AKHIR / SKRIPSI yang saya ajukan sebagai hasil tulisan saya sendiri.

Bila kemudian terbukti bahwa saya ternyata melakukan tindakan menyalin atau meniru tulisan orang lain seolah-olah hasil pemikiran saya sendiri, berarti gelar dan ijazah saya yang telah diberikan oleh Universitas Stikubank (UNISBANK) Semarang batal saya terima.

Semarang, 02 September 2024

Yang Menyatakan



(**RIZQI ANDRIA APRIAWAN**)
 NIM :20.03.52.0030

SAKSI 1

Tim Penguji

(**TEGUH KASPRABOWO, S.Pd., M.Pd**)

SAKSI 2

Tim Penguji

(**Dr. AGNES WIDYANINGRUM, S.E., S.Pd., M.Pd.**)

SAKSI 3

Tim Penguji

(**ENDANG YULIANI RAHAYU, S.S., M.Pd**)

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis entitled “**Alienation and Capitalism: A Study of 'Bartleby, the Scrivener' through Fromm's Lens**” is my work and has never been submitted for any degree award elsewhere. Ideas, findings, and works of others cited here in have fully credited and acknowledged in compliance with the tradition of academic writing.

Semarang, 19 July, 2024

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rizqi', written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath.

Rizqi Andria Apriawan

PAGE OF MOTTO

“Let everything happen to you: beauty and terror. Just keep going. No feeling is final.”

— **Rainer Maria Rilke, *Go to the limits of your longing***

“The struggle itself toward the heights is enough to fill a man's heart. One must imagine Sisyphus happy.”

— **Albert Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus***

ABSTRACT

Apriawan, Rizqi Andria. 2024. *Alienation and Capitalism: A Study of 'Bartleby, the Scrivener' through Fromm's Lens*. A Research Paper, Faculty of Law and Language. University of Stikubank (UNISBANK) Semarang. Supervisor: Teguh Kasprabowo, S.Pd., M.Pd.

The short story entitled “Bartleby, the Scrivener” contains the theme of alienation. “Bartleby, the Scrivener” by Herman Melville is an interesting short story because it contains a view of alienation within the context of capitalism and delves into psychological effects of alienation. This study examines the theme of alienation which focuses on the social aspect of alienation and the psychology of the character in the short story which focuses on the characteristics of each character's escape mechanism. The method used in this study is a qualitative method with Marxist and psychoanalytic theory of Erich Fromm. In this study, researcher found the theme of alienation heavily influenced by four elements which are long hours work, economic inequality, inability to connect one another, and work as part of the interests of the capitalist system. Using the context of 19th-century American capitalism, the economic and social structures in the story prioritize profit over people is the main factor of “Bartleby, the scrivener” world alienating the characters. Furthermore, researcher found that characters in stories had different types of escape mechanisms in response to their alienating environments. Automaton conformity, authoritarianism, and destructiveness are the primary escape mechanisms observed in the story. By repressing their individuality in order to meet the demands of their jobs, Turkey and Nippers are prime examples of automaton conformity, which leads to psychological problems and a superficial sense of belonging. Through authoritarianism, the lawyer clings to his religious beliefs and the hierarchical structure of his workplace for security and order, but this escape mechanism disconnects him and prevents him from forming true human connections. Though first concealed by his seemingly automaton conformity, Bartleby's destructiveness becomes more apparent as his passive resistance grows more intense, eventually leading to his self-destructive behavior and eventual demise. However, the last finding emphasizes the need for positive freedom and authentic relationships as means to overcome the alienation perpetuated by capitalist systems.

Keyword: capitalism, alienation, mechanisms of escape, marxist, psychoanalysis, Erich Fromm

Abstrak

Apriawan, Rizqi Andria. 2024. *Alienation and Capitalism: A Study of 'Bartleby, the Scrivener' through Fromm's Lens*. A Research Paper, Faculty of Law and Language. University of Stikubank (UNISBANK) Semarang. Supervisor: Teguh Kasprabowo, S.Pd., M.Pd.

Cerpen berjudul “Bartleby, the Scrivener” merupakan cerpen yang mengangkat tema keterasingan. “Bartleby, the Scrivener” karya Herman Melville merupakan cerita pendek yang menarik karena memuat pandangan tentang alienasi dalam konteks kapitalisme dan menggali dampak psikologis dari alienasi. Penelitian ini mengkaji tema alienasi yang menitikberatkan pada aspek sosial dari alienasi dan psikologi tokoh dalam cerpen yang menitikberatkan pada karakterisasi ‘mechanisms of escape’ masing-masing tokoh. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah metode kualitatif dengan teori Marxis dan psikoanalitik Erich Fromm. Dalam penelitian ini, peneliti menemukan tema alienasi yang dipengaruhi oleh empat elemen yaitu jam kerja panjang, kesenjangan ekonomi, ketidakmampuan untuk terhubung satu sama lain, dan bekerja sebagai bagian dari kepentingan sistem kapitalis. Menggunakan konteks kapitalisme Amerika abad ke-19, struktur ekonomi dan sosial dalam cerita yang memprioritaskan profit daripada manusia adalah faktor utama dunia “Bartleby, the Scrivener” yang mengasingkan karakternya. Selain itu, peneliti menemukan bahwa karakter dalam cerita memiliki ‘mechanisms of escape’ yang berbeda-beda sebagai respons terhadap lingkungan mereka yang mengasingkan diri. ‘Automaton Conformity, Authoritarianism, dan Destructiveness’ adalah ‘mechanisms of escape’ yang diamati dalam cerita. Dengan membuang individualitas mereka demi memenuhi tuntutan and eskpektasi dari pekerjaan mereka, Turki dan Nippers adalah contoh utama ‘automaton conformity’, yang mengarah pada masalah psikologis dan rasa ‘belonging’ yang dangkal. Melalui ‘Authoritarianism’, pengacara berpegang teguh pada keyakinan agamanya dan struktur hierarki tempat kerjanya demi ‘security and order’nya, namun ‘mechanisms of escape’ ini memutuskan dan mencegah terbentuknya hubungan antarmanusia yang sejati. Meskipun pada awal cerita, terlihat seperti ‘automaton conformity’, ‘Bartleby’s destructiveness’ menjadi lebih jelas terlihat ketika perlawanan pasifnya semakin kuat, yang pada akhirnya mengarah pada perilaku merusak diri sendiri dan akhirnya kematian. Namun, temuan terakhir menekankan perlunya kebebasan positif dan hubungan otentik sebagai sarana untuk mengatasi alienasi yang diakibatkan oleh sistem kapitalis.

Kata Kunci: kapitalisme, alienasi, mekanisme pelarian, marxis, psikoanalisis, Erich Fromm

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Firstly, I would like to express my gratitude to my parent who always give me full support, encouragement, and trust in everything so that I could complete this thesis. This thesis was prepared as one of the requirements for obtaining a Bachelor of Literature degree at the faculty of law and literature in University of Stikubank Semarang.

Furthermore, I would also like to express my gratitude to my friends who have been there every step of this journey. The support, ideas, dedication, togetherness, and laughter that we share together have become encouragement and strength for me in completing this thesis.

I also thank all the staff and lecturers at the Faculty of Law and Languages, who have facilitated the smooth implementation of this project. In particular, I would like to thank my supervisor, Teguh Kasprabowo, S.Pd., M.Pd for guiding me in my attempt to write my thesis. I appreciated every comment he made, and his support, advice, and direction are crucial for me to finish the thesis. Not to forget, I would like to express my thanks to the Dean of the Faculty of English Letters, Dr. Agnes Widyaningrum, S.Pd., M.Pd, and Head of the English Literature Undergraduate Program in English Literature, Mrs. Yulistiyanti, S.S., M.Hum. Their contributions, both large and small, were instrumental in achieving my study goals.

Finally, I hope that this thesis can provide benefits for readers, further research and interested parties. I really hope for constructive criticism and suggestions for future improvements. Thank You.

Semarang, 19 July, 2024

Rizqi Andria Apriawan

TABLE OF CONTENT

DECLARATION	i
SUPERVISOR’S APPROVAL	ii
PAGE OF APROVAL	ii
PAGE OF MOTTO	vi
ABSTRACT	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	vii
TABLE OF CONTENT	viii
CHAPTER I	1
INTRODUCTION	1
1.1. Background of the Study	1
1.2. Statements of the problems	7
1.3. Objectives of the Study	8
1.4. Scope of the Study	8
1.5. Significance of the Study	9
1.6. Approach of the Study	9
1.7. Organization of the Study	10
CHAPTER II	12
SYNOPSIS OF THE WORK AND BIOGRAPHY OF THE AUTHOR	12
2.1. Synopsis of the work	12
2.2. Biography of the Author	13
2.2.1. Early Life and Educational Background	13
2.2.2. Life at Sea and Marriage	14
2.2.3. Writing and Reputation	15
CHAPTER III	19
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	19
3.1. Previous Study	19
3.2. Literature, Short Story, and “Bartleby, the Scrivener”	26
3.3. Character and Plot “Bartleby, the Scrivener”	29
3.4. Social Condition of mid-19th New York and Melville’s Work	31

3.5. Alienation theories.....	33
3.6. Erich Fromm’s Alienation	35
3.7. Erich Fromm’s Mechanisms of Escape	37
CHAPTER IV.....	40
FINDING AND DISCUSSION	40
4.1. Alienation in the “Bartleby, the Scrivener”	40
4.1.1. Working long hours	40
4.1.2. Economic inequality	41
4.1.3. The inability to connect to one another	44
4.1.4. Work as parts of the interests of the capitalist system	46
4.2. Escape Mechanism of the Characters “Bartleby, the scrivener”.....	48
4.2.1 Turkey and Nippers’ Automaton Conformity	49
4.2.2. The Lawyer’s Authoritarianism.....	51
4.2.3. Bartleby’s Destructiveness	54
4.3. Finding Liberation within the capitalist system, based on Fromm's ideas	59
CHAPTER V	64
CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION	64
5.1. Conclusion.....	64
5.2. Suggestion.....	67
5.2.1. Further analysis of the “Bartleby, the Scrivener”	67
5.2.2. Further analysis relating to the alienation theory in the story	67
BIBLIOGRAPHY	