

**AGAINST THE STATE'S OPPRESSION IN MAXIM GORKY'S  
*MOTHER*: A MARXIST APPROACH**



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**By:**

**DEWI SRI MAULIDIANINGSIH**

**A 320 030 176**

**SCHOOL OF TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION  
MUHAMMADIYAH UNIVERSITY OF SURAKARTA  
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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### A. Background of the Study

*Mother* was written at the end of 1906 and the beginning of 1907 when Gorky was living abroad. Part 1 was written in the United States, and part 2 in Italy. *Mother* gives a broad and generalized picture of life in Russia on the event of the Revolution of 1905. The narrative is based on events which took place in the town of Sormovo. It is one of Maxim Gorky's best-loved novels, a story of working class heroes about a mother who secretly distributes forbidden literature, sowing truth and hope among the people of Russia.

Gorky wrote in the Adirondack Mountains greater part of his classic novel, *Mother*, which appeared in 1906-1907. Its heroine, Pelageia Nilovna, adopts the cause of socialism in a religious spirit after her son's arrest as a political activist. Pelageia's husband is a drunkard and her only consolation is her religious faith. Pelageia's husband dies and her son Pavel changes from a thug to socialist role model and starts to bring his revolutionary friends to the house. Pavel is arrested on May day for carrying a forbidden banner. While continuing to believe in Christ's words, she joins revolutionaries, and is betrayed by a police spy. Gorky based her character on a real person, Anna Zalomova, who had traveled the country distributing revolutionary pamphlets after her son had been arrested

during a demonstration. The novel, considered the pioneer of socialist realism, was later dramatized by Bertolt Brecht. The other literary works of Maxim Gorky are *Creatures That Once Were Men*, *Mother*, *The Man Who Was Afraid*, *Twenty-six and one and other stories*.

Maxim Gorky's is the popular and influential Russian author, a founder of the socialist realism. The greatest Russian literary figure of the 20th century. He wrote stories, plays, memoirs and novels which touched the imagination of the Russian people, and was the first Russian author to write sympathetically of such characters as tramps and thieves, emphasizing their daily struggles against overwhelming odds.

Maxim Gorky was born with the name Aleksei Maksimovich Peshkov on March, 28<sup>th</sup> 1866 in Nizniy Novgorod. His parents died when he was still child, and then he was taken care by his grandmother who liked reading literature and she paid attention to the poor much. Gorky died suddenly of pneumonia in his country home, *dacha*, near Moscow on June 18, 1936. In some source the cause of death was said to be heart disease. Maxim Gorky's Russian short story writer, novelist, autobiographer and essayist, whose life was deeply interwoven with the tumultuous revolutionary period of his own country. Gorky's ended his long career as the preeminent spokesman for culture under the Soviet regime of Joseph Stalin. Gorky's formulated the central principles of Socialist Realism, which became doctrine in Soviet literature. One of literary work of Maxim Gorky's is

*Mother*. The novel was first published in English translation in “Appleton Magazine” (New York) in 1906-1907, and in April 1907 which 373 pages. Its consist of two parts. Each part consists of 29 chapters.

Already in 1907-1908 the novel appeared in the United States, England, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Turkey, Sweden, Albania, Denmark, Czechoslovakia, and other countries.

In Russia, the publication of *Mother* coincided with the beginning of the Stolypin reaction, a reign of terror that lasted for many years. Actually, *Mother* was a forbidden book. The revolutionary readers could not express their opinion of it publicly. The reactionary critics attacked the book for its alleged lack of artistic merits. Bourgeois critics declared that “Gorky was finished” after reading only half of the first part the novel which appeared in two issues of “Znanie”. What had caused his “fall”, and his “crime” in their opinion was that he had begun to disseminate Marxism in artistic images and to speak out about the revolutionary proletariat and the awakening peasantry as forces that promised to achieve a complete liberation of Russia. *Mother* has been translated into every language and is being continually re-printed everywhere. As soon as the Great October Socialist Revolution lifted the censorship ban from *Mother*, adaptations of the novel were made one after the other for the stage and screen. In 1919, A. Ruzumy produced the first film based on *Mother*. The most successful of the numerous stage and screen adaptations was V. Pudovkin’s film (released in 1926, and sound-tracked in

1935), and the *Mother*, written and staged by Berthold Brecht, as authorized by Gorky, in 1932. In 1958 it was named the world's twelve best films.

The interesting side about this novel is this novel discusses the revolution whose main character is old women. The other interesting side is the value given in *Mother*. This novel was the first novel written by a Russian author who writes sympathetically of such characters as tramps and thieves, emphasizing their daily struggles against overwhelming odds and fight against state's oppression in Russia.

Considering all about the explanation above, the writer is interested in analyzing the State's oppression in Russia society entitled: **“AGAINST THE STATE'S OPPRESSION IN MAXIM GORKY'S *MOTHER*: A MARXIST APPROACH”**

## **B. Literature Review**

As long as the writer knows, there is no previous researcher that conducts to study Maxim Gorky's *Mother*. At least in Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta. So this study is the first study. Further, in this study, the writer studies Maxim Gorky's *Mother* based on the Marxist approach.

### **C. Problem Statement**

Based on the research background above, the problem of the study is how the struggle against the State's oppression is reflected in Maxim Gorky's *Mother*.

### **D. Limitation of the Study**

To make it easy for the writer to conduct the study, she gives limitation of the problem on the major character Pelagia Nilovna Vlasov (Mother) attempt in her struggle for freedom viewed from the Marxist Approach.

### **E. Objective of the Study:**

The objectives of the studies are as follows:

1. To analyze the novel based on its structural elements.
2. To analyze the novel based on the Marxist Approach.

### **F. Benefit of the Study**

By presenting this research, the writer hopes that there will be some benefits as follows:

1. Theoretical Benefit

This study is purposed to give additional information to literature research especially those dealing with Maxim Gorky's *Mother*.

## 2. Practical Benefit

This study can develop the writer's skill and ability in applying the Marxist approach in Maxim Gorky's *Mother*.

## **G. Research Method**

Dealing with research method, there will be at least four points that need to be involved in this research.

### 1. Object of the Study

The object of study is the novel of Maxim Gorky *Mother* in 1907, analyzed using structural analysis and Marxist approach.

### 2. Data Sources

The study will use library research whose data are taken from:

#### a. Primary Data Sources

Primary data sources are the main data consisting dialogue action and description about the character of the novel.

#### b. Secondary Data Sources

Secondary Data Sources are some material related to the data requires, such as writer's biography, the data taken from official website, and other related sources.

### 3. Technique of Data Collection

These are steps of collecting the data:

- a. Reading the novel.
- b. Taking note from primary and secondary data.
- c. Browsing to the internet to get some information article that related to the topic.

### 4. Technique of Data Analysis.

The technique of data analysis in this study is descriptive.

## **H. Research Paper Organization**

In order to make the research easier to follow this research paper is organized into six chapters. Chapter I is introduction which explains the background of the study, literature review, problem statement, objective of the study, limitation of the study, benefit of the study, research method and research paper organization. Chapter II is underlying theory that consists of notion of Marxism, the principles of Marxism, structural elements, and theoretical application. Chapter III includes the social background of Russia. Chapter IV will cover the structural analysis of the novel by describing character and characterization, setting, a point of view, plot and theme and a brief discussion. Chapter V is Marxist analysis dealing with the problems in the novel. Chapter VI contains conclusion and suggestion.