

**CRITICISM AGAINST VIOLENCE FOR SOLVING  
PROBLEM REFLECTED IN WILLIAM SOMERSET  
MAUGHAM'S LIZA OF LAMBETH NOVEL (1897):**

**A SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE**



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**CRITICISM AGAINST VIOLENCE FOR SOLVING PROBLEM  
REFLECTED IN WILLIAM SOMERSET MAUGHAM'S LIZA OF  
LAMBETH NOVEL (1897): A SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE**

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**Abstract**

*This study is about Criticism Against Violence for Solving Problem in Liza of Lambeth novel. The problem of the study is how criticism against violence for solving problem reflected in Liza of Lambeth novel. The object of the study is Liza of Lambeth novel by William Somerset Maugham. It uses sociological perspective. This study belongs to qualitative research. In this method, there are two types of data source, namely primary and secondary data source. The primary data source is the novel and the secondary data is other materials related to the study. The result of the study shows the following conclusion. Based on the analysis it shows that there is a close relation between the novel and the social reality of English society at the end of the nineteenth century. William Somerset Maugham wants to criticize the violence for solving problem in Liza of Lambeth novel.*

*Keyword: Criticism Against Violence, Solving Problem, Liza of Lambeth, Sociological Perspective.*

## A. Introduction

The novel *Liza of Lambeth* is written by William Somerset Maugham, he is an English novelist. Novel *Liza of Lambeth* tells about love and violence for solving problems in their social life. The primary theme of this novel is a problem should not solved by a violence because a violence is not a good way to solving the problem. The value in *Liza of Lambeth* novel has become an interesting knowledge in literature. It is interesting to learn this novel. As far as the writer concerns, in Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta, none of the reseacher was concern to study in *Liza of Lambeth* novel. But the writer had found the study about *Liza of Lambeth* novel in among others is a research conducted by Christina Halim by entitled "A Study of Liza's wrong decision and its fatal effects in W. Somerset Maugham's *Liza of Lambeth*". From that study she using of psychological approach. It means that there is a space for the reseacher to study in sociological perspective. So, the reseacher use of sociological perspective because there is a relation between the novel with the social life.

Literature is a social institution, using as its medium language, a social creation. Literature 'represents' 'life' ; and 'life' is, in large measure, a social reality, even though the natural world and the inner or subjective word of the individual have also been objects of literary 'imitation' (Wellek and Warren, 1962: 94). Then, Both Ferguson and Smith were suggesting that as society becomes increasingly commercial and industrial, man and his arts are unintentionally torn away from a living organic relation with society itself ( Swingewood and Laurenson, 1972: 29). The relation between literature and society is usually discussed by starting with the phrase, derived from De Bonald, that 'literature is an expression of society'. It is assumed that literature, at any given time, mirrors the current social situation 'correctly', it is false; it is commonplace, trite, and vague if it means only that literature depicts some aspects of social reality (Wellek and Warren, 1962: 95).

The issue of the novel is criticism against violence for solving problem. According to Kant (Hanssen, 2000) critique was meant to secure the

conclusive demarcation of the transhistorical conditions of possibility that underlie knowledge, moral deliberation, and aesthetic judgment. (Beatrice Hanssen, 2000: 4). In *Critique of Violence*, the book written by Walter Benjamin violence is a product of nature, as it were a raw material, the use of which is in no way problematical, unless force is misused for unjust ends. (Benjamin, 1969: 278).

On Problem Solving, the Gestalt psychologist Karl Duncker defined a problem as follows:

A problem arises when a living creature has a goal but does not know how this goal is to be reached. Whenever one cannot go from the given situation to the desired situation simply by action, then there has to be recourse to thinking. Such thinking has the task of devising some action, which may mediate between the existing and desired situations. (1945, p. 1)

According to Mayer and Wittrock, problem solving is “cognitive processing directed at achieving a goal when no solution method is obvious to the problem solver” (2006, p. 287).

In sum, problem solving is cognitive processing directed at transforming a problem from the given state to the goal state when the problem solver is not immediately aware of a solution method.

## **B. Research Method**

In the study, the writer applies qualitative research. Qualitative approach argues that inquiry is always value free—and that inquiries must be explicit about values play in any given study. Qualitative inquirers argue that inquiry is the choice of a problem to investigate, in the choice of whether to adopt or qualitative approach to a problem, in the choice of methods used to in problem, in the choice of a way to interpret results or findings, and by the different in the context where the study take place (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). The data sources are library and literary data. The purpose is to analyze using sociological approach.

In collecting the data, the researcher takes some steps they are as follow: reaing the novel for several times, taking notes of important parts

both primary and secondary data, arranging the data into several groups based on its theoretical category, selecting particular parts considered important and relevant for analysis, drawing conclusions and formulating its pedagogical suggestions.

In analyzing the data, the writer applies a qualitative approach. The steps taken by the writer in analyzing the data are as follows: the first analyzing the data based on its structural elements. Focus will be paid on the structural analysis of the novel, the second step is analyzing the data based on a sociological perspective. Focus will be paid on the criticism against violence for solving problems in *Liza of Lambeth* novel in English society in the end of the nineteenth century.

### **C. Research Findings and Discussion**

After analyzing the novel the researcher gets some research findings. The research findings have some cases to be discussed. They are Criticism Against Violence for Solving Problems in *Liza of Lambeth* novel and violence in society.

#### **1. Findings**

In analyzing the novel the researcher gets some research findings. The research findings have some cases to be discussed. They are Criticism Against Violence for Solving Problems in *Liza of Lambeth* novel and violence in society.

##### **a. Criticism Against Violence for Solving Problems**

In this novel Maugham criticized about violence for solving problems. Most violence was done by husbands to their wives. This matter occurs because almost characters in this novel come from a lower class and they are not educated people.

Maugham delivers three cases that happen in this novel. Types of cases that happen are a domestic violence between Harry and Sally, then a domestic violence between Jim Blakeston and his wife,

Mrs. Blakeston and the last a domestic violence between Mrs. Hodges and her husband.

The cause of violence occurs because most of the characters in this novel come from lower class and they are not educated people. Usually they do a physic violence. VPA (Virtual Population Analysis) discusses the problem of violence as defined in the *World report on violence and health* (WRVH), namely the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, development disorders, or deprivation."

**b. Types of Violence**

Violence and other forms of abuse are most commonly understood as a pattern of behaviour intended to establish and maintain control over family, household members, intimate partners, colleagues, individuals or groups. While violent offenders are most often known to their victims (intimate or estranged partners and spouses, family members, relatives, peers, colleagues, etc.), acts of violence and abuse may also be committed by strangers.

There are nine distinct forms of violence and abuse. It can be seen as follows:

1) Physical Violence

Physical violence occurs when someone uses a part of their body or an object to control a person's actions. As described above, most violence did by husbands to their wive. The physical violence that happen are a domestic violence between Harry and Sally, then a domestic violence between Jim Blakeston and his wife, Mrs. Blakeston and the last a domestic violence between Mrs. Hodges and her husband.

2) Sexual Violence

Sexual violence occurs when a person is forced to unwillingly take part in sexual activity. For example, touching in a sexual manner without consent (i.e., kissing, grabbing, fondling), forced sexual intercourse, beating sexual parts of the body, and so on. In this novel, sexual violence did by Jim Blakeston to Liza. Jim has kissed Liza without permission.

3) Emotional Violence

Emotional violence occurs when someone says or does something to make a person feel stupid or worthless. In this novel, emotional violence shown between Jim Blakeston and Tom. Jim was satisfied that he could make Tom jealous of him because Sally be opting for him.

4) Psychological Violence

Psychological violence occurs when someone uses threats and causes fear in an individual to gain control. Maugham delivers psychological violence in this novel through Mrs. Blakeston, she is Jim Blakeston's wife. She goes on to indirectly threaten Liza and she tells other people what she would do to Liza if she got hold of her, and the other people tell Liza.

5) Spiritual Violence

Spiritual or religious violence occurs when someone uses an individual's spiritual beliefs to manipulate, dominate or control that person.

6) Cultural Violence

Cultural violence occurs when an individual is harmed as a result of practices that are part of her or his culture, religion or tradition. This novel tells about Liza is falling in love with Jim Blakeston, a forty old man and he has a wife. Liza is falling in love with wrong person.



7) Verbal Abuse

Verbal abuse occurs when someone uses language, whether spoken or written, to cause harm to an individual. The language uses in English society at the end of nineteenth century is non standar English language because they are come from lower class. Sometimes they are calling other people with bad nickname.

8) Financial Abuse

Financial abuse occurs when someone controls an individual's financial resources without the person's consent or misuses those resources. For example is forcing the person to work outside the home. This is shown in Liza's mother, Mrs. Kemp. She wants Sally to work outside the home and earns much money to defend their life.

9) Neglect

Neglect occurs when someone has the responsibility to provide care or assistance for an individual but does not.

**c. Violence in the English Society at the End of Nineteenth Century**

Almost certainly the incidence of violence in the urban areas increased from the 1880s onwards, the result of increased population as people flocked in from the countryside to escape the effects of the sugar depression, and as immigrants from many places. Many of the urban poor were chronically unemployed, or at best found odd, irregular jobs. (Trotman, 1986: 146)

Modern industrial capitalism engineers a new social division of labour. Women's loss of economic independence developed at an increasing pace after 1840. This period saw the beginning of the consolidation of family life around modern gender roles in which women were increasingly excluded from wage work and became housewives dependent on their husbands as 'breadwinners' while the range of occupations open to women narrowed to little more than

domestic service. This doctrine of the 'two spheres' retreated women, and of course domestic violence, from public view. Except of course in the poorest sections of the working class where it still took place on the streets. (Conley, 1991: 71)

From the explanation above it can be concluded that violence occurs because in that era women position is low. Most of women get a bad behaviour from men, especially their husband. They get phisycal violence, sexual violence, psychological violence, cultural violence, verbal abuse, etc. In *Liza of Lambeth* novel, Maugham criticizes violence for solving problem. There are more ways to solve problem because violence is not a good way for solving problem.

## **2. Discussion**

William Somerset Maugham criticizes the social reality in England through the theme, story and characterization in *Liza of Lambeth* novel. The theme of the story is a violence not a good way for solving problem. It represented in major character of this novel. Sally is described as a standfast woman. She always avoid what the other people say about her husband, Harry. Sally loves her lover very much although Harry asks her to come out of the factory where the place she is work. Harry also interdicts Sally consorts with other neighbor in Vere street.

William Somerset Maugham tells to the reader that he is disagrees about social view in England society, especially in the slum area of Lambeth that almost the people are not educated. Most the men do domestic violence to solve problem. Maugham thinks that violence not a good way to solve problem.

Maugham explains some aspects in the story such as, social aspect, economical aspect, political aspect, cultural aspect, religious aspect, and scince and technology aspect. In the social aspect contain social structure and social status. Social structure shows that most of the characters in the novel work as a factory worker. Then social status

shows that they are in the lower class or politarian's society. They live in the Vere Street, slum area of Lambeth.

Economical aspect also contributes in the story of the novel. Maugham shows that they are in the lower class and not educated. Usually people which lower class an not educated they are live in the slum area. Besides that, almost characters in the novel work as a factory worker. Because of that Maugham shows the setting of the story in the Vere Street, slum area of Lambeth.

Maugham also shows the political aspect in the *Liza of Lambeth* novel which show Harry as Sally's husband. Harry work as a member of parliament think that women place is in the home. He didn't like women that work as a factory worker. Therefore he ask Sally to give up the factory.

Maugham shows the cultural aspect contribute in the *Liza of Lambeth* novel. Tradition, language, and sports are part of cultural facts in the Victorian era. Tradition is one of cultural aspect, for example all people in the Vere Street always come in together in the street to dancing together. It is a good activity because they can meet one another.

Another culture in the Victorian era, especially in the Vere Street, slum area of Lambeth is language using. They are not educated people therefore the language used by the people was non standard English.

Sports also contribute into cultural aspect. Maugham shows the activity of the people in the Vere street with game. Several games of cricket were being played by widly excited boys, using coats for wickets an old tennis-ball or a bundle of rags tied together for a ball and generally an old broomstick for bat. The wicket was so large and the bat so small that the man in was always getting bowle, when heated quarrels would arise, the batter absolutely refusing to go out and the bowler absolutely insisting on going in.

English societies have their right in choosing of their religion. The religions for the most of peoples in England are Christian. It

represented by all people in the Vere Street. For example, they always celebrate natal as well then they also believe about Santa Clause.

Science and technology aspect contributes the novel. It can be seen from health and medicine. They were rest on doctor, sick nursing, and midwife to help if they are sick.

From the sociological analysis about *Liza of Lambeth* novel, the writer concludes that William Somerset Maugham as the author of this novel explain the social condition in England, especially in slum area of Lambeth London at the time. He shows the condition in the end of nineteenth century in the Victorian era.

Based on all aspects that are reflected in *Liza of Lambeth*, there is relation between this novel and the English society in the end of nineteenth century in Victorian era. Based on the analysis, it is sure to the writer to state the social conditions which are suitable with the main idea of William Somerset Maugham viewed by sociological perspective.

#### **D. Conclusion and Implication**

The writer gets some conclusion and implication after analyzing the novel.

##### **1. Conclusion**

After analyzing the *Liza of Lambeth* novel, the researcher describes the following conclusion. The first, based on the structural analysis, is clear that in *Liza of Lambeth* novel, the author disagrees about a violence to be a way to solving problem. To elaborate the message of the novel the researcher uses the characters in the novel, Sally and her husband Harry.

Second, based on the sociological analysis, it can be concluded the relation between this novel and the social reality of English society at the end of nineteenth century. This novel clarifies the social aspect, economical aspect, political aspect, cultural aspect, religious aspect and the last is science and technology aspect.

## **2. Implication**

After analyzing *Liza of Lambeth* novel, the reseacher finds pedagogical implication. There is education system identified in this novel based on the theme taken by the reseacher. The theme is a violence not a good way for solving problem.

The problem is because most of the characters in the novel are not educated people. Usually they use violence to solve problem. Whereas, a problem should not be solved with a violence. This is not a good way. The impact of this problem is many women in that era always get rowdiness from men, especially from their husband. The problems above needs solution. As men should love their wive and don't use violence to solve problem. Besides that a good education is vitally need in order that men do not use violence to solve problem.

The problems can also solve if there are some institutions involved. The first institution comes from family. Family is first and important thing in life. Family also gives positive things. Besides that, woman protection comission is also one of institution that can solve the problem of violence.

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