ABSTRACT

This thesis analyzes the struggle of the main character in *The House of Mirth* novel by Edith Wharton, Lily Bart, to survive in the upper-class social reputation during America’s Gilded Age. There are three aims of the research; the first is to find out why Lily Bart only focuses to pursue wealth and social status rather than her own happiness. The second is to show the readers the reasons that make material things dominate Lily’s life. Then, the last is to find the impacts of material things domination to Lily’s life. Qualitative method is used to answer those questions which is done through library research and collecting data from books and websites. The novel is used as the primary data and then the other data related to the theories (Marxism and Historical Materialism) are used as means to analyze the novel. The result shows that the efforts of surviving in the upper-class social reputation has brought more disadvantages to the main character’s life as she suffers endless feeling of dissatisfaction, identity lost in the society, large debts and heavy depression due to society hegemony of material things and family heritage.

*Keywords: Literature, The House of Mirth, Marxism, Historical Materialism, novel analysis*