

**FOOD AS SYMBOLIC CAPITAL: A NEO-MARXIST
APPROACH TO CLASS STRATIFICATION IN
THE MENU (2022)**



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THESIS

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**ENGLISH LITERATURE STUDY PROGRAMME
FACULTY OF LANGUAGES AND ARTS
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ABSTRAK

Dennisa Mutiara, 2026. Food as Symbolic Capital: A Neo-Marxist Approach to Class Stratification in The Menu (2022).

Skripsi. Jakarta: Program Studi Sastra Inggris, Fakultas Bahasa dan Seni, Universitas Negeri Jakarta.

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis bagaimana makanan direpresentasikan sebagai modal simbolik melalui dialog-dialog yang berkaitan dengan makanan dalam film *The Menu* (2022) serta bagaimana representasi tersebut mencerminkan dominasi ideologis dan stratifikasi kelas. Penelitian ini berfokus secara khusus pada dialog sebagai data tekstual utama tanpa menganalisis unsur visual maupun sinematik. Penelitian menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif dengan pendekatan analisis tekstual terhadap dua puluh dialog mengenai makanan yang diperoleh dari transkrip film dan diverifikasi melalui penayangan film untuk memastikan kesesuaian dialog, penutur, dan konteksnya. Karl Marx digunakan sebagai landasan teoretis untuk memahami relasi kelas, sedangkan konsep Neo-Marxis Louis Althusser mengenai ideologi, *Ideological State Apparatuses* (ISA), dan interpelasi menjadi kerangka analisis utama. Konsep modal simbolik dan *distinction* Pierre Bourdieu digunakan untuk menjelaskan bagaimana praktik kuliner menghasilkan prestise, legitimasi budaya, dan pembedaan sosial. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan dua temuan utama. Pertama, makanan direpresentasikan sebagai modal simbolik melalui eksklusivitas kuliner yang dibangun melalui penggunaan bahan langka, pengetahuan kuliner yang terspesialisasi, penyajian estetik, serta akses yang terbatas. Kedua, makanan berfungsi sebagai mekanisme ideologis yang mereproduksi dominasi ideologis dan stratifikasi kelas melalui dialog-dialog yang menormalisasi eksklusivitas, privilese, dan selera yang dianggap sah. Dengan demikian, makanan dalam *The Menu* tidak lagi direpresentasikan semata-mata sebagai kebutuhan biologis, melainkan sebagai instrumen budaya dan ideologis yang mempertahankan pembedaan sosial dalam masyarakat kapitalis.

Kata kunci: representasi makanan, modal simbolik, Neo-Marxisme, dominasi ideologis, stratifikasi kelas.

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ABSTRACT

Dennisa Mutiara, 2026. Food as Symbolic Capital: A Neo-Marxist Approach to Class Stratification in The Menu (2022).

Thesis. Jakarta: English Literature Study Programme, Faculty of Languages and Arts, Universitas Negeri Jakarta.

This study investigates how food is represented as symbolic capital through food-related dialogues in *The Menu* (2022) and examines how these representations reflect ideological domination and class stratification. The study focuses exclusively on dialogue as the primary textual data, excluding visual and cinematic elements. Employing a descriptive qualitative method with textual analysis, the research analyzes twenty selected food-related dialogues obtained from the film transcript and verified against the film. Karl Marx's theory serves as the foundational framework for understanding class relations, while Louis Althusser's Neo-Marxist concepts of ideology, Ideological State Apparatuses (ISA), and interpellation constitute the primary analytical framework. Pierre Bourdieu's concepts of symbolic capital and distinction explain how culinary practices signify social prestige and cultural legitimacy. The findings reveal two principal forms of representation. First, food functions as symbolic capital through culinary exclusivity, where rarity, specialized culinary knowledge, aesthetic presentation, and restricted access transform food into a marker of elite distinction. Second, food operates as an ideological mechanism through which class hierarchy is reproduced, as food-related dialogues construct and normalize values of exclusivity, privilege, and legitimate taste. These findings demonstrate that food in *The Menu* extends beyond its nutritional function and becomes a cultural and ideological instrument through which social distinction and class domination are maintained.

Keywords: food representation, symbolic capital, Neo-Marxism, ideology, class stratification.

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Jakarta, 30th of June 2026

The Author



Dennisa Mutiara Safira Irsano

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