

THE SOCIAL CLASSES IN
“THE GREAT GATSBY” MOVIE



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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Wellek and Warren (1977) ever mentioned that literature is life's expression. This statement can mean that literature is able to give depiction of society. Nevertheless, it seems that not only literature can become the reflection of society, but movie also, can become the reflection of the happenings of society. This happens because modern age is both dominated and enriched by technology, the role of entertainment such as film is steadily growing. The example is film may grow as reflection of culture and politics. Christensen & Haas (2005) mention that Film and politics "inform" one another, meaning that film reflects the politics within a society in which they are placed.

Therefore, it is clear that both literature and film can reflect the happenings and the condition of society. This can happen because, both film and literature have intrinsic elements which make them resemble the life of real human beings. Intrinsic elements, such as characters which experience conflicts, can be found in every literature and film. And so, it is important to look deep at characters and what events or phenomena they experience in film or literature. This is because, this events or phenomena experienced by characters, and how the character respond to it, may become the reflection of society as stated on previous paragraph.

Abrams (1971) mentions character as “people who present in dramatic or narrative works”. The readers or viewers can notice them as having or possessed with specific moral or dispositional qualities which are expressed in their speech and their actions. This means that characters can be seen as the “people” who have experience inside film or literature. This experience and how the character responds to it, in both actions and speech, may become the reflection of society as stated by Wellek and Warren that literature is life’s expression.

Therefore, it is now clear that literature and film, altogether with characters which present on them, can reflect society. Now, the attention is on the common phenomena which can be found in society. As complex as it seems, society possesses various phenomena. The phenomena which exist in society can belong to psychological one, economic one, cultural one, and many more. One of the economic phenomena is “social class”, which has been studied by various scholars, such as Marx Weber.

In a journal titled “Weberian Model of Social Stratification-A Viewpoint”, Pyakuryal (2008) gives comprehensive explanation about the term “social class” proposed by Marx Weber. The term "class" refers to any group of people (who have the same typical chance for a supply of goods, external living conditions, and personal life experiences, insofar as this chance is determined by the power to dispose of goods or skills for the sake of income in a given economic order. For Weber, as for Marx, the basic condition of "class" lay in the unequal distribution of economic power and hence the unequal distribution of opportunity (Pyakuryal, 2008).

Based on Pyakuryal’s statement, it is notable that social-class is determined by unequal distribution of economic power and the unequal distribution of opportunity.

The inequality of economic power altogether with inequality of opportunity can be found in a film titled *The Great Gatsby* (2013). *The Great Gatsby* is an American romantic drama movie. It is an adaptation of Fitzgerald's 1925 novel *F. Scott Fitzgerald of the Same Name*. This movie directed by Baz Luhrmann and portrayed by famous Hollywood artists Leonardo DiCaprio, Tobey Maguire, Carey Mulligan, Joel Edgerton, Isla Fisher, Jason Clarke, Elizabeth Debicki, Jack Thompson, and Amitabh Bachchan. This movie contains a lot of phenomena which are about the inequality of economic power and inequality of opportunity. It depicts how the main character, named Gatsby, experience a lot of struggles in his economic power and life's opportunity.

From previous paragraphs, there are some notable points. First, both film and literature can reflect the society and the happenings of society. Second, the characters in both film and literature are the one who experience the society as people who present in both film and literature. Therefore, considering the importance of film as society's reflection, the writer decides to examine and analyze how social-class is portrayed on this movie how Gatsby, as the main character of this movie, responds to the existence of social-class, especially the actions and speech which reflect the existence of social-class.

1.2 Statements of the Problem

The statements of the problem are created based on the last paragraph written on background of the study, concerning film and literature which can reflect the society and the happenings of society, altogether with the characters in both film and

literature are the one who experience the society as people who present in both film and literature. Therefore, the statements of the problems are written as follows.

1. How social class is portrayed on *The Great Gatsby* movie?
2. How does the main character of *The Great Gatsby* movie respond to social class?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are created based on the statement of the problems which have been listed previously. Therefore, the objectives of the study are written as follows.

1. Analyze and describe how social class of *The Great Gatsby* movie.
2. Analyze and describe how the main character of *The Great Gatsby* movie responds to social class

1.4 Scope of the Study

The study focuses on describing and analyzing the speech and action of main character of *The Great Gatsby* movie. The speech and action which are analyzed are limited extracted from movie's script and selected based on its relation with Max Weber's theory which are reviewed by Pyakuryal (2008). The study focuses on the investigation of social-class only and how the main character responds to it in *The Great Gatsby Movie*.

1.5 Significance to the Study

The significance of this study are divided into two kinds: the theoretical contribution and the academical contribution. In theoretical sense, this study has its significance of providing more light in the sociological-literary field. In addition to the enrichment of the sociological-literary field, this study can also provide some

references for the future writers who are interested on literary studies. It is also expected to give advantages for the readers and also to provide a better and useful understanding, as follows:

1. To English learners and students, this study will provide example and reference in studying English literary work from sociological point of view,
2. To literature and film researchers, this study can provide another reference for the researchers who are interested on the study of literature and movie,
3. To the common readers, this research will give deep understanding about how literature and film can really become the society's reflection.

1.6 Approach to the Study

The data analysis method of this study is descriptive qualitative method. The primary data are collected from *The Great Gatsby* movie's script. The writer applied Max Weber's theory about social-class which is presented on a journal titled "Weberian Model of Social Stratification-A Viewpoint" written by Pyakuryal (2008). The analysis of the main character in the *The Great Gatsby* movie's script was done in following steps: first, watching the movie carefully. Second, taking noted especially of the main character to find out the characteristic in the scenes. At last, from the data could be selected and collected from the movie's script.

1.7 Organization of the Papper

The writer makes order of this study into several parts, in order to present a clear guidance in reading and invoke the understanding the study. The writer organizes this study into five chapters.

Chapter I is introduction. It consists of background to the study, statement of the problem, objective of the study, scope of the study, significance of the study, approach to the study, and organization of the paper.

Chapter II is the director's biography and The Movie Synopsis. In this chapter the researcher writes about the biography of the author and synopsis of the movie that will be analyzed.

Chapter III presents literature's review which is furthermore divided into several subheadings, namely previous studies, literature and film in culture, and Weberian's Social-Class. This chapter is presented to give clear understanding about the theory which is applied in findings and discussion.

Chapter IV is findings and discussion. This chapter answers two research questions based on Weber's social-class theory. The data from the subtitle is qualitatively described on this chapter based on the provided theory.

Chapter V is conclusion and suggestion. This is the last chapter which consist of conclusion of chapter IV, altogether with the suggestion for future study.