

A CLASS CONFLICT AS REFLECTED IN *THE HUNGER GAMES* BY GARY ROSS

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ABSTRACT

Class conflict occurs because of the relationship between one class and another. In this thesis, I analyze the class conflict that occurs in *The Hunger Games* the film by Gary Ross (2012). The class conflict that occurs in this film is the difference in social life between the upper and lower classes represented by the citizens of the Capitol and the Districts. In this thesis I emphasize on the existence of class distinctions that cause class conflicts. I used a qualitative descriptive method by analyzing scripts and scenes that contain the main topic in the film. I used theory about literature and film to prove that film is a literary work as well as literature and society theory as well as a mimetic approach as a literature approach. In relation to the main topic, I also used the theory about class conflicts. As a result of this analysis, I found that there is a class division between the Capitol and the Districts which is class conflict in both classes because of their interaction. I concluded that the problems that exist between these two classes depend on power and economy.

Keywords: Class Conflict, Game, Film, Society, Literature.

INTRODUCTION

In this research, I analyze *The Hunger Games* the film. This film is an adaptation of the novel *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins (2008). In addition to publishing a novel with that title, Suzanne also published its sequel *Catching Fire* (2009), and *Mockingjay* (2010). These three novels became her trilogy. That trilogy was made into films. The first novel, *The Hunger Games* (2008) was made into a film entitled *The Hunger Games* (2012) by Gary Ross. The second novel *Catching Fire* (2009) was made into a film entitled *The Hunger Games: Catching Fire* (2013). The third novel *Mockingjay* (2010) was made into a film entitled *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay - Part 1* (2014) and *The Hunger*

Games: Mockingjay – Part 2 (2015). The second until the fourth films are directed by Francis Lawrence. In this thesis specifically, I only focused in the first film of *The Hunger Games* (2012).

The Hunger Games the film tells the story of the struggle of citizens in 12 districts in the battle between life and death which is broadcast on television and watched by the people of the districts. This story is set in a country called Panem which consists of 12 districts. This inter-district battle is held to commemorate the victim who dies during the uprising against the failed government seventy-four years before. This competition must be followed by one male and one female in each district. Then the participants are taken to Capitol, the capital city to go through a training session and look for sponsors who will help them in the competition. The hunger game in this film is like a reality show that directs participants to have a good image to get sponsors. According to collinsdictionary.com (2021) "... reality show is a type of television program that aims to show how ordinary people behave in everyday life, or situations, often created by the program makers, which are intended to represent everyday life." In addition, I describe the hunger games in this film as a reality show because all of the participants' activities are recorded and shown on television and people in each district could watch it. The hunger games are held on purposes. The first purpose is to remind the districts of the power of Capitol. The second purpose is lack of remorse or forgiveness for the failed rebellion of the current competitors' ancestors. Besides, it is to entertain the Capitol's people, even to the point of being broadcast on the television and also many Capitol citizens are willing to become sponsors for their favorite participants. The sponsored participants will get several facilities that help participants to survive in the game, such as drinking water, medicines and so on.

I am interested in discussing this film because this film has a social issue that is important to discuss, i.e. class differences and class conflict. In my research, I apply some theories, interrelations between film and literature by Gerald Mast (1982), literature and society Wellek and Warren (1949) and theory of class conflict by Rodney Hilton Jordan (1971) in the next chapter. In the next chapter, before I explain the theory of class conflict, I point out that this is literary analysis that uses a film as an object of my research. I also describe the relation between literature and film. I use the theory of class conflict by Rodney Hilton (1985). Class conflict is one of the social issues that appear in the storyline of the film. From *The Hunger Games* the film, I only focuses on

the differences between Capitol and the districts and from its differences arise the class conflict. Therefore, the title of my research is "A Class Conflict as Reflected in *The Hunger Games* by Gary Ross."

I have several reasons why *The Hunger Games* the film by Gary Ross becomes the subject of this research. The first reason is that *The Hunger Games* the film has a social issue that is interesting to discuss. The social issue is about class conflict. I analyze the struggle of someone of the lower class, namely Katniss, in which she must be willing to represent her district to compete in the match, which is the 74th of the hunger games. By participating in this game, Katniss discovers something that pointed to the class differences between the Capitol and the district from their social life, so that I will show these differences from the film in this research by answering all of the research questions.

From the focus of the research above, I develop it into three research questions. The first is how is the division of the class in *The Hunger Games*? I want to show the class differences; i.e., the upper and the lower classes from the powers that each class have. The upper class, Capitol citizens, has the power and they do not play the game. The lower class, the citizens of the 12 districts, has no power, so that they play the game. In addition, this research discusses the division of the class. The second is what are the reasons for the districts to play the games? I want to analyze the reason why the districts play this game. This film talks about an annual game that 12 districts of Panem should play with 2 volunteers in each district. They have to survive in the battle between life and death. The last is what are the messages in *The Hunger Games*? I want to find out and analyze the messages in *The Hunger Games* because every film must have implied messages that the director wants to convey to the audience.

I want to explain some theories related to this research. The topic of this research is class conflict reflected in *The Hunger Games* the film by Gary Ross. I have pointed out that this analysis is literary and I will explain the interrelations between literature and film. From Gerald Mast in *Interrelations of Literature* (1982) literature and film can also be interpreted as part of life or an imitation of real life. Therefore, I can conclude that literature and film can also represent real life. Thus, I analyze this research using the film from the literary point of view. Besides, I used the theory of *Literature and Society* by Warren and Wellek (1949). Society is one aspect in literature. In addition, literature contains stories in the context of society, not in the individual.

I used theory of *Class Conflict* by Jordan as the main theory. A conflict arises as a result of the interaction or contact between people. The “conflict” is a problem when the capitalist became the dominant in society because of their power and rid the lower class. The working class is a group of people that have to work to live. This class also has problem with their economic, which mean they work for the capitalist to earn money. They need capitalists to generate income. Indirectly they have a relationship with the capitalists. While the capitalists need the lower class to be employed to get what they need. These two relationships between upper and lower are interaction that is generated. In other words, social class can occur if there is interaction between the two classes. From these interactions can lead to conflicts between classes.

METHODOLOGY

As explained above, the topic is about class conflict in *The Hunger Games* the film by Gary Ross. I use the qualitative research method. Sugiyono (2015, p.56) explains that “Qualitative research is an inquiry approach useful for exploring and understanding a central phenomenon”. I use this research method in analyze the film by watching and found an issue of class conflict in the film. The class conflict is a result of the differences between two classes or more. The central phenomenon in this film is the differences of social life between the people of Capitol and Districts. Qualitative research method does not have to interviewing people. Furthermore, I only analyze the scripts and scenes after watching the film. For the procedures, firstly, I watched *The Hunger Games* by Gary Ross to understand the class conflict that appears in the film on the interactions of character and their social life. Secondly, I identified the scenes and scripts of the film showing the class conflict based on the theory of class conflict. Thirdly, I collected the data in the film (scenes and scripts) that are related to the theories. Fifthly, I analyze the class conflict according to the collected data.

The primary source of data of this research is the film by Gary Ross entitled *The Hunger Games*. This is an adaptation from Suzanne Collins’ novel with the same title. The writer analyzes the class conflict portrayed in this film. I collect data from the scenes and scripts that contain class conflict issue. I choose the scripts and scenes that show a class conflict in the film. I watched the film and take notes of any part of the film that shows the differences social life between the Capitol and the Districts that lead to class

conflict. After finding some scenes and scripts about the class conflict in the film, I identify the division of social class in the film and analyze it. Lastly, I will explain the class conflict in *The Hunger Games* the film.

DISCUSSION

In this part, the discussion is divided into two main sections, i. e. (1) division class in *The Hunger Games* film (2) the reasons of the districts play the game.

A. *Division Class in The Hunger Games*

The social class in this film is shown in the scene where Katniss is in District 12. It is depicted that District 12 is a conflicted and neglected environment. Meanwhile, a different atmosphere is shown when Peeta and Katniss are in the Capitol. A clean environment and it can be seen that the Capitol is a developed city as shown in scene 03:16 and scene 27:45. At this point we should already know that the visual class differences are already visible. Why is there a class difference here? According to me, the perspective of the Capitol, the Capitol wants to be a developed city by utilizing the resources of the districts.

HAYMITCH: Don't kill her. You'd just create a martyr.

CRANE: Well it seems we've already got one.

HAYMITCH: I hear these rumors out of district 11, This could get away from here.

CRANE: What do you want?

HAYMITCH: You have a lot of anger out there. I know you know how to handle a mob, you've done it before. If you can't scare them. Give them something to root for.

CRANE: Such as?

HAYMITCH: Young love.

...

SNOW: So you like an an underdog.

CRANE: Everyone likes an underdog.

SNOW: I don't. How many are dead? 10? 11? 12?

CRANE: Uh.,... Not personally, no!

SNOW: Well I have. Lots of underdogs. Not too coal too. Raw crops. Minerals. Things we need. There are lots of underdogs. And I think if you could see them. You would not root for the martyr. unlike you, be careful.

Script 7 (Ross, 2012, 01:44:57 – 01:46:07)

This is reinforced by President Snow's conversation with Crane on script 7 that the districts only contain weak people who are used by their energy to gather resources from each district. As a explanation by Arifin (2015, p. 65) that the capitalist class that wanted to be the dominat in the society. This film showed that Capitol became the capitalist class over Panem. Meanwhile, Natural resources to be paid include coal, crops and so on. This reinforces the argument that the economy is an important factor in class differentiation. With the Capitol taking control of the districts and taking their resources, the Capitol intends to strengthen themselves. As a country, Panem should uphold equality between the districts and the Capitol. The Capitol feels that as the capital city of the country they are reserve the right to whatever is earned in their country. However, for the districts it is not fair. There has been a deviation of power here. How can the Capitol claim to be a city that protects, loves and feeds their people if the priority is only for the citizens of the Capitol? Even though the fact is that the rebellion was caused by class differences and social inequality.

The realities faced by the districts are poverty, shabby clothes and hunger. Supposedly for a country, every city has a right to their resources. However, that does not apply in Panem because power is completely controlled by the Capitol. If each district has a right to their resources, what happens is equality, poverty and hunger. According to me, the Capitol wants to be a better city than the districts by exploiting them. By exploiting them, it weakens the districts and strengthens the Capitol so that the Capitol holds power over Panem.

As a human who lives in a lower class environment, Katniss, who comes from district 12. She represents her district to compete in the 74th hunger games. Before entering the game arena, the tributes are evaluated for their skills in front of the game makers. Katniss shows off her skills in archery. At first when entering the room Katniss felt ignored by them. This is in accordance with scene 44:34. For a moment when she showed her ability but missed, it was seen that the game makers underestimated Katniss' ability of archery. Although Katniss' second try was on point, it didn't interest them. This proves that the lower class people do not deserve an attention. However,

because of Katniss' courage to shoot the apple in the game makers' room and hit the target, Katniss was finally able to distract the game makers so that she got a score of 11 which she got the higher score than all tributes. This can be seen in scene 46:42 and scene 46:53. This strengthens my assumption that even though people from lower class, they deserve appreciation for what they have done. Katniss gives an example that she is from the lower class with her courage and ability, she is able to get high attention and scores.

CRANE: Attention. Attention Tributes. There has been a slight rule change. The previous provision allowing for two victors from the same district has been revoked. Only one victor maybe crowned. Goodluck. And may the odds be ever in your favor.

Script 8 (Ross, 2012, 02:07:05 – 02:07:27)

Another courage that Katniss showed at the end of the game where when the rules were changed that shown in script 8 and she with her courages against the rules by committing suicide with Peeta with the aim that there was no winner in this game. However, Crane changed the rules again to allow for 2 winners this year. So that the Crane is considered a failure in the contained the game. Katniss' courages made her a symbol of the rebels and it was taken seriously and would endanger many people. Many of the rebels imitated Katniss' actions by waving a three-finger salute, so this was used by the rebels against the Capitol. Katniss' courage is considered as a gap to fight against the Capitol because it seems as if Katniss is giving hope to end social inequality. As we know that too much hope will be dangerous for the Capitol because these expectations cannot be controlled by the Capitol. These expectations are about social issues. District people hope for social equality between the capitol and the districts.

In addition, the conflict that Katniss and Peeta face is dealing with the game. They plan to achieve the hope of winning this game. This is evidenced by Peeta when he asks Haymitch as a mentor about a plan to survive the game. Haymitch suggests to Katniss and Peeta the best way to stay in the game is simply to get support from sponsors. To get support from sponsors, they have to get the Capitol citizens to like them. The 'Sponsors' as I have already mentioned, that sponsors will make it easier for the tributes to survive the game. The people who are able to provide the facilities needed are the Capitol people. Why? Because basically all that support costs more and the

people who can help are the Capitol. In this case, the tributes who are the lower class need the contribution of the upper class. Besides that, Capitol citizens who are the upper class want their champions to win this game because this game is considered as entertainment for them.

As the theory which I have already explained that social class occurs because of the upper class and lower class. Class conflict occurs because of the relationship between them. both relationships between Capitol citizens and tributes are an interaction that results from this game. In other words, there is an interaction between the two classes. From these interactions can lead to conflicts between classes.

This film presents social issue that occurs in Panem. Film is a reflection of the real world which is presented in the form of stories based on social experiences. The social class in this film is as the existence of a shadow in water or a mirror. Social class in the film also occurs in real life. However, the social class described in this film is dramatized because the film is only fiction. In real life, examples of social class that occur in society are like differences in tribes, religions, races, economic, political, ideological differences and so on.

B. The Reasons of Districts Play the Game

It is known that 74 years ago there was a war between the Capitol and the 13 districts. The Capitol who won the war has power over the districts. If we talk about war, war results in losses for the Capitol and the Districts so there must be a 'price' to be paid. In the war against the rebels was won by the Capitol. The District was punished by paying of their deeds. The price to be paid by the district is divided into two, namely the exploitation of human resources and natural resources.

The price to be paid in terms of human resources, for example, is the labor of the districts to collect their natural resources for the Capitol. Apart from that, the most important thing is the fact that the Capitol has the power to exploit human resources by requiring representatives from the districts to participate in the game in exchange that this game is a 'reaping' for what they did 74 years before. This is the main reason of the districts that they send two tributes each to join the game. Ironically, they can not fight back due to lack of power and economy.

PEETA: Yeah. I wanna know what the plan is. You're our mentor, you're supposed to go....

HAYMITCH: Mentor?

PEETA: Yeah. Our mentor, you're supposed to tell us how to get sponsors and give us advice.

HAYMITCH: Oh, okay. Ummm.,... embrace the probability of your imminent death. and know, in your heart, that there's nothing I can do to save you.

.....

HAYMITCH: You really wanna know how to stay alive? You get people to like you. Oh! Not what you're expecting. When you're in the middle of the games.,... and you're starving or freezing, some water, a knife or even some matches can mean the difference between life and death. And those things only comes from Sponsors. And to get Sponsors, you have to make people like you. And right now, sweetheart, You're not off to a really good start.

Script 3 (Ross, 2012, 00:23:52 - 00:24:14 / 00:27:01 - 00:27:39)

CINNA: So tonight they have the Tribute Parade. They're gonna take you out and show you off to the world.

KATNISS: So you're here to make me look pretty.

CINNA: I'm here to help you make an impression. Now usually, they dress people in their close to their district.

KATNISS: Yeah. Our's was coal miners.

CINNA: Yeah. But I don't wanna to do that. I'm gonna do something that they're gonna remember. Did they explain about trying to get sponsors?

KATNISS: Yeah, but I'm not very good at making friends.

CINNA: We'll see. I just think, somebody that brave shouldn't be dressed up on some stupid costume now, should they?

....

CAESAR: And then what is that in the background?

...

CAESAR: Now see that! I love that. Two young people, holding their hands up! Saying; "I'm proud, I'm from District 12. We will not be overlooked!" I love that. People are sure to be paying attention to them right now.

Script 4 (Ross, 2012, 00:30:06 - 00:30:41 / 00:32:19 -00:33:10)

HAYMITCH: Tomorrow. They'll bring you in one by one. They'll evaluate you. This is important because high ratings will mean Sponsors. This is the time to show them everything. There'll be a bow, make sure you use it. Peeta, you make sure to show your strength. They'll start with District 1 so the two of you will go last. Well, I don't know how else to put this. Make sure they remember you.

...

CAESAR: And finally... From District 12 Katniss Everdeen. With score of... Eleven.

Script 5 (Ross, 2012, 00:43:04 - 00:43:29 / 00:48:58 - 00:49:13)

Their economic differences are shown in scene 03:16 and scene 27:45. In scene 03:16 it can be seen that district 12 is experiencing poverty, while in scene 27:45 it can be seen that the economy of the Capitol is very good. The economy is one of the factors why the districts have to follow the game. In script 3 it is explained that the tributes who follow the game are advised to seek sponsors to help survive in the game. This is reinforced by script 4 when Cinna tries to make clothes for Katniss that will make her highlighted by many people. The more people who like her, the more chances to get sponsored. This is reinforced by Haymitch's suggestion in script 5 that a good impression plays an important role in getting sponsors. In this case even Katniss who is a people of the district strive to survive the game by getting sponsors.

CRANE: I think it's our tradition. It comes out of a particularly painful part of our history.

CAESAR: Yes. Yes.

CRANE: But it's been a way we've been able to heal. At first it was a reminder of the rebellion, it was the price the Districts had to pay. But I think it has grown from that. I think it's a .. It's something that knits us all together.

Script 1 (Ross, 2012, 00:01:01 - 00:01:22)

SNOW: An eleven?

CRANE: She earned it.

SNOW: She shot an arrow at your head.

CRANE: Well, at an apple.

SNOW: Near your head. Sit down. Seneca, why do you think we have a winner?

CRANE: What do you mean?

SNOW: I mean, why do we have a winner? I mean if we just wanted to intimidate the Districts, why not round up twenty four at random, and execute them all at once? Way a lot faster... Hope.

CRANE: Hope?

SNOW: Hope. It is the only thing stronger than fear. A little hope is effective. A lot of hope is dangerous. Spark is fine, as long as it's contained.

CRANE: So?

SNOW: So... contain it.

CRANE: Right.

Script 6 (Ross, 2012, 00:49:31 - 00:50:39)

The moment Caesar and Crane conduct an interview on script 1, Crane explains that the hunger game is the price the districts have to pay. Why does only the district have to pay? The rebellion that had occurred resulted in losses on both sides of both the Capitol and the district. In script 6, snow explains to Crane that this game was created to give the districts a little hope. Why is that? It is because Snow thinks that little hope keeps them subservient to the Capitol.

It can be concluded that the economic factor is the reason for the districts to get involved in the game. It was proven that the Capitol never sent representatives to play in the game and also that none of the districts became sponsors because of their low economy. One of the small hopes given to the winners is wealth. Poverty is one of the factors that cause districts to send their tributes. The poverty of the districts can be seen from scene 03:16. The reason the districts participate in the game aside from the economic factor, the second factor is power. On script 7, President Snow states that many of the district's people are weak; this proves that the Capitol leader already considers the district's citizens to be just lower class and has no power. Strength is needed to make a group of people in the upper class.

As for the districts from the lower classes, they have no power. It is because the power is entirely in the hands of the Capitol. With the lower class status having no power, the districts were required to send two tributes. This is evidenced in the film that the tributes sent to the game are not from the Capitol representatives, but only from the

districts. In fact, if equality is demanded between the districts and the Capitol, to remember the war that occurred 74 years ago, the Capitol must send representatives. So, the reason why the districts have to participate in this game based on script 7 is that there is not enough power over the districts.

NARATOR: War...Terrible war. With those... Orphan... and a motherless child. This was the uprising that rocked our land. Thirteen districts rebelled against the country that fed them, Loved them. Protected them. Brother turned on brother until nothing remained. Then came the peace. Hard fought. Sorely won. The people. Rose up from the ashes and a new era was born. But freedom has a cost. And the traitors were defeated. We swore as a nation we would never know this treason again. And so it was decreed... That each year. The various districts of Panem would offer up in tribute One young man and woman to fight to the death in a pageant of honor, courage and sacrifice. The lone victor... Bathed in riches... would serve as a reminder of our generosity and our forgiveness. This is how we remember our past. This is how we safeguard our future.

Script 2 (Ross, 2012, 00:12:49 – 00:13:56)

On Script 2, at the time of the 'reaping' it was explained that the Capitol was the victor of that war. To show its power by instead of making it a 'game', the Capitol held the hunger game with only district representatives participating. This is also shown at the time of 'reaping' where the contributors to the hunger games are one female and one male from 13 districts aged 12-18 years. The Capitol promises that the victor will gain wealth and forgiveness. From the Capitol's point of view, that wealth and forgiveness are hope for the districts to live a better life than in the district and that power of giving them the 'reward' are totally controlled by the Capitol.

The Capitol considers itself as the capital city that protects its people, as explained in script 2. On the script 2, it is explained that the Capitol's way of remembering the war 74 years ago is by controlling the districts. In fact, what the Capitol does is exploit the districts by taking away their natural resources which makes them poorer. This is related to Arifin's theory (2015, p. 65) that a group of people should have full control over the resources produced from their area. However, the situation in the districts is different. They are required to give the resources they produce to the Capitol such as coal, mineral and so on.

In addition, the power factor can be seen in script 8, where game makers who have full power over the entire game can easily change game rules. However, with courage Katniss dared to break the rules that have been changed. Indirectly, Katniss againsts the power of the game makers. As is known, the one who holds the highest power in Panem is President Snow. So, when President Snow finds out that the power of Crane is being opposed by Katniss, and then President Snow gives Crane the death penalty to show that President Snow is the holder of the highest power. This can be seen in scene 02:09:59.

HAYMITCH: They're not happy with you.

KATNISS: Why? Because we didn't die?

HAYMITCH: Because you showed them up.

KATNISS: Well.. I'm sorry it didn't go the way they planned. You know I'm not very happy with them either.

HAYMITCH: Katniss, this is serious. Not just for you. They don't take this things lightly.

Script 9 (Ross, 2012, 02:09:27 - 02:09:46)

The factor of power can cause serious problems. It is shown in script 9, that Haymitch reprimands Katniss while fighting Crane's rule. Haymitch warns Katniss that what she did could cause a danger to people without power. Those people are district people. It can be seen in figures 6-8 that the rebellion occurred because Katniss was symbolized as a symbol of rebellion against the power of the Capitol.

The power of the Capitol proves that the Capitol has the ability to make this game whose participants are only the people of the districts who do not have power. The result of the power factor is the emergence of rebellions from the districts to the Capitol.

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that the social class can be a person's perspective on other classes in society. Not infrequently it also creates problems for other groups. I will describe some of the conclusions that have been obtained after analyzing the film *The Hunger Games*.

1. Classes that are known to society are classes that are divided according to their economy and power. For people who do not have a good economy, they are often

seen as weak people who work that is only for their life. The economy is sometimes also related to the existence of power for a group. In this context, those who benefit the most are the upper class. With the power and economy that they have, many of them abuse it. As can be seen from the film *The Hunger Games*, it has been 74 years in Panem that there has been a game reserved only for the lower class. This is evidenced by Crane who easily changes the game rules twice.

2. Their relationship that causes mutual interaction between the tributes and sponsors, it can be seen that there is a conflict between classes where the tributes try to get sponsors while the sponsors can choose the attribute they like to provide the support that has been mentioned. This creates conflict between classes. Where the lower class always tries to survive and the upper class only chooses for their needs.

In conclusion, this class conflict occurs in society due to social conditions including the economy and power which are the basic priorities in society. Katniss succeeds in creating equality for herself with courage on display. Equality should be for everyone regardless of economy and power, because basically people are the same.

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