

## A REVIEW OF JORDAN PEELE'S US MOVIE'S ANALYSIS OF CLASS STRUGGLE (2019)

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### Abstract

This study analyzes the class struggle as reflected in Jordan Peele's *Us* movie 2019. The objective of this research is to identify the aspect that represent the class struggle and to depicts the form of class struggle as represented in this movie. In conducting this research, the researcher used structural and sociological approach, and the theory that will be Used is Marxism theory by Karl Mark. The method of this study is descriptive method. The researcher will collect the data with library research in order to answer the research questions of this study. As the result, the researcher found that there are two form of class struggle shown in this movie, the first is ideological struggle in form of symbolism and dialogue in the movie, and the economical form shown in this movie. For the motive of class struggle, it can be seen from the actions taken by the lower class to the upside class that wants to revenge. Thus, this movie teaches us that everything can change if we have a willing to do it and there is so much moral value that we can take from this movie.

**Key words:** analysis, class struggle, marxist, movie, structural, sociological

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### INTRODUCTION

It is undeniable that the differences in social status are becoming the concern over time and it more problematic [1], [2]. The differences of social status becoming the concern since it can cause the conflict among those classes [3], [4]. One of the most powerful sociological explanations of social conflict is from Karl Marx [5], [6], who introduced a class struggle that happened between proletariat and bourgeoisie intrinsic to capitalist, industrial society [7]. [8] argue that this notion is powerful in being dynamic, intuitively persuasive, and appearing to fit well with history. It is powerful in providing in one package a description, an explanation, and a prediction of contemporary problems, and a remedy [9], [10]. The significant of the social phenomenon in a particular society has inspired some writers or even director to create a new fiction work that has a social element [11], [12] with the aim of capturing certain phenomena [13] and creating a reflection of the community itself [14]. One of the most phenomenal director Jordan Haworth Peele has shocked the public with his new movie that capture the social life of American society in his horror movie [15] that published on March 8, 2019 entitled *Us* [16], [17]. The movie basically tells the story about two groups of people live in America [18]. Each of the groups are representing two

different classes in the social structure of society [19], [20]. They are the American people who live above where they have a freedom [21] and wealth and make them free to do anything for their interests [22], [23]. Instead, the American people who live below or in the film called as "tethered" are describe as the lower classes who not have anything and ignored from the government attention [24], [25].

Thus, it needs serious attention from the researcher. As the prove that this problem becoming the important research, the researchers provides some prior researchers that have the relationship with the toping that being discussed as well as the guideline for the researcher. The first prior is by Mahfudz (2017) try to find out the class struggle as seen in *Upside Down* movie and to describe the classification of social class. As the result, the study shows that there are four points performed by the character [26], [27], which are form of class struggle, motive of class, effect as well as the significance of class struggle [28], [29]. While the result for second objective is the classification of class struggle which are ideological [30] and economical class struggle [31], [32]. Leonita (2009) in her study revealed the class struggle in Zola's *Germinal* which applied Marxism theory from Karl Marx [33], [34]. The objective of the study is to know the setting and character in *Germinal* [35] and to know the oppressions experienced by working class as reflected through the settings [36], [37] and character [38], [39], [40]. In order to answer the problems statements, the researcher used the same theory which is Marxism theory by Karl Marx. The result of this study shows that the bourgeois was traited unfairly since they were exploited physically, economically and mentally.

Hence, in order to conduct the same research with the different object which is Jordan Peele's *Us* movie 2019, the main focus of this research is to disclosure form of the class struggle as describe in *Us* movie by Jordan Peele 2019. There are two problems that the researchers want to present in this research as the research objective as well as the limitation of the study. Those two objectives are to find out what are the aspect that represent the class struggle of this movie that dealing with the dialogue, settings, character and characterization and any other aspect. The second objective is to depict the form of class struggle through the dialogue, settings, character and characterization in Jordan Peele's *Us* movie 2019. Concerning the focus of the research, the questions of this research

are: What is the aspect that shows the class struggle in Us movie 2019? And how are the depict of class struggle in Us movie 2019?

This research used descriptive method of analysis. There are some instruments used in this research in order to answer those two research problems. For the first problem, the researcher used intrinsic approach in order to recognize the characterization in the movie that represent the class struggle. While for the second problem, which is the chief objective of this research, the researcher used sociological literary approach in order to answer the depict form of class struggle from the aspect that found from the first problem. Since the main objective is to depict the class struggle, the theory that used was Marxism theory by Karl Mark.

Theoretically, this research discusses the class struggle as represent is Jordan Peele's Us movie 2019. The researchers tried to find a new perspective after analyzing this research and provide some benefits to the reader. Two kind of benefits can be gained from this research, which are theoretical and practical benefits. This research is expected to increase the researcher's knowledge in literature especially in sociological perspective. Furthermore, the final findings can increase the reader's knowledge and give more information about class struggle and social position in the real life. Besides, this study can be meaningful for the future researchers and expected to give references for them in conducting the similar research.

The sociological approach is one of the studies conducted by literary critics [41], [42]. Someone who examines the text carefully [43] and looks for deeper meaning [44], [45]. According to [46] and [47] stated that introduction to Fiction, Poetry, and Drama, when using a sociological approach, "a critic examines the literature in the cultural, economic and political context in which it is written or accepted [48], [49]." In criticizing literary work through a sociological approach, a critic looks at the society or the context when and where the story is depicted [50], [51], one of which is to see the culture of society [52], including standards of behavior, etiquette, relations between opposing groups [53], [54]. Likewise, the economy and politics of society, including the system of government, individual rights, how wealth is distributed [55], [56], and who holds power [57].

The researchers choose intrinsic theory by Wellek and Warren to answer the first research question that later be the foundation to answer the second research question. This approach is attempts to study the literature from the intrinsic elements inside the literary work. In intrinsic approach, the analysis focuses on the language, style and symbols. While Using intrinsic approach, some text inside the literary work is very importance in order to answer the research question and get the satisfactory result [58], [59]. Meanwhile, for the second research questions, which become the main topic in this study, the researchers choose the theory proposed by Karl Marx which is Marxism theory. Karl Marx (1818-1883) was a revolutionary German economist and philosopher, and the founder of the Communist movement. Marx was writing against a backdrop of great industrial change. Overcrowded, newly industrialized cities were expanding, and much of the working class lived in great poverty. Marx saw history as the story of class struggles, in which the oppressed fight against their oppressors [60]. According to [61], as history unfolded, the victory of one class would pave the way for the future freedom of the rest of society.

Marxism as the main theory for this research was introduced Karl Marx that dealing with social class and class struggle. Karl Marx's background of his thinking about social problems is because the existence of large-scale of exploitation by entrepreneurs or capital owners, capitalists or the bourgeois against the workers what so called as the proletariat. Those phenomena create what we called as social class and makes certain social class to take the risk in class struggle in order to get the prosperity [62], [63]. The main difficulty that we encounter today is that, Marx never discussed the meaning of the Social Class specifically. Maybe for Marx the meaning of social class is very clear. In general, social class can be defined as the social group from different class. According to [64], social class, also called class, a group of people within a society who possess the same socioeconomic status. Besides being important in social theory, the concept of class as a collection of individuals sharing similar economic circumstances has been widely Used in censuses and in studies social mobility [65]. According to [66], social groups are typical symptoms of society that can be interpreted as certain positions in the production process, but it called as social classes if they are realized as classes [67], as special groups who want to fight for them [68], [69]. But, in order to gain the satisfactory definition of the social class, the researcher also Used the theory from another expert. According to Lennin the meaning of

social class is considered as a social group in a social order determined by a certain position in the production process.

According to [70] the main actors in social change are not the particular individuals, but social classes. It's not only because the social class that found, but also the power structure that exists in that social class. In social class there are those in power and those in control. With these classes there is work alienation because people who work differ in class, namely the working class and the employer class. The employer class has the means of production, factories, machinery and land. Whereas the workers work and are forced to sell their labor to the employers because they do not have the facilities and infrastructure. Therefore, the results of the work no longer belong to the workers but also for the employers.

The workers can only work if there are owners who open jobs. And employers only benefit if workers work where they are because those who are fortunate have the means of production. But this interdependence is not very fair especially for workers because workers cannot live if they do not get a job, while employers even though they do not get income because they do not have workers, but they can still live from the capital and profits collected while the factory is running. They still sell the factory if it is necessary. With such an assumption, that the owner class is a strong class and workers are a weak class. The advantage gained from the upper class from this position is that they do not need to work alone, because they can live from the benefits derived from the laborers who work. The relationship between the upper and lower classes is a power relationship with the aim of the workers to continue working for the interests of employers by using labor from the workers. Therefore, the upper class is the oppressor class for the lower classes. This what makes the worker or the proletariat struggle to the highest social class like the employer or bourgeois..

## **METHOD**

In this research, the researchers used descriptive method that the researchers believe it suits with this research since the type of the research in this study was a textual analysis which intended to analyze the class struggle in Jordan Peele's *Us* movie 2019. It can be concluded that the method used was to find out, define and describe the finding that were

analyzed by the researcher. In conducting this research. In analyzing this study, the researchers used library research which involves the step-by-step process that used to gather the information in order to conduct this research. the researchers used two sources of data, as follow:

### **Primary data source**

The primary data source is Jordan Peele's *Us* movie 2019.

### **Secondary data sources**

The secondary data sources are from books, journal article and websites that correlated with the study.

### **Data Collecting Technique**

The method of data collection in this study is library research. We collect the data from both primary and secondary data analysis.

1. Rematch the movie carefully
2. Collects all the necessary data
3. Classifying and determining the relevant data
4. Implementing the theory *Used*
5. Finding out the aspect that contains class struggle
6. Arranging, researching, and developing the selected materials into a good unity until it is eligible to answer the research questions.

### **Data Analyzing Technique**

During the analysis, the researcher conducts some steps to analyzing the data as follows:

1. Interpreting: In this step, the researcher interprets the overall data to construct the structure of the narratives and correlate with the research questions and research objectives that has been designed.
2. Analyzing: Analyzing step is the activity where the researcher starts to analyze the data sources and corelate the data with the theory used in this research analysis. In this part, the structures of narrative in the novel will be broke down based on things that correlated in the theory.

3. Evaluating: In order to avoid the mistakes, the researcher will reread all the data and rechecks whether the analysis is complete. In this part of step is aim to validate all the data that have been collected and analyzing using the theory used by the researcher.
4. Concluding: After all the steps are done, and all the data and analysis are accomplished, the result of the analysis will be described and concluded by the researcher.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

From the analysis that the researcher have conducted, the researcher found two result in this study, which are the form of class struggle, that show ideological struggle that describe in this movie and the motive of class struggle which dealing with the aspect that show the class struggle and why they struggle for their equality even if they came from different class. From this research, the researcher found that the bourgeois in this film is the people who live in upside, while the lower class which is tethered is consider as the proletariat if we see from the characteristic of the character in tethered class.

### **Form of Class Struggle**

At the beginning of Jordan Peele's film, young Adelaide (Maddison Curry) crosses a person named Alan (Alan Frazier) holding a thick paper that reads "Jeremiah 11:11". The number 11:11 appears many times in the film. When Gabe Wilson (Winston Duke) watches a baseball game, the host announces, "We are trapped at 11:11", when Jason (Evan Alex) points to Adelaide's room clock showing 11:11. On a shirt depicting the black flag worn by the Tyler twins there is also the number 11:11. Hannah Shaw-Williams in Screen Rant writes, Jordan Peele adopted Jeremiah 11:11 in *Us* to describe the punishment that comes from sin and violates the covenant with God, as well as the reflection of the characters in the film rise up against the original figure.

Red (the name of Adelaide's self-reflection) intends to take revenge on Adelaide for his past crimes. The figure reflects the brutal revenge against Adelaide and his family also appeared and haunted every figure in the film. This film talks a lot about human dualism. *Us* managed to haunt the faith of the audience, who despite all their strength to do good, they would still receive punishment. Harper Bazaar reviewed, this film draws a conclusion

that *Us* has a message for the audience that what we think we know about ourselves, our values, and our environment easily turns to attack *Us* through the gaps of fear in *Us*. Whether it's obsession, or materialism, ambition, and pride this shows the ideological struggle that the tethered did. Tethered describe as the lower classes who not have anything and ignored from the government attention, they want to have the equality and freedom just like the class who lived above. In Jordan Peele's *Us* movie, the tethered class describe as the class who doesn't have anything in economical aspect, they struggle to have the same equality and wealthy like the class who live above because they want to have a prosperity.

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Motive of Class Struggle



As the researcher analyzed this movie, the researcher finds out that the motive of the struggle done by the lower class is not about the economical aspect only, but the desire of revenge to the class that live above. If we see the movie until the last part, we can see that there is a quick flashback of Adeline when she was a kid. In fact, the real Adelina right is actually the Red one, who come from the lower class, so that's why, the Red of Adelina wants to revenge to the above class who take her life and all of her happiness.

## CONCLUSION

This research has a purpose to analyze the aspect that represent the class struggle of this movie that dealing with the dialogue, character and symbolism as well as to depict the form of class struggle through the dialogue, settings, character and characterization in Jordan Peele's *Us* movie 2019. From this research, the researchers found that the bourgeois in this film was the people who live in upside, while the lower class which was tethered was consider as the proletariat if we see from the characteristic of the character in tethered class. The treatment of the government to the tethered class or lower class was not as good as the treatment for the upside class.

In class struggle that performed by the character in this movie, there were two points that sums it all. The first was the form of class struggle and the second was the motive of class struggle. For the form of class struggle, the researchers found that there were two forms of class struggle shown in this movie, the first was ideological struggle in form of symbolism and dialogue in the movie, and the economical form shown in this movie. For the motive of class struggle, it can be seen from the actions taken by the lower class to the upside class that wants to revenge. Thus, this movie teaches us that everything can change if we have a willing to do it and there are so much moral value that we can take from this movie.

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