

## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **A. Background of the Study**

*The Knight's Tale* movie directed by Brian Helgeland is inspired by "The Canterbury Tales," as well as the story of Ulrich von Lichtenstein, this is the story of William, a young squire with a gift for jousting. After his master dies suddenly, the squire hits the road with his cohorts Roland and Wat. On the journey, they stumble across an unknown writer, Chaucer. William, lacking a proper pedigree, convinces Chaucer to forge genealogy documents that will pass him off as a knight. With his newly-minted history in hand, the young man sets out to prove himself a worthy knight at the country's jousting competition, and finds romance along the way.

Brian Helgeland was won both his Oscar and a Razzie award the same weekend in 1998: He took Best Screenplay for L.A. Confidential (1997) and Worst Screenplay for Kevin Costner's The Postman (1997). When asked backstage at The Academy Awards about winning both "honors," Helgeland declared he'd like to display them both side-by-side on his mantle to remind him of the Quixotic nature of Hollywood. He then made good on his promise, permitting the founders of The Razzies to present him his Worst Screenplay dis-honor in his production offices as Warner Bros. studios later that year. He was only the fourth person in Razzie history to voluntarily accept one of their statuettes. He received his undergraduate degree at the University of

Massachusetts, Dartmouth. The November 14, 2003, draft of the screenplay for The Bourne Supremacy (2004) credited Brian Helgeland for a rewrite. He is not credited in the final film. His directing mentor was Richard Donner when they worked together on Conspiracy Theory (1997) and then when Brian started to direct Payback (1999/I). One director who involves those situations of human life in his literary work is Brian Helgeland in his movie “*The Knight’s Tale*” in 2001

*The Knight’s Tale* film itself takes the setting time in medieval a sport is arose. The sport is jousting. For one of these knights, an over-the-hill former champion, it is the end. But for his peasant squire William Thatcher, it is merely the beginning. William Thatcher is one of the major characters who have problems in his life after his father leaves him, and bring him to Sir Ector. He also tries to be survival man in the world.

Inspired by "The Canterbury Tales," as well as the story of Ulrich von Lichtenstein, this is the story of William, a young squire with a gift for jousting. After his master dies suddenly, the squire hits the road with his cohorts Roland and Wat. On the journey, they stumble across an unknown writer, Chaucer. William, lacking a proper pedigree, convinces Chaucer to forge genealogy documents that will pass him off as a knight. With his newly-minted history in hand, the young man sets out to prove himself a worthy knight at the country's jousting competition, and finds romance along the way. When a knight dies during the recession of a fight, one of his squires, William Thatcher, disguises himself as his master in order to win the prize money of

the tournament. He wins the fight and decides to, together with his fellow squires Wat and Roland, take on a new false identity as a knight and make a living winning tournaments. On their way to a tournament, they meet Geoffrey Chaucer, a poor writer who joins the group. The quartet then keep traveling through England, fighting in tournaments.

“This movie's got a little bit of everything. A little bit of action for the boys, a little bit of romance for the girls and a little bit of humor, drama and happy-go-luckiness for everyone! Is it a great movie? Certainly not. It doesn't really bring to light a story that they have not seen before (*Gladiator*), does not avoid the trappings of sappy romantic dialogue from the day and does not mind the occasional reference to a modern symbol that simply distracts. And that is the exact reason why some of these smaller details didn't bother me as much as they might another. They did not expect to like this film, they expected to be bored, I expected lame action sequences, but ultimately, this film surprised me. It was entertaining, had some very cool jousting scenes and it even had my movie companion close to tears at one point. And the whole debate about the use of modern rock music in a medieval movie?” (<http://www.lib.blcu.edu.cn/per/981/en/e-1-2.html>).

This movie shows the phenomenon of society life, there are four aspects to study from the phenomenon of society life. The first aspect is Brian Helgeland conveys the name of *The Knight's Tale* through the story it self. In *The Knight's Tale*, he describes how William Thatcher's struggle really influenced his personality, the major character of this movie, in facing the problem in his life since he was child and especially after the death of Sir

Ector. In this case, William Thatcher has personality development that is influenced by struggle that can change one's personality.

The second aspect, as a reflection of an anxiety of personality, the resistance in the personality of William Thatcher emerges from his tendency to expect the best in all things. He obtains this kind of personality from experiences and struggles during his life. The society does not know everything about him, and classified William Thatcher as a knight figure. He learned much kind of tricks and strategies of finding pleasure and avoiding pain. Before going to the winner of the world championship, he always makes a good preparation of optimistic in his life.

The third aspect is structural elements including: the character & characterization, theme, plot, setting, and style. The theme of the movie: to be the struggle for "human freedom" against and dictatorial society dominated by knights and aristocratic elites. The title this movie describes that *The Knight's Tale* movie though is carried out by a different exploited class, but it can really only be understood and claimed by the movement of the exploited class in this society, the modern proletariat. This movie uses progressive plot (straight plot), called straight plot if event in the story walked chronologically, one event cause the next event. Every person has class struggle in his life even ones. This situation happens as people interacts with other people that sometimes, the stronger power innervate her or him that finally pressure results un-good feeling or uncomfortable condition into the weaker one. That

is why people will against that to get free no matter what he or she tries to effort as long as he or she can try to overcome.

The gap between social classes in society is caused by many factors, the main factor is that these are two groups in society such as up-level class, and low level class (<http://www.lib.blcu.edu.cn/per/981/en/e-1-2.htm>). Marx stated that “there always progress in the society to go class less society. Believing progress is reactionary or revolutionary” (Bressler, 1999: 212) The revolutionist movement is made by oppressed to get the equality with their oppressor.

Learning from the figure that has stated on that story above, the researcher finds the reason that is to study *The Knight's Tale* movie by using Marxist approach. Karl Marx defined class in terms of the extent to which individual or social group has control over the means of production (from: marxism.<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/marxism>). Class struggle is fundamental theory and as a central part of Marxism” (Sargent, 1987: 86-87). It is a hypothesis used by Marx to explain a movement. Class struggle is “the condition between production method and productive relationship that happen through the classes in the society” (Sargent, 1987: 86-87). According on Marxist believes that in its pure from capitalist society divided into two powerful social classes. Social classes refers to the hierarchical distinctions between two groups is between the powerful and powerless.

Marxist criticism views that “literature as the mirror of social reality that influenced the reality so can make up the society” (Atmazaki, 1984: 18).

Literature is mirror up to nature. The writer tries to breakdown the problem in *The Knight's Tale* movie, by using Marxist approach. In this study, the writer encourages herself to give title “Class Struggles in *The Knight's Tale*” movie directed by Brian Helgeland.

## **B. Previous Study**

The first study about Brian Helgeland’s *The Knight's Tale* has ever been conducted in Muhammadiyah University by Chandra (2005) with entitled *The Anxiety of William Thatcher in Brian Helgeland's Movie A Knight's Tale: A Psychoanalytic Approach*. In his observation the researcher finds that research analysis by using Sigmund Freud theory. The aim of the study is finding the criticism on moral and social value.

The second study is conducted by by Elies Krisna (2003) entitled “A Class Stratification of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*: Marxist Approach”. The objectives of the study is analyzed the structural elements of the movie and analyzed the character of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* based on Marxist perspective.

Meanwhile in this research, the writer wants to analyze the class struggle in *The Knight's Tale* directed by Brian Helgeland based on Marxist perspective with different object.

## **C. Limitation of the Study**

This study will not cover the class struggle of all characters, but it will only focus on the one of the major character in *The Knight's Tale* movie.

## **D. Problem Statement**

Based on the research of the study, the problem proposed in the research how class struggle is reflected in *The Knight's Tale* movie directed by Brian Helgeland?"

## **E. Objective of the Study**

1. To analyze the movie in terms of its structural elements.
2. To analyze the movie based on Marxist Approach.

## **F. Benefits of the Study**

By analyzing *The Knight's Tale* movie, two benefits can be expected:

### **1. Theoretical Benefit**

The study is expected to give contribute and additional information to the larger body of the knowledge particularly to the further studies of *The Knight's Tale* movie.

### **2. Practical Benefits**

The study is expected to enrich the knowledge of the researcher about *The Knight's Tale* movie in Marxism Perspective.

## **G. Research Method**

The research method of this paper is broken down into five aspects:

### **1. Type of the Study**

The type of this study is qualitative research. Means this study is more grounded. Qualitative study is the study of the fact concerts with

individual behavior and the results of this study can not be fact using numbers in analyzing the data found in the movie.

## **2. Object of the Study**

Object of the research is the class struggles in *The Knight's Tale* movie by using Marxist approach.

## **3. Type of The Data and The Data Source**

The type of data of this study is text and image. The text consists of words, phrases, or sentences that comprise the dialogue or narration in the movie. The primary data source is the movie itself, while the secondary data source is documents related to the study, either in terms of theoretical or methodological resources.

## **4. Technique of the Data Collection**

The techniques of collecting data include note-taking and image-capturing. Note-taking is the techniques of collecting the textual data, while image-capturing is used for collecting the visual. The writer uses library research in collecting data, which involves several steps; searching the script of the film from internet, reading the script repeatedly, marking the point in the script to make easy in analyzing it, taking image capturing to classifying the data into groups according categories of elements of literary study, and selecting the picture which the relevant of sources to support the topic of the study.

## **5. Technique of the Data Analysis**

The writer uses a Marxist approach and applies it by using the descriptive analysis. In addition, the writer also uses the structural analysis of the work. Firstly, the data are arranged in a list of data. Secondly, the researcher is looking for a selecting the relevant of the data by using the chosen approach. Thirdly, all data from the second step are arranged. Finally, a conclusion is drawn.

## **H. Research Paper Organization**

The organization of this research is explained in order to the reader is able to understand. This paper is divided into six chapters: Chapter I is introduction that covers background of the study, literary review, problem statement, objective of the study, limitation of the study, the benefits of the study, research method, research paper organization. Chapter II is underlying theory. It will discuss with the notion of Marxist theory, major principle, Marxist theory and literary criticism, Marxist critical assumption, and theoretical application. Chapter III is social historical background of the south society includes social aspect, politic aspect, economic aspect, religious, cultural aspect, scientific and technology aspect. Chapter IV is structural analysis of the movie. In this chapter, the writer will present analysis structural element of the movie and discussion. Chapter V is Marxist analysis and discussion. Chapter VI is conclusion and suggestion.