

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

The place of *Amazing Grace* shooting was in London during October 2005. The setting of the story is in 1782. The duration of *Amazing Grace* film is 118 minutes. The film was released on February 23, 2007. Directed by Michael Apted, *Amazing Grace* is written by Steven Knight. It is produced by Ken Wales. It is edited by Rick Shaine. It tells about the campaign against the slave in 18th century British.

Michael Apted was born in Buckinghamshire, England February 10th, 1941. He had gotten some awards. He had been a winner for 4 times and 4 nominations. The 4 awards are Christopher Award, Evening Standard British Film Award, Humanities Prize Award, and London Critics Circle Film Awards. The 4 nominations are; first the Feature Films with crews Michael Apted (director), Steven Knight (screenwriter), Edward R.Pressman (producer), Terrence Malick (producer), Patricia Heaton (producer), David Hunt (producer), Ken Wales (producer), Mark Cooper (co-producer), Jeanney Kim (executive producer), James Clayton (executive producer),Duncan Reid (executive producer). The second nomination is Best Screenplay by Steven Knight Also for *Eastern Promises* (2007). Third of nomination is Feature Film Category by Steven Knight, and the last nomination is British Breakthrough – Acting Benedict Cumberbatch.

The movie tells about one member of parliament that becomes the rivals of William Wilberforce, the duke of Clarence. He always fights against the effort of

William Wilberforce to erase the slavery. William Wilberforce feels frustrated due to many fights from the other members of parliament that disagree with his opinion and he becomes physically ill. Having virtually given up hope, William considers leaving politics forever. Barbara convinces him to keep fighting because if he does not, no one else is capable to do it. In time, after many attempts to bring legislation forward over twenty years, he eventually is responsible for a bill being passed through Parliament in 1807, which abolishes the slave trade in the British Empire forever.

Many people believe that this film is great because it already changes the view of slave. After being released in 23 February 2007, there are many critiques from public. One website already accepts 108 reviews for this film that shows 70 percent positive response.

The positive responses are as follows:

Positive—*Amazing Grace* was refreshing! It's been a long time since I've seen such a film that didn't have offensive language, or behavior. Everything in the film was appropriate and handled well. The references to the hymn we all know and love was spoken throughout the film and even sung a cappella by the main character sending chills up and down my arms. There are also many references to prayer and the Bible as well. "I once was lost, but now am found" was the most powerful line in the whole movie—spoken by the main character's former minister. An excellent film for the entire family (*Kim alee Finelli, age 31*)

Positive—No one should miss it. What an exceptional experience. Although it is fully accurate historically, they do not show abuse of the slaves, but there is some verbal description of it. The focus is on the determination of one man vs. almost everyone else to bring slavery to an end. The romance is ideal including from moral, intellectual, and realistic standpoints. This movie is better than all the Oscar nominees rolled up in one. Tell everyone you know (*Sue, age 49*)

Positive—I would have liked to have seen a statement of what can be done to work to end current human trafficking around the world, including the USA. People were primed to act, and an opportunity was missed. Great film though (*Jane, age 44*)

The first comment is from Kim alee finelli, he has opinion about *Amazing Grace* movie that it was refreshing and excellent movie for families. The second comment is from “Sue”. Her opinion about *Amazing Grace* movie was the content of this movie is focusing on the determination of one man vs. almost everyone else to abolish the slavery in order to erase it quickly. The last comment is from the same opinion about *Amazing Grace* movie. The opinion of the movie includes what can be done by people now and the purpose is finishing the human slavery trade around the human environment.

The negative responses are as follows:

I saw the movie yesterday and caught the difference between abolition of the slave trade and abolition of slavery. I know enough about history that slavery was not abolished for many decades later. However, I was interested to learn the facts surrounding the producers of the film and their point of view so that I could examine the movie for other possible examples of bias that might exist. I would have liked to know more about Wilberforce’s other accomplishments as well, particularly in the area of animal welfare. I don’t care that his motivation for doing good works might center on the salvation of his own soul. By salvation I don’t mean an afterlife, I mean a feeling that one has lived a good life while he is alive. (Word press, 2007)

Negative—I’m at a loss anymore. Why is it that every time a film comes out that should really be labeled marginally “Christian,” it is automatically touted by the Church as some great and moral “must see”? This film is full of profanity. I place this film right alongside “End of the Spear” and “The Nativity” where both had the potential to really be a witnessing tool to a lost world, but instead what we get are actors whose lives are controversial off screen and thus neutralizing the film’s effectiveness. I’m here to tell you that we are Christians first and everything else second—or we’re not Christians at all! We are called to a higher standard than this; to live a life holy and acceptable unto God. I am appalled (and I’m sure I’m alone in this) that these online movie reviewers attempt to highlight all that’s wrong in the film which includes profanity, nudity, and violence and then turn around. (—*Tomo, age 35*)

Negative— I do not recommend this movie. Yes, it was a wonderfully done historical movie, and William Wilberforce’s story is an excellent one to study. And that is the very reason I cannot recommend this movie. I felt like we were morally violated, especially our boys. I walked out of the movie, but there were many Christians at that showing who chose to do the very thing that Wilberforce so passionately believed was wrong—staying and accepting whatever the culture tolerates, whether or not it is biblical. We need to let producers know that a ‘Christian’ movie is one that shows Christ being honored (—*Barb, age 51*)

Based on the three negative responses the *Amazing Grace* movie is unsupported element. The first comment in this opinion is agreement of erasing human slavery trade. He also comments on the movie producer which is using his point of view to make the movie interesting. But, he gives the comment about disagreement of motivation on that movie, because it cannot change us. One of them is the way of life. The second comment from the movie was the losing of interest to watch the movie, because in that movie, there are too much of Christian teaching and it contains human violence between the poor and rich. The last comment of movie is not recommended. It is just happiness to major character, William Wilberforce who was fighting against the moral violence, which is the relationship directly among the group of society. In this movie the dominant religion is Christian.

These statements above show to readers or viewers that *Amazing Grace* has gained responses from society.

The film has sold in a little over \$4 million at the box office over the weekend of February 23 up to 25 2007, it got the tenth highest grossing film for the weekend, behind the new releases of *The Astronaut Farmer* and *the Number 23*. The film had grossed \$21,250,683 in the United States as of June 14, 2007. Worldwide box office as of August 26, 2007 stands at \$32,050,774.(George Clack).

Besides getting much money, the *Amazing Grace* movie also was getting a successful Award of “*Best Spiritual Film of 2008*” in the third annual *Belief net Film Awards*.

The writer will analyze four points of interesting things in *Amazing Grace*, those are: first, the plot of the film which is different with the others because this story uses plot that is begun with end back to beginning, middle, climax and the next is ending or conclusion. However the other films usually use plot which is begun from beginning, middle, climax, and the last is ending. So, the writer thinks that it is unique.

Second is setting. Michael Apted is excellent to make a setting in the *Amazing Grace* movie. He builds the movie with the unique place and time to make the movie interesting to watch. Besides that, he is also success on his life, inside that the clothes worn by each character are around the 17th -18th century, where each men and woman wear different clothes as their identity and become unique characteristics. All of the clothes which are worn by characters are unique style in 17th -18th century and show the characteristic of each character. The setting of place in *Amazing Grace* movie (2006) is on the ship, in the palace, also in the park.

Third, is the character, the writer was interested in the main character. The main character is William Wilberforce. He is handsome, gentlemen, responsibility, honest, and also he is a politician that fights without surrender of prohibition although he is in bad condition. He also thinks of justice for any another people. The writer was interested on William Wilberforce because he is the representation an example and way of life of the writer himself.

The last is the theme which is used by the film; it is about slavery. Slavery is a condition in which a person is compelled to work for another without paying

getting a payment. Slavery itself comes from the word “slave” means that person is compelled with the other person who has strong power. The theme of *Amazing Grace* movie is fighting against the human slavery trade.

The other reasons are two effects from this movie, such as slavery and politics, because this movie also shows the way how to engage in politics. So, the writer constructs the title as follows:

**FIGHTING AGAINST HUMAN TRADE IN MICHAEL APTED
AMAZING GRACE MOVIE (2006): A SOCIOLOGICAL
APPROACH**

B. Literature Review

The researcher found this film also had been analyzed by students of Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta first namely is Rika Amalia. Her research paper was entitled “*the analysis of the inferiority feeling that influences the personality of William Wilberforce gets the inferiority feeling in Michael Apted Amazing Grace using an individual psychological approach*”. The major character, who has oppose and doing something but also with the rule government is failed, until five year against with suggest rule government already achieve agree all members of parliament about the slavery in the British. He was spending much time and become frustrating because he cannot change the government arrangement about human slavery trade. William becomes physically ill. He feels in responsible with his promise to abolish the slave trade in British. In this research, she also concerned about the character of William Wilberforce in how he copes with the problem of his life.

The second, the researcher found that film had been analyzed by Joanna Gunawan student of Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta. Her research paper was entitled” *the analysis of the Against Slavery in Michael Apted’s Amazing Grace: using a marxist approach*”. The major character, William Wilberforce felt irresponsible with his promise for fighting against the abolishment toward slave trade in British. In her research, she concerns about the character of William Wilberforce to be analyzed, her problem statement focus on how George Orwell reflects Against Slavery in *Michael Apted’s Amazing Grace* by using a marxist approach.

The differences from the previous study, the present study focuses on the analysis of struggle against slavery of the *amazing grace* movie (2006) directed by Michael Apted. The major issue in 18th century was about the campaign against the slavery in British. People paid serious attention toward slavery but just a few people speak up about this William Wilberforce is an ambitious and popular member of parliament. William made a struggle to erase and to know how many people supported him on the human slavery trade. In this research, the writer analyzes *Amazing Grace* movie (2006) based on a sociological approach that focuses on the major character.

C Problem Statement

The problem of the study is how the struggle against human trade of slavery which reflected in Michael Apted *Amazing Grace* Movie.

D.Limitation of the Study

The writer focuses this research on analyzing the fighting against human trade of slavery that is reflected in Michael Apted *Amazing Grace* Movie based on a sociological approach.

E. Objective of the Study

The objectives of the study are as follows:

- 1.To analyze Michael Apted *Amazing Grace* movie based on the structural elements of the movie.
- 2.To analyze the film based on the sociological approach.

F. Benefits of the Study

The benefits expected from this study are as follows:

1.Theoretical

This study is expected to contribute to the large body of knowledge, particularly literary studies on Michael Apted *Amazing Grace* of movie and give knowledge in analyzing a movie through a sociological perspective.

2.Practical

This study can develop the writer's knowledge about Michael Apted of *Amazing Grace* movie particularly related to the sociological approach.

Practically, this study is expected to give better understanding in literature and sociology especially in the writer personality and others. By this lesson, the writer hopes that he and others can reflect it to the real world, not only be a partial fulfillment of the requirement for bachelor degree.