

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

In this life, there is a community, and in that society, there are various classes. Generally, the community is divided into lower classes, middle classes, and upper classes. Class divisions in society can be based on education, family, and economic status. The most striking and most often applied in society is the division of social classes based on economics. In certain social classes, they will get particular rights. In general, the higher social class of a person, the more privilege they get.

The social construction of social class on society is controversial (Fussel, 1992; Storck, 2002). Social classes are challenging to define. Several experts define social class. For Marx, the secret to understanding capitalism and other socioeconomic arrangements or development processes is to examine economic dynamics, social roles and even shifts in such frameworks. In the Communist Manifesto, Marx and Engels argue that the past of every life that remains to now is the past of class struggles. (Bottomore, p. 75). Marx argued that there were two social classes - the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.

In life, it is very possible for social change to occur. One of them is social mobility. Many people think that the higher the social position, the happier their life is, that's why people are competing to make social change. Social mobility can be defined as the act of moving from one social class to another. (Horton & Hunt, 1984: 369). According to Soekanto (2001: 68) defines social mobility as movement in social structures. According to Kimball Young, the social structure contains the relationships between individuals and their groups.

One film that contains elements of social mobility is a film written and also directed by American filmmaker Rian Johnson. His film, *Knives Out*, indirectly displays social class in society. Before working on the film *Knives Out* which was released in 2019, Rian Johnson also directed one of the trilogy sequels, namely *Star Wars: The Last Jedi*.

Knives Out is a whodunit genre film which stands for "Who has done it?". The genre focuses on stories of detectives finding clues to figure out how the crime was committed. Knives Out is a film about an investigator who tries to uncover Harlan Thrombey, a popular wealthy novelist. The film is written by Rian Johnson and produced by Rian Johnson and Ram Bergman and distributed by Lionsgate. Rian Johnson also directed this film. The central role in this film stars Daniel Craig, Chris Evans, and Ana de Armas. The film was first shown at the Toronto International Film Festival 2019 on September 7, 2019, and was released in theatre in the United States on November 27, 2019. The running time is about 130 minutes.

This film tells the story of a young woman named Marta Cabrera, played by Ana de Armas. Marta comes from a family of illegal immigrants. Marta is a nurse and close friend of Harlan Thrombey, a wealthy novelist. Harlan Thrombey, on his 85th birthday, was found dead in his chair with an incision in his neck. After the discovery, a character, played by Daniel Craig, named Benoit Blanc, a private detective, appeared.

Blanc asked all family members at home when Harlan was killed. From all the interviews of family members, Blanc knew that everything was lying. Blanc walks the house and meets with Marta, and makes Marta become his assistant after learning that Marta cannot lie. After searching, a character named Ransom, played by Chris Evans, appears. Starting here, the climax of this film begins.

The reading of the Harlan's will begins. The event was attended by the entire Thrombey family, including Marta. In the will, it is written that Harlan bestows all his assets for his nurse, Marta. The whole family was shocked to hear this and did not believe in it. The whole family urges Marta to release the treasure to family members who are blood-related to Harlan. Starting from pressing and making subtle threats. All family members do it except Ransom. At the end of the film, little by little, the mystery of Harlan's death unfolds. It is known that Ransom tried to accuse Marta by exchanging the drugs that Marta used to give to Harlan every day. This makes Marta guilty of Harlan's death. Harlan did not want Marta guilty, so Harlan made plans to run away from Marta and finally cut his neck with a knife. Ransom unconsciously admitted his evil deeds after

Marta set him up. The film ends with Ransom's arrest by the police and Marta being the owner of Thrombey's property.

The public responded to the film by Rian Johnson with various responses. One response said that this was a unique film. Where the film raises a rare sub-genre of whodunit. Based on the audience, this film looks like a whodunit classic, but the director handles it well so that it can attract their interest.

Another public opinion also thinks that this film elevates life in America, especially in the post-Trump world. This film is also considered to be offensive to politics in the United States today.

Knives Out managed to get \$ 309.2 million in revenue against a \$ 40 million budget. The film also entered into several award nominations. Some of them are at the 77th Golden Globe Awards, de Armas in the Best Actress category, Daniel Craig in Best Actor, and this film is in the category of Best Motion Pictures. Not only that, this film also won several awards, in 2019, this film won the Philadelphia Film Critics Circle Award for Best Film, Philadelphia Film Critics Circle Award for Best Screenplay, Phoenix Critics Circle Award for Best Screenplay, Oklahoma Film Critics Circle Award for Best Original Screenplay, Kansas City Film Critics Circle Award for Best Original Screenplay, and the Phoenix Film Critics Society Award for Best Original Screenplay. In 2020 the film also won an award in the Chicago Independent Film Critics Circle Award for Best Studio Film and the Chicago Independent Film Critics Circle Award for Best Original Screenplay.

This film presents several false climaxes that successfully fool the audience. This is what makes the public assume that Johnson is a skilled director and writer. In addition to the palsy climax found by the public, the audience also felt some of the insinuations contained in the film for the current condition of America, since Trump took the lead as president.

Johnson presents a debate containing xenophobic American citizens through the characters Richard and Walt. Johnson points out that white residents (the Thrombey family) do not care about the life of immigrants, like Marta. It is illustrated by the Thrombey family dialogue that says Marta came from Brazil and Uruguay. In fact,

nobody knows which part of Latin America came from. Another satire, namely satire about healthy lifestyle influencers, through the role of Joni Thrombey's character who sells products that are not scientifically appropriate.

The plot of this film is very neat and also successful in making the audience curious as to what will happen and what actually happened. The cast of this film also managed to attract public attention like the character Chris Evans, who is also a cast of Captain America. Besides his role in the heroic Captain America, in this film, he plays a cruel and evil person. Daniel Craig, who plays James Bond, who is known to be cool, plays a role that sometimes makes people laugh.

The *Knives Out* film interprets many aspects of life in society, especially in the case of social mobility which are still applied in society. This film also shows the response of white people to other groups. This is what makes the writer choose the title **SOCIAL MOBILITY REFLECTED IN THE KNIVES OUT FILM (2019): A MARXISM APPROACH.**

B. Problem Statements

1. What are the indicators of social mobility in *Knives Out* film?
2. How does the author illustrate social mobility in *Knives Out* film?
3. Why does the author address social mobility in *Knives Out* film?

C. Objectives of this Study

1. To identify the indicators of social mobility in *Knives Out* Film.
2. To describe how the author describes social mobility in *Knives Out* film.
3. To reveal the reason why the author addresses social mobility in *Knives Out* film.

D. Advantages of this Study

1. Theoretical Significance

The study gives information and contribution in literary study, especially in social class and mobility.

2. Practical Significance

The study could give information and increase reader and writer's knowledge in analysing *Knives Out* movie using Marxist approach.