

## THE SOCIAL STRATIFICATION IN SNOWPIERCER MOVIE

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### Abstract

Social stratification is the classification of people into classes that can be arranged in stages. Social stratification can also be referred to as layers between communities that classify individuals and groups who have differences. Vertical hierarchical classification of society resulted in the emergence of social classes so that the terms upper social class, middle class, and lower class emerged. This research will examine (1) how social stratification is described in the snowpiercer movie and also (2) what is the impact of social class classification in the snowpiercer movie. The research method used in this study is the qualitative method. By using the snowpiercer movie as the main data used in research studies. Based on the results of the study it was concluded that 1) the picture of social stratification that occurs in the snowpiercer movie leads to the division of social classes based on the economic status of eternal train passengers. Where people who have money will enter as first-class passengers with an upper social class and live in luxury while those who do not have money will become occupants of the rear carriage with a low social class and live in hardship. 2) The impact of this social class division is the occurrence of conflict turmoil that occurs from the lower social classes against the upper social classes or often known as class struggle. The underclass as the oppressed who try to get a good life by carrying out a revolutionary movement as a form of protest against existing differences.

**Keywords:** social stratification, social class

### INTRODUCTION

Social stratification comes from the word 'stratum' means 'layer' and 'social' means 'society' So according to the origin of the word social stratification is a layer of society. Social stratification according to Pitirim A. Sorokin (in Soerjono Soekanto 2017) is the division of the population or society into classes in stages (hierarchically). Vertical hierarchical classification of society resulted in the emergence of social classes so that the terms upper social class, middle class, and lower class emerged. Soekanto divides the nature of social stratification into three characteristics. The first is *a closed social stratification* which in this nature limits the possibility of a person moving from one layer to another. The second is *open social stratification* which gives each individual the opportunity to move up to a higher level of social strata. The third is *mixed social stratification*, which is a combination of closed and open social stratification.

Problems and social issues that occur as well as social stratification in society can sometimes be encountered in movies. In this case a literary work can be created from the observations of novelists or film scenarios about political events and social problems that occur in society. In this study, the researcher will examine a movie entitled The Snowpiercer 2013. The movie deals with issues related to social stratification. The movie is based on the French graphic novel *Le Transperceneige* by Jacques Lob, and is directed by Bong Joon-ho. This film tells about a world in the future that returns to the age of the ice age and everything freezes. However, there is a train that is called the eternal railroad because it travels on rails around the earth and never stops. This train is led by Wilford as the guardian of the sacred railroad engine that regulates life on the rails.

Life in this train has class in each car where the rear carriage is the lower-class passenger carriage that rides the train for free, they live with limited food and shelter, in the middle car there is a place for various forms of food sources, a place to study and a room for workers, while in the front of the carriage is a place for elite passengers who occupy the highest social class with various complete facilities. The limitations of the rear carriage passengers to obtain a decent life made a revolutionary movement to be able to occupy the carriages. The revolution that became the conflict was led by Curtis.

Looking at the background, the research questions for this study are as follows. (1) What is social stratification described in the *Snowpiercer* movie?. (2) What are the impacts of the classification of social class on the movie *Snowpiercer*?. The important thing in this research is to explain how the description of social stratification occurs in the *Snowpiercer* film and how the impact occurs on the *Snowpiercer* movie with this social status classification.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

### **Sociology of Literature**

This study used the sociological analysis of literature. (Durkheim, 1958), sociology can be easily understood as a field of study that examines human behavior, the formation of a social structure and mutual agreement in economics, politics, culture, and more. According to (Wahidah Nasution, 2016) Literary works are born because of something that makes the soul of an author or creator have a certain sense of problems or events in this world, both directly experienced and from the realities of everyday life that exist in society. With this it can be concluded that a literary work is the result of human art creation in the form of imagination or real stories as a description of the process of life that has aesthetic art. Literary works are dynamic which follows the times so that there is always something interesting in every literary period.

According to (Ratna, 2003), sociological analysis gives great attention to the functions of literature as a product of a particular society. It can be concluded that the sociology of literature is an approach that examines, understands, and evaluates literary works using the lens of sociological studies that examines humans, society, and social institutions.

### **Social Stratification**

Humans are known as social creatures because their lives are always related to other communities. The social nature is an implication of the interaction relationship with the environment with various backgrounds. With the existence of various backgrounds in society, this triggers the occurrence of social layers that occur without realizing it. Layers in the life of this society can be in the form of class differences between the rich and the poor, the smart and the stupid, government officials and ordinary people and many more. Which in this case is known as social stratification.

Social stratification comes from the word *strata* which means layers, we can recognize that the word *strata* refers to the rank of a person or group of people in a society. But this term is defined by previous sociologists as universal inequalities that occur in society. Durkheim briefly mentions inequality in society, he divides it into two types, namely external inequality and internal inequality. He describes an external inequality as an inequality imposed on the individual by the social circumstances from which he was born, in other words the status from which he came. While the internal inequality factor is seen from inequalities based on individual talents. Durkheim implies that people with the right talents can be allowed to change positions according to their talents, Durkheim 1964 (in Kerbo, 2006).

Based on the explanation above, it can be seen that social stratification is a system in society that distinguishes or places a person, society or population into classes certain aspects of their social life. This can be influenced from various aspects such as education, power, economy, ability and many more. The focus in this study is how stratification causes problems. As stated above, social stratification is a concept in sociology that looks at how members of society are distinguished based on their status. Because of these differences, it is not uncommon to cause a problem or conflict in society.

### **Karl Marx Theory**

Related to social problems in the form of inequality, which included in the "Snowpiercer" movie, the study of which will be used for analysis of Sociology of literary theory. Sociological theory used to express social class, researchers using the theory of Karl Marx. Karl Marx was a philosopher who was born in southeastern Germany in 1818. He is known as the father of communism and the father of socialism. He was born into a middle-class Jewish family. According to Karl Marx (Kerbo, 2006), social class sees property ownership as the basis for class division. The class division in pre-industrial society was between landowners and the landless, peasants and slaves. In today's industrial capitalist society, the class division is the owners of industrial capital and the working class.

In a journal entitled *Karl Marx and the Concept of Social Class Struggle* (2012) wrote that Marx has divided three main classes in the structure of capitalist society, namely the wage laborers, the capitalist class and the landowner class (Landowner), but the structure is still not strong despite the efforts of the middle class to erase the gulf between these classes. However, the development of the structure of industrial capitalism introduces only two types of classes, namely the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. As a result, all the wage-working classes will be classified as the proletariat class, while the capitalist and landowner classes also represent the bourgeoisie. The existence of significant differences in the rights and obligations obtained by the proletarians and the bourgeoisie, this triggered an upheaval for equality by the proletariats. (Indriati Ismail & Mohd. Zuhaili, 2012) regarding the oppressed class, namely the proletariat, Marx asserted that the scenario of their exploitation gave birth to an element of 'class antagonism' which triggered the desire to be free from bondage. According to Marx, these classes are a collection of social principles that drag the conflicts of society in them and give the impression of a change in their economic substructure. Because of this, a class is able to identify its importance in society as a whole through the revolutions that have taken place before this. This fact describes the history of mankind by the struggle or class struggle. The class struggle of the proletariat begins when the awareness of the exploitation of the proletariat by the bourgeoisie gives rise to the theory of conflict. The starting point of this conflict theory is Karl Marx.

### **RESEARCH METHOD**

The type of research that has been used in this research is qualitative research. According to Bogdan and Taylor (1992), qualitative research is a research procedure capable of generating data descriptive forms of speech, writing, and behavior of people observed. This qualitative research aims to understand context status to guide interpretation of a detailed and in-depth description of natural conditions, based on reality which exists. The researchers used a sociological approach in this study to analyze the issue in the movie. It is suitable for analyzing literary works that relate to the social stratification in the Snowpiercer movie. Sociology of literature aims to explain the understanding between literary works and society.

The data source for this research is the movie itself. The main form is the scene or the dialogue of the characters in the movie. Attractions or actions of the characters in this picture can also be used as data. Data in the form of dialogue or scenes in the snowpiercer movie becomes primary data, while secondary data can be in the form of books, journals and other materials from the internet related to this research topic to support this research.

Data collection is important in research. Broadly speaking, qualitative research data can be divided into three types: observational data, interview data, and data in the form of narrated documents, texts, or works of art (Pawito, 2007). From the classification of the qualitative data types, the data in this study is a text or artwork that is narrated in the form of a movie.

Data analysis is a way of managing data that has been obtained through data collection methods. The data generated after analyzing the data is the answer to the research question. According to Miles and Huberman (2002), the analysis is divided into several stages as follows:

- a. Data reduction is the stage of simplifying data according to the needs so that it is easy to get information. The data that has been collected will be categorized or grouped into very important, less important, and unimportant data. Furthermore, researchers can store which data is necessary and discard unnecessary data for research. That way the data will be simpler and clearer so that it is easy to go to the next stage.
- b. Presentation of data is done to display reduced data in the form of graphs, charts, and others. The goal is to make it easier to convey and understand by other parties. This will also make it easier for the reader to absorb the information contained in the data.
- c. Drawing conclusions or conclusion drawing is information obtained from data that has been compiled and grouped which is then presented using certain techniques. Conclusions can be placed at the end or as a cover so that the reader can find the conclusions of the entire research.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Form of Social Stratification in The Snowpiercer movie**



*Figure 1.1*

In this picture, it can describe the rear of the carriage as lower-class people who live in a carriage in a slum condition, with only a small block of food where this food they call the protein block. But they don't know that the protein block they consume is made from insects, especially cockroaches. In terms of appearance, we can see that everyone only wears matching dark clothes. Judging by her facial makeup, which is usually matte, and dirty. We can use this as a benchmark

for rear carriage people who do not have a decent life. They live in complete deprivation of not only food, but also clothing and even water.



*Figure 1.2*

In this picture, you can see the carriage behind it sleeping with bunk beds in a cramped and irregular condition. On the lighting side, it looks dark, only relying on a small lamp as lighting along the narrow alley where they rested. The view of a room full of stuffy impressions becomes one of the depictions that the life of the lower social class is very stifling, far from worthy.



*Figure 1.3*

In this scene Mason's minister, Wilford's minister who serves as spokesperson delivers her speech to the passengers in the rear carriage.

*“This is so disappointed. Passenger’s, this is not shoes. This is disorder. This is size 10 chaos. This, you see this? This is death. In this lokomotif we call home, there is one thing that between our warm heart and the bitter cold. Clothing? Jeans? No, order. Order is the barrier that hold back the cold and death. We must all of us, on this train of life remain in our allotted stations. We must each of us occupy, our preordained particulate position. Would you wear shoe on your head.? Of course you wouldn’t wear a shoe on your head. Shoe doesn’t belong on your head. A shoe belong on your foot. A hat belong on your head. I an a hat, you are a shoe. I belong on the head, you belong on the foot. Yes? So it is. In the beginning, orde was prescribed by your ticket. First bus, economy and freeloaders like you. Eternal order is prescribed by the sacred engine. All thing flow from the sacred engine. All things in their place. All passengers in their section. All water flowing, all heat rise pays homage to the sacred engine. In this own particulate preordained position, so it is. Now as in the beginning I belong to the front, you belong to the tail. Whe the foot seeks the place of the head a sacred line is crossed. Know your place, keep your place be a shoe.”*

In her speech, Minister Mason emphasized the position of passengers in the rear car. She compares shoes and hats where the rear passenger is a shoe that should be in the back and she is a hat that should be in the front car. She also said no one would want to wear a shoe on their head. In this speech it can be seen that the passengers of this train are divided into three groups, namely first class passengers, economy and free passengers (freeloaders). The three forms of tickets of the passengers also determine their social class on the railroad cars. Here it can be concluded that first class passengers are people in power like Wilford and people with money, while for economy class, namely hard workers and for passengers who enter for free, they will occupy the lowest position in the social class order in the carriage. To prevent resistance or conflict that will be carried out by lower-class passengers minister mason also emphasized that the passengers in the rear carriage should remain in their positions and not try to go to the front of the carriage, especially on the sacred engine (the main engine of the train).



Figure 1.4

Figure 1.4 shows the condition of a train car which is very different from the back car. The carriage contains green and bright vegetable and fruit plants, like a plantation complete with a working gardener. This is actually inversely proportional to the situation in the rear carriage that gets unhealthy food, while in the carriage a complete variety of vegetables and fruit is available. Where all the produce from this plantation is only for consumption by the elite on the train.

In this picture we can also see some of the workers who are in charge of maintaining the existing garden. Even though they are just ordinary workers, at least they don't live in poverty in a stuffy place like what happened in the back carriage. Even though the film does not explain in detail how the lives of these workers live, they are not included in the group that inhabits the rear carriage



Figure 1.5

In the next carriage they are in a large aquarium carriage filled with fresh fish. Here for the first time the people in the back carriages enjoyed meat from fish.



Figure 1.6

In the next car is a school for the children of the passengers in the front car. This is very different from the condition of the children in the back carriage who have not received any education at all. Even the children in the back carriage have to live in poverty because they are

not given proper facilities.



*Figure 1.7*

If the previous picture shows the children from the front carriage serving a proper education, in contrast to the cut scene 1:53:22, we can see the children from the rear carriage being used as child labour. They are in charge of repairing train engines which have a narrow space that only fits small children. That is why before being made into child labour, their height is first measured. This is a form of exploitation of the children of the rear carriages which was carried out by Wilford for reasons of survival on the train.



*Figure 1.8*





*Figure 1.9*



*Figure 1.10*



*Figure 1.11*

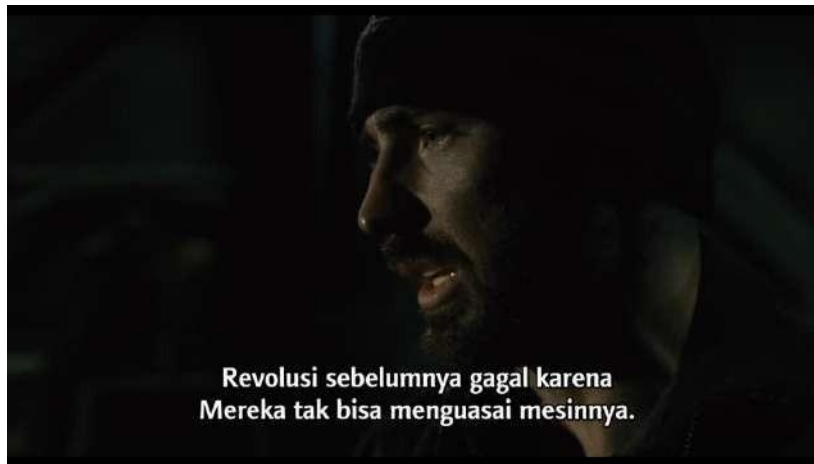


*Figure 1.12*

In scenes from pictures 1.8 to 1.12, it becomes a picture of the luxurious life that is lived by the passengers from the front carriage. As passengers with first class tickets, they enjoy various existing facilities. Starting from private rooms (figure 1.8), facilities for dining with good and luxurious service (figure 1.9), beauty treatments for high-class women (figure 1.10), glamorous parties (figure 1.11) and also other private facilities such as swimming pools (figure 1.12). In the front carriage they had various sumptuous meals with maids ready to service their lives. This facility makes the life of the upper class elite in a train car feel comfortable even though they are

on a train car. They get wider space and luxurious facilities as a form of profit for passengers who pay more for their tickets. These first class passengers live a good and decent life.

### **Impacts of the classification of social class on the movie *Snowpiercers***



*Figure 2.1*

- Curtis :if we can get him to cooperate he can take all the way to the front of the train.  
Gilliam :very front section?  
Curtis :yeah, from here right through the front of the train everything in one stroke. We control the engine, we control the world. Without that, we have nothing. All past revolution have failed because they couldn't take the engine.  
Gilliam : what are you saying?  
Curtis : this time we take the engine.  
Gilliam : then what?  
Curtis : we kill them.

At this meeting between Curtis and Gilliam discussed the revolutionary plans they would carry out. Curtis acted as the leader of the reform movement this time. Curtis wanted the revolution this time to target the front carriage because several revolutions that had occurred failed because they did not target the front carriage. He wanted that in this revolution they were targeting the front carriage to be controlled by the engine because by controlling the dining carriage they were controlling the world. Curtis wants Gilliam to replace Wilford as the scared engine holder of the train and wants to kill him.



*Figure 2.2*

In figure 2.2, this is an illustration of the revolution carried out by Curtis' group against the soldiers in the train cars. They fought back with rebellion and beat back the soldiers. As in the revolution in the color of rebellion in general, which certainly claimed many lives. Likewise with

Curtis' group who killed several of his friends but they were still able to survive with the mature strategy they had designed.



*Figure 2.3*

In the next scene, they cut off and those who survived took Minister Mason and took advantage of the situation as a card to get through several carriages. With the mason ministers as hostages they can more easily control the people in the carriages. Minister Mason himself is Wilford's accomplice to deliver the message.

The form of social stratification that can be seen in the snowpiercer movie is social conflict. Marx explained, this conflict will continue to occur in line with the existence of social classes that have been described in the social order, because class is always defined by Marx as something that has the potential to cause conflict (Ritzer and Goldman, 2016). The revolutionary movement carried out by the lower class/backcarriage class against the ruler or owner of the railroad, namely Wilford, is a form of this social conflict. This class conflict itself occurs because there is oppression and injustice that occurs between classes in railroad cars. The lower classes seek to take over the railroads to rule the world and change the order of life in railroad cars.

Based on the findings, we can conclude that in the snowpiercer movie there is a social order that classifies passengers into social classes based on the passengers' economy. Where those who occupy the front carriage with all the comforts and complete facilities are only broken down for elite/bourgeois people who have money to pay for their ticket. While for the rear carriage passengers are passengers with the lowest social class. As a stowaway or a passenger with a free ticket they get a hard life on the train. They live with all the less in a room that is stuffy, dirty, and also dark. They live in cramped carriages and only rely on one block of protein as food per day. Different from the upper class in this carriage who can afford to eat well and live with their own private space. In the middle of the carriage there are workers who are tasked with taking care of the garden and aquarium fields as well as food for the passengers where they can be categorized as working passengers. It is this very important difference that causes conflict between social classes.

It is this very important difference that causes conflict between social classes. The conflict will trigger a class struggle because each class has different collective interests and thus will give birth to a series of collective actions aimed at class opponents. The class struggle will not end before a class loses and cannot take collective action (Syafaat, M. H. 2017). In the Snowpiercer movie, the Curtis Revolution group is depicted as having managed to seize the front carriage where the engine is located. However, this struggle took many victims besides that this rebellion also caused the train to deviate from its track. The main character, namely Curtis, also did not survive the accident and in the end, only Tim and Yona managed to get out of the train. The theory conflict that occurs is a form of class struggle today based on Marx's statement. Marx in Damsar (Syafaat, M.H. 2017) stated that there were three stages of class struggle. First, there is a class contradiction

(social conflict). Class contradiction is the contradiction of interests between the capitalist class and the proletariat class. The interests of the capitalist class are generally always fulfilled, while the interests of the proletariat are very difficult to fulfill. Second, there is class antagonism (class consciousness). At this stage, the class whose interests are difficult to fulfill or the proletariat class begins to have feelings of suspicion towards the class whose interests are always fulfilled or the capitalist class. Then the last stage, namely, there is a collective action of class members aimed at members of other opposing classes. This collective action is what Marx calls the class struggle.

### **CONCLUSION**

In accordance with the formulation of the problem in this study, namely how the form of social stratification is presented in the snowpiercer movie and how the impact of this stratification is, conclusions can be drawn as follows. Social stratification itself is a system of individual or group differentiation in society, which places people in different hierarchical social classes and gives different rights and obligations between individuals at one layer and another. As for the form of social stratification encountered in the film *The Snowpiercer*, namely in the form of social class where there is a distribution of train passengers based on their economy. Where first class passengers occupy the front carriage, economy class passengers occupy the middle carriage which are also workers on the carriage such as cooks and gardeners and soldiers, while for passengers who ride freely they occupy the rear carriage with full limitations.

The passengers of the rear carriage occupy the lowest social class among the others, they do not get a proper place and live in a jostling with one another, besides that they also do not get good food intake. While those who occupy the middle carriage are workers in their respective carriages and soldiers. These workers and soldiers still belong to the lower social class but they are laborers. The workers ensure that food and safety on board the carriages are guaranteed. The two classes above can be categorized as the proletariat class. In this carriage those who enter with first class tickets are categorized as bourgeois class, they live with complete luxury and facilities, good food, spacious living quarters and also they just have fun.

The various social groups above are based on the theory of Karl Marx which divides classes into two, namely the upper class/ bourgeois and the lower class of the proletariat. He explained that these upper classes were those who owned the means of production, land or those who owned capital, while for the proletariat they were mainly workers who sold their labor or slaves. Apart from discussing social class, Marx also expressed conflict theory. Where conflicts can occur because there is a class struggle.

In the film *Snowpiercer*, it shows the impact of social stratification, in this case the division of social classes. It is clear that each social group has different rights and obligations, this difference in the distribution of rights results in an oppressed social class. The occupants of the back cars who did not receive good treatment and facilities and lived in deprivation formed a revolutionary movement. This movement is based on anxiety about the life of the oppressed, they want to control the train carriages so they can change their lives for the better. The passengers of this back car tried to seize Wilford's power and apply equality in each car. The revolutionary movement that took place was a form of class struggle which was carried out by the war of the passengers in the rear carriage against the soldiers from the front carriage and control of one train carriage after another. In the end this revolutionary movement was won by the passengers in the rear carriage but at that time the condition of the train had gone off the track and the accident resulted in only 2 survivors being seen.

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