

Social Aspects Contained in E. L. James' *Fifty Shades Freed* Movie: A Sociological Study

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Abstract

This study aims to reveal the social aspects contained in *Fifty Shades Freed* movie because this movie is considered too vulgar which is still very taboo in the community today. It also believed can damage the moral of its viewers and have received so many critics so that, the researcher wanted to reveal the other side of the movie. For this purpose, this study used sociological approach by Alan Swingewood which is defined as 'a study of human, especially civilized, society; study of social problems, especially with a view to solving them'. Sociology is not only human behavior but sociology elements such as society structure, social stability and social change. Social aspect can be described as an ensemble of social institutions that construct a social structure, including; norms, standards of behavior so that one can be accepted by others, and values that are consciously formulated and realized to be socially adhered to. Based on the result of the study, the researcher successfully found five social aspects contained in the movie, namely the patriarchal culture that still exist in America, class divisions in American society, showing free sex that still exist in America, sexual assault and hedonist life. Therefore, through this vulgar depiction, the writer wanted to express the social aspects that he wished to convey through his work.

Keywords: Social Aspect, Fifty Shades Freed Movie

Introduction

As a work of art, literature is a product of a creative activity. This is in accordance with Wellek & Warren's statement (1948: 3) who argue that literature is a creative activity, a work art. A literary work can be created because of the creative process of the author. Literary work is the author media to express ideas through the creative process carried out. The idea is the result of the imagination of the author combined with the reflection of the reality that occurred in surrounding. Thus, literary work is a product of an imaginative creative process and reflective. However, a reflection of life is not merely a mirror. An author reflects the view of life and the world is idealized author. This means, that reality is reflected in a work literature is the reality that has been processed by the author according to his ideas and thoughts.

By being a reflection of society, literature becomes a medium to express various problems faced by the community. A literary work as a result of human creation does not regardless of the social conditions of the surrounding community. He revealed the social conditions of the community at certain times. Even through a literary work, an author also often criticizes the imbalance that occur in society. Wellek & Warren

(1948: 99) argued that through literary work, an author not only shows what is the connection and impact of a work on the community, but dictates what relationships and impacts should be. Therefore, an author always slips the hidden message in his work, including social aspect about the life around him. As expressed by Ratna (2008: 243), that work of art, especially literature is tool or media to unit individuals, groups, tribes, and even between nations. A writer cannot get rid of the facts around him in writing a work, including social aspect that providing a response about the society around.

Social aspect, as stated by Swingewood (1972:14) is the task of sociologist of literature to relate the experience of the writer's imaginary characters and situations to the historical climate from which they derive. Learning sociology is not only human behavior but sociology elements such as society structure, social stability and social change. Social aspect can be described as an ensemble of social institutions that construct a social structure, including; norms, standards of behavior so that one can be accepted by others, and values that are consciously formulated and realized to be socially adhered to.

As Wellek & Warren (1948: 98-99) said literature is associated with certain situations, or with certain political, economic, and social systems. It means that literature cannot be separated from the surrounding community that influences many writers in creating literary works. More than that, the social aspect is the one most ogled by the writer than the political and economic aspects of which all three are incorporated in the sociological approach. Like in a movie entitled *Fifty Shades Freed*, it is an erotic romantic movie based on E.L. James novel whose work was considered too vulgar. This is a movie which also separates a vulgar separation which is still very taboo in the community today. It also believed can damage the moral of its viewers and have received so many critics.

Fifty Shades of Grey is a trilogy novel by E L James is a 2011 self-published book about the sexual relationship of virginal Anastasia Steele and rich sociopath Christian Grey. Throughout the book Grey introduces Steele to the world of sex and stuff happens that resembles a plot. Upon release, the book was banned at libraries in Florida, Georgia, and Wisconsin due to the sexual situations it contained. Claiming it was pornography, the libraries chose not to include it despite the public's fascination. Similar bans have happened in Malaysia about the movie made of the book (bannedlibrary: 2015). Meanwhile, despite of showing vulgar separation in this movie, as what has been explaining above, that an author can't get rid of social facts around. Therefore, the researcher wanted to reveal the social aspects presented by the author, so that a vulgar work does not necessarily have a positive value at all, because through a vulgar work we can learn the social aspects contained therein.

The researcher also found two previous studies that also analysed literary work by using sociological approach. Both of them using sociological approach in the social criticism, namely the first research came from Bayu Adhie Biantoro entitled *Kritik Sosial Dalam Novel Kalatidha Karya Seno Gumira Ajidarma: Tinjauan Sosiologi Sastra*. In this research, the researcher found that the writer conveys thirteen social criticisms contained in the novel, consisting of eight criticisms of the New Order and five criticisms of the Indonesian government. The second reference comes from Anisa Octafinda Retnasih entitled *Kritik Sosial Dalam Roman Momo Karya Michael Ende (Analisis Sosiologi Sastra)*. In this thesis, the researcher found some social criticisms contained in the novel, those are; the economic problems and people's welfare that

trigger social problems, political problems with the authorities, issues of social inequality, unemployment, and the nature of consumerism, etc.

Thus, the researcher used these two theses as a reference for compiling this thesis because they used the same approach that is sociological approach. However, both studies examined a literary work in general, namely *Kalatilda* and *Momo* they did not have vulgar separation. While in this study, the researcher examined a vulgar film that has even been banned from broadcasting in several countries.

Literature Review

In order to make readers get more understanding about this study, the researcher provided some theories related to this study in order to help the readers do not face any difficulties and misinterpretation in studying it. Those theories will be explained below:

1. Sociological Approach

The sociology of literature is a specialized area of study which focuses on its attention upon the relation between a literary work and the social structure in which it is created. It reveals that the existence of a literary creation has the determined social situations. As there is a reciprocal relationship between a literary phenomena and social structure. Sociological study of literature proves very useful to understand the socioeconomic situations, political issues, the world view and creativity of the writers, the system of the social and political organizations, the relations between certain thoughts and cultural configurations in which they occur and determinants of a literary work.

It analyses the influences of economic, political, cultural, artistic, aesthetic, geographical, scientific and other forces and factors on man and his life and throws more light on the various social problems like poverty, education, social class, religion, and others. According to Alan Swingewood states: "Sociology is essentially the scientific, objective study of man in society, the study of social institutions and of social processes; it seeks to answer the question how society is possible, how it works, why it persists."

Sociology offers a perspective, a view of the world. Swingewood (11: 1972) defines sociology as a scientific and objectives study of humans in society, the study of social institutions and processes. The sociological perspective opens a window onto unfamiliar worlds and offers a fresh look at familiar ones. Sociologists study the broader social contexts that underlie human behavior. These include the social groups that influence human behavior and the larger society that organizes it.

The sociological perspective is an approach to understanding human behavior by placing it within its broader social context. C. Wright Mills referred to the sociological perspective as the intersection of biography (the individual) and history (social factors that influence the individual). Sociology grew out of the social, political, economic, and technological revolutions of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The Industrial Revolution, in particular, eroded old traditions and necessitated new ways of perceiving and examining the social world.

According to Wellek & Warren (1948: 89) sociological approach is the relations of literature to a given social situation, to an economic, social, and political system. Those attempts made to describe and define the influence of society on literature and to prescribe and judge the position of literature in society. In other words, Wellek & Warren stated that between literary work and society cannot be separated. They linked

each other and give influence one another. They also said that Marxist critics not only study these relations between literature and society, but also have their clearly defined conception of what these relations should be, both in our present society and in a future 'classless' society. They practice evaluative, 'judicial' criticism, based on non-literary political, and ethical criteria. They tell us not only what were and are the social relations and implications of an author's work but what they should have been or ought to be (Wellek & Warren, 1948: 89-90). In the sociological approach stated by Swingewood (1972:12), there are three aspects in sociological approach, namely social, economic and politic aspects. However, in this study only focused on social aspects contained in the movie.

2. Social Aspect

The social word in this case relates to interaction with society. Interaction carried out by community members refers to problems involving many people or often referred to as public interests. As stated by Swingewood (1972:14) that social aspect is the task of sociologist of literature to relate the experience of the writer's imaginary characters and situations to the historical climate from which they derive. Learning sociology is not only human behavior but sociology elements such as society structure, social stability and social change.

Social aspect can be described as an ensemble of social institutions that construct a social structure, including; norms, standards of behavior so that one can be accepted by others, and values that are consciously formulated and realized to be socially adhered to. That is called as social aspect. Social aspects that are showed by the writer are an effort made by someone to provide depiction or information that occurs in society in a certain period of time. This assessment can be expressed by observing, expressing mistakes, giving consideration, and insinuating in order to determine the intrinsic value of a society through understanding, interpretation and accountable facts.

As Wellek & Warren (1948: 98-99) said literature is associated with certain situations, or with certain political, economic, and social systems. It means that literature cannot be separated from the surrounding community that influences many writers in creating literary works. Therefore, a writer will convey his intentions in society that he has observed through a work in the form of literary work.

Swingewood also said that literature is an author's social world, his adaptation to it, and his desire to change it. By this quotation, it can be concluded that an author will draw his ideal life into his work. If there is something that makes him feel bad, then he channels it through a work which he uses as a venue to insinuate. He also argues that the novel or literary work, as the major literary genre of industrial society, can be seen as a faithful attempt, with politics, with the State; it delineates too his roles within the family and the other institutions, the conflicts and tensions between groups and social classes (Swingewood, 1984:12)

Thus, a writer will always write the situation around him into the literary works he wrote. Literature, of course, has a relationship with certain social situations. Efforts were made to describe and define the influence of society on literature and to determine and assess the position of literature in society (Wellek & Warren, 1948:89). In the term of social aspect, the writer can depict social case around him such as the existence of class barriers in society, poverty or racism. As stated by Wellek & Warren (1948:91) below:

Statistics can establish that, in modern Europe, literature recruited its practitioners largely from the middle classes, since aristocracy was preoccupied with the pursuit of glory or leisure while the lower classes had little opportunity for education.

From the quote, Wellek & Warren gives an example of criticism from the author because the class barriers in society still exist. The bourgeoisie is more victorious while the poor are increasingly left behind. That is the example of social aspect depiction contained in a novel based on the writer's surrounding.

Since every writer is a member of society, he can be studied as a social being. Though his biography is the main source, such a study can easily widen into one of the whole milieu from which he came and in which he lived. It will be possible to accumulate information about the social provenience, the family background, the economic position of writers. By analyzing the background and life around the writer, it can be seen what the criticisms he is trying to convey to his readers.

Method

1. Design

This research used qualitative design in which the data is in the form of document. Qualitative itself is concerned with the opinion, expression and feeling of individuals producing subject data. According to Creswell (2003) also stated that in contrast to quantitative research, in quantitative research, research departs from theory to data, and ends in acceptance or rejection of the theory used; whereas in qualitative research the researcher departs from the data, utilizes existing theories as explanatory material, and ends with a theory.

2. Research Instrument

The instrument of the research is human instrument in form of documents. The researcher got all the data from the internet and some book references then collect it in form document. One of the characteristic of the real research is the researcher directly find out and collect the data without using questionnaire. It means that human is one of instrument that cannot be changed by another instrument such as questionnaire. In other words, the researcher able to collect the data by herself through documenting data from some references as the technique to get the data.

3. Procedure of Collecting the Data

In order to collect the data in this research, the researcher did some following steps below:

- a. The researcher watched *Fifty Shades Freed* movie by E. L. James and understood its story well.
- b. The researcher noted sentences or dialogues that showed social aspects in the movie.
- c. The researcher looked for supporting data from outside the movie to strengthen the data that has been found.

4. Procedure of Analyzing the Data

In term of analyzing the data, the researcher did some steps below:

1. Analysing

The researcher analysed social aspects contained in the *Fifty Shades Freed* movie by taking note the data related to the social aspects found.

2. Looking for supporting data

The researcher looked for the supporting data from outside the movie to strengthen the analysis of the research, such the condition of society around James at that time, as well as things that influence the writer in creating the work. To make the readers easier in understanding the data that has been found. The researcher made the classification table 1.1 below.

Table 1.1 Social Aspects Showed by the Writer

No.	Data (Scene)	Analysis
1.		
2.		

In the 'analysis' section, the researcher also provided evidence from outside literary works that are related to social aspects around the writer, as in the evidence of patriarchy issued in America that still exist and look for the meaning of some words that are not understood like sadomasochists.

3. Making conclusion

After doing data analysis above, finally, the researcher made a conclusion about the issue addressed by the researcher that is about what social aspects that James presented in his vulgar work.

Finding and Discussion

A vulgar film is always synonymous with negative things that have no benefit at all. However, a writer who has never been separated from the real world when creating a work, as said Wellek & Warren (1948: 3), who argue that the idea is the result of the imagination of the author combined with the reflection of the reality that occurs in surrounding. This means that the writer indirectly describes the world around him, one of them in social terms.

Fifty Shades Freed is the third and final installment of the erotic romance *Fifty Shades Trilogy* by British author E. L. James. After accepting entrepreneur CEO Christian Grey's proposal in *Fifty Shades Darker*, Anastasia Steele must adjust not only to married life but to her new husband's wealthy lifestyle and controlling nature. The paperback edition was first published in April 2012. In this research that aimed to reveal social aspects contained in the movie. Firstly, the researcher wanted to define the meaning of social aspect. According to Swingewood (1972:14) social aspect is the task of sociologist of literature to relate the experience of the writer's imaginary characters and situations to the historical climate from which they derive. Learning sociology is not only human behavior but sociology elements such as society structure, social stability and social change. Therefore, the social aspects can be revealed.

Finally, the researcher delivered some findings that have been collected about social aspects found in the *Fifty Shades Freed* movie, including:

1. The patriarchal culture

Patriarchy is a social system that places men as the main power holders and dominates in the roles of political leadership, moral authority, social rights and property control. In America patriarchy itself is a concern because there is still a lot going on there, as quoted from the news page www.wbur.org titled *America Has a Patriarchy Problem*, regarding the Jeffrey Epstein case that used his riches to employees who would help him to recruit, violate and rape scores of young women.

The author of the novel *Fifty Shades Freed* criticizes patriarchy culture which is still very thick there. America is still colonized by patriarchy culture. The country is battling about patriarchy. Money, power, guns and laws continue to terrorize many women into silence and sexual submission. This news written in August 15th, 2019, proves that even today patriarchy culture is still developing and existing.

The same is illustrated by E. L. James who raised many patriarchal issues through his characters.

2. Class divisions in American society

Most social scientists in the U.S. agree that society is stratified into social classes. Social classes are hierarchical groupings of individuals that are usually based on wealth, educational attainment, occupation, income, or membership in a subculture or social network. Social class in the United States is a controversial issue, having many competing definitions, models, and even disagreements over its very existence. Many Americans recognize a simple three-tier model that includes the upper class, the middle class, and the lower or working class.

Some social scientists have proposed more complex models that may include as many as a dozen class levels. Meanwhile, some scholars deny the very existence of discrete social classes in American society. In spite of debate, most social scientists do agree that in the U.S. people are hierarchically ranked in a social class structure.

In this case, the author gives an overview of these classes through the main character, namely with the creation of Gray figures as young billionaires (as bourgeois) and Ana as a student who works in a publisher (as a middle class). The American upper class refers to the “top layer,” or highest socioeconomic bracket, of society in the United States.

3. Showing free sex that exist in America

Free sex is an activity that is not in accordance with the norm, which deviates from the norm in society. In other hand, the author also wanted to reveal some vulgar scenes are shown in public. James described the women who were bare-chested while sunbathing on the beach. He calls a boob which means a woman’s breasts in a mocking sense.

4. Sexual assault

In the case of sexual violence, the author has described it through the main male character, namely Christian Grey who became a sadomasochist who when engaging in sexual violence by means of violence. Sadomasochism itself is the derivation of sexual gratification from the infliction of physical pain or humiliation either on another person or on oneself (Merriam-Webster). In this movie, Grey asked Ana to say red when she starts doing things out of the ordinary when having sex. Therefore, in some scenes Ana says red because she is unable to deal with the pain caused by Grey’s ferocity.

Sadomasochism appears in the current version of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-10) of the World Health Organization. It refers to the preference for sexual activity that involves bondage or the infliction of pain or humiliation and divides sadomasochism into sadism and masochism according to whether the individual prefers to be the provider or recipient of it. The ICD-10 specifies that mild forms of sadomasochism are commonly used to enhance otherwise normal sexual activity. In the beginning of the movie, the author has already told Grey’s irregularity to the reader, by telling Ana to say the word red to make her-self safe.

5. Showing hedonist life

Hedonism is something inessential but conducive to pleasure and comfort, something expensive or hard to obtain. Ofcourse, we all know traditional meaning - rich persons waste a lot of money to live in expensive and exclusive style, expensive clothes, jewelry, food, cars, trips, yachts and etc.

Grey, who was a wealthy businessman at a young age, had a very luxurious life in his life. He had a jet, a private helicopter, some personal securities and a super fast car that he had driven with his wife.

Conclusion

Based on data collected on social aspects contained in the film *Fifty Shades Freed*, the researcher concludes that behind the vulgar description of the work, the writer wants to convey the social aspects that are worthy of concern, namely as follows

1. The patriarchal culture that still exist in America
The dominance of men in this film very much, such as the role of Grey who is so dictating his wife, even hurt his wife because of sexual disorders. Another representative is depicted by Jack. He was the antagonist character in the movie who wanted to do revenge to Grey's family.
2. Class divisions in American society, namely bourgeoisie, middle class and lower class in the representatives of Grey and his wife, Ana. Grey became a billionaire at a young age depicted as the upper class, while Ana was an employee at a book publishing house as a middle class character.
3. Showing free sex that exists in America by showing some shirtless scenes on the beach by some women.
4. Sexual assault, the most sexual violence was shown by Grey against his wife, Ana. The author described it with a sexual disorder owned by Grey, namely sadomisoichist.
5. Showing hedonist life, the author described the life of luxury and spree on the character Grey, he even has a private jet and super fast car.

Therefore, through this vulgar depiction, the writer wanted to express the social aspects that he wished to convey through his work.

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