

SOCIAL CLASS CONFLICT IN KEVIN KWAN'S *CRAZY RICH ASIANS*

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ABSTRACT

This research entitled Social Class Conflict in Kevin Kwan's *Crazy Rich Asians*. It is discusses about social class conflict that occurs in the main characters. The aim of the study is to find out some causes of social class conflict that appear in *Crazy Rich Asians* novel. This study also talks about the effects of social class conflict that appear in the *Crazy Rich Asians* Novel. This study aims to provide two points : causes of social class conflict and effects of social class conflict in *Crazy Rich Asians* novel written by Kevin Kwan. This study uses the sociological approach of literature as it helps to find out how social class conflict on the chacracters can have cause and effect. Kwan`s *Crazy Rich Asians* is used as the source data. In conducting the thesis, the writer uses qualitative research. . Some quotation will be added to support the analysis. From the result of the analysis, the writer found two types of social class namely are upper class and middle class. And also found two types of conflict namely external conflict and internal conflict. The writer found two types of social class. First, upper class found on the Young Family and Aramita's friends. Second, midlle class found on Rachel Chu. The writer found causes of the external conflict are Eleanor between rachel Chu, Aramita's friends between Rachel Chu, Parker Yeo between Rachel Chu. The internal conflict is Rachel chu with herself. Social class conflict founded by writer gives effects on Rachel Chu as middle class because she is different from the others where they are from upper class.

Keywords: *Social Class Conflict, causes of Social Class Conflict , effects of Social Class Conflict.*

1. INTRODUCTION

In the new modern era are many people look at humans that how much material they have than how much human value they have. Social class is a condition when the society is diverged into groups of rich, middle, and poor people. It evokes social inequality. Haralambos and Holborn(2004:1) stated that social class refer to the presence in society of distinct social group which are ranked one above the other in terms of factors such as prestige and wealth. Social status is one of the concepts of sociology that explains about one's position in social stratification.

Conflict is a relationship between opponents who share some cultural references in words. Simmel mentions, " Conflict is a combination of elements, opposition, which are included in a combination under a higher conception" (Simmel in Wieviorka, 2010:3). Conflict is divided into two types; there are internal conflict and external conflict. First ,Internal conflict is a conflict that happens within the mind of personal who has necessary that attain in planned goal. Second, External conflict may be a conflict that happens once a personal concerned during a world problem or misery. External conflicts have many examples, including communities in society, the globe of nature, government and alternative people.

One of the literary works that discusses the lives of the rich and social class conflict is *Crazy Rich Asians* Novel by Kevin Kwan's that published at 2013. This novel tells the story of a rich family life from the main characters that originated in Singapore called Young's Family and the poor girl from America that actually she is the Chinese people. The main characters of this novel consist

of Nicholas Young called Nick , Rachel Chu , and Eleanor Young.

This novel tells the problem of social class, which happened to Rachel Chu because she comes from the middle class who has a relationship with a rich man named Nick Young. Nick is the heir of a Young's family known as a wealthy man in Asia. Because Nick and Rachel have difference classes , Nick's mother insisted on rejecting Rachel's presence in her family.

In this research , the writer focuses on main character of *Crazy Rich Asians* (2013) by Kevin Kwan novels created by the author. This novel consists of two main themes, one is romance and the other is Social Class Conflict. . This novel tells about the relationship of lovers who have different social status. The story of this novel is about how the main characters namely Nicholas young called " Nick ", Rachel Chu and Eleanor Young.

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

There are two previous studies presented in this study. The first previous study is Irma Suryani , 2016. In her thesis entitles " Class Conflict in Ibsen's an *Enemy of The People*", University of 17 Agustus 1945 Surabaya. The thesis writer investigated the action of the characters that cause class contact in the drama an enemy of the people by Henry Ibsen's. To achieve the study, a sociological approach is used. In addition, qualitative describe method is applied in the analysis. As result of the analysis, the author presents three main points to determine the class conflict that occur in the drama. The first point is to describe the class conflict that belongs to elite group in the drama they are mayor and media. The next point is to find and describe the member of

subordinate groups in the drama they are doctor and citizen. The last point is to look for the cause and explain how class conflict occurs.

The second previous study is Felicia (2019) in his research entitled "Social Prejudice reflected in Kevin Kwan's *Crazy Rich Asians*" University of 17 Agustus 1945 Surabaya. The thesis is only focused on analyzing the social prejudice reflected in Kwan's *Crazy Rich Asians*. The writer also uses the conflict theory and concept of social prejudice that are used as the basis on the analysis of social prejudice. Moreover, the writer analyzes one research problem which related to the content of the novel.

In the present study, the authors found similarities from the previous ones. Similarities talk about the causes of class conflict. The author also found the difference from the first previous study with the present study is that previous research talks about the type of class conflict while the present researcher does not mention the type of class conflict. While the difference between the present study and the second previous study is that in the present study is tell about social class conflict meanwhile second previous study tells about social prejudice. In both studies there was only unity in object.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

The research approach in this study is used sociological approach. Sociological approach is more concerned an individuals and their relationship with society, like cultural, economical or political aspect. Kennedy (1995: 1790) stated "sociological approach is sociological criticism examines literature in the cultural, economical, and political context in which it is written or received".

The research is qualitative in nature. According to Babbie, Earl (2014), qualitative research is a scientific method of observation to gather non-numerical data. This type of research refers to the meanings, concepts, definitions, characteristics, metaphors, symbols, and description of things that will answers why and how a certain phenomenon may occur, Berg, Bruce Lawrence; Lune, Howard (2012). Qualitative research focuses on the human elements of the social and natural sciences. In this study, the qualitative research is focusing on the main characters.

The data source that will be used in this research is a novel written by Kevin Kwan entitled *Crazy Rich Asians* which contains 527 pages in 20 chapters. It was published in 2013. Sources of data obtained from several characters in the novel. Data in the form of notes by reading the novel and making notes for parts of the social capital of the novel.

In this research, the writer applies some procedures of collecting data as follows: The writer firstly reads the novel carefully and understand the novel deeply. The writer identifies Social Class Conflict in the main Characters in the novel. The writer writes down the data from novel to piece of colored paper. The writer classifies Social Class Conflict in the main characters in the novel based on the theory.

The writer starts doing the data analysis by reading the novel and reading some journals related to the topic, sociology and social class conflict. Then the writer makes some notes from the data. Last, the data will be analyzed specifically based on some notes and then explained on the data analysis as conclusion.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the analysis of the data. The analysis would be in chronological order based on research problems in chapter one that has relation with conflict theory. In analyzing the data, the writer will use certain techniques provided in chapter three. Therefore, the writer will discuss the causes of social class conflict and the effects of social class conflict portrayed in the novel of *Crazy Rich Asians* from the collected data.

In this novel there are two social classes status. They are upper class and lower class. The upper class is from Young Family that consists of Philip Young, Eleanor Young, and Nick Young. The other rich are Araminta's family and Parker Poe. The unrich is Rachel Chu who comes from Mainland China who mostly are peasants.

4.1 The causes of the social class conflict in Kevin Kwan's *Crazy Rich Asians*

4.1.1 Social class conflict between Eleanor and Rachel

In the beginning of the story, the social class that appears in this novel is when the conversation between Daisy and Eleanor who mention the plan arrival of Nick to Singapore to attend the wedding of his best friend "Colin Khoo". Daisy says that Nick will come with his American girlfriend but she is Chinese. Eleanor is surprised by the news.

"An American girl? Nicky wouldn't dare do such a thing. Daisy, your information is always *ta pah kay!*"
What do you mean? My news is not *ta pah kay* – it comes from the most reliable source! Anyway, I hear she's Chinese," Daisy offered.
Really? What's her name, and where is from? Daisy, if you tell me she's from Mainland China, I think I'll have a stroke," Eleanor warned.

(Kwan's 2013: 28)

From the quotation above, it is found that external conflict is the first cause of social class conflict that occurs in Rachel by Eleanor. It is shown that Eleanor's reaction directly asks about Rachel's identity such as name, origin, and explains if Rachel is from Mainland China. She thinks she will have a stroke because her future daughter-in-law is not from a rich family or someone like her family. Nick is from a Young family who highly respected in Singapore to the Asian community and he has a nickname that called *crazy rich asian* while Rachel only a middle class girl who raised from child by a single parent who doesn't have a good background. So this explanation shows that there is a social class conflict between upper class and middle class.

In the conversation by phone between Eleanor and Philip who discuss Rachel's background life which Eleanor thinks that it is very astonishing.

"Stop it, lah! This is urgent! The report is even worse than my worst nightmare! Your stupid cousin Cassandra got it wrong - it turns out the girl is not one of the Chu's from that Taipei Plastics family!" (Kwan's 2013:102)

From the quotation above explains that Eleanor who already knows the true identity of Rachel if she is not from of Taipei Plastic family. This information is obtained from the result of an investigation by a private investigator in Beverly Hills who is employed by Eleanor. Most of rich people are very concern with how a person's background before they allow to get into her family. From this explanation tells if social class determines where social class equality should be, such as upper class with upper class, middle class with middle and lower class with lower class.

4.1.2 Social class conflict between Rachel and Nick

Actually in this novel explains that from the first time Rachel meets Nick, she never knows about the background of Nick who is a wealthy person in Asia, especially Singapore. These are explained in the following quotation:

"You're kidding right?" Rachel said, thinking Nick was pulling a prank when he steered her onto the plus red carpet of the Singapore Airlines first-class counter at JFK..."
(Kwan's 2013:84)

From the quotation above, it is found that the conflict of relationship occurs between Rachel and Nick. From Rachel's reaction she is surprised and she doesn't believe what happens when they are at the airport, even Rachel thinks that Nick pranks her, it explains that Rachel really doesn't know the background of Nick's family that is able to buy a first class tickets. Which Rachel knows they will go to Singapore with the type of economy class. From the last part explains that Nick convinces Rachel if he only means to comfort things between them because he is going on a long journey for 21 hours and doesn't mean to show off his wealth.

4.1.3 Social class conflict between Rachel and Parker Yeo

Parker Yeo is one of the friends of Aramita who takes part in a bachelorette party. Parker sits next to Rachel Chu while on the plane. She introduces herself to Rachel Chu to ensure the truth of Rachel's status.

"Isn't your cousin Vivian Chu? Doesn't your family own Taipei Plastics?"
(Kwan's 2013:231)

From the quotation above, it is found that the social conflict occurs between Rachel and Parker. This quotation explains that Parker has an intention sitting next to Rachel, she is looking for an information or clarifying the truth about Rachel's social status. And also from this explanation it tells that there are differences in social class between herself and Rachel because of her assumption that Rachel comes from the Taipei Plastic Family is totally wrong.

Not only looking for information about Rachel's background but Parker also intends to offend and spread the information to all passengers in the cabin, most of whom are still curious about the background of a Nick's Girlfriend.

"Girls, I have a scoop off all scoops!" Parker burst in on the girls crowded into the master cabin. "I was just sitting next to that Rachel Chu girl, and guess what? She isn't related to the Taipei Chus! She Hasn't even heard of them!"

(Kevin Kwan's 2013:232)

From the quotation above, it is found a social conflict. From Parker's announcement to everyone in the cabin, it has an impact on Rachel as ostracized during the bachelorette party held by Aramita. It happens because of inequality social status between Rachel and all Aramita friends who have a high social status "upper class" while Rachel's social status is "middle class".

4.2. The effects of the social class conflict in Kevin Kwan's Crazy Rich Asians

When Rachel and Peik Lin go to the grandma lives, they are confused because the house does not have a number and along the road are many trees and like

in the forest. But when arrive in the gate they see two bodyguards carrying firearms.

“Her stomach felt like it had been twisted in a vise, and she smoothed out the creases on her dress nervously. “ Am I really late?”
(Kwan’s 2013:170)

From the quotation above, It is found that internal conflict occurs in Rachel Chu. She is scared when she arrives at the nick’s grandma house that is placed from the second one to third line by quotation “her stomach felt like it had been twisted in a vise, and she smoothed out the creases on her dress nervously” because of she knows that grandma lives in the Tyersall Avenue like a real estate. Seeing the grandeur of Grandma's house increasingly makes Rachel is insecure because she and Nick's family do not have the same social class.

Shopie is cousin of Astrid from Leong’s family. She is a nice girl that one and only cares with Rachel when in the bachelorette party. Shopie hear a screaming that makes her splashing some water on her face. She go to the door and found Rachel standing there with her lips white and her whole body shaking. She does not know what happens with Rachel. But Rachel tells to Shopie to look directly into her room. Because that room has a dead fish that makes Rachel scared and surprised.

They think that this incident happens because of Araminta’s friends dislike Rachel who has a relationship with Nick. There is an effect from a relationship between Rachel and Nick so that is why Araminta’s friends do something to provoke Rachel and in order to make mess in the Bachelorette party.

“ They may not know at the first thing about him, but they are all vying to become Mrs. Nicholas Young.”
(Kwan’s 2013:277)

From the quotation above , it is show that these girls dislike Rachel which it is explained in the last sentence from quotation “ They may not know at the first thing about him, but they are all vying to become Mrs. Nicholas Young.” All woman including Araminta friends who have good backgrounds definitely really want the position of Rachel at this time . The Position as Mrs. Nicholas Young who has abundant wealth, a handsome husband, an educated and the only heir of Young’s Family.

5. CONCLUSION

From this research explains that social class occurs between upper class and middle class. Upper class that shows to Young’s Family especially Eleanor Young , Philip Young ,Nick Young and his another family as Araminta, Araminta’s friends, Francesca , Nadine and etc. and lower is showed in Rachel Chu who comes from Mainland China that most of them are peasants.

Social class conflict that occurs from external conflict happens when the information on the arrival of Nick to Singapore with his girlfriend ”Rachel Chu” who want to do summer vacation and at the same time to attending Colin’s wedding as Nick’s best friend. After the news spreads to Asia, many socialite women immediately find out the background life of Rachel. Because of those are very important information which is the background of Nick has abundant wealth and high position to be heir of Young Family. Many people thinks that if Rachel comes from Taipei Plastic’s family, but all assumption is wrong. Rachel comes from Mainland

China who grows up in America as immigration people. While the news circulating for the truth of Rachel's background that only originated from lower class family makes it intimidated and overlooked by Nick's family and others his family.

This discussion tells some social classes conflict that occur between Eleanor Young, Daisy, Parker Yeo as Araminta's Friends and another Araminta Friend's towards Rachel Chu. The cause of social class conflict is when knowing the background of Rachel who comes from Mainland China that mostly as farmers and the background of Rachel that is complicated. This news make her confused by thinking of ways to separate Nick and Rachel.

All of that is proven when Eleanor does traveling to shenzhen on weekend in order to avoid her meeting with Rachel even though she never leaves his beloved son when Nick visits Asia. she does it merely to protect the good name of her family.

Rachel's social class has an effect from some people including Eleanor Young, Parker Yeo and Araminta's Friends. She is intimidated when she sits next to Parker Yeo in the cabin of the plane. Which Parker asks the truth about his family background and when after learning the truth that Rachel is not from the Taipei family plastics, Parker Yeo immediately makes an announcement of the truth to all the passengers in the cabin in a mocking tone.

Not only that, Rachel also gets terror from Araminta's friends when she is at a bachelorette party. Which there is a dead fish in Rachel's room. That's all they do to provoke Rachel to make a fuss during the event and make her embarrassed.

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