

## THE SOCIAL CHANGE AND COLLECTIVE BEHAVIOR DEPICTED IN RICHARD LONCRAINE'S 5 FLIGHTS UP

## A FINAL PROJECT In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement For S-1 Degree in American Studies in English Department Faculty of Humanities Diponegoro University

**Submitted by:** 

Yulia Asti S

13020112140065

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES DIPONEGORO UNIVERSITY SEMARANG 2017

#### **PRONOUNCEMENT**

The writer honestly confirms that she compiled this final project entitled "The Social Change and Collective Behavior Depicted in Richard Loncraine's 5 Flights Up" by herself without taking any results from other researchers in S-1, S-2, S-3, and in diploma degree of any university. The writer ascertains that she did not quote any material from other publications or someone else's paper except from the references mentioned.

Semarang, 8<sup>th</sup> June 2017

Yulia Asti S

#### MOTTO AND DEDICATION

"The adventure of life is to learn. The goal of life is to grow. The nature of life is to change."  -William Arthur Ward
"Every man must decide whether he will walk in the light of creative altruism or in the darkness of destructive selfishness."  -Martin Luther King
I sincerely dedicate this final project to my beloved ones for their encouragement and guidance.

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Written by: Yulia Asti S 13020112140065

is approved by the project advisor on  $8^{th}$  June, 2017

Project Advisor,

Sukarni Suryaningsih, S.S., M.Hum

NIP. 197212231998022002

The Head of the English Department,

Dr. Agus Subiyanto, M.A.

NIP. 196408141990011001

#### **VALIDATION**

# Approved by Strata 1 Thesis Examination Committee Faculty of Humanities Diponegoro University On 4<sup>th</sup> July, 2017

Chair Person First Member

Ariya Jati, S.S., M.A Rifka Pratama, S. Hum., M.A NIP. 197802282005021001 NIK. 199004280115111092

Second Member Third Member

Dra. Christina Resnitriwati, M. Hum

Drs. Oktiva Herry Chandra, M.Hum

NIP. 195602161983032001

NIP. 196710041993031003

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Finally, I expect that this final project will be useful to the reader who

wishes to learn in gaining her/his sense of awareness about particular phenomenon

occurred within society through films.

Semarang, 8<sup>th</sup> June 2017

Yulia Asti S

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#### **ABSTRACT**

Basically every individual experiences changes in their life. People change, and so do society. In the 5 Flights Up Film, the writer is interested to find the major sources of social change such as the population growth, the infrastructure development, and technological innovation that produces smartphones and the internet. Somehow, technological innovation has influenced the life style, way of living, and behavior of the society in this modern era. The writer is also interested in analyzing the types of collective behavior namely rumor, mass hysteria, and panics among the society regarding a particular issue. In analyzing this film, the writer used library research as the method of research. Objective and sociology of literature approaches are used as the method of approach. As the result, the writer is able to observe what affects Mr. and Mrs. Carver's decision to cancel selling their house and decide to stay in their five floor apartment. Moreover, the film often represents certain issue and it highlights its perspective on the issue. Thus, the writer also emphasizes that through the film everyone can learn to gain the sense of awareness about particular phenomenon occurred within society.

Keywords: The Society, Social Change, Collective Behavior, Modern Era

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

Film, as a product of a popular culture, is made by a filmmaker with some purposes. Those purposes are to make a profit, to keep the viewers entertained, to announce certain messages clearly, and to offer meaningful form of education (Gunning, 2002). However, this paper focuses mainly only on the meaningful form of education in filmmaking. This is presented in the form of depiction of society's life at a given time in order to give the viewers a better understanding about it.

According to Henry L. Tischler in *Introduction to Sociology*, society is a group of people who share common culture and same territory (2007:125). Everything is undergoing change as time goes by, including society. The change may happen in a large scale like technological change or in small change like people's attitude. The individuals are the main roles of the changing including their behaviors and attitudes. In the sociological context, the respond of people through act and behavior that is relatively spontaneous and relatively unstructured is classified in the form of collective behavior (Barkan, 2012).

A film by Richard Loncraine, 5 Flights Up (2014) based on the Jill Ciment's novel, Heroic Measure (2009), reflects social change and collective behavior in the society. In the beginning of the movie, Mr. Alex Carver as the main character and the narrator of the film describes how the world he and his wife live now has changed from the first time they moved to Brooklyn. They live in the modern civilization. The neighborhood is full of hipsters, people of subculture. In their neighborhood people neglect the street when they cross it. People keep using their phones while crossing the street without paying attention

to their left or right hand side. Somehow, it makes Mr. Carver shakes his head emphasizing it as he disagrees with the change of the world it becomes now.

He and his wife, Ruth, have been living in Brooklyn, New York as a married couple for over forty years with their ten-year old dog, Dorothy, in a five floor apartment which does not have an elevator. Because this apartment does not have an elevator, it makes them uneasy as they are getting older. Therefore, they intend to sell it by conducting open house and buy a new apartment where it has an elevator with the help of their real estate agent, Lily. However, the selling and buying process is getting stressful for them by the news that said there could be a terrorism act on the Williamsburg Bridge located near their house. This news affects the selling and buying process because it changes and affects society's perspective. It is believed that the term perspective is used to indicate in how individuals perceive and evaluate their choices which consequently resulted as their behavior. Thus, society's perspective is what determined the result of the selling and buying process and society's behavior is in line with collective behavior theory.

Regarding the issue, the writer is interested in presenting social change and collective behavior in the type of rumor, mass hysteria and panic within society through 5 Flights Up film while exploring how it affects Mr. and Mrs. Carver's decision to cancel their selling the house, and decide to stay in their five floor apartment. The writer used library research as data collection to find further information with close reading and close viewing. In this paper, the writer limits the discussion into two aspects. They are intrinsic and extrinsic aspects. In

analyzing the intrinsic aspects such as narrative and cinematographic elements, the writer uses objective approach. While in analyzing the extrinsic aspects which illustrate the social change and collective behavior in the film 5 Flights Up (2014), the writer uses sociology of literature approach by adapting the Henry Tischler's theory in Introduction to Sociology about social change. In addition, Steven Barkan's theory in Sociology: Comprehensive Edition book about collective behavior is put together as supporting points for the analysis.

#### 2. MOVIE AND SOCIAL ISSUE

According to Dick in *Anatomy of Film*, movie is widely known as moving pictures; simply named because the pictures certainly move (1997:2). In his book, he offers a description of film from John Howard Lawson. He cites that a film is a process of audiovisual conflict from a premise proceeds to a climax and comes to the end of the action.

Movies watched at cinema, on television, are notably narratives. These narratives are often about characters going through experiences and how they go about it. In addition to Lawson's argument, Dick also explains that movie is also the same as narrative film that builds a climax and descends into a resolution shown audio-visually (1997:2). To a far extend, Kaul (2004) on *Representation of Social Issues on Films* also writes that "a movie usually refers to a motion picture for the masses whereas a film is something with more artistic and or educational appeal".

To say a movie is merely for entertainment, it could be right or wrong. The main purpose of a movie is indeed to entertain. However, it depends on how a viewer sees a film, whether for entertainment only or getting deeper meaning. This means through film, the viewers could learn about a particular phenomenon. To add, Kaul (2014) states that a film often represents a certain issue and it highlights its perspective on the issues that it present, either in direct or indirect interpretation. Hence, films have great influence on the viewers' way of thinking, decision making and even mood. Furthermore, films can also raise social awareness and effect change in itsviewers if it is used responsibly.

In the education purpose, films can be taught to gain better understanding of society and its social issue. In *Using Contemporary Films to Teach about Social Problems* Journal (2010:3), Jannet Cosbey from Eastern Illinois University states that he teaches some films to his students regarding particular issues. For example, in the film *The Pursuit of Happiness (2006)* he found that the film shows how the individualism and American dream ingrained in each character. However, this film also reflects that within society there is still certain group who struggle for decent salary. Consequently, it has successfully developed sense of awareness and better understanding of his students about social issues in society through films. He adds, "using films to illustrate social problems worked quite effectively in this class" (2010:6).

An analysis of cinema has been consequently related to the theories of narrative (Andrew, 1984:76). A film always contains a story. Thus, narrative elements can be applied in analyzing a film. The narrative elements discussed in

this paper are character, setting, and conflict. These elements are also found in written literature.

According to Kennedy, a character is a person who lives in a story that is generated from imagination (2007:74). He classifies the character into round and flat characters. He says that a round character is represented in thorough insight. The importance of this character's involvement in the events builds up the story. Meanwhile, a flat character possesses only one trait to be represented (Kennedy, 2007:75).

The second narrative element is a setting. The setting is used to identify time, and place of the story. Setting has a function to give realistic impression about the story. In addition, the setting is used to create a certain atmosphere as if it really exists and happens. This is supported by the opinion of Abrams (1981: 175) in Nurgiyantoro (2010: 214).

The last narrative element is a conflict. The conflict is one of the important elements to make the story seem lively. According to Perrine, "conflict is a clash of action, desire, ideas, or goods in the plot of a story (1987:42)". Thus the conflict makes a story has purpose. There are two classifications of conflict, external conflict and internal conflict. According to Meyer (1990), the external conflict is a conflict which happens between a person with other individual or environment, while the internal conflict is a conflict which occurs between himself and his own desire.

Exploring the cinematographic elements of a movie is important because the movie is the object of the study. This element has technical aspects which deal with camera and its technique. Nugroho states that the cinematographic element has function. The element can be perceived to deliver messages, information or even to communicate certain ideas to the viewers (2014:11). The cinematographic elements can be divided into three aspects. Those aspects are camera distance, camera angle, and audio.

Camera distance deals with a camera and the object of the movie. There are four types of shots that exist in the camera distance. They are extreme long shot, long shot, medium long shot and medium shot. According to Nelmes, extreme long shot is used to show broader scenery or the panoramic of a scene in movie. Long shot is a framing technique that shows the whole body of the object and the nearby situation. While medium long shot is a framing technique that is used to show from the head to the knee of the object's body. At last, the Medium Shot is a framing technique that shows the activity such as conversation of an object with another object. This shot shows from head to the waist of the object's body. Thus, the viewers may see the object's feature clearly (2012:94).

Camera angle is a shooting technique which has a purpose to give diverse interpretations. According to Bordwell and Thompson, there are three types of angle. The first one is the straight angle which is commonly used in filmmaking. The second one is high angle. This angle positions the viewer looking down at the object. It is used to give dramatic scene by showing the object to seem weak or

intimidated. The last one is low angle. This angle positions the viewer looking up at the object appeared in a scene. Thus it brings interpretation to the object as strong or dominant (2008: 190).

The last cinematographic element of a movie is audio. They are three types of audio aspects; dialogue, music and sound effect (Himawan Pratista, 2008:61). However, this analysis focuses only on dialogue aspect.

#### 3. SOCIAL CHANGE AND COLLECTIVE BEHAVIOR

Basically every individual experiences changes in their life. People change, and so do society. The existence of these changes will be known when a comparison is made between the situation in a certain period and in the past within society. The change that occurs in society is essentially a continuous process. It means that every society is in fact going to change.

In the *Introduction to Sociology: Ninth Edition* book, Tischler states that the best way to analyze how the sociologists define social change is through example. He mentions that the acceptance from public and the use of an innovation is part of social change not the innovation itself (Tischler, 2007:479). It also means that attention, consistency, persistency of public are needed to make social change happened. Thus, "social change consists of any modification in the social organization of a society in any of its social institutions or social roles" (Tischler 2007:480).

There are major sources of social change that can make some changes occured within society. The first one is population growth. Barkan states that changes in the growth of population may give impacts for other aspects of a modern society (2012:836). The second source of social change is the infrastructure development. As the rate of population growth in a city is increasing, people demand a bigger and better environment. Thus, the developing of their environments with the abilities they have affects the infrastructure.

The last one is the technological innovation. To emphasize, Tischler states that the invention in technology has been rapidly growing in this modern era (Tischler 2007:480). Technological innovation produces advanced products such as telephone and internet. However, this advanced technologysomehow has influenced social change. Deeksha in "Social Change: Meaning, Types, and Characteristic" finds that technological advance has influenced the life style, way of living, and behavior of a youth in India.

The behavior and attitude of individuals are the main roles of a change.In *Sociology Comprehensive Edition v. 1.0.*, Barkan states that many sociologists use the term of collective behavior to indicate various set of behaviors which large numbers of people give contribution on it. This behavior is rather less spontaneous and less structured than conventional behavior (Barkan, 2012:863). Collective behavior is a response that has been done by certain people to influence other people and it is done spontaneously and unstructured towards a certain concern.

Common forms of collective behavior discussed in this paper are rumor, mass hysteria and panic. Rumor and mass hysteria strongly held beliefs and perception that turn out to be false (Barkan, 2012:871). In this modern era, where technology is advanced rumor can be spread very quickly through internet. While mass hysteria and panic refers to widespread, intense fear of and concern for a danger that turns out to be false or greatly exaggerated (Barkan, 2012:871). These two common forms of collective behavior involve people who are more widespread geographically and do not interact each other but they are involved trough the help of mass media (Barkan, 2012:871).

### 4. THE NARRATIVE ELEMENTS IN RICHARD LONCRAINE'S 5 FLIGHTS UP

In presenting the social change and collective behavior depicted in the 5 Flights Up film, at first the writer analyzes the narrative element to gain better understanding. In the film the writer finds that there is one round character in the movie, Mr. Alex Carver and flat character is Mrs. Ruth Carver. The setting of the film takes place in New York in the modern time. At last, there are two types of conflict that can be analyzed in this film, Mr. Carver against himself, and Mr. Carver against environment.

Mr. Alex Carver is the round character in the 5 Flights Up. He is an old-fashioned man. He does not keep up with the modern technology. It is proven when he still uses the old type of cell phone. It is shown in the picture 1.1 while he is having conversation with his neighbor he gets phone call from Mrs. Carver

and he picks his flip-phone up. Somehow, in the picture 1.2 he mumbles himself because he gets some troublesome in hearing Mrs. Carver's voice. It happens because his flip-phone seems old that may not reach the signal well. These two scenes are taken with medium shot technique of framing.





Picture 1.1 (5 Flights Up, 00:01:38)

Picture 1.2 (5 Flights Up, 00:01:43)

The next is the round character. The round character in this movie is Mrs. Ruth Carver played by Diane Keaton. She is a retired teacher. She is a caring woman. She knows that they are living in a five floor apartment (see picture 1.3) which does not have an elevator, so they have to struggle with the stairs. Therefore, she intends to sell their apartment and buy a new apartment which has an elevator to help them in the future. It is shown in the picture 1.4 when she is having conversation about it with Mr. Carver and this scene is taken with medium shot technique of framing.



Picture 1.3 (5 Flights Up, 00:05:42)



Picture 1.4 (5 Flights Up, 00:08:36)

The setting of 5 Flights Up movie takes place in Brooklyn, New York. In the picture 1.5 shows the neighborhood of Brooklyn. This scene is taken by using extreme long shot because it shows the scenery of the city including the Williamsburg Bridge. In addition, the picture 1.6 shows the city center in the night where there is the well-known Radio City Music Hall.





Picture 1.5 (5 Flights Up, 00:00:55)

Picture 1.6 (5 Flights Up, 00:49:56)

While, the setting of time is in the modern era, where the innovation of technology, smartphone is already part of the people's live. It is seen in the dialog of the narrator:

Mr. Carver: "And their bunker husband, their heads buried in their

Smartphone." (5 Flights Up, 00:03:57-00:04:00)

Mr. Carver: "All it needs now is the ultimate sign of modern

civilization, an Apple Store. (5 Flights Up, 00:04:12-

00:04:18)

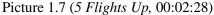
There are two kinds of conflict in the 5 Flights Up film namely, internal conflict and external conflict. The example of the internal conflict in 5 Flights Up is when every time Mr. Carver looks back to the days where he and his wife are always happy living in their fifth floor apartment. He also wonders what kind of room he will be painting in when they move out, will it be the same as his current apartment which has a window and great view. At that time he has a conflict with

his own mind rather he actually does not want to moveout from his fifth floor apartment or move out. It is seen in the dialog:

Mr. Carver : "This room has been my studio for more than 40 years. What room will I be painting in next year? Will it have a view? Will it even have a window?" (5 Flights Up, 00:07:37-00:07:50)

At last, the external conflict in *Flights Up* often happens between Mr. Carver and the environment, which is the society itself. One of the examples of external conflict is when Mr. Carver wants to buy the *Times* magazine but he cannot find it. Therefore he asks the shopkeeper. However, the shopkeeper ignores him. He only points out his finger in unknown direction and keep busy playing his smartphone. The result is Mr. Carver decides to cancel buying the magazines and walk out the door because of the unpleasant act of the shopkeeper towards him (See picture 1.7 and picture 1.8).







Picture 1.8(5 Flights Up, 00:02:33)

## 5. SOURCES OF SOCIAL CHANGE DEPICTED IN THE 5 FLIGHTS UP FILM

5 Flights Up film depicts about social change and collective behavior of the society. In analyzing what restructure the social changes that is depicted in the 5 Flights Up film, Mr. Carver as the narrator gives contribution for it. Sources of

social changes that are reflected in the movie are the population growth, the infrastructure development, technological innovation, and the internet.

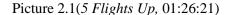
In the beginning, Mr. Carver tells that he and his wife moved from Manhattan to Brooklyn. During their life in Brooklyn for forty years, they experience many changes. In the *5 Flights Up film*, itshows that the population is growing. He describes that his neighborhood now has changed a lot. It is full of hipsters, people of subculture as it is seen in the dialog below:

Mr. Carver : "The neighborhood has changed a lot. It's cool now, filled with hipsters." (5 Flights Up, 00:03:46 - 00:03:51)

From the dialog above it shows that the population within society in his neighborhood is changing and rapidly growing.

The city's infrastructure has also been developed. In the picture 2.1 that is taken with extreme long shot, shows that New YorkCity is now full of tall buildings. In the picture 2.2 shows Mr. Carver neighborhood where there is Williamsburg Bridge.







Picture 2.2 (5 Flights Up, 00:00:45)

The last source of social change seen in this movie is the technological innovation which is smartphone. The use of it has been widely spread. Rarely

found during the film people who do not have a smartphone. It is an important source of change that has transformed the way people live and work. In the movie, Mr. Carver describes that people in the society now days seems unable to live without their smartphone. It is seen in the dialogue below:

Mr. Carver : "...and their banker husbands, their head buried in their

Smartphone. Crossing the street while you're trading stocks

and bonds does not seem that smart to me."

Driver : (Brakes Screeching) "Hey! Hey! Watch where you're

going!" (5 Flights Up, 00:03:57 - 00:04:08)

The dialogue above is a reflection of the innovation, Smartphone that has changed the way people behave. There is a man who keeps using his Smartphone while crossing the street and he almost got hit by a taxi because he is too busy looking at his Smartphone.

However, this innovation, smartphones makes people's life easier. For example in the 5 Flights Up film, when Dorothy, their old ten year dog is in pain and has to do a surgery. The doctor keeps informing Dorothy's situation via telephone to this married-couple so they do not have to go there to check her condition. It can be seen in the picture 2.3 and 2.4. These scenes are taken with medium shot with straight angel position.





Picture 2.3 (5 Flights Up,01:14:07)

Picture 2.4 (5 Flights Up, 01:14:54)

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The internet is also another example of technological innovation. In the

film, the internet has helped a lot in the selling process of their house. Not only via

telephone can the buyer place sequential bids but also via email. The dialogue

below shows that Lily tells this old couple via telephone to open their email

because there is one buyer makes an offer by sending them email.

Mrs. Carver

: "What? Lily? Lily what happened?"

Lily Portman: "The matching sweaters offered \$ 951.000. but here's the

good news. Dr. Gilbert's gonna email you a counter offer."

(5 Flights Up, 01:11:42 – 01:11:50)

COLLECTIVE BEHAVIOR DEPICTED IN THE 5 FLIGHTS UP FILM

Collective behavior namely rumor, mass hysteria, and panics are reflected in the 5

Flights Up. Rumor is depicted when there is reported news that says there has

been jackknifed on the Williamsburg Bridge and the driver fled from the area. The

society keeps assuming that this is part of terrorism as they know that the driver as

suspected is a Muslim.

Moreover, there is a mass hysteria among the society that sparks intense

fear of danger. For example, another real estate agent, Miriam Cshows her

concernfor a danger by accusing the suspect that he may carry a bomb with him

(See Picture 3.1). The result is that the society becomes panic. Mr. Vincent also

curses the suspect. He gives his unpleasant comment that says to lock the suspect

up or better to shoot him right away. His anger towards the suspect is part of a

panic because he would lose some amount of money from selling his house under his expectation (See picture 3.2).





Picture 3.1 (5 Flights Up,01:18:25)

Picture 3.2 (5 Flights Up,01:18:57)

The people's attitude towards the issue makes it worse. Moreover, this issue is being exaggerated by mass media and society keeps consuming it. In the end, it all turns out to be false. The truth finally has been spoken. It is said that the suspect is only an innocent young man. From this explanation, it really depicts the society nowadays when they just believe in anything mass media tells and keep accusing without considering the truth.

At last, Mr. Carver becomes really sick of the people's behavior. So, he cancels both transactions of buying new house and selling his house. He decides to still stay in his fifth floor apartment with his wife, because in there he already finds what he called as a home. As it is seen in the dialogue below:

Mr. Carver

: "And like most rides, we ended up where we begin. Still, it reminded us of who we are, what we have. It was worth it only for that. Maybe one day we'll sell. Stop climbing the stairs. But for now we'll just deal with what is. The important thing is it brought us back here. Together. Back to our sense and to our home." (5 Flights Up, 01:25:21 – 01:26:18)

#### 7. CONCLUSION

In 5 Flights Up, it is clearly depicted how social change occurs within society's life in the neighborhood of the main character, Mr. Alex Carver in Brooklyn, New York. One of the sources of social change which is technological innovation of Smartphone is widely used. It is shown in the film that almost everyone in this modern era has their smartphones. It is not only the technology innovation that is changing but also the infrastructure development, the population growth, and the internet that has transformed the way people live and work.

In addition, the collective behavior is also depicted within the society in his neighborhood. These common forms of collective behavior are rumor, mass hysteria, and panic. Once there is news about an incident happened around this neighborhood which sparks rumor among the society and leads to mass hysteria and panic. Moreover, mass media exaggerates the issue and society keeps consuming it. In the end, it all turns out as untrue.

In contrast, Mr. Carver stands differently. He does not want to be part of that society. His belief, behavior, and life chance are not determined by it. As a result, he cancels his plan to sell his house and stays to live in his five floor apartment with his wife. He argues that no matter what in that five floor apartment, he has already found the real home and builds a good life with his wife. All in all, through a film viewer can learn to gain the sense of awareness about particular phenomenon occurred within society.

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