INTERGROUP CONFLICT IN HOWARD DEUTCH'S
FILM *PRETTY IN PINK*

A FINAL PROJECT

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement

For S-1 Degree in American Studies

In English Department, Faculty of Humanities

Universitas Diponegoro

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SEMARANG

2018

The writer sincerely affirms that she compiles this thesis entitled 'Intergroup Conflict in Howard Deutch's film, *Pretty in Pink*' by herself without taking any result from other researchers in S-1, S-2, S-3, and in diploma degree of any university. The writer also emphasizes she does not quote any material from the existed someone's journal or paper except from the references mentioned later.

<div align="right">Semarang, 16 July 2018</div>

<div align="right">Ardra Arlizar</div>

MOTTO AND DEDICATION

What a caterpillar calls the end of the world we call a butterfly.

Eckhart Tolle

Allah SWT does not burden a soul beyond that it can bear

Al-Baqarah (2:286)

This final project is dedicated for my

parents and my future.

APPROVAL

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Praised be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds, the most Gracious, and the most Merciful who has given strength, health, and spirit to me, so this thesis entitled "Intergroup Conflict in Howard Deutch's Film, *Pretty in Pink*" came to a completion. On this occasion, the writer would like to thank all those people who have contributed to the completion of this thesis.

My deepest gratitude and appreciation are addressed to Mr. M. Irfan Zamzami, S.S., M.Hum as my project advisor for sharing his expertise, guidance and encouragement and supported me in finishing this final project. The writer would also like to express her thank to these following people:

1. Dr. Rediyanto Noor M.Hum., as the Dean of Faculty of Humanities, Diponegoro University.

2. Dr. Agus Subiyanto M.A., as the Head of the English Department, Faculty of Humanities, Diponegoro University.

3. All the lecturers in the English Department, Faculty of Humanities, Diponegoro University. Thank you for all the shared experiences and valuable knowledge.

4. My beloved family; my father Arlizar Rivai (Alm.) and my mother, Selly Riawanti who has given me abundance love, support, and inspiration, and my sister Areta Arlizar, who I truly adore.

The writer realizes that this final project is far from perfect. Thus, the writer will be glad to receive any advices, suggestions, and recommendations in order to make this thesis better than before. The writer hopes this final project will be useful for the readers.

Semarang, 16 July 2018

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ABSTRACT

Pretty in Pink is a film that tells about the relationship of two high school students who come from two different social groups. This group distinction complicates their relationships and can threaten breakdowns in it. The author analyzes the problems that arise between the two groups and the individuals. The purpose of this analysis is to reveal whether the individual will act on their will or based on the will of the group represented, using social identity theory by Henri Tajfel and John Turner. The method used is library research method. The differences between the two groups creates problems in both individuals, but ultimately, they act on their interest rather than what their groups want.

Keywords: social group, social identity, intergroup conflict, group

ABSTRAK

Pretty in Pink adalah sebuah film yang menceritakan tentang hubungan dua siswa SMA yang berasal dari dua kelompok sosial yang berbeda. Perbedaan kelompok ini menyulitkan hubungan dan dapat mengancam keretakan dalam hubungan mereka. Penulis akan menganalisis masalah yang timbul antara dua kelompok tersebut. Tujuan dari analisis ini adalah untuk melihat apakah individu tersebut akan bertindak berdasarkan kehendak mereka atau berdasarkan kehendak kelompok yang diwakili dengan memakai teori identitas sosial oleh Henri Tajfel dan John Turner. Metode yang digunakan adalah metode penelitian pustaka. Adanya perbedaan antara dua kelompok tersebut menimbulkan masalah dalam kedua individu, namun pada akhirnya mereka tetap bertindak berdasarkan kehendak diri sendiri bukan berdasarkan apa yang kelompok mereka inginkan.

Kata kunci: kelompok sosial, identitas sosial, masalah intergroup, kelompok

1. INTRODUCTION

In any society, an individual mostly shares the similar interest or background with other individuals. Their similarities bring them together and can be the base to form a group. People can be a member of one or more social groups. The groups become their identity. Unfortunately, the existence of multiple groups is not always harmonious. A group can clash with another group because of their differences in which can cause an unpleasant situation in the interaction among individuals belonging to two or more different groups. In life, superiority between groups happens often and can cause obstacle in the affair between them.

Howard Deutch's film, *Pretty in Pink*, depicts the relationship between two individuals who come from different social groups—in an urban American society. The kind of groups that they belong to are peer groups, based on social class. They are high school students in a well-established school. However, their relationship is not cherished by their respective groups members. They are encouraged to separate by the members of their groups and conflict between the two groups sparks. The groups background is the cause of the problem. Andie (the main character, female) comes from a lower-middle class family. Meanwhile, Blane (Andie's date, male) belongs to an upper-class family.

Their background differences put them into two different peer groups that exist in their high school. These two groups do not have a good relationship. As mentioned before, one group can be superior than the other and this is the case in the film.

According to Tajfel and Turner (1986) in their social identity theory of intergroup behavior, discrimination or competition between two groups is possible if they both are aware of the existence of one another. The social identity theory of intergroup behavior is used to analyze the reason why intergroup conflict that happens in the film and how the groups and the members of the groups cope with the conflict. To support the social identity theory of intergroup behavior, the writer will also refer to social class theory by Henry Tischler (2014) to see the background of the group and the concepts of peer pressure and peer influence in youth's lives by Maria R. T. de Guzman (2007) to understand the idea of what group is. By the end of the analysis we shall see how the individuals cope with the intergroup conflict that emerge between them.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The writer will develop the theoretical framework in this chapter to analyze the film. Theories and concept that will suit best to study the film is the concept of group, social identity theory, peer group influence and pressure, and social class in America. The first concept is to understand what group is and how group will bring out the social identity of the members. Meanwhile, social class is to support the background of the groups because each group in the film has different background. Social identity theory is the fundamental theory of intergroup conflict, the main issue in the film.

2.1 Definition of Group

According to Tajfel and Turner, a group is

> "…a collection of individuals who perceive themselves to be members of the same social categorization, share some emotional involvement in this common definition of themselves, and achieve some degree of social consensus about the evaluation of their group and of their membership in it." (1986:15)

Group occurs when two individuals or more get together because they have the same or similar identity. It could also be based on similar interest, certain common goals, or shared norms (Tischler, 2014). They will then behave according to what is acceptable by the group members. Tischler stated that peer groups are classified to small groups, meaning that the members are few and they know one another (Tischler, 2014).

2.2.Social Identity Theory of Intergroup Behavior

Social identity of intergroup behavior is a theory offered by Henri Tajfel and John Turner that was published in 1986. This theory basically explains the condition of the existence of social groups. Groups that people belonged to give an important identity for the members. A person can be the member of more than one group. A group has its own characteristic and the members shall behave the way the group is supposed to behave. Tajfel and Turner said that if a person is a member of more than one group, then the person will have more than one identity and have multiple treats according to the groups' characteristics (1986:7).

In this theory, if an individual belongs to a group, then his or her group will be called as the in-group and other groups are the out-groups. The in-group has the tendency to discriminate or have prejudice against the out-group to enhance their self-image. There is a superior group and the inferior group. The discrimination, prejudice, and superiority can lead to competition or conflict.

2.2.1.   Intergroup Conflict in Social Identity Theory

In social identity theory, conflict that emerges between groups is called Intergroup Conflict. As Tajfel and Turner put it,

> " ...the mere perception of belonging to two distinct groups—that is, social categorization—sufficient to trigger intergroup discrimination favoring the in-group. In other words, the mere awareness of the presence of an

outgroup is sufficient to provoke intergroup competitive or discriminatory responses on the part of an in-group." (1986: 13)

Conflict can arise between groups because of their differences. The superior group can have prejudice towards the inferior group and the other way around. In an intense group conflict, an individual will behave based on their group interest towards the outgroup rather than their own characteristic.

If conflict happens, there could be several things that can be done by the member of the group. The first one is social mobility. Social mobility is when an individual/individuals move into another group if they are not satisfied with their previous group. The second one is social creativity that can be done to manage identity threat. Social creativity means the group members seek positive distinctness of the group characteristic. Social creativity can be in the form of changing the value of the group that used to be negative and make the value positive.

2.2.2. Social Categorization

As Tajfel and Turner put it, social categorization is "…cognitive tools that segment, classify, and order the social environment, and thus enable the individual to undertake many forms of social action (1986: 17)". Thus, social categorization is a part of social identity theory that function as a process where an individual categorizes themselves into a particular category that will lead them into becoming a member of a group or groups. The categorization itself could be based on gender, age, ethnicity, class, and so forth. The example of social categories is student, teacher,

Asian, and American. This process of categorizing will be the base for defining their behavior—they will have to behave according to the norms and rules of the group they belong to. In this film, the categorization of the groups will be based on social class because the groups are made based on the social class background.

2.3.Peer Group, Peer Influence, and Peer Pressure in Adolescence

The concept of peer influence and peer pressure in this paper is based on Maria R. T. de Guzman's concepts (2007). Guzman explained that, "Adolescence is a time when peers play an increasingly important role in the lives of youth." (2007, p.1). Intimate friendships—that are exclusive—begin to develop and plays as an important aspect in their development (Guzman, 2007). The group is a safe platform to explore things for youth where they can experience the feeling of being accepted and have a sense of belongingness (Guzman, 2007). Meanwhile, Guzman stated that there are positive and negative effects from peer influence (2007). Peer pressure comes because of the similarity that the peer group has and when there is a difference in the way the peers behave then the group will emphasize what is right for their group.

2.4.Definition of Social Class by Henry L. Tischler

People who share similar income, job, lifestyle, and attitudes are classified into social class (Tischler, 2014). Stratification in the society is made because of the existence of several social classes. There are several social classes in United States; the upper class, the upper-middle class, the middle-middle class, the lower-middle

class, and the lower class. These class are based on occupation, education, and children's education (Tischler, 2014).

Upper class members are those who come from honorific positions in government and the arts, politician, corporate ownership and their children's education is college and post-college and they are often considered as "the old money" whose wealth is inherited from generation to generation. The upper-middle class members come from successful business, managers, professional and technical fields with high income. The education for the upper-middle class is college and graduate training and same goes with their children education. The middle-class members are clerical and sales position, small business, semiprofessionals, farmers. Education in the middle class are high school, or college and the children have option of college.

Lower-middle class are people of skilled labor, craftsman, nonfarm workers with the education of grade school or high school. Children's education in lower-middle class is high school and vocational school. Lower class comes from unskilled labor and service work, private household work, and farm labor. The education in lower class are grade school and their children have little interest in education or high school dropouts. (Tischler, 2014)

Class	Occupation	Education	Children's Education
Upper class	Corporate ownership; upper-echelon politics; honorific positions in government and the arts	Liberal arts education at elite schools	College and postcollege
Upper-middle class	Professional and technical fields; managers; officials; proprietors	College and graduate training	College and graduate training
Middle-middle class	Clerical and sales positions; smallbusiness semiprofessionals; farmers	High school; some college	Option of college
Lower-middle class	Skilled and semiskilled manual labor; craftspeople; foremen; nonfarm workers	Grade school; some or all of high school	High school; vocational school
Lower class	Unskilled labor and service work; private household work and farm labor	Grade school	Little interest in education; high school dropouts

Table 2.6.a.

Source: Tischler, Henry. 2014:176

3. RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses library research method to analyze the film. Library research is conducted to gather all factual information or expert opinion needed complete this research study. The source for this method is divided into two, namely the primary source and the secondary source.

The primary source is the film *Pretty in Pink* directed Howard Deutch and released in 1986. Meanwhile, the secondary source is scientific journals and textbooks that will help with the analysis in this research study. For the research approach, the writer will use sociological approach to discuss the conflict in the film. According to Wellek and Warren, sociological approach uses a theory from social philosophers to interpret society in literary works (1942). Sociological approach is used because the issue discussed in the film is an issue that happens in the society and revolve around the relationship of the character in the film.

4. Discussion

This section will discuss the intergroup conflict in Howard Deutch's film *Pretty in Pink.* The discussion will be divided into two sub-sections. First, it will discuss the social categorization, social class, and groups that exist in Pretty in Pink. The second sub-section will discuss the intergroup conflict that happens in the film.

4.1. Social Categorization, Social Class, and Group

The story revolves around the romantic relationship of Andie (the main character) and Blane. They go to the same respected and rather expensive high school. Since Andie does not come from a wealthy family, going to an expensive school is a privilege. However, the society in that school does not take her well which at some point can be hard for her. Meanwhile, Blane suits that school well because he comes from a wealthy family.

Andie comes from the lower-middle class family. This categorization is made clear because Andie's father is unemployed and because Andie has a part time job to support her needs. The neighborhood where they live also represents their social class, lower-middle class, as the houses are small, and the area is not strategic.

Meanwhile, Blane is the opposite. He comes from a wealthy family who lives in a good neighborhood. His family lives in a big house that comes with a stable, his parents are very rich who works in a big corporation.

As depicted in the film, the students are categorized into two peer groups. One group is from a lower-middle class group and the other is from the upper-class group. The identity of the adolescence—in this case the individuals of the group—can be seen by their outfit, activity they do, and the place they go to (McCulloh, Stewart, and Lovegreen, 2006). The lower-middle class group (in-group) hangs out at the outdoor area of the school, while the upper-class (out-group) hangs out in the indoor area. The outfit of the in-group is rather messy, and they layer many colorful clothes. The out-group wears outfit that is simpler and rather posh. The car that the out-group uses is expensive car and the in-group drives used and old cars. Andie is the member of the lower-middle class group because she comes from the lower-middle class family meanwhile Blane is the opposite.

These differences result in the existence of a superior group and an inferior group. In this film, the superior group is the upper-class group which makes the lower-middle class group as the inferior group. The film uses Andie's life as its perspective. Therefore, Andie's group can be considered as the in-group while Blane's group becomes the out-group.

4.2. Intergroup Conflict

The relationship between the groups has never been good. In social identity theory, in-group bias or in-group favoritism is a feature that we can see everywhere of intergroup relation as the bias tend to be influenced by the group interest. The in-group has its own prejudice towards the out-group and the out-group has their own

prejudice as well towards the in-group. The in-group sees the out-group members as ignorant and cocky people. Meanwhile, the out-group sees the in-group as poor and tacky people and thus inferior. The out-group tends to treat the in-group as an object to mock and bully which could be seen as a statement of their superiority towards the in-group.

> Andie's father: So, are you in love?
> Andie   : Yeah, I think I am.
> Andie's father: Well, who is this guy?
> Andie   : His name's Blane, and he's a senior. He's so beautiful. He's a richie.
> Andie's father: A what-ie?
> Andie   : A richie. It's kinda stupid. It's just his family has a lot of money.
> Andie's father: Well, is that a problem?
> Andie   : I don't know, it's just weird. His friends have a lot of money and he has a lot of money. He drives a BMW. I just... I don't know... I'm not really sure if they're gonna accept me.
> Andie's father: What does that mean? You like him, he likes you.
> (Pretty in Pink (1986), 56:20-56:59)

Prejudice from Andie towards the out-group can be seen in the dialogue above, when Andie tells her father about Blane's background. She hesitates whether Blane's background and his friends could be a problem in their relationship or not.

> Out-group girl   : Where'd you get your clothes? Five-and-dime store? Attractive!
> Teacher   : Is there a problem, ladies?
> Andie   : No.
> Out-group girl   : No.
> Teacher   : Andie, is there something going on between you and these ladies?
> Andie   : No, not that I'm aware of.
> (Pretty in Pink (1986), 05:29-05:43)

There are already tensions between the two group even before Andie and Blaine start to date. As stated above, the out-group makes the in-group as an object to mock and bully. In minute 05:29-05:43 as in the dialogue above, the main character, Andie, is bullied by the girls from the out-group because of her outfit. The out-group girls are mocking Andie's outfit because her clothes look cheap. Most of the time, the out-group gets away with their unpleasant behavior easily and not getting any punishment, which in the end, makes them even more superior. Another prove of bully is when Andie is in the physical education (P.E.) class, she was mocked again by the girls from the out-group (minute 33:00-33:14), dialogue below. This time, Andie is sent to the principal's office because the PE teacher thinks she is disturbing the class and the out-group wins again.

> *(P.E. teacher is expelling Andie's friend from her class because she has a scene with the girls from the out-group)*
>
> P.E. Teacher   : You are outta here, Hooman.
> Andie's friend   : Right. Bye-bye. Bye, girls.
> P.E Teacher   : So, do you share your partner's attitude?
> Andie   : No, I don't.
> Out-group girl   : (to Andie) Eat shit.
> (Pretty in Pink (1986), 33:00-33:14)

When Andie and Blane start to date, intense conflict between the in-group and the out-group emerges. An attempt of social mobility occurred. Andie goes to a party held by the out-group with Blane. This is an act of social mobility. However, Andie is not able to blend in with the members of the out-group because the out-group

responds negatively towards Andie's appearance (dialogue below). They resent

Andie's presence and look down on her.

> *(Andie goes to an out-group party with Blane)*
> Out-group girl   : Oh, my God. Am I having a nightmare?
> Out-group boy   : We got guests.
> Out-group girl   : I know you. You're in my calculus class.
> Andie   : Gym.
> Out-group girl   : Your name's Jim? You are worthless, aren't you? You and your friends gave me a lot of shit the other day.
> Blane   : Take it easy, Benny, huh?
> Out-group girl   : This is Steff's party, Blane.
> Blane   : Don't tell me what to do.
> Out-group girl   : Steff...You shouldn't be allowed to invite just anybody. Steff, she's gonna ruin my night.
> (Pretty in Pink (1986), 47:00-47:37)

The same thing happens when Blane tries to hang out with Andie's friends whose

members of the in-group. Andie's friends do not accept Blane with open arms and act

unfriendly towards him. This condition occurs because when such conflict happens,

an individual will behave according to the group's interest not their own individual

characteristic to define the relationship of the groups. Since the behavior of Andie

and Blane start to change after they become a lover, their groups give negative

reaction (dialogue below) which non-favoring the relationship between Andie and

Blane.

> Blane's friend   : If you want your little piece of low-grade ass, fine, take it. But if you do, you're not gonna have a friend.
> Blane   : Is that right?
> Blane's friend   : Yeah, that's right.
> (Pretty in Pink (1986), 1:04:44-1:05:10)

In social identity theory, it is possible that the members of a group create obstacles if an individual of the group does a social change to move out from his or her group. The obstacles are created so that the individual interest is overlapped by the group collective interest. Both groups wish to break their relationship.

Blane   : A month ago, I asked somebody else and I forgot.
Andie   : You're a liar! You're a filthy fucking no-good liar! You didn't have the guts to tell me the truth. Just say it!
Blane   : I'm not lying.
Andie   : Tell me!
Blane   : What do you wanna hear? What?
Andie   : You're ashamed to be seen...
Blane   : No, I am not. I am not.
Andie   : You're afraid! You're terrified that your goddamn rich friends won't approve! Just say it! Just tell me the truth!
Blane   : You don't understand that it has nothing at all to do with you.
(Pretty in Pink (1986), 1:16:15-1:17:40)

The group's negative reaction and bad rumors about their relationship starts to creep into Blane's mind as he stops seeing Andie and not receiving any of her phone calls, avoiding Andie. He promised Andie that he will take her to the prom, but he canceled it with no reasonable reason. This behavior of Blane proves that the group interest has successfully overlapped Blaine's interest. Andie got upset and shouted, "You're ashamed to be seen with me!" in the dialogue above, in which explains that the level of Andie's background and her in-group background is lower than Blane's. In this case, Andie is inferior from Blane and he does not want to ruin his and his group's reputation by dating Andie. Andie herself do not get tackled by her group's interest. She still behaves according to her own characteristic.

By the end of the movie, none of them succeed in attempting individual mobility. During the prom night, Andie come by herself, without concerning the out-group's opinion towards her group's identity, towards her outfit, and the fact that she comes alone—a form of social creativity. If intergroup comparison happens, the outcome will determine their prestige and eventually the perceived status will reduce the comparability. Hence, subjective superiority and inferiority will decrease. The final event of the film is Blane return to Andie and she forgave him. Blane behavior is based on his individual interest and characteristic, not according to the group's interest anymore.

5. CONCLUSION

From the analysis of the film Pretty in Pink using social identity theory by Tajfel and Turner, it can be summarized that intergroup conflict happens in the film. Before the conflict happens, tension between groups already exist because of the groups' social class differences. The tension then leads to a more complex intergroup conflict when the leading figures—Andie and Blane—that come from a different group is involved in a romantic relationship. The groups do not favor the relationship of Andie and Blane and they wish to break their relationship.

The groups create obstacles to separate Andie and Blane. At first, the obstacles succeed to break their relationship. An attempt of social mobility occurred but it fails. However, by the end of the film, Andie and Blane decide to cross the group barriers and get back together for their love. This action is an act of social creativity. They act according to their own interest, not according to their group interest. After that, the conflict between the two groups ceases.

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