

# **THE ROLE OF A CHARISMATIC LEADER IN WINNING THE FIRST HALF OF THE CIVIL WAR AS SEEN IN *GODS AND GENERALS* MOVIE**

**Submitted by:  
Maulidini Wulan Hidayati  
13020110110002**

English Department Faculty of Humanities  
Diponegoro University  
Semarang

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## **Abstract**

*Gods and Generals* movie is based on true story of the first half of the American Civil War (1861-1865). The aim of this thesis is to prove that the existence of a charismatic leader who is respected by his soldiers results in the victory for the Confederate States in the first half of the American Civil War based on *Gods and Generals* movie. The writer conducts the library research and sociology approach by applying the theory of role by Biddle & Thomas and charismatic leader theory by Max Weber. The result of this research is that General T.J “Stonewall” Jackson is a charismatic leader and he is able to give the victory to the Confederate States. A charismatic leader is a leader whose actively contributes in society, therefore he is respected

Keywords: charismatic leader, movie, *Gods and Generals*, General T.J “Stonewall” Jackson

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## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1 Background of the Study**

Civil war is a part of American historical moments which happened in 1861-1865, it was a war between the Northern and the Southern states of the United States of America. One of the causes which made this happened was the existence of slavery in the Southern states which was banned by the North, especially when a new anti-

slavery president had been elected, President Abraham Lincoln. Meanwhile in the war, there were some great leaders from the Southern states; one of them is General T.J “Stonewall” Jackson. He was a very different leader among the Southern states’ leaders because he had something special called charisma. Beside his charisma, General Thomas Jonathan Jackson got his middle name “Stonewall” because of his bravery in the battle fields against the Union army. His existence for the Southern states’ army increased the Southern people’s spirit to seize the victory. Regarding to the issues of charismatic leader, the understanding of the leader’s role concept is needed which is influencing on how a charismatic leader is respected by his followers. In doing the research, the writer utilizes the theory of Role by Biddle & Thomas and Charismatic Leader Theory by Max Weber. For the method of study, the writer uses library research and sociology approach. Therefore, this thesis revolves around a figure of charismatic leader through his role, the respect towards him by his followers, and how a charismatic leader results in victories in the first half of the American civil war.

## **1.2 Aims of the Study**

1. To present a figure of charismatic leader through his role based on *Gods and Generals* movie reflected on General T.J “Stonewall” Jackson character.
2. To analyze the intrinsic and extrinsic aspects dealing with how a charismatic leader is respected by his followers through the qualities of a charismatic leader.
3. To examine how a charismatic leader (General T.J “Stonewall” Jackson) influences the Southern army’s victories in the first half of civil war (1861-1863)

## **1.3 Scope of the Study**

The writer limits this thesis’ problem on how a charismatic leader (General T.J “Stonewall” Jackson) influences the Southern army’s victories in the first half of American civil war (1861-1863).

## **1.4 Method of the Study**

According to Nyoman Kutha (2004:34), method is a systematic step and strategy to collect data and to analyze the object of the study. The method of the study is divided into two, method of research and method of approach.

### **1.1.1 Method of Research**

Semi (1993:7) states, “Method of research is a method used to find out, develop, and test the truth of knowledge empirically based on the fact and data.” In this research, the writer takes library research. It means, in collecting the data to be used in the research, the writer uses a method that is conducted by studying collection of books, or other sources of information such as online materials, journals, and films.

### **1.1.2 Method of Approach**

In order to identify the intrinsic elements, the writer applies exponential approach. According to Guerin (1992: 197), the exponential approach describes implicit meaning in a play or film which is represented by the motifs, symbols, and images and basic patterns. Therefore, the readers are able to re-create their imagination to communicate the work.

Gerungan (2004: 47) explains that the experience and the human behavior are influenced and generated by social conditions which are studied and investigated by scientific studies called social psychology. Literature can be the historical witness since literature represents the condition in an era. Meanwhile, aspects of social life will be reflected in a literary work, even though they remain in imagination and manipulation. The writer applies social psychology approach in order to discuss how a charismatic leader influences his followers' spirit of struggle (the Southern army) so that the Southern army won several battles in the first half of the American civil war (1861-1863). In this research, the writer chooses Theory of Role by Biddle & Thomas (Sarwono, 2011: 215-220) and Charismatic Leader Theory by Max Weber (Bendix, 1960: 299-328; Klaus, "Charisma". 2006; Asselo & Martins, "7 Qualities of a Charismatic Leader". 2012.) to present a figure of charismatic leader through his role that reflected on General T.J "Stonewall" Jackson, to show the respect towards him from his followers in the first half of civil war based on the *Gods and Generals* movie, and to examine how a charismatic leader influences the Southern army's victories in the first half of American civil war (1861-1863).

### **1.5 Organization of the Study**

- Chapter 1 : This chapter consists of background of the study, aims of the study, scope of the study, method of the study, and organization of the study.
- Chapter 2 : This chapter consists of synopsis of the *Gods and Generals* movie.
- Chapter 3 : This chapter consists of theoretical review that the writer uses to support the analysis, including intrinsic and extrinsic aspects.
- Chapter 4 : This chapter consists of the analysis of intrinsic and extrinsic aspects of the *Gods and Generals* movie.
- Chapter 5 : This chapter contains the conclusion of this paper.

## **2. Synopsis**

### **2.1 Synopsis of *Gods and Generals* Movie**

At the beginning of the story, there was a meeting between General Robert Edward Lee and Mr. Blair in Washington. In that meeting, Mr. Blair was ordered to deliver Abraham Lincoln's message to General Lee that he was being ordered by Mr. President to be the Major General for the Union's army to invade the South. Until the end of the meeting, General Lee refused the order, because he was a Virginian and he wanted to defend his country. As a loyal citizen and a leader who claimed a higher principle, General Jackson said that he was ready to be involved in this war against the Union's army. At the same time, there was a convention appointed by the president of Virginia. In that occasion, the president of Virginia pointed General Robert Edward Lee as the Major General in the civil war for the citizen army of Virginia. The General accepted the order; he was also said that he would defend his motherland, Virginia. The other days, so many Virginians were preparing themselves for the war. After that, General Jackson formed the citizen army and kept an eye to the training before the war. He delivered a simple and straight forward speech in front of Virginian citizen army; he told them about the message from President Lincoln that in this war the Confederate states were commanded to form three regiments. Bravely, he shouted "Tell them we have done so". Soon after that, the Bull Run war began. The struggle came from both sides, the Confederate and the Union. In that situation, General Jackson led the army and he ordered all captains to do the strategy. His brigade was the last brigade that would join the war after all of the other brigades lost, that was the key of General Jackson's strategy. While he was leading the army, he was shot right on his left hand. But still, he faced the war and he kept motivating his soldiers with strong feeling that The Confederate states army would be the winner in this war. At the end of the first day war, the confederate won. On the other side, the Union's generals held a meeting in order to discuss the strategies that they would do in Fredericksburg. They decided that they would not give up and would send their soldiers to Richmond. The Union's army had lost for several times, finally they retreated. The next morning after that day, one of the Captains read the letter from President Abraham Lincoln. Therefore, it was official that the Union's army retreated from the war. Several days after that day, General Jackson made a strategy called all about surprise. The army of Confederate attacked the Union's army in the early morning when the Union's army had no preparation. In the night after that war, General Jackson and some soldiers were riding horse around the battle field; unfortunately he was shot three times right on his left arms by his own soldiers, because the soldiers who shot him did not recognize him. On the next day, the Confederate won the war. He had to lose his left arm because of the shots and he also got pneumonia. At last, he could not survive, but at the end of his life, he had a will to attack the Union's army and wanted to bring this war to the North.

### **3. Review of Literature**

#### **3.1 Intrinsic Aspects**

##### **3.1.1 Narrative Elements**

According to Himawan Pratista in *Memahami Film* (2008: 33), narrative is the series of event related to the story.

###### **3.1.1.1 Theme**

According to Burhan Nurgiyantoro in his book entitled *Teori Pengkajian Fiksi* (2009: 70-71), theme is the main idea of the story and it is usually talking about the meaning of life and human circumstances.

###### **3.1.1.2 Character**

According to Abrams (1999:32), “Characters are the persons represented in a dramatic or narrative work, who are interpreted by the reader as being endowed with particular moral, intellectual, and emotional qualities by inferences from what the persons say and their distinctive ways of saying it—the dialogue—and from what they do—the action.” There are two divisions of character according to Nurgiyantoro (2009: 176-177), such as Central character, it holds the most important role as the central character. The main character appears the most among all other characters. The appearance frequency of peripheral character is less than the central character’s. The peripheral character only appears when there is a relation with the central character in the story.

###### **3.1.1.3 Setting**

According to Nurgiyantoro (2009: 217), setting is important in establishing a realistic impression to readers and in creating particular situations that feel real to readers. Setting is divided into three, such as setting of time, it has a relationship with a matter of “when” the event happens in the story; setting of place, it refers to the location where the event happens based on the story; and setting of social environment, it is a setting about the way the society lives in a certain place.

###### **3.1.1.4 Conflict**

According to Nurgiyantoro (2009: 122), conflict is an essential element in developing the plot of a story. Conflict is divided into two, such as internal conflict, it is an argument or decision-making process within one character's mind; and external conflict, it is A struggle between a character and an outside force.

### **3.1.2 Cinematic Elements**

Cinematic elements include the thing that filmmaker do to the camera and the film. In cinematic elements there is cinematography which consists of distance of the frame (extreme close up, close up, medium shot, medium close up, medium long shot, long shot and extreme longshot), angle (high angle, low angle, and straight on angle), and sound (dialogue and Music).

## **3.2 Extrinsic Aspects**

### **3.2.2 A Figure of Charismatic Leader**

In order to recognize a figure of charismatic leader, the writer employs Theory of role by Biddle and Thomas (Sarwono, 2011: 215-220) and Charismatic leader theory by Max Weber (Bendix, 1960: 299-328; Klaus, "Charisma" 2006; Asselo & Martins, "7 Qualities of a Charismatic Leader". 2012).

#### **3.2.2.1 Theory of Role**

The concept in this theory is the existence of people who play their roles in a society. The word "people" in this theory is can be explained into two parts, such as:

- 1) Actor, it is a person who plays a certain role in society.
- 2) Target, it is the other people besides the actor, meaning that the target has a relationship with the actor and his performance.

In taking action, Biddle & Thomas in the book entitled *Teori-Teori Psikologi Sosial* by Prof. Dr. Sarlito Wirawan Sarwono classify four important points that relate to the role itself (Sarwono, 2011: 216), they are:

1. Expectation, it is that the expectation from the people around the actor himself. The society expect the actor to play his role well, their expectation is that the actor can play his role based on what he has to do with his role in a society. (Sarwono, 2011: 216).
2. Norm, it is just a part of the expectation from the target or society towards the actor (Sarwono, 2011: 217).
3. Performance, it can be seen from the concrete performance in order to fulfill the expectation itself. (Sarwono, 2011: 218).
4. Evaluation and sanction, based on Biddle & Thomas theory in the book *entitled Teori-Teori Psikologi Sosial* by Prof. Dr. Sarlito Wirawan Sarwono, evaluation and sanction can be positive or negative which is according to the society's expectation.

The evaluation is depending on the performance of the actor. On the other hand, sanction is the actor's positive action in order to change the negative evaluation from the target or society.

### **3.2.2.2 Charismatic Leader Theory**

Max Weber defines charisma as:

a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is considered extraordinary and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities (Weber 1947:358-359).

(Klaus, 2006)

According to Bendix (1960: 300), a leader who functions with a high level of charisma holds complete control over his followers in the social structure. A leader is determined as a charismatic leader under these circumstances, they are:

- 1) The followers believe in the correctness of the leader's belief
- 2) The similarity between the followers' beliefs and those of the leader
- 3) The unquestioning acceptance of the leader by the followers
- 4) The personal affection of the followers for the leader
- 5) The follower's willing obedience to the leader
- 6) The followers' emotional involvement in the mission of the organization
- 7) The followers' heightened performance goals due to the influence of the leader
- 8) The followers' continuing belief that they are able to contribute to the success of the group's mission.

(Klaus, 2006)

### **3.2.3 Followers' Respect towards a Charismatic Leader**

The respect from the followers is a kind of appreciation towards a successful charismatic leader. It occurs when the emotional bond between a charismatic leader and followers is formed. Dealing with those factors, the 7 qualities of a charismatic leader are strength of personality, vision, simplification of speech, strong feelings, creation of emotional bonds, search for the spotlight, and claim higher principle. The strength of personality means that the personality of a charismatic leader can attract people which are distinct, solid, and strong personality. The vision has a definition that a charismatic leader knows where he is heading, in a clear vision. The simplification of speech refers to a simple, understandable, and straight forward point in a speech. The following qualities of a charismatic leader are the strong feelings, a charismatic leader feels his emotions and he makes the followers feel his emotion as well. The creation of emotional bonds is the result of the strong feelings. This kind of bond lasts much longer than the intellectual bond. Search for the spotlight, a

charismatic leader always takes the opportunity to spread his vision. Besides, he is always on stage; that action makes him known by many people and makes so many followers for him. A charismatic leader always claims higher principle; he puts his strength and passion come from something higher than him. (Asselo & Martins, “7 Qualities of a Charismatic Leader”. 2012)

### **3.2.4 A Charismatic Leader Brings Victories for the Confederate Army**

The usage of the charisma that belongs to a leader is to build his followers' confidence which means that he shows his charisma in his performance when he performs his role as a leader. In this case, the charismatic leader is not only giving a motivated speech, smart strategy or even strict command but he also joins his followers on the battle field with confidence and pride.

## **4. Discussion**

### **4.1 Intrinsic Aspects**

#### **4.1.1 Narrative Elements**

##### **4.1.1.1 Theme**

The theme of this movie is the struggle of the Confederate's army that led by a charismatic leader named General T.J “Stonewall” Jackson against the Union's army.

##### **4.1.1.2 Character**

###### **4.1.1.2.1 Central Character**

###### **4.1.1.2.1.1 General T.J “Stonewall” Jackson**

General T.J “Stonewall” Jackson character is casted by Stephen Lang. *Gods and Generals* movie shows the beginning of General T.J “Stonewall” Jackson's career as a general for Virginia until the end of his life(after the war at Chancellorsville), His action makes him well-known as a charismatic leader, because his followers still believe that the spirit of that belongs to General T.J “Stonewall” Jackson is never dead.

###### **4.1.1.2.1.2 General Robert Edward Lee**

The character of General Robert Edward Lee is casted by Robert Duvall. Although he rarely appears in this movie, he plays his character as a wise and a kind-hearted General for the Confederate states.

###### **4.1.1.2.1.2 Colonel Joshua Chamberlain**

General Chamberlain is the leader for the Union. This character is casted by Jeff Daniels. In this movie, he is a volunteer of the Maine brigade. He is a person who has a very high spirit and he is also loyal to the Union.



#### **4.1.1.2.1 Peripheral Characters**

##### **4.1.1.2.2.1 Priest Pendleton**

This captain is casted by Terry McCrea. In this movie, he has two roles; first as a priest and second as the captain for the Southerners. He is Captain Alexander Pendleton's father.

##### **4.1.1.2.2.1 Captain Alexander Pendleton**

Captain Alexander Pendleton is casted by Jeremy London. The character of Captain Alexander Pendleton is a loyal person, especially to General Jackson.

#### **4.1.1.3 Setting**

The setting of time in this movie is taken in 1860s, in the range of 1861-1863. The settings of places in this movie are in Washington and Virginia. The setting of social environment of this movie is the middle and up class society, mostly the movie only shows the students' life in military school.

#### **4.1.1.4 Conflict**

The internal conflict in this movie is General Jackson fears of losing his wife, Anna. Actually he is not afraid of being involved in the civil war, but there is a huge conflict which is losing Anna. Most of the external conflict in this movie is between General T.J Jackson and the Union army. He commands his soldiers to do the strategies with discipline; he also involves himself in the battlefield. Meanwhile General Chamberlain also ready to face the war against the Confederate army.

### **4.2 Extrinsic Aspects**

#### **4.2.1 A Figure of Charismatic Leader**

1. Jackson gives spirit to his soldiers in the middle of the crucial situation in battle field:

He performed his role as a leader in the battle field; he gave spirit to his soldiers, even though he was wounded. His action attracts his followers' spirit to fight against the Union. the involvement of a leader in the war, it creates a good image for the leader himself and good impression from his followers as well. A charismatic leader is a leader who walks his talk; it creates the emotional bond between the leader and his followers

2. Communication between General Jackson and Captain Pendleton regarding to the decision making before the execution of the three betrayers in Confederate's soldiers:

General Jackson obeyed the military principle. Captain Pendleton did not want the execution happened because he pitied those betrayals. Yet, at the end, General Jackson ensured Captain Pendleton that they had to do what they had to do according to the rule, and Captain Pendleton finally agreed with him. Believe and obedience, are some of those circumstances meaning that Captain Pendleton doubt nothing about General Jackson's statement.

#### **4.2.2 Followers' Respect towards a Charismatic Leader**

##### 1. When Jackson was alive

###### ➤ Before the war begins

General Jackson as the centre of attention and all of them apply the straight on angles. Here, the Virginians put a great expectation to General Jackson so that he would win the war. They respected General Jackson and hoped for the Confederate's victory.

###### ➤ In the battle field

The strong feelings point can be seen on his expression, General Jackson was able to convince his soldier that they had to win this war because the reason for this war was the second independence. The creation of Emotional Bonds can be seen in this line "*You are the first brigade in the affection of your general*". He used those words in order to create a close relationship with his soldiers, besides he really loved them, and the search for the spotlight point can be seen by his position, he stood in front of his soldiers.

###### ➤ Before the confederate attacks the union in Chancellorsville

Gen. Jackson orders to one of captains to keep quiet because that is the plan in that war. The strategy is all about surprise, the captain obeys Gen. Jackson's order. All of the soldiers obeyed. As the result, Confederate won the war because of the discipline, the cooperation, and the obedience of the soldiers to their leader.

###### ➤ After his death, before his funeral

Knowing that General Jackson was dead, the entire confederate soldiers were sad and held a parade as the last respect to General Jackson.

### 4.2.3 A Charismatic Leader Brings Victories for the Confederate Army

1. The Confederate army won the war  
Related to the role of a leader, at that situation, those soldiers performed the struggle action based on the command of the leader. Besides, the command itself came from General Jackson as a beloved leader to his soldiers.
2. The retreat of the Union's army as the result of the successful strategy by the Confederate:  
The written speech from President Abraham Lincoln shows the official retreat of the Union army, soon after the speech was read, the Union army was dismissed and they went back to Washington.

## 5. Conclusion

*Gods and Generals* movie tells a story about the first half of the American civil war in 1861-1863. According to this movie, the Confederate states' army (the South army) achieved some victories in the first half of the American civil war. The figure of a charismatic leader can be shown by General "Stonewall" Jackson because he succeeds in fulfilling his role as a leader by showing his performance in front of his soldiers, he also proves himself as a charismatic leader who walks his talk; he involves himself in the battle field with all of his soldiers. Based on the seven qualities of a charismatic leader such as strength of personality, vision, simplification of speech, strong feelings, creation of emotional bond, search for the spotlight, and claim higher principle which are successfully proven by General "Stonewall" Jackson; He was highly respected at that time, moreover the relationship between General "Stonewall" Jackson and his followers were so close, yet he was not lose his prestige as a leader. The proof that a charismatic leader is a factor in achieving the Confederate states army's victories is that he succeeded in grabbing the attention of the army; therefore, the followers of the charismatic leader obeyed his command with pleasure and discipline.

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