

**THE SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS OF ANTAGONIST CHARACTER IN *EXAM*
MOVIE**

A GRADUATING PAPER

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for Gaining the Bachelor
Degree in English Literature



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A FINAL PROJECT STATEMENT

I certify that this research is definitely my own work. I am completely responsible for the content of this research. Other writer's opinions or findings included in the research are quoted or cited in accordance with ethical standards.

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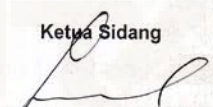
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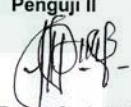
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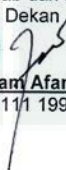
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The semiotic analysis of antagonist character in *Exam* movie

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ABSTRACT

Exam is a film that has a single set. This film is different with most of the film in this modern era which use any locations from whole countries of the world to show beautiful nature, high mountain, or others amazing set. The set of *Exam* is only in a room. Then the writer analyzes one of character of the film. The character is White who is the candidate of the examination for a contract of employment at the company. White is also the antagonist character of the film. The writer chooses to analyze antagonist character because the antagonist character in this film has very dominant role and also the antagonist character influences the conflict of the film because almost all of conflict in the film are caused by the antagonist character. The research aims to find the symbol of White. Semiotics theory from Roland Barthes is applied in this research. Since the object of the research is film, the writer also uses film theory in this research. Main source of data in this research is personality of White character including script and shot of the film that relate to White. And the result of the research is the symbol of White. The writer concludes that White is the symbol of hegemonic masculinity because the personality of White is appropriate with a concept of hegemonic masculinity that is popularized by R.W. Connell.

Key Words: Exam, White, hegemonic masculinity.

The semiotic analysis of antagonist character in *Exam* movie

Oleh: Badruz Zaman

ABSTRAK

Exam adalah film yang mempunyai satu latar tempat. Film ini berbeda dengan kebanyakan film di era modern sekarang yang menggunakan latar dari berbagai tempat di penjuru dunia untuk memperlihatkan keindahan alam, pegunungan yang tinggi, atau latar lain yang menakjubkan. Latar tempat dari film *Exam* hanya pada satu ruang. Kemudian penulis menganalisis salah satu tokoh dalam film. Tokoh itu adalah White yang merupakan peserta ujian untuk memperebutkan kontrak kerja dari perusahaan. White juga merupakan tokoh antagonis dalam film. Penulis memilih untuk menganalisis tokoh antagonis karena tokoh antagonis dalam film ini mempunyai peran yang sangat dominan dan juga mempengaruhi terhadap konflik dalam film karena hampir semua konflik yang ada di dalam film disebabkan oleh tokoh antagonis. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menemukan simbol tokoh White. Penelitian ini mengaplikasikan teori semiotik dari Roland Barthes. Penulis juga menggunakan teori film karena objek kajiannya adalah film. Sumber data dari penelitian ini kepribadian dari tokoh White yang mencakup naskah dan gambar yang berhubungan dengannya. Dan hasil dari penelitian ini, penulis menyimpulkan bahwa White adalah simbol dari sifat kelaki-lakian yang hegemoni karena kepribadian White itu sesuai dengan konsep sifat kelaki-lakian yang hegemoni yang dipopulerkan oleh R.W. Connell.

Kata Kunci: Exam, White, sifat kelaki-lakian yang hegemoni.

MOTTO

The only source of knowledge is experience.

-Albert Einstein-



DEDICATION

I dedicate this graduating paper to

My beloved father and mother

My beloved sister

My big family

English department of UIN Sunan Kalijaga

and

Nashiruttulab Moslem Boarding

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of Study

Exam is single set film. It is psychological thriller film that written by Simon Garrity and Stuart Hazeldine in 2009. The film is about an examination for a contract of employment at a company. There are many interesting things in the film. Eight candidates entered a room to join the examination. They sat down at individual desks. Each desk contained a blank paper; it just contains a word “candidate” followed by a number of candidates. What examination is it? There is no question in the paper. A Chinese Girl, the first candidate who is disqualified after spoiling the paper by writing a sentence on it, says that this is not a proper test. Actually the question is said by the invigilator after he says rules of the exam: do not communicate to the invigilator or the guard, do not spoil the paper intentionally or accidentally, and do not leave the room for any reason. Then he says “any questions?” That is the question of the exam. The candidates do not realize it and they look for question and answer during 80 minutes from time of the examination.

Another interesting thing is nickname of the candidates. The film does not mention names of candidates through narrator, invigilator, or mentioned on the paper. Eight candidates are four men and four women from different cultures and ethnic backgrounds. After the Chinese Girl is disqualified, the antagonist character who has white skin, gives nicknames arrogantly based on physical

appearance except Deaf for a candidate who is always silent. They are White for himself, Black, Brown, Dark, Blonde, and Brunette.

In this modern era, film is produced by the latest technology such as animation, visual effects, or other film making technology. Film set also uses any locations from whole countries of the world to show beautiful nature, high mountain, or others amazing set. Its purpose is to catch viewer's attention which spend a lot of budget. Exam film presents in different set. It has one set where is in a room. Indeed it also spends low budget. However Exam has power on the plot. The conflicts of story are complete that is enough for making interest. Therefore the writer chooses *Exam* to be researched.

The writer analyzes antagonist character of the film. Antagonist is character that is pitted against an important opponent (Abrams, 2009: 265). In other word, antagonist is a character that is causing the conflict. In this film, antagonist character is White. He caused almost all of conflict in the film, starts from trying to disqualify another candidate with the way they break one of the rules of the exam, treacherous, lying, rude, cruel, and other bad attitude. Even according to Abrams, White is called the villain, because in the film he is evil, or capable of cruel and criminal actions. However, the presence of antagonist is the one who actually makes the story can run and be interesting. This is the reason why the writer chooses antagonist to be analysed. And also this research is not a mainstream one because it analyzes the antagonist character which protagonist always gets more privilege than antagonist in a structure.

The role of antagonist character in this films differs from other antagonist. The antagonist character in this film has dominant role. White, as the antagonist character, has important role from the beginning until the climax of the film. Moreover the antagonist character influences the conflict of the film because almost all of conflict in the film are caused by the antagonist character. Therefore the writer want to analyze the antagonist character of the film in deep research.

The writer also analyzes the film in literature research. There have been various attempts to define literature. It can be defined, for example, as 'imaginative' writing in the sense of fiction - writing which is not literally true (Eagleton, 1996: 1). According to Abrams (2009: 117), literature (from the Latin *litteraturae*, "writings"): Literature has been commonly used since the eighteenth century, equivalently with the French *belles lettres* ("fine letters"), to designate fictional and imaginative writings—poetry, prose fiction, and drama.

In other side, the writer sees the antagonist in Islamic perspective. According to Islamic perspective, an antagonist is bad doing. And the effects of bad doing will affect to person who do it. In the end of the film, White is disqualified and automatically he does not get a contract of employment. That is the result of his bad acts to others in the examination. Bad things come to White as a candidate who has bad acts. In the holy Qur'an surah Al-Israa' Allah said:

إِنْ أَحْسَنْتُمْ أَحْسَنْتُمْ لِأَنْفُسِكُمْ وَإِنْ أَسَأْتُمْ فَلَهَا فَإِذَا جَاءَ وَعْدُ
الْآخِرَةِ لِيَسْتَعْمُوا وجوهكم وليدخلوا المسجد كما
دخلوه أول مرة وليتبروا ما علوا تَبِيرًا



Which means: “If you do good, you do good for your own souls, and if you do evil, it is for them. So, when the time for the second (of the judgments) came (We roused against you others of Our slaves) to ravage you, and to enter the mosque even as they entered it the first time, and to lay waste all that they conquered with an utter wasting.”

(Al-Israa’: 7)

1.2. Research Questions

According to the background of study, this research is intended to answer these questions:

1. How can the antagonist role of White can be explain?
2. What does the role of White symbolize?

1.3. Objectives of Study

From those research questions, this research intends to explain the antagonist role of White and to find the symbol of the character of White.

1.4. Significances of Study

The significances of this study are:

1. Theoretically, this research shows an important thing that semiotic theory can be used to analyze the antagonist character and also this research is hoped that can be used as reference to understand the content of *Exam*.
2. Practically, this research is expected to become an inspiration to the next research about *Exam* film for student and also thid research is

hoped that can be used as supporting source for research about antagonist character.

1.5. Literature Review

The writer did not find yet any research about this film. Maybe that is caused *Exam* is new movie released in 2009, besides *Exam* also is not famous or popular movie. Only some reviews of *Exam* without deep analysis that is found by the writer.

1.6. Theoretical Approach

1.6.1. Semiotic Theory

Semiotic theory is applied in this research. It all started at the beginning of the twentieth century with the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1857–1913), who was the first to apply scientific theory to the study of language and to relate this science to social psychology. It was he who introduced the term semiology. In conclusion, he determines semiotics with signifier and signified (Martin and Ringham, 2000: 1-3).

However the writer applies the semiotic theory from Roland Barthes. In myth there are the signifier, the signified and the sign, but myth is a peculiar system. It is a second-order semiological system. That which is a sign (namely the associative total of a concept and an image) in the first system, becomes a mere signifier in the second. We must here recall that the materials of mythical speech (the language itself, photography, painting, posters, rituals, objects, etc.), however different at the start, are reduced to a pure signifying function as soon as they are caught by myth. Myth sees in them only the same raw material; their unity is that

they all come down to the status of a mere language. Whether it deals with alphabetical or pictorial writing, myth wants to see in them only a sum of signs, a global sign, the final term of a first semiological chain. And it is precisely this final term which will become the first term of the greater system which it builds and of which it is only a part. Everything happens as if myth shifted the formal system of the first significations sideways (Barthes, 1991 :113).

1.6.2. Film Theory

This research also uses film theory because the object of the research is film. Film theory is an evolving body of concept designed to account for the cinema in all its dimension (aesthetic, social, physiological) for an interpretive community of scholars, critics, and interested spectators (Stam, 2000: 6).

Film theory is used to analyze the language of cinematography. It analyzes the lighting which the sources of lighting are a key light, a fill light, and a backlight by varying intensities and direction of light. Moreover it analyzes camera distance, camera angle, or camera's depth of field.

1.7. Method of Research

1.7.1. Type of Research

Qualitative research is used in this research. It is a process of interpretation and definition as the theorists move from one situation to another. The situation consists of actions and physical objects (Bogdan, 1975: 13-14).

According to Flick (2009: 14), the essential features of qualitative research are the correct choice of appropriate methods and theories; the

recognition and analysis of different perspectives; the researchers' reflections on their research as part of the process of knowledge production; and the variety of approaches and methods.

1.7.2. Data Sources

Source of data in this research are main and supporting data. Main source of data is personality of White character as antagonist. The writer also uses some literary books and some critical works about the film to support analysis of the research.

1.7.3. Data Collection Technique

The writer collects the data from the film, including images and scripts that relating to the antagonist character in such ways:

1. The witer categorizes acts of White character that contain antagonistic values.
2. The writer clasifies acts of White character according to role in the plot of the film.

1.7.4. Data Analysis Technique

The writer analyzes the data from the film, including images and scripts that relating to antagonist character. The data that appropriates with the antagonist character of White will be analyzed by the structrualism theory. In the end, the writer infers entire conclusion of the research.

1.8. Paper Organization

This paper consists of four chapters. Chapter one explains the background of study, research questions, objectives of study, significances of

study, literary review, theoretical approach, method of research, and paper organization. Chapter two contain intrinsic elements of *Exam* film. Chapter three is analysis of the research. Chapter four is the conclusion of the research. It will answer the questions of the problem statement and the suggestion for the next research related to this film.



CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

In this last chapter, the writer will concludes the objective of the research. The research aims to analyze the antagonistic values of the character of White, and also the role of White in the plot of the film. Besides the research also explains the symbol of White. The writer also gives suggestions for the next research which the object is *Exam* film.

4.1. Conclusion

The conclusion of the research is on the objectives of the research. The objectives of the research are to analyze the antagonistic values of the character of White, to explain the antagonist of White in structurally, and to find the symbol of White . The character of White has values of antagonist. The first value is arrogant which he underestimates the others. The second value is rude which he causes other candidates to fell uncomfortable or embarrasses to other candidates. The third value is selfish which he takes the advantage from dereliction of other candidates or disqualifies other candidates from the examination. The fourth value is cruel which he causes pain to other candidates either feeling pain or physical pain.

And to explain the antagonist of White in structurally, the writer explains role of white in exposition, rising, and climax of the plot. The role of white in exposition are showed by beginning some conflicts with other candidates. White

begins the conflict when he gives nicknames the candidates arrogantly based on physical appearance. Then he begins to appear a sign of his selfish act when he takes the advantage from dereliction of other candidates. Then he rises the intensity of conflict in rising of the plot. He disqualifies the candidate and makes other candidates become angry. Moreover he is coma because of his acts to others. After he is conscious from coma, he revenges the other candidates and enforces to all candidates to leave the room. Suicide of White is the climax of *Exam*. After White knows that he will be disqualified, he feels frustration. He tries to kill his self with the gun, however the gun can not be used because it uses fingerprint of The Guard.

From an analysis above is known that all antagonistic values of White are appropriate with the characteristics of hegemonic masculinity which are violence and aggression, courage, toughness, risk-taking, adventure, competitiveness. So, it can be concluded that White is symbol of hegemonic masculinity.

4.2. Suggestion

The writer gives any suggestion to the next *Exam* film research. There are many object of the film that can be analyzed for the research. The object of the research is not only White character but also the other candidates. There are ten characters of the film. They are eight candidates of the examination, The Invigilator, and The Guard. There are any interesting thing that can be analyzed from the film. One of those is Deaf. He actually the the chief executive officer of the company. However he becomes one of the candidates of the examination and looks like a stupid man. He is just silent when White mocks him and even makes

physical pain to him. And the candidates except White or the protagonist character can be analyzed for the next research.



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