

POLITICS OF TERROR PORTRAYED IN *SNOWPIERCER* MOVIE

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Degree in English Literature



By :

Sri Rahayu

13150002

STATE ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY
SUNAN KALIJAGA

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

FACULTY OF ADAB AND CULTURAL SCIENCES

STATE ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY SUNAN KALIJAGA

YOGYAKARTA

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A FINAL PROJECT STATEMENT

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Yogyakarta, May 4, 2017

The researcher,



SRI RAHAYU

Student No. 13150002

STATE ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY
SUNAN KALIJAGA
YOGYAKARTA



KEMENTERIAN AGAMA
UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI SUNAN KALIJAGA
FAKULTAS ADAB DAN ILMU BUDAYA

Jl. Marsda Adisucipto Telp. (0274) 513949 Fax. (0274) 552883 Yogyakarta 55281

PENGESAHAN TUGAS AKHIR

Nomor : B-263/Un.02/DA/PP.00.9/06/2017

Tugas Akhir dengan judul : POLITICS OF TERROR PORTRAYED IN SNOWPIERCER MOVIE

yang dipersiapkan dan disusun oleh:

Nama : SRI RAHAYU
Nomor Induk Mahasiswa : 13150002
Telah diujikan pada : Rabu, 17 Mei 2017
Nilai ujian Tugas Akhir : A-

dinyatakan telah diterima oleh Fakultas Adab dan Ilmu Budaya UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta

TIM UJIAN TUGAS AKHIR

Ketua Sidang

Ulyati Retno Sari, S.S. M.Hum.
NIP. 19771115 200501 2 002

Penguji I

Witriani, S.S. M.Hum.
NIP. 19720801 200604 2 002

Penguji II

Nisa Syuhda, S.S., M. Hum
NIP. 19751029 200501 2 006

STATE ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY
SUNAN KALIJAGA
YOGYAKARTA

Yogyakarta, 17 Mei 2017
UIN Sunan Kalijaga
Fakultas Adab dan Ilmu Budaya
DEKAN

Prof. Dr. H. Alwan Khoiri, M.A.
NIP. 19600224 198803 1 001



KEMENTERIAN AGAMA
UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI SUNAN KALIJAGA
FAKULTAS ADAB DAN ILMU BUDAYA
Jl. MarsdaAdisucipto Yogyakarta 55281 Telp./Fak. (0274)513949
Web : <http://adab.uin-suka.ac.id> E-mail : adab@uin-suka.ac.id

NOTA DINAS

Hal : Skripsi
a.n. Sri Rahayu

Yth.
Dekan Fakultas Adab dan Ilmu Budaya
UIN Sunan Kalijaga
Di Yogyakarta

Assalamu'alaikum Wr. Wb.

Setelah memeriksa, meneliti, dan memberikan arahan untuk perbaikan atas skripsi
saudari :

Nama : SRI RAHAYU
NIM : 13150002
Prodi : Sastra Inggris
Fakultas : Adab dan Ilmu Budaya
Judul :

POLITICS OF TERROR PORTRAYED IN *SNOWPIERCER* MOVIE

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Yogyakarta, 4 Mei 2017
Pembimbing,

Ulyati Retno Sari, SS, M. Hum
NIP. 19771115 200501 2 002

POLITICS OF TERROR PORTRAYED IN *SNOWPIERCER* MOVIE

By: Sri Rahayu

ABSTRACT

Snowpiercer movie by Bong Joon-ho is a science fiction movie. The movie consists of social-political issue. Related to the social-political issue, this movie shows some phenomena about social problem in social life. Such as separation of class, injustice, abuse of power and so forth. Thus, the researcher discusses the problem about abuse of power that has done by the upper class. The abuse of power is an effort to maintain the upper class's power. In this movie, the form of abuse of power consists of some terrors. The researcher uses qualitative methods, objective approach, and Marxist theory to analyze this research. Relating to the problem statements, the function of the theory is to identify how the upper class spreads their terror as form of abuse of power in *Snowpiercer* movie and how the effects of the terror that occurs in lower class. Based on the analysis of this research, the researcher draws a conclusion the form of the terror. They are verbal and practice forms. The verbal forms include insinuation to create otherness and threat statement. While for the practice forms include some practices as physical violence. The effects of terror for the lower class are physical and psychological forms. The physical is violence physical. While, for the psychological effects are powerless feeling and damaging traumatic effects.

Keywords : *Upper Class, Lower Class, Oppressors, Oppressed, and Terror.*

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Oleh: Sri Rahayu

ABSTRAK

Snowpiercer, sebuah film yang disutradarai oleh Bong Joon-ho merupakan film yang bergenre fiksi ilmiah. Film tersebut mengangkat tema tentang sosial dan politik. Berkaitan dengan isu sosial dan politik, film ini memperlihatkan beberapa fenomena masalah sosial yang terjadi di kehidupan sosial. Fenomena tersebut terdiri dari pembagian kelas, ketidakadilan, penyalahgunaan kekuasaan dsb. Sehingga, peneliti membahas tentang masalah penyalahgunaan kekuasaan yang dilakukan oleh kelas atas. Penyalahgunaan kekuasaan tersebut merupakan salah satu usaha untuk mempertahankan kekuasaan kelas atas. Di film ini, bentuk dari penyalahgunaan kekuasaan adalah dengan menggunakan beberapa teror. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah kualitatif, pendekatan objektif, dan teori Marxis. Sehubungan dengan rumusan masalah tersebut yaitu fungsi dari teori tersebut adalah untuk mengidentifikasi bagaimana kelas atas menyebarkan teror tersebut sebagai bentuk dari penyalahgunaan kekuasaan yang digambarkan di film dan efek dari teror yang dirasakan oleh kelas bawah. Berdasarkan analisis penelitian ini, peneliti menyimpulkan bahwa bentuk terror-terror tersebut terdiri dari bentuk verbal dan praktik. Bentuk verbal meliputi kalimat sindiran yang menunjukkan perbedaan status dan ancaman.. Sedangkan bentuk praktek meliputi berbagai tindakan. Untuk efek dari teror terdiri dari fisik dan psikologis. Efek fisik berupa kekerasan fisik. Sedangkan untuk efek psikologis meliputi rasa tak berdaya dan ketakutan yang menimbulkan trauma.

Kata kunci : *Kelas Atas, Kelas Bawah, Penindas, Tertindas, dan Teror.*

MOTTO

And, when you want something, all the universe conspires in helping you to achieve it.

~Paulo Coelho, The Alchemist~

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DEDICATION

This graduating paper I dedicate to :

The honorable my Parents

My English Fellows

English Literature Department State Islamic

University Sunan Kalijaga

STATE ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY
SUNAN KALIJAGA
YOGYAKARTA

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Sri Rahayu

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

Nowadays, literary work can be formed as moving pictures such as movie. Movie is one of the forms of literary work that tells a story with moving pictures also has a sound and it has interesting thing which is produced by movie (Cambridge, 2008). The interesting thing can be about language of the movie. Such as cinematography, sound, and so forth. “Film is not, of course, a language but it does generate its meanings through systems (cinematography, sound editing, and so on) which work like languages” (Turner, 1999: 52). Those of the element can be a support tools for the movie.

The language of movie can beautify the movie overall. Also, the story is described in the movie can be seen clearly. Thus, the audience can understand easily the story of the movie. Moreover, nowadays movie to be the famous literary work is produced by many production house of movie and it also gives some profits. This statement is supported by theory of movie. “In just over a hundred years, movies have evolved into a complex form of artistic representation and communication: they are at once a hugely influential, wildly profitable global industry and a modern art—the most popular art form today” (Barsam and Monahan, 2010: 2)

Moreover, movie can give effect for the audience how they can interpret the movie and how they see the movie in different point of view. As Turner said that there are many attempts to understand the relation between film and culture. They have occurred in various fields such as: film and society, film and politics, film and mass culture. Also some analyses have focused on the relations between film and trends within popular culture (Turner, 1999: 152). It means that movie can be analyzed and connected with many subject areas.

Movie is interesting works for some people. It is because movie gives some emotions and certain message to the audience. "Because most movies seek to engage viewers' emotions and transport them inside the world presented on screen" (Barsam and Monahan, 2010 : 3). The audience can see how the movie describes the plot of the story through the picture. There are many kinds of movie such as action movie, adventure, animation, biography, comedy, crime, documentary, fantasy, history, horror, musicals, mystery, romance, science fiction, war and vice versa. In this research the researcher chooses science fiction genre.

Science fiction genre usually tells about the future and technology. "Science fiction is fiction based on the imaginative science or with imaginative science for a background" (Bleiler and Diety, 1949: 5). Thus, science fiction movie genre uses science knowledge or it usually uses background of science. Science fiction contains many values in the story of the movie. They are scientific truth, educational value, and artistic truth (Bleiler and Diety, 1949: 6).

In this context about Science Fiction movie, the researcher chooses *Snowpiercer* movie to be analyzed. This science-fiction movie is different with others. It does not only talks about the global warming issues but it also talks about the social issue, such as separation of class, injustice, abuse of power and so forth. Though *Snowpiercer* contains critics about social problem, the movie maker can create the story uniquely. In the beginning of the movie, the movie describes the damage of the earth but in the middle of story, it also describes the social problem by showing some phenomena. Also, the main setting of this movie is only in the train. The train is the last place for human being. The train is powerful and can pierce the snow.

In this research, the researcher discusses about the problem abuse of power. The upper class controls the lower class in order to subjugate them. This phenomenon is common case that happens in society. It is important case because as social creature who live in society people face those of the conflict. Those of the phenomenon also occurs in society because as Marx said that social classes has a power to other classes (Eagleton, 2002: 6). Thus, the separation of class can create some conflicts in a society. One of them is about abuse of power.

Snowpiercer movie is written by Bong Joon-ho. This movie released on 1 August 2013 and it is starred by Chris Evans, Song Kang-ho, Tilda Swinton, Jamie Bell, Octavia Spencer, John Hurt, and Ed Harris. This movie tells about the damage of the earth in the future.

This story begins when the global warming problem has been solved by a number of scientists with a formula called CW7. This formula is capable of making

the hot weather becomes cold. This CW7 releases into the atmosphere. The result, heat is solved but the earth is frozen. Life on earth is almost extinct.

The vehicle is called *Snowpiercer* or ice breaker. *Snowpiercer* is the last place for human. The vehicle is the form of a train with a locomotive and it has a powerful engine. This train is created by the transportation magnate Wilford. Wilford is the creator of the train. He controls many things that relate with the train such as facilities and food.

Human is divided into two classes and consists of poor people and rich people. Poor people is in the tail. In the tail is uncomfortable and it is unfit for human habitation. Besides, the food that they eat just a block protein that these foods are made from cockroaches. Meanwhile, the rich people enjoy a good food.

In the front of wagon there are a lot of army personnel to protect the front wagon. In the *Snowpiercer* movie, rich people have many good facilities in contrast with poor people, they far from prosperous life. The lower class is always oppressed by the upper class who has authority to control them. The lower class does not have any authority to take part.

The lower class is forced to follow the upper class's rule. There is no compromise for the lower class they should do what the upper class command. In the context of some characters in *Snowpiercer* movie, the main character is Curtis, he is the man who comes from the lower class. He tries to break through the wagon and he go to the front of wagon. Curtis has a plan and led a rebellion to gain the justice and freedom of lower class for prosperous life.

Curtis is assisted by Edgar, a young man who was born in the wagon. The other one, a former army personnel who prisoned in the locker. He is Namgoong Minsoo and his daughter Yona. Namgoong is the one who can open the wagon so Curtis and the other can pass the wagon until the front of wagon. Their goal is to seize control the train engine that controlled by Wilford. The train engine is the important thing to make the train keep running.

Therefore, this research focuses on the social condition that portrayed in the movie and how the lower class condition because of those terror. In this case, the prohibition in doing oppression toward the weak people (lower class) is reflected in Al-Quran surah Asy-Syura ayat 39-43:

وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَهُمُ الْبَغْيُ هُمْ يَنْتَصِرُونَ (٣٩) وَجَزَاءُ سَيِّئَةٍ سَيِّئَةٌ مِثْلُهَا فَمَنْ عَفَا وَأَصْلَحَ فَأَجْرُهُ عَلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الظَّالِمِينَ (٤٠) وَلَمَنْ انْتَصَرَ بَعْدَ ظُلْمِهِ فَأُولَئِكَ مَا عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ سَبِيلٍ (٤١) إِنَّمَا السَّبِيلُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ يَظْلِمُونَ النَّاسَ وَيَبْغُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ أُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ (٤٢) وَلَمَنْ صَبَرَ وَغَفَرَ إِنَّ ذَلِكَ لَمِنْ عَزْمِ الْأُمُورِ (٤٣)

Means : And those who, when tyranny strikes them, they defend themselves. And the retribution for an evil act is an evil one like it, but whoever pardons and makes reconciliation - his reward is [due] from Allah. Indeed, He does not like wrongdoers. And whoever avenges himself after having been wronged - those have not upon them any cause [for blame]. The cause is only against the ones who wrong the people and tyrannize upon the earth without right. Those will have a painful punishment. And whoever is patient and forgives - indeed, that is of the matters [requiring] determination.

From the verse above, Allah says that if someone treated tyrannically, they have right to defend themselves from the tyranny. In this case, based on the research the upper class treat the lower class tyrannically. They do not care with the condition of the lower class. They only want to maintain their dominance. So, as reflected in Surah As-Syura the lower class may fights against the upper class because of the injustice treatment. Allah does not like that people do tyrannical action to others. Tyrannical treatment is prohibited in Islam.

In the reality, this case also occurs in society. The lower class has no courage to fight against the upper class. As the dominant class they only think to get more profit and dominance. As human being and social creature we should keep our relationship. Human being should help each other without any distinction such as status or class stratum.

1.2 Problem Statements

Based on the background of the study above, the research of this paper aims to discover the answers of the problem as follow:

1. What are kinds of spreading fear and how can this spreading fear of the oppressors to the oppressed portrayed?
2. What are kinds of effect of terror for lower class in *Snowpiercer* movie?

1.3 Object of Study

According to the problem statements above, the objectives of this research are:

1. To describe how the oppressors (upper class) oppress the lower class.
2. To analyze how the effects of terror that occurs in the lower class.

1.4 Significances of Study

This research has two kinds of significances. They are theoretically and practically. Theoretically, this research provides further information about the dominant class in controlling the lower class. It discusses in Marxist theory about the dominant class and subordinate class which occurs in *Snowpiercer* movie. Moreover, this research adds knowledge and understanding the meaning of Marxist theory about the dominant and subordinate class.

Practically, this research can help the academic readers to understand the case about dominant and subordinate class as class conflict in society through literary works. Furthermore, it can help the common reader about the case class conflict that occurs in society. They can understand that the class conflict about the dominant class and subordinate class are still recurrent.

1.5 Literature Review

The researcher has found three researchers who conduct in similar topics and object. The first is found at library of UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, while the second and the third are found in websites.

The first is written by Ahmad Faqikhudin. In his graduating paper entitled “The Struggle of Lower Class Against The Government As Seen in *Elysium* Movie” (State Islamic University, 2015). In his research, he uses an objective approach and applies class struggle theory by Karl Marx. His research question is how the upper class and the lower class are represented in *Elysium* movie, how the upper class oppresses the lower class, and how the lower class struggles to achieve the justice

and equality against the upper class. He discusses about the struggle of lower class in the movie is the way of lower class to get their justice. The portrayal of lower class in the movie is an attempt of reverse the representation of government through negative meaning and giving a new meaning that people in the government is not always good people.

The second is written by Muhammad Sandi Firdaus from Telkom University. His paper entitled “The Representation of Capitalism In Film *Snowpiercer* (The Semiotic Analysis With John Fiske Model)”. His research uses semiotic model by John Fiske to find out the meaning of semiotics about capitalist values in *Snowpiercer* movie and to analyze what the signs contained in the movie are. The signs are related to the value of capitalism from the level of reality, the level of representation and ideological level, which is the part of John Fiske's television codes. In his paper, he discusses the result from the level of reality, the level of representation and the level of ideology in the *Snowpiercer* movie is the back wagon do not get the same treatment with the front wagon group.

The third is written by Ferdy Soegito Putra from Universitas Komputer Indonesia. In his paper entitled “*Representasi Kelas Sosial Dalam Film Snowpiercer*”. He uses Semiotic Analysis by John Fiske to find out the meaning of semiotics about social class values in *Snowpiercer* movie.

The topics of the three works have mentioned before have relation to the researcher's topic and the same object. The first graduating paper uses class struggle by Karl Marx. The second paper uses semiotic theory by John Fiske to find out the

representation of capitalism in the same object as the researcher's object. The last paper uses semiotic theory by John Fiske to find out the representation of social class in *Snowpiercer* movie.

Therefore, in this research has different discussion or analysis with the three paper has mentioned. In this research, the researcher analyzes the problem about abuse of power. The abuse of power can be formed as terror. Thus, the researcher analyzes what kinds of terror for lower class and how the spreading fear of terror is portrayed in the movie. Also, the effects of terror for the lower class that occurs in *Snowpiercer* movie. This research applies Marxist theory to analyze the problem.

1.6 Theoretical Approach

This research attempts to describe the form of abuse of power through terror. Those of terror give some effects for the lower class. In this research, the research concerns with Marxist theory.

1.6.1 Marxist Theory

Marxist theory consists about social, economic, and political problem. Those of the field is the base of principle or system in Marxist. The main basic of Marxist theory is economic which can influence other subject areas such as politic system and social. The bourgeoisie (capitalist), proletariat (working class) are two elements which create a mutual relationship between both of them. The capitalist need the laborers to make a profit for them and the laborer (proletariat) need money for their life. In this case, money is the main profit for the capitalist (Isaac, 1987: 110)

Based on the marxist theory, class is not determined or differentiated by income, occupation, and status as criteria of class. The four elements that possible are property, exploitation, market behavior, and domination. “Having rejected income, occupation, and status as criteria of class, four more plausible definitions must be considered: property, exploitation, market behavior, and domination”. Power relation of dominant class and subordinate are in a hierarchical chain of commands (Elster, 1986: 125-127).

Those of the elements are part of social conflict and they are natural extension of concept class (1986: 127). Marx considered that state is controlled by the dominant class in society. Then, state to be the apparatus to control the subordinate class. It is because the staet is controled by the dominant class in society (Kristeva, 2015: 336). In this case, the dominant class (ruling class) has a power to control the lower class as subordinate class (ruled class).

Hence, the state not only to fulfil as repression function but also as integration of ideology system (2015: 343). This has a relation with domination and power in a class. The dominant class has more power and authority in controlling subordinate class (ruled class). It has a purpose to maintain their positions to be the dominant class.

1.6.2 Movie Theory

Relating to the research discusses about movie, the researcher applies movie theory to support the analysis. Movie theory is important for this research. It is because the pictures or shot in the scene of the movie are taken help the researcher in finding the data. The basic of film analysis is *mis-en-scene*. In *mis-en-scene*, there

are six elements- setting, lighting, costume and hair make-up, figure behavior, and cinematography (Villarejo, 2007: 28-36).

The first element is setting. Setting to be the important element in making movie. The setting in movie takes an important role in explaining the situation of the story within the movie. Setting can be divided into two kinds. There are setting of place and setting of time. Those of the setting, it help the spectators to understand the story easily.

The second is lighting. Lighting can establish mood and directs attention to detail. There are three point of lighting- key light, a fill light, and a back light. Key light provides the primary or key light source. It tends to illuminate the shot's subject strongly and it also tends to cast the strongest shadows. Then, fill light to soften the illumination upon the subject and its surrounding area. Back light comes from behind the subject and separates the subject from the background, counterbalancing the brightness of the key light. High-key lighting has little contrast between bright and dark, soft and revealing of detail. Low-key lighting has high contrast, harsh and hard. It usually uses in horror and mystery (2007: 32-33).

The other element are costume, hair, and make-up. Those of the element able to be the complement in the movie especially for the character. Then, figure behavior means to describe the movement, expressions, or actions of the actors or other figures (animals, monsters, animated things, and droids) within a given shot.

The last is cinematography. There are seven compositions of cinematography that are used in framing the pictures in the movie. The first is extreme long shot

(ELS) in which one can barely distinguish the human figure. The long shot (LS) in which humans are distinguishable but remain dwarfed by the background. The medium long shot (MLS), in which the human is framed from the knees up.

The medium shot (MS), in which portrayed the human from the waist up. The medium close up (MCU), in which gives the description of the human from the chest up. The close up (CU), which isolates a portion of a human (the face most prominently). The last, the extreme close-up (ECU), in which gives the depiction of human in portion of the face (an eye or the lips) (2007: 33-38).

1.7 Method of Research

The inquiry consists of type of research, data resources, method of collecting data, and method of analysis. Each of the data is briefly described as follows.

1.7.1 Type of Research

In this research, the researcher uses a qualitative research. It means this research produces descriptive data as form of the text is concerned with qualitative phenomenon, i.e., phenomena relating to or involving quality or kind (Kothari, 2004: 3). The researcher describes the data through the action, a speech language, and expression which is shown in the *Snowpiercer* movie.

1.7.2 Data Sources

The data is the scene of *Snowpiercer* movie as the main data. The units of the data in this research are practice of terror and images of terror. It consists of two practices, dialogues and performances. Then, for image of terror it comes from social condition's appearance in *Snowpiercer* movie. The supporting data is taken from books, journals, websites, and article which relate with the theme of this

research. Both main data and supporting data are primary data because it can complete the researcher's analysis.

1.7.3 Method of Collecting Data

In the collecting data, the researcher uses *Snowpiercer* movie as a text and the act of the movie. The first step, the researcher watches the movie and comprehending the story through the script of the movie. It aims to consider the case of the story and determining which is proper to be analyzed with the Marxist theory. Second, the researcher understands some of intrinsic elements of the movie.

Then, the researcher considers the word or statement in the movie which has a relation with the research of problem about social-political theme. Also, the researcher determines certain scene of the movie which can be used as the data to be analyzed.

1.7.4 Method of Analysis

In this research the researcher uses objective approach to analyze the data. In which, the data is taken from the movie factually.

1. First, the researcher determines the data which are proper to be analyzed such as events of oppressors oppressed the lower class, objects, and the action of the character in the movie.
2. Then, the researcher analyzes the data based on the theory of this research.
3. The last, the researcher determines the conclusion of the research.

1.8. Paper Organization

This research consists of four chapter. Chapter I consist of: Background of Study, Problem Statements, Objective of Study, Significances of Study, Literature Review, Theoretical Approach, Method of Research, and Paper Organization. The second chapter is about the intrinsic elements of the *Snowpiercer* movie including theme, character and characterization, setting and plot. The third chapter is the analysis of the data by using Marxist theory and movie theory. The last chapter is conclusion and suggestion.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

4.1. Conclusion

From the previous discussion, the conclusion can be drawn in this research. The aims of this research are to discover the problem relate to power abuse. The portrayal of power abuse in this movie is described by terror. Besides, the terror give some effects for the lower class. Thus, in this research discusses about those of the problem. The researcher applies Marxist theory which discusses about class conflict in order to find answer those of the research question.

There are two kinds of spreading fear relate to abuse of power in *Snowpiercer* movie. The first is verbal forms. The verbal forms can be formed through word or statement. The verbal forms are divided into two kinds. They are insinuation to create otherness and threat. Those of the verbal forms contain terror action. Then, for practice forms related to violent action that has done by the ruling class to the ruled class. The violent actions have done by the upper class aims to subjugate the lower class. All of the action are part of power abuse.

There are two effects of terrors which are experienced by the lower class. They are physical and psychological effects. The physical effect forms as violent effects. The psychological effects of terror are divided into two effects. The first, psychological effects form as powerless feeling. The second is damaging traumatic effects. Those of the effects of terror are caused by the spreading fear of terror.

4.2 Suggestion

Snowpiercer movie has a social issue theme. In this research the researcher analyzes this movie using Marxist theory and movie theory as supporting analysis. This research is far from perfect research. It causes the limitation of knowledge and so forth. The first, researcher hopes for the next researcher can explore more about the Marxist theory and apply the theory in some movies. Then, the second for the next researcher may find another interested theme which contain in *Snowpiercer* movie uses another theory such as representation theory, feminism and so forth.

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CURRICULUM VITAE



Name : Sri Rahayu

Place of Birth : Jakarta

Date of Birth : June 28, 1995

Mobile Phone: 087839583025

Email : ayurahayu569@gmail.com

Educations:

2001-2007

SDN 13 Lubang Buaya

2007-2010

SMPN 157 Jakarta Timur

2010-2013

SMAN 1 Karangmojo

2013-2017

**English Department State Islamic
University Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta**

