

**ORIENTALISM AS PORTRAYED IN *THE GREAT WALL*  
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 thesis is definitely my own work. I am completely responsible for the content of this thesis. All the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledge by means of complete references.

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Kami menyatakan bahwa skripsi tersebut sudah dapat diajukan pada sidang Munaqasyah untuk memenuhi salah satu syarat memperoleh gelar Sarjana Sastra Inggris. Atas perhatiannya, kami ucapkan terima kasih.

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## ABSTRACT

The researcher wants to examine the portrayal of Orientalism in a movie. In here, the researcher choose *The Great Wall* movie as the object. This movie has the representation of East and West. This movie made from West industry but take a setting in the East. It makes the movie as though East is superior but in a fact West has the domination in this movie. The domination of West is conduct the Orientalism issue. Orientalism is thought that the West has the authority to provide stereotypes and constructs the East. For the analyzing the data, the researcher uses descriptive qualitative as the kind of the research. The qualitative research has a meaning to explore and understand the meaning of individuals or groups ascribe to social or human problem. The descriptive qualitative research is used to explore the data of this research. Hence, the researcher could get the meaning and the interpretation as the research's result. In this research, the researcher is also uses the library research because this research is using many sources materials in library and the researcher is not observing the participants in the laboratory or in the field. The purpose of this research is revealing the domination of the superiority of the West to the East. As the result, this research finds about the contrast between the portrayal of East and West.

*Keyword: East, West, Orientalism, Song Dynasty*

## ABSTRAK

Studi tentang Timur, seperti budayanya, bahasanya, agamanya, dan adat istiadatnya cukup terkenal di kalangan orang Barat untuk dipelajari. Orang Barat menarik untuk memelajarinya karena Timur dianggap berbeda dari mereka. Studi tentang Timur disebut Orientalisme. Di sini, Peneliti ingin meneliti tentang orientalisme. Orientalisme sendiri berpendapat bahwa Barat memiliki wewenang untuk memberikan stereotip-stereotip kepada Timur. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui dominasi yang dibuat oleh Barat terhadap Timur. Dalam kasus ini, film *The Great Wall* menyajikan kedua budaya yaitu Timur dan Barat. Timur digambarkan oleh setting dan beberapa karakter dari film ini. Sementara Barat digambarkan oleh karakter utama bernama William Garin. Suatu hari, William melakukan perjalanan ke Dinasti Song dengan temannya Pero Tovar. Mereka memiliki tujuan untuk mendapatkan bubuk hitam. Di sana, dia ditangkap oleh tentara China tapi seiring berjalannya waktu, William justru membantu Dinasti Song untuk melawan para alien jahat bernama Tao Tie. William dibutuhkan oleh Dinasti Song. Perbedaan antara unsur-unsur William dan Dinasti Song seperti orang-orangnya dan tempat itu sendiri bisa terlihat. Perbedaan ini membentuk isu Orientalisme tentang bagaimana film *The Great Wall* menggambarkan Timur dan Barat melalui elemen intrinsiknya. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah deskriptif kualitatif dengan melakukan penelitian kepustakaan. Akibatnya, penelitian ini menemukan tentang kontras antara penggambaran Timur dan Barat.

*Kata kunci: Timur, Barat, Orientalisme, Dinasti Song*

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## MOTTO

*People ask me*

*How I was able to hold out of a place like that*

*The Hope that I'll be able to get out of there one day*

*The Hope that The Real Omnipotent being must be watching over us*

*The Hope that someone will answer upon hearing my desperate cry*

*Such Hopes are what got me through those days*

*I believe that such hopes still exist in this world*

DEDICATION

***Sincerely, I dedicate my graduating paper to***

***My Father & My Mother***

***My Big Family, My Friends, My Environment***

***And many people who support me***



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Finally, I realize that there are many errors in the writing of this paper. Because of that, I really hope and allow all of the readers to give any suggestion to improve this paper.

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The Researcher



Ridho Hanif Yoghi Artanto

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of Study

Literature is a result of human's creativity. Literature is product of ideas, thoughts, and expressions. Ideas, thoughts, and expressions come from human. It means that human and literature cannot be separated. It is because literature reflects the social condition that uses the social surrounding as the foundation. Wellek Warren (1973:39) states that the works of literature themselves justify all our interests in the life of an author, in this social environment and the whole process of literature. Literature itself refers to imaginative and fictional works, such as drama, prose fiction, poetry, movie and song (Abrams and Harpham, 2009: 177-178). Humans express their feelings toward literary works.

Literary works are classified into novel, poetry, and drama. Furthermore, there is a new media based on the development of technology named moving pictures or it can be called as a movie. Basically, movie has the same intrinsic elements as drama, but it is recorded. Movie tells about a story in the form of an audio visual media and it different from another literature work that deal with and written in papers. Movie also represent sides of life. The sides of life are showed by its dialogue and the plot in visual delineation.

The researcher uses the movie as the data of this research because it not only present the picture that supported an audio-visual effect, but also gives more consistent messages and moral values based on the socio culture than in another literary works. Those additional elements of the movie are helpful to analyze the data effectively because the audiences have a direct access to see the audio-visual of the movie deeply.

In this research, the researcher chooses *The Great Wall* movie as the object of research. This movie is different from the other movies which are realized in the Hollywood. *The Great Wall* is made by the mix of Chinese and American elements in the filmmaking, and wondered whom the film was meant to attract the viewers. *The Great Wall* movie has the genre of action.

Action is a genre that the protagonist end up in a series of challenges which typically include violence, extended fighting, frantic chases and physical feats. Action films is tending to feature a resourceful hero struggling against incredible dispute, which include life-threatening situations, a villain, or a pursuit which generally concludes in victory for the hero (Tasker, 2004: 4).

This movie tells about a mercenary warrior that come from European Country (exactly from England) who is imprisoned within the Great Wall era. Their names are William Garin and Pero Tovar who were sneaking into the Empire of China (exactly The Song Dynasty) for stealing gunpowder. After arriving in China, they realized that they were trapped in a war that is underway in the country. There was a dangerous situation in this dynasty. Every 60 years, the elite of the imperial China lowered to maintain the Great Wall of China from a

mysterious monster attacks. The monster itself resembled a lizards. Finally, after they were released from the prison, William and Pero as a mercenary who often face tensions on the battlefield, cooperated the imperial elite troops to defeat the monsters. (<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt2034800/>).

*The Great Wall* movie shows the West representation of the East. Here, the main characters of *The Great Wall* movie are the key of the relationship between East and West. Character is a person who has part to act and speak in literary work. According to Abrams, characters are the persons in fiction works like dramatic or narrative work, which have particular moral, intellectual, and emotional qualities. It can be seen from their particular ways of saying it or the dialogue and from what they do or the action (Abrams, 2009: 42).

The main characters in this movie are William Garin and Commander Lin Mae. Those characters in this movie are so important. West is represented by William's character and East is represented by Lin Mei character. William is a west mercenary who traveled to China. Someday, he arrived to Song Dynasty. there, he became a hero who saved the dynasty from the alien attack. Lin Mei was a Chinese woman commander. She was the only one woman commander in Song Dynasty. She became a friend with William. In this movie, William and Lin Mei worked together to destroy the attack from the alien called Tao Tei.

Despite all the differences in the characters and characterization above, those differences denote the ideology of East and West. The ideology of East and West leads to the inequality. This can be seen from the superiority of Western role as seen in the character of William. It is proved when William defeated the alien

alone by himself. Before that, many Song people cannot defeated the alien alone. Western and Eastern signification also can be seen in the plot of this movie. Plot of narrative or dramatic work according to Abrams is constituted by its events, as these are rendered and ordered toward achieving particular artistic and emotional effects (Abrams, 2009: 265).

Furthermore the development of imperialism of Western is leading the Western to claim that they are having the authority to speak everything about East. This is because Western begins to study about Eastern - or Orient - such as; the history of eastern, the culture of eastern, the language of eastern. Thus, Western people “that teaches, writes about, or researches the Orient and this applies whether he is as sociologist, anthropologist, either in its specific aspect or its general aspect, is an Orientalist (Said, 2003:2). Then the Orientalist try to construct the portrayal of Orient in its own way that is called orientalism. This thought started to develop Napoleon expansion to Egypt in the Eighteenth century. Western -or in this case Britain- as the colonizer speaks for describing Egyptian. This is because Western has the knowledge about Eastern. Having a knowledge means knowing about it deeply, more than just the object itself. In this case, Balfour said that “to have such knowledge of such thing is to dominate it, to have an authority over it (as cited in Said, 2003:32).

Orientalist is trying to construct the portrayal of East. Here, *The Great Wall* movie is presenting both West and East with their own intrinsic elements. As what had been discussed before, movie can contain an aim to show an argument or an idea. Thus, the portrayal of West and East in *The Great Wall* movie is

important to be analyzed since this movie contains Orientalism idea about west and east.

The gap that happens between West and East creates a lot of damages, such as what happened in the First and Second World War. Hence, in Islamic study Allah mentions that differences are not disunion. The differences is the color of the world. Thus, what is needed is to respect each other. The diversity happens in this movie is possible to be united because of Allah's Will, like in Holy Qur'an Allah says

وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَجَعَلَكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَلَكِنْ يُضِلُّ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَلَتُسْأَلُنَّ عَمَّا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٩٣﴾

93. And in Allah had Willed, He could have made you [of] one religion, but He causes to stray whom He Wills and guides whom He Wills. And you will surely be questioned about what you used to do (Hilali and Khan)

Allah had made diversity in the universe in order to make people know each other. This written in the Holy Qur'an. He has created humans male and female in many groups and races to see and learn each other. Thus nothing differs people in front of God, but their obedience to God's command.

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتَقْوَاهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ ﴿١٣﴾

13. O mankind! Lo! We have created you male and female, and have made you nations and tribes that ye may know one another. Indeed, the noblest of

you, in the sight of Allah, is the best in conduct. Lo! Allah is Knower, Aware.

(Hilali and Khan)

The verses above is proving that in the perspective of Islam, the discrimination is not supported. The discrimination worsens the harmony of people in this earth. Moreover, colonialism practices produce violence acts.

This research aims to explain how the images of East and West are presented implicitly. In this movie, Eastern is seemingly majority and Western is seemingly minority, but actually Eastern is inferior and Western is superior. It is important to analyze because from the superiority of West and the inferiority of East it can be shown that there is a gap between them. It can be shown in the perspective of west to east that is relatively negative. The unique things from this movie also can be seen in the Chinese majority in this movie. Commonly, in other movies The Eastern is always more inferior than The Western, but in this movie western has the domination over eastern. It can be seen when William Garin came to dynasty Song, many soldier of dynasty song were helped by him. It proves the relationship between East and West, it tends to be in conflict.

## **1.2 Research Question**

Based on the background of the study, the researcher of this paper aims to discover the answer of the problem as follows: How does the movie portray the Eastern and Western through the intrinsic elements such as the characters and setting?

### 1.3 Objectives of Study

Based on the problem statement above, this research aims to explain how the movie portrays the West and East's condition through the intrinsic elements.

### 1.4 Significance of Study

Differentiations can't be separated in this world. Therefore the portrayal of East and West that exists in any kinds of genre as well as media. In addition, it affirms that the shadow of imperialism is inseparable from the connection between East and West. The researcher realizes that being different is a common thing.

### 1.5 Literature Review

There are some previous researches which relate to this research. Those researches use the same theories as this research, *videlicet* orientalism and postcolonial theories. The first analysis which relates to this research is a research which is written by Afri Meldam. This research is named "*Primitiveness of the Caribbean as an Orientalism Discourse: A Post-Colonial Study on Daniel Defoe's Robinson Crusoe*" (2009). In this research, Afri Meldam analyses the discourse of bias of East by using binary opposition between the native Caribbean and the main lead character. Afri Meldam's research uses documentation qualitative research design. In this research, Afri Meldam applies the theory of orientalism by Edward Said. There are some binary opposition between the native Caribbean and the main lead character in this research which are intentionally presented by the author to defend the domination of Western.

Another research is a graduating paper “*A Study of Post-Colonial; Western Representation of East in Unleashed movie*”. The research is written by Septian Dona Prasetyo in 2013. Septian Dona Prasetyo is a university student of English Literature Department in State Islamic University Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta. This research uses the theory of Post-Colonialism and Orientalism to analyze the data. This research also uses qualitative method to collect the data. This research observes how the western people give stereotype to the main character of this movie named Danny and reconstructed his character from the ideology and imperialism of the perspective of west.

Another research is a graduating paper with the title “*Portrayal of East and West as seen in The Warrior’s Way Movie: A Post-Colonial Study*”. This graduating paper is written by Nur Fauziah Hasibuan in 2016. She is a university student of English Literature Department in State Islamic University Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta. In this graduating paper, Nur Fauziah Hasibuan uses the orientalism theory to analyze the data. Nur Fauziah Hasibuan finds some binary oppositions between the East and West in this graduating paper.

However, this present research is totally different from the researches above, this research is analyzing about The Great Wall movie by using Post-Colonial theory that have been done before. Besides, this research only focuses on the Orientalism that is portrayed in the movie.



## 1.6 Theoretical Approach

This research uses two theories. The first is post-colonial theory in orientalism approach for the major theory. The second theory is film theory, this theory is used as supporting and secondary theory.

### 1.6.1 Post-Colonialism Theory

Post-Colonialism theory is the thought that refers to discourse of ideological about the revolution of many colonized countries that ever be colonized by the superior countries. This thought appears to against the imperialism. Young said that “the term of post-colonial is used in the social sciences with specific Marxist reference and nowadays it continues in the economic, policial science, language, and international relation (Young, 2001:58)”. For the first time it is used in the 1950’s and in the 1960’s. The effect of Imperialism influences many aspect of colonized country, and it makes them become addicted to it. Commonly it influences the culture and thought. Post-colonial comes with new thought that every person in this world can get their freedom of imperialism.

This movement is an anti-colonial movement, “it is used to cover all the culture affected by imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day ( Walder as cited in Eliot and Owens, 1998: 162)”. This movement has an aim to increase people’s awareness that they can be free from the imperialism. This research uses post-colonial theory to see the impact of colonization which still exists till today, especially in the African and Asian

country. The impact of colonization is happening not only in political and economic aspects but also in the culture and social aspects.

Orientalism has an idea that the East is constructed by West because of the impact of imperialism. The Western's generalization dominates the life of the colonized country. According to Said which Orientalism is a manner of thought based on epistemological and ontological diversity made between "the orient" and ( the most time ) "the occident" ( as cited in Hamadi, 2014:40 ). In this thought, the word of Orient and Occident are always appurtenant to East and West. Said also believes that "all the representation of the Orient by West constituted a determined effort to dominate and subjugate it (Carter, 2006: 116).

Orientalist tries to build some images of the Orient that they are "stressing the sensuality, primitiveness and despotism of the East underlined the rational and democratic qualities of the west" (Carter. 2006: 116). East seen as "other" that means The East people is more inferior than West people and The West people is more superior than East people. Here some usages of Orientalism as point out by Edward W Said;

Firstly, it refers to the long period of cultural and political relations between Europe and Asia. Secondly, the term is used to refer to the academic study of oriental languages and culture which dates from the early nineteenth century. And Thirdly, it is used to refer to the stereotypical views of the orient developed by many generation of

western writers and scholar, with their prejudice views of Orientals in inherently criminal and deceitful (Carter, 2006: 116).

Said's criticism as seen in this research is used as the theoretical point of view too see the portrayal of West and East which are built in *The Great Wall* movie.

### 1.6.2 Film Theory

Besides the theory of post-colonial as the primary and the first theory, this research needs the secondary theory, such as the theory of film. Amy Villarejo in his book *Film Studies: The Basics* (Villarejo, 2007, 28-38), there are two important aspects in analyzing a scene that can be seen in the movie; mise-scene and cinematography. Mise-scene is used to make the movie look alike as real life. It has six elements such as; setting, lighting, costume, hair, make-up, and figure behavior. Those components are needed to make the movie more attractive.

Besides mise-en-scene, another aspect that is important to help the analysis of the movie is cinematography. Cinematography is about camera when it shoot an object. There are camera distance, camera angle, and camera's movements that belong to cinematography (Villarejo, 2007:36).

- a. The Extreme Long Shot (ELS), covers a wide area, including the human figure and environment.
- b. The Long Shot (LS), the focus is the subject, but the background is still visible;

- c. The Medium Long Shot (MLS), frames the whole subject from knees up;
- d. The Medium Shot (MS), frames the whole subject from the waist up;
- e. The Medium Close-Up (MCU), frames the subject from chest up;
- f. The Close-UP (CU), frames the subject, especially the face;
- g. The Extreme Close-Up (ECU), frames just the person's facial features;

The shot's meanings according to Heiderich are as follow:

- a. Extreme Long Shot: Typically used to show subjects of relatively massive scale. Picture a mountain or hill climber represented as a mini speck against a vast expanse of snow, the extreme long shot conveying the relative insignificance of character struggling against their environment. It is study in scale. It is also study in majesty.
- b. Long Shot: The distance camera from its subject also reflects an emotional distance; the audience does not get as emotionally involved in what is going on as they would if they were closer. In a way, it makes viewers as casual bystander, somewhat aloof to what is happening. Take a couple arguing, where the details of their argument are lost to the viewer, and only the big blow-ups are able to catch our attention. Something is happening, but we cannot be sure what it is.
- c. Medium Long Shot: falling between the long shot and the close shot, this is more informative than emotion. It is too close for the epic scale of a long shot and too far to convey the intimacy of a close-up, making it emotionally neutral.

- d. Medium Shot: it is where we are starting to engage with the characters on personal level. It is an approximation of how close someone would be when having casual conversation.
- e. Close up: More intimate than the medium shot, the expressions and the emotions of an actor are more visible and affecting and it is meant to engage the character in a direct manner and personal manner. You are starting to lose visual information about the character's surroundings, but the character's actions are more intimate and more impacting.
- f. Extreme Close Up for amplifying emotional intensity, the extreme close up puts the camera right in the face of the actor, making even their smallest emotional cues huge and raises the intensity of the problems behind them. This works for objects too. What the extreme close up lacks in context, it makes up for by taking a small event and making it enormous.
- g. Dutch angle: tilting the camera gives a subtle cue that something about the scene is unstable or just a little bit off-kilter. The effect shows the unbalanced mental or unbalanced emotional state of the character, or to make the scene feel somehow unsettling. ( Heiderich, 2012: 7-12)

The theory of film helps the researcher to make a capable deal between the researcher and the reader. It will be useful to help the readers more clearly to understand it.

## 1.7 Method of Research

This part is containing and elucidating about the type of research, data collection technique, data source, and data analysis technique.

### 1.7.1 Type of Research

Method is the device to obtain the study's purpose. According to Stedman, method is a mean or manner of procedure, especially a regular and systematic way of accomplishing something (Stedman, 1995: 39). In this research, the researcher uses descriptive qualitative method as the kind of the research. According to Creswell, The qualitative research has a meaning to explore and understand the meaning of individuals or groups ascribe to social or human problem (Creswell, 2009:22). In this research, the researcher also uses the library research because this research uses many sources of materials in library and in this research the researcher do not observe the participants in the laboratory or in the field.

### 1.7.2 Data Sources

According to Merriam Webster data is factual information (such as measurements or statistics) used as a basis for reasoning, discussion, or calculation (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/data> Accessed on, January 22, 2018). The data that is needed in this research are taken from *The Great Wall* movie and the events. The primary data is the events that consist of screenshot and dialogue. The supporting data comes from journals, articles, websites and books that relate to this topic.

### 1.7.3 Data Collection Technique

Data collection techniques allow us to collect information systematically about the object of study and about the setting in which they are occurred, the technique of data collection is divided into four types of methods, they are documentation, observation, interview, and focus group discussion. here, the researcher uses the documentation method to collect the data.

The researcher do some steps to collect the data by applying the documentation method. First, the researcher read the film as a text. Then the researcher do the screenshot to be the unit of the data using technique of cinematography. The researcher also collect the dialogue from the movie. Afterwards, the researcher starts to classify the data based on orientalism issue between East and West. The steps are as follows:

1. The researcher classifies the data that match with the variable of orientalism like primitiveness
2. After matching the data, the researcher analyzes the primitiveness side in the data
3. The researcher also classifies the data that match with the variable of orientalism such despotism
4. After matching the data, the researcher analyzes the despotism side in the data
5. The researcher also classifies the data that match with the variable of orientalism like democratic of West
6. After matching the data, the researcher analyze the democratic of West that is portrayed in the data

7. The researcher also classifies the data that match with the variable of orientalism like Inequality between East and West
8. After matching the data, the researcher analyzes the inequality between East and West that is portrayed in the data

#### 1.7.4 Data Analysis Technique

To analyze how East and West are described in *The Great Wall* movie. First, the researcher defines the East and West intrinsic element that focuses in this research. Then, the researcher analyzes it through *The Great Wall* movie that has the movie portrays about the Eastern and Western through the intrinsic elements such as the characters and settings. The orientalism issue has many variables such as inequality position, primitiveness, despotism and democratic of West. Each variable is the result of orientalism issue. Each variable can be changed depend on the object.

#### 1.8 Paper Organization

This research is divided into four chapters. The first chapter is discussing about the research's general introduction. The first chapter is providing the background of study, research question, objective of study, significance of study, literature review, theoretical approach, methods of research (such as the type of research, data source, data collection technique, and data analysis technique ), and paper organization. The second chapter is discussing about the contents of intrinsic element in *The Great Wall* movie. The third chapter is discussing about the analysis of the research. The last chapter is containing the conclusion of the research and the suggestion for the next research.



## CHAPTER IV

### CONCLUSSION

#### 4.1 Conclusion

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century the study of east language, east habits, and east religions was increase among Western. Western begins to study and to explore more anything about East. Western make Eastern as their object. Western study about East is called as Orientalism and people that study about East is called Orientalist. Orientalism itself has an idea which the East is constructed by the Western. Orientalist construct the East with their point of view. They construct to East as the negative object. They give inequality position to East and they make themselves better that East. Thus, Western strengthens their position.

The Great Wall movie is the Western movie with Chinese setting. This movie also directed and produced by Western people. After conducting the analysis, this research find that the construction of West to the East through the intrinsic element in this movie. The East is described as negative and the West is full of Kindness. All of the negative images are portrayed in the Asian character as Lin Mei, The Emperor, The troops and the Asian habits in this movie like their medicine. In other hand, the good qualities is shown in the William's Character.

Implicitly, in this movie Western show how superior William that the Chinese people. William as the West character shows his superiority by

defeat the Tao Tie that Chinese people can't defeat them before. Not only about it, there are also some aspect like the plot and the setting that make the East look worse than the West. These all evidence of Eastern Inferiority and Western superiority is still happen in 21<sup>st</sup> century.

All of that prove that Orientalism portrayed in The Great Wall movie. The West tend to stereotypes to East and inferiority of East to West as showed in The Great Wall movie. This movie is created in 2016 and published in 2017. But the researcher finds the Orientalism is still happen and exist through The Great Wall movie nowadays.

In the other hand, the researcher thinks that there are many aspects from the movie that can be analyzed more. Thus it can be a suggestion to the next research. The next researcher can research about the feminism of Lin Mei characters by feminism theory.

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### INTEREST

1. Everything that make me happy
2. Everything that make me grateful