

**WESTERN SUPERIORITY AGAINST EAST AS SEEN IN
THE KINGDOM MOVIE (2007)**

A GRADUATING PAPER

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



By:

Dimas Setiawan

15150047

**ENGLISH DEPARTMENT
FACULTY OF ADAB AND CULTURAL SCIENCES
STATE ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY SUNAN KALIJAGA**

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A FINAL PROJECT STATEMENT

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

Yogyakarta, 7 May 2019

The Writer,



Dimas Setiawan
Student No.: 15150047



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

Jl. Marsda Adi Sucipto Yogyakarta 55281 Telp./Fax. (0274) 513949

Web: <http://adab.uin-suka.ac.id> Email: adab@uin-suka.ac.id

NOTA DINAS

Hal: Skripsi

a.n Dimas Setiawan

Yth.

Dekan Fakultas Adab dan Ilmu Budaya

UIN Sunan Kalijaga

Di Yogyakarta

Assalamualaikum Wr. Wb

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

Nama : Dimas Setiawan

NIM : 15150047

Prodi : Sastra Inggris

Fakultas : Adab dan Ilmu Budaya

Judul : **WESTERN SUPERIORITY AGAINST EAST AS SEEN IN
THE KINGDOM MOVIE (2007)**

Saya 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.

Wassalamualaikum Wr. Wb.

Yogyakarta, 7 May 2019

Pembimbing

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



PENGESAHAN TUGAS AKHIR

Nomor : B-287/Un.02/DA/PP.00.9/05/2019

Tugas Akhir dengan judul : WESTERN SUPERIORITY AGAINST EAST AS SEEN IN THE KINGDOM MOVIE
(2007)

yang dipersiapkan dan disusun oleh:

Nama : DIMAS SETIAWAN
Nomor Induk Mahasiswa : 15150047
Telah diujikan pada : Selasa, 07 Mei 2019
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

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

Penguji II

Danial Hidayatullah, SS., M.Hum
NIP. 19760405 200901 1 016

STATE ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY
SUNAN KALIJAGA
Yogyakarta, 07 Mei 2019
Fakultas Adab dan Ilmu Budaya
E E A N



Dr. H. Ahmad Patah, M.Ag.
NIP. 19610727 198803 1 002

MOTTO

“I am the bone of my sword,
Steel is my body and fire is my blood,
I have created over a thousand blades,
Unknown to death,
Nor known to life,
Have withstood pain to create many weapons,
Yet those hands will never hold anything.”

(GARNiDELia - Yakusoku)

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this graduating paper to;

My beloved family

and

for those who has been struggling over their graduating paper,

I hope, it helps you ☺



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Finally, I realized that nobody is perfect in this world. There are many lacks and mistakes in writing this graduating paper. Thus, I really allow all readers to give suggestions to improve this graduating paper.

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Yogyakarta, 7 May 2019

Dimas Setiawan
Student Number: 15150047



WESTERN SUPERIORITY AGAINST EAST AS SEEN IN *THE KINGDOM* MOVIE (2007)

By: Dimas Setiawan

ABSTRACT

As the Western movie industry, Hollywood has a large effect in creating identity. In 2007, a war, action, thriller movie entitled *The Kingdom* was produced. The movie is about cooperation between Saudi and America for combating terrorist together. Although the movie is about cooperation, the West depict themselves as equal, modern, strong, and powerful country. Meanwhile, the West also depict the East in such ways like, unequal, insubordinate, weak, ruthless, radical, devout, horrible place, the West consider the East as terror feeder. The West depicts the East in such ways to show their superiority. It is the reason which makes the researcher interested to research further how the West superiority is shown in this movie. The researcher uses Orientalism theory by Edward Said to find out the Orientalism patterns through the movie. This research focuses on the Orientalism pattern such as sociological aspects, political aspects, military aspects, and ideological aspects. The researcher uses descriptive qualitative method for deeper analysis. The conclusion of the research is Western superiority in some aspects that are shown in this movie. Meanwhile, the West manages and even produces the Orient sociologically, militarily, politically, and ideologically to show that the West is more superior to the East.

Keywords: *West, East, Superiority, Orientalism, Movie, The Kingdom (2007)*

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ABSTRAK

Sebagai industri film barat, Hollywood mempunyai peran yang besar dalam pembentukan identitas. Di 2007, film perang, aksi, thriller yang berjudul *The Kingdom* telah diproduksi. Film itu tentang kerjasama antara Arab Saudi dengan Amerika dalam memerangi teroris secara bersama sama. Meskipun film itu tentang kerjasama, di dalam film ini, Barat menggambarkan dirinya sendiri sebagai Negara yang sama rata, moderen, kuat, dan subordinasi terhadap timur. Sementara itu, Barat juga menggambarkan Timur dengan cara seperti, ketimpangan, pembangkangan, lemah, kejam, radikal, saleh, tempat mengerikan, dan pemberi terror. Barat menggambarkan Timur dengan sedemikian rupa untuk menunjukkan kesuperioritasannya. Itulah alasan yang membuat peneliti tertarik untuk meneliti lebih lanjut bagaimana superioritas Barat ditampilkan dalam film ini. Peneliti menggunakan teori Orientalisme oleh Edward Said untuk mengetahui pola-pola Orientalisme yang digunakan Barat. Penelitian ini berfokus pada pola-pola Orientalisme seperti aspek sosiologis, aspek politik, aspek militer, dan aspek ideologis. Peneliti menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif untuk analisis yang lebih dalam. Setelah data dianalisis, dapat disimpulkan bahwa keunggulan Barat dalam beberapa aspek yang ditampilkan di film ini. Sementara itu, Barat mengelola dan bahkan membuat Timur secara sosiologis, militer, politik, dan ideologis untuk menunjukkan bahwa Barat lebih unggul daripada Timur.

Kata kunci: *Barat, Timur, Superioritas, Orientalisme, Film, The Kingdom (2007)*

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

Literature is important and interesting. It is not only as old as human language but also as new as tomorrow's sunrise (Carter and McRae, 1997: 3). Literature is produced every day and it is everywhere. One of the literary works is movie. Movie has several genres such as action, adventure, comedy, crime, gangster, drama, epics/historical, horror, musical, science fiction, westerns, and war (<https://www.filmsite.org/genres.html>). Movie has always played powerful role in creating a sense of identity (<https://pro.europeana.eu/post/what-does-film-have-to-do-with-identity-anyway>). People who like to watch Western movie will imitate the words that are mainly said by the characters in the movie such as man, dude, bro, and shit.

One of the biggest movie industries is Hollywood. Hollywood's major studios such as Walt Disney, Pixar, Warner Bros, and Universal Studios have dominated the global movie industries since the end of World War One (Silver, 2007: 21). Meanwhile, moviemakers make a series of choices and each of those choices has artistic and expressive consequences (Sikov, 2010: 15). Moviemakers can choose what they want to show and what they do not. They can make one group look powerful and also look powerless.

Western views of the Middle East tend to fold up regions, periods, cultures, and religions into an according bellows of overlapping images. (Firestone, 1999: 9). The post-9/11 Hollywood movies might be in part behind the shift of the representation of Muslim and have negatively impacted the lives of Arab Immigrants and Arab-Americans in America's public sphere (Elouardaoui, 2011 :11). After the 9/11 attack, the jingoistic war movies, such as *Black Hawk Down*, *We Were Soldiers*, and *Behind Enemy Lines*, were rush into the cinema, while war films with a critical perspective, such as *The Quiet American* and *Buffalo Soldier*, were quietly held (<https://m.theeuropeanmag.com/guy-westwell--2/6354-film-as-propaganda>).

In 2007, a war, action, thriller movie named *The Kingdom* directed by American moviemaker, Peter Berg, was produced. In a softball game, there is a terrorist attack that is set off by Abu Hamza. The end of the attack begins when someone blows up himself in the central of the chaos while saying *shahada* (the Muslim profession of faith). In the night, one of the special agents from FBI that is placed in Saudi Arabia reports the current situation in the place, but suddenly an ambulance is blown up near him and he dies. After that situation, the FBI sends a team to investigate the double terrorist attacks in Saudi Arabia, but the team opposed by the State Department and the general Danny Huston who does not want to break an importance alliance.

In addition, the movie is based on the 1996 bombing of the Khobar housing complex and the 2003 bombing of the Riyadh compound. There are three groups in the movie, FBI's group, the terrorist, and the Saudi. The movie is about

cooperation between Saudi (as the East) and America (as the West) against the terrorist Abu Hamza. The FBI represents the West, while the East is divided into two sides, Saudi and the terrorists. Therefore, the power of each group shown in this movie is more inclined in the West than the East. It could be seen from the power of the troops, nursery system, politics, character, and the social condition.

The researcher assumes that Orientalism by Edward Said is appropriate to analyse the distinctions between West and East in this movie. Said says on his book, *Orientalism*:

“Orientalism derives from a particular closeness experienced between Britain and France and the Orient. From the beginning of the nineteenth century until the end of World War II France and Britain dominated the Orient and Orientalism; since World War II America has dominated the Orient, and approaches it as France and Britain once did. Out of that closeness, whose dynamic is enormously productive even if it always demonstrates the comparatively greater strength of the Occident (British, French, or American), comes the large body of texts I call Orientalist” (Said: 1979: 4).

The western world, also known as the West, refers to various nations such as parts of Europe (Western and Northern Europe), Australasia, and North America (The U.S. and Canada) (Kurth, 2004: 1). Meanwhile, The Orient is a historical term for the *East* comprising anything that belongs to the eastern world (Central, North, East Asia, Greater Middle East, Southeast Asia, and South Asia) (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/oriental>). Moreover, in this movie, America, as one of the Western countries, is represented by the FBI, while the East is represented by Saudi.

The researcher chooses this movie because this movie shows two great oil rulers countries, Saudi and America in combating terrorist together. In this movie, the West that is represented by the FBI team is portrayed as the well-trained and strong people. On the other hand, the East is portrayed into two different groups. They are the Saudi's troops as the devout Muslim and the Abu Hamza's group as the extremist terrorists. Both, Saudi and the terrorists are depicted as Muslim. Moreover, the West also depicts the East such as a dry, backward, weak, and barbaric country to show that the West is better than the East.

Said says that the West creates a discourse that aims to spread two hegemonic ideas. The first is to make imperialism legal, and the second is to make a false conviction that the West is capable to help and bring a better civilization for the East (Bartens, 2008: 204). The movie is not all about fighting and killing. It also consists of the Middle Eastern politics with different perspective than the other war-based movie. The movie is also interesting because Al Ghazi is a good Muslim that fights for his country helped by the US team (FBI) against his own Arabian people whom are depicted as the terrorist.

This graduating paper is about to examine the western superiority against Islam by looking the western domination in sociological, political, military, and ideological aspects. Superiority is a fact that one person or thing is better, stronger, and greater than others (Cambridge Dictionary). This paper examines that the West is more powerful than the East even though it is in the East's country itself. Even though the movie is about America and Saudi collaboration to hunt the terrorists, the power that is shown in the movie is very inclined. The

researcher uses Orientalism theory to analyse the Western superiority against the East that is shown in this movie.

1.2 Research Questions

How is the Western superiority in important aspects shown against the East in *The Kingdom* Movie (2007)?

1.3 Significance of Study

The research is significant to prove that western superiority through the movie is real and faced by the East in this world. Even though the film is covered by tolerance or cooperation between other religions, it shows the Western superiority against the East through importance aspects.

1.4 Literature Review

The researcher finds some thesis, journal, and article that have the same object with the researcher's object, *The Kingdom* (2007) movie by Peter Berg through internet and libraries.

The first is a thesis entitled "The Constuction of Muslim Terrorism in *The Kingdom* Movie 2007 directed by Peter Berg: A Reception Theory" by Santoso Agung Budi (2015) from Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta. The thesis is about the construction on Muslim terrorism based on reader response reflected in *The Kingdom* (2007) movie. Santoso Agung Budi states that there are two objectives of the study. The first is to describe the dominant issues of the reviewer in applying reader response theory to Peter Berg's *The Kingdom* movie, and the second is to explain the reason why the dominant issues are perceived

differently by reviewers. The study reveals how the cultural reader response reflected to *The Kingdom* movie.

The second is a journal entitled “Representations of Muslims Bodies in *The Kingdom*: Deconstruction Discourses in Hollywood” by Michelle Aguayo. This journal is about the movie’s critiques and notes the movie’s narrative practices, with particular attention paid to the racial and gendered discourses that are produced in the movie. The journal claims that many scenes show in which Muslim bodies are scripted as dangerous, pre-modern, and uncivilized in American popular culture. The journal is a commitment deconstructing Muslim bodies in Hollywood that will illustrate the embeddedness of racialized and gendered imaginings of “Others” as they unfold not only on “onscreen” but also their relationship to violent colonial projects “off-screen” [Michele Aguayo, 2009].

Lastly, researcher finds an article that reviews *The Kingdom* movie (2007). A. O. Scott on September, 28rd, 2007, writes an article on The New York Times, entitled “F.B.I. Agents Solve the Terrorist Problem”. Scott says that *The Kingdom* takes aim at the ethical nuances and ideological contradictions of the war on terror and blasting away. In his article, the movie is a depiction of American competence and righteousness. He says that *The Kingdom* can be seen as a wishful revisionist scenario for the American response to the Islamic fundamentalist terrorism. It is also the power of America in combating terrorist. After a murderous terrorist attack, four of American best people rather than a

thousand go over the country that spawn the terrorist, kill the bad guys and come home safely (<https://www.nytimes.com/2007/09/28/movies/28king.html>).

The researcher's problem is different from those three previous researches. The researcher wants to focus on analyzing the western superiority against the East that is shown in *The Kingdom* Movie (2007) by using Orientalism of Edward Said. The researcher looks at the previous thesis, journal, and article as the additional sources for his research.

1.5 Theoretical Framework

1.5.1 Orientalism

The researcher uses Orientalism by Edward Said as the main theory. Orientalism can be discussed and analysed as the corporate institution for dealing the Orient by making statements about it, authorizing views about it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, and ruling over it. Orientalism is a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient. In shorts, Orientalism depends for its strategy on flexible positional superiority, which puts the Westerner in a relationship with the Orient without ever losing the relative upper hand (Said, 1979: 3).

Orient and Occident are man-made. Vico states in Said's *Orientalism* that men make their own history and they make geographical sectors such as Orient and Occident (Said, 1979: 6). The Western world as the Occident also contrasts with the Orient. Meanwhile, some writers have accepted the basic distinction between East and West as the starting point for elaborate theories, novels, epics, social descriptions, and political accounts concerning the Orient, their people,

destiny, customs, and mind (Said, 1979: 2). The West also tries to show that the Western culture gains strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient. Chaucer, Mandeville, Shakespeare, Dryden, Pope, and Byron use the canonical word "Oriental" to design Asia or the East, geographically, morally, and culturally (Said, 1979: 31).

Said says that the superiority constructed by the West creates a discourse aimed to spread two hegemonic purposes, to make imperialism legal to the government and to make false conviction that the West is capable of helping and bringing a better civilization to the East (Bartens, 2008). The West wants to set their hegemony includes military, political, sociological, and ideological towards the East. The body of Orientalism is not created itself, but it is constructed by the body theory and practice from many generations. As cited in Orientalism by Edward Said, Orientalism, therefore, is not an airy European fantasy about the Orient but a created body of theory and practice in which, for many generations. There has been a considerable material investment (Said, 1979: 6).

Orientalism dates from the period of European enlightenment and colonization of the Arab. Said's idea is that the Western interest in the Orient is political according to the obvious historical accounts of it that creates the interest. It acts dynamically along with brute political, economic, and military rationales to make the Orient the varied and complicated place that is obviously called Orientalism (Said, 1973: 12). Flaubert's encounter with an Egyptian courtesan produces a widely influential model of the Oriental woman that she has never

spoken of herself, and she has never represented her emotions, presence, or history. The West speaks for and represents her (p6).

In addition, there is hegemony of Western ideas about the Orient, themselves reiterating Western superiority over Oriental backwardness. The relationship between Occident and Orient is a relationship of power, domination, and varying degrees of a complex hegemony (Said, 1977: 6). European culture is able to manage and even to produce the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively. It also tries to show that European culture gains in strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient. Orientalism makes sense at all depend more on the West than on the Orient. American political and economic role in the Near East (the Middle East) makes great claims on our understanding of the Orient.

Orientalism is a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between "the Orient" and (most of the time) "the Occident. The structure of Orientalism is nothing more than a structure of lies or of myths which the truth about them to be told would simply blow away. Orientalism is never far from the idea of Western collective notion identifying "us" Western as against all "those" Eastern as the "other", and indeed it can be argued that the major component in European culture is precisely what makes the culture hegemonic both in and outside Europe: the idea of European identity as a superior one in comparison with all the non-European peoples and cultures.

1.5.2 Film Theory

The secondary theory that is used by the researcher is film theory by Ed Shikov. The researcher uses *mise-en-scene* to analyse the research. It is the fundamental elements of formal film analysis from the expressive content of individual images to the ways the images link with one another (Shikov, 2010: 11). Film studies deals with the problem of reality by making assumption and proceeding logically from it. *Mise-en-scene* describes the cinematic representation and it is the first step in understanding how film produces and reflects meaning (p16).

Shikov states in his book Film Studies, “*Mise-en-scene* consists of all of the elements placed in front of the camera such as setting, props, lighting, costumes, makeup, and their facial expressions. *Mise-en-scene* also consists of camera angles and cinematography which means photograph for motion. *Mise-en-scene* does not have to do with the picture given which is realistic or not. Sometimes *mise-sen-scene* has realistic looking and sometimes not. Everything that comes under the heading of *mise-en-scene* is a mouthful. *Mise-en-scene* is the totality of expressive content within the image. Shikov assumes that everything within the image has expressive meaning and by analyzing *mise-en-scene*, the meaning from the picture can be seen (p18).

1.6 Method of Research

This part explains the type of the research, data source, data collection technique, and data analysis technique.

1.6.1 Type of Research

This paper uses descriptive qualitative as the type of research. According to Elliot, other distinctive features of qualitative research may turn out to be of far greater importance (Elliot, 1999). There are several advantages of descriptive qualitative method such as emphasizing of understanding phenomena in their own right, opening exploratory question, unlimited description options, special strategies for enhancing the credibility of design and analyses, and discovering something new. This type of research is used to explore data. In addition, the researcher uses many sources from libraries and internet.

1.6.2 Data Source

The researcher uses *The Kingdom* (2007) movie as the main data source. The main data are scripts, pictures, and acts from the characters of the movie. The second data come from many articles, journals, referential books, and websites that relate to this topic.

1.6.3 Data Collection Technique

The researcher close reads the movie first, and then makes some notes that contain the variable of the problem and theory such as inequality power, different depiction of parenting system, different depiction of setting of place, and different depiction of ideology. Secondly, the researcher starts to observe the scripts, pictures, and acts that contain the main data problem of Orientalism, such as western superiority against the East from the characters and scenes that are shown in this movie. Thirdly, the researcher collects all the data from the notes such as

the scripts of dialogues, pictures, and acts. Lastly, researcher classifies the data into two comparisons between the good West and the bad East.

1.6.4 Data Analysis Technique

The researcher uses several steps on analyzing the data. Firstly, the researcher classifies the data to pictures, acts, and dialogues into two different sides, West and East. Then from the classification, the researcher finds the West and East hegemony relation that shows the Western superiority against the East. Finally, the researcher uses orientalism theory by Edward Said to analyze the hegemony relation between West and East shown in this movie

1.7 Paper Organization

This research is divided into four chapters. The first chapter consists of background of study, research question, objective of study, significance of study, literature review, theoretical framework, method of research, and paper organization. The second chapter provides the intrinsic elements of *The Kingdom* movie. The third chapter is the analyses of the data by discussing about the superiority of Western as seen in some aspects. The last chapter is conclusion that contains conclusion and suggestion of the researcher.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

4.1 Conclusion

The Western tends to dominate the East by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, and describing about the East. Orientalism depends for its strategy on the flexible positional superiority, which puts the Westerner in a whole series of relationship with the Orient without ever losing the relative upper hand. In this movie, the West has cooperation with the East to investigate the terrorist attack. Even though the theme is cooperation, but still there are many scenes which show the western superiority against the East. The domination in this movie shows that the East is more powerless, lack of self-consciousness, and ability to determine their future.

In conclusion, Orientalism is a man made, and it can be said that *The Kingdom* (2007) movie directed by Peter Berg carries some patterns of Orientalism. The West that is depicted by the FBI gains strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient that is depicted by the Saudi and the terrorists. The West manages and even produces the Orient sociologically, militarily, politically, and ideologically. The Western moviemaker, Peter Berg, depicts the East in such ways like inequality, being in subordination, weak, ruthless, radical, devout, horrible place, and terror feeding. Even though the movie is covered with cooperation theme, the power that is shown in this movie is still inclined and shows that the West is more superior against the East that is inferior.

4.2 Suggestion

The Kingdom movie is a Western movie that takes places in the East especially in Saudi. The movie shows the superiority of the West against the East. The researcher only sees the movie through Orientalism by Edward Said. Moreover, the new researchers that will choose *The Kingdom* movie by Peter Berg as their object can apply Occidentalism to analyze the West images from the East and Muslim world. Occidentalism is a counterpart to the term Orientalism as used by Edward Said that refers to and identifies Western stereotypes of the Eastern world

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