

**THE PORTRAYAL OF MUSLIM CLASS STRUGGLE AS SEEN IN
AMERICAN EAST (2008)**

A GRADUATING PAPER

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



By:

Muhammad Furqon Al Farizi

17101050053

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, december 5th 2021

The Writer,



M. Furqon Al Farizi

Student No: 17101050053

STATE ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY
SUNAN KALIJAGA
YOGYAKARTA



NOTA DINAS

Hal : Skripsi

a.n. Muhammad Furqon Al Farizi

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 : Muhammad Furqon Al Farizi
NIM 17101050053
Prodi : Sastra Inggris
Fakultas : Adab dan Ilmu Budaya
Judul :

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Yogyakarta, 16 Desember 2021
Pembimbing,

Febriyanti Dwiratna Lestari, S.S.
M.A.
NIP. 198102032009012007



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

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Tugas Akhir dengan judul : "The Portrayal of Muslim Class Struggle As Seen in American East (2008)

yang dipersiapkan dan disusun oleh:

Nama : MUHAMMAD FURQON AL FARIZI
Nomor Induk Mahasiswa : 17101050053
Telah diujikan pada : Kamis, 16 Desember 2021
Nilai ujian Tugas Akhir : A/B

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

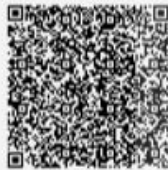
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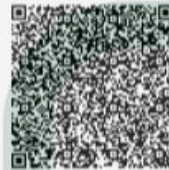
Febriyanti Dwiratna Lestari, SS., MA
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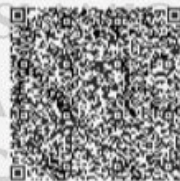
Dr. Witriani, S.S. M.Hum.
SIGNED



Valid ID: 61ef86b8d531c

Penguji II

Ulyati Retno Sari, S.S. M.Hum.
SIGNED



Valid ID: 61efa82e70ff0

Yogyakarta, 16 Desember 2021
UIN Sunan Kalijaga
Dekan Fakultas Adab dan Ilmu Budaya
Dr. Muhammad Wildan, M.A.
SIGNED

MOTTO

“I’ll leave tomorrow’s problems to tomorrow’s me.”

-Saitama (One-Punch Man)-



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DEDICATION

The researcher dedicates this paper to:

My beloved parents for their endless love, support, and encouragement

All of the researcher friends in English Department of UIN Sunan Kalijaga

Yogyakarta



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Finally, I recognized that this graduating paper is insufficiently perfect because only Allah SWT has the utmost perfection. Nonetheless, despite the fact that it is likely to contain some errors, I am hopeful that this graduating paper may be useful to other researchers interested in this topic.

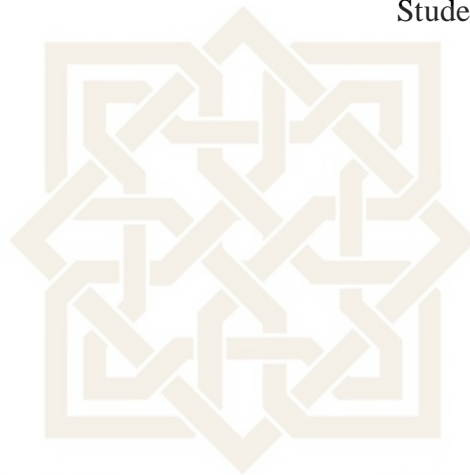
Wassalamualaikum Wr. Wb.

Yogyakarta, 07 December 2021

The Researcher

Muhammad Furqon Al Farizi

Student No: 17101050053



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SUNAN KALIJAGA
YOGYAKARTA

THE PORTRAYAL OF MUSLIM CLASS STRUGGLE AS SEEN IN

AMERICAN EAST (2008)

By: Muhammad Furqon Al Farizi

ABSTRACT

Class Struggle is the conflict that arises when two antagonistic classes compete for their respective class interests. Class conflict occurs as a result of inequity such as class distinction that exists in society, and it has negative consequences for the community's existence, particularly for the lower or subordinate class, as well as possibilities for the dominant class to oppress or exploit the subordinate class. In the 9 September 2001 the world and especially America flabbergasted by the news of airplane hijacking and suicide attack by Muslim terrorists. This tragedy make Americans stereotype Muslims as terrorist and make Muslims who live there hard. While this tragedy has caused prejudice against Muslims in the United States, this movie provides a new perspective from Muslim characters, demonstrating how Muslims thrives and struggles to be accepted by society. The aims of this research, thus, is to identify how Muslims survive after the 9/11 tragedy in American East movies by using the class struggle theory by Karl Marx. This research also aim find aspects of social condition in this movie. This research uses qualitative research method. Data taken from pictures and dialogue in the movie and the researcher connected it with the class struggle theory of Karl Marx are then used as evidence for analysis. After examining the data, the researcher came to the conclusion that the class conflict represented in this film demonstrates that there is a class division and that humans are exploited in capitalist society.

Keywords: *Class Struggle, Muslims, 9/11 tragedy.*

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**THE PORTRAYAL OF MUSLIM CLASS STRUGGLE AS SEEN IN
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Oleh: Muhammad Furqon Al Farizi

ABSTRAK

Perjuangan Kelas adalah konflik yang muncul ketika dua kelas antagonis bersaing untuk kepentingan kelas masing-masing. Konflik kelas terjadi sebagai akibat dari ketidakadilan seperti perbedaan kelas yang ada dalam masyarakat, dan memiliki konsekuensi negatif bagi keberadaan masyarakat, terutama untuk kelas bawah atau bawahan, serta kemungkinan bagi kelas dominan untuk menindas atau mengeksploitasi kelas bawahan. Pada tanggal 9 September 2001 dunia dan terutama Amerika terperang oleh berita pembajakan pesawat dan serangan bunuh diri oleh teroris Muslim. Tragedi ini membuat orang Amerika stereotip Muslim sebagai teroris dan membuat umat Islam yang tinggal di sana keras. Sementara tragedi ini telah menyebabkan prasangka terhadap Muslim di Amerika Serikat, film ini memberikan perspektif baru dari karakter Muslim, menunjukkan bagaimana umat Islam tumbuh subur dan berjuang untuk diterima oleh masyarakat. Tujuan dari penelitian ini, dengan demikian, adalah untuk mengidentifikasi bagaimana umat Islam bertahan setelah tragedi 9/11 di film-film Amerika Timur dengan menggunakan teori perjuangan kelas oleh Karl Marx. Penelitian ini juga bertujuan menemukan aspek kondisi sosial dalam film ini. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode penelitian kualitatif. Data yang diambil dari gambar dan dialog dalam film dan peneliti menghubungkannya dengan teori perjuangan kelas Karl Marx kemudian digunakan sebagai bukti untuk analisis. Setelah memeriksa data, peneliti sampai pada kesimpulan bahwa konflik kelas yang diwakili dalam film ini menunjukkan bahwa ada pembagian kelas dan bahwa manusia dieksploitasi dalam masyarakat kapitalis.

Kata kunci: *Perjuangan Kelas, Muslim, tragedi 9/11.*

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

Class Struggle is the conflict that arises when two antagonistic classes compete for their respective class interests. Class conflict occurs as a result of inequity such as class distinction that exists in society, and it has negative consequences for the community's existence, particularly for the lower or subordinate class, as well as possibilities for the dominant class to oppress or exploit the subordinate class. The proletariat is constantly strengthened as a result of class struggle. As a result of this trend, the proletariat must emerge as the dominant class (dictatorship of the proletariat). Marx focuses on his originality, namely, the idea that class struggle always leads to proletarian dictatorship, and that this dictatorship simply serves as a bridge to the extinction of all classes and the establishment of a classless society (Resnick and Wolf, 1985:16).

One of the causes of Muslims struggles and get racial discrimination from majority Americans was the 9/11 tragedy. The 9/11 tragedy were a series of terrorist act by some Muslim terrorist who killed many people. Many people were affected deeply by this terrorist attack. Because of this attack happened at that time, people in America developed islamophobia and prejudice towards Muslims.

There are numerous examples of racist situations in Hollywood history. People of color, Asians, and Muslims have all been targeted in the past. Take, for

example, "The Siege," a thriller about Muslim terrorists wreaking havoc in New York, which plays into long-held preconceptions about Arabs and Muslims in the United States. In her book, *Reel Inequality: Hollywood Actors and Racism*, sociologist Nancy Wang Yuen states, "Racism has defined the Hollywood movie industry since the first 1900s, inside the form of job exclusion and racially stereotyped roles." Indeed, Asian characters in Hollywood's early days mainly took the form of racial stereotypes, either as mysterious, threatening villains or as comedic profiles like Omar in *Four Lions Movie*.

A movie is one of the literary works that use pictures combined with sound to entertain or teach people something. According to Abrams, a movie is in the form of composition designed for performance in the media, in which actors take roles of character, perform the indicated actions, and utter the writer dialogue (2009:84).

American East is a family film that tells about a Muslim immigrant who wants to open a restaurant in America with his friend. Unfortunately, they moved to America after the 9/11 tragedy. They are seen and judged by the American people as terrorists because Mustafa is Muslim. They both encounter resistance from skeptical locals and families and friends that expose common misunderstandings about Arabs and Islamic cultures as they explore building a business together. But it gets far more complicated than that, Mustafa must soon decide if he will take the easy road and succumb to societal pressures or rise above prejudices. Mustafa's life is one of a string tragedy and problems all related to 9/11 and American public fears. He's done absolutely nothing wrong, but everything he does now looks suspicious. He's arrested by the FBI, and they question him about his friendship

and money he donates to help his family back home. His business, Habibi's Café, is about to close and damaged. His business investment is about to fall through, the Muslim-Jewish conflict rages in debate among his friends, his family life is collapsing, and he worries about whether his children will be able to survive in this society. Despite all the tragedy that falls upon Mustafa and his family, he manages to survive.

This movie also explains the discrimination of immigrant Muslims. Moreover, this movie indirectly describes society nowadays, where the lower class (minority) is being exploited and accused by the upper class (majority). This is the reason why the researcher chooses as the object of the research.

Discrimination toward race is differential treatment from majority race at someplace toward a minority that disadvantages them. That differential treatment exists, whether economical or social. According to Peck and Coyle, "racism is an act where someone considers minority of group as "others" or outsiders and threatening them just like an alien (1993).

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." We hold the truth it becomes clear, that all human beings are created equal, that they are blessed by their Creator with inseparable rights, which include life, freedom, and the pursuit of happiness". (Representatives of USA, 1776)

It is clearly said that all humans are created equal and have the right to live, be free, and pursue happiness. But in reality, there is still a lot of racism or discrimination happening there. Groups such as the Ku Klux Klan and Neo-Nazis felt that the pure US state was owned by whites and immigrants as something that could endanger national security. Fear that the state and the rights of its citizens will be taken by migrants makes them interpret it as 'white oppression.

This statement was created a long time ago by representatives of the American governor, but in fact, even today, nothing has really changed.

United States Declaration of Independence or the US Declaration of Independence is a statement of 13 American states who broke away from the British colony. Thomas Jefferson was the author of the text, which was ratified by parliament on 4 July 1776. This text is a basis for the recognition of human rights. Thomas Jefferson was inspired by the writings of John Locke, an English philosopher. John Locke's thoughts about natural rights possessed by humans, such as the right to life, freedom, and ownership of objects inspired the decision of The Founding Fathers to declare independence from Britain

Inclusions of statements regarding recognition of human rights can be seen in the second paragraph of the declaration of independence document. From the explanation above, this research wants to find how Americans discriminate against others when they boast about equality.

1.2 Research Question

1. What aspects of social condition are depicted in the American East movie?

2. How does the main character as the lower-class fight persecution from the upper class, as depicted in the movie?

1.3 Objective of Study

Using Karl Marx's theory, this thesis aims to discover the social condition of class struggle in America after 9/11 as shown by the characters in the American East films.

1.4 Significance of Study

1. The significance of the research is to show people and raise their awareness that Muslims' struggle for freedom from Americans and the discrimination they face as a result of the 9/11 tragedy continues to this day, as can be seen implicitly in how Western filmmakers present their various films, such as American East.

1.5 Literature Review

Following the researcher's search for literary analysis of this topic, the writer discovers various studies related to this research.

The first is a thesis from Retno Dwi Wulandari from UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta entitled "The Representation of Muslim Immigrant In American East Movie." This research aims to the representation of Muslim immigrants in American East movies. She uses data qualitative method and representation theory by Stuart Hall. The difference between Retno Dwi Wulandari's research with the current research is in the theoretical approach. Her research used representation as

a subject of the research and the current research aims to analyze the struggles of characters after the 9/11 tragedy. And this research uses class struggle theory.

The second a thesis paper by Irwan Febriansyah from UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta entitled “Class Struggle as Seen in Black Panther and Sunan Kalijaga Movie”. He employs class struggle theory and comparative theory. In this paper, the researcher found that the portrayal of both movies that both characters in the movies have similarities in their motivation and their background. The differences however are that Sunan Kalijaga did it to get equality for poor society, while Killmonger did it in order to get equality for himself.

The third thesis paper by Tantan Hudayana from UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta is entitled “The Discrimination as Seen in 8 Mile Movie”. He use racism theory by D. M. Newman and Charles A. Gallagher. In this paper, the researcher focuses on discrimination between the black and the white race.

The fourth thesis paper by Ibnu Chaedir from UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta is entitled “Discrimination of Minority People as Seen in Brick Mansion Movie”. He use social bias theory by John F. Dovidio. In this paper, the researcher focuses on finding what factors influence discrimination from the government toward citizens in this movie.

The fifth is a thesis by Ahmad Jibril Mubarroq UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya entitled “An Analysis of Racial Discrimination Towards Uncle Tom in Uncle Tom’s Cabin Novel”. He use the theories of race and racism by Back, Les and John Solomos. This research is to analyzes the effect of racial discrimination in the novel.

1.6 Theoretical Approach

In this research, the writer applies class struggle theory and film theory to analyze American East.

1.6.1 Class Struggle Theory

In this research, the researcher applies class struggle theory since the concern of this paper is about the power and domination of one class upon another. For the approach, the researcher applies the sociological approach because the purpose of this thesis is to investigate the social condition of class conflict in capitalist society as portrayed by the characters in the movie. Moreover, this approach is related to what is mentioned in the problem statement of this research.

The sole element used to categorize people into social groups is heredity. There are nobility, clergy, and commoners as a result (Day, 2001: 2). Productive relations, market access, a status structure, and culture have all been blamed for class differences. They often appear to be difficult to distinguish from other types of division, such as racial, gendered, regional, ethnic, religious, and so on. Class societies can be described as either stable or conflicted. Classes are influenced by historical trends. As a result of this tendency, society is divided into two large opposing classes. The polarization of battles between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat is thus established by stating the historical tendency of class struggles.

According to Marx in Martha's research (2011: 20), class struggle is the ongoing battle for economic and political power between the capitalist and working classes. It's also known as class warfare. People from lower social classes engage

in a variety of strategies of class struggle in order to achieve greater social status. The most prevalent methods of era class conflict include violence, proletarian revolution, and proletarian dictatorship (Wilczynski:1984)

In Marx's theory, there are two subclasses in capitalist classes, according to Bottomore (1983:169):

- 1) Bourgeoisie
- 2) Aristocracy

The writer chose bourgeoisie and proletariat based on Marx's theory of capitalist classes. The bourgeoisie or majority is an upper-class group that owns a means of production, whereas the proletariat or minority is a lower-class group that works for the bourgeoisie.

According to Tuderu's thesis, Karl Marx emphasizes on the concept of social class. It also considers whether Marx's concept of social class struggle can give a way out for the proletariats, allowing them to break free from the capitalist system's bonds of cruelty, brutality, and alienation (2008:47). It can be inferred that class conflict is a worker's collective reaction to the capitalist's unfair actions. These actions include low wages, lengthy hours of work, and harsh punishment for those who breach the law.

Capital, according to Marx is formed by the purchase of commodities with the intention of producing new commodities having a higher exchange value than the money used in the original purchase. Because the exchange value of labor power, as reflected in the wage, is less than the value it provides for the capitalist,

the use of labor power has become a commodity under capitalism (Tucker, 1978:444). Capitalism is a belief that the owner of a business may work hard in order to make a large profit. Capitalist societies, according to Marx, dehumanize men because the social relations of production prevent men from obtaining the freedom of self-determination that technology has made possible.

According to Tucker, in capitalist society, there are two basic groups that interact in the production sphere: capitalists (bourgeoisie/opposing class) and waged labor (proletarian/working class). The first class controls the tools of production and amass capital through labor exploitation. The working class, on the other hand, lacks the means of production and must instead rely on their labor power to generate value for the capitalist in order for it to survive. This category comprises everyone who earns a living by selling their labor power and receiving a wage or compensation in exchange. They don't have much of a choice; they must work for capitalists since they don't have any other means of surviving in (Tuderu, 2008:34),.

In terms of Islamic viewpoint, there is no distinction between classes in Islam because everyone has the same status. As stated in Surah Al-Hujurat, verse 13 of the Holy Quran:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلَكُمْ أَسْمَاءَ وَنُسُبًا وَالْأَسْمَاءَ وَالنُّسُبَ لِلْبَشَرِ لَا لِلْإِلَهِ إِنَّ إِلَهِكُمْ إِلَهٌ وَاحِدٌ عَالِمُ الْغُيُوبِ

خ (١٣)

O humanity! Indeed, We created you from a male and a female, and made you into peoples and tribes so that you may 'get to' know one another. Surely the most noble

of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous among you. Allah is truly All-Knowing, All-Aware. (Al-Hujurat [26]: 13).

In this verse, the entire human race is addressed in order to rid it of the grave evil that has always caused global disruption, namely prejudices based on race, color, language, country, and nationality. As a result, Islam accords equal rights to all people, rich and poor, noble and ignoble, and there is no superiority in Islam, save in terms of Taqwa. This is the foundation of Islamic society. Allah then concludes the verse with two of His Great Names, All Knowing and All Aware, which inspire believers to do good acts and fear Allah because He is fully aware of man's actual nature.

1.6.2 Film Theory

Because the primary evidence in this study is cinema, the researcher uses film theory as a supplementary theory. Its goal is to see how the film is portrayed. Cinematography and mise-en-scene are two elements that have become the foundations of film study (Villarejo, 2013).

In this research, the researcher uses *mise-en-scène* to analyze this film. “*Mise-en-scène* is a French word that means “put into the scene” and designated all that encompassed by the frame” (Villarejo, 2013). *Mise-en-scène* has six elements to make a film like a reality, such as setting, lighting, costume, hair, make-up, and characteristics of figure.

Besides *mise-en-scène*, there is another important aspect in analyzing the scene, and it is the cinematography. According to Villarejo (2013), “there are two important aspects in analyzing a scène in the movie: *Mise-en-scène* and Cinematography.” Cinematography is the technique that is used to analyze everything related to the camera and its moving. “Cinematography refers to what to do with camera’s movements.” (Villarejo, 2013). According to Villarejo, there are seven framing techniques in cinematography, they are:

- a. The extreme long shot (ELS), in which can distinguish the human figure.
- b. The long-shot (LS), in which humans are distinguishable but remain small by the background.
- c. The medium-long shot (MLS), in which the human is framed from the knees up.
- d. The medium shot (MS), in which the audience moves slightly to frame the human waist up.
- e. The medium close-up (MCU), in which the audience is slightly closer and sees Human from the chest up.
- f. The close-up (CU), which isolates a portion of a human.
- g. The extreme close-up (ECU), in which the audience sees a mere portion of the face (Villarejo, 2013).

In this study, the researcher additionally looks at the film's shot utilizing the camera height. Adjusting the camera height can have artistic, dramatic, and psychological meanings (Mascellin, 2005:32). As a result, this technique can assist the researcher in reading the film more thoroughly.

There are three types of Camera height:

- a. A level angle or level camera films the object from the eye of an observer of average height.
- b. High angle shot is any shot and which the camera is tilted downward to view the subject.
- c. Low angle shot is any shot in which the camera is tilted upward to view the subject.

In this research, the researcher also examines the shot by its types of camera angle. There are three types that are mentioned below.

- a. Objective camera is when it films from a sideline viewpoint.
- b. Subjective camera is when it films from a personal viewpoint.
- c. Point of View or simply POV camera angle which records the scène from a particular player's viewpoint.

1.7 Method of Research

1.7.1 Type of Research

The researcher uses the qualitative technique in this study since it is about the group's perspective, which is shown in the film. "Qualitative studies attempt to capture the views that actors in certain social circumstances utilize as a foundation for their activities." (Hatch, 2002:7). Some questions appear through this method, such as "What is happening here, specifically?" The answer for these questions can

be analyzed by collecting the data from the sources (used novel, prose, or film in literature) and expert assumptions as a secondary source to support the data.

1.7.2 Data Sources

The data sources in this research have one category: primary data. The primary data for this research is taken from the film *American East*.

1.7.3 Data Collection Technique

The researcher collects data by using the library research technique. First, the research considers the movie *American East* as a literary work and decides what is the proper theory to analyze the movie. Second, the researcher watches the movie to get the theme, character, characterization, plot and setting as the intrinsic element.

Then, the researcher selects and classifies the data which relate to the problem statements. The research also collects supporting data from the internet and other sources. After collecting the data, the writer analyzes the data based on the theory that is used in this research.

1.7.4 Data Analysis Technique

The researcher uses the objective approach to analyze the data. It is based on the movie *American East*. First, the writer collects and categorizes proper data for this research, including the event, object, and action of the character. The researcher analyzes this by using the theory of class struggle. The researcher does not only analyze the main character but also analyzes other characters as supporting data.

The researcher also uses film theory to analyze the scene, expression, and dialog. Last, the researcher concludes all of the analysis as the conclusion.

1.8 Paper Organization

This research is divided into four chapters. The first chapter includes the general information about research, such as the background of choosing this study, problem statements, the objective of the study, the significance of the study, literature review, theoretical approach, method of research, and paper organization. The second chapter consists of *American East* film elements. This chapter explains the intrinsic elements of the film. The third is the analysis, the data found to be examined and analyzed using both Discrimination and Film theory. The fourth is the research conclusion.



CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

4.1. Conclusion

In this chapter, the researcher made a conclusion from what has been analyzed in the previous chapter, they are:

1. The researcher discovered the social condition in capitalist society in the film American East. The social conditions in capitalist society demonstrate that there is a class divide and that humans are exploited.
 - a. The writer discovered that there are two classes: upper class and lower class. The two classes are as follows:
 - 1.) The upper class, often known as the bourgeoisie, is made up of people with a lot of influence. In this example, they are the Society or the Director in this movie case, and the FBI agent.
 - 2.) Lower class refers to a group of individuals who lack power and must rely on the upper class to exist. They are considered upper-class victims because they are frequently subjected to unfair treatment. Mustafa and Omar are their names.
 - b. In the case of human exploitation, it demonstrates how the higher class exploits the lower class by determining their activities.
2. The researcher discovered a class conflict among the lower classes as a result of capitalist oppression. The upper class uses its political and

economic influence to take advantage of the lower class. It demonstrates that the lower classes do not have no power. They have fallen prey to the capitalist system. As a result, the lower class wishes to be free of the exploitation of the capitalist/society. They battle against society's exploitation by forging a partnership with his wealthy pals in the case of Mustafa, and fighting until he dies in the instance of Omar.

3. The movie's depiction of class struggle has the same goals as Marx's theory and Islamic perceptions of liberation from oppression and exploitation.

4.2. Suggestion

American East movie tells about a racial discrimination story. Hence, the researcher applies the racial discrimination theory Macionis and Plummer that focuses on the main character of the movies. Thus, the researcher suggests the next researcher may uses the theory of post-colonial theory to find out the connection between the East and the West. Orientalism theory to analyze how people from the West perceive the culture and characteristics of people in the East (Islam) or Occidentalism to analyze how people from the East perceive the culture and characteristics of people in the West.

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