

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

There are more than seven billion people living on Earth. They come from different nations, races, tribes and gather with each other. Despite these differences, they actually have something in common, that is the same human basic needs, such as to earn food, shelter, and clothing. As we know the Earth that we are living in was exploited by human hands, and in the end we will get lack of nature resources and it cannot fulfill the requirement of the next generations. Moreover all people aim to get secure economic, education, and healthcare. Therefore, people who have power and money will control and exploit those who have powerless. It is become a concern of Karl Marx, the German philosopher who produced Marxism. Louis Tyson stated in his book entitled *Critical Theory Today*: Karl Marx divide two social classes: first the bourgeoisie or capitalist those who control the world's natural, economic, and human resource to obtain the benefit. The other one is proletariat, the majority of the global population who lived in substandard condition and sell its power to capitalist (54). Theoretically, people who have power and money called bourgeois, while those people oppressed by bourgeois called proletariat. Gary Lapon in his article *What Do We Mean by Exploitation?* said that such phenomena is called exploitation, where the bourgeois exploit the proletariat to fulfill their needs.

Bourgeois usually create a production or enterprise and employ the proletariat and pay them with the minimum wage to achieve a massive production. Marxists literary criticism define exploitation as the payments are not fair to workers where the amount is less than the total amount of production after deducting the cost of maintenance of capital goods. In a simple explanation, exploitation of labor is when laborers forced to work 24 hours with a minimum payment and time to rest. They work beyond working hours, but their wages are not accordance with their duties. The bourgeoisie gain their goals by using others. They will always be leaders who control proletariat by made them become bourgeoisie's worker or labor. In this case, some of bourgeoisie cause suffering to the proletariat by forcing, threatening, and exploiting. The bourgeoisie would use many tricks to control others. They use their exclusive position, wealth, knowledge to exploit the proletariat ones. Marx argued that the ultimate source of profit, the driving force behind capitalist production, is the unpaid labor of workers. So for Marx, exploitation forms the foundation of the capitalist system (Gary Lapon, *What Do We Mean by Exploitation?*).

In movie, one of the recent works that focuses on exploitation towards labor is Neil Blomkamp's *Elysium*. It is a Sci-Fi movie released in 2013. *Elysium* is an absolute gorgeous looking fantasy spectacle and filled to the brim with the kind of worthwhile social commentary that ennobles science-fiction as a genre. Neil Blomkamp, the writer and also director, was born on September 17, 1979 in Johannesburg, South Africa. He graduated from Vancouver Film School's 3D Animation and Visual Effects program in 1998. Blomkamp worked as a visual

effects artist at The Embassy Visual Effects in Vancouver. He is known for his work on *District 9* (2009), *Elysium* (2013) and *Stargate SG-1* (1997). Then, Neil Blomkamp started his first movie debut *District 9*, which was won for the Saturn Award Best International Film in 2010. His next movie is *Elysium*, which won for Leo Award 2014 for The Best Visual Effect Motion Picture, and Neil Blomkamp was nominated for the Hollywood Movie Award in 2013 (Bonamusa, *Awards*).

Neil Blomkamp's *Elysium* is one of the example were rich people who use their money and power to exploit the poor people, written in a form of literary work, movie. In the story, Elysium was made because in 2154 the earth suffering an over-population and crisis of natural resources. Therefore, the bourgeoisie make shelter for them as a replacement of the earth. In Elysium they life luxuriously and get good food, clothing, and shelter. Only the rich people can live in Elysium, while the poor have to live on Earth where conditions are lack of natural resources. Although all of the advantages and luxuries are available in Elysium, it still require the services from residents of Earth, so that the lives of the people in the Elysium would run properly. For instance, residents of Elysium requires robots to serve their daily activity. While the raw materials and factory of the robots are named 'Armadyne' located in the Earth, automatically residents of the Earth must become a worker at the factory. However, the conditions of the people in Earth are far from the conditions of Elysium residents, people in Earth were live under welfare and plagued a wide variety of diseases. This condition makes some of people in Earth wants to go to Elysium in order to use medical devices that can cure any diseases.

The basic literary approach used for analysis that issue is Marxist literary criticism conceptualized by Terry Eagleton, beside another related literary theorists and critics who developed Karl Marx's concepts about Marxist and criticism. Peter Barry in his book *Beginning Theory an Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory*, explains Marxism as this following: The aim of Marxism is to bring about a classless society, based on the common ownership of the means of production, distribution, and exchange. Marxism is a materialist philosophy: that is, it tries to explain things without assuming the existence of a world or of forces beyond the natural world around us, and the society we live in (156). While Terry Eagleton in his book *Marxism and Literary Criticism*, defines Marxist criticism as "not merely a 'sociology of literature', concerned with how novels get published and whether they mention the working class. Its aim is to explain the literary work more fully, and this means a sensitive attention to its forms, style and meanings (2).

Accordingly, Marxist literary criticism is the most suitable theory for this study because it can cover the relation between upper and lower class including their problems. In Marxism, rich people are categorized as the bourgeoisie or upper classes while the poor people as proletariat or lower classes. This study would concern with the exploitations in capitalist system along with its impacts and complications. This study also discusses the exploitation issue because the director of the movie emerges a story about labor's and lower class society's life. This study is interested to discuss labor's exploitation through the main character

Max da Costa in order to reveal the gap between upper and lower class on the movie.

There are some previous studies about labor exploitation. First is a thesis comes from Anastasya Evalyn's *Criticism toward Classism of Victorian Period in Oscar Wilde's Fairy Tales: A Marxist Criticism*. Anastasya concerns with human interaction between working class and ruling class, economic gap, class struggle. The issue of that thesis with the issue on this study also relates with relation between upper and lower class. However, Anastasya more concerns with interaction between upper and lower classes, class struggle in the Victorian period through fairy tales. The other study is Irfan Roshadi's *American Dream as an Ideology for American Immigrant Workers in Upton Sinclair's The Jungle*. This work analyzes the exploitation of immigrant workers in America through aesthetic elements, and also brings the ideology of the American Dream and connects it with alienation and exploitation in the story. The writer would also reveal how Sinclair manages to reveal the marginalized in society through his description of alienation and exploitation.

From those previous studies, it can be seen from above that under capitalism system, labors would hardly get the decent living. This means that the capitalists will continue to try to improve the working time in order to earn more money or capital. As a result, workers will increasingly spend more time in the production room. Because, in Marx's view, the time is 'more capital' for the owners of tools of production, and from which the workers lost their lives; spend a lot of time in their labor; lost their identity; and, related to our discussion about

alienation, workers will be alienated from their work, from the production process in which they work, and alienated from their social life. Those are reasons why exploitations are interesting issue and so is this movie.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

1. How is the main character Max as lower class and labor exploited by capitalist represented through Marxist concepts in the *Elysium* movie?
2. How is the fights of the lower class society toward exploitation in the *Elysium* movie?

1.3 Objective of the Study

These following are the objectives of the study:

1. To analyze how the exploitations toward the labor are portrayed in this text.
2. To analyze the implications of exploitations towards the lower class society especially labor. Also this study aim to find the way to decrease or minimize exploitation in our society.

1.4 Significance of the Study

By presenting this thesis, the writer hopes it can encourage readers to be more enthusiastic in watching a movie as a learning form, not merely as an entertaining tool for a leisure time. The writer presents this study for university students so that they could be able to analyzing the literary text. The thesis writer hopes students would be more sensitive while they are watching a movie, and they could look beyond the movie itself, either the ideology or the message of texts.

This study is presented for students who will do further analysis about exploitation towards labor. This study also is expected as additional information for readers who analyze the similar issues about exploitations towards labor and how to decrease or minimize it. The thesis writer also aim this study for adult readers, and also for those who has power such authorities. Furthermore, the thesis writer expect readers' to be wiser to behave with other classes in our society, especially lower class and to be more concern with exploitation around us. This study is expected to be a worthy contribution for English Department in Universitas Airlangga.

1.5 Definition of Key Terms

- Bourgeoisie** : Those who control the world's natural, economic, and human resource to obtain the benefit (Tyson 54).
- Capitalism** : An economic system based on private ownership of the means of production (Felluga).
- Corporatocracy** : A neologism that describes a government dominated by corporate influence (Perkins).
- Elysium** : A human made high-tech space station beyond earth's atmosphere built to replace the earth for bourgeoisie.
- Exploitation** : The term used to describe image of workers laboring in sweat shop for small amount of money (Lapon).
- Marxist** : The ideas which were developed by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in the mid-nineteenth centuries (Parker 211).
- Proletariat** : The majority of the global population who lived in substandard condition and sell its power to capitalist (Tyson 54).