

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework that will be applied in this study is Marxist literary criticism. This chapter explains the theory used to analyze Neil Blomkamp's *Elysium*. In order to make the readers to understand about this study, the writer will explain Marxism and how literature can be interpreted from a Marxist concept. Considering the use of film as the object of the study, narrative and non-narrative aspects of the film will be combined to enrich the analysis.

2.1.1. Marxism and Literature

Charles Bressler in *Literary Criticism: an Introduction to theory and Practice*, explains that Marxism approach did not begin as an alternative literary criticism to literary analysis. Marxism had aroused in the nineteenth century as a pragmatic view of history that gave idea to the working class to take opportunity to change their world and their individual lives. Marxist literary theory has started well known in the nineteenth-century writings of the German social critics and philosopher Karl Heinrich Marx (1818-1883). Many believe that Marx himself was not sure about the relationship of his ideas to literary theory. However, Marx developed until the twentieth century (192). Twentieth century critics used Marx's philosophical assumptions to develop a variety of Marxist approaches to textual analysis that focus on the study of the relationship between a text and the society

reads it. The nature of reality itself from Marx and his philosophical assumptions of it is the main core of all these diverse approaches (193).

Terry Eagleton, the author of *Marxism and Literary Criticism*, explains that Marx and Engels had important role on literature based on their comment on art and literatures are scattered and fragmentary, glancing allusions rather than developed positions (193). Eagleton describes Marxist criticism on literature is: It is 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, styles and meanings (194). The human social relations, are made up with the way they produce their material life. Eagleton stated that, this time between the bourgeoisie or capitalist class who owns those means of production, and the proletarian class whose labor-power the capitalist buys for profit. Taken together, these 'forces' and 'relations' of production form what Marx calls 'the economic structure of society', or what is more commonly known by Marxism as the economic 'base' or 'infrastructure'. From this economic base, in every period, emerges a 'superstructure' certain forms of law and politics, a certain kind of state, whose essential function is to legitimate the power of the social class which owns the means of economic production. But the superstructure contains more than this: it also consists of certain 'definite forms of social consciousness' (political, religious, ethical, aesthetic and so on), which is what Marxism designates as ideology. The function of ideology, also, is to legitimate the power of the ruling class in society; in the last analysis, the dominant ideas of a society are the ideas of its ruling class.

Moreover, Peter Barry states that, Marxist literary criticism maintains a writer's social class, and its prevailing 'ideology' have a major bearing on what is written by a member of that class (157). From those explanations, it can be seen that Marxist is not merely an economic theory but can be applied in literature because literature describes and shows the society's matters. In Marxist case, the literature shows the relation between high class and low class in the real life which is depicted in literary work.

2.1.2 Exploitation in Capitalist System

Exploitation in Marx's theory would be explained further by Charles Bressler and Robert Parker. Marx asserts as explained by Bressler that as a result of a society progress in its economic mode of production, the feudal system changed to a more market-based economy caused to a more complex industrialized economy system. It means, within that economic system, people's functions become differentiated and these differentiations indirectly lead divides people into different social classes. The desires and expectations of the various social classes is clash. As consequence, such classes has caused changes in economic base of society from feudal system of power based on inherited wealth and status to a capitalist system based on the ownership of private property. As a result of these forces, Marx developed four historical periods; feudalism, capitalism, socialism, and communism (193). Firstly, communist movements originally developed among the conservative feudal peasants and craftsmen. Many of the guilds from feudal times were workers' organizations that lived communal lifestyles and then they socialized. Among Communists there is also a

view that there is a stage of 'socialism' that a society would pass through prior to becoming a communist society.

In the Communist Manifesto, Marx and Engels maintain capitalism into two classes: the bourgeoisie or capitalist power own means production and the ones who pay workers as little as possible so that they benefit while proletariat which sells its labor to the capitalist (Tyson 53). The capitalists or the bourgeoisie have successfully enslaved the working class, or the proletariat through, economic and political power to keep their wealth. Bressler stated that a few, for example, will be the employers, but many more will be the employees. The employers (the bourgeoisie) have the economic power and gain social and political control of their society. Eventually, this upper class will control the dominant discourse and formalize and articulate its beliefs, values, and arts to develop its ideology (194). It means, today in class society the dominant ideology tends to develop a broadly defined ideological formation. For instance, in the Christian belief people must work in order to get rich, and as worker we are must obey to the rules and so on so forth.

In the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, Marx describes proletariat as this follows: "The lower strata of the middle class — the small trades people, shopkeepers, and retired tradesmen generally, the handicraftsmen and peasants — all these sink gradually into the proletariat, partly because their diminutive capital does not suffice for the scale on which Modern Industry is carried on, and is swamped in the competition with the large capitalists, partly because their specialized skill is rendered worthless by new methods of production. Thus the

proletariat is recruited from all classes of the population (Marx, *Marx-Engels Archive*).

Whether consciously and unconsciously, the working class, also called wage slaves are influenced by the ruling class ideology forces, hence the bourgeoisie take chance to develop and controls the superstructure. This system leads the rich become richer and the poor become poorer and live in a more suffer and oppression (Bressler 194). Bressler argued that, by controlling material relationship, the bourgeoisie control a society's ideology. In effect, by controlling a society's ideology, the bourgeoisie has power in their hand to force others to follow their rules in consciously and unconsciously ways. As a result of capitalist's society with ideology influence, workers would have no longer have contact with the entire process of producing, distributing, and consuming material goods (194).

There is no longer distinctive of age and sex among the working class. The less the skill and exertion of strength will put anyone in lower strata. In modern industry, whoever with less qualification cannot fight higher strata since the modern industry become more developed. They are valued based on how much they can produce with their labor power.

As Marx cited by Eagleton explains that, I use the term labor power or capacity for labor, to denote the aggregate of those bodily and mental capabilities existing in a human being, which he exercises whenever he produces a use-value of any kind (201). Under capitalism, exploitation does exist. We have constructed

that we are paid for the work we do. We will be paid for our work hours and get extra money for the extra time of working. That is how we look at it. On contrary, Marx discovered was that capitalist does not buy a determinate lump of work done. The capitalist only pays for a use value of any kind product.

Furthermore, Parker defines capital and Marx as follows: For Marx, capital is not simply money that can be exchanged for goods or labor. It is money that is used to purchase goods or labor for the purpose of making profit (213). Typically, the profit comes from purchasing goods and then selling them again. Hence capital, refers to more money and on again it continuous circulation. Capitalists understand their practices as natural, because capitalists privilege capital over labor, whereas Marx privileged labor over capital.

Capitalist is interested to hire working class because of their labor power. Karl Marx in his book *Wage Labour and Capital* coined labor power as follows: "Wages are the amount of money which the capitalist pays for a certain period of work or for a certain amount of work. Consequently, it appears that the capitalist buys their labor power with money, and that for money they sell him their labor. What they actually sell to the capitalist for money is their labor power. This labor-power the capitalist buys for a day, a week, a month, etc. (Marx, *Wage Laboour and Capital*).

Labor power which has been sold and paid by capitalist is called wage labor. In the modern society, the workers by themselves alone produce all values but these values do not belong to them instead belong to owners of means

productions and money, which enable them to buy labor-power of working class. As consequence, working class would get back only entire mass of products produce by it, as return. Working classes bring labor power along with themselves while ruling class have money to buy labor power to make profits.

Capitalist doubled the value of the labor power to make profits. If the profits are not reinvested in the workers instead to grow more factories, the workers would live poorer and poorer and there is no longer term successful in their life. There must be some Marxist critical theorists but for this study, the thesis writer would apply the theories from Bressler and Parker in order to make a deep analysis about exploitations towards labors.

2.1.3 Labor Slavery

Karl Marx in his book, *The Poverty of Philosophy*, Karl Marx describe labor slavery: is just as much the rotate of bourgeois industry as machinery, credits, etc. It is an economic category of the greatest importance, because Without slavery you have no cotton; without cotton you have no modern industry. Without slavery, America will be the roost progressive of countries and transformed into a patriarchal country (94). Historically, labor slavery was happened in 1857 and Karl Marx argued in his book *Grundrisse Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy*, United States was a country where bourgeois society did not develop on the foundation of the feudal system, but developed rather from itself; where this society appears not as the surviving result of a centuries-old movement, but rather as the starting-point of a new movement;

where the state, in contrast to all earlier national formations, was from the beginning subordinate to bourgeois society, to its production, and never could make the pretence of being an end-in-itself; where, finally, bourgeois society itself, linking up the productive forces of an old world with the enormous natural terrain of a new one (884).

According to Human Right Center in the book *Hidden Slaves: Forced Labor in The United States*, The International Labor Organization (ILO) in Convention Concerning Forced Labor no.29, defines labor slavery is: all work or service which is exacted from any person under the menace of any penalty and for anyone as said person has not offered himself voluntarily (1). Since the setting of *Elysium* movie is in U.S, the author will provide the facts about Labor Slavery in US. Based on the survey of HRS (Human Right Center) Carolina University in September 2004, labor slavery in five sectors of the U.S. economy: prostitution and sex services (46%), domestic service (27%), agriculture (10%), sweatshop/factory (5%), and restaurant and hotel work (4%). The existing of labor slavery in these sectors because of low wages, lack of regulation and monitoring of working conditions, and a high demand for cheap labor. Thus we can conclude that labor slavery is the economic system because it always exist in any model of industrialization. It also as a tool of the bourgeoisie to maintain their business, especially in the industrial sector.

2.1.4 Corporatocracy System

The last discussion of this study is the emergence of corporatocracy system within capitalist ideology which can initiate the struggle of lower class society. Corporatocracy term used by John Perkins in his book *Confessions of an Economic Hitman* explain that, in order to build a global empire among bourgeoisie, the large corporations, banks, and government joined the financial and political powers unite to force people to follow their will (156). Corporatocracy derived from two words, there are corporate and aristocratic. Corporate refers to businesses doer who adopt capitalism and financial institutions that regulate the circulation of money, while the aristocratic is describe about feudal form of government that recognize and acknowledge the existence of caste division in society. If combined, the corporatocracy is one form of infidelity in the economic field which gathered into one harmonious relationship. Corporatocracy subsequently identified as an attempt to legalized system of capitalism in terms of to enter through economic system in every country. We all know that the principle of capitalism is the accumulation of capital as much from a production process. Thus, all parties that could hinder the objectives of capitalist corporation to achieve a maximum profit must be able to "be invited" into the cooperation.

Finally, the cheating process between a capitalist and government began. A state which the primary function is to protect the society then turned become a public enemy who is hiding behind a good mask. Government is supposed to protect and support its people in terms of ensuring their welfare by providing capital loans to SMEs (small medium enterprises). In fact, the government does

not siding with the society; large companies are given a capital loan with a small interest, while the people's business (SMEs) hard to get a capital loan. Even if they could, they would be burdened with great interest. It means, government policy has not siding with the society because government is more support the growth of large companies rather than SMEs. Thus, the practice of exploitation will continue to happen because of large companies which led by the capitalists would flourish, and forcing people to work as laborers in it.

2.2 Review of Related Studies

There are some previous studies about labors. 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 also concerns with human interaction between working class and ruling class, economic gap, class struggle. The issue of that thesis with the issue on this thesis 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 from Fatma Balci's *The Marxist Concept of Alienation and Exploitation in of Mice and Men*. This work analyzes the alienation in *Of Mice and Men* novel through aesthetic elements and also brings the ideology of the American Dream during the Great Depression and connects it with alienation and exploitation in the story. The writer would also reveal how Steinbeck manages to reveal the marginalized in society through his description of alienation and exploitation.

The differences between those two works from this study are the subject and the problem of research. The first work used a novel entitled *Of Mice and Men*. This study more concerns on the alienation. This study also connects the ideology of American Dream with the enslaved labors. These two works are different with this study in the focus of the analysis. This study more concerns with the exploitation itself in the *Elysium* movie and reveals the implications of the exploitations to the life of the main character Max as labors, and also find the way how to decrease and minimize exploitation based on movie story. Therefore, the result and the conclusion of those works and this study would be different.