

## Class Struggle in *Maze Runner: The Death Cure* Film

Leandra Nur Ariefka<sup>a\*</sup>, Sholikatus Sa'diyah<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> English Literature, Faculty of Adab and Humanities,  
Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University Jakarta

\* Corresponding Author. Email: leandrarief@gmail.com

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### Abstract

This research analyzes how class struggle happened in the film: *Maze Runner: The Death Cure*. This study uses the qualitative method, which aims to understand the phenomenon experienced by the subject of the research, such as behavior, perception, and action. The author collects data for research taken from screenshots of several scenes related to analysis and the film's dialogue. The utilized theories in this research are Marxism, and the writer explained in detail the class social, both the bourgeoisie and proletariat, that can cause the conflict in the film based on Marxism Theory. The result of this research shows how class struggle that happened in the film with the problem of social class in this film that is an exploitation of the upper classes (bourgeoisie), namely the organization named WICKED, by the lower classes (proletariat), namely the youth and society who never get justice. Therefore, there was a rebellion movement from young people and the community (proletariat) to fight for their social status.

**Kata kunci:**

Marsisme  
Borjuis, Proletar  
Perjuangan Kelas  
Maze Runner:  
The Death Cure

**Abstrak**

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisa bagaimana perjuangan kelas yang terjadi dalam film *Maze Runner: The Death Cure*. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif yaitu metode penelitian untuk memahami fenomena yang dialami oleh subjek penelitian seperti perilaku, persepsi, tindakan, dll. Peneliti mengumpulkan data penelitian dari tangkapan layar beberapa adegan yang berkaitan dengan analisis dan dialog film. Teori yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah teori Marxisme tentang pertentangan kelas sosial yaitu antara kelas borjuis dan proletar. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan masalah konflik kelas yang terjadi dalam film adalah eksploitasi kelas atas (borjuasi), yaitu organisasi yang bernama WICKED kepada kelas bawah (proletariat), yaitu pemuda dan masyarakat yang tidak pernah mendapatkan keadilan. Oleh karena itu, muncullah gerakan pemberontakan dari kaum muda dan masyarakat (proletariat) untuk memperjuangkan status sosialnya.

**ملخص**

الكلمات الرئيسية:  
الماركسية  
البرجوازية  
صراع الطبقات  
فيلم عداء المتاهة: علاج  
الموت

تهدف الدراسة إلى تحليل صراع الطبقات في فيلم «عداء المتاهة (علاج الموت)» مستخدمة منهج النوعي الذي يقوم بتحليل الظواهر التي يمر بها الأشخاص الخاضعون للدراسة من السلوك والتصورات والإجراءات وغير ذلك، وتقوم الدراسة بجمع بيانات من عدة مشاهد الفيلم المتعلقة بالتحليل والحوارات. وتناول الموضوع بنظرية الماركسية عن صراع الطبقات الاجتماعية بين البرجوازية والبروليتاريا. وتظهر نتيجة الدراسة أن الصراع الطبقي التي حدثت في الفيلم كانت استغلال الطبقة العليا (البرجوازية) الممثلة في المنظمة المسماة Wicked على الطبقة الدنيا (البروليتاريا) الممثلة في الحكومة المحلية، وهذا الصراع تسبب في ظهور حركة تمرد من قبل الشباب والمجتمع للنضال من أجل وضعهم الاجتماعي.

## INTRODUCTION

Dystopia describes a state of affairs that is virtually terrible and has no possibility of a good life (*Dystopia Definition - Meaning and Concepts of Dystopia*, n.d.). A dystopia is a handicapped society in which human beings stay in fear of the world around them. Historically, dystopia changed into honestly a literary phrase describing an imaginary vicinity wherein humans lived inhuman and frequently scary lives. Depicts a place where there is an injustice to a few of the citizens, steady worry, and chaos. It may be stated that nowadays, society is more of a dystopia than a utopia (*Dystopia definition | Gender&LitUtopiaDystopia Wiki | Fandom*, n.d.).

Characteristics of a dystopian society are fear (such as the feeling of being constantly watched), lack of freedom of speech or thought, and marked declines in health and environmental sustainability. Dystopia is typically societies with hierarchies, divided classes, and created the Caste system. This system gave the upper, middle, and lower classes. This division of classes created an imbalance, gave power to the upper classes, and left the middle and lower classes with little hope of ascending to a higher class. The middle and lower classes down are generally struggling and have no means to change their situation (*Dystopia definition | Gender&LitUtopiaDystopia Wiki | Fandom*, n.d.).

The issue of social class is the main topic of this research discussion, taking stories about lives that are filled with danger and threats. The film *Maze Runner (The Death Cure)* was directed by Wes Ball and written by T.S. Nowlin is based on the novel *The Death Cure* written by James Dashner. *Maze Runner (The Death Cure)* is the third film of the sequel to *The Maze Runner: Scorch Trial* in 2015. *Maze Runner (The Death Cure)* is the opening of a 4DX blockbuster film in 2018. Many fans around the world are enthusiastic about this film. Furthermore, the film *Maze Runner (The Death Cure)* is the end of this trilogy which is interesting because in the last part of this trilogy Thomas as the main character leads his group to escape from the Gladers in the final and most dangerous mission. The film produced in the United States produced in 2018 presents social class and class struggle as the main idea of the story in this film.

The problem of social class in this film is the exploitation of the upper classes, namely the organization named WICKED to the lower classes, namely the youth and society who never get justice. *Maze Runner (The Death Cure)* can be analyzed from the perspective of a Marxism theory. This is what triggers the class struggle in the film *Maze Runner (The Death Cure)*.

In this film, there was a rebellion movement from young people and the community to fight for their social status. The purpose of the rebellion was to destroy the power of an organization called WICKED. In *Maze Runner (The Death Cure)*, the WICKED organization is a group of organizations that conduct creepy social experiments on groups of teenagers. They kidnap and use humans who are immune to the virus by drawing their blood for anti-virus discoveries and making a healing serum for those who are infected. The WICKED organization also has a desire to create a new world. However, according to the WICKED organization, this is a good intention but ended in exploitation for those immune to the virus including Thomas and Minho. Not only that, but the WICKED organization also controls the entire city or the community residence. Therefore, the proletariat revolted and wanted to destroy the WICKED organization. In an addition, the aim of the rebellion was to save humanity from the greed of the WICKED organization.

Thomas and their friends must find a way to get out of the control of an organization called WICKED. The plot in the story clearly shows how people who are clean or have money can be protected from viral infections that will destroy teenagers and society and people

who do not have authority will not be protected. The lives of people who have money and high social status can be easier than people who are less able to live their lives for financial reasons. Thomas and friends and the lower class society as a representation of the proletarian struggle to regain their rights. They fight for their rights because of the inter-class injustice where the bourgeoisie treats the proletariat badly. Because of this, the proletariat was struggled to carry out a revolt against the bourgeoisie.

Based on the synopsis above, there are issues of a social class between the lower class society and the WICKED organization. The issue of social class in this film is a description of social problems in literary works related to social changes that occur in an industrial society where the struggle of the lower classes is oppressed to be free from the oppression of the bourgeoisie.

## **METHOD**

In conducting this research, the writer applies the qualitative method. The qualitative research method is a method of research that has a purpose to understand the phenomenon which is experienced by the subject of the research such as behavior, perception, motivation, action, etc. It is easier to describe how they are lived shown in the film *Maze Runner (The Death Cure)*. The data of research is taken from the scene and the dialogue of the film *Maze Runner (The Death Cure)*.

The writer uses some reference articles about *Maze Runner (The Death Cure)* film and Marxism Theory from the internet that support the analysis of this research. The writer will watch carefully the movie and find the meaning of the setting and how the situation of class struggle displayed and settled in the film. The data analysis technique applied in this analysis is the descriptive analysis technique. The writer will explore the class struggle in the film, how the proletariat tries to get away from the oppression of the bourgeoisie and has an interest in destroying the bourgeoisie. By watching the movie carefully, the writer can find the clue to identify classes and characteristics of those classes. First, the writer will explain in detail the class social, both the bourgeoisie and proletarian that can cause the conflict in the film based on Marxism Theory. Second, the writer indicates the social distinction and how it leads to class struggle.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

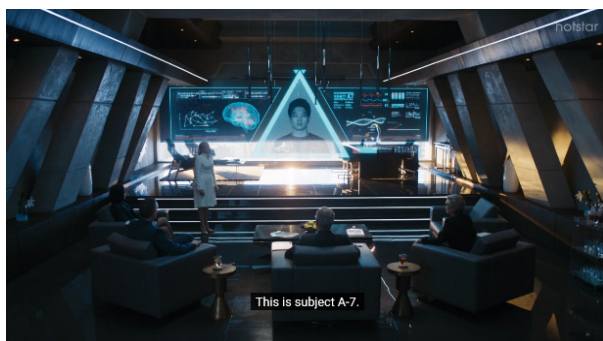
*Maze Runner (The Death Cure)* was chosen as the research corpus because it was raised the issue of the class struggle. There are issues of a social class between the lower class society and the WICKED organization. The issue of social class in this film is a description of social problems in literary works related to social changes that occur in an industrial society where the struggle of the lower classes is oppressed to be free from the oppression of the bourgeoisie.

### **Bourgeois in *Maze Runner (The Death Cure)* Film**

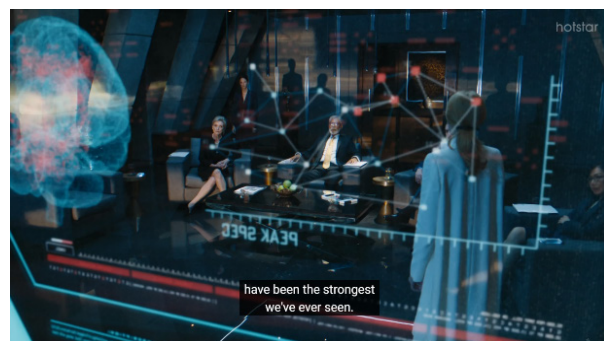
The bourgeoisie is the term for the capitalists in the modern economy. The bourgeoisie is the owner of the means of production and the social class that controls the sphere of production (Historis et al, 1986, p. 2). The meaning of this understanding is that the bourgeoisie has the capital and has the power to oppress the weak or the proletariat.

In this study, the bourgeoisie is represented by the WICKED organization, namely doctors Ava Paige and Jason. The WICKED organization is a group of organizations that conduct scary social experiments on groups of teenagers. They kidnap and use humans who are immune to the virus by drawing their blood to find anti-virus and make healing serums for those who are infected. According to Karl Marx, the upper class is those who own and control the means of production or resources. They can be called oppressive bourgeoisie or capitalists (Box, 1969, p. 130). Capitalism is a social system in which the economic surplus is taken up by who is in control of the economic organization and the aim is to maximize profits (Bellanca, 2013, p. 62).

Starting from the WICKED organization that has good intentions to find anti-virus that aims to save the world. The WICKED organization has found the answer that the key to finding the anti-virus was human immunity. Enzymes produced by the human brain are immune when separated from the bloodstream, it becomes a powerful substance to slow the spread of the virus. But the WICKED organization has yet to find a cure. In the end, the enzyme cannot be produced and can only be taken from the immune and the young. But that didn't stop the WICKED organization. If they were allowed, an entire generation would be sacrificed. The film *Maze Runner (The Death Cure)* shows that Minho is one of the invulnerable teenagers who can be tested as shown in the following picture below.



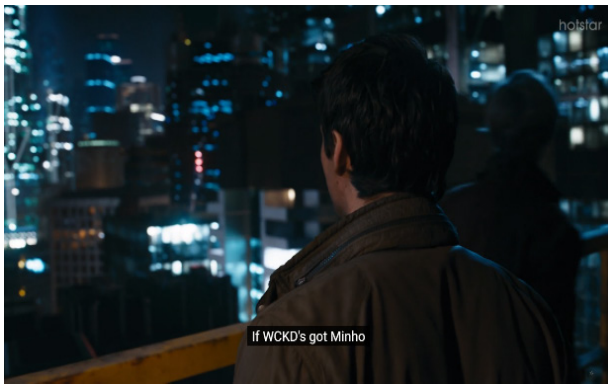
Picture (1) 33:43



Picture (2) 33:43

The analysis found that the situation was getting worse because the infection rate had gone up to 300% and the WICKED organization was extracting a new serum. In picture 1 above shows Minho being the subject of A7. Minho spent more than three years in the Labyrinth Exam. Then, picture 2 above shows Minho's body response is one of the strongest. He could save as many people as possible. The purpose of the WICKED organization is to utilize human blood that is immune to viruses such as Minho's blood and that blood will become an anti-virus serum. The aim of the WICKED organization is to protect or save humans but on the other hand, they sacrifice the immune humans just for their research. This shows that the WICKED organization only cares about their interests without looking at the suffering of immune humans. Because they feel unfair, it causes teenagers who are pilots or as proletariat to want to rebel against the WICKED organization or the bourgeoisie. the workers lose their individual freedom because they have been deprived of the system that surrounds them. They do not have the time, energy, and desire of their own because they are imprisoned by the system that they accept as a reality (Farihah, 2015, p. 446).

Next, The analysis finds that Thomas, Gally, and Newt looking for a way to save Minho and the others. They are managed to enter the Last City area. They observed the WICKED organization building, there were many soldiers and CCTV watching the building like the two pictures shown below.



Picture (3) 53:50



Picture (4) 53:50

The two pictures above show that the city where the WICKED organization lives have a safe and comfortable place. They have CCTV watching the place. This shows that the WICKED organization is top class because they own the means of production. The class system is a common feature of industrial society because industrialization is a product of individual efforts in a free market resulting in differing individual wealth. A class system is a system of stratification whereby people are classified according to their economic possession. Generally, sociologists use income, wealth, occupation type, education level, lifestyle, and material possessions to categorize people into social classes. The class system was to begin when individuals started amassing wealth to themselves to the detriment of others, thereby creating social inequality (Box, 1969, p. 133). These 2 pictures above have shown how the bourgeoisie has a comfortable place to live, a safe environment, money, power, and easily get what they want. In their residence Last City, they can carry out activities like other normal people. They have the facilities and needed not be afraid of any threats.

Ava Paige : It's impressive what humans are capable of when their lives are at stake. you squeeze them, there's nothing they can't do. No line they won't cross.

Janson : We've still got 28 immunes right inside this building. We can find more.

Ava Paige : You hunt them all until there's nothing left. despite everything, we do to them. any torment we give them at least we give them the ability to survive.

**(*Maze Runner (The Death Cure)* film, 01:04:21 - 01:06:23)**

Furthermore, the above statement proves that the film *Maze Runner (The Death Cure)* shows Ava Paige as a doctor from the WICKED organization contemplating what she is doing. Paige realizes that her actions have exploited society by torturing and blackmailing those who have been sacrificed to become anti-virus experiments. Exploitation is not unique to capitalism. This has been a feature of all-class society, which is divided into two main classes, the exploited class, which produces wealth, and the exploiter class, which takes over. Exploitation forms the basis of all profits distributed among the entire capitalist class. It is not only the case that the rich have much while the workers have little; capitalists accumulate wealth through a system of organized theft from the working class. (*What do we mean by exploitation?* 2022 *SocialistWorker.org*, n.d.).

The virus can spread through the air, the serum was the last chance. People who have not been infected will be exposed within a month. Because he felt his research was already underway, Janson would not give up. He wanted his research to continue. The aim of the WICKED organization is to protect or save humans but on the other hand, they sacrifice the

immune humans just for their research. Capitalism is the conditions of life such as food, clothing, and (the tools needed to make them) produced by wage workers as commodities in exchange for profit. In the production process, most of the workers work under the control of a minority who controls productive resources such as land, factories (Das, 2019, p. 6-7). Capitalism is a system of government for economic affairs that has emerged in different settings and continues to evolve over time. Capitalism also owns and controls the use of the property for personal gain (Mayer et al, 2017, p. 4).

### **Proletariat in *Maze Runner (The Death Cure)* Film**

As mentioned earlier, the proletariat is the owner of labor, and only the owner of labor, with no other resource than the ability to work with their hands, bodies, and minds. Since these workers do not own the property to survive and earn for themselves and their families, they have to find work for employers. This means working for the employer (capitalist) in an exploitative social relationship (*Marx on Social Class*, n.d. 2022). Both Marx and Engels saw that, although the working class was created and organized by capitalism, it still struggled against its exploitation and subordination (Bell & Cleaver, 2002). The proletariat will thus “take over” and, through its dictatorship, stop the “exploitation of man by man” and create a classless society (Garden et al., 1975).



**Picture (5) 23:49**

Picture 5 shows WICKED taking extreme steps that could harm Minho, Teresa believes her terrible experiment on Minho can create an anti-virus because Minho has been proven to be immune to viruses that infect all over the world and the WICKED organization wants to use his blood as the main ingredient for making vaccines. Minho is a representative of the proletariat.



Picture (6) 00:01:24

Picture (7) 00:21:35

Two of the pictures above depict the WICKED organization building a wall to prevent infection with the flare virus from spreading. Thomas and his friends are trying to find a way to get into Last City (where the WICKED organization lives). Thomas and his friends include people who live outside the city of Last City as representatives of the proletariat which is reflected in its struggle against the oppressors who exploit it. They struggle to try to save their friend Minho and other teenagers from the WICKED organization because the organization WICKED sacrifices teenagers to become an antidote to the virus. They use humans who are immune to the virus by drawing their blood for anti-virus discoveries and making a healing serum for those who are infected.

Vince : I know you've all been through hell. I wish I could say our troubles are over. But we're not past this yet. WICKED is still out there watching us. They didn't give up. Because you have something they want. They took you because you were immune to the plague that wiped out humanity. And they think you're worth the sacrifices to find a cure. So in two days, we'll be out of here. We're going to a place where WICKED will never find you. A place where you can start over. A place you can call home.

**(*Maze Runner (The Death Cure)* film, 12:37-13:23)**

The above statement shows Vince wants to take them somewhere. They have just been rescued by Thomas and his friends from a train belonging to a wicked organization that wants to kidnap them to be used as an anti-virus serum experiment material. He wanted them to be separated from the WICKED organization because Vince felt the environment they lived in was inappropriate and different from normal life in general. Vince has a plan by getting them to leave the place to survive because the environment they live in is not safe. Marxists identify the working class as comprising individuals who are forced to sell their labor-power in order to survive and who work under the control of the capital. (O'Neill & Wayne, 2017, p. 7).

### **Class Struggle in *Maze Runner (The Death Cure)* Film**

The social class system is radically different from other stratification systems. Social class is a de facto group. Class is an economic group. The class showcases an industrial society that has flourished since the 17th century. Classes differed in many ways, from slavery, plantations, and caste. We can define class as a large-scale grouping of people who share the same economic resources and this usually affects their lifestyle. The main basis for class distinction is wealth and occupation. Classes differ from previous versions of stratification in many ways. Different classes of individuals differ from each other in terms



of ownership of material resources. Here economic inequality dominates (Stephenson & Slesinger, 2018, p. 25). The cause of class struggle in this film began when the WICKED Organization was planned to create an anti-virus trial that would endanger the group of teenagers who were testing it. After being tested, those who are immune will have their blood drawn for the discovery of anti-virus as a healing serum for those who are infected. Because of the Exploitation of the WICKED organization, Thomas and his friends have the intention to fight against the WICKED organization. They have also staged a revolt and wanted to destroy the WICKED organization. different new Features of a more complicated class society that were technologically and culturally advanced included wars for land and resources, slavery for exploitation, the state with its armed bodies to protect property, and uprisings of the lower instructions including revolutionary moves (*Karl Marx's Theory of Class Struggle: The Working Class & Revolution | Socialist Alternative*, n.d.).

Exploitation carried out by the WICKED organization in addition to using teenagers as trials, they also control entire cities or peoples residences. Therefore, the proletariat revolted and wanted to destroy the WICKED organization. Moreover, the aim of rebellion is to save humanity from the greed of the WICKED organization. The power of the proletariat as the power of socialism to live and be accepted by society. The capitalist form of production has overthrown all others, and become dominant in the industrial sector. Wage labor is now the dominant form of labor. When the capitalist in industry buys the only commodity the proletariat can offer for sale, namely, his labor-power, he does so with the sole aim of making profitable use of it. The more workers produce, the greater the value of the product. In relation to employees, he is not a co-worker, he is just a driver and an exploiter (Jeklin, 2016, p. 13-14). Socialism as envisioned via Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels is en-capsulated by way of the following principle: "From every in step with his or her capability to every consistent with his or her contribution." An employee's "potential" could be measured or determined in phrases of his or her age, capabilities, revel in, academic attainments, physical attributes, and the total range of hours worked (Kyambalesa, 2019, p. 1).

The struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie in this film aims to save them from the ordeal of the WICKED organization. Thomas, Minho, and friends as representatives of the proletariat who were victims of the WICKED Organization experiment and did not receive the WICKED organization's treatment. They tried to rebel against the WICKED organization.

Jasper : (ON LOUDSPEAKER) we're the voice of the unvoiced! They disguise in the back of their partitions, thinking they are able to maintain the cure for themselves, while they watch the rest of folks wither and decay! however, there are extra of us than there are of them. And I say, we rise up and take again what is ours! Let's bring back a victory!

**(Maze Runner (The Death Cure) film, 36:56-37:20)**

The statement explained that the proletariat felt that they could not stand still while the WICKED organization made them crumble and die. They call on the proletarian society outside Last City to fight the WICKED organization and take back what is rightfully theirs. The proletarian society could no longer contain its fury. They are ready to revolt and fight the WICKED organization.

Lawrence : Don't be afraid. I may not be beautiful, but we all know who the enemy is. Those huddled behind those walls! They're there giving names to people like us. They call us Cranks! But I say that they are monsters. They started this war, but tonight, we will finish it. Follow me, and we'll show them the faces of the people they've chosen to forget! Follow me and the city is yours!

**(Maze Runner (The Death Cure) film, 1:37:39-1:38:31)**

Next, the statements have proven that the film Maze Runner (The Death Cure) shows Lawrence inviting people to discuss their goals. In addition, they plan to rebel against the WICKED organization because they feel they are considered ankle (humans have been infected with the virus) by the WICKED organization. But for them, the WICKED organization lacks humanity and makes the proletariat feel insecure. The proletariat rebelled for justice. During the quest to free the gladders, the proletariat also rebelled against the WICKED organization by destroying the city of Last City. The cause of the exploitation of the bourgeoisie against the proletariat makes the proletariat want to revolt and destroy the bourgeoisie. In all class societies, there is class struggle, both the struggle of the dominant classes to reproduce the system and the struggle from below. Working masses indeed fight against the exploitative class relations and the political mechanisms, which support these. Their class struggle happens both in the political realm and in the realm of consciousness. This fight can be overt or covert. It succeeds sometimes and in some places. It fails at other times and in other places. The struggle is both aimed at changing things inside the system and at transcending the system. Class struggle is often not informed by fully-formed class consciousness, and it is often deflected through, and mediated by, struggle over non-class interests (Das, 2019, p. 6). Marx's view that the proletariat will realize their common interests so that they will build up the power to rebel against the bourgeoisie (Farihah, 2015, p. 446).

## CONCLUSION

After the analyze data, it can be concluded Maze Runner (The Death Cure) film discusses class struggle, there are two major classes in a capitalist society, the bourgeoisie (the upper class or owners of industrial equipment) and the proletariat (lower class or laborer). This research tries to analyze the class struggle and to know how class struggle happened in the Maze Runner (The Death Cure) film. The problem of social class in this film is the exploitation of the upper classes, namely the organization named WICKED to the lower classes, namely the youth and society who never get justice. The WICKED Organization aims to make an experiment that torture and make the city where Thomas and friends and the lower class society live unsafely. With the power of the WICKED organization, they dare to oppress the youth and the lower class society. Thomas and friends and the lower class society as a representation of the proletarian struggle to regain their rights. They fight for their rights because of the inter-class injustice where the bourgeoisie treats the proletariat badly which causes the proletariat to feel oppressed. Therefore, there was a rebellion movement from young people and the community lower class or proletariat to fight for their social status.

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