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THE PORTRAYAL OF POWER AND AUTHORITY IN *ELYSIUM* FILM

Siti Mutiara Fahmi, Anjar Dwi Astuti, Setya Ariani

Department of English Literature, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Mulawaman University

E-mail: smutiarafahmi@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study discusses the portrayal of power and authority based on the order of plot in *Elysium* film. There are two theories used in this study: Dahrendorf's power and authority and Reaske's plot. The research design of this study was qualitative content analysis. The data of this study were taken from *Elysium* film in the form of dialogues related to the portrayal of power and authority. This study finds out that the portrayal of power and authority is divided based on the plot order of *Elysium* film: rising actions, climax, and resolution. Power is portrayed through the representative of Earth citizens who decide to work together. Meanwhile, authority is portrayed through the representative of Elysium citizens who decide to kill each other in taking control of Elysium. This study concludes that the representatives of power stand as the winner of the conflict by eradicating the discrimination policy of the previous Elysium that is controlled by authority and building the new Elysium without discrimination against the Earth citizens.

Keywords: plot, power, authority, film

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mendiskusikan tentang perwujudan kekuasaan dan wewenang berdasarkan urutan alur cerita yang terdapat dalam film Elysium. Ada dua teori yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini: kekuasaan dan wewenang milik Dahrendorf dan alur cerita milik Reaske. Bentuk penelitian ini berupa analisa konten kualitatif. Data yang diambil berasal dari film Elysium dalam bentuk dialog-dialog terkait perwujudan kekuasaan dan wewenang. Penelitian ini menemukan bahwa perwujudan kekuasaan dan wewenang diurutkan berdasarkan urutan alur cerita dari film Elysium: pemunculan konflik, klimaks, dan resolusi. Kekuasaan diwujudkan melalui perwakilan dari penduduk Earth yang memutuskan untuk bekerja sama. Sementara itu, wewenang diwujudkan melalui perwakilan penduduk Elysium yang memutuskan untuk membunuh satu sama lain dalam mengambil alih Elysium. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa perwakilan kekuasaan yang berdiri sebagai pemenang konflik dengan menghapus kebijakan diskriminasi dari Elysium yang dulu dikendalikan oleh wewenang dan membangun Elysium baru tanpa diskriminasi terhadap masyarakat Earth.

Kata Kunci: alur cerita, kekuasaan, wewenang, film

A. INTRODUCTION

In a society where people with power are the ones who do things under the orders of people with authority, the switching possibility is completely a great deal to happen. It



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becomes even more possible to happen when Dahrendorf himself defines that power is tied to the personality, while authority is tied to the social positions or roles (166). It signifies that this concept is not absolute and people in any condition can reach any point they wish for. The state where authority becomes the deal in socioeconomic society is the face of real society. It is a general truth that our society these days are based on the economic development.

This condition has been numerous times narrated in literary works as well including film. *Elysium* film is directed by Neill Blomkamp and released in 2013. It tells a story about the corrupted future earth in the late 21st century with diseases, pollutions, and overpopulation. *Elysium* film portrays the life condition where its society lives with the switching position between those with power and authority. The portrayal of power and authority in *Elysium* film is seen based on the plot order applied in the film. This study uses two theories to answer the research question of this study, Ralf Dahrendorf's power and authority and Reaske's plot order.

B. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1. Reaske's plot

A story must contain plot since this element works to make up the whole idea of a story. Reaske's plot order consists of rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution. Rising action is the introductory part of a story. It covers two kinds of events: the certain events that have happened before the beginning of the film and the events that excite the character (usually the hero) to take some action (Reaske 27-28). Climax is the end of the two previous events in rising action. It indicates the turning point of a whole film to lead to a new discovery by the character (Reaske 28).

Falling action is the part of film focusing on the main character's desperation. After going through the conflicts, then comes the time when the main character is overpowered by the situation (Reaske 28). Resolution is the end of the film (Lannom). In ending a film, there appear several types that can be done such as through catastrophe. It is the depressing and unpleasant ending of the film (Reaske 29).

2. Dahrendorf's power and authority

Social structure is constructed on the basis of controlling and being under control. This kind of social structure employs the concept of power and authority to run the lives in society. People who have power do not have the rights to control how things work since this privilege is given to those who have authority. In other words, power works under the orders of authority as the legitimate value of society.

a. Power

According to Dahrendorf, power is the ability of an individual to perform things, particularly on achieving one's goals despite resistances that may happen. It is also tied to the individual's personality (166). Thus, the term power in this concept is not solely referring to one's degree of physical strength. One has to set up the probability of targeted goals being achieved successfully to be defined as power (Uphoff 303). The characteristics to set up the probability in power setting are accounted through conceivable qualities and circumstances.

b. Authority

When an individual has reached an important social position, it signifies the individual is in the setting of authority. This setting allows the individual to take control



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over other people who are considered as the subordinate element (Dahrendorf 166). Since authority works as the legitimate law (the systems, rules, values, and laws made are absolute for the superordinate and subordinate parties), it makes this setting to be tied to the social position or role. However, authority only works for social setting. It means that an individual of authority could not apply his/her rule outside of the social position the authority sits at (171). It is valid for its own circle.

Table 1 Characteristics of Power and Authority

No.	Social Structure	Definitions	Characteristics	
1.	Power	An individual's ability	Its characteristics	
		to do things in life mostly in achieving one's goal despite resistances which is tied to the individual's personality.	ultimately revolve around the existence of probability in achieving one's goal based on	
			 a. Conceivable qualities are: intelligence energy level. leadership skill. efficacy. experiences. bargaining abilities. persuasive. likeableness. trust. competence. well-being skill. 	
			b. Conceivable circumstances are: - economic status information force.	
2.	Authority	An ability to control things through domination and subjugation is tied to the social position or role.	Its characteristics stand on the existence of authority relations which is all about the relations or super-and subordination. a. Conceivable qualities are:	



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	- socially expected to control through orders, commands, warnings, and prohibitions subordinate element.
	b. Conceivable circumstances are: - economic status information.
	- force.

3. Previous studies

The first previous study was entitled *Social and Political Conflicts in the "Elysium" Movie* by Desi Amelia Sari. Sari's study was aimed to find out the kinds and causes of social and political conflicts in *Elysium* movie. Sari's study yielded to two findings which were: (1) the kinds of social conflicts that existed in *Elysium* movie were conflicts of social position, interest, and role. Meanwhile, political conflicts were found in interest and value issues; and (2) the causes of social conflicts as portrayed in *Elysium* movie were solely rooted in the differences of people, culture, interest, and social change. In the matter of political conflicts, the causes appeared from the pluralities of horizontal and vertical.

The second previous study was entitled Structural Analysis of Plot in Rick Riordan's "Percy Jackson and The Olympians: The Lightning Thief" by Dani Irawan. Irawan's study discussed the plot of Riordan's Percy Jackson. The results of Irawan's study were: (1) the elements of plot structure applied in The Lightning Thief novel were exposition, the problem in the story, conflicts, complication, climax, resolution, surprise, suspense, and ending; (2) the way plot structure composed the plot of The Lightning Thief novel was by dividing the story into three major sets of events (looking for the Half-Blood Camp, looking for Zeus' lightning bolt, and returning the lightning bolt); and (3) the kind of plot applied in the novel was a dramatic one.

The third previous study was entitled *Konflik Sosial Dalam Novel Dawuk: Kisah Kelabu Dari Rumbuk Randu Karya Makhfud Ikhwan (Kajian Teori Ralf Dahrendorf)* by Rany R. Putri. Putri's study discussed the social conflict in *Dawuk* novel. The results of Putri's study showed that: (1) the two faces as portrayed in the society of *Dawuk* novel were conflicts (physical abuse, fights, sexual abuse, and murder), and consensus; (2) the form of power was described through family relationship, while the form of authority was described through the official government actions; (3) the groups involved in the social conflict were pseudo group and interest group; and (4) the way social conflict was controlled and solved through arbitration.

C. RESEARCH METHOD

The design of this study was descriptive qualitative research. To analyze this study, the researcher applied the content analysis. Content analysis refers to a method of analyzing data through interpreting language material in a finished form (Mayring 56). The



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data in this study were dialogues. As the source of data, *Elysium* film script and scenes were used in obtaining the data needed for the analysis process.

The researcher performed three steps in collecting the data in this study such as read *Elysium* film script, watched *Elysium* film, and took notes of the scenes and dialogues related to the discussion of this study. The process of analyzing data in this study applied the approach of content analysis. In applying the approach of content analysis, a researcher is required to perform two steps such as making the coding categories and interpreting the data (Mayring 64). Below are the coding categories used in this study:

Table 2 Coding Categories of Power

No.	Power	Characteristics	Codes	
		Intelligence Energy Level	IEL	
	Conceivable Qualities	Leadership Skill	LDS	
		Efficacy Quality	EFQ	
		Experiences Quality	EXQ	
1.		Bargaining Abilities	BRA	
1.		Persuasive Quality	PRQ	
		Likeableness Quality	LKQ	
		Trust Quality	TRQ	
		Competence Quality	CMQ	
		Well-Being Skill	WBS	
		Power-Economic	PEC	
		Circumstance	FEC	
2.	Conceivable	Power-Status Circumstance	PSC	
۷.	Circumstances	Power-Information	PIC	
		Circumstance	PIC	
		Power-Force Circumstance	PFC	

Table 3 Coding Categories of Authority

No.	Authority	Characteristics	Codes
1.	Conceivable Qualities	Socially-Expected Controller	SEC
		Subordinate Element	SBE
2.	Conceivable Circumstances	Authority-Economic Circumstance	AEC
		Authority-Status Circumstance	ASC
		Authority-Information Circumstance	AIC
		Authority-Force Circumstance	AFC

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The researcher analyzed the data based on Dahrendorf's theory to explain the way power and authority was portrayed in the film. The display of data analysis followed the orders of plot in *Elysium* film. The researcher presented the discussion of this study's findings by explaining the similarities and differences in findings with the three previous studies.

D. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

1. Findings

The portrayal of power and authority was described through the representation of two societies in the film, Earth and Elysium by the five selected characters. The explanation of findings' analysis was based on *Elysium* film's plot to see the characters as part of their representative society instead of an individual being.

a. Rising Action

In this film, authority always came as the first event to initiate the emergence of the rising action order. However, the display of findings presented the explanation following to the title of this study where it started with power as the first explanation and be followed by the authority as the second one.

Max as the hero of *Elysium* film initiated the event of rising action as portrayed from the setting of power. Right after he was exposed to a lethal dose of radiation from his work, Max decided to get himself cured in med bay of Elysium. Max's dying condition demanded him to take the risky decision of going up to Elysium.

Data 1, Max: CMQ 01 and PFC 01

Max : They can fix this shit on Elysium, man.

Julio : I know.

Max: I'm gonna go see Spider.

Min. 29:05 - 29:09, Line 254-256

When Max took a decision to have Spider's help, it initiated two characteristics of power that he was developing at the moment. The first characteristic was competence quality. In power, competence quality (CMQ) refers to an individual's ability to achieve goals (Uphoff 315). The word 'competence' here referred to Max's determination in curing himself. He had a great sense to overcome the upcoming obstacles to reach Elysium. The second characteristic was power-force circumstance. Power-force circumstance (PFC) is the physical strength of an individual that allows them to achieve their goals under the circumstance of power (315). In this case, Max had a literal force in his power circumstance.

Long before, he was known as one of the strongest robbers in his neighborhood. This fact that got him to be confident in asking for Spider's help since he could use force as the way out. The two characteristics (CMQ 01 and PFC 01) were the signs of power setting. Max posed these two characteristics and put them into use to achieve his goal: getting cured in Elysium. As the one who lived in the setting of power, Max's decision to have Spider's help initiated the rising action event. This decision of him excited a future conflict between people of authority and power.

In the setting of authority, there was only a character to represent the rising action of authority. Delacourt sat in a high position of Elysium. She was a Defense Secretary for Elysium with the crucial task of protecting it from being invaded by the Earth illegal intruders.

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Data 5, Delacourt: SEC 01, SBE 01, and ASC 01

Man Employee : What do you want us to do, ma'am?

Delacourt : Activate Kruger.

Woman Employee : Ma'am, according to Executive Order 355 we are

unauthorized to use our assets on Earth.

Delacourt : I am authorizing you.

Min. 14:58 – 15:07, Line 247-253

There were three characteristics of authority that Delacourt owned in her position as the Defense Secretary such as socially expected controller (SEC), subordinate element (SBE), and authority-status circumstance (ASC). Socially expected controller is the quality of an individual in authority setting to control other people (Uphoff 309). In SEC 01, Delacourt had a position where she could control the way things related to the security and defense of Elysium worked. She was allowed to control things through her orders and one of those was when she gave an order to activate agent Kruger.

The order given by Delacourt was performed by her subordinates such as the man and woman employees and agent Kruger. This fact indicated one obvious thing that Delacourt had the characteristics of subordinate element (SBE 01) in the setting of authority. Subordinate element refers to the people who work for the individual of authority (Uphoff 309). These two characteristics were supported by a crucial characteristic that Delacourt owned at the moment which was her status, the authority-status circumstance (ASC 01). Authority-status circumstance (ASC) is a position that allows an individual to control other people (Uphoff 317). It is different with the socially expected controller, because ASC is a position and SEC is an individual's quality. She served the position of Defense Secretary for Elysium that accommodated her to have several other characteristics in the setting of authority.

b. Climax

After the initiation of rising action events that the representatives of power and authority had made, the plot order continued to the climax events. This order occurred when the characters encounter some discovery events. There were two major events to initiate the climax events in *Elysium* film. The first climax event occurred when the representatives of power setting discovered the truth behind the stolen information. The second climax event was signified when the representatives of authority fought each other to take over Elysium society.

The first event of climax in *Elysium* film was initiated by the discovery of stolen information. Max was able to steal the organic information of Elysium citizen, John Carlyle. Unexpectedly, the organic information that he stole was no other than a reboot program that previously had been ordered by Delacourt to create a coup in Elysium.

Data 7, Spider: IEL 01 and PSC 01

Spider : They will hunt you to the edge of the Earth for this.

Max : What is it?

Spider: It's a reboot program for Elysium. Whoever has this has the power to

override their whole system. Open the borders. Make everyone a citizen of

Elysium. This can save your life. We can save everyone.

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Min. 1:08:50 – 1:09:20, Line 1067-1076

As an experienced informant, Spider was able to read the data of Elysium reboot program. This quality of him referred to another characteristic of power setting which was the intelligence energy level. Intelligence energy level (IEL) refers to the quality of an individual's intelligence in the setting of power (Uphoff 315). Spider had quite an intelligence energy level since he could understand what kind of data that Max had stolen. Previously, one of Spider's colleagues tried to read the data, but he was not able to do it. Here, it was clear that Spider had the quality of intelligence power.

Power-status circumstance (PSC) is about the individual's influencing status in the setting of power (Uphoff 315). The PSC 01 referred to Spider's status as an informant in Earth society. This status was considered to be important since it allowed him to have many closed information going around between the Earth and Elysium societies. Furthermore, the status as an informant also allowed Spider to catch the real identity of the stolen data since he had many experiences dealing with this kind of stuff.

In the setting of authority, Kruger's character initiated the event of climax. He was a mercenary of Elysium, but due to his problematic behavior, Kruger was put off duty. It was Delacourt who activated Kruger back as an agent to help her with the overthrowing plan.

Data 10, Kruger: AIC 01 and AFC 01

Kruger: But nobody is gonna hang us for treason. We do the hanging. Put your hand on it. Keep pressure on it. Not so chirpy now, eh? It's all right, boys. **Elysium is about to get its first proper president.**

Min. 1:24:38 – 1:24:55, Line 1301-1308

The authority-information circumstance (AIC 01) of Kruger referred to the fact that he discovered the truth behind the stolen information within Max's head. He also found out the reason why Delacourt was willing to activate his service once again only to recover the stolen information. Thus, it was proper to state that Kruger owned the characteristic of authority-information circumstance.

Authority-force circumstance (AFC) refers to the circumstance of force (the amount of force) that an individual of authority could produce and own (Uphoff 317). The AFC 01 signified the force circumstance that Kruger owned at the moment. He was a trained mercenary advanced with Elysium technology which made him undefeatable. This one characteristic allowed him to overthrow Delacourt from her authority position by killing her. This characteristic that also got Kruger's confidence up when he stated out loud about Elysium's presidency to be on his hands. In this case, the researcher considered Kruger to have more advantage than Delacourt in recovering the stolen information because he knew how to defeat Max through force circumstance.

c. Falling Action

The third plot order found in *Elysium* film was the events of falling action. In this order, there were two data to show the existence of falling action. The two data were only initiated by Delacourt's character as the representative of Elysium citizens and Max's character as the representative of Earth citizens. It was because only these two characters that experienced the state of helplessness as the key event of falling action order in *Elyisum* film.

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The first character who experienced the state of helplessness was Delacourt. She was the representative of Elysium citizens which meant that she owned the characteristics of authority.

Data 11, Delacourt (no characteristics of authority)

Delacourt : No. No more.

Min. 1:26:14 – 1:26:21, Line 1332-1333

As shown in data 11 above, Delacourt was in her state of helplessness after being stabbed by Kruger. She lost lots of blood and was in a critical condition. During this falling action event, there was another character who tried to save Delacourt by putting some pressure on her neck. However, this aid was refused by Delacourt because she knew the fact that she would not survive. The fact that Delacourt was a person of authority did not give her any privilege to get through the state of helplessness. In fact, she did not perform any of the characteristics of authority.

The same case also happened to the representative of Earth citizens through Max's character. Even though it was clearly described that he held the master key of all the chaos between the Earth citizens and Elysium citizens, Max still could not save himself.

Data 12, Max (no characteristics of power)

Spider : Max?

Max : It's okay. I know.

Spider : There's no coming back from this. No med bay can heal you.

Max : All right. Give it to me.

Min. 1:36:54 – 1:37:17, Line 1464-1468

The helplessness state of Max was being shown when he surrendered to his dying state. Max found out that once the reboot program on his head was being extracted, he would instantly die from it. It was because the reboot program of Elysium had been designed to be a lethal information for whosever hold the information.

d. Resolution

The resolution event of *Elysium* film was initiated by the actions of representatives of the power setting. The reason of only power setting that came up as the resolution event in *Elysium* film was because the two representatives of authority, Delacourt and Kruger concerned to bring themselves into the controller position. Meanwhile, the representatives of power setting agreed to cooperate in reaching out their goal. Hence, the resolution came up as the representative of power setting took over Elysium.

After being able to reboot the data program of Elysium citizens, Spider was ambushed by President Patel and his subordinates. When he commanded the robot officer to arrest Spider, there came an unexpected answer. The robot officer claimed that it could not arrest Spider since he was already an Elysium citizen.

Data 14, Spider: ASC 01 and AIC 01 President Patel : Arrest him!!

Robot Officer : I cannot arrest a citizen of Elysium.

President Patel: What?

Spider : You did uh, you did a great job. Guess who Elysium belongs to

now.



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Min. 1:40:22 – 1:40:34, Line 1499-1503

There were two characteristics of authority setting that Spider developed at the moment. The first was authority-status circumstance referring to Spider's ASC 01. Spider's status at the moment he was ambushed, had altered as an Elysium citizen. This fact alone posed a great advantage for him since each of Elysium citizen's security was guaranteed by their law. By producing the arrest order towards an Elysium citizen, it had already violated the law which got the robot officer to decline the order.

The second characteristic was authority-information circumstance referring to the AIC 01. Spider as the last standing person automatically owned the reboot program which made him the new president of Elysium. This fact was stated by Spider when he asked President Patel to guess the controller of the current Elysium. Between these two characteristics of authority, the strongest value was laid on the authority-information circumstance since the reboot program had the ability to turn the table in seconds.

2. DISCUSSION

The portrayal of power and authority based on the plot order in *Elysium* film is aimed to eradicate the toxic society (the first generation of Elysium society) and build another new society (the second generation of Elysium with the Earth citizens). This study also notices a work pattern of each setting. By seeing from the representatives of power setting, Max's and Spider's characters are willing to work together to achieve one similar goal to make all Earth citizens as the official citizens of Elysium. Yet, the same pattern of work do not apply to the representatives of authority. Delacourt and Kruger overthrow anyone who has the position of the controller in Elysium society. It is because their main goal to be the controller of Elysium. Rather than working together, both Delacourt and Kruger make use of each other to step up their authority setting. As the result, none of them is able to reach the goal.

After obtaining the result in this study, there appears some similarities and differences with the results of the three previous studies. A previous study that is written by Desi Amelia Sari entitled *Social and Political Conflicts in the "Elysium" Movie* aims to discuss the kinds and causes of social and political conflicts in *Elysium* movie. The result shows the kinds and causes of social and political conflicts in *Elysium* movie are based on position, interest, and role. The result of Sari's study is also being found within the findings of this study.

In line with this study, the conflicts existed in the film are also based on different position, interest, and role of each representative, the Earth citizens and Elysium citizens. However, the causes of conflicts found in this study are not from the political conflicts and social conflicts just like the findings in Sari's study. The portrayal is described into the conflicts between Earth citizens and Elysium citizens caused by the existence of power and authority as the social structure applied in the film.

The next previous study is entitled *Konflik Sosial Dalam Novel Dawuk: Kisah Kelabu Dari Rumbuk Randu Karya Makhfud Ikhwan (Kajian Teori Ralf Dahrendorf)* by Rany R. Putri. In her study, Putri discusses the description of two faces in society, power and authority as portrayed in *Dawuk* novel. The result shows that power's face is described through family relationships, while authority's face is described through the official government actions.

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The same findings support the findings of the current study. The cooperative bond between Max and Spider represents the setting of power since they are friends (family relationship as their Earth citizens' status). Meanwhile, the way Delacourt and Kruger act throughout the film represents the way the government of people in the setting of authority usually takes control (through orders, force, and violence).

On the other hand, the findings of Putri's study are at some points contrasting with the findings of the current study. The social structure of power as portrayed in *Elysium* film do not require the cooperative bond by blood only. It sees all Earth citizens as the whole family which means they are not limited by blood relations. The social structure of authority as portrayed in *Elysium* film does not purely come from the official government. It is due to the situations where Delacourt and Kruger have moments when they take control of Elysium even though the official president at the moment is still President Patel. Thus, it is clear that in *Elysium* film, anyone who has the highest authority will be able to control Elysium.

E. CONCLUSIONS

The way power and authority is portrayed following to the plot order in *Elysium* film is through the conflicts between the Earth citizens and Elysium citizens into the events of rising action, climax, and resolution. The Earth citizens as the representatives of power cooperate to eradicate the previous system of Elysium that keeps torturing the Earth citizens through their discrimination policy. On the other hand, Elysium citizens as the representatives of authority fight against each other to have themselves sit in the highest position as the President of Elysium. They want to maintain the discrimination system of Elysium. The result shows that the representatives of power stand as the winner of the conflict by eradicating the previous Elysium and building a new one to include the Earth citizens as the legal citizens of Elysium.

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