

Analysis of Systemic Violence and Social Inequality in *The Purge* (2013): A Marxist Theoretical Lens

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Abstract

*This study analyzes systemic violence and social inequality represented in James DeMonaco's film *The Purge* (2013) using a Marxist theoretical lens. This study focuses on analyzing the three main pillars of Marxist theory: class domination, class struggle, and alienation, as represented in the visual elements, narrative, and characters in the film. This study uses a qualitative descriptive method with a focus on content analysis. This study interprets the film using Marxist concepts and compares the findings with contemporary academic studies on cinema and cases of social inequality. The results of this study show that *The Purge* depicts how capitalist ideology legitimizes violence, how resistance emerges symbolically, and how alienation destroys social and psychological structures. This study argues that *The Purge* functions not only as a dystopian horror film, but also as a symbol of ideological criticism of the capitalist system, which is relevant to both global and local conditions. These findings highlight the role of film as a cultural medium in social criticism and reinforce the relevance of Marxist theory in analyzing social inequality in modern society.*

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INTRODUCTION

Social inequality remains one of the crucial challenges facing the world today, including the modern world. In the era of globalization, technological advances, and neoliberal economic systems, the accumulation of wealth among the elite has accelerated, while leaving behind the majority of the middle and lower classes. According to data from the World Bank Report (2022), the top 10% of the global population controls nearly 52% of total income, while the bottom 50% only has 8%. Oxfam International (2023) highlights that billionaires have actually gained significant profits estimated at more than USD 2.7 trillion

during the COVID-19 pandemic. Meanwhile, millions of other people have fallen into poverty. These statistics show the persistence, even increase, of systemic inequality globally. Inequality is not a coincidence, but is embedded in the structure of the capitalist system, which has access to resources, such as education, law, public services, and basic survival.

In the local context in Indonesia, this creates an abstract social pattern in the socio-economic structure. Data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS, 2022) states that the Gini ratio in Indonesia remains at 0.381. This figure is a sign of persistent inequality between communities in urban and rural areas. Meanwhile, urban areas enjoy the benefits of industrialization and the effects of globalization, but rural areas continue to face problems of poverty, lack of public services, and minimal access to education. One of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic is that Indonesia has experienced an increase in unemployment, especially among informal workers, highlighting the disproportionate structural vulnerability that affects the lower classes. Academics such as Haryanto (2023) state that inequality in Indonesia is not only economic but also ideological, as the dominant narrative often legitimizes inequality by portraying poverty as an individual failure within a social system. In this case, media, including films, can actually play a crucial role in reinforcing or criticizing such inequality.

Film media is one of the most influential mediums in representing this case of inequality. This is because it is capable of shaping public awareness about this crucial phenomenon. Film is not only a medium of entertainment, but also functions as an ideological text that can normalize existing social structures or question them. As Kellner (2021) argues, popular media operates as a form of cultural education, teaching audiences how to understand power, identity, and social relations. In this regard, dystopian films have played a significant role in depicting extreme forms of inequality. Works such as Bong Joon-ho's *Parasite* (2019), Galder Gaztelu-Urrutia's *The Platform* (2019), and the Netflix series *Squid Game* (2021) have gained intensity from the public as global recognition for their resonance with real concerns about class stratification and capitalist exploitation. The films mentioned reveal how inequality is reflected and naturalized, often by translating abstract systemic patterns into concrete images of hierarchy, struggle, and despair.

In a broader cinematic lens, James DeMonaco's film *The Purge* (2013) occupies a unique position. The film is set in the United States, where, for one night each year, all crime is legalized under the control of a regime referred to in the film as the New Founding Fathers of America (NFFA). Although the initial narrative framework is like a survival thriller-horror film, the symbolism is highly political. The annual "Purge" agenda serves as an allegory for systemic violence, where the poor are the main targets and are subject to elimination, while the rich are able to protect themselves with sophisticated technological equipment to reinforce the security of their homes. In this case,

the Sandin family represents the upper class, illustrating how privilege can facilitate survival, while those in the lower classes are hunted and marginalized, such as a homeless man in the film who becomes a prime victim of this policy. Through this, *The Purge* (2013) dramatizes the cruelty of capitalist inequality by showing the mechanisms used by the upper class to maintain their dominance.

Academic attention to *The Purge* has been diverse but growing. Several studies have analyzed the film in the context of horror conventions, ethical dilemmas, racism, or commentary on violence in American culture. Other studies have explored its political ideology, highlighting how the narratives in the film critique authoritarianism and neoliberal governance (Brown, 2020). However, few studies have directly applied Marxist theory to this film, especially in relation to its main elements such as class domination, class struggle, and alienation. Recent research on similar films includes Rafif and Munjid's (2022) analysis of the novel *Ready Player One* and Fabrianne et al.'s (2022) study of the film *Parasite*. This demonstrates the Marxist approach in revealing deeper insights into how the media alludes to systemic inequalities. However, Marxist analysis focusing on *The Purge* is still relatively unexplored, leaving a significant gap in the literature.

This gap is highly relevant because *The Purge* does not merely criticize inequality in the context of the United States, but also reflects broader implications for audiences globally and locally. The film's emphasis on the depiction of systemic violence, fragile resistance, and the psychological impact of alienation is consistent with conditions in many societies, where inequality is deeply rooted and resistance is often decontextualized. In Indonesia, this inequality is widening day by day, which affects limited social mobility and the alienation of informal workers in line with the dynamics depicted in *The Purge*. Therefore, research on *The Purge* through a Marxist approach is expected to be a material for in-depth discussion that bridges cinematic criticism and socio-political reality in various contexts.

Although Marxist-inspired film reviews continue to emerge, previous studies have not fully explored *The Purge* (2013) through a comprehensive framework. This framework will map its socio-political critique into the three main foundations of classical and neo-Marxist theory. Films such as *Parasite* (Fabrianne 2022) and *The Platform* (Fitria 2024) have indeed been studied from the perspective of class dynamics. Other studies have also investigated alienation in modern cinema (Istinara and Sinaga, 2023; Rahmawati, 2022). However, in-depth and integrated analyses focusing on the close relationship between class domination, class struggle, and alienation in state-sanctioned violence in *The Purge* are still rare in well-known journals. This study attempts to fill this important gap by using a Marxist theoretical lens to recognize, categorize, and interpret the depiction of systemic violence and social injustice in films in a structured manner. The added value of this research lies in the

integrated use of the three pillars of Marxism to highlight the role of film as an ideological critique of the current capitalist order.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Film studies have long explored Marxism from various perspectives. Early Marxists such as Forsyth (1997) emphasized how cinema encodes ideological values, transforming abstract economic relationships into visible narratives and performances. Recent research focuses more on how films can depict inequality in a way that resonates with global audiences. Kellner (2021) states that media functions as cultural education, teaching audiences how to interpret social relations and power structures. This is often seen in dystopian films, which frequently depict extreme inequality to provoke reflection on real-world issues.

In recent years, there has been a surge of academic interest in the representation of class struggle in film. As mentioned earlier, Fabrianne et al. (2022) analyzed Bong Joon-ho's film *Parasite* (2019) and concluded that although the film clearly depicts class conflict, resistance remains difficult for the lower classes in a capitalist system. Research by Rafif and Munjid (2022) in their study analyzing the novel *Ready Player One* (2011) observed a similar pattern, where resistance to capitalist domination is depicted as an individual moral rejection rather than an action to voice injustice. Both studies highlight the limited depiction of class struggle, which often dramatizes conflict without regard for structural transformation.

Other recent relevant studies focus on the spatial representation of inequality. In a study conducted by Fitria et al. (2024) analyzing the film *The Platform* (2019), it was found that the social structure in the film symbolizes a rigid economic hierarchy, where those at the top consume excessively while those at the bottom starve. Similarly, a study by Panjaitan et al. (2023) analyzed the film *Saltburn* (2023) and showed how elite spaces and architecture reinforce the privileges of certain classes by normalizing social stratification. These studies highlight the importance of cinematic space as a metaphor for systemic domination.

The concept of alienation has also been studied by several previous researchers, such as Mukhopadhyay (2020), who outlined the concept of Marxism by identifying four dimensions of alienation: separation from work, products, species existence, and community. He argued that these dimensions would continue to shape human experience in late structural capitalism. Research by Øversveen (2021) updates this perspective, emphasizing that alienation today transcends the workplace, manifesting in emotional separation and a lack of solidarity. These findings are also found in Istinara and Sinaga's (2023) research on the film *Fair Play* (2023), which shows how alienation intersects with gender and capitalist expectations, especially regarding the representation of women as primary breadwinners. Collectively, these studies

reinforce that alienation remains a relevant concept for analyzing contemporary cinema, where psychological and emotional separation are often manipulated.

The popularity of series and films such as *Parasite*, *The Platform*, *Squid Game*, and *Saltburn* shows that audiences are interested in analyzing the issues depicted in film literature and are keen to explore cultural studies as a form of intellectualism on the broader issues of capitalist exploitation. Academics such as Santoso (2022) argue that dystopian cinema serves as a mirror of global inequality, transforming abstract economic disparities into compelling narratives that provoke reflection. However, although these studies have explained how the media criticizes inequality in various contexts, few have focused specifically on *The Purge* within the framework of Marxist theory.

MARXIST THEORY

Marxist theory was first conceived by a figure named Karl Marx (1818-1883), who was a prominent figure in social and political thought. He laid the foundations for understanding the structure of modern society through the lens of historical materialism and critical analysis of the capitalist system at that time. His ideas are still very influential in examining issues of social and economic inequality, especially regarding the dynamics of class struggle and its impact on human life, such as the concept of alienation. Karl Marx's work emerged from his involvement in criticizing the impact of the industrial revolution on society in Europe, observing issues of striking inequality and highlighting the exploitative conditions dominated by the developing capitalist system (McLellan, 1973). In this study, Marxist theory will be used to analyze the film *The Purge*, focusing on three main pillars. The first pillar is class domination, a mechanism whereby the elite systematically use their power to control legal policies and state resources in order to protect their interests and control the lower classes. The second pillar is Class Struggle, a condition created by conflict between two classes arising from dissatisfaction with policies in a capitalist system. This conflict is in line with Fanon's (2004) interpretation of violent opposition as a response by the oppressed to oppression in a country. The third pillar is Alienation, where this concept highlights the psychological impact felt by individuals who are alienated from human relationships and their self-confidence, which is exacerbated by the fragility of social relationships in modern society, as described by Bauman (2000).

CLASS DOMINATION AND CLASS STRUGGLE IN CAPITALISM

In the capitalist system, society is divided into two classes: the first is the upper class (bourgeoisie), and the second is the lower class (proletariat):

- a) Bourgeoisie: The ruling class that owns and controls the means of production, such as factories, land, and capital. Their main goal is the accumulation of profits through the exploitation of labor.

- b) Proletariat: The working class who do not own the means of production and only have their own labor power. In order to survive, they are forced to sell their labor to the bourgeoisie in exchange for wages.

The concept of class domination in Marxist theory states that the group that controls the means of production also inherently controls the political and ideological apparatus of society. This domination extends beyond the economic sphere and permeates the formation of social and cultural values. It also exists in the legal system, which is designed to maintain and legitimize the existing power structure (Marx & Engels, 1848). Through control over key institutions, the ruling class can shape the collective consciousness of society, making it easier for their specific interests to appear as universal interests or to seem natural. Michael Parenti (1995) emphasizes this by explaining that “a state in a capitalist society ultimately serves the interests of the ruling class.” This means that institutions, laws, and even public spaces often reflect and reinforce the interests of the ruling class, ensuring the continuity of their hegemony.

Cases of exploitation and domination that inevitably exacerbate the situation in capitalism give rise to a class struggle movement. Marx and Engels stated in their work *The Communist Manifesto* (1848) that “The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles.” Class struggle is not merely an incidental conflict, but rather a fundamental driving force in historical development, arising from the conflicting interests of two classes: the ruling class and the lower class. The capitalist class seeks to maximize profits through continuous exploitation, while the working class struggles day after day just to get better wages, humane working conditions, and ultimately freedom from exploitation.

A class struggle does not always emerge with anarchist goals or trigger conflict and violent revolution. Class struggle can be seen in various forms, including public discussions in open spaces, actions that voice rights for justice, and ideological ideas about values that are considered dominant. E.P. Thompson (1963), in his work entitled *The Making of the English Working Class*, explains how class consciousness and class struggle were historically formed through daily experiences of exploitation and collective resistance. He shows that class is not a static entity, but is formed through a dynamic process of relationships and conflicts. Anthony Giddens (1971) also emphasizes this point, that class structure is the basis of social conflict in a capitalist society, where tensions between conflicting groups and economic interests are inevitable. Therefore, class struggle is a manifestation of the internal contradictions of capitalism that continuously push society towards change.

ALIENATION IN MARXIST PERSPECTIVE

The psychological impact of alienation is profound for an individual. The concept of alienation explains the impact experienced, such as a decline in public trust in the prevailing system. Those in the lower classes, in particular, often experience significant pressure, causing them to suffer from anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem. Richard Sennet (1998) in his book *The Corrosion of Character* explores how the demands of the modern capitalist system, with its emphasis on flexibility and mobility, cause fragmented identities and a sense of disconnection from the community and long-term goals. Similarly, Guy Standing (2011) explains the concept of the “precariat,” a new class characterized by chronic uncertainty and alienation in the face of an increasingly flexible and unstable labor market. This creates a society that is economically and psychologically vulnerable.

In the context of the modern social era, alienation is spreading to various aspects of life. This is exacerbated by unstable employment, a modern culture that creates aggressive consumerism, and digital isolation. Therefore, Marxist theory provides a strong framework for analyzing contemporary issues, showing how the fundamental dynamics of capitalism continue to deepen social and economic inequality, and are capable of encouraging a more critical class struggle and reducing widespread alienation in society. Therefore, criticism of the global capitalist system is central to understanding how these issues persist and continue to evolve in new forms.

MARXIST THEORY IN CRITIQUING THE PURGE (2013)

In an effort to uncover the ideological mechanisms behind the film *The Purge* (2013), this framework will be further strengthened by a Neo-Marxist perspective. By adding Gramsci's concept of Hegemony (1971), which will be used to analyze how the ideology of the ruling class, referred to in *The Purge* as the New Founding Fathers of America (NFFA), becomes a valid finding that is acceptable to society and fosters agreement on the issue of inequality. In addition, the reference will be further strengthened by Althusser's (2008) concept of the Ideological State Apparatus (ISA), which is crucial in identifying how the media and public information function as tools to spread the ideology that legitimizes the practice of “Purge” itself. By combining these three main pillars and adding the ideological lens of Neo-Marxism, this study aims to present a comprehensive socio-economic and psychological critique of the narrative in the film *The Purge*.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative descriptive design, which is highly relevant in exploring cultural texts such as film literature. Unlike quantitative research, which focuses on finding measurable variables, qualitative research prioritizes interpretation and meaning formation. As explained by Creswell (2014),

qualitative research allows researchers to understand how individuals or groups construct meaning in a particular context. In the case of the film *The Purge* (2013), this approach is appropriate and efficient because the film is not only a medium of entertainment, but can also be called a cultural artifact that encodes ideological messages about class, power, and inequality.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The qualitative descriptive research design used in analyzing *The Purge* was inspired by Lambert's (2012) view that descriptive research allows for the identification of systematic patterns and the exploration of themes in complex social phenomena. With a focus on the representation of class domination, class struggle, and alienation, this research design facilitates an in-depth reading of *The Purge* while placing the analysis in the perspective of a broader Marxist theoretical framework. The descriptive analysis component is better able to emphasize what is represented in the film, while the analytical component interprets these representations through Marxist theory.

OBJECT OF THE STUDY

The material object of this study is the film *The Purge* (2013), a work by American director James DeMonaco, which serves as the main text source for analysis. The film's narrative structure, visual elements, character dynamics, and dialogue are explored as a space of observation where disparities are revealed. The formal object is Marxist theory, specifically the concepts of class domination, class struggle, and alienation, which serve as an interpretative lens for deeper analysis. Secondary materials include books/e-books, journal articles, scientific papers, and film reviews that place the findings in the context of existing literature.

DATA COLLECTION

The data collection process combined three techniques:

1. **Observation:** This involves repeated viewings of the film to fully understand the scenes, dialogue, and visual cues that represent systemic disparities. For example, identifying the Sandin family's background as symbolizing the upper class, while the portrayal of homeless men is coded as an example of the lower class.
2. **Literature Review:** Academic sources are collected and understood in order to examine the analysis in the context of contemporary research. This includes journal articles on Marxist theory, film studies, and studies on inequality in film media.
3. **Documentation:** Supporting evidence was collected from various sources, such as academic databases, repositories, online journals, and

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film reviews. This not only provides a theoretical foundation but also
provides comparative insights from other cultural texts.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Class Domination

An analysis of the film *The Purge* (2013) found significant results that this film is able to demonstrate its existence in criticizing the capitalist system in accordance with the Marxist theoretical approach, especially in three main pillars that are interrelated: class domination, class struggle, and alienation. First, this finding confirms the existence of widespread class domination organized by the New Founding Fathers of America (NFFA), which is structurally embedded and ideologically legitimized. This is clearly symbolized by a sophisticated security system, which transforms the basic need for security into an exclusive and profitable commodity for certain parties, in this case the upper class (bourgeoisie). As Marx (1867) asserted, the ruling class controls and fully controls the means of production, which gives the ruling class unrivaled dominance, and this is proven when the character James Sandin confirms his success by stating a narrative and scene in the film.

Scene :



Picture 1. Result of data findings. Source: *The Purge* (2013)



Picture 2. Result of data findings. Source: The Purge (2013)

Dialogue:

Scene	Dialogue narrative
In the scene at minute 12:44, there is a dialog within the Sandin family	<i>“ Sandin : I have some news, I did it. All sales are final and I’m on top. My division sold the most upgraded security systems</i>

Table 1. Result of data findings. Source: The Purge (2013)

Scene	Dialogue narrative
At the scene at minute 19:31, a TV narration shows an interview with a narrator named Tommy.	<i>“ Tommy : Now, is the purge really about releasing aggression and containing violence, or is it something else? Purge detractors often postulate this evening is actually about the elimination of the poor, the needy, the sick. Is the purge really about money?. Either way, crime is down, The economy is flourishing.”</i>

Table 2. Result of data findings. Source: *The Purge* (2013)

Analysis :

This scene is a representation of how the ruling class (bourgeoisie) strengthens its power by turning the security system into a commodity, effectively making the rich increasingly untouchable. This is in line with previous film studies, such as those in the films *Saltburn* (rahmawati, 2023) and *The Platform* (Fitria, 2024), where cinematic representations are displayed through similar architecture and elite spaces, reinforcing class stratification and exclusive domination. This framework neutralizes radical criticism and reinforces the concept of Hegemony as stated by Gramsci (1971), whereby an

ideology propagated by the ruling class is normalized as common sense in order to control society. This reflects a broader cinematic and media tendency to normalize cinematic inequality (Nugroho & Pramudito, 2021; Santoso, 2022).

Class Struggle :

This dominant system fuels class struggle, which is reflected in direct conflict and despair. The violence of the bourgeoisie is concealed by their privileged status, which allows for the elimination of the “unproductive” poor. In contrast, the lower class's struggle for survival is tragically represented by a homeless man who desperately begs for protection:

Scene :



Picture 3. Result of data findings. Source: The Purge (2013)

Scene	Dialouge narrative
At minute 25:50, a homeless man is being hunted by an upper-class group and seeks help as he lacks means of protection	<i>“ Homeless man : I just need to get somewhere safe. Does anybody hear me? I won’t hurt you! I don’t want to die. I don’t deserve this. Why won’t anybody help me? I just need somewhere to hide! Somebody please just open the door fo me! They’re coming, Somebody, please!”</i>

Table 3. Result of data findings. Source: The Purge (2013)

Analysis :

These ignored pleas are a form of systematic dehumanization and intense class conflict. This arises when economic inequality poses an existential threat. This sense of despair reflects a fundamental human drive for survival,

which is in line with Fanon's (1961) view that violence is a means for the oppressed to regain power. However, this film depicts resistance as an isolated moral act. This is in line with the findings of research on the film *Parasite* (Fabriane, 2022) and the novel *Ready Player One* (Rafif & Munjid, 2022), which note that cinematic resistance often remains fragmented and has little structural impact. This pattern reflects a limitation in the real world, where the media often depoliticizes collective action (Saragih, 2021; Haryanto, 2023), confirming that this film reveals the difficulty of achieving broader structural change.

Alienation

Finally, this film powerfully depicts alienation, the impact caused by the dehumanization of dystopian capitalism. Alienation from fellow humans is shown in the scene where James Sandin's family is attacked by their neighbors, who feel aggrieved by the Sandins because they have to buy the expensive advanced security system that James Sandin sells every year, and the "Purge" night policy becomes a means for them to take revenge by hunting down the Sandin family. In addition, this film also represents the psychological impact experienced by an individual, which in the concept of alienation is called self-alienation. This is depicted by a character named Zoe, who feels depressed, has lost her self-esteem, feels hopeless, and experiences excessive anxiety due to the impact of this policy, so she decides to isolate herself

Scene :



Picture 4. Result of data findings. Source: *The Purge* (2013)



Picture 5. Result of data findings. Source: The Purge (2013)

Dialogue :

At minute 11:15, Sandin's neighbors attack him	<i>" Sandin's neighbors: We saw that you we're having some trouble. We decided to help you. Don't thank us too much, the truth is you're ours, not theirs!"</i>
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Table 4. Result of data findings. Source: The Purge (2013)

At minute 47:22, a character isolates herself for safety	<i>" Zoe : I don't know what's going on. There are people outside. Stay where you are. Please be safe! I'm going to go hide in your secret spot."</i>
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Table 5. Result of data findings. Source: The Purge (2013)

Analysis :

This scene depicts how extreme capitalist ideology fosters deep mistrust and turns relationships between people into competitive ones, eroding social bonds, in line with Bauman's theory of liquid modernity (2011). Self-isolation supports the theory explained by Lukács (1923), whereby individuals view themselves as mere objects within an oppressive structure. The comprehensive depiction of alienation in *The Purge*, which includes emotional disconnection and loss of self-esteem, confirms the film's power as an allegory for the universal psychosocial phenomenon of inequality in capitalism (Istinara & Sinaga, 2023; Rahmawati, 2022).

Discussion

The conclusion of an in-depth study of class power, class struggle, and alienation confirms that the film *The Purge* (2013) is not just a dystopian horror movie, but a profound ideological critique of modern capitalism. This analysis reinforces the initial opinion of the study that the systematic violence in the film is not merely coincidental, but is driven by a strong structure and ideology. These findings reveal an important relationship between the three main

foundations of Marxism. First, Class Power is manifested through commercialized violence in *The Purge* and the security system, in line with Althusser's concept of the State Ideological Apparatus (SIA), whereby public acceptance legitimizes systemic inequality (Althusser, 1970). This is thematically similar to the cinematic depiction of class separation seen in films such as *Saltburn* (Panjaitan, 2023) and *The Platform* (Fitria et al., 2024), in which the architecture and ideology of the elite normalize privilege and physical separation.

Secondly, the manifestation of Class Conflict is depicted as highly fragmented and moralistic. Unlike revolutionary narratives in general, the resistance in *The Purge* is more in the form of separate moral choices (for example, the actions of the daughter, the moral doubts of the Intruder). This reflects the complex dynamics seen in films such as *Parasite* (Fabrienne et al., 2022), in which the struggle remains confined to the domestic sphere and does not develop into a social revolution. The film implies the success of NFFA hegemony (Gramsci, 1971) in suppressing organized class resistance, leaving only isolated acts of revenge.

Finally, the theme of widespread alienation is a psychosocial consequence of power and the failure of struggle. This alienation is not only the result of work, but also of a sense of human existence, whereby human life itself is devalued and commodified for the sake of system stability. This is in line with Mukhopadhyay's (2020) framework and finds resonance in modern studies of uncertainty and alienation, even in local contexts (Rahmawati, 2022). By depicting the psychological burden of participating in—or surviving—*The Purge*, the film emphasizes that systemic inequality destroys social unity across all levels of society.

In conclusion, the combination of these three elements highlights how *The Purge* transcends mere entertainment and becomes a powerful cultural artifact in conveying social criticism. This discussion affirms the enduring relevance of the Marxist theoretical perspective in interpreting modern crises in which socio-political power structures are closely intertwined with economic violence and ideological control.

CONCLUSION

This study effectively analyzes the film *The Purge* (2013) using a Marxist theoretical approach, focusing the analysis on three main frameworks: class domination, class struggle, and alienation. The findings show that this film is capable of serving as a medium for criticizing the capitalist system by depicting how the elite maintain their privileges and highlighting a class struggle that emerges as a form of resistance and self-defense, even though it remains inevitable. The film is also capable of representing the impact of this oppressive system and how alienation damages community and individual relationships. Through the lens of domination, this film depicts how systemic violence and

ideology normalize inequality. In terms of struggle, this film highlights moral resistance but emphasizes its limitations under a hegemonic system. The alienation depicted is not only a psychological conflict, but also social isolation, in line with contemporary experiences of powerlessness in a capitalist society. The significance of this finding lies in how this film shows cinema functioning as criticism culture. *The Purge* (2013) is not just a horror dystopia but a cultural text that reflects a tool for voicing and opposing systemic inequality. For global audiences, this film is relevant to persistent inequality, while in the local context in Indonesia, this film is a parallel form related to social issues concerning fragile work systems, elite privilege, and rampant cases of policies that are considered burdensome to some parties. In conclusion, it is hoped that future researchers will be able to compare *The Purge* with other global dystopian works and conduct more in-depth cultural studies of other literary works to shed more light on how a work negotiates inequality in society.

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