

**OPPRESSION AGAINST THE BLACK IN  
PHILLIP NOYCE'S *CATCH A FIRE* MOVIE (2006):  
A MARXIST CRITICISM**



**RESEARCH PAPER**

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### A. Background of the Study

*Catch a Fire* is a dramatic thriller about activists against apartheid in South Africa. The film was directed by Phillip Noyce, from a screenplay written by Shawn Slovo and Robyn Slovo produced the film. Starring in this film are Derek Luke, Tim Robbins and Bonnie Henna. *Catch a Fire* movie was edited by Jill Bilcock and studio is StudioCanal, Working Title Films, Mirage Enterprises. This film was distributed by Focus Features with released date in October 27, 2006. Running time is 98 min and budget \$14 million. *Catch a Fire* movie was shot on location in South Africa, Swaziland and Mozambique.

*Catch a Fire* movie was directed by Phillip Noyce. Phillip Noyce is town of Griffith, New South Wales. In 1973 he was selected to attend the Australian National Film School where he made *Castor and Pollux*, a 50 minute documentary. His first professional film was the 50 minute docu-drama *God Know Why, But It Works* in 1975. In 1978, he directed and co-write *Newsfront* which won Best Film, Best Director and Best original screenplay at the Australian Film Awards.

This film tells about apartheid period in South Africa where oppression against in black people by the white people because just only country in Africa has two race which the country is South Africa. *Catch a Fire* shows that by

telling the true story of Patrick Chamusso, an upstanding black South African living in 1978's oppressive regime of Apartheid. Patrick isn't interested in politics or the underground freedom fighter movement sweeping the country.

In *Catch a Fire* movie, Patrick Chamusso (Derek Luke) is a political man who is accused of carrying out an attack against the government. He stays with his wife Precious Chamusso. Patrick works in Secunda Oil Refinery and he always hard work to increase his life because Patrick protects and cares with his family. But Nic Vos (Tim Robbins) is the leader of South Africa's Anti-Terrorist group, is convinced of his participation in the attack. This movie makes Tim Robbins character look evil. But actually didn't think so. Tim Robbins as a man doing what he thought he needed to do to protect his family.

Nic Vos investigates the black people after heard explosion from railway track and the reason from the black explodes railway track is he wants to kill the white people. Then that terrorist is died sentence. In the Secunda Oil Refinery, bathroom between the black and the white people also different.

Everyday Patrick always hear Freedom Radio which it is radio from ANC (African National Congress). This party aims to protect the black people right in Africa. At the mid night, Patrick comes to other woman not his wife. Actually, recent bomb attack against the Secunda Oil Refinery at that time. Then Nic Vos investigates Patrick due to his inability to provide a satisfactory explanation for his where about at the time of the bombing (he was actually

having an affair with a woman not his wife). Nic Vos catch Patrick and his friends and also torture them.

When holiday, Nic Vos invites Patrick to come Nic Vos family in his house and to share but Patrick is disparage in Nic Vos house. Patrick is investigated but he is not confesses because Patrick thinks he is not guilty to bomb the Secunda Oil Refinery and he is not terrorist. Then Patrick is brought to close room where his wife stay there with Precious was tortured by Nis Vos and savagely abused by Vos and Vos's subordinates. Desperate, Patrick says that he is willing to confess to a crime he did not commit to protect his family from torture. At last, Vos finally concludes that Patrick is innocent and orders his release. Some days, Patrick joins with ANC without his family unknowingly because he takes revenge with Nic Vos and other white people who they torture his wife and his friend. Joe Slovo who he is the head of ANC starts to train all of members in ANC to take revenge and struggle for the black people life.

When the members of ANC take a rest, the white soldier attack them and some members from ANC are shot and died in there. ANC plan bombs in Oil Refinery and Patrick attempts to execute a plan to attack Secunda, the refinery itself. Patrick changes his identity as James Mabuso when he goes to Secunda Oil Refinery, but Nis Vos knows. Then on the road, Patrick can flee from Nic Vos and Patrick goes to Secunda Oil by first bombing its adjacent water supply facilities and 15 minutes later triggering the main workforce to flee between the two bombs would reduce the possibility of successfully

extinguishing the fire caused by the second, main explosion. Patrick succeeds in the first part, but the second bomb is discovered by Nic Vos and deactivated.

Patrick is arrested and sentenced to 24 years in prison in the Robben Island after his wife goes to Vos and tells him where Patrick is because she falls for a simple trick in which Vos left photographs of Patrick talking to a female member of the ANC. Through her unjust jealousy she sells him out. He is released early due to the abolition of apartheid. Some years later the head of black people Nelson Mandela declares Independence the black people in South Africa and finishes apartheid-era.

The public response consists of positive and negative response. Positive response to *Catch a Fire* movie comes from one of the people in United States. *Catch a Fire* movie in his opinion, a much more powerful story. All acting was done perfect. He loves the cinematography with the plant in the background. He could really feel the emotion of the Africans chanting and singing for freedom (IMDb.com.)

Negative response comes from one of the people said that the film offers very little in the way of action or plot development, for that matter. *Catch a Fire* feels like two hours of exposition to a larger plot that is unfortunately left out (IMDb.com).

*Catch a Fire* movie in Box Office reaching total \$4,291,965. This film in Box Office Opening gets total \$2,026,997 and highest Ranking 12.

This film get three awards, the first is Category of Best Actor in a Motion Picture, Drama Derek Luke with Satellite award in 2006, the second is category of best actor Derek Luke with award Black Reel in 2007, the third is category of Outstanding Motion Picture with Image Award in 2007 (IMDb.com)

There are reasons why researcher is interested to analysis *Catch a Fire* movie:

The first is character, Patrick Chamusso and Nic Vos are major character. Patrick who he is one of the black people in South Africa and he usually work hardly to improve life with his wife Precious Chamusso. He usually increases his knowledge with join in the members of ANC to struggle the black people in South Africa. Nic Vos is the one of the white people and he usually investigates some terrorist especially the black terrorist.

The second is setting, setting in *Catch a Fire* movie is in the South Africa and this country of apartheid period in South Africa where oppression against in black people because just only country in Africa has two race which the country is South Africa and white people have the high power in factory and government.

The third is sound, the sound in *Catch a Fire* movie makes this film no boring to watch and to hear the music in this film because it is originally music from South Africa which the builds the mood in scene by the music and sound track effect.

Issue in *Catch a Fire* movie is oppression against the black people in apartheid-era in the South Africa where this era difference between white and black people in everything such as in government, factory, build and the other. Oppression against make the black to be poor a life, tortured and underestimated in this county because just only reason is different skin. The black and white people makes the black people become low power in everything and the white people become high power in South Africa.

Considering the explanation above, the researcher turns to analyze the movie by using Marxist Approach. In this study the researcher encourages herself to give a titled **“OPPRESSION AGAINST THE BLACK IN PHILLIP NOYCE’S *CATCH A FIRE* MOVIE: A MARXIST CRITICISM.”**

## **B. Literature Review**

*Catch a Fire* is interesting movie and this movie can be classified into apartheid movie. The writer found two short explanations about *Catch a Fire* movie in Internet. The first is Victoria Alexander (2006) with the title is “Attempts to explain anti-apartheid terrorism by a reluctant true-life hero and conflicted torturer”. She focuses the real hero in *Catch a Fire* movie and the conflict when apartheid era such as bomb and ANC.

The second by Joanne Laurier (2006) with the title is “A story of struggle against apartheid”. She focuses typical hero of South Africa’s struggle, in that Patrick Chamusso is a man who had no political history, education, or

background before joining the ANC. Chamusso is considered a hero in South Africa and his story influenced the end of Apartheid.

The literature studies above have the same research which they analyze hero in *Catch a Fire* movie. Hero in this movie is Patrick Chamusso who he is one of the black people in South Africa and he joins with ANC to protect the black people's rights.

Based on literature studies, the writer assumes that there is no writer who analyzed oppression against the black people in *Catch a Fire* movie by using Marxist Criticism.

### **C. Problem of the Study**

The problem of the study is “how oppression against the black is reflected in *Catch a Fire* movie”.

### **D. Objectives of the Study**

Based on the problem that has stated above, the writer formulates the objective of the study as follows:

1. To describe the movie based on structural elements.
2. To describe the movie based on Marxist Criticism.

### **E. Benefit of the Study**

The study of oppression against the black in *Catch a Fire* movie has several benefits, they are:



### 1. Theoretical Benefit

This study is purposed to give additional information to literature research especially those dealing with Phillip Noyce's *Catch a Fire*.

### 2. Practical Benefit

This study can develop the writer's skill and ability in applying the Marxist Criticism in Phillip Noyce's *Catch a Fire*.

## **F. Research Method**

The writer will describe the methods that use on research. There are four elements to support in research method, there are:

### **1. Type of the Research**

The type of this research is a qualitative research in which the writer does not need statistic to collect, to analyze, and to interpret.

### **2. Type of the Data and the Data Sources**

The types of data of this study are the images and the text which forms such like words, phrases, and sentences in a dialogues or monologues.

The writer takes two kinds of data:

#### **a. Primary data source**

Primary data is the main data obtained from all the worlds, dialogues, phrases, and sentences occurring in the movie related to the topic.

b. Secondary data source

Secondary data is the supporting data taken from the literary books, criticism, and sentences occurring in the movie related to the topic.

### 3. Research Object

The object of the research is the movie Phillip Noyse's *Catch a Fire* for about 98 minutes.

### 4. Method of the Data Collection

The writer collects the data by taking notes for the texts and by capturing images for the image. She uses library research in collecting data which involves several steps:

- a. Collecting the video compact disk of *Catch a Fire* movie and movie manuscript by browsing on the internet.
- b. Watching the film carefully and repeatedly on order to get the best understanding of all messages, ideas, and other significant points.
- c. Reading some relevant books to get the theory being used to analyze the film, data, and information to support her study.
- d. Taking the significant data and then writing some notes of the important part of sources.
- e. Writing the data on the paper.
- f. Classifying the data into groups according to the category of the elements of the literary study.

## **G. Paper Organization**

This research paper consists of six chapters. The first chapter is introduction, which contains the background of the study, literary review, problem of the study, objective of the study, benefit of the study, research method, and paper organization. Second chapter is underlying theory. The third chapter deals with Social Background of *Catch a Fire* movie. Fourth chapter deals with the Structural Analysis of *Catch a Fire* movie. Analysis and discussion of *Catch a Fire* movie is presented in fifth chapter. Finally, the sixth chapter consist conclusion and suggestion.