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Global contents but nationalistic themes: Bong Joon-ho's "Snowpiercer"

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Abstract: Bong Joon-ho's film, *Snowpiercer* (2013) is based on a French graphic novel which deals with the people who got on a train that ran continuously around the world in the coming ice ages. At first, the passengers of the train were restricted to the upper classes, but some lower class people happened to get on the train abruptly. It seems to be inevitable to start to struggle between the two classes. In this regards, the theme of this film is focused on the environmental disaster and social stratification. The ruling classes on this train emphasize the order and control. They justify their domination and oppression over the lower classes, assuming that the cause of the disaster lies in the discrepancy which comes from the uncontrolled populations and productions. They use 'the Spell of Plato' to prove their logic. According to their logic, the hierarchy must be divided into two (the ruler and the oppressed) or three (guardians, warriors and workers). Every

citizen must be satisfied with his social position. Their logics are further reinforced by the gradual ‘piecemeal social engineering’ proposed by Karl Popper. They also emphasize the justification of strong control supported by the Malthusian ‘principle of population’, where the population grows exponentially, but production increases arithmetically. This theory is repeated itself at the commercial movie like *Avengers: Infinity War* (2018) and *Kingsman: The Golden Circle* (2017). These movies became the dominant trends which could be named ‘(Post) Apocalyptic Film’. It seems that Bong Joon-ho is willing to follow the trends and conventions of the genre movie as known as Apocalyptic Film. However, by casting Korean actors as third groups of the movie intentionally, he makes it possible to imagine a new world that is different from this frustrating dichotomy (higher’s domination/lower’s oppression). Namgung Minsu and Yona who are acted by two Korean actors are represented as very active and interesting characters who are anticipated to solve the main social problems in the movie; environmental disasters and class conflicts. They show us the possibilities of the new world which can be imagined after the frozen and totally destroyed world is ended. Korean spectators can feel proud of the fact that the heroic and fantastic character of this movie is restricted to two Korean actors. Bong seemed to aim the target of spectators only to Korean. Anyway, he could make a little bit different movie from the conventions of blockbuster a.k.a. disaster movie or apocalyptic movie.

Key words: binary opposition; post-apocalyptic film; ‘Spell of Plato’; hierarchy; film conventions.

글로벌 주제에 대한 민족주의적 접근: 봉준호의 “설국열차”

초록: 봉준호 감독의 영화 “설국열차” (2013)는 지구에 불어닥친 혹한을 피해 달리는 열차에 탑승한 사람들의 이야기를 담은 프랑스 그래픽 노블을 원작으로 하고 있다. 원래 이 기차의 승객은 상류계급이었는데, 막무가내로 하층계급이 기차에 탑승함에 따라 두 계급 사이에 충돌이 벌어진다. 이런 점에서 보면 이 영화의 주제는 환경재앙, 계급갈등의 문제에 있다. 이 기차의 지배계급은 질서와 통제를 강조한다. 재앙의 출발 또한 조절되지 못한 인구수와 생산량에 있다는 전제하에, 하층계급에 대한 지배와 억압을 정당화한다. 이들은 자신의 논리를 입증하기 위해 ‘플라톤의 마술’을 사용한다. 즉 계급은 지배자, 군인, 평민으로 나뉘며 각자는 자신의 위치에 만족하는 것이 ‘정의’라는 주장을 내세운다. 이들의 주장은 칼 포퍼에 의해 제시된 ‘점진적 사회공학’에 의해 더욱 강화된다. 이들은 또한 인구는 기하급수적으로 증가하지만 생산량은 산술급수적으로 증가한다는 맬서스의 인구론을 바탕으로 깔고 강력한 통제를 강조하는데, 이러한 세계관은 영화 “어벤저스”

와 “킹스맨” 등에 효과적으로 활용됨으로써 최근 ‘아포칼립스 영화’의 장르적 관습으로 자리잡은 듯하다. 봉준호 감독도 이러한 아포칼립스 영화의 장르적 규칙을 따른다. 그러나 그는 한국인 배우를 의도적으로 제3의 인물로 설정함으로써, 이러한 답답한 이분법과는 다른 새로운 세계를 상상하도록 만든다. 한국인 배우들이 연기한 남궁민수와 요나는 환경재앙의 해결책을 통제와 억압에 두고자 하는 극중인물들과는 다르게 열차 바깥의 세계를 상상할 수 있게 하는 계기를 제공함으로써 재난 영화의 관습적 인물 배열과는 다른 세계관을 보여준다. 이 영화는 한국인 배우를 통한 한국인의 잠재적 가능성을 재현함으로써 한국인 관객에게 특별히 어필할 수 있었다. 어쨌든 재난 영화의 보편적 문법을 따르면서도 민족주의적인 성격을 부여함으로써, 환경재앙과 계급갈등이라는 현대적 과제를 다루되 한국인의 소망과 취향을 고려하여 좀더 한국인에게 친숙한 영화를 만들 수 있었던 것으로 보인다.

키워드: 이항대립; 포스트아포칼립스 영화; 플라톤의 마술; 위계질서; 영화 관습.

Nacjonalistyczne podejście do globalnej problematyki ukazane w filmie „Snowpiercer: Arka Przyszłości” w reżyserii Bong Joon-ho

Abstrakt: Film *Snowpiercer: Arka przyszłości* (2013) w reżyserii Bong Joon-ho oparty jest na francuskiej powieści graficznej, ukazującej ludzkość znajdującą się w krążącym po skutym lodem świecie pociągu. Początkowo pasażerami byli jedynie przedstawiciele klas wyższych, jednak nieoczekiwanie okazało się, że do środka pociągu dostały się także osoby z klas niższych. Kwestią czasu zatem stało się starcie tychże klas. W tym ujęciu film skupia się na katastrofie klimatycznej oraz rozwarstwieniu społecznym. Klasy rządzące w pociągu kładą nacisk na porządek i kontrolę. Uzasadniają swoje rządy oraz ucisk klas niższych tym, że katastrofa miała swoje źródło w rozdzwisku między niekontrolowanym wzrostem liczebności populacji oraz uprzemysłowieniem. Udowadniają swoją logikę odwołując się do ‘czaru (zaklęcia) Platona’. Zgodnie z nim, hierarchia musi być podzielona na dwie (rządzący i rządzeni) bądź trzy (strażnicy, wojownicy i robotnicy) części. Każdy obywatel musi zadowolić się swoją pozycją społeczną. Ich logika ulega następnie wzmocnieniu Popperowską ‘stopniową cząstkową inżynierią społeczną’. Podkreślają również uzasadnienie silnej kontroli wspieranej maltuzjańską ‘statyczną teorią zasobów’, w której liczba ludności przyrasta geometrycznie a produkcja żywności arytmetycznie. Teoria ta powtarza się w takich filmach komercyjnych jak *Avengers: Wojna bez granic* (2018) czy *Kingsman: Złoty krag* (2017). Tytuły te stały się dominujące w obszarze filmów nazywanych ‘(post)apokaliptycznymi’.

Wydaje się zatem, że Bong Joon-ho chce podążać za trendami i konwencjami filmu gatunkowego uznawanego za apokaliptyczny. Jednakże celowo obsadzając koreańskich aktorów w grupie trzeciej umożliwia wyobrażenie nowego świata, innego od tego pełnego frustrującej dychotomii (dominacja wyższego/ucisk niższego). Namgung Minsu i Yona, grani przez koreańskich aktorów, są ukazani jako bardzo aktywni i ciekawi bohaterowie, mający rozwiązać główne problemy społeczne w filmie, katastrofy klimatyczne i konflikty klasowe. Ukazują możliwości, jakie przynieść może ze sobą nowa rzeczywistość po tym, jak obecny zamrożony i zniszczony świat upadnie. Koreańscy widzowie mogą zatem czuć się dumni z tego, że bohaterski i fantastyczny wymiar filmu jest podkreślony dzięki grze tych dwojga aktorów. Wydaje się zatem, że reżyser, wykorzystujący z jednej strony uniwersalny schemat filmów katastroficznych i nadający mu nacjonalistyczny charakter, a jednocześnie podejmujący wyzwanie współczesnych tematów katastrofy klimatycznej i konfliktów klasowych, tym właśnie filmem zdołał trafić w gusta Koreańczyków.

Słowa kluczowe: opozycja binarna; film postapokaliptyczny; ‘czar (zaklęcie) Platona’; hierarchia; konwencje filmowe.

1. Preface

1.1. About the movie *Snowpiercer*

Snowpiercer (설국열차, 2013) is a 2013 English-language science fiction action film based on the French graphic novel *Le Transperceneige* by Jacques Lob, Benjamin Legrand and Jean-Marc Rochette. This film is directed by Bong Joon-ho (봉준호), and written by Bong and Kelly Masterson. The film marks Bong’s English-language debut; approximately 80% of the film was shot in English¹.

The movie is based on an original story which deals with the people who got on a train that ran continuously around the world in the coming ice ages. In 2014, an attempt to counteract global warming through climate engineering backfires catastrophically, causing another ice age and extinguishing all life. The only survivors are on the *Snowpiercer*, a massive train traveling on a circum-navigational

¹ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Snowpiercer> (Accessed March 1, 2020).

track created by the transportation magnate and inventor, Wilford. At first, the passengers of the train were designed to be restricted to the upper classes, but some lower class people happened to get on the train abruptly. It seems to be inevitable to start to struggle between the two classes. In this regards, the theme of this film is focused on the environmental disaster and social stratification.

1.2. About the director, Bong Joon-ho

Let's start with the filmography of Bong Joon-ho. His films have dealt with the influences of the United States in a series of diverse ways. In his first popular film, *Memories of Murder* (살인의 추억; 2003), the United States plays a pivotal role in identifying or misidentifying serial murders. In his second film *The Host* (괴물; 2006), the monster was suspected to be created by the influences of poisons poured at the US Military Base at Yongsan Military Camp (용산군사기지) (Taylor 2016: 44). In his latest film *Okja* (옥자; 2017), CEO of Miranda, global food company at New York wants to capture a pig and send it to the laboratory in order to make a Super Pig. A Korean girl love that pigs so intensely that she decided to depart to save her pet pig, Okja. When we mention the characteristic aspects of *Okja*, we must remind the fact that US entertainment company Netflix supported him to make that movie. Also, American actors, American budget and English language are used at that movie. Anyway, his films are involved with the United States.

Nowadays we heard the big news that Bong's new film *Parasite* (기생충; 2019) received Palme d'or Award at Canne International Film Festival and Oscar Awards at four important sections. He became one of the most brilliant film directors in the world.

1.3. Between Global and Korean

In the winter of 2005, Bong was known to find Jean-Marc Rochette's French graphic novel series *Le Transperceneige* at a graphic novel

shop near Hongik University Street (홍대거리) and finished reading the entire series while standing in front of the bookshelf where he found it. He was fascinated by ideas of people struggling on the train for survival, and how every section is classified in social stratification. Bong showed the series to his friends, fellow director Park Chan-wook (박찬욱) and producer Lee Tae-hun (이태훈), who loved it as well. In the following year, Park's production company Moho Film acquired the copyrights to the original story of *Snowpiercer* for Bong. Next time, Kelly Masterson was hired to rewrite the script. Bong and Masterson had originally envisioned a romantic story for the protagonist; however they jettisoned that idea in subsequent drafts of the screenplay. On 2012, Chris Evans began negotiations to star in the film adaptation, and was later confirmed as the film's male lead. After the contract, Tilda Swinton and Jamie Bell were confirmed to be in talks to join the project. Principal photography had officially begun in Prague, Czech Republic, with a budget near to \$42 million, which was the largest film budget of all time for any film with Korean investors. The preparatory production began in Tyrol, Austria during mid-March for one day to shoot some snowy scenery on the Hintertux Glacier².

The movie has been produced by the collaboration of many people whose nationalities are very diverse: Korea, US, French, Czech Republic. Although it has been made by the collaborations of various nation's people, the basic tone and theme seem to be restricted only to Korean people and Korean culture. Although the main issues and many elements of this movies are global and universal, but the main streams seem to be controlled by nationalistic feelings aroused by Korean director and Korean actors.

² <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Snowpiercer> (Accessed March 1, 2020).

Tab. 1. Basic data on *Snowpiercer*

Item	Name	Nationality
original story	Jean-Marc Rochette's French graphic novel	French
directed by	Joon-ho Bong	Korean
written by	Joon-ho Bong/Kelly Materson	Korea/US
filmed at	Prague/Korea	Korea/Czech
language	English (80%), Korean (20%)	English/Korea
budget		Korea
actors	Chris Evans, Tilda Swinton, Gangho Song, and others	US/EU/Korea

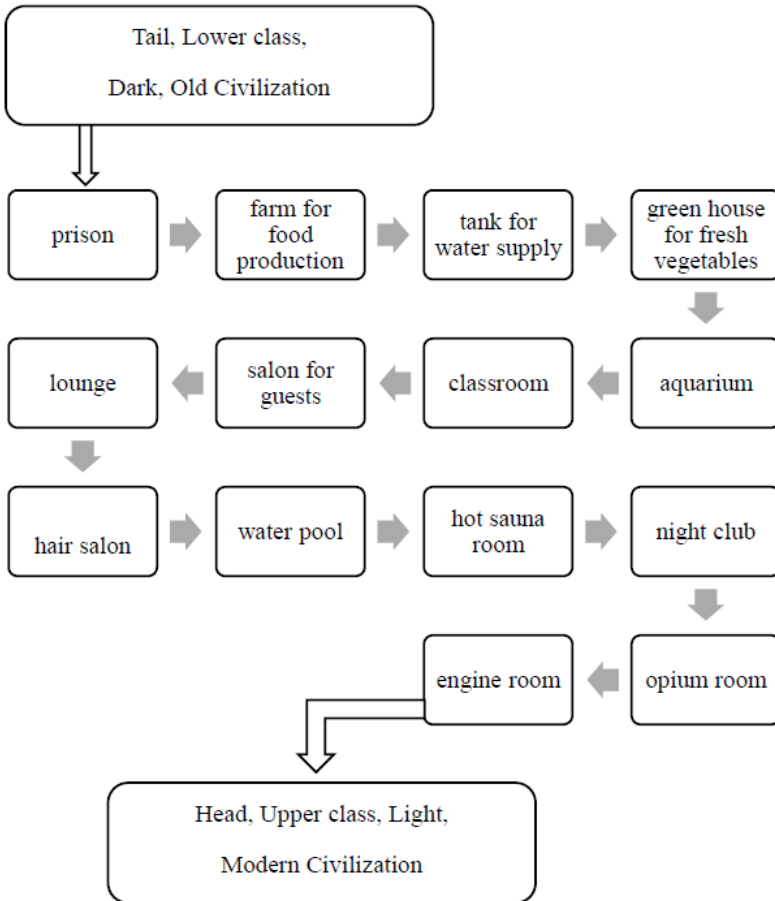
2. Binary Opposition of this movie

According to the category shown by the website Naver Movie, this movie is classified as 'SF-Action-Thriller'. We can watch the disaster which would be forecasted in the future, so it can be called SF Movie. We can meet the battle between two groups, so it can be Action Movie. We want to know the riddle of the struggle, so it can be Thriller Movie. Some articles treat this movie in these perspectives, to mention e.g. Taylor 2016; Canavan 2014 or Schmidt 2014.

2.1. Theme 1: Action Movie

Under watch by Wilford's guards, the poor people are brought only gelatinous 'protein blocks' to eat. The leader of the poor people, Curtis Everett plans to lead the tail passengers in a revolt that will take them all the way up to the engine, a perpetual motion machine. They started to attack toward the top. The train then heads into a long tunnel, plunging the car into darkness. They are quickly able to fashion some torches, which levels the playing field. In the ensuing bloody combat, Curtis can capture Mason Minister. It is the first victory.

In fact, the structure of this story is similar to that of Adventure Video Game which could be operated at PC or mobile phone. Each cabin of that train is similar to the stages of Adventure Game. Probably, the long chained linear train of the movie seem to be designed to be similar to the developing sequences of the human civilization.



Graph 1. The scheme of the quest inside the train and its reflection on the civilization development.

Each poor people must march towards the rich people. Each ancient people must move to the enlightened society. The lower class people at the tail cabin must struggle to get their freedom and human rights. It is represented like a video game.

2.2. Theme 2: Claustrophobia of Prison Movie

The situation of film *Snowpiercer* is restricted to the enclosed space. All the characters of this film are closed to the speedy and horrible nonstop-train. The overwhelming atmosphere is concerned with claustrophobia. Everyone who suffers from claustrophobia feels very uncomfortable or anxious when they are in small or enclosed places. The claustrophobia which can be experienced at the box stage became the main theme of the modern drama (Hayman 1995: 164). The people of the movie is similar to the actors of Box Stage in the modern drama.

That situation is presumed to be come from that of Nazi's Concentration Camp depicted at Günter Eich's radio-drama, *The Dream (Die Träume; 1947)*. The grandfather, father, son and grandson have been living together in completely enclosed trains for decades. In previous day, they were assumed to be abducted by the unknown soldiers (maybe they were Nazist). Grandfather always talks about 'yellow flowers' dandelions, but his grandson and his wife do not believe in the existence of dandelions. Because they have never seen a dandelion on the train, the family do not believe in the existence of dandelions except grandfather. All the Family get angry at the mention of their grandfather for they don't believe that the yellow flower would exist in the world:

Grandson's wife: My boy, there is not yellow flower in the world.

Child: But my grand grandfather and grand grandmother always talk about that flower.

Grandson's wife: Come on, That was just a fairy tale.

Child: What does it mean?

Grandson's wife: It's not real story.

Grandfather: You must not tell a lie to your lovely baby. I just say something true.

Grandson: All right. If your words are true, why not show that flower to us? please show it to me.

Grandfather: As you know, how can I show it?

Grandson: If you cannot show it immediately, it should be a lie. There can be no yellow flowers. (Kim Kwang-gyu 김광규 1983: 102–118).

In other words, that situation reminds us the ‘allegory of Plato’s Cave (Imprisonment in the cave)’. According to Plato and Socrates, there can be an imaginative cave where people have been imprisoned from birth. These prisoners are chained so that their bodies are fixed, forcing them to gaze at the wall in front of them and not look around at the cave. Behind the prisoners there is a fire, and between the fire and the prisoners there is a long walkway. The prisoners cannot see any of what is happening behind them, they are only able to see the ‘shadows’ cast upon the cave wall in front of them. Socrates suggests that the shadows are reality for the prisoners because they have never seen anything else; they do not realize that what they see are shadows of objects in front of a fire, much less that these objects are inspired by real things outside the cave which they do not see. Also, few humans will ever escape the cave. This is not some easy task, and only a true philosopher, with decades of preparation, would be able to leave the cave, up the steep incline. Most humans will live at the bottom of the cave, and a small few will be the major artists that project the shadows with the use of human made light (Russell 1995: 196).

Plato continues, saying that the freed prisoner would think that the world outside the cave was superior to the world he experienced in the cave and attempt to share this with the prisoners remaining in the cave attempting to bring them onto the journey he had just endured; “he would bless himself for the change, and pity [the other prisoners]” and would want to bring his fellow cave dwellers out of the cave and into the sunlight. The returning prisoner, whose eyes have become accustomed to the sunlight, would be blind when he re-enters the cave, just as he was when he was first exposed to the sun. The prisoners, according to Plato, would infer from the returning man’s blindness that the journey out of the cave had harmed him and that they should not undertake a similar journey. Plato concludes that the prisoners, if they were able, would therefore reach out and kill anyone who attempted to drag them out of the cave.

According to that allegory, the people located at the tail cabin is the same to the prisoners at Plato’s Cave. The tail cabin is dark and the top cabin is light. The people at lower class is dark and foolish, the

ones at upper class is light and wise. They must obey to the command of the top cabin.

2.3. Theme 3: Social Stratification

The riots were able to capture Mason Minister. She was the mouthpiece of dominating upper class. She always shouted: ‘you are just the tail. You must obey the command of the top. Or you will be perished’.

After the capture, they forced her to put her shoes on the head. This scene seems to be the critical parody against Plato’s *Politics*.

‘Now see whether you agree with me’, says Socrates.

‘Do you think it would do much harm to the city if a carpenter started making shoes and a shoemaker carpentering.’

‘Not very much.’

‘But should one who is by nature a worker, or a member of money-earning class... manage to get into warrior class; or should a warrior get into the guardian’s class without being worthy of it; then this kind of change and of underhand plotting would mean the downfall of the city.’

‘Most definitely it would.’

‘We have three classes in our city, and I take it that any such plotting or changing from one class to another is a great crime against the city, and may rightly be denounced as the utmost wickedness?’

‘Assuredly.’

‘But you will certainly declare that utmost wickedness towards one’s own city is injustice?’

‘Certainly.’

‘Then this is justice. And conversely, we shall say that when each class in the city attends to its own business, the money-earning class as well as auxiliaries and the guardians, then will be justice. (Plato in Popper 2013)

At the previous sentences, Popper accuses Plato of betraying Socrates in *The Republic*, wherein Plato portrays Socrates sympathizing with totalitarianism. Anyway, Plato’s hatred of democracy led him, says Popper, “to defend lying, political miracles, tabooistic superstition, the suppression of truth, and ultimately, brutal violence”. Popper feels that Plato’s historicist ideas are driven by a fear of the change that liberal democracies bring about. Plato

according to Popper was sympathetic to the oligarchs of his own day and contemptuous of the common man. Popper also suspects that Plato was the victim of his own vanity, and had wished to become the supreme Philosopher King of his vision.

Plato (according to Popper, it's not Socrates probably) made a strict hierarchy from top to bottom like the following tableau.

Tab. 2. The juxtaposition of Plato's hierarchy and the hierarchy in *Snowpiercer*.

Plato's <i>The Republic</i>	Movie <i>Snowpiercer</i>	
guardian	Gilford	head cabin
warrior	Mason Minister/soldiers	
worker	Curtis, Edgar, Namgung Minsu	tail cabin

It is a very stubborn dichotomy between the head and shoes. The worker must be satisfied with his social position in the same reason that the shoes must be put not on the head but on the feet. The class differentiation represented in the words of Spell of Plato is strengthened in the last dispute between Gilford and Curtis. It seems to be the conservative attitude of this movie.

2.4. Theme 4: Disaster or Apocalyptic Movie

In the movie, to run a sacred engine eternally is the duty of the leader (guardian) of the top cabin. The leader Gilford insists that to keep balance between production and consumption is the only way for survival in the fatal apocalyptic environment.

His economical policy comes from Malthusian 'principle of population'. He also emphasize the justification of strong control supported by the Malthusian 'principle of population', where the population grows exponentially, but production increases arithmetically. This theory is repeated itself at the commercial movie like *Avengers: Infinity War* (2018) and *Kingsman: The Golden Circle* (2017).

These movies became the dominant trends which could be named '(Post) Apocalyptic Film'. Apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic fiction is a sub-genre of science fiction, in which the Earth's

technological civilization has collapsed. The apocalypse event may be climatic, such as runaway climate change; natural, such as an impact event; man-made, such as nuclear holocaust or resource depletion. The story may involve attempts to prevent an apocalypse event, deal with the impact and consequences of the event itself, or it may be post-apocalyptic, set after the event. Post-apocalyptic stories often take place in a non-technological future world or a world where only scattered elements of society and technology remain.

To sum it up, the themes of this movie come from the combination of disaster and class conflict. The principle of ‘the survival of the fittest’ is very dangerous thought especially when it would be adapted at human society. We can call it totalitarianism. The guardian at the top engine has the doxa that human must keep the basic rule that some people should sacrifice their lives for the happiness of all mankind.

3. Binary Oppositions without Exit

3.1. Third Vision over hopeless dichotomy

The future vision presented at *Snowpiercer* does not stay at the narrow binary oppositions. Namgung Minsu and Yona offered us a new vision which could be named as the third possibility. They overcame the dichotomy between the head cabin and tail cabin, the upper and lower layers. Two Koreans actors acted very bravely and creatively than others. So spectators come to believe that only Korean people could reach their destination of the ultimate paradise they can imagine. The third vision is more important than hopeless and stubborn dichotomy. To acknowledge it, we must mention ‘the Rule of the Three’ (cf. Kim Mansu 2015).

In the beginning, in almost any story, there is an all-important ‘one’: the central figure of the story, the hero or heroine with whom we identify. Then, there arises a sense of division, of a splitting into two a.k.a. dichotomy. Basic story such as myth and folklore lies in the clear and distinct logic of dichotomy. But we must realize that the trichotomy (rule of three) is richer than the binary oppositions for it contains various rich elements that could not be explained by

dichotomy. According to Bruno Bettelheim, English folk tale *Three Little Pigs* is more attractive than Aesop's fable *The Ant and the Grasshopper* because it contains three characters. A comparison of *Three Little Pigs* with *The Ant and the Grasshopper* accentuates the difference. In both stories the child identifies with the animals: but after having identified with grasshopper, there is no hope left for the child, according to the fable. But identification with the little pigs of the fairy tale teaches that there are development-possibilities of progress from the pleasure principle to the reality principle (Bettelheim 2010: 43). Of course, Aesop's fable *The Ant and the Grasshopper* is based on a firm dichotomy of 'labor and play' and has a strong moral intensiveness. However, this allegory cannot give children a real sense of emotion. The fable teaches a terrible instruction that enjoying life in the midsummer is a kind of crime or bad behavior. Also it teaches that rich people must not help poor people because the charity to the poor make the poor more dependant. But in the tale of *Three Little Pigs*, the weakest and youngest pig has a warm heart enough to help his two elder brothers. *Three Little Pigs* is based on three logics. The logic is richer than the dichotomy of strict instruction.

3.2. New Vision represented by Korean Actors

In the movie, Namgung Minsu (남궁민수) and Yona (요나) play a funny role like Joker at card game. The proportion of these two figures was somewhat secondary until the middle of this story. Unlocking the securities set up at the train was their job. Though they were doing it quite well, they were not important character but comic. Suddenly the story started to change after they broke the windows of the train and tried to escape out of the train. At the moment of the escape from the enclosed train, the theme and the vision of this film had been changed into unanticipated closure.

As you know, most important stories were constituted with the binary opposition between head (upper class) and tail (lower class). Most important role were given to famous Hollywood star such as Chris Evans, Tilda Swinton and Jamie Bell. But the key character to escape the enclosed train were given to two Korean actors, Song

Kang-ho (송강호) and Go Ah Sung (고아성). Of course, they are known to very influential actors in Korean movies. It seems to be important that Bong tried to emphasize their role in this movie only because they are Korean. We cannot deny the fact Korean movie has been produced and consumed only in Korea in the long time. We must criticize Bong's intention to appeal only Korean movie goers.

This setting contributes to create a kind of hybrid and transnational characters in the film. When all the people stays in the closed circuit of dichotomy, only the Korean people can dream of the third realm and imagine the new possibility. It makes the Korean audience set as the main consumer segment of the film.

The film presents a message of salvation through the way Yona and Timmy are depicted as masters of the new world. Of course, the audience of this film cannot come out of the train with Yona. It was because the movie ended before they could escape from the enclosed trains. However, their play remains as a third visual impulse, as strongly as the class confrontation pair that kept this film conflict constant.

4. Conclusions

The film has earned US\$ 86.7 million worldwide. The film grossed US\$ 59,8 million in South Korea and its largest international market was China, with \$11 million. It succeeded not at the global market but at the domestic³.

In Korea, over twenty movies could achieve the blockbuster title which means 10 million spectators come to see the movie. Ten million people means the amount of 20% of all Korean population. It is an amazing scale that 20% of all people saw the movie at the same time. *Snowpiercer* is not 10 million blockbuster. But it was the tenth highest-grossing domestic film in South Korea with 9.35 million admissions at that time.

It succeeded not at the global market but at the domestic. Socialist realism wanted to show their attitude via this slogan, "socialistic in content, nationalistic in form". To parody the slogan of

³ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Snowpiercer> (Accessed March 1, 2020).

socialist realism, Bong's film seems to be restricted to be a nationalistic film even though it intended to be global products.

We can conclude this movie like the following sentences: It seems that Bong Joon-ho is willing to follow the trends and conventions of the genre movie as known as Apocalyptic Film. However, by casting Korean actors as third groups of the movie intentionally, he makes it possible to imagine a new world that is different from this frustrating dichotomy (higher's domination/lower's oppression). Namgung Minsu and Yona who are acted by two Korean actors are represented as very active and interesting characters who are anticipated to solve the main social problems in the movie; environmental disasters and class conflicts. They show us the possibilities of the new world which can be imagined after the frozen and totally destroyed world is ended. Korean spectators can feel proud of the fact that the heroic and fantastic character of this movie is restricted to two Korean actors. Bong seemed to aim the target of spectators only to Korean. Anyway, he could make a little bit different movie from the conventions of blockbuster a.k.a. disaster movie or apocalyptic movie.

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