

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In first chapter, this study discusses these following sections; background of the study, limitation of the study, problem formulation and objective of the study, significance of the study and organization of research report.

A. Background of the Study

Nowadays, some people spend many of hours merely to enjoy television programs such as lifestyle, news, education, sport and film. It is difficult to vivid life without those things, especially film. Film has changed from a temporary novelty to the high visual form of modern popular culture since the innovations of the late nineteenth century (Crary, 2002:7). In contrast to the print mass media such as book, magazine, newspaper which need literate audiences or even radio which counts on audiences who figure out the originating language are in a great demand. Film is known as universal language of moving visuals that was immediately embraced and popularized in around the world. By far, the existence of film in this modern era is inevitable.

Landon J. Shimpa states that film and society are connected each other. Thus, films generally bring past events to explore culture (Shimpa, 2016:2). Culture, by borrowing the writing of DidikMurwantono is composed of three embodiments; cultural knowledge, cultural behavior, and cultural

artifact. Cultural products begin with human ideas, followed by a variety of activities to produce these ideas (Murwantono, 2011:21). Basically every progressed culture in the world presents or produces films by combining cultural knowledge, cultural behavior and cultural artifact. Fortunately, America is a country that can take advantage of this situation.

America's cultural influence through film is extremely strong. Just the word Hollywood, Disney and Oscar Night indicate American culture in motion pictures recently. Motion pictures may not have been invented in the U.S, but modern films that reflect American perspectives vividly were perfected there. Thus, American's dominant position will be accepted by society. Hence, such global popularity legitimizes the consideration of film as the emblematic media form of popular culture. These are the evidences that American hegemony operated global through the popular culture especially within motion picture industry.

There are several ways to define popular culture. Williams defines three deep meanings. Culture can serve as a general intellectual mechanism, spiritual and associated to beauty of nature and art improvement. While the word popular, he suggests four meanings: many people like, kinds of subordinate group work, work purposely to achieve favor in society, created by the people (Williams, 1983:236). It can be said that the social context and particular historical are related each other. Based on the explanation above, either popular or culture are reflect and influence one another. So, popular culture can called as a culture that many people like.

Like Raymond Williams, Morag Shiach also provides working definitions relevant with. She admits Williams's enormous influence and underlines the term popular is one of the convoluted words in English language. Shiach relays the transformations of the term popular from its legal connotations to the idea of a general public. A fascinating issue raised by this etymology is the extent to which traces of these definitions inform contemporary conceptualizations and practices of the popular (Guinz and Cruz, 2005:21).

On the other hand, Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci defines a popular culture on the political analysis, especially on the development of the hegemony theory. He assumed, the term hegemony is can be used as a way where the dominant groups in society seek to win the consent of subordinate groups through a process of intellectual and moral leadership in society (Storey, 2009:79). It means that the bourgeoisie as pictured of dominant group manage hegemony of ideas, values, beliefs and behavior which keep and enlarge their area as the rulers of society. Bennet argued as follows:

The field of popular culture is structured by the attempt of the ruling class to win hegemony and by forms of opposition to this endeavor. As such, it consists not simply of an imposed mass culture that is coincident with dominant ideology, nor simply of spontaneously oppositional cultures, but is rather an area of negotiation between the two within which – in different particular types of popular culture dominant, subordinate and

oppositional cultural and ideological values and elements are ‘mixed’ in different permutations (Bennet, 1980:20).

Although the explanation above underscored class conflict, the concept of hegemony also can be used to seek and analyze conflicts involving ethnicity, race, gender, generation, sexuality, disability, etc. They are at various circumstances dealing with cultural struggle against the dominant culture.

The distinction of popular culture was developed during Enlightenment. Intellectuals in this period through exploration and invention started to seek the basic principal of individual life such as the product of human. The educated and elite considered the element of real beauty objectively and universally associated with high culture. Then, everything became popular. Todd Gitlin argued as follows:

In the contemporary industrial era popular culture is a product, usually of large, often multi-national corporations providing goods and services for profit. These corporations leverage their marketing and productive capacities to create as large and pervasive a consumer base for their product as possible. They use their power to establish patterns of planned obsolescence, ever-changing styles, and a treadmill of celebrity introductions and exits to promote endless turnover in products that are then marketed and consumed by population at large (Crothers, 2007:9).

Popular culture thus represents a way where people develop products that are usable, achievable and consumable; even it can be a power in a large society. Popular culture is now working at many levels as depicted in American movies and mass media in which embodied as American popular culture. Thus, the existence of American popular culture in the global environment is undoubted. It means that American popular culture has *broad-spectrum hegemony* over the rest of the worldwide societies.

This phenomenon's can be traced back by studying literary work. Shortly, social conditions that happened above are affecting a literature. It can be concluded that the phenomenon or events that caught up through history books or events that leaves a deep trauma and sensations are possibly affect the literature (Murwantono, 2011:136). So, literature as an image of human life provides what people think, say and do in the society.

Through literature, people are able to see the realities that happen in the certain society and the value system that is addressed by that community. In the literary works, an author in his or her works sometimes shows the conflict of the character in much condition or case. The author might will create a conflict where the character of the play will be confused, frightened and frustrated to resolve the conflict in the beginning then turn to get happiness and indeed get kind of victory in the end. Similarly, initiated by Tony Mendez; the main character of *Argo* film. He plays an important role as CIA in the drama rescuing six Americans hostage and stranded in post-revolutionary Iran 1979. The movie begins with Iranian revolutionaries

attacked American embassy in Iran. Then, several Americans were taken hostage. Immediately, six Americans managed to escape and hide at the house of Canadian Ambassador. American government afterwards, through the CIA ordered to get them out of the country. Tony Mendez as the CIA devised an awkward plan; it is making a fake film project based on Iran background. Helping by some trusted Hollywood contacts, Mendez made the hoax and flight to Iran as the producer. Finally, Mendez leads the six Americans out as the production crew and completing such a mission impossible.

Argo is the celebration of popular culture as a soft power. The reality presented in Argo clearly delivers the power of film because the influence brought by the film is inevitable. It tended to simplify and stereotype as its messages and also can be an effective weapon. Argo, based on the real history events, use a science fiction flick to rescue their hostages in a conflicted Iran. In this modern era, this mediated history of Argo emphasizes on bringing back the hegemony in between their crisis in both economic and foreign policy. The emergence of such films as Argo in this modern era, especially with its label as an Academy Awards winner shows how America, despite hatred and crisis, they still power in a form of films. The famous Hollywood industries also function as hegemony of film culture.

Cultural hegemony allows certain ideologies of dominant groups to be accepted by a large group of people. The consent given by this group, as explained by Gramsci is always spontaneous. It is easily acceptable because there is no force in this concept. This is really pretty much to explain why on

Argo, they use film to release the hostages in Iran crisis. Films are also considered as a cultural hegemony product as it deconstructs the idea of high culture. As it is more acceptable, the use of films as political bait is then more reasonable. Then, Hegemony is built. Argo used this as well, creating hegemony by using big promotion on this fake movie. The result is very overwhelming as they successfully released those hostages. This is absolutely horrifying as America subtly proclaims what they can do with their popular product. Audience out there is drawn into the power of their film, claiming America is still on the front on world power through American popular culture hegemony.

There are some considerations why *Argo* movie interesting for this study. First, people will know how does the American hegemony through its cultural hegemony in this globalization era play a great role in holding a power and strongly influence in the worldwide. Then the second is people will know the power of films as a part of popular culture not only for entertaining product but also can be used as conflict prevention and peace building. Therefore, the title of this study is: THE IMPACTS OF POPULAR CULTURE IN CREATING AMERICAN HEGEMONY REFLECTED IN *ARGO* FILM.

B. Limitation of the Study

This study highlights an impact of American hegemony through popular culture based on the theory of popular culture, and the theory of

hegemony by Antonio Gramsci. The aim of this study is to explain the types of American hegemony in *Argo* film and to analyze the impacts of popular culture in creating American hegemony reflected in *Argo* film based on the theory of popular culture, and the theory of hegemony by Antonio Gramsci. In the term of data, this study limits into textual source by analyzing movie script.

C. Problem Formulation

This study has some significant problems stated as follows:

1. What kinds of American hegemony reflected in *Argo* film?
2. How are the impacts of popular culture in creating American hegemony reflected in *Argo* film?

D. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are:

1. To explain the types of American hegemony reflected in *Argo* film.
2. To analyze the impacts of popular culture in creating American hegemony as reflected in *Argo* film.

E. Significance of the study

This study is expected to give the readers many benefits as follows:

1. This study is dealing with the impacts of American hegemony through popular culture would be beneficial for the students of Language Faculty

who would like to learn more about the all things related to American popular culture, culture hegemony and social life.

2. For other researchers, the writer hopes this writing will give benefit for them in conducting a new study related to the issue dealing with the impacts of popular culture.

F. Organization of Research Report

This study presents in five chapters. The first chapter is introduction. It covers by the background of study, limitation of the study, problem formulation, objective of the study, significance of the study, and organization of research report. The second chapter is review of related literature which consists of some theories relevant to the study; theory of popular culture and theory of hegemony. The third chapter involves research method including types of research and data organizing that consists of data collecting method, types of the data and analyzing the data. The fourth chapter contains findings and discussion whatkinds of American hegemony and how are the impacts of popular culture in creating American hegemony in *Argo* film (2012). The last fifth chapter provides conclusion and suggestions.