

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of Study

Hegemony, as an idea and theory has long been discussed by scholars, and those who took interest in studying human from a sociological perspective. According to Herrmann (2010), the term hegemony signified “leadership” or “sovereign ruler.” The term expanded to include the military, economic, and political dominance of one nation state over another.” From that instance, hegemony as a theory describes about how the ruling imposed his or her decree to all aspects of social lives, in an attempt to achieve complete dominance over the people who are the subject of dominance. One of prominent thinker of hegemony theory is Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937). Gramsci, whose idea was influenced by Marxist theory suggested that, it is always the highest authority who imposing their dominance over the lower class of society (McNally, 2009). In which, it emerged as the result of the adherent structure of society where sovereign rulers, or those who had power, need to always maintain their position by asserting control over others (Jones, 2006). Gramsci believes that, the way the ruling affirms their domination to the people is by controlling their ideology, norms, and values. This in turn, will give them total control to their economic, politic, and all their systems (Williams, 2020). This is called as cultural hegemony. Artz and Murphy (2000) discussed cultural hegemony in their book *Cultural Hegemony in the United States* in which they stated that people are surrounded by power: corporate power, media power, and power of boss over worker, power of teacher over

student. Whatever the relationship, power does not arise naturally. Power must be established through behavior. Power often relies on physical force, economic constraint, legal guidelines, or other coercive techniques. But coercion is expensive and dangerous. Subordinate class can organize revolt, and find other allies. Power is best secured if subordinates buy into the arrangement, agree to the terms, and make the relationship theirs. Hegemony is the system of power that has the support of the subordinate.

According to the description above, cultural hegemony focused in the fact that the people being dominated do not grasp the point that they are being controlled or aware of it, but considers hegemony as something that is necessary in a society to function. Subordinate class takes the values of dominant groups as their own values, and the majority of people never questioned those values. As the result, the subordinate classes of society are unable to uphold or initiate resistance as their backgrounds were systematically repressed and replaced.

In the realm of literature, sociological point of view is still being discussed widely by the people who interested in the study. Cultural hegemony is one of the topics of discussion in socio-literature field. It examines the way power being exercised by the people by means of values, and ideologies control. Coherently, it sees literary works as a picture, tool, or critiques of power dominance in real life. In other instance, the nature of the works of literature can be seen also as separate world as it follows specific constructions, and criteria that also different from real world. As Kurniawan stated, literature is a medium in the distribution of ideology that serves to build the process of hegemony (2012:45). Therefore, in this research a novel has been chosen to be analyzed. The intrinsic elements of this

type of literary works can be characterized as the work of socio-literature. The novel contains cultural hegemonic practices in form of narration of characters that indicates that there is an exercise of power which is the central point of hegemony theory. This is why the writer chooses to analyze about cultural hegemony in the novel to reveals how ideology and practical hegemony is formed in the characters' story.

The literary work is entitled "*Never Let Me Go*", a novel written by British author Kazuo Ishiguro. *Never Let Me Go* is a 2005 dystopian science fiction that was shortlisted for the 2005 Booker Prize. This novel sets place in dystopian version of late 1990s, in which it pictures a world where the lives of ordinary peoples are prolonged through a state-sanctioned program of human cloning. The clones, refers to as students, grow up in special institutions away from the outside world. The story of Ishiguro's novel focuses on the students in Hailsham Academy, a place where the clones are being raised and nurtured. Then, as young adults, they began to donate their vital organs. All "donors" received care from designated "care giver" clones that have not yet begin the donation process. The clones continue to donate organs until they "complete," which is a euphemism for their death after donation of three or four organs. It can be seen, that the students of Hailsham Academy experience something that makes them willingly, without question, donate their organs. The apparent portrayal of oppression reflects in the way they are being convinced, by their headmaster and teachers that what they do is the best thing for them and everyone. The way the headmaster maintains the current status quo is by instating a certain value, norm, and ideology to the students. Thus, it will limit their freedoms, and they will easily be exploited. As

that result, it is not about how the oppressor works to exploit the student, but how their norms, values, and ideology, as the way to limit the students of Hailsham Academy, work. In other hands, it is about how cultural system works as the tool of oppression to oppress. In accordance to that, this research is keen in analyzing its cultural oppression, which will be discussed by using cultural hegemony theory.

The characters, especially the clones in the novel, are described to live a normal life but actually not. The government in the novel puts the ideology and indirectly forms an agreement through the institutions such as school as formal education. They assume that what happened to them is a normal thing. They cannot choose what they want except donating their organs and wait for death to come. Analyzing cultural hegemony in literary work is important, because it is correlated with our social life. As the product of social interaction, and as the picture of real- life world, literary work must not be appreciated only by the aesthetic values it contains, but to understand what is beyond it, is the most important one. Sometimes, we indirectly experience controls by the upper classes for certain purposes, and we perceived it as normal. In fact, culture through ideologies which makes consent between upper class, and lower class in our social life, contains that experience as well. Literary work presented itself in this way; it contains critics of the world that had given birth to it. Thus, to understand what is beyond the immediate surface of literary work means understanding the very structure of society. As such, this research will be helpful to the readers, to understand and be aware about this issue that could happen anytime in social life.

## **1.2 Research Question**

How is the portrayal of cultural hegemony as depicted in Hailsham Academy in *Never Let Me Go* by Kazuo Ishiguro?

## **1.3 Research Objective**

This research is aimed to reveal the practice of cultural hegemony in Hailsham Academy by looking at the student as depicted in the actions, words, and narration of the characters about their surroundings in the novel *Never Let Me Go* by Kazuo Ishiguro

## **1.4 Uses of Research**

In doing this analysis, the research is over two uses for academic, and general views; theoretical, and practical uses.

### **1.4.1 Theoretical use**

This research will offer clear understanding in how to applying sociological approach, especially Gramsci's cultural hegemony theory to literary work. In addition to that, this research will provide certain information about the formation of cultural hegemony within literary work which is it depicted.

### **1.4.2 Practical use**

This analysis will offer the reader a new perspective in reading the literary work. Additionally, it will give the reader a greater awareness about the other nature of literary work as depiction, and critic of real structure of society.

## **1.5 Scope of the Study**

In order to answer the formulated problem correctly, the writer needs to limit the analysis. This research scope is arranged in order to stay focus on the analysis of how the practice of cultural hegemony is being asserted to the students in

Hailsham Academy as seen in Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*.