

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The United States, with its capitalist ideology, can triumph as a superpower country in the world. The doctrine of capitalism has raised the image of America as a superpower country. Gregory, Pail, and Stuart stated that capitalism is characterized by private ownership of the factors of production. Decision making is decentralized and rests with the owners of the factors of production. Their decision making is coordinated by the market, which provides the necessary information. Material incentives are used to motivate participants (2013:41). American civilization is called the civilization of capitalism because the state guarantees the freedom of every citizen in terms of property. Everyone has the right to own, hoard, and obtain material in any way. The state has no right to limit the material ownership of its citizens.

According to Braudel (1979), the term “capitalist”, meaning an owner of capital, appears earlier than the term “capitalism” and dates to the mid-17th century. The development of a system of property rights freedom is the beginning of a capitalist economic system. Therefore, American civilization is called a capitalist based on material. The view of life built by capitalist culture is pragmatic because what is taken into consideration for doing or not doing is the principle of benefit or based on profit and loss. In social terms, American capitalist civilization, through the

state, ensures citizens' freedom to express and conduct themselves. It relies on American democracy since democracy is a capitalism-derived ideology or concept that provides a person's freedom.

Capitalist exploitation dominates American society, especially in the American industrial world. In addition, capitalists use power to realize their desires. The strength and power of an industry or company will make it easier for capitalists to get the maximum profit without seeing the resulting losses. People with wealth might try to defend what they have at all costs, especially by oppressing people experiencing poverty or harming those around them, whether humans or nature. In addition, individuals or groups in society will work to try to maximize the wealth and power of the capitalists.

The *Dark Waters* (2019) movie shows a relationship between the company or industrial capitalist and the community as victims. *Dark Waters* tells the story of the turmoil of a lawyer who has to uncover facts hidden by a capitalist company. It all started with an old farmer who complained about the condition of his sick and dying livestock and his herd, which was almost bankrupt. This old farmer suspects the capitalist company is polluting the environment by dumping waste around its stables. There are no local lawyers to help the old farmer. Therefore, he hopes that a lawyer from a firm can help him. Later, the lawyer discovered many strange facts, from sick livestock to death, to the unnatural conditions of the natural environment and local people.

The company hides the risks of products on the market and violates its waste management. Their air pollution is more freely in the air, and their liquid waste flows in rivers and gets buried underground. Animals and residents are also affected by diseases such as cancer. This company argues that the government has not regulated the use of hazardous materials in their products to make them safe. But hiding the ill effects they already know is wrong. If so, economic growth is more important than human safety and natural balance.

In *Dark Waters* (2019) movie, a lawyer defends a chemical company waste pollution victim. Moreover, a chemical company, DuPont, which silences experts, uses its strength and power in litigation to keep things running smoothly. This capitalist company also deceives the public as if their products have no harmful chemicals or side effects to continue making good profits. People who believe in them will continue to suffer losses such as disabilities, cancer, etc. This case has been started since 1998. However, this case was only filed for lawsuits in 2001. Then, this case was continued with a medical study entitled 'The C8 Health Project' on 69 thousand West Virginians to prove claims of pollution by hazardous compounds.

Based on the background above, the exciting thing analyzed in this film is the struggle of lawyers in dealing with social issues that are spreading due to the actions of chemical companies that do not want their secrets to be exposed. Another exciting thing to study is the power domination of the capitalist company and the effects of capitalism. Therefore, the writer focuses on analyzing three problems, namely the form of power domination of capitalist companies, the results of capitalism, and the

struggle of lawyers against the capitalist company, as depicted in the *Dark Waters* (2019) movie.

1.2 Research Questions

Related to the background of the study, the writer has identified some research problems as follows:

1. How does the movie portray the narrative elements?
2. How does the form of power domination treatment of the capitalist company and the struggle of the lawyers on each side as reflected in *Dark Waters* (2019) movie?
3. How does capitalism affect society as depicted in *Dark Waters* (2019) movie?

1.3 Scopes of The Study

In this study, the writer will analyze extrinsic and narrative elements. Extrinsic elements analyze the form of power domination of the capitalist company, the struggle of lawyers on each side, and the effect of capitalism on society as reflected in *The Dark Waters* (2019). The analysis of the narrative elements of *Dark Waters* will be limited to character, setting, and conflict. Following that, to elaborate on the problem use of conflict and capitalism, Karl Marx's conflict theory and capitalism theory will be further utilized to portray the extrinsic aspects.

1.4 Aims of The Study

1. To analyze the narrative elements of *Dark Waters* (2019) movie.
2. To analyze the form of power domination treatment of capitalist company and the struggle of the lawyers on each side as reflected in *Dark Waters* (2019) movie.

3. To analyze the effect of capitalism as depicted in *Dark Waters* (2019) movie.

1.5 Previous Studies

Previously, several researchers conducted a study on social problems caused by capitalist company. However, research in *Dark Waters* (2019) movie is less than the object of material in this research. The analysis presented in this chapter supports the scope of this study. As a result, reviews will mainly focus on the movie's conflicts.

The writer has found four studies that were relevant to the writer's study. The first study related to object material is Joanne Laurier's article entitled *Dark Waters: American capitalism poisons its population* (2019:2). The article's discussion focuses on a lawyer suing a chemical company. However, because the chemical company was too big to be sued, the lawyer finally sought other evidence to beat the company in court. This capitalist chemical company reaps a lot of profit annually even though it badly impacts the residents around the chemical company.

The article "*Learning from Dark Waters to Create a Healthier Environment*," as highlighted by BU School of Public Health (2019:1), discusses the alarming health issues stemming from environmental pollution caused by a chemical company's waste. Furthermore, the article points out that numerous individuals suffer from diseases due to the compounds generated by this chemical company.

In addition, the following research related to the research topic is a journal written by Laurent Thévenot (2017:70) entitled *You Said "Capital"? Extending the Notion of Capital, Interrogating Inequalities and Dominant Powers*." Her article

explores that Capital in the 21st Century based on the writer's choices about the definition of capital, its unequal distribution, and the welfare state interventions she proposes to address. Trace the political genealogy of 'human' and 'intellectual' capital, and the subsequent evolution of other capital variables used to measure different types of inequality and assess policies developed to address them. The differences in how these different types of capital are invested and priced (not entirely market-oriented) clearly demonstrate the power associated with each type and the assertion of its legitimacy despite the inequalities it creates and the dominance it exercises.

The other related study is a thesis written by Alejandro Reuss (2020:3) entitled "*The Power of Capital: An Introduction to Class, Domination, and Conflict.*" His research focuses on the forms of power that characterize capitalist economies. A capitalist economy has three characteristics: 1) Producers (the things used to produce other things, such as land, buildings, and machines) are privately owned and can be bought and sold on the market. 2) Labor power (a person's ability to work) is bought and sold in the market, mainly when some people agree to work for others in exchange for payment. 3) Goods and services are produced to be sold on the market for private gain. On the other hand, Alejandro said that the word "power" is so widely used that those who use it don't always define exactly what they mean. Individuals may need to figure out what a particular commentator means by "power"

by looking at who they perceive as the wielder of power or what types of behavior they perceive as the wielder of power.

This study differs from the previous studies because the writer needed to identify research that explored the topic under consideration. Most research articles focus on environmental problems. Meanwhile, the writer's research will focus on the power domination of the capitalist company, the effect of capitalism, and the resistance of a lawyer fighting the company, as reflected in *The Dark Waters* (2019). The writer explains the two problems in Parkersburg, West Virginia, and the lawyer's struggle to deal with the capitalist company as reflected in *Dark Waters* (2019) movie.

1.6 Research Method

1.6.1 Data and The Sources of Data

In this study, the writer employs qualitative research to support the processing data and information related to the research object and subject. In this study, there are primary and secondary data. The primary data comes from the American movie entitled *Dark Waters* (2019). As for the secondary data, the data from other analyses, papers, books, or journals explain power domination, capitalism, and *Dark Waters* (2019).

1.6.2 Method of Collecting Data

In collecting some data related to the subject to be analyzed, the writer uses library research. According to George, identifying and searching sources that provide

information or personal opinions/experts on research questions has become a feature of library research methods (2008: 6). The material object or primary data in this research is *Dark Waters* (2019) movie. Data collected using this method comes from a variety of sources. Sources come from libraries and the Internet in the form of books or journals. This data consists of the information, opinions, and theories that support this paper.

1.6.3 Method of Approach

The writer in this study uses Marxist approach to analyze *Dark Waters* (2019). According to Aditya Kumar Panda, in his journal titled “Marxist Approach to Literature: An Introduction”, stated that the history of all hitherto existing societies is the history of class struggle’ says Marx in the Communist Manifesto (1848). In a Marxist approach to literature, we have the following factors which need to be discussed: There is a class history and class struggle in a literary text; Struggle is there means there is a domination and oppression. And in that, someone has to win and someone has to defeat. It belongs to a particular society and culture.; There are influential factors like political motives behind the production of a text (2015:2). The writer uses a Marxist approach to place data in the context of the discourse of Marxism and capitalism in *Dark Waters* (2019).

1.7 Organization of The Writing

This thesis is organized into four chapters:

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This chapter contains the background of the study, the research question, the scope of the study, the aims of the study, previous studies, the research method, and the organization of the study.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter will expound on the theories used to provide a clear understanding of how the theory limits the scope of the research into intrinsic and extrinsic aspects.

CHAPTER 3: RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This chapter will contain the findings and analysis of the research conducted based on the theories and research questions mentioned in the previous chapter.

CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSION

Materials from the first to the third chapter will be compiled as a repetitive research summary and provide suggestions regarding further studies.