

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

In keeping with the times, movies have evolved in terms of the themes or issues they cover. Many American movies incorporate social concerns including poverty, social class, politics, discrimination, feminism, and culture into their plots. It happens regularly that a popular phenomenon is brought up or included in a movie. According to Dennis McQuail (1989: 13) film is one of the artistic and cultural creations that can tell tales "communicating" the occurrences and phenomena of the environment in which it was created. Popular phenomena are frequently brought up or included in movies on occasion.

In the 21st century cancel culture has become one of the most talked-about issues, most particularly in the entertainment industry. There has been a lot of cancel culture recently in the American entertainment industry, any celebrity who has ever spoken or done anything even somewhat controversial has probably been canceled. For instance, Roseanne Barr and her sitcom got canceled because of her racist comment on Twitter. Additionally, Ellen Degeneres who hosted *The Ellen DeGeneres Show* got canceled after allegations of her creating a toxic work environment.

Along with that, a number of movies have recently started to come out that address the topic of the phenomenon of cancellation, keeping up with the times, and the growth of the film industry. This was not a recent

feel phenomenon, cancel culture has existed for ages. Yet the forms of cancel culture have changed over the centuries (Jeftovic, 2020). As different perspectives contribute to the meaning of cancel culture, a number of meanings keep coming into existence. Basically, Wright (2023) states that cancel culture is comparable to a boycott due to the fact that they certainly overlap. Ng (2020:623) describes it as the “withdrawal of any kind of support for those who are assessed to have said or done something unacceptable or highly problematic”. Clark (2020:88) details the act of canceling as a form of “expression of agency,” whereby an individual withdraws their attention, presence, time, and money from someone or something “whose values, (in)action, or speech are so offensive”.

The movie *Tár* is one of those that brings up the current issue of the cancel culture phenomenon. *Tár* reflected on how women exploit their position to harass other women and her downfall after. The name of the lead character, Lydia Tár, serves as the inspiration for the movie's title. Lydia Tár is currently active as one of today's greatest classical composers and conductors. When the past finally begins to catch up with her as she reaches a career milestone, her entire existence begins to fall apart. She loses the position she has, her social position, and her reputation. By the movie's end, she has reached her lowest point after being discovered by cancel culture.

Tár had its world premiere on September 1, 2022, at the Venice International Film Festival. Focus Features released the movie in the US on October 7, 2022, with a limited run in a few places, then on October 28,

2022, it had a broader distribution as reported by Sofia Sheehan's article in *collider.com*. The majority of the movie's locations are in Germany and New York. Written and directed by Todd Field, he is a former actor who is currently working as an American film director, according to IMDb.

Tár is a 2022 psychological drama film, the story revolves around famous conductor Lydia Tár who is accused of engaging in sexual assault. Brito (2021) stated that cancel culture will always be present as a public response whenever someone, famous or not, says or does something that is thought to offend social norms. In line with that, Winarsunu (2008) examines the definition of sexual assault as any unwelcome activity that has sexual overtones that is carried out alone and without the victim's consent. Speech, writing, symbols, provocative gestures, and movements are all examples of the form. In other words, *Tár* is a movie about cancel culture, since sexual assault is categorized as behavior that is against social norms. Furthermore, Lydia Tár's downfall is in accordance with the definition of cancel culture that has been mentioned previously.

Within the framework of the writer's observations, the movie *Tár* contains a number of cases and scenes that might serve as a form of cancel culture phenomenon. Therefore, the writer will use McQuail's mass media theory and the spiral of silence theory to investigate further cancel culture after seeing the background information that is already mentioned above.

1.2 Research Questions

In analyzing cancel culture in *Tár* movie the writer proposes three main questions, as the following:

1. How are the intrinsic elements of the movie *Tár* depicted?
2. What are the issues that trigger cancel culture in *Tár*?
3. What are the impacts of cancel culture in *Tár*?

1.3 Scope of the Study

This study will discuss two topics, which are the intrinsic elements by Abrams's theory namely characterization, conflict, theme, and setting that might serve as a form of cancel culture in the movie *Tár*, and the extrinsic aspects that analyze and explain how cancel culture is impacted as seen in the movie *Tár*.

1.4 Aims of the Study

The objectives of the study are connected to the research problem. The objectives are presented as follows.

1. To explain the phenomenon of cancel culture in American movies through intrinsic elements in the movie *Tár*.
2. To analyze the trigger issues of cancel culture in the movie *Tár*.
3. To analyze the effect of cancel culture in the movie *Tár*.

1.5 Previous Studies

To ensure that this research has not been done and to fill the gap in the research field on this topic, the writer will provide research done before

this study. All of which concern similar topics to this study. Those are as follows.

The first previous study was written by Aja Romano (2019) in his article, "*Why we can't stop fighting about cancel culture*" which gives a brief history of the word cancel culture or "canceling," which first appeared in Nila Rogers' 1981 song "Your Love Is Canceled" before being utilized in the dialogue of the 1991 film *New Jack City*. This research found that 'cancel culture' is the popular practice of withdrawing support for (canceling) public figures and companies after they have done or said something considered objectionable or offensive.

The second one was served by Joseph Ching Velasco from De La Salle University in 2020 entitled "*You are canceled: Virtual collective consciousness and the emergence of cancel culture as ideological purging*". The purpose of the study is to gain further insight into the phenomenon of cancel culture. This study used the example of a Filipino celebrity who experienced cancel culture as a result of his statements in an Instagram story post that the public found offensive. It is a complex social movement because, while on the one hand, it promotes censorship and a sort of intolerance for ideas that defy societal standards, it also functions as a powerful form of democracy on the subject.

In 2021, another study came up with the title "*Virtual Call-Out: The Aggressions and Advantages of Cancel Culture*" (Placio, Vargas, & Estigoy, 2021). This study was conducted with the aim to understand what motivates

cancel culture on social media, how victims feel about cancellation, and what impact cancellation has. In this study, discrimination and the political beliefs of the victim of cancellation are the factors that set off the cancel culture.

The study *"Masculinity, Cancel Culture, and Woke Capitalism: Exploring Twitter Response to Brendan Leipsic's Leaked Conversation"* by Sailofsky (2021) mentions this cancel culture as being partially to blame for the reputational damage suffered by celebrities who have never been formally found guilty of a crime. In his study, Sailofsky examines this culture of cancellation and analyzes how social media plays a significant role in framing issues and silencing those who have a marginal voice using Neumann's (1974) spiral of silence theory.

The last study performed by Hervé Saint-Louis in 2021 *"Understanding Cancel Culture: Normative and Unequal Sanctioning"* said that cancel culture has developed into a compelling phenomenon in the age of the internet. Individuals who break social media norms will be criticized by netizens and blacklisted. This study has shown that the cancel culture directly affects those who have received the title of "canceled." Long-term impacts of cancel culture include being fired, being publicly shamed, and having personal information made public, which frequently results in ostracism.

Although some studies are observing similar topics, which analyze the phenomenon of cancel culture and social media, yet no study

specifically examines the cancel culture issue in the movie. In contrast to previous studies mentioned above, in this study, the writer will analyze the issue of cancel culture in a movie. Therefore, the study will provide a new perspective on the movie *Tár* from the perspective of a psychological approach and mass media communication theory spiral of silences.

1.6 Method of Data Collection

In order to perform this study, the writer uses library research methods to gather information related to the topic. In this case, the writer uses Todd Field's *Tár* movie as the primary source of research. By watching the movie for multiple times, the writer will analyze through the intrinsic and extrinsic elements of the movie. Additionally, the writer performed library research to collect secondary sources of research. Library research is used to collect sources from a variety of books, journals, and internet sources. As stated by George (2008), library research is a kind of research that collects data by learning and understanding data having a close relationship with the problem from theories, books, documents, etc.

1.6.1 Method of Approach

In this study, the writer uses the psychology of literature as an approach to analyzing the cancel culture phenomenon in the *Tár* movie. Wellek and Warren define the meaning of psychology in literature by stating:

“By ‘psychology of literature’, we may mean the psychological study of the writer, as type and as individual, or the study of the creative process, or the study of the psychological types and laws present

within works of literature, or, finally, the effects of literature upon its readers (audience psychology)” (Wellek and Warren, 1963: 81)

Within this approach, the writer will examine the behavior of Lydia Tár with the purpose of analyzing the cause and effect of cancel culture portrait in the movie *Tár*.

1.7 Organization of Writing

This study consists of four chapters. Some of them are divided into several subchapters. The four chapters are listed as below:

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

This first chapter contains seven sub-chapters. Those are the background of the study, research problems, scopes of the study, the aims of the study, previous studies, research method, and organization of the study.

CHAPTER II THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter covers the theoretical review to investigate cancel culture in the movie *Tár*.

CHAPTER III DISCUSSION

This chapter is the main chapter in this study since it contains the discussion of cancel culture in the movie *Tár*.

Cancel culture in the movie *Tár* is analyzed using theories suitable for the topic.

CHAPTER IV CONCLUSION

This last chapter entails the overall summary of this Study.