



**THE ELITE'S HEGEMONY IN MAYAN SOCIETY  
IN GIBSON'S *APOCALYPTO***

**A FINAL PROJECT**

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of *Sarjana*  
*Sastra in English*

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**When we are young, we sacrifice so much of our health in the  
pursuit of wealth.  
And when we get old and wise, we change our tune. We become  
willing to sacrifice every bit of our wealth for even one day of  
good health.  
But then it's too late.  
Don't let it happen to you.  
(No Name).**



**This final project is dedicated to:**

**Everyone I love:  
Poentadi & Roesmiyati (Alm.),  
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Rulani Dewi Agustini, Emi Rosana,  
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## ABSTRACT

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This study analyzed the concepts of hegemony over the society found in the movie. The object of the study is a movie by Mel Gibson entitled *Apocalypto*". The objectives of this final project are the following: to identify the position of the elites in the story, to identify the access of the elites to hegemony over the society in the story, to identify the role of hegemony Mayan society in the story.

This study uses a qualitative research. To collect the data I used five steps: watching the film, identifying the video, searching for references, categorizing the objectives of the study and reporting. The last step was drawing conclusion to answer the questions.

Finally, by studying and analyzing this film, I hope that this study can be a reference for those who are interested in analyzing the movie with the similar theme. In addition, it can enhance our knowledge about relation between literature and sociology that can be found in films. Moreover, this final project can stimulate further research related to the relationship between literature and sociology.

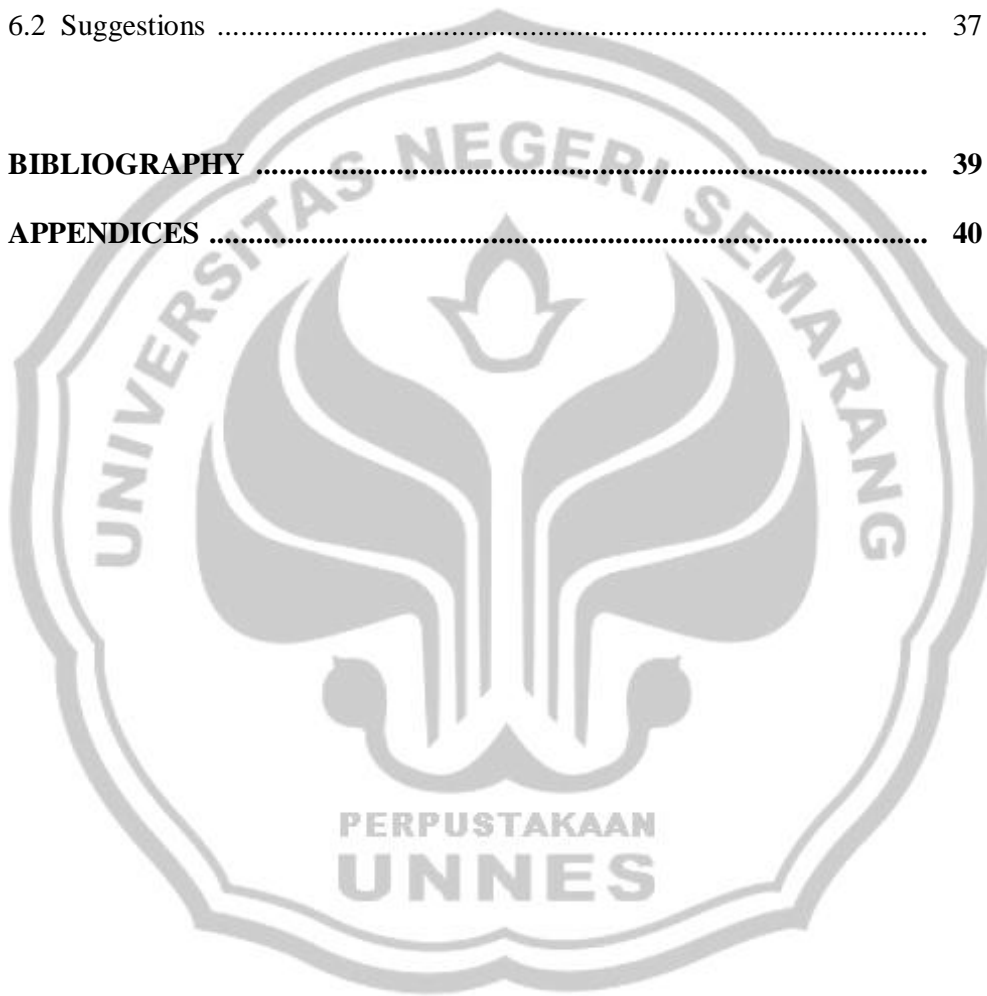
## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>APPROVAL</b> .....	ii
<b>DEDICATION</b> .....	iii
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT</b> .....	iv
<b>ABSTRACT</b> .....	vi
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b> .....	vii
<b>CHAPTER</b>	
<b>I INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>1</b>
1.1 Background of the Study .....	1
1.2 Reasons for Choosing the Topic .....	3
1.3 Statements of the Problem .....	4
1.4 Objectives of the Study .....	4
1.5 Significance of the Study .....	5
1.6 Outline of the Report .....	5
<b>II REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE</b> .....	<b>7</b>
2.1 Theory of Film .....	7
2.1.1 Definition of Film .....	7
2.1.2 Types of Film .....	8
2.1.3 Elements of Film .....	9
2.1.4 Categorizing Film Genres .....	12
2.2 Psychology in Literature .....	15
2.2.1 Sociological Approach .....	15
2.2.2 Sociology in Literature .....	16

2.3	Hegemony.....	17
2.3.1	Concept of Hegemony .....	17
2.3.2	Forming Hegemony .....	18
2.4	Ancient Maya Culture .....	19
2.4.1	Art and Architecture .....	20
2.4.2	Religion and Mythology .....	21
2.4.3	Intellectual Achievements .....	22
<b>III</b>	<b>METHOD OF INVESTIGATION .....</b>	<b>24</b>
3.1	Object of the Study .....	24
3.2	Role of the Researcher .....	24
3.3	Types of Data .....	25
3.4	Procedures of Collecting Data .....	25
3.5	Methods of Analyzing Data .....	26
3.6	Theoretical Framework .....	26
<b>IV</b>	<b>THE ELEMENTS OF FILM.....</b>	<b>27</b>
4.1	The Theme of the Film.....	27
4.2	Plot of the Film .....	28
4.3	Characterization.....	29
4.3.1	Major Character.....	29
4.3.2	Minor Character .....	30
4.4	Modes of Vision.....	31
<b>V</b>	<b>DATA ANALYSIS .....</b>	<b>32</b>
5.1	The Position of the elites in the Film .....	32



5.2 The Access of the Elites to Get Hegemony over the Society .....	33
5.3 The Role of Hegemony in Mayan Society in this film .....	35
<b>VI CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS .....</b>	<b>37</b>
6.1 Conclusions .....	37
6.2 Suggestions .....	37
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY .....</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>APPENDICES .....</b>	<b>40</b>



# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the study

Literature always interests our mind, as it is very motivating and highly valued. Some people define literature as a means for expressing feelings and attitude toward the world. However, what is literature? The word *literature* derives from the Latin word *littera*, 'a letter of the alphabet'. The Latin word for literature was simply the plural, *litterae* and in this basic sense of literature embraces everything written with the letters of the alphabet.

Many people would agree that literature is word artfully arranged to stimulate feelings and impart understanding. Some would also agree that literature can be grouped into three genres: fiction, poetry, and drama. From these three basic genres, more genres branch out. Film is one of these branches. Film which combines techniques of drama, poetry, visual arts, and music, has been included in literary studies. According to <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Film>, film is a form of entertainment that enacts a story by sound and a sequence of images giving the illusion of continuous movement.

With movie scripts being studied as works of art along side the books and plays many films are based on. Undoubtedly, modern technology will continue to influence the forms and genres of literature.

Film is a kind of literary work, but it different from any other forms of literature. Everything in film appears to be lifelike and natural; the characters walk and talk just as people actually do. As written in Encyclopedia Americana (2004:505)

Like literature, many films are based on narrative of a story and develop characterization and mood, like theatre, films for the most part use human actors who are engaged in a performance. Like poetry, films can convey several levels of meaning simultaneously.

A film portrays something existing in the real life, which has some moral values described through the element of it, such as characters or settings. In a film, we will find a lot of problems in the characters' life, such as problem in gaining their dream, problem with their society, the characters' personal conflict, etc. By watching a film we can dig some knowledge up of how to face the life and the world from some points of view such as politics, economics, social matters or aesthetics.

In estimating a literary work, in this case is in watching a film, every person has difference interpretations. Some people would have a movie just as an entertaining media. The others are so deeply drowned in the story made by the movie makers. They didn't realize that they had been influenced by the story. And they considered it as a natural thing. In other words, they have got hegemony by the movie makers. The film *Apocalypto* by Mel Gibson indirectly tells us about the hegemony of the elites over the Mayan society with the collapse of the Mayan civilization as a setting. In analyzing this film, the writer uses sociological approach, because sociology studies about the relationship between people and

their society. Popenoe (1983:2) states that sociology is the systematic and objective study of society and social behavior. Since a literary work usually talks about a certain society and how people interact with other people, the work embodies sociological aspects.

Sociology is relevant to other disciplines and everyday life issues because it deals with the world of people and society and has a goal to study on human being as members of society, as individuals and their life. Sociology has many aspects that include culture, family, gender, politics, economics, population and also religion.

The writer would like to analyze the film *Apocalypto* from its political aspect and historical background. Using sociological approach, the story was taken when Mayan civilization in the Central Area reached its full glory in the early eighth century.

## **1.2 Reasons for choosing the topic**

The writer carries out this research because of the following reasons. Firstly, the full glory of Mayan civilization in the Central Area was in the early eighth century which some part of the film shows about the existence of ancient political conspiracy that might lead the collapse of the civilization.

Secondly, *Apocalypto* is an interesting story. This film contains political aspect and social problems in almost every country in the world. It is set in the Mayan civilization, when a man's idyllic presence is brutally disrupted by a violent invading force; he is taken on a perilous journey to a world ruled by fear and oppression where a harrowing end awaits him. Through a twist of fate and

spurred by the power of his love for his wife, his son and his family he will make a desperate break to return home and to ultimately save his way of life. It teaches us the crippling effects of fear, how it crawls into the soul and destroys inner peace.

Third, the writer found a new interesting topic that it is not directly expressed in this film. It is about how the rulers' hegemony over the society to get whatever they want such as super power to rule the nation. And that they are trying to make people obey whatever they say naturally in every way.

And finally, sociology studies the relationship between people and their society. So it helps us to learn about the human social problems and difficulties, especially problems that faced by the Mayan Civilization that time. Then, the writer can get some experiences and values from this story for applying in our life.

### **1.3 Statements of the problems**

In order to focus on the study, the writer limits the discussion of this film by presenting two problems, as follows:

1. How does the story pose the elites?
2. How do the elites get access to hegemony over the society in the story?
3. How is the role of hegemony in Mayan society in the story?

### **1.4 Objectives of the study**

The objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To identify how the position of the elites in the story.

2. To identify how the elites get access to hegemony over the society in the story.
3. To identify the role of hegemony Mayan society in the story.

### **1.5 Significances of the study**

The result of the study is expected to fulfill the following expectations:

1. To improve readers' understanding in watching this film.
2. To share opinions about Mayan civilization.
3. To describe the definition and deeper meaning of hegemony.
4. To be use as a reference for further studies on the same topic.

### **1.6 Outline of the study**

In order to present a clear description about the study to the readers, I present the final project in a systematic arrangement. I divide it into five chapters.

Chapter one serves the introduction which contains of background of the study, reason for choosing the topic, statement of the problem, objectivity of the study, significance of the study and outline of the study.

Chapter two is review of related literature. It discusses the theory of film, theory of sociology, hegemony, and ancient Mayan culture.

Chapter three is method of investigation. It consists of object of the study, role of the researcher, type of the data, procedures of collecting the data, and procedures of analyzing the data.

Chapter four presents analysis of the study. This chapter will discuss the result of the study.

Chapter five is the conclusions and suggestion based on the analysis.

The bibliography follows this chapter and is given in other page.



## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

In this chapter, the writer would like to present the review of related literature to support her analysis concerning the film. She uses several sources to explain the subject matter. The data was taken from books, encyclopedias, dictionaries, and some websites.

#### **2.1 Theory of Film**

In this subchapter, the writer presented about some theories about film which are the definition about film, types of film, elements of film and categorizing film genres.

##### ***2.1.1 Definition of Film***

According to <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Film>, film is a form of entertainment that enacts a story by sound and a sequence of images giving the illusion of continuous movement. Film is a term that encompasses individual motion pictures, the field of film as an art form, and the motion picture industry. Film is produced by recording images from the world with cameras, or by creating images by using animation techniques or special effects.

Lorimer (1991:506) states that films can record culture and they can treat social or political issues and other aspects of societies to capture relationship that is difficult to be communicated by other means.



Film allows us to see the aspect of the world through its story. It can be a true story, imaginative story, and dramatic story, etc. Like any other forms of literature, it gives us a pleasure. It can be enjoyment, amusement, education or entertainment.

Based on the definition above, the writer concludes that film is a literary work, which consists of a story, history, culture, social or political issues and other aspects of societies to be show on the television or at cinema.

### **2.1.2 Type of Film**

According to *Bordwell and Thompson (1997:42-51)* there are four types of films, they are:

#### **1. Documentary Film**

Documentary film presents factual information about the world outside the film. As a type of films, documentaries present themselves as factual trustworthy. There are two types of documentary, they are: (1) compilation films: produced by assembling images from archival sources. (2) Direct cinema; recording an on-going event “as it happens”, with minimal interferences by the filmmaker.

#### **2. Fictional Film**

A fictional film presents imaginary beings, places, or events. Yet, if a film is fictional, that does not mean that it is completely unrelated to actuality. In a fictional film, an intermediary, not photographed directly, portrays the agents.

### 3. Animated Film

Animated films are distinguished from live action ones by the unusual kinds of work that are done at the production stage. Animators do not do continuously filming an on-going action in real time, but they create a series of images by shooting on a frame at a time.

### 4. Experimental Film

Another basic type of filmmaking is willfully nonconformist. Some filmmakers set out to create films that challenge orthodox notion of what movie can show and how it can show it.

#### 2.1.3 Elements of Film

In order to profound the story of this film, it is necessary to know the elements of film. The following is a list of some of the major elements.

##### 2.1.3.1 Plot

In literary work, plot is crucial element. The word "*plot*" technically term is a series of tied together events in a story. Below some definition of plot according to some literary theorists (cited by Frimadhona Syafri, 2005:4):

- 1) Aristotle's concept, said hat plot has a beginning, middle, and an end.
- 2) Hills (1987:8) regard that "story" in the old sense of "Tell Me Story" means plot.
- 3) Perrine (1959:61) defines plot as the sequence of incidents or events of which a story is composed.
- 4) Franson (as cited by Koesnosoebroto,1988:36) state that conventional plot structure starts with the point of attack initiates the action,

showing the main character in conflicts with self, others, nature's forces as the apex of their struggle.

Based on some opinions about plot, I can conclude that a plot is the arrangement of tied-together chronological events, which have casual and thematic connection.

### **2.1.3.2 Character**

As cited by Frimadhona Syafri, Abrams (1971: 20) defines characters as the persons in a dramatic or narrative work, endowed with moral and dispositional qualities that are expressed in what they say, i.e., dialogue, and what they do in action.

E.M Forster in Robert and Jacobs (1987) defines three types of characters:

#### ***a. Round Character***

Round characters are usually major figures in a story. They have many realistic traits and are relatively fully developed by the author.

#### ***b. Flat Character***

Flat characters are characterized by one or two traits. They are essentially undistinguishable from their groups. They are usually minor characters, although not all minor characters are flat.

#### ***c. Stock Character***

Stock characters are used to refer to characters that perform in these repeating situations. They have many common traits. Some of them are the clown, the revenger, the foolish boss, the long-suffering wife, the loveable drunk, and many more. I can say that stock characters are

stereotyped figure who have so often appeared in fiction that his nature is immediately known.

### **2.1.3.3 Theme**

Perrine, as cited in Koesnosoebroto (1988:76) stated that theme is a controlling idea or central insight of the story. Further, Perrine stated that the theme is the unifying generalization about life stated or implied by the story. Sometimes the theme of a story is explicitly stated somewhere in the story, but frequently it is left implicit.

### **2.1.3.4 Setting**

Setting refers to the point in time and space at which the events occur. Like characters, setting may an important element in a story or even in a work of particular author. Setting can be setting of place and setting of time. Setting of time is period when the story happens. Connolly as quoted by Koesnosoebroto in his book (1988:79) says that setting is a sense of time, place, and concrete situation of the narrative, the web of environment in which characters spin out their destinies.

### **2.1.3.5 Point of View**

Point of view is the most complex element of fiction. A story can be told in the third person, the second person or the first person.

According to Francis Connolly, as cited in Koesnosoebroto (1988:87-90), there are four basic points of view or angles from which the events are seen or narrated, from outside, inside, above or below. The four basic points of view as follow:

**a. *The Omniscient Point of View***

The author tells the story in the third person. The author's knowledge and prerogatives are unlimited. The author can tell the readers the thoughts of any characters.

**b. *The First Person Point of View***

The author disappears into one of the characters in the story, s/he can be the main character telling his/her own person, or s/he can tell it from the view point of one character in the story.

**c. *The Objective Point of View***

The author disappears into a kind of roving sound camera, which can go anywhere, but can record only what is seen and heard. It cannot comment, interpret, or enter the character's mind.

**d. *The Omniscient Limited Point of View***

The author tells the story in the third person, but s/he tells it from the viewpoint of one character in the story.

### **2.1.4 *Categorizing Film Genres***

Based on <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/filmgenres>, film genres can be categorized according to the setting, mood, format and the target of the audience of the film. Below is categorizing film genres:

#### **2.1.4.1 Based on Setting**

Below some kinds of film genres based on the setting of the film:

- a. Crime: places its character within realm of criminal activity, or within organizations attempting to prevent said activity (or sometimes both).

- b. Film Noir: portrays its principal characters in a nihilistic and existentialist realm or manner.
- c. History: taking place in the past amidst notable historical circumstances.
- d. Science Fiction: defined by the effects of speculative (not yet existing) technology (i.e. future space travel, cyberpunk, time travel).
- e. Prison: story is about life in prison, the guilty and the innocent.
- f. Fantasy: speculative fiction outside reality (i.e. myth, legend).
- g. Sports: sporting events and locations pertaining to a given sport.
- h. War: battlefields and locations pertaining to a time of war.
- i. Westerns: wilderness on the verge of civilization, usually in the American West.

#### **2.1.4.2 Based on Mood**

Below some kinds of film genres based on the mood of the film:

- a. Action: generally involves a moral interplay between "good" and "bad" played out through violence or physical force.
- b. Adventure: involving danger, risk, and/or chance, often with a high degree of fantasy.
- c. Comedy: intended to provoke laughter.
- d. Drama: depends mostly on in-depth character development, interaction, and highly emotional themes.
- e. Horror: intended to provoke fear and/or revulsion in the audience.
- f. Music: about musicians, music and their instruments, not to be confused with musicals.

- g. Mystery: not understanding in full the plot of the movie until the end.
- h. Romance: dwelling on the elements of romantic love.
- i. Thriller: intended to provoke excitement and/or nervous tension into audience.

#### **2.1.4.3 Based on Format**

Below some kinds of film genres based on the format of the film:

- a. Live Action: the most common format of films.
- b. Animation: the rapid display of a sequence of 2-D artwork or model positions in order to create an illusion of movement.
- c. Biography: also known as "biopic", a format that tells the story of an historic figure or an inspirational story about real people. This genre is arguably the most controversial, because the majority of bio pictures show fictionalized events.
- d. Documentary: a genre that films reality.
- e. Musical: songs are sang by the characters and interwoven into the narrative.

#### **2.1.4.4 Based on Target Audience**

Below some kinds of film genres based on the target audience of the film:

- a. Children's film: films for young children; as opposed to a family film, no special effort is made to make the film attractive for other audiences.
- b. Family film: intended to be attractive for people of all ages and suitable for viewing by a young audience. Examples of this are Disney films.

- c. Adult film: intended to be viewed only by an adult audience, content may include violence, disturbing themes, obscene language, or explicit sexual behavior. *Adult film* may also be used as a synonym for pornographic film.

From the definition above, the writer concludes that *Apocalypto* is an adult live action thriller film. And based on the setting this film is a history film because it was taking place in the past amidst notable historical circumstances.

## **2.2 Theory of Sociology**

In this subchapter, the writer presented some theories of sociology, which are including sociological approach and sociology in literature.

### **2.2.1 Sociological Approach**

Sociology studies about society and its relation to human being, so it covers many aspects such as culture, family, gender, politics, economics, history, and religion, etc. A film with all of the characteristics can be enjoyable means of studying sociology. For example we can analyze a literary work using sociological approach through its elements such as characters, theme, setting, etc. Through the relationship among the characters, for instance, we can analyze how they interact with each other in the society, how they respect each other even if they come from different society. Gelles and Levine (1999:10) define sociology as:

Sociology is the systematic study of the groups and societies in which people live, how social structures and cultures are created and maintained or changed, and how they affect our behavior.



One scope of sociology is society. A society consists of some families which have interaction between a number of the family to one another or from the family to the society itself. In other words, everything that is studied in sociology fits under the heading of societies. Society is the largest group to which any individual belongs.

Since sociology deals with the familiar world of people and society and has goal in understanding human society. Human beings and their lives, sociology is relevant to a wide range of other disciplines and everyday life issues. As a result, sociology has a broad scope that includes culture, family, gender, ethnics, politics, population, religion, slavery, urbanization among others.

### ***2.2.2 Sociology in Literature***

*Apocalypto* is a film that tells much about social conflict. Although the author's imagination has a role in it, in analyzing a screenplay with sociological approach, the writer should treats the society in the story as the society in a real world. Therefore, the writer considers that the most appropriate equipment to be applied here is sociological approach. It is an approach that emphasizes on the sociological aspect of a work such as individual society, community relationship and between event and accuracy which happens in certain period.

Damono (1979: 7) states that by learning its social institutions and all economic, religion, social problems, we get the description about the way human being adjust himself to his surroundings, and the process of cultivation of the society.

Laurenson and Swingwood (in Endraswara, 2003:79) mention that there are 3 main perspectives which are related to sociology in literature. The perspectives are:

1. A study that sees the work of literature as a social documentation which contains a reflection of condition in which the work is being written at the time being.
2. A study that uncovers the work of literature as a mirror of the writer social condition.
3. A study that captures work of literature as a manifestation of a historical sequence and the culture condition.

## **2.3 Hegemony**

This subchapter consists of concept of hegemony and forming hegemony, which talk about the definition of hegemony and how hegemony formed.

### **2.3.1 Concept of Hegemony**

“It was Gramsci who, in the late twenties and thirties, with the rise of fascism and the failure of the Western European working-class movements, began to consider why the working class was not necessarily revolutionary, why it could, in fact, yield to fascism” (Gitlin, 1994:516).

Hegemony can be defined as the dominance of one group over other groups, with or without the threat of force, to the extent that, for instance, the dominant party can dictate the terms of trade to its advantage; more broadly,

cultural perspectives become skewed to favor the dominant group. Hegemony controls the ways that ideas become “naturalized” in a process that informs notions of common sense (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hegemony>)

“...Dominant groups in society, including fundamentally but not exclusively the ruling class, maintain their dominance by securing the ‘spontaneous consent’ of subordinate groups, including the working class, through the negotiated construction of a political and ideological consensus which incorporates both dominant and dominated groups.” (Strinati, 1995: 165)

Terminologically, hegemony means ‘to lead’ (Greek: *hegeisthai*). A lot of sociologists use the hegemony concept to explain the phenomena of reaction to stand the power by the rulers or elites. We can conclude that in hegemony the dominated group influenced by the dominants (the ruling party) to accept moral, political and cultural values. Hegemony is considered to be something natural, so that the dominants ideology can be spread and practiced. The ruling party fought for values and hegemony ideology so that the dominated stay put and obeys to the dominants’ ruling.

Hegemony can be seen as a strategy to defense power. If it looks as a strategy, the concept of hegemony is not exclusively own by the ruler. It means, any group can use the hegemony concept to be a ruler. For example, the power of US Dollar; most of international transactions are using US Dollar.

### ***2.3.2 Forming Hegemony***

Gramsci (1891-1937) was a famous figure with his hegemony analysis. Gramsci analysis was a make up action to the economy determination concept and

classical Marxism history. In classical Marxism, capitalism will produce mass of labor class. Then finally there will be labors revolution that will produce socialism. In other words, capitalism produces socialism. But, this was not happen. Gramsci argued that the failure caused by the ideology, values, self-consciousness, and labors organization drowned in the ruler's hegemony. This hegemony happened through indoctrinating by the mass media, schools, even by religious' preaching, that cause a new realization of the labors. Instead of doing revolution, the labors thought that they improved their status to middle class, to be able to follow popular culture, and to imitate the upper class behavior or life style. These all are illusions created by the elites to make lose the dominated group ideology and self-identity to be a free human. According to Gramsci (Strinati, 1995), the labors created their hegemony by war of position and war of movement. War of position applied by getting support through mass media propaganda, build strategic alliance with the line of broken hearted, education liberation through schools which improve self and social- consciousness. The characteristics are long-fight, emphasize the struggle in system, struggle directed to the culture and ideology domination. Frontal attacked by support of mass was to apply the war of movement.

## **2.4 Ancient Maya Culture**

According to Encyclopedia Americana (2004:543-544) the culture of the ancient Maya is remarkable for its artistic and intellectual achievements. Although these highly visible accomplishments have justly received much

attention from both scholars and the general public, Maya achievements in social, political, and economic organization should not go unnoticed.

### ***2.4.1 Art and Architecture***

The art of the Maya has been called the richest of the New World. It has a great complexity of motifs and iconography and uses wide variety of media for its expression. Maya buildings were painted and adorned with features such as carved friezes, facades, and roof combs in stone or stucco. The interior walls of certain structures were painted with colorful murals. Intricately carved monuments (or stelae) are found at many Classic sites in numbers varying from one to dozens. Some carvings were executed in low relief on a single flat face or on both sides of a flat slab, while at the sites of Copán and Ouiriguá the carving was done in the round. Most often, one or more human figures appear on the stelae in full ceremonial regalia, including headdresses, earplugs, necklaces, bracelets, and other accoutrements. These figures, often important male or female members of the elite ruling families, have accompanying hieroglyphic texts. It should be pointed out that these achievements in building with and carving on stone were all the more remarkable because they were undertaken with stone tools. Metal was not used in the Maya area until Postclassic times, and even then only for ceremonial purpose.

The Maya also expressed themselves artistically in portable objects. Their ceramics, for example, were produced in a large variety of forms and were decorated through surface manipulation (such as incision or plano-relief), modeling (such as the making of incense burners in the form of gods), and

painting (from monochrome to polychrome). The complex scenes painted on the beautiful polychrome vases of the later part of the Classic Period in the lowlands show exquisite detail and fine technical control. In addition, the lowland Maya excelled in working jade and obsidian, which they imported from the Guatemalan highlands. The Maya also designed fascinating works of art from flint, bone, and shell and made highly decorated cotton textiles.

Although Ancient Maya architecture changed significantly throughout the course of Maya history, certain features stand out. First, the Maya built many of their structures – from small houses to large palaces – on platforms of varying sizes. Most noticeable are the huge truncated pyramids that formed the bases for temples. Second, the Maya usually built new structures on top older ones. Third, the Maya often enclosed large open plazas with groups of temples, palaces, and built-up acropolises. Fourth, a central architectural feature of Maya building was the corbelled arch, which caused rooms to be high and narrow. This characteristic changed somewhat with the advent of colonnaded palaces in the Postclassic Period. Finally, throughout much of their history, the Maya built with carefully cut and prepared stone, which was sometimes plastered or painted or both. Numerous colors were used to cover buildings and the floors of plazas.

#### ***2.4.2 Religion and Mythology***

The highly decorated building and monuments in the centers of most Maya sites were intimately connected with Maya religion. In virtually all areas of Maya life, it is impossible to separate religious from secular activities. The gods

controlled all aspects of Maya life, and the worship of these deities permeated all corners of Maya existence.

Structures and monuments were built in honor of the gods. Worship included prayers, the burning of incense, mutilation (such as rasping the tongue with the thorny vine or rope), and occasionally, human sacrifice. The priests performed most of these activities on behalf of the populace as a whole, although decentralized family worship appears to have increased in Postclassic times.

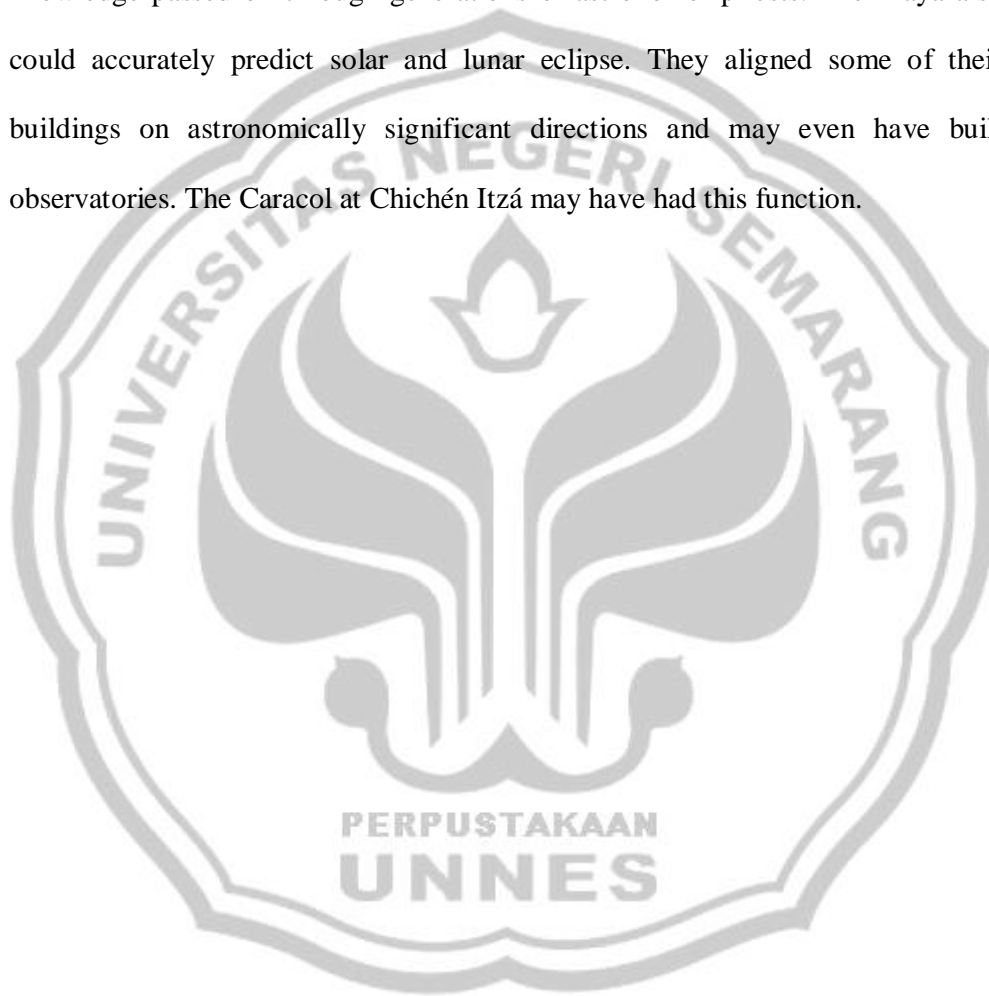
Maya cosmology and mythology were extremely complex. The numerous gods and goddesses had many forms and facets. For example, Ix Chel was goddess of the moon and goddess of childbirth, among other things. Moreover, as the moon goddess only, she might be depicted in several different guises. Many Maya deities and ancient Mesoamerican deities in general were related to natural features such as the sun, moon, and rain. In addition, the Maya calendar time (day, month, and larger units) was represented by god. The gods also were involved in all the myths about creation, the movements of the heavenly bodies, and the coming of the seasons.

### ***2.4.3 Intellectual Achievements***

The ancient Maya are particularly renowned for their achievements in astronomy, mathematics, calendrics, writing and literature. The Maya used a mathematical system based on the number 20. Their use of place notation and their invention of the zero allowed them to make immense calculations, sometimes involving millions. Their mathematical abilities in turn allowed them to make calculation necessary for their highly precise calendrical system. The

ancient Maya had a 365-day calendar, which was more accurate than the contemporary one in Europe.

Perhaps most outstanding of Maya achievements were their incredibly accurate observations of the movements of the moon and Venus based on knowledge passed on through generations of astronomer-priests. The Maya also could accurately predict solar and lunar eclipse. They aligned some of their buildings on astronomically significant directions and may even have built observatories. The Caracol at Chichén Itzá may have had this function.





## CHAPTER III

### METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

This chapter deals with method of investigation. It presents the procedures and research steps to solve the research problem. It consists of five sub-chapters, object of the study, role of the researcher, types of data, methods of collecting the data, and method of analyzing the data.

#### 3.1 Object of the Study

The object of the study is the film entitled “Apocalypto”. Apocalypto is an Academy Award-nominated 2006 epic film directed by Mel Gibson, starring Rudy Youngblood. Set in Mexico's Yucatán Peninsula, it depicts a Mesoamerican tribesman's experience of an armed invasion and destruction of his tribe, and subsequent manhunt for him during the declining period of the ancient Maya civilization.

#### 3.2 Role of the researcher

The role of the researcher is data analyzer. The writer tries to analyze this film using sociology of literature.

### 3.3 Type of Data

The type of data in this research is qualitative. This study uses data to be classified into two categories, the primary and secondary data. The primary data is the movie entitled “Apocalypto”. The secondary data is references such as books, journals, encyclopedia, dictionaries, and websites related to the study.

### 3.4 Procedures of Collecting Data

There are several steps to collect the data:

1. The writer gets out the *Apocalypto* movie.
2. The watches the movie several times in order to understand the content and detail of the movie.
3. After watching the movie, the writer identifies the data using steps as follows:

- a. Identifying the video

Beside the movie script data, the writer uses the video (*Apocalypto* video compact disc) to back up data. The writer identifies the data by watching the video and then using “pause” to understand the dialogue, mimic of the character and description that show the historical background that cannot be found in the movie script.

- b. Searching for the references

To support the analysis, the writers search some supporting data through internets and some books.

### **3.5 Method of Analyzing the Data**

The data is analyzed in order to reach the objectives. The aim is to find out any elites hegemony, how it is portrayed and what the impacts of it toward Mayan civilization as seen in the film. There are procedures to reach the objectives, they are:

1. Exposing the data in order to reveal the problems.
2. Explaining the data. The data are to be explained clearly until all the evidence is found.
3. Interpreting the data. It is used to present the problems from the point of view of sociology of literature.
4. Concluding is to answer the statement of the problems. In addition, some conclusions and suggestions are presented in the end of the analysis.

### **3.6 Theoretical Framework**

According to sociology in literature, literary work is related to the reality. What happen in the society is influencing by an influence literary work. Hegemony, according to Gramsci, is the dominated group influenced by the dominants (the ruling party) to accept moral, political, cultural values. Hegemony is considered to be something natural, so that the dominants ideology can be spread and practiced. The ruling party fought for values and hegemony ideology so that the dominated stay put and obeys to the dominants' ruling. Thus, in this film, the writer would like to identify the hegemony of the elites over the Mayan society.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **ELEMENTS OF THE FILM**

This chapter focuses in the elements of the film. It consists of four sub-chapters, the theme of the film, the plot of the story, characterization, and the modes of vision.

#### **4.1 The Theme of the Film**

Although it is not directly expressed in this film, the background to the events depicted is the collapse of the Maya civilization, which the filmmakers researched before writing. The collapse or demographic demise of many great Maya cities occurred throughout several major periods of Maya history. However, the filmmakers also intended the Maya collapse to have relevance for contemporary society. The problems faced by the Maya are extraordinarily similar to those faced today by our own civilization especially when it comes to widespread environmental degradation, excessive consumption, and political corruption.

The main issue of this film is possibly how we can manage our fear into a breakthrough brave action to protect what's important in our life. Along the journey to the capital city they have been haunted by some things that scare them.

Thus, the writer has found another theme of this film. This has something to do with phenomena of reaction to stand the power by the elites,

which is called hegemony. The elites get access to hegemony over the society by religious preaching of a priest.

## **4.2 Plot of the Film**

This movie begins with a band of brothers hunting a tapir. They seemed to be very happy, enjoy each other's company and even engage in a frat boy style of communal fun. They are interrupted by a migration of other villagers whom have been attacked and run off their land. This visit sits in the mind of Jaguar Paw. At the village he wakes one morning to find a band of Mayan raiders attacking his settlement. He rushes his pregnant wife and young son into a deep hole for insurance of safety. He is captured (as are all of the surviving adults). They are tied to bamboo poles and forced to walk through perilous terrain to the Mayan civilization. On this journey they encounter a young girl who delivers an omen to the Mayan soldiers that one of their captives will bring them all to their end. Upon arrival at the Mayan civilization the women are sold into slavery and the men are to be offered as a sacrifice to the Mayan Gods. Jaguar Paw was saved only by an eclipse and was eventually able to escape to freedom, but not until after he killed the Mayan general's son. The Mayan raiders chase Jaguar Paw through corn field, the jungle, over waterfalls, etc. He is able to eliminate them slowly throughout this process. He arrives back to retrieve his wife (whom had given birth in the hole) and his son(s)

### 4.3 Characterization

In a film, we can find characters easily. They are portrayed by actors and actresses but they can also be aliens, animals, gods, and an artificially intelligent or inanimate object. If we talk about character, we cannot leave the term of characterization. They are related to one another. The characterization in the film is how the director describes the way the characters think, behave, and speak in the film. The following is a list of some characters in this film.

#### 4.3.1 Major Character

It is the most important character in a story. Basically, a story is about this character, but he cannot stand on his own; he needs other characters to make the story more convincing and lifelike. There are some of the major characters in this film:

1. Jaguar Paw

He is the main character of this film. He is a brave and loveable person. He is quite consistent to protect his family.

2. Seven

Seven is Jaguar Paw's wife. She's so lovely and caring person. She loves her husband and sons so much so that she can be patient to wait her husband come back.

3. Blunted

He is one of Jaguar Paw's friends in the village. He is reckless and innocent person. But he is loveable though.

#### 4. Turtle Run

He is the first son of Jaguar Paw and Seven. He is vivacious and attractive kid. And he loves his parents so much.

#### 5. Flint Sky

Flint Sky is the father of Jaguar Paw. He is quite humorist and wise person.

### ***4.3.2 Minor Character***

It is just the supporter of the main characters to make the story more colorful. The characters are less important than those of the main. They are:

#### 1. Zero Wolf

Zero Wolf is the bloody commander of Holcane Warriors. He is cruel and brutal. But in the other side he loves his son so much who's in the group too.

#### 2. Middle Eye

He is the subordinate of Zero Wolf. He is playful with his captives. He likes to show off that he deserve highest position to his leader.

#### 3. Cut Rock

He is the only son of Zero Wolf. He is shy guy, silent, and lack of self-confidence.

#### 4. Fish Hunter

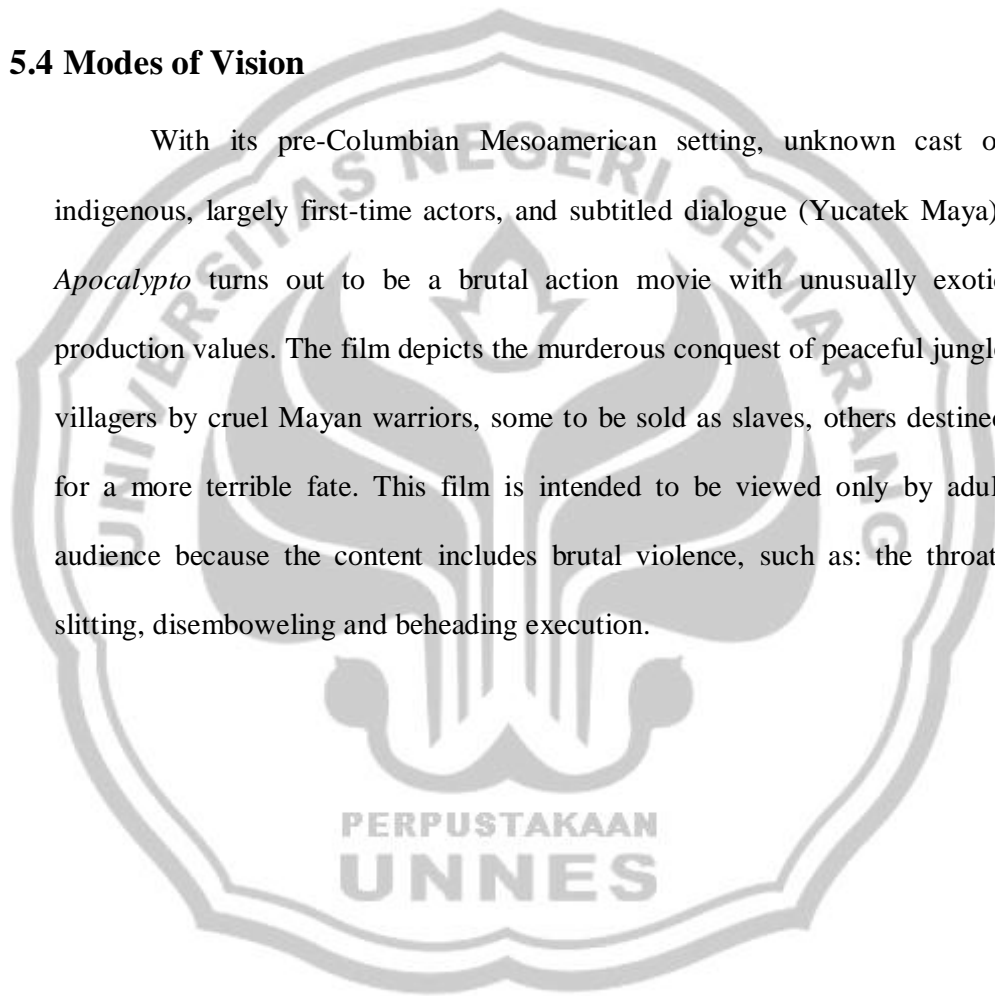
He is a man from another village who bring the rest of the people of his village move into somewhere else. He is quite mysterious.

#### 5. The Oracle Girl

She is a mysterious little girl. When she meets the captives brought by the Holcane Warriors she said some prophecy of what is going to happen next with the warriors.

#### 5.4 Modes of Vision

With its pre-Columbian Mesoamerican setting, unknown cast of indigenous, largely first-time actors, and subtitled dialogue (Yucatek Maya), *Apocalypto* turns out to be a brutal action movie with unusually exotic production values. The film depicts the murderous conquest of peaceful jungle villagers by cruel Mayan warriors, some to be sold as slaves, others destined for a more terrible fate. This film is intended to be viewed only by adult audience because the content includes brutal violence, such as: the throat-slitting, disemboweling and beheading execution.





## **CHAPTER V**

### **DATA ANALYSIS**

In this chapter, the study focuses on the analysis of the data. The data that has been taken from *Apocalypto* movie will be obviously presented in this chapter. This chapter consists of three subchapters which become the main answer of the problem statements stated in the previous chapter. They are: the position of the elites in the film, the access of the elites to get hegemony over the society, and the role of hegemony in Mayan society in this film.

#### **5.1 The position of the Elites in the film**

In this subchapter, the writer would identify the position of the elites in the story. There was a distinct class system in ancient Maya times. Between the ruling class/elites and the farmer/laborer, there must have been educated nobility who were scribes, artists and architects.

The rulers were often identified as “holy” (k’ul) and had series of lower ranking military generals, priests, and servants associated with them. Maya ruler ship appears to have had numerous layers rank and status that helped define proper etiquette and key protagonists for specific events and rituals. Royal households included the King, his principle queen, his heirs, and his ancestors.

Mayan rulers were the centers of power for Mayan civilization. Each Mayan city-state was controlled by a dynasty of kings, who collectively drove the

empire forward and also control the water, the land, every living source in their land.

In this film, the Royal family and the nobles are easy to find. They usually pierce their face; mostly at ears, nose, and chin, with jades or bones. Their cloths are also different. On public occasions the king appeared decorated with gold and precious stones, wearing on his head a golden circlet decorated with the beautiful quetzal plumes. While the Queen dressed with white robes and jade accessories and piercing. The nobles are also shown with a canopied palanquin borne upon them. Their body was painted in green.

The provincial governors were nobles of the four royal families, and were supreme within their own governments. The rulers of towns and villages formed a lower order of nobility, not of royal blood. The king usually acted on the advice of a council of lords and priests. The lords alone were military commanders, and each lord and inferior official had for his support the produce of a certain portion of land which was cultivated in common by the people. Merchants were important to Maya society because of the significance of trade. Principal interior trade routes connected all the great Classic lowland centers and controlled the flow of goods such as salt, obsidian, jade, cacao, animal pelts, tropical bird feathers, and luxury ceramics.

## **5.2 The Access of the Elites to Get Hegemony over the Society**

Classic Maya kingdoms are highly similar to late Post Classic polities encountered by the Spaniards in Yucatán and Central Mexico: some polities could

be subordinated to hegemonic rulers through conquests or dynastic unions and yet even then they persisted as distinct entities ([www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maya\\_civilization#Political\\_structures](http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maya_civilization#Political_structures)).

As explained in the previous sub chapter that the elites of the Maya are not only the Royal family but also the rulers of town and village, the merchants who were doing the significance trade to Maya society, and the priest.

As a leader of a nation, to uphold his authority, Mayan kings were expected to legitimize their claim of power. One of the ways to do this was to control and authorize all the nature sources in their land which has been inherited by the ancestors.

In order to get support from the society, the elites set up hegemony by saying that they are descendant of gods. Therefore they are instructing the society to build the temple pyramid to worship their gods. In this film shows a scene where human sacrificial lead by a priest cut the person's chest open and tore out his heart as an offering. The priest motivated the society by saying that the sacrificial thing was to make the god happier so that their land would never had drought anymore. They believe in him because they have seen that their land has been through a massive drought. They didn't realize that the drought caused by their rulers who have been growing disproportionately so that they need more lands to live.

It was total solar eclipse shown in this film in the middle of sacrificing. It makes day become so dark and Maya society get confused and afraid of what is happening. Then the priest make the most of that moment to

poisoned society's thought by pronouncing the words to god in order to give back the light of the sun if he has satisfied with the blood-letting. And incidentally after the priest saying the words comes back the sunlight. Then they are happy and cheering up. Thus they will take the sacrificial as a natural thing which can be done to worship their gods. And the elites' positions are getting stronger because they have won the society's heart.

### **5.3 The Role of Hegemony in Mayan Society in this film**

As mentioned in the previous subchapter, the elites of the Maya society in the movie have very good position in government and they have really got big access to gain what they want. As time went by, the elite class was growing disproportionately and they had to prove their power by acquiring more high status food. Most of the Maya people were village farmers who gave two-thirds of their produce and much of their labor to the upper classes. The lower classes would give the best cuts of white-tailed deer meat to the rich as a form of taxes. The Maya believed that the giving of blood was one of the most effective ways of worship their gods. Sacrifice brought about good-luck, health, fortune, improved crops, and communion with gods.

After getting the society's trustiness, the elites of the Maya society have very good position in government and they have really got big access to gain what they want. Essentially, power will always have strategy to keep having the support and in the other hand the lower class are not fighting back. The dominated group influenced by the elites to accept moral, political, and cultural values. Here

comes the role of hegemony in Mayan society. They believe that they have to serve all the upper class to get prosperity and mercy from god. This is considered to be something natural, so that the elites' ideology can be spread and practiced. And also the elites will retain it in order to make the society stay put and obey the ruling party.



## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

In this chapter, the writer concluded the analysis in the previous chapter in order to answer the formulated problem statements. Then, the writer gave suggestion for the next writer who is interested in studying the same subject, especially those who want to study *Apocalypto* film viewed from sociological perspective.

#### 6.1 Conclusion

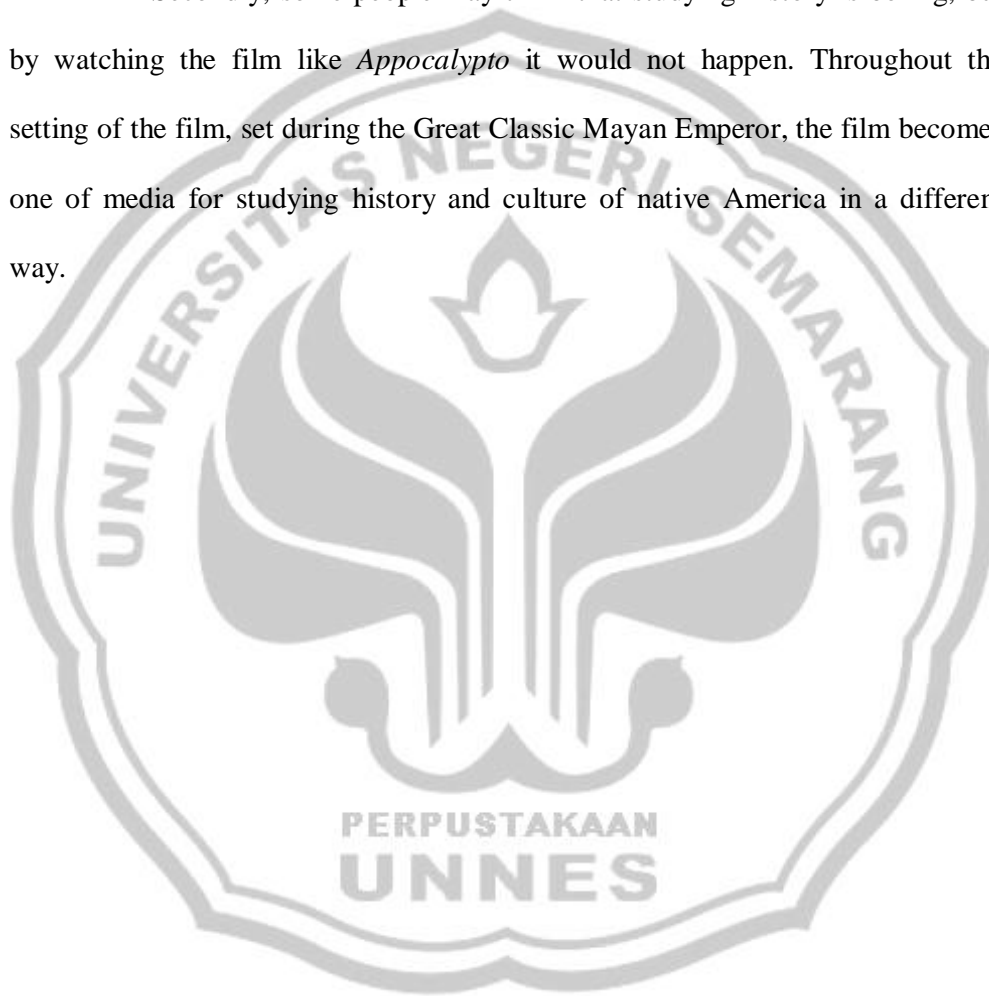
Based on the analysis of the previous chapter the writer concludes that the elites of the Maya society in the film have a strategic position because of the controlling of the living sources and the religious preaching. It can be inferred that the access of the elites to get hegemony over the society was really big. The elites could gain everything they want from their society without the threat of force because they controlled every living source in their land. Therefore, every Mayan society was expected to give every best thing to their rulers

#### 6.2 Suggestion

From the conclusions above, the writer would like present some suggestions for the readers. Firstly, she hoped the readers could appreciate works of literature not only as an entertainment but also as a lesson. Try to see a literary

work from different angle or point of view which is a possibility that we will be able to create a new interpretation which is different from the common one. The moral value and inspirational things that are contained in the works of literature can be applied in the real life and enhance the quality of a person.

Secondly, some people may think that studying history is boring, but by watching the film like *Appocalypto* it would not happen. Throughout the setting of the film, set during the Great Classic Mayan Emperor, the film becomes one of media for studying history and culture of native America in a different way.



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# APPENDICES

## APPENDICS A

### Biography of Antonio Gramsci

The Italian Communist leader Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937) was a highly original Marxist who, working from Leninist principles, developed a new and controversial conception of hegemony in Marxist theory.

Antonio Gramsci was born in Ales in Sardinia on January 22, 1891. As the fourth son of Francesco Gramsci, a clerk in the registrar's office at Ghilarza, Gramsci was brought up in poverty and hardship, particularly during the five years his father was in prison for alleged embezzlement. As a child Antonio was constantly ill and withdrawn, and his anguish was compounded by physical deformity.

He was compelled to leave school at the age of 12 but following his father's release he was able to resume his education at Santa Lussurgia and Cagliari. On winning a scholarship to the University of Turin in 1911 he came into contact with future Communist leader and fellow Sardinian Palmiro Togliatti. During the elections of 1913 - the first to be held in Sardinia with universal male suffrage - Gramsci became convinced that Sardinia's acute problems of under-development could only be solved in the context of socialist policies for Italy as a whole. (Gramsci retained a lively interest in his native Sardinia throughout his life and wrote a major essay on The Southern Question in 1926.)

Like many of his generation at the university in Turin, Gramsci was deeply influenced by the liberal idealism of Benedetto Croce. Gramsci's hostility to positivism made him a fierce critic of all fatalistic versions of Marxism. By 1915 he was writing regularly for the socialist *Il Grido del Popolo* (The Cry of the People) and *Avanti* (Forward), often on cultural questions in which he stressed the importance of educating the workers for revolution.

Following a four day insurrection in August 1917 Gramsci became a leading figure in the Turin workers' movement. He welcomed the Russian Revolution (although in Crocean style he presented it as a "Revolution against *Das Kapital*") and in May 1919 he collaborated with Togliatti, Angelo Tasca, and Umberto Terracini to found *L'Ordine Nuovo* (The New Order) as an organ of "proletarian culture." The paper saw the factory committees in Turin as Soviets in embryo and the nuclei of a future socialist state. Thousands responded to the call to establish workers' councils in the Turin area, and during the "red years" of 1919 and 1920 there was a general strike and factories were occupied. *L'Ordine Nuovo's* critique of the passivity and reformism of the Italian Socialist Party won the approval of Soviet leader Lenin, and although Gramsci would have preferred to continue working within the Socialist Party at a time of rising fascist reaction, a separate Communist Party of Italy was formed at Livorno in 1921.

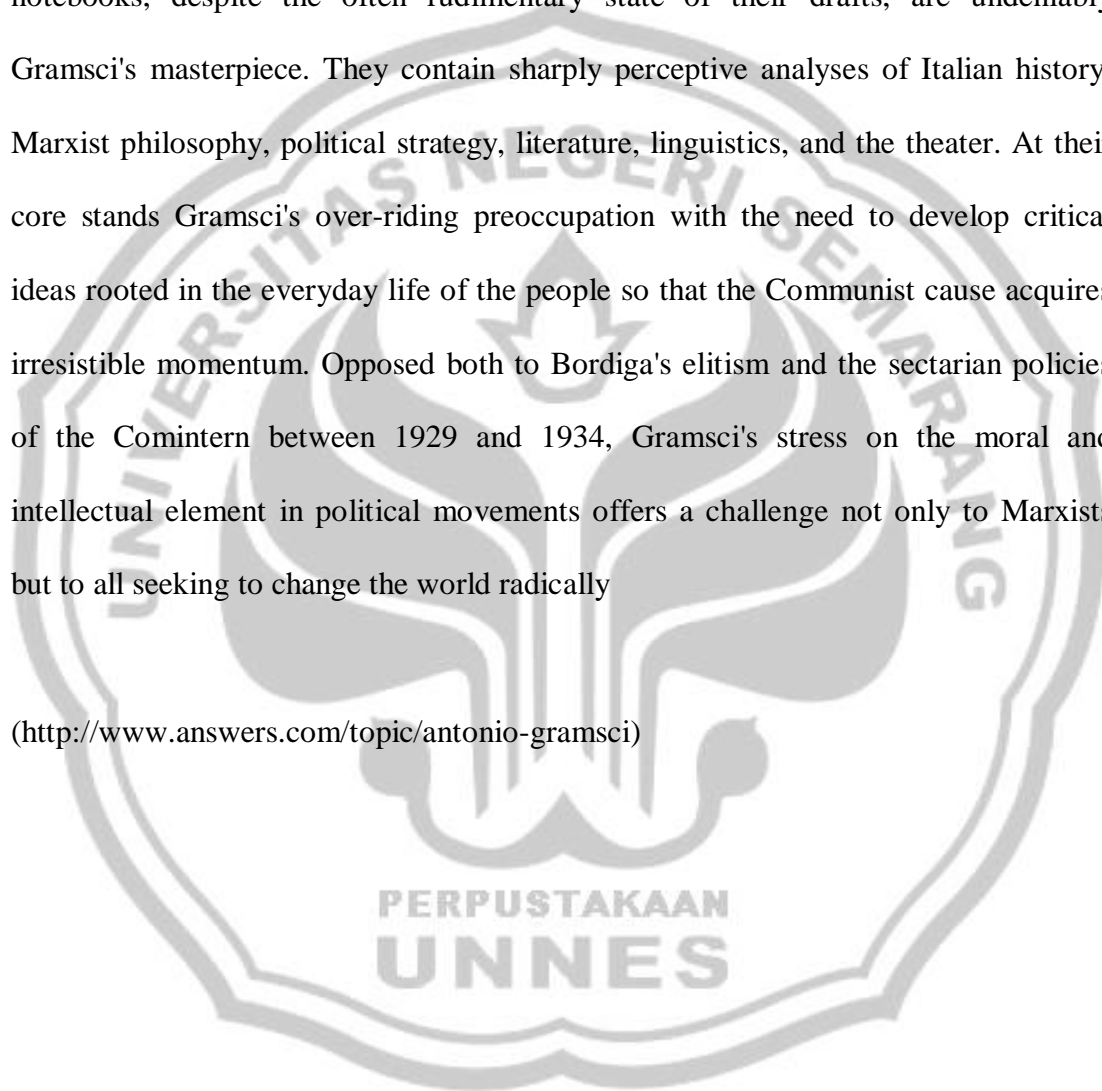
Gramsci was on the Communist Party's central committee, but the newly formed party was dominated by Amadeo Bordiga, a powerful figure whose purist elitism brought him into increasing conflict with the Third Communist International

(Comintern). Gramsci became his party's representative on the Comintern, and it was while recovering from acute depression in a clinic in Moscow that Gramsci met his future wife Julia in 1922. They had two children, Delio and a younger boy - Giuliano - whom Gramsci never actually saw. Despite some happy moments, particularly when the two were together in Rome in 1925 and 1926, the relationship between Gramsci and Julia was a fraught one. Julia was in poor mental health, and later with Gramsci's imprisonment all communication between them more or less ceased. It was with Julia's sister, Tatiana, who was devoted to Gramsci's well-being during the torturing years of incarceration, that he found real companionship.

In October 1922 Mussolini seized power. The head of the Communist Party was arrested, and Gramsci found himself party leader. He was elected parliamentary deputy in 1924 and by 1926, when the party held its third congress in Lyons, Gramsci had won wide membership support for a Leninist strategy of an alliance with the peasants under proletarian hegemony. In his one and only speech to the Chamber of Deputies Gramsci brilliantly analyzed the distinctive and lethal character of fascism and in 1926 he was arrested. Two years later he was brought to trial - "we must prevent this brain from functioning for twenty years," declared the prosecutor - and Gramsci spent the first five years of his sentence in the harsh penal prison at Turi. He was able to start work on his famous Prison Notebooks early in 1929, but by the middle of 1932 his health was beginning to deteriorate rapidly. Suffering from (among other ailments) Potts disease and arterio-sclerosis, he was eventually moved as a result of pressure from an international campaign for his release to a prison

hospital in Formia, but by August 1935 he was too ill to work. Transferred to a clinic in Rome, he died on April 27, 1937, after a cerebral hemorrhage. Tatiana had his 33 notebooks smuggled out of Italy and taken to Moscow via the diplomatic bag. These notebooks, despite the often rudimentary state of their drafts, are undeniably Gramsci's masterpiece. They contain sharply perceptive analyses of Italian history, Marxist philosophy, political strategy, literature, linguistics, and the theater. At their core stands Gramsci's over-riding preoccupation with the need to develop critical ideas rooted in the everyday life of the people so that the Communist cause acquires irresistible momentum. Opposed both to Bordiga's elitism and the sectarian policies of the Comintern between 1929 and 1934, Gramsci's stress on the moral and intellectual element in political movements offers a challenge not only to Marxists but to all seeking to change the world radically

(<http://www.answers.com/topic/antonio-gramsci>)



## APPENDICS B

### Ancient Maya Culture

#### 1. WAR

The prevailing anthropological belief in 1900's was that the Maya were a peaceful theocratic society. However understanding Maya Hieroglyphs and new interpretation of Maya sculpture have dramatically revised this interpretation. Warfare was an important part for ancient Maya and was a method of subjugation and humiliated for defeated polities. Conversely, wars were a mechanism for prestige and power for the prevailing forces. The ancient Maya seem to have engaged in a ritualized conflict or limited conquest with apparent little interest in territorial gains. Warfare seems to have become more common during the late classic (AD 600-900) and post classic period (AD 900-1511), with smaller centers usually the target for the purposes of ensuring tribute or labor requirements. The more notable conquest involved the capture of elite rulers or nobles, and monuments were recorded with the names, titles, and numbers of captives that a particular king and/or war captain had. In the post classic period, it was often used like the Aztecs of the Mexican Highland, to obtain sacrificial victims or slaves.

#### 2. SACRIFICE

The Maya practiced the concept of sacrificed. Sacrifices included offerings of animal (jaguars, pumas, crocodiles, snakes, birds, and fish), plants (copal

incense, corn, squash and other food), humans (captives), or personal blood-letting events (auto-sacrifice). The Maya believed that the giving of blood was one of the most effective ways of worship their gods. Sacrifice brought about good-luck, health, fortune, improved crops, and communion with gods. People of high status would give personal sacrifices, such as the piercing of the penis or ears with a stingray spine or obsidian blade. Documented cases in Maya art show prominent women bringing a rope through their tongues. Blood of royalty and nobility would be collected on strips of paper or bark, and then burned. In the smoke, one was capable of receiving of visions and having direct links with the gods and ancestors. Bloodletting events were associated with period ending celebrations, accession rituals, dedicatory ceremonies and other sacred events. Evidence of human sacrifices goes back into the Middle classic period (ca. 500 B.C) by post classic time however blood from sacrificial victims was rubbed over idols and monuments in temples.

### **3. RULERS**

Evidence suggests that the ancient Maya may have been united under single or perhaps several political systems in Pre-Classic (800 BC-AD 150) periods. But subsequent fragmentation appears to have divided the Maya into a multitude of separate polities. During the classic period (AD 300-900) of Maya society, the Maya region was covered with a number of independent city states, although two polities seemed to have had the major impact on the

political organization of the Lowlands as “super states”; Calakmul and Tikal. The principle polities of the Maya had a main governing ruler ‘ahaw’, an institution which begun in the Pre-classic centuries before the birth of Christ. Rulers were often identified as a “holy” (k’ul) and had series of lower ranking military generals, priests, and servants associated with them. Maya rulership appears to have had numerous layers rank and status that helped define proper etiquette and key protagonists for specific events and rituals. Royal households included the King (which, on several occasions, appears to have been female), his principle queen (often of important lineages herself), his heirs, and his ancestors.

#### **4. THE COLLAPSE**

The collapse or demographic demise of many great Maya cities occurred throughout several major periods of Maya history, and often within a fairly short amount of time. The better known collapse of many Maya cities occurred around AD 900, although evidence of a previous major abandonment of Maya centers occurred around AD 150. Archeologists are working to answer the mystery of how and why this happened, and the answers are found within a variety of complex issues. Reasons for the collapse include environmental degradation, abuse of subsistence resources, possible droughts, endemic warfare, and possibly a top heavy ruling class, or the combination of these factors.



## 5. CLASS SYSTEM

There was a distinct class system in ancient Maya times. Between the ruling class and the farmer/laborer, there must have been educated nobility who were scribes, artists and architects. Evidence of their skill and innovation remain in works of stone, stucco, jade, bone, pottery, obsidian, and flint. There is no evidence of priesthood and it is likely that priestly duties were performed by the ruler.

## 6. CLOTHING

The ordinary garment of men was a cotton breechcloth wrapped around the middle, with sometimes a sleeveless shirt, either white or dyed in colors.

The women wore a skirt belted at the waist, and plaited their hair in long tresses. Sandals were worn by both sexes. Tattooing and head-flattening were occasionally practiced, and the face and body were always painted. The Maya, then as now, were noted for personal neatness and frequent use of both cold and hot baths.