THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE AMERICAN AGENT AND THE
IRANIAN MUSLIM PEOPLE IN ARGO FILM

A Thesis
Submitted to Letters and Humanities Faculty
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Strata One

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ABSTRACT

Muhammad Noval, NIM: 1110026000024, The Construction of the American Agent and the Iranian Muslim People in Argo Film. Thesis: English Letters Department, Letters and Humanities Faculty of Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University, Jakarta 2014.

Argo (2012) film directed by Ben Affleck is the unit analysis of this research. The writer uses this film to reveal the representation of two countries and the ideology. The purpose of this research is to know and understand the character construction from the representation concept by Stuart Hall. This research is also conducted to know the ideology which is conveyed behind the film. The writer uses qualitative descriptive analysis method to reveal the findings. All data are collected from the script dialogues and the pictures of the film.

The result shows that Argo film contains the construction, from the story, the characters and the purpose of the film. Argo film shows America through the main character as the major hero who saves the hostages from Tehran. The main character is constructed in order to represent that America is the superior country. The villain of this film is Iranian Muslim people. The writer finds out that Argo film shows Muslim as the villain. The Iranian Muslim are represented as cruel, irrational and barbaric people in Argo film. The writer also reveals that Argo film distorts between actual event and the film story. There are two revelation of the film ideology; belief and Islamophobia. Both are related to propaganda.

Keywords: America, Argo, CIA agent, construct, hero, ideology, Iranian Muslim, representation.
APPROVEMENT

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The thesis entitled above has been defended before the Letters and Humanities Faculty's Examination Committee on December 30th, 2014. It has already been accepted as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of strata one.

Jakarta, December 30th, 2014

Examination Committee

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma of the university or other institute of higher learning, except where due acknowledgement has been made in the text.

Jakarta, November 2014

Muhammad Noval
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This paper is presented to English Letters Department of Letters and Humanities faculty UIN of Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta as partial fulfillment of the requirement for strata one degree. The writer would like to express the highest gratitude to his mother; Lazizah Achfas, brother and sisters who are giving spirit and passion every single day that makes his strong. Most of all, his dedicated this thesis for his beloved father, Muslih Muhammad and grandmother Koswah H. Abdul Hamid (may Allah bless them) who had passed away a year ago.

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Jakarta, December 2014

The Writer
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Film has been developed rapidly. Film is important for every human culture; it helps us in meaning and understanding of environment around. Basically, film could be an instrument to record the social condition or tragedy in certain time or place. Film can be served as the public information for us about the past, present, and future events. According to Arnheim (1957) the film resembles painting, music, literature, and dance.\textsuperscript{1} Literary is the expression of life.\textsuperscript{2} Actually, film acted on screen literary work, literary itself is an art of expression or in other words.

If we talk about film, it commonly related to Hollywood. Hollywood is the world's largest film industry. Many famous actors and actress are starring in there. Hollywood produces film in many genres, such as action, drama, comedy, science-fiction, history, and so on. Hollywood is not only as an entertainment industry, but also becomes the largest commercial industry in the world.

Most of Hollywood films are telling about America. There are Hollywood films that portray about the image of America as superior country. Some Hollywood films show off the image of America through the character, a group, the institute, government, or also through life style in America. The film constructs America as good as possible and shows them. In varying genres,

\textsuperscript{1} Rudolf Arnheim. \textit{Film as art}. (California: University of California press, 1957). p. 8
Hollywood films make a story which is showing massive power of America, such as action, thriller, war, and science fiction films. For example is 2012. That is a science-fiction (sci-fic) film about the end of the world. In this film, America as the leader of the other country to avoid the great disaster and rescue the people from the extinction. Later, many directors make film with America or Americans as the major figure in their film.

Argo is one of Hollywood films which is showing America as the major figure through the main character. This film is directed by Ben Affleck in 2012. He is an actor and a director of the film. Argo is considered as the masterpiece of Affleck’s film. It won lot of achievements in many film award contests, for example Best Pictures in 85th Academy Award. Ben Affleck had got many credits and honors through Argo. Many people gave their reviews for his film. Justin Craig posted in foxnews.com that “Affleck shows a somewhat brutal disconnect between Hollywood and the rest of the world,... “Argo” is one of those rare movie that seemingly has it all.”

Argo is film based on true story of Iranian hostages crisis during the Iranian Revolution in Tehran, Iran. The film story is telling about a classified rescue of six diplomat members of United State hidding in Tehran from Iran military who tries to find and abduct them after the storming of the United State embassy in November 1979. All Iranian people were angry because of their tyrant Shah was going to left Iranian soil in order to escape from the punishment which is thrown by his people in Iran.

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When militants seize control of the U.S. embassy in Tehran during the height of the Iranian Revolution, Tony Mendez (Ben Affleck) acted as the CIA agent plans a fake Hollywood film production in order to rescue six members of American diplomats who have hidden at the home of the Canadian ambassador. As the six members of the embassy staff remain behind closed doors, armed militants conduct thorough searches of local homes, and kill anyone suspected of harboring the Americans. It is only a matter of time before the six are identified and taken hostage by the militants. While in America, people (America Government and CIA) are trying to find out the way to rescue the diplomat members. Mendez offers a unique way also potentially dangerous solution, make a fake movie. He is posing as a Canadian film producer and the members as crew of film. He will enter into Tehran under the precipice of scouting locations for an upcoming science fiction opus, gather up the refugees, pass them off as his crew at the airport, and fly out of Iran right under the Iran militants' noses. At the end, six members of American diplomats walk on U.S. soil for the first time since they left Iran. Mendez is the man who has responsibility in taking them out from Tehran successfully.

Argo is one of many Hollywood films raising America image through some aspects. The brief synopsis above gives us a significant point that Argo clearly shows America as a superior country through CIA role in rescuing their embassy members. Argo’s story is showing off America role through the main character as the CIA agent redundantly.

Actually this film is based on a true story, but it is not in line with the fact. This film blured out the fact. In New York Times online news site reported that
“The Former Canadian Ambassador, Kenneth D. Taylor, Renews Criticism of ‘Argo’.” Ken Taylor is one of people criticising that film because it has a number of missing facts. He said that, “The film (Argo) is a great. But at the same time it was a Canadian story that’s been, all of sudden, totally take over by the Americans.” In that site also added, that in Iran, the film has been condemned as an example of “Hollywoodism,” the supposed hidden agenda behind major American movies.4 “Hollywoodism” is actually is a conference held annually and organized by the government of Iran with the purpose of criticizing the U.S. industry (Hollywood) and its attitudes towards Iran and Islam.5

In this film, there are many scenes which is showing Muslim from negative lens. Islam or Muslim are showed as terror and radical community in order to make a fear about Islam or Muslim. Nowadays, the fear towards Islam is called Islamophobia. Islamophobia is a new word, phrase, or term concerned to assumptions or discriminations of Islam or Muslim.6 This term appeared in 1980s in Western, but it becomes popular and commonly used after 9/11 attacked, especially in Hollywood film. America with the Hollywood had raised Anti-Islam campaign to the whole world implicitly through its films. Argo portrayed Iranian were over-emotional, irrational, and dangerous. Hollywood wants to try showing

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the world that Iran should be avoided. *Argo* shows that American is the hero and Iranian are dangerous.

For example in this film, *Argo*. *Argo* gives some different perspectives to people or audiences by making the story about American people has a significant role. *Argo* is much more representing that American character as a dominant figure. Hollywood films, nowadays, become an effective way to run the mission. One of the best way of changing people’s belief or mindset is injecting the idea or concept into art, definitely film. According Stuart Hall (1997),

“Language is able to do this because it operates as a representational system. In language we use signs and symbols – whether they are sound, written words, electronically produced images, musical notes, even objects – to stand for or represent to other people our concepts, ideas and feelings. Language is one of the ‘media’ through which thoughts, ideas, feelings are represented in a culture”.

Based on the explanation above, media especially film has significant role in giving concepts, ideas, and feelings to others. Thereby, Hollywood film like *Argo* applies its story to represent people, place, or anything. A film is not only as a media to earn money but also to implant their ideas to the people. Hall (1997) also argues that representation can have different meaning, it depends on who is behind the set of representation. The people who is having power do so by attempting to fix and change meanings in accordance with their own ideas.

*Argo* is one of Hollywood films which giving their concept, ideas, and feeling by showing America have a significant role in rescuing its diplomat members from conflict in Tehran, Iran. *Argo* tries to bring back the incidents at

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that moment, then it puts some ‘spices’ into the film so it raises the distortion between the actual event and the film story. Then it constructs America as the superior country in the film.

On the other hands, Argo has many bad effects to people especially to Iranian people. According to Guardian site, this film made Iranian people hard to watch Argo. In that site posted that after watching Argo in cinema, Iranian people are afraid to speak Persian too loud. Because they considered if others would say, “Oh my God, they're Iranians.” They assumed as if they were from Mars.9 Through a film, something good or bad would be reflected in the real life. Film can also represent particular culture.

In order to see the power of America through the film in changing people’s belief, this film shows us American character as a superior and hero. By analyzing the film from representation concept by Stuart Hall with constructionist approach, this research wants to show how Argo constructs two countries, America and Iran, then implant its concepts or ideas into people’s mind through the story of the film.

B. Focus of the Research

Carry out the research, the writer needs to limit the research. The focus of this research is to describe the role of America in this film. Using the representation concept from Stuart Hall with constructionist approach, the writer focuses on the showing portrayal of America and Iran through Argo film. This research in addition to provide an explanation of Americia and Iran in this film, the

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The writer tries to explain how *Argo* construct two countries and showing its role through the film. Then, the writer also tries to reveal the ideology of this film. The ideology is used by the director to convey his purpose to the target audiences.

**C. Research Question**

*Argo* film has raised America strength. Like other Hollywood film, *Argo* defines America as a powerful and superior country and stronger than the opposite country. The writer tries to analyze two cases;

1. How is *Argo* constructed American agent and Iranian people in *Argo* film?
2. How does *Argo* convey its ideology?

**D. Significance of the Research**

The result of this research hopefully could be used as an input in literary studies. The writer hopes that this research gives a new contribution for knowledge development, particularly in cinema. People usually watch a film for entertainment only. But, actually it reveals something more than what it is. What is represented in films must be contained of thoughts, ideas, and ideology. Through this research, the writer provides an explanation to understand the meaning each scene –through the screen and script-play– behind the movies. The writer also hopes that after reading this research the reader could be more critical in watching film, especially Hollywood film which is same with *Argo*. 
E. Methodology of the Research

This methodology consists of several important elements related to the research namely the objective of study, the method of study, the instrument of study, the data of analysis, and the unit of analysis.

1. The Method of Research

Related to the problem of research and also the objective of the research mentioned above, this study used qualitative descriptive. Farkhan (2011) stated in his book,

*Penelitian kualitatif merupakan penelitian yang mengandalkan data verbal dan non numerik lainnya sebagai dasar analisis dan pemecahan masalah yang sedang dikaji, seperti analisis isi, analisis wacana, dan penelitian naturalistik.*

He also described that descriptive does not need statistics analysis and has to analyze based on the methods, theories or relevant approaches. Qualitative method can give more attention to data analysis, the data related with the context itself. By using this method, the writer will do explaining, describing, and analyzing the element of the film. The writer will collect, describe and analyze the data then write the supporting analysis from any sources.

2. The Objective of the Research

The aim of the research is to see America and Iran which are constructed in this film. In Hollywood film like *Argo*, American character is

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11 Ibid. p. 44
oftenly described as superior and super-power country. The most films in several genres which showing the heroes are from the United State soil. *Argo* as Hollywood film is made from and by the United States of America to people whole the world. Therefore, the study begins by watching and learning the movie repeatedly. Then the writer focuses on the portrayal of America through the main character, Iran through The Muslim People and reveals the ideology of this film.

3. The Technique of Data Analysis

In this research, the writer uses qualitative technique by collecting the main information from this film and also secondary information, such as journals, articles, books, and also websites related to support my study with taking notes. The writer gives explanation about data through the script of film and the visualization (cinematography).

4. The Instrument of the Research

The writer is the main instrument of this research. Watching and paying attention in the film carefully are the ways to get the information and explanation about the unit and data analysis. The writer also uses many sources to support the analysis.

5. The Unit Analysis

The unit analysis of the research is *Argo* film by Ben Affleck released by Warner Bros Film in 2005 with approximately 112 minutes running time.
D. **Time and Place**

The research is conducted for about 7 months (March – November 2014) at Islamic State University Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, Faculty of Adab and Humanity, English Letters Department. To support the analysis, the writer visits several libraries in various universities. The sources which is found, gives the writer many knowledges and information related to the research.
CHAPTER II
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A. Previous Research

Argo film had been analyzed by other researchers. The writer found the other researchers who analyze Argo film with using other theory in www.slideshare.net. The researchers used semiotic theory to reveal the signs and symbols which are used in the film. They used Barthes tools of semiotic analysis method to reveal their findings. The researchers also explained how the media shaping the public opinion through the film.

From the brief explanations above, the writer wants to make this research different and more detail than the previous research. The writer uses the concept of representation through construction approaches in order to give something different to the readers. Through this research, the writer uses other concept and theory to give to the readers that this film can be analyzed through some approaches. This research also can be considered as a reference for next researchers.

B. Concept of Representation

The concept of representation is born from Post-modernism.\textsuperscript{13} It appears in wide variety of study including art, architecture, music, film, literature, sociology,

\textsuperscript{13} Postmodernism is a late-20th-century movement in the arts, architecture, and criticism that was a departure from modernism. Retrieved from Wikipedia http://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Postmodernism Accessed on June 21, 2014
fashion, communication, and technology. In those studies, representation is used in the process social of meaning through symbolization system which is available.

Representation means using language to say something meaningful about, or to represent, the world meaningfully, to other people. A simple definition of representation is a production of meaning through language. Language is a tool to show a meaning. It is the link between concept and language which enables us to refer to either the real world of objects, people or events, or indeed to imaginary worlds of fictional object, people, and events.

Representation is the production of the meaning of the concept in our minds through language. Hall (1997) used the suggestions from the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary, that representation has two relevant meanings for the word:

1. To represent something is to describe or depict it, to call it up in the mind by description or portrayal or imagination; to place a likeness of it before us in our mind or in the senses.

2. To represent also means to symbolize, stand for, to be a specimen of, or to substitute for,

Representation has two processes each other involved. First, there is the system by which all sorts of objects, people and events are correlated with a set of concepts or which we carry around in our heads. Language is the second system of representation involved in the overall process of constructing meaning.

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15 Stuart Hall. Representation. Cultural Representation and Signifying Practices p. 15-17
16 Ibid p. 16
17 Ibid p. 17
The general term we use for words, sounds or images which is carry meaning is *sign*. These signs stand for or represent the concepts and the conceptual relations between them which we carry in our heads and together they make up the meaning-system of our culture.

Hall (1997) stated if there are three approaches of representation. There are (a) reflective, (b) intentional, and (c) constructionist or constructivist approaches. These approaches are used to explaining how representation of meaning through language.

In this research, the writer only uses one approach, constructionist approach. This approach has most significant impact on cultural studies in recent years. Constructionist do not deny the existence of the material world, such as people, particular event or place. However, it is not the material world which conveys meaning: it is language system or whatever system we are using to represent our concept. It is social actors who use the conceptual system of their culture and linguistic and other representational systems to construct meaning, to make the world meaningful and to communicate about the world meaningfully to others.

Constructionist approach is appropriate to be used in analyzing film. Because the film is a system which designed exclusively by its creator to show the world through the screenplay. The film is made by the director, free to construct. This film has a meaning which is implied by the director in the pictures. The director, Ben Affleck, constructs two countries involved in the story of *Argo*,

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5 (a) Reflective is to reflect the true meaning as it already exists in the world.
(b) Intentional is the words mean what the author intends they should mean.
(c) Constructionist is constructing meaning through language.
19 Stuart Hall p. 15
20 Ibid p. 25
America and Iran. In this case, constructionist approach is supported by another theory, characters-characterization and. The theory is used to analyze the portrayal of America through the main character of Tony Mendez. Whereas Iran will be analyzed from the Iranian portrayal in *Argo* film.

C. **Ideology**

Ideology as a theoretical terms comes from Karl Marx (1818-1883) and Frederick Engels (1820-1895). Marx stated about ideology in different perspective. His statement appears in *The Germany Ideology* (1846), which he wrote with Engels. They stated that,

“Ideology itself represents the “production of ideas, of conception, of consciousness,”.... Its functions as the superstructure of a civilization: the conventions and culture that make up the dominant ideas of society.”

In their era, ideology only covered up the notion that people needed to actively change the socio-economic system to a better form. Marx maintains that there is a very unfair exploitative situation of average workers -the proletariat- by the rich elite of the world -the bourgeois. Ideology from Marx and Engels is the root from many other ideologies in the world. There are many ideologies developed universally, such as Capitalism, Liberalism, Communism and so on. Ideology can also develop and set into literature studies, for example Feminism.

Ideology has many definitions which widely described. It will develop appropriate for particular era. John Storey (2009) explained in his book *Cultural*

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There are several ways of understanding ideology. One of his definitions of ideology is that an ideology refers to a systematic body of ideas articulated by a particular group of people. For example, if we speak of ‘political ideology’ to refer to the ideas which inform the practices of particular political groups. It means here, ideology is used to indicate how some text and practices deliver the ideas to people.

There are many ideologies developed in the world. Ideology is a set of aims. The main aim of the ideology is likely to change public opinion. It is often used by particular group to gain their interest in society. This film, Argo has many ideologies which is injected behind the story.

Kimberley said that “propaganda has migrated from the backdrop of action movies to being the focal point of serious drama today.” Now propaganda is often used in many Hollywood films. It is not only in the action movies, but propaganda is in drama also. Propaganda has many definitions, one of them is based on the definition of Richard Nelson (1996). He stated, “Propaganda is neutrally defined as a systematic form of purposeful persuasion that attempts to influence the emotion, attitudes, opinions, and actions of specified target audiences for ideological, political, or commercial purposes through the controlled transmission of one-sided messages (which may or may not be factual) via mass and direct media channels.”

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24 Ibid.
Propaganda also related to persuade the attitudes, beliefs, and opinions of the audiences seeing from particular side and which may purpose for many reasons. This research wants to show how *Argo* film injects some ideas of the film to change public’s mind through its constructions. By reading many sources related to the film and the ideology, and seeing the phenomena in the society, the writer tries to reveal that there are the ideologies which is related to propaganda behind *Argo*.

1. Belief

Belief is an acceptance that something exist or is true, especially one without proof. Propaganda is based on an ideology. It is the way to make people aware of ideological belief. Belief is also defined as ideology, which is an organized collection of ideas that is main purpose is to provoke change and to organize thoughts. An ideology is also a set of beliefs or opinions of individual or group. Through this ideology, the director wants to recreate and reconstruct for particular purpose.

2. Islamophobia

Hollywood has largely portrayed Arabs as Muslims, representing as the villains, terrorist, and aslo barbaric. Through the Muslim stereotype intentionally constructed, Hollywood wants to make an anxiousness or fear to people towards Muslim or Arab portrayed through its films.

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There are propaganda which are created by Hollywood talking about Islam, either the religion or the people. Nowadays, the fear towards Islam or Muslim is well-known as Islamophobia. It is a new word, phrase, or term concerned to assumptions or discriminations of Islam or Muslim.\textsuperscript{30} Sheehi (2011) said,

Islamophobia is an ideological formation. This does not mean that it is the purview of any particular political party. Rather, an ideological formation is created by a culture that deploys particular tropes, analyses, and beliefs. Islamophobia does originate in many actors that are collectively responsible for the virulent dissemination of anti-Muslims and Arabs stereotypes and beliefs, circulated in order to naturalize and justify the United States global, economic, and political hegemony.\textsuperscript{31}

According to the text above, Islamophobia could be regarded as an ideological issue which deliberately created by America to maintain its power in the world, also its hegemony.

The Runnymede Trust (British Research and Social Policy Commission)\textsuperscript{32} stated about Islamophobia, that,

1. Islam is seen as a monolithic bloc, static, unresponsive to change.
2. Islam is seen as separate and “other”. It does not have values in common with other cultures, is not affected by them and does not influenced them.
3. Islam is seen as inferior to the West. It is seen as barbaric, irrational, primitive, and sexist.


4. Islam is seen as violent, aggressive, threatening, supportive of terrorism and engaged in a ‘clas of civilisations’.
5. Islam is seen as a political ideology and is used for political military advantage.
6. Criticism made of the West by Islam are rejected out of hand.
7. Hostility towards Islam is used to justify discriminatory practices towards Muslims and exclusion of Muslims from mainstream society.
8. Anti-Muslim hostility is seen as natural or normal.

Nowdays, Hollywood often constructs a particular social group or ethnic in a film following to its perspective. Islam or Muslim people are often in its film with various stereotype. However, Islam or Muslim people are much more portrayed as a villain, terrorist, or barbaric, particularly after 9/11 attacked. Hollywood is seen and considered producing many movies which showing Islam and Muslim as bad as possible. In Argo film, the director sets up the plot in Tehran, Iran which is Muslim as a majority. Argo wants to show and spread this ideology to be consumed through the screen.

D. Character and Characterization

Character is someone who acts, appears, or is referred to as playing a part in literary work. To running the plot in the story, character is divided to a couple roles. Both are not able playing apart. Hero is the character with leading male role “good guy”, who opposes the villain “bad guy”. This term is much known as protagonist and antagonist. The protagonist is portrayed as a good person whereas the antagonist is the bad one. Those term are also called as the major or main characters who we see more of over than a longer period of time, can grow and change. They are the most significant persons in the story.
According to *The Norton Introduction to Literature*, the characters who can thus “surprise convincingly”, an influential critic says, are round characters. The opposite is flat one, who are not very complex and do not change in surprising ways. Flat characters are less complex than round ones. In any literary works such as novel, short story, play, even film, these characters must be exist to lead the plot of the story.

Meanwhile, the character must have one, two, or more characterizations. Diyanni (2004) defined that characterization is the means by which writers present and reveal character. Jerome Beaty (1973) stated that effective characterization can encourage us to identify so completely with certain characters.

If we want to analyze character, we could not left its characterization behind. Both are like a coin having different looks on each side, but they could not be separated.


a. **Characterization through Appearance**

A major aspect of film characterization is revealed visually and instantaneously. Although some actors any be versatile enough to project

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35 Op. Cit. p. 106
completely different qualities in different roles, most actors are not. The minute we see most actors on screen, we make certain assumptions about them because of their facial features, dress, physical build, and mannerism and the way they move.

b. Characterization through Dialogue

A great deal of the characterization is revealed by characters say or dialogue. Their true thoughts, attitudes, and emotions can be revealed in subtle ways through word choice and through the stress, pitch, and pause patterns of their speech. Actors’ use of grammar, sentence structure, vocabulary, and particular dialects (if any) reveals a great deal about their characters’ social and economic level, educational background, and mental processes.

c. Characterization through External Action

Perhaps the best reflections of character are a persons’ action. It must be assumed, of course, that real character are more than mere instruments of the plot, that they do what they do for a purpose, out of motives that are consistent with their overall personality. Thus, there should be a clear relationship between a character and his or her actions; the actions should grow naturally out of the character’s personality.

d. Characterization through Reaction From Other Characters

The way other characters view a person often serves as an excellent means of characterization. Sometimes, a great deal of information about character is already provided through such means before the character first appears on the screen.
CHAPTER III
RESEARCH FINDINGS

Based on the research question in chapter 1, the writer will reveal the findings in this chapter. The first revelation is about how Argo constructs the American agent and Iranian Muslim people. The second is the revelation of the ideology in the film.

A. The Construction of Tony Mendez Character as The CIA Agent

Argo is based on the true story. Almost all characters such as Tony Mendez, the Canadian ambassador, and the six staffs of U.S. embassy are adapted from native people\(^\text{37}\) but played by professional actor and actress.

Hollywood makes American people as a good person in this film. The main character who acted by American guy is truly represented as hero in the film. Mendez is the main character of this film. Mendez are showed a longer of period scences than other characters. From the beginning of the film, Mendez takes an important role in leading the plot. He is a CIA (Central Intelligence Agency)\(^\text{38}\) agent who given an exfil mission of the U.S. embassy staffs in Tehran, Iran. Argo shows its main character as an ultimate hero. Mendez’s characterization could be seen in some scenes. Boggs (1999) defined seven characterizations, but it only uses four of them. The characterization will be described through the appearances, dialogues, external actions and reaction from other characters.

\(^{37}\) Native people means the people who had existed and experienced with the actual event at that time.


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The first characterization of Mendez could be seen from this picture and text below. His characterization showed through the appearances and the reaction of other characters. In the picture 1 is Tony Mendez and the second picture is Ken Taylor, Canadian Ambassador. When the another character sees Mendez at the first time, he does not realize that Mendez is an agent who wants to rescue the staffs.

Mendez: Thank you for what you’re doing.
Taylor: I was expecting more G-Man look.
Mendez: You’re thinking of FBI, sir.
Taylor: Hmmm…

(Argo, 00:55:26-00:55:31)

The scene above shows that the other character, Ken Taylor, sees that Mendez’s appearance is not suitable for his job as an agent. He expected that he was waiting for an agent having a G-Man look ready for rescuing them from Tehran. G-Man is short of Government Man, a slang term for Special agents of the United States Government. It is specifically used as a term for a Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) agent. G-Man look is like agent who wearing the black suit, eyeglasses, and also bring a gun on his back coat. However, According Taylor’s opinion that Mendez’s characterization is just like an ordinary guy. His appearance is more like an officer than a secret agent.

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The second characterizations of Mendez are showed in the text below. *Argo* shows Mendez’s characterizations through his external action. Mendez is a smart and brilliant CIA agent. He is responsible and expert on his job also. In this case, rescuing the staffs, Mendez is considerably audacious and hard work.

Mendez: Okay, you know those science-fictions movie? *Star Trek, Star Wars*. They need an exotic location to shoot. Moonscape, Mars, dessert, you know. Now imagine this: They’re a Canadian film crew on a location scout for a science-fiction movie. We put it out there—The Canadian producers put it out there. That we’re looking at Egypt, Istanbul. Then, we go to the consulate and say, “Hey, we wanna look Iran too.” I fly into Tehran, we all fly out together as a film crew. Done. *(Argo, 00:23:20-00:24:15)*

The picture above describes the main character as a smart guy and expert also. *Argo* reflects Mendez’s characterization as a smart agent towards his action in arranging the exfiltration (exfil) mission. Mendez represents that the CIA agents is the fast masters on in their level. His master skill could be seen in his explanation above. In the text above, Mendez explains his unique plan to the others in the States. He arranges the mission plan only one night after watching a film on the television. He wants to make a fake film and bring the crew to Tehran looking for the location and fly out as a film crew through the airport. Mendez prefer this way than using Delta Force to rescue the staffs. If America government use the military way, it will strike the war between America and Iran. The people
of the States do not think that his plan is the best options so far. Mendez is represented as a smart and brilliant agent through his unique rescue mission.

Mendez comes to Tehran and he is responsible of the US embassy members’ life. These scenes show that Mendez is a calm person and professional agent. Mendez is asked some questions from the official about his purpose in coming to Tehran. These conversations below are set in the Iranian Consulate Office, Turkey and in the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance.

**Official**: What will be the purpose of your visit to Iran?
**Mendez**: Film production. Business.

**Official**: Why didn’t you get your visa in Canada?
**Mendez**: I would’ve loved to, except my boss didn’t send a telex till I got here. Guy had an intelligent thought in his head, it would die of loneliness. (Argo, 00:50:18-00:50:58)

In this scene, Mendez have asked many question by the officer. He tries to stay calm. Mendez says something funny to the officer about his boss (on his last statement) in order to push down his nervous and the condition also. Mendez clearly success and pass the Consulate and ready to fly to Iran.
Behrouz: This film crew is just yourself?
Mendez: No, we have six more from Canada meeting us today.
Behrouz: You like to film at Bazaar?
Mendez: The bazaar, maybe the palace. Landmark sites.
Behrouz: I see. The exotic Orient. Snake charmers, flying carpets.
You came to us at a complicated time. Before the revolutions, 40 percent of the movie theaters in Tehran were showing pornography.
Mendez: I understand.
Behrouz: The function of this office is purification as well as promotion of the arts. I’ll review this for the minister.
Mendez: Okay, thank you.

(Argo, 00:54:05-00:54:52)

Two scenes above tell that Mendez has to pass the administration if he wants to come to Iran with any purposes. Form text above, we could see how calm, fluent, and relax Mendez in facing and answering the questions from the officials. Mendez is more like a tourist who spends his holiday than doing the classified mission in Iran. He is very calm and never showing nervous or panic face when talking to the Iranian people. As a professional agent, he has to lead the emotions and feelings, so he is not being distrustful by the Iranian people.

The third characterizations of Mendez showed through the dialogue between Mendez and O’Donnell. This scene shows that the main character is a responsible figure. Mendez looks very responsible for his exfiltration mission. From the conversation below, Mendez gets an order that he has to leave Tehran and abandon the mission soon.
O’Donnell: It all just changed.
Mendez: What?
O’Donnell: They called the game. You’ve got to come back. Joint Chiefs are planning a military rescue of the hostages in a month. Delta Force started training to storm the grounds. So if the six of them get brought down there, they won’t be held for long.
Mendez: Fuck. Goddamn it. I never would have exposed them if I wasn’t authorized to take them out.
O’Donnell: It’s over, Tony.
Mendez: If they stay here, they will be taken. Probably not alive.
O’Donnell: Listen to me. The thinking has changed. Six Americans get pulled out of a Canadian diplomat’s house and executed, it’s another world outrage. Six Americans get caught playing a movie make-believe with the CIA at the airport and executed? It’s national embarrassment. They’re calling the operation.
Mendez: We’re responsible for these people.
O’Donnell: What we are is required to follow orders. I’m sorry.

(Arго, 01:16:47-01:17:46)

Mendez has frustrated after getting the call from O’Donnell. He has to decide either should left the six staffs behind or deny the order. Mendez in that conversation stated that he is responsible for the staffs, but he has not showing his action yet.

O’Donnell: O’Donnell
Mendez: Somebody’s responsible when things happen, Jack. I’m responsible. I’m taking them through.
O’Donnell: Tony?

(Arго, 01:22:25-01:22:34)

The scene above shows the audience that Argo showing Mendez’s characterization directly in the dialogue. Mendez states clearly that he has full of responsibility to take the six staffs out from Tehran. Finally, Mendez decided to keep going the mission and ignoring the order from the States. He still keeps on his plan to carry out the staffs through the commercial airport. He does not attend to the order and audaciously faces the consequences of being publicly executed in Iran. His characterization emphasizes and strengthens the main character, Mendez
is an epic hero in the film. It means that Mendez is admired for his great achievement behind the successful mission in Iran.

Thus, through the main character portrayal in *Argo*, the film story wants to deliver a statement that American is a good person, like Mendez in *Argo* film. However, Mendez is described unlike the other agents. *Argo* constructs the main character as good as possible in this film. Through some characterization findings above, Mendez is raised as an American hero who has the most significant role than other character in the film.

*Argo* once again shows American character as a hero to the public. *Argo* constructs its hero and left behind Canadian Ambassador, Ken Taylor, as the real hero of the actual event. Through the findings, *Argo* raises the American character as hero or good person who save other people even the world in its story.

*Argo* shows how Mendez makes an escape plan, he handles the rescue mission by himself and then he achieves the Intelligence Star, the highest award of merit of the Clandestine Services of the United States, after finishing the mission in Tehran.

O’Donnell: He wants to give you the Intelligence Star. You’re getting the highest award of merit of the Clandestine Service of these United States. Ceremony’s on the 14th….

O’Donnell: Carter said you were a great American.

(Argo, 01:47:52-01:48:33)
After completing the mission, he was honored by the American president as a hero of America. In Argo film, the hero gets honor an award from the government or the department. It clearly shows that Argo wants to deliver the message indeed American deserves it. After analyzing, the writer assumes that Argo has a concept in constructing American hero in its story. Argo shows American character as the plan-maker, the executor who brilliantly finishes the mission and honors an award by the government. It is a scheme where America who is represented by the main character as a hero is portrayed as superior and good country by some constructions.

In addition to constructs American hero character in Argo, the film also makes an opinion about America through the scene below. Argo excessively shows CIA agent in its films. The CIA agent frequently appears as the important character, commonly becomes a hero.

The dialogue in the picture above is Rossi, one of the CIA staffs, said: “Call the Times, nail it to the goddamn door. CIA are the good guys.” They assumes implicitly that the CIA are good department. After Mendez completed the rescue mission, they implicitly give honor to the CIA that the U.S. embassy staffs will never walk out from Iran without them. All the aspects in the mission the CIA was involved.
As the result, *Argo* also constructs the public opinion about the significant effect of the CIA. *Argo* film spreads the ideas that the representation of America through the main character as the CIA agent has the most significant role. *Argo* really constructs its hero, the CIA, so incredibly competent and represents America as a superior country. After all findings above, the writer concluded that *Argo* successfully constructs the CIA agents as a hero in the film story.

**B. The Construction of Iranian Muslim People**

*Argo* has set in Iran. It is properly that many Iranian Muslim people look dominant in this film. They are shown through many characters, such as children, youth, adult, and the elderly. Iranian Muslim people are characterized through the students, the army, and the citizen. *Argo* film, however, portrays the Iranian Muslim people under its own construction.

Iran, at the moment, is undergoing a massive revolution. They were demanding the former Shah to be returned. All Iranian Muslim people are angry to death towards American people, especially the government. They are very angry with America government that helping the Shah to escape from Iran to avoid the Iranian Muslim people who will give punishment to him.

*Argo* shows all the Iranian Muslim people as well the native people. However, *Argo* portrays the Iranian subjectively, in their perspective. Iranian Muslim people are portrayed as the villain or the opposite of American by showing their attitudes, gestures, and speaking. *Argo* wants to show that Iranian Muslim people are the villain, not friendly, ignorant, cruel and irrational especially to American people. Their former Shah has escaped from the sentence
in Iran which is helped by America government. That is why all Iranian people are extremely sick to death of America.

They are Iranian students who are strike and angry with Americans. They are described in the film invading the U.S. embassy office, destroying, and kidnapping all the staffs. They are portrayed in *Argo* film as criminals who want to rob a bank.

The picture above is shown one of Iranian students who looks angry because his Shah’s picture, Ayatollah Khomeini, used as a target of shot by the embassy staffs. The Iranian student said: “Who has made this? Who had made this?” to the staffs who are frightened. *Argo* shows the Iranian Muslim is brutal especially toward American people during the Iran revolution. *Argo* takes a black and white view towards Iranians, like many other Hollywood films about Iran or the Mid-East country. *Argo* portrays Iranian Muslim people as cruel, strictly religious, and fanatical.
Reza: He wants the photograph you took.
Mendez: She’s the production designer. Her job is to take photographs.
Reza: He says he did not give you permission to take a photograph of his store.
Kathy: That’s okay. You can tell him he can have it. Please. Please. Just take the photograph.
Angry Man: America!! No!... No!
Joe: He is saying that the shah killed his son with an American gun.
Cora: Canada… no.. Canada…
Joe: He says we’re the CIA taking photographs to plan the bombing of the city.

(Argo, 01:11:51-01:12:55)

The picture and the conversation above show a chaotic situation at Tehran Bazaar. The angry man looks unhappy when Kathy Stafford (one of the U.S. embassy members) takes the picture of his store. He assumes that they are American people. The angry man had lost his son who was killed by the former Iran shah with the American gun. This man is portrayed very mad as hell. He really does not like about anything related to the American because of the death of his son. *Argo* wants to shows how the Iranian people are extremely hate American during the revolution. For those who have a relationship or just kin to the shah family will be arrested and shot by the revolutionary guards, even the civil could be.

In the same case but in different frame, the picture below shows also that the Iranian Muslim people are ruthless and brutal. The target is not only the American people but the Iranian people also.
The picture above shows and tells the audience that The Iranian Muslim people who are represented by the revolutionary guards are very hate the Americans and even Iranian civil also who have a relationship with the Shah. It shows that the revolutionary guards were judging the man who was impeached as the family of the Shah. After interrogating, one of the guards has shot the man. This is another proof that the Iranian Muslim people are very cruel and indiscriminately sweeping the America henchman out. The cruelty of the Iranian Muslim people could be seen in this scene.

The other proofs portraying Iranian Muslim people who are irrational, cruel and ignorant also. The picture below shows us the Iranian’s Muslim people appearance who portrayed by the revolutionary guards. They are bearded and have no smile on their face but ignorant enough.

Azizi : (Speak in Farsi) You. You had a business in Iran.
Joe : We did. We were preparing to make a movie here, sir.
Mendez : Sir…
Azizi: (Speak in Farsi) You don’t have journalist visas.

Joe: Not a documentary. A movie. It’s a fantasy story about a war in another world. Here you can see our notices. I wish make a film in Iran.

Azizi: (Speak in Farsi to the other guards)

Joe: Kevin, where’s your briefcase?

Mendez: These are the drawings that show what we will film in the movie.

Joe: Alien villains have taken over the hero’s planet. They fight for their family and take back the city. They know our hero is the Chosen One, so they kidnap his son in the spice market… so he and his wife storm the castle. The people… hold that… the people are inspired to join him. They are farmers, but they learn to fight. They shoot weapons at their enemies. They have these chariots. Like this one… and the king of the aliens is destroyed when the people find the courage.

Azizi: (Speak in Farsi) Enough. You don’t go until we verify.

Mendez: You can call our office.

(Azizi rings the office for two times and he is going to hang up...) Chambers: Studio Six Productions

Azizi: May I speak to a Mr. Kevin Harkins?

Chambers: I’m sorry, Mr. Harkins is out of country on a location scout. May I take a message?

Azizi: (Hang up the phone)

(Argo, 01:32:08-01:37:02)

From the picture which is supported by the conversation tells about Mendez and the six staffs are suspected as Americans by the guards. They seize the passports and herd in a room to be interrogated. The Iranian guards do not believe that Mendez and his friends are the Canadian film crew. The Iranian guards were strictly asking Mendez whether they come to Iran for a film business or not. From that scene, the audience could see the securities of the Iranian revolutionary guard are armed at all points and so discipline. These guards are used to learn in America, so they know as well all about the characteristics of Americans.

At the end, however, the Iranian guards look like so ignorant who believe all the stuffs showed by Mendez and the staffs. They were easily fooled by the Americans and credulously that they are the film crew. They allow Mendez and
the six staffs passing the gate after proofing with the fake article, cards, and film properties. The Iranian Revolutionary guards looked very strict and serious at the first time. However, after Joe Stafford tells some brief-scenes to the guards, they are extremely ignorant.

*Argo* intentionally constructs the Iranian Muslim people in its way. *Argo* tells how the Iranian Muslim people hate American people and the government. *Argo* constructs and portrays the Iranian Muslim people as a barbaric, irrational, ignorant, and fanatical. *Argo* film as one of entertainment medias is used to represent Iranian appearances, attitude even its culture in order to deliver some assumptions and perspectives towards the people.

C. **The Ideologies of Argo Film**

The film usually implied many deep messages, as we called the ideology. Every film definitely has an ideology either explicit or implicit in its story. Sometimes the ideology could be seen through the screen clearly, or we have to understand and analyze the whole of the film.

As the writer stated in the first chapter, *Argo* has the ideologies conveyed in its story. The first ideology in *Argo* film is that the film wants to people who watch believe that Tony Mendez as the CIA agent is the hero. *Argo* tries to make opinions about America as a superior country also. It is essentially pro-American propaganda, demonizing Iran and Iranians as villain, barbaric, and fanatical. The film story shows America through the main character as an ultimate hero. This film has ideological propaganda at all. As the definition in the second chapter, propaganda is to control or transmit one-sided messages towards public via mass media. In this case, film is the main media. *Argo* wants to deliver some messages
through the *Argo* that America has a significant role in rescuing the six United States embassy staffs from Tehran to American soil

After analyzing the representation of two countries, America and Iran through each analysis, the writer states that the ideology of the film related to result of the analysis above. *Argo* tries to give opinion to people who watch the film and make them believe in the story. The story of the film show that America through the main character becomes a hero, good, and superior country as well. *Argo* wants to make people who watch to believe in the story of *Argo*. It conveys ideology of belief implied into the film story. *Argo* wants to create and construct the film for particular purpose. This ideology is to provoke, to change and to organize the thoughts. Belief is the first ideology conveyed in *Argo*. The ideology of belief refers to the trust. *Argo* film through the constructions of Tony Mendez character wants to give its own perspective that someone who deserve called a hero is Tony Mendez who is representing America as superior and good country.

The second ideology in *Argo* film is showing the power of America hegemony. It should be a question, how can the Iranian Muslim people who extremely hate and angry with American people or the government, they consciously still consume American food. The writer assumes that there is a contradiction in the film. Look at two picture below. *Argo* shows clearly American fast-food restaurant in Tehran and shoots the people who are eating the meals.
Two pictures above show there is a fast-food restaurant (KFC: Kentucky Fried Chicken) which is one American product. In picture 19, there are some veiled women eating the meals. All Iranian Muslim people should avoid American products, because America is their enemy during the revolution storm in Iran. However, this film shows that some Iranian Muslim people still consume American meals. The question is what the director’s purpose to take that scene into the film? The writer assumes that this scene is intentionally portrayed in the film in order to show that if the Iranian Muslim people hate the American people and the government, they should banned everything related to America in Iran. However, in fact, the Iranian Muslim people could not ignore the American products and keep consuming in American restaurant. The pictures above are contrary with all of the Iranian Muslim people’s demands and their actions in the pictures below.

In the two pictures above, they burn and run over the American flag. They also chant in Persian “Magbar Carter! Magbar Ahmrika!” which means “Death
“Death to Carter!” “Death to America!” It means the country hates and wants American blood on their cereal for every breakfast. The Iranian Muslim people demand the former Shah to be returned from America and be tortured by them. So, the writer’s opinion that Argo wants to show the power of America. Even though all Iranian Muslim people hate America, but their power is still exist in the Iranian soil through the portrayal of Iranian Muslim people who are consuming the meals at American fast-food restaurant in the film.

The third ideology which is conveyed in Argo is Islamophobia. Phobia means scare or fear of something. Islamophobia is a new ideological formation developed in Western. This ideology is often conveyed in numerous Hollywood films for recent years. Over years, the film have instilled in the American psyche a fear of Islam and spread to whole of the world. The writer has stated in the first chapter that there is an example which is happened in consequence of Islamophobia. It is quoted from Guardian site that there are Iranian people who have been watching Argo in cinema. They are afraid to speak Persian too loud. Because they considered that people who see them would say, “Oh my God, they’re Iranians.” They assumed as if they were from Mars.

In the picture below, there is another proof that the Iranian Muslim people are hated by the public.
Narration: At the point, the mob cornered one of the Iranians. When he tried to protect himself, this is what happened.

American Man: Just hit him again! We’re gonna take it anymore! We’re sick of it! America!"

(Argo, 00:21:29-00:21:41)

From the picture above, it shows the impact from American who have kidnapped by Iranian Muslim people in Tehran. Argo takes some documentary scenes from the media television which is presented the impact of the Iranian Revolution at the time. Argo presents the picture in order to show Iranian Muslim people who live in America are deserve to be punished by American even the world. He gets attacked from American who are mad as hell towards Iranian Muslim people.

Argo conveyed Islamophobia behind the portrayal of Iranian Muslim people. Argo demonizes Iran through the portrayal of Iranian Muslim people. Argo portrays the Iranian Muslim people as barbaric, villain, and fanatic screaming in Farsi which is not translated in the film. From the representation result analysis about Iranian Muslim people—the students, the guards, and the civil above, Argo delivered the message to public that all of the Muslim people, exclusively in Iran are so dangerous and fanatic. Argo film shows that almost all the Iranian Muslim people, either the men or the women, they have a gun on their hands. The Iranian Muslim people during the revolutionary storm are preferred solving the problem through the bullets than the diplomacy. It represents that Iranian Muslim people are so barbaric at the time.

Argo wants to show that the Anti-Muslim or fear towards Islam and Muslim seen as natural and normal movement in this era. People who watch the film would assume that it was fair if Islam, Muslim, or many Islamic organizations
which are reputed as a threat should be rejected and destroyed. Through this film, there is an implicit movement to stimulate people fear towards Iran and Muslim people.

Then at the last, Argo also wants to proof and reinforce that this film is based on the true story through some similarities between the actual event and the film story. Argo tries to make people who watch the film believe that all elements, such as character, plot, setting and the story are based on true story. Look some similarities below.

The similarities above are showed in the end of the film. Those appear in order to show that Argo is definitely based on true story. Argo wants to people who watch believe the story. Argo proofs and reinforces its label that the film is
based on true story through taking some similar scenes in the film. *Argo* represents some of actual events into the screen play as good as possible.

Through the revelation of the ideologies in this film above, the writer concluded that *Argo* primarily tries to represent the Iranian Revolution into the screenplay. *Argo* tries to give some opinion about Iranian Muslim people that they are not friendly and have to be destroyed. In the end, *Argo* is completely successful making the story full with constructions and injections of the ideologies. *Argo* does not only make its own hero and history, but give to the people who watch the film some bad perspectives about Iranian Muslim people.

As the representation concept by Start Hall said that language as a tool to transmit the production of meaning of the concept in the minds. This concept is in line with in *Argo* film. *Argo* film through its story, script and scenes tries to say something meaningful to the people. *Argo* wants to construct America in order to say and deliver the concept into people’s minds. Through the ideologies also, *Argo* film is produced to indicate how some texts and scenes distorted images of reality. That is same with the ways of understanding ideology which is stated by John Storey. He said that one of the purposes of ideology refers to a systematic body of ideas articulated by a particular group of people. *Argo* gives the ideas to the people who watch the film.
CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

A. Conclusions

This writer analyzes Argo film using representation theory and ideology concept. Through the representation theory, the writer revealed how Argo constructed America through the main character of Tony Mendez and portrayed Iran through the Iranian Muslim people in this film. This research also reveals the ideologies of the film. The writer uses qualitative descriptive method with Argo film as the unit of analysis. The writer answers the research questions through the explanation of the pictures and the texts of the film. The other sources outside the film are used to support the analysis.

From the findings, the writer concluded that America has suzerainty to make and produce film appropriate for its purposes. Argo film shows how construction of America as the hero. Argo film shows America through the main character of Tony Mendez as the CIA agent to become a hero. Through some characterizations, such as appearances, dialogue, external actions, and the reaction of other characters, Argo film wants to show that America has a heroic figure indeed. This film raises the American’s role and diminishes the other character. Beside Argo film raises American hero, this film represents Iran through the Iranian Muslim people as the villain. All the descriptions of Iranian Muslim people refer to the bad things, such as barbaric, ignorant, and cruel. Argo film constructs the Iranian Muslim people in its perspective.
Argo film also tells the actual event of the rescuing missions at the time. The film also conveys the ideologies implied in several scenes. The ideologies of the film show that Argo film definitely represents American character as the hero and proof that the film is based on true story.

This research wants to reveal how Argo delivers the history through some texts and scenes. The film tries to show the actual event as well as possible on the screenplay. Argo through its story builds many constructions and delivers some ideologies.

B. Suggestions

The writer suggests to the other researchers to use another theory or concept, because this film could be analyze through many theories or concepts in order to find the different things. For example, this film could be analyzed through the comparison way to see the similarities and the differences between the actual event and the film story. Therefore, the writer hopes this research gives more contribution to all students of English Letters or all students of other universities outside who want to use this concept and theory to analyze a film.
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