

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a discussion of the research context, a statement of the problem under consideration, an account of the purpose and significance of the research, and a definition of key terms. The research background provides insight into the rationale behind the choice of object, the theoretical framework employed, and the subject of the research. The statement of the problem presents the research question in accordance with the background of the research. The purpose and significance of the research project is to set forth the rationale for undertaking the research and to provide an account of its importance. The final section provides a definition of the key terms used in this research.

1.1 Research Background

Over the past decade action movies have become an integral part of popular culture. One of the most popular action movies is the superhero movie. Among the many superhero films that have been aired Spider-Man is the most globally recognized superhero, almost everyone around the world recognizes the iconic superhero characterized by a red and blue costume with extraordinary super-spider abilities. Since his appearance in the comics by Stan Lee and Steve Ditko in 1962, Spider-Man has been adapted in various forms of media, including television series and feature films. One of the most recent and phenomenal adaptations in the history of the Spider-Man franchise is *Spider-Man: No Way Home (2021)* which was not only commercially successful but also gained widespread attention, from audiences, critics and the Spider-Man loving community.

According to Storey (2003, p. 5) term of popular refers to something that well liked by many people, the kinds of inferior works, a work that purposes to win favor of the people, and the culture that made by people for themselves. In addition McCracken (1998, p. 6), defines that popular literature simply as literature

extensively consumed by the public. But in the context of this contemporary era, popular literature have had new definition namely it is a huge entertainment industry product. Literature is only a part of this industry, which promotes and sells another kind of popular narratives such as film, radio, television, magazines and book. So in another words it is a literary industry activity that is entertaining and commercial. Because popular literature entertain people with the stories and get revenue through theirs sales. Gelder (2004, p. 11) states that the best conceived of popular literature is the opposite of high literature and vice versa. In fact it often seem as if the two exist in a state of mutual repulsion. Popular literature refers to simple stories that can be easily understood by readers, its priorities are oriented towards the taste of the reader's experience and market demand, so it often uses industrial language and is concerned with the interests of the market rather than the aesthetic value and vision of the author's unique expression.

Although popular literature is different from high literature, Nachbar & Lause (1992, p. 34) emphasize the importance of taking popular culture seriously as a subject of academic study. This perspective allows for a deeper understanding of the cultural artefacts and events that shape societal values and individual identities. According to Fisk (2005, p. 4) the popular art is “the art of making do” The popular culture industry is often thought of as an industry that produces societal commodities in the form of films, music, television, publications, and so on. A film can be considered as a type of literary work because a film has a similar concept to a drama performance where there are actors and visualized actions, but the difference is that this is realized in the form of a recording, besides that in both there are also formula that consist of elements such as character, plot, technique, setting and narrative (Klarer, 2004, p. 56).

As entertainment, film presents a performance narrative that is deeply rooted in the tradition of literary history and is one of the most widely used media. According to Vallance & Hardcastle (2022) The cinematic art form represents a convergence of artistic story which is originated from literature and technological elements which is part of the development of the era. This formulation can be observed in all forms of production, including both popular and experimental

works, as well as fiction and non-fiction based pieces. It is a well-established fact that contemporary human life is characterized by the pervasive influence of sophisticated technology and media. The film, as a form of artistic expression, is also an integral part of the media landscape. Then Bazin (2022, p. 83) posits other statement that literature has continuously influenced film since approximately 1910.

Film criticism generally accepted this influence as long as film freely adapted books, even if they borrowed well-known themes or characters, as long as the film did not rigidly adhere to its source material. Films have a very high correlation with literary works because most films are adaptations of conventional written works such as novels, short stories, folklore, or drama. The difference is only in the form of both, where films are in visual and auditory form and literary works are in the word or text form. Literary work allows the reader to imagine the action of a character in a story only in their mind, while film can give a different sensation with a live picture of the characters' actions in each scene.

It is impossible to consider the relationship between film and literary work outside the context of cultural elements, particularly popular culture. As previously stated, the term "popular" is used to describe something that enjoys a broad appeal or is aimed at a mass consumer audience. This makes it clear that the film and literature sectors are closely linked to wider industry and the economy. The advent of new technologies at the end of the 20th century precipitated a sharp increase in the film industry, leading to the construction of numerous facilities in Western countries dedicated to displaying cinematic works. In Europe, these structures are commonly referred to as cinemas or cinema theatres. In the United States, however, the terminology is more closely aligned with the colloquial usage, where the word 'movie' or 'Hollywood' is more commonly popular. In order to prevent any confusion regarding the inconsistent usage of terms such as "film," "cinema," and "movie" in this study, the researcher proposes that the term "film" be used when discussing film as a form, and that "cinema" be used when discussing film as a cultural product. Nevertheless, the focus of this study is on American products, and the term "movie" will be employed than "cinema".

A literary work or film can be a popular and best-selling because it contains formulas which develop the story that serve as reliable recipes for its success. Nachbar & Lause (1992, p. 417) posits that a popular story formula comprises two principal categories of elements, namely conventions and inventions. A single formula convention represents an identifiable building block of the genre, while a combination of such conventions serves to define the genre's framework. Put simply, conventions are the elements that are common to all specific examples of a given genre. While Inventions are the distinctive adaptations that an artist introduces to established formulas in order to maintain their appeal and relevance, as Warshaw (1974) notes, this approach aims to "intensify the expected experience without fundamentally altering it". So it can be considered that the convention of the formula has a function to allow the audience to readily identify, anticipate, and expect the genre of the film. While the invention, in contrast, provides a novelty and invigorating sensation that captures the audience's attention and engages their interest in the film.

The popularity of a work can be explained through the use of a formula that audiences know and love, as well as new elements or inventions that make the formula feel fresh and interesting. In this context, superhero movies generally have a typical formula, such as a protagonist with extraordinary powers, a conflict between good and evil, and a satisfying resolution. However, the tremendous success of *Spider-Man: No Way Home* shows that it offers more than just a conventional formula. By embracing the concept of the multiverse and presenting characters from previous generations of Spider-Man films, it combines nostalgia with narrative innovation on a scale that has never been done before.

The *Spider-Man: No Way Home* (2021) is regarded as one of the most popular superhero movies of the 21st century. Based on the Internet Movie Database (2021), the movie *Spider-Man: No Way Home* (2021) has a rating of 8.2 out of 10. And Statista (2024) noted that the *Spider-Man: No Way Home* (2021) set a record as the first movie earning more than US\$ 1,9 billion globally as of November 2024, and it placing this movie as the highest grossing Spider-Man movie ever. It is a superhero movie produced by Marvel, directed by Jon Watts, and

written by Chris McKenna and Erik Sommers. The movie is the third sequel to *Spider-Man Homecoming* (2017) and *Spider-Man: Far From Home* (2019), and is the 27th movie in the MCU (Marvel Cinematic Universe).

This movie revolves around a teenager named Peter Parker "Spider-Man" who gets into trouble after Quentin Beck slanders Peter Parker as a murderer and reveals his identity as Spider-Man. Peter, MJ, Ned, and Aunt May are interrogated by the Federal Agent DODC. After being rejected from MIT, Parker turns to Stephen Strange at New York's Sanctum for help. When Strange tried to make everyone forget who is Peter Parker and Spider-Man, the spell was broken due to Peter's constant foolishness to keep his loved ones remembering, and Strange stopped the spell. The destruction of Dr. Strange's spell unfortunately caused some unexpected anomalies in the constellation of the multiverse. This resulted in the appearance of other Spider-Mans and a number of other supervillains from different points in his life, which presented a significant challenge for Peter Parker. The multiverse concept can be analyzed with the reimagining theory because it is the new idea that has not been there in the superhero formula yet. In *The Cambridge Dictionary* (2024) "reimagining" is to have a new idea about the way in which something is supposed to be. Furthermore according to *The Oxford Dictionary* (2016) "reimagining" as a process of reinterpreting in a creative and imaginative manner. While "interpreting" is defined as the act of explaining, clarifying, or decoding the meaning of something (Marechal & Karamath, 2017).

The researcher argue that the reason why the movie *Spider-Man: No Way Home* (2021) can becomes the most popular than other Spider-Man movies in the Spider-Man verse is because it empowering the conventions of the superhero formula properly and utilizing invention and reimagining to develop its main character, Peter Parker (Tom Holland), as A Spider-Man through innovative storytelling and character archetypes. The characterization and or character development is the integral part in the superhero formula as Coogan posits that the superhero genre is about the process of character development from adolescence to adulthood Coogan (2006, p. 24). Therefore the character development itself is the main point in this research.

Character development is derived from the character, then the understanding of character and characterization are required. Chatman elucidated that character analysis is the process of examining human nature, action, and manner through the lenses of narrative elements. It is an intrinsic component intricately linked to the plot, setting, and point of view. The character is a product of the plot, showcasing the progression of the story through actions, reactions, and interactions with other characters, while characterization is the process of establishing the defining traits of a character within a narrative (Austin & Chatman, 1979). Meanwhile, this research will analyze the main character development through its convention and invention.

As a convention The Spider-Man movies often start with the origin story of Peter Parker, a high school student who gains spider-like abilities after being bitten by a radioactive spider, and with great power Peter fights and struggles by himself to kill the supervillains and or breaking down their plans. Character development that is shown by Peter Parker in how he can become wiser in his act and decision is the core of Superhero Genre. The classic origin story has become a staple in superhero movies, providing a relevant starting point for the hero's journey and making it easy for the audience to recognize it.

As an invention the film places significant emphasis on the way of growth and maturation of Peter Parker's character, particularly in terms of his capacity for responsibility and accountability of his actions. This is exemplified in his decision to ask Doctor Strange to erase everyone's memories of him as Spider-Man, a choice that ultimately leads to a profound and unfavorable outcome. The loss of Aunt May, forgetting by MJ, Ned, Happy and friends and the burden of fixing the multiverse contribute significantly to the emotional depth of his journey. In addition, as Peter works alongside the friends and learns from their wisdom and experience, the film emphasizes teamwork and mentorship, showing the importance of working together and learning from others. Each of these elements contributes to the creation of a novel cinematic experience that represents a fresh sense from the conventions of previous Spider-Man movies.

Yet the exploration of the multiverse concept in *The Spider-Man: No Way Home* (2021) as a reimagining in this film also represents a significant departure from traditional superhero narratives, particularly in its portrayal of the superhero character. Rather than featuring just one version of Spider-Man, as is common in other Spider-Man movies, the movie introduces three different versions of the character from disparate universes (Tom Holland, Tobey Maguire, and Andrew Garfield) in one space and time.

Such portrayals are not merely intended to capture the interest of fans or audiences, but also to enhance the complexity of the character of Peter Parker by illustrating the multifaceted interactions between the heroes, each with their own distinctive background, experiences, and growth. Multiverse integration does not only exist in superhero characters, but also in supervillains characters. Supervillains from previous Spider-Man franchises, such as Doctor Octopus, Green Goblin, Electro, Sandman, and Lizard, are reintroduced. These characters are not just cameos, but integral parts of the plot, with motivations and backstories reimagined and expanded in the context of the multiverse. The concept of what the superheroes are and his relationship with supervillains is transformed from the classical concept that “superheroes always manage to win the fight by killing supervillains” to a more complex and contemporary concept “Superhero kills the Evil Idea not Devil Person”.

The *Spider-Man: No Way Home* movie (2021) captivates audiences through its effective use of character and characterization. The film delves deep into Peter Parker's emotional struggles and personal growth, crafting a deeply relatable and empathetic hero. His interactions with both familiar faces and new allies enrich the narrative with themes of friendship, loyalty, and sacrifice. Each character undergoes significant development, particularly Peter, who evolves from grappling with consequences to embracing responsibility and making tough choices. Themes of identity, redemption, and the consequences of choices further enrich the storyline, creating a compelling cinematic experience anchored in engaging storytelling and meaningful character development. Besides that *The film Spider-Man: No Way Home* employs the established formula of the superhero genre, situating its

characters within a context of relatable, morally driven narratives and pushing the boundaries of visual storytelling. The reimagining of supervillains adds depth and modern relevance, making conflicts more nuanced and engaging. This fusion of traditional superhero elements with innovative character development and a modern interpretation has solidified Spider-Man's position as a beloved and enduring character (popular) in the genre.

In this research, previous studies are of considerable importance as they provide a solid theoretical and contextual foundation. By reviewing previous studies, researcher can understand the context of the topic to be studied, identify unfilled research gaps, and formulate appropriate research problems. In addition, previous research provides a theoretical and conceptual basis that assists researcher in developing a framework and choosing appropriate methods of this research. By referring to previous studies, it increases the validity of this research and strengthens the arguments and findings by comparing them to the results of other studies. Furthermore, this research can avoid duplication and ensure that the research conducted is original and makes a new contribution to the development of science.

Many other studies on the topic of Superheroes and Popular Literature have been conducted in various fields and topics. In the superhero character section, studies were conducted by Santosa & Arian (2020), Browne (2024), Bateman (2015), and Gonzalez (2023) each of them regarding on convention and invention, and the impact of the constituent elements of a work on the delivery medium, especially characters; author intention on the groundbreaking Stan Lee and the Spider-Man character on American popular culture and the comic book industry; how *The Amazing Spider-Man* written by Lee in the 1960s and 1970s redefined the modern superhero archetype that integrated teenage identity into mainstream narratives, and used comics as a platform to discuss national issues such as civil rights, drugs, and social anxiety; the last regarding the cultural field, Spider-Man as a symbol of cultural diversity, touching on themes such as race, class, gender, and sexual identity. In the field of production has been carried out by Taylor (2013), the study discusses how director Tim Burton uses a unique visual and narrative

approach to “re-imagine” characters, stories, and worlds in his films. In the field of character development has been conducted by (Hasanah et al., 2018).

Before its official release, *Spider-Man: No Way Home* set an impressive record, with the film's official teaser and trailer reaching a total of 176 million viewers in a short period of time, exceeding other well-known films. The high level of public enthusiasm for this movie indicates a new appeal that may not only derive from the popularity of the Spider-Man character, but also certain innovations in the story formula presented. This phenomenon raises the question of what makes the narrative formula in *Spider-Man: No Way Home* is different from other Spider-Man movies that managed to attract such massive attention, even before its official release. The researcher posits to conduct this study, because there are not many super hero films that use the invention to the characters and character development in the form of multiverse and the reimagining of superhero and supervillain's relation in form of villain values reinterpretation namely the dead of evil idea not devil person.

This research is intended to analyze the popular formula applied in *Spider-Man: No Way Home* based on Coogan's theory and identify the elements of invention that contributed to the movies' success as one of the most significant popular culture products in 2021 by taking the research title “INVENTION AND REIMAGINING SUPERHERO FORMULA AS DEVICES OF PETER PARKER'S CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT IN THE SPIDER-MAN: NO WAY HOME MOVIE 2021”. Therefore, it is hoped that this research will provide a new and significant contribution to the understanding of how a movie can create global appeal through the modification of popular literary formulas and its influence to the character, especially in *The Spider-Man: No Way Home Film 2021*.

1.2 Research Problems

In order to analyze the topic in accordance with the background of the research previously outlined, the following questions will serve as the primary focus of this study:

1. What kinds of character development of a superhero that are portrayed in The

Spider-Man: No Way Home movie (2021)?

2. How do the invention and reimagining affect the superhero formula in The *Spider-Man: No Way Home* movie (2021)?

1.3 Research Purposes

Based of the formulation of the question above, the purposes of the study are expected to be able to give the following benefits:

1. To find out the character development of superhero formula in The *Spider-Man: No Way Home* movie (2021).
2. To find out how the invention and reimagining adapts the superhero in The *Spider-Man: No Way Home* movie (2021).

1.4 Research Significance

This research has two significant implications, both theoretically and practically. The present study addresses a topic that has not been explored in the existing literature. From a practical standpoint, this research is related to the use of research.

Theoretically this research can useful for readers to understand the superheroes genre in films through its formulas, and the researcher's theory can be applied to everyday phenomena. The research can be appreciated by readers through a variety of avenues, including reading the original paper or providing input in the form of other papers from this research project. The research allows readers to engage with the research in a constructive manner, thereby facilitating a learning process.

Practically the results of the research can be useful and provide ideas for solving problems related to the topic, and this research is expected to be useful as an alternative development in helping further analysis studies. In view of the preceding discussion on superheroes, the findings of the present study can serve to enhance readers' understanding and provide useful references for their research in the field of cinema, particularly with respect to genre analysis.