

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the researcher introduces the Research Background, Statement of Problems, Research Purposes, Research Significances, and Definition of Key Terms.

### 1.1 Research Background

Film has actually become a form of reflection and representation of humans in modern society. In its production, the filmmaking process combines visual forms, animation or moving images with artistic values as well as various cultural and social values that live in society. Films also capture the same like literature but due to its visual and sound effect, it got wide popularity. The reading of literature is a mono-sensory private experience of readers whereas witnessing a film is multisensory communal experience emphasizing immediacy. One thing is very clear and one has to accept it that literature gives verbal literacy while films give visual literacy. Thus, there is a link between literature and film. So that film is considered as a branch of literature. Film is also a thing of past not a new which existed in overnight from somewhere in a society. In fact, adaptation of film is not a recent phenomenon. It is right there from the dawn of film industry.

Visual elements and cinematic concepts in films tend to be formed from the results of human imagination and thoughts from the reality they see. Line, form, mass, volume, and texture. Like painting and photography, film exploits the subtle interplay of light and shadow. Like sculpture, film manipulates three-dimensional space. But, like pantomime, film focuses on moving images, and as in dance, the moving images in film have rhythm (Petrie & Boggs, 2018). Films are also a form of human expression to bring human imagination into reality, conveyed through the composition of visual and artistic elements. As a reflection of human reality, films certainly have a storyline like the story or journey of human life. It is possible for film to depict almost anything that we can think of or perceive. The invisible can be made visible by slowing or speeding up time. Peter and Boggs continues that,

“The trajectory of a bullet through the air or the various stages of a flower's bloom can be made visible and understandable, almost like magic.”

As humans have various twists and turns in life, films also have a variety of stories or various types of stories. The development of narratives or different types of films is what makes them more unique. The depiction of characters, setting of place and time, as well as expressions and other elements that build the storyline can be depicted more clearly and quickly than depictions in literary works in the form of text. This allows the film to convey the storyline more efficiently or briefly. However, sometimes some people feel disappointed when the characters imagined in their favorite films have bad acting. And there are also those who feel that time or some scenes are too short or even too long.

The overall story experience for the audience depends heavily on the narrative in the structure of a film. Stories in the film are more than just a list of events; they also feature conflicts, what motivates characters, and how these problems are resolved, making the story easier for the audience to feel involved with. As time has passed, filmmakers have changed their storylines to suit the tone and message of their films, which has sorted films into different genres. They make it easier for the audience to know what feelings and themes to expect, whether from a romantic, horror, mystery, science fiction, or adventure film. Among these, the adventure genre stood out for its action-packed and dangerous plots, its missions often had the heroes facing high stakes, and its main heroes facing obstacles to achieve significant goals (Saricks, 2009). An adventure story is commonly about a protagonist who embarks to pursue a journey with obstacles or a mission that demands courage, resilience, and determination. Typically, a fictional works that include a fast-paced story, exotic backgrounds, moral dilemmas, and a main aim for the hero, be it saving the people, finding treasure, or discovering the secret or the truth. What makes adventure stories popular is that they manage to tie together adventure and strong emotions in a way that is fun to watch or read. Adventure stories, due to their unifying structure and appeal to a wide audience, are now a big part of today's mainstream entertainment. As such, they are both considered an important part of

films and an essential element in popular culture, where they are accessible, repeated, and widely known.

Watching films is an enormously popular activity across the world, and like any large-scale human activity, you can use methods from the social sciences to analyse and explain the phenomenon (Wiley, 2015). But in some stories, appear to be uncommon or that only a select few are aware of are referred to be high culture. The researcher's focus in this study will be on well-known, commonly found or often encountered stories (pop culture).

In the film *Ready Player One* (2018), one of the films of popular culture, Steven Spielberg is blends that futuristic technology with a main-character adventure story, presenting an action-packed story, science-fiction visuals, and describe a relation about how humans interact with technology (virtual reality) and reality. The film is an earlier adaptation of the novel *Ready Player One* by Ernest Cline. Set in 2045, environmental and economic difficulties cause the globe is on the verge of collapsing in this period. OASIS (Ontologically Anthropocentric Sensory Immersive Simulation), an immersive virtual environment built by eccentric and geek developer James Halliday, is really becoming one of the most people seek solace from the harsh realities of life in that time. OASIS is a hyper-realistic virtual massive multiplayer online video games, where almost everything included such as virtual entertainment, education, recreation, online quest, online gambling, adventure exploration, racing car, even a prostitution, and many more created by a Halliday who has similar issues with him. In this virtual world, Halliday allows people to interact with each other and do things that could never be done in the real world.

After his passing, Halliday left behind a significant legacy: an Easter Egg, that was hidden inside the OASIS. Definitions of Easter eggs are unified regarding their hidden, secret and surprising characteristics, but they often diverge in their general naming of these elements, e.g., messages, objects, interactions, tricks and unusual behaviours (Mago, 2019). In pop culture and digital games, "Easter eggs" is a path, clue, content that is hidden or intentionally hidden for a specific purpose, which can provide additional excitement or motivation to play the game. The plot of the movie

presents the relationship and influence of the OASIS as a virtual world setting in 2045, which is the answer to the harsh social reality, identity crisis, frustration, and anxiety experienced by humans. And of course, the conditions of the reality of life created by Wade Watts (Parzival), starting from the figure of a child who experiences domestic violence and also a broken home. The main theme of this movie is the main character's adventure in a quest or mission that makes him get the final achievement or reward in an adventure plot. This movie has similarities with the American Western genre. The virtual world setting as the main setting in the depiction of this film, is described as a world of 'home' for humans who are unlucky in facing the reality of the real world. Where the limits of this world are the imagination and thoughts of the players.

In 2019, this film won the 2019 Best Science Fiction Film Award category by the Academy of Science Fiction, Fantasy, & Horror Films USA. In the IMDb report, the film also won 11 awards and 57 nominations overall. Which on the average includes the use of visual effects in depicting the virtual world in the movie. (IMDb) Still in IMDb's advanced report, the movie has an overall rating of 7.4/10 from 501,965 correspondents (as of November 18, 2024).

According to Saricks, (2009) formulas stories as art and popular culture, John G. Cawelti explains that adventure fiction is the story of "individual heroes or groups who overcome obstacles and dangers and achieve success with some important and moral mission. Sarick continues that, the prototypical Adventure story features a hero on a mission, and he must face a range of obstacles along the way. The reader gets a firsthand look at the exotic locale in which the story is set. Detailed settings are important. These stories are set "elsewhere," and this foreignness underlines the sense of danger and obstacles to be overcome (Saricks, 2009). The reader participates in suspenseful derring-do, joining the hero as he extricates himself from multiple dangers along the way and overcomes the physical dangers to complete his mission successfully. The plot revolves around action, typically a mission, and the risks and challenges encountered during the journey. Because the hero must save himself and others from life-or-death situations, physical adventure and danger are crucial. Often, though not always, the hero's trials

are the result of the machinations of a villain, and, in addition, the hero frequently receives, as a kind of side benefit, the favors of one or more attractive young ladies (Cawelti, 1977). Usually, the story ends happily, with the hero safe and peace restored. In addition, in describing a story or adventure movie, the setting and place are the most important to be able to present visuals and depictions to the audience about how the adventure is shown.

The first previous research that the researcher analyzed from Sri Nuraini (2024) from Sunan Gunung Djati State Islamic University entitled “*Adventure Formula In Mad Max: Fury Road Movie (2015) Directed By George Miller*” This research aims to identify the components of the adventure formula in the film, look at how the protagonist, Max Rockatansky, crafts the adventure story, and comprehend how the setting influences the plot and characters. Story pacing, storyline, location, tone, linguistic style, and character are some of these attributes. The study also found many protagonist characterizations that showed bravery in the face of hardship, with a focus on the complex desert terrain and the sociopolitical conditions that prevailed at the time.

The second previous research, is a research analysis from Yuli Andriyani (2019) from Sunan Gunung Djati State Islamic University entitled “The Construction Of Adventure Formula Through Heroes In Rick Riordan's *The Red Pyramid*” This research aims at how the adventure formula in the book *The Red Pyramid* is shaped by the hero. The novel's portrayal of the hero and the way the hero creates the adventure formula are the two primary areas of interest. The analysis makes use of John G. Cawelti's adventure formula theory, which outlines the challenges and perils the character encounters, and Joseph Campbell's hero journey theory, which charts the phases of the hero's trip from departure to return. Through the collection, identification, and interpretation of data from the novel's narrative, this study employs a qualitative methodology. The findings demonstrate that the hero adheres to the journey's phases—departure, initiation, and return—and constructs an adventure formula using popular literature's heroes, challenges, and triumphs.

The third is from previous research, namely from Putri Nabilla Afifah (2024) from Sunan Gunung Djati State Islamic University entitled “*Redefining The*

*Adventure Formula In Barbie (2023) Directed By Greta Gerwig.*” According to Cawelti and Saricks’ theory, this research seeks to reinvent the adventure formula in light of the film *Barbie (2023)* directed by Greta Gerwig. The focus of this action packed movie is in a woman. Based on this process of retaining and transforming adventure formula components, the aims of this study are as follows: Some of the criteria of adventurous were identified by the research through a qualitative analysis of scenes and conversation patterns in the identified categories which are story pace, plot, character, setting, tone/atmosphere, and language style. This paper argues that *Barbie (2023)* successfully subverts the cones of constructionism through a reinvention of the adventure genre which sees its main character encounter various forms of risks in the story.

The fourth previous research, that the researcher an analysis from Irfani Nurrahmah(2018) from Sunan Gunung Djati State Islamic University entitled “*Adventure Formula In Pete Docter's Inside Out (2015) Movie.*” This research study seeks to understand the impact of the heroine and the anti-heroine as the primary characters in defining and shaping the adventure formula in the Movie *Inside Out (2015)*. The film is pro-adventure in the way its narrative supports the use of a journey: the major characters are heroines by definitions. Analyzing the text as a whole, a structuralist orientation is used, which involves search for patterns of meaning in a storyline. This method explores the dignity of plot patterns and characters relations as symptoms of existence and symbolizations of culture and psyche. The analysis shows that synergy with the heroine and anti-heroine deepens the progression of the adventure kitsch and the heroine’s storyline parallels the common adventure tropes. This research builds on the frameworks of Cawelti, Campbell and Gladys on the formula of adventure and reflects how such theories work in the film in terms of characterization and plot.

The fifth previous research, that the researcher an analysis from Valentina Romanzi(2020) from University of Bergamo entitled “*Levels Of Reality In Steven Spielberg’s Ready Player One: Utopia, Dystopia, And Retrotopia.*” The levels of utopian, dystopian, and retrotopian realities in the film *Ready Player One (2018)* by Steven Spielberg are examined in this research. The research is examines how

these elements interact and shape the plot of the movie, particularly in light of 1980s and 1990s pop culture nostalgia. Zygmunt Bauman's concept of retrotopia, which highlights the propensity to turn back time in order to escape a dismal present, serves as the foundation for this tactic. The film contrasts the dystopian future of 2045 with the utopian virtual world of the OASIS to highlight the tension between the need to solve present issues and longing for the past. In this research, the 'surrounding environment' or the setting of the place, location, setting in the movie, becomes the main focus of the discussion in this research.

The sixth one, is the researcher an analysis from Jhodi Januarta, Fajar Permadi, Eva Dwi Kurniawan(2024) from University of Technology Yogyakarta entitled “*Dampak Virtual Reality Terhadap Identitas Individu Dalam Novel Ready Player One Karya Ernest Cline.*” This research topic uses discourse analysis methodology to examine the impact of virtual reality on personal identity. The social identity theory of Henri Tajfel is also referenced in this research. This idea holds that an individual's identity is influenced by how they interact with the social group they are a part of. Virtual reality (VR) creates a new social group in the OASIS virtual world in Ready Player One. People can experiment with their identities in scenarios that differ from the actual world and learn how social interactions in virtual environments influence virtual identities.

While previous research have examined the adventure formula and the impact of virtual reality in literature and film, this research focuses on the role of virtual reality as a key element in shaping the adventure stories in *Ready Player One (2018)*. The first research identified the elements of adventure formula in *Mad Max: Fury Road (2015)* with a strong analysis on the main character or protagonist in the movie, Max Rockatansky. However, this research is limited to analyzing the conventional adventure formula without an in-depth focus on analyzing the setting or environment that forms the adventure formula as the setting of the story. The second research explored the elements of adventure in the novel *The Red Pyramid* with a traditional approach based on Joseph Campbell's theory of the hero's journey. The researcher focuses more on the hero's adventure narrative, and just like the first, this study does not emphasize too much on the deepening of aspects related to the

setting or background where the film forms an adventure formula. Meanwhile, the third study attempted to redefine the adventure formula in film by highlighting the role of female protagonists. While these studies offer new perspectives on gender in adventure, the main focus is still on storylines and characters. Overall, the fourth study is similar to several previous studies. However, the difference that can be seen in this research is that it uses a structuralism approach in order to redefining the adventure formula. Only the fifth and sixth studies seem to discuss in detail how the role of setting in the movie *Ready Player One (2018)*. Aspects such as the dystopian world, virtual world and other aspects. However, these two studies do not discuss at all about analyzing the adventure formula in the film.

This research offers a different contribution by focusing on how Virtual Reality as the main setting shapes and influences the adventure formula in *Ready Player One (2018)*. This research will identify and analyze the aspect of the adventure genres and generated through the elements of the setting, which in this film, Virtual Reality as the main setting in this film, which has not been discussed in depth in previous studies. This approach allows a deeper analysis of how the virtual world or virtual reality is not only a story setting, but also an element that defines the structure and development of the adventure, thus providing a more comprehensive understanding of the analysis and influence of film settings in shaping the adventure formula in the film.

## **1.2 Statement of Problem**

The main problem in this research is about how the adventure formula and virtual reality build an adventure story that is so complex with its setting, but with a relatively simple plot. With this background, the researcher formulated the following research question:

- a. What are the aspects of the adventure formula presented in *Ready Player One (2018)* by Steven Spielberg?
- b. How does the Virtual Reality as the setting in this film build the adventure story in the film *Ready Player One (2018)* by Steven Spielberg?

### **1.3 Research Purpose**

As explained in the research question above, the main objectives of this research are:

- a. To find out the aspects of the adventure formula represented in the film *Ready Player One (2018)* by Steven Spielberg.
- b. To identify the Virtual Reality as the setting of this film to build the adventure story in the film *Ready Player One (2018)* by Steven Spielberg.

### **1.4 Research Significances**

- a. Theoretically this study should be especially advantageous to academics and literary circles in relation to the literary works that have been studied in the construction of adventure formula theory. It should also provide the general audience with new information about the film *Ready Player One (2018)* by Steven Spielberg.
- b. Practically this research is intended to contribute to the academic field of literature and general audience, because there are still few researchers who examine the film *Ready Player One (2018)* from the perspective of the adventure formula and virtual reality elements.

### **1.5 Definition of Key Terms**

The "definition of key terms" tool provides assistance in giving concise and accurate definitions of the important terms used in the study. In addition to preventing ambiguity or misinterpretation, the purpose of providing this definition is to guarantee that the reader is aware of the researcher's meaning behind any term used in the context of the study.

#### **1.5.1 Film**

According to Peter & Boggs (2018), film is focuses on moving images, and as in dance, the moving images in film have rhythm. Film visuals and cinematic ideas are often the product of people's imaginations and thoughts based on what they observe in the actual world. Mass, volume, texture, line, and shape. Similar to photography and painting, film takes advantage of the delicate relationship between light and shadow. Film is evolving into a medium for human expression that uses artistic and visual components to bring people's fantasies to life. Films undoubtedly

have a plot that reflects human reality, much like the journey or story of human existence. Almost anything that we can imagine or see can be portrayed on film.

### **1.5.2 Adventure Story**

John G. Cawelti (1997) explains that adventure fiction is the story of individual heroes or groups who overcome obstacles and dangers and achieve success with some important and moral mission. There is always a recognizable hero, a persona that readers identify with and find relatable. With cunning and creativity, he completes his urgent task.

Saricks (2009) mentioned that, the prototypical Adventure story features a hero on a mission, and he must face a range of obstacles along the way. Action, usually a mission, and the dangers and difficulties faced along the way are central to the plot. Physical risk and adventure are essential because the hero must rescue both himself and others from life-or-death situations. Usually the story ends happily, with the hero safe and peace restored. According to (Saricks, 2009) there are 6 characteristics in the adventure genre, namely pacing, storyline, characterization, frame/setting, tone/mood, and style/language.

### **1.5.3 Virtual Reality**

Virtual Reality (VR) creates a setting and imaginative universe where seemingly artificial locations become realistic-looking. With the help of computer hardware, software, and virtual world integration technology, which can dynamically depict the real world, Virtual Reality (VR) technology is improving and becoming more immersive. As soon as real-time communication is established between humans and the virtual world, these technologies can react based on people's forms, languages, and other characteristics. As a result, companies and researchers have been quite interested in this technology for the past few years.

According to Gandhi Dipakkumar and S. Patel (2018), Virtual Reality is a three dimensional computer based interactive environment which simulate reality. Virtual Reality can bring us into a imaginary world which appears exactly similar to our own world. Virtual reality exists as a fast-progressing technology which adapts through technological development alongside user requirement expansion. The technology provides solutions to augmented reality constraints while

establishing new advantages throughout human life processes.

The main benefit of virtual reality exists in its capability to create dynamic real-world simulations through integration of software and hardware and virtual world technologies. Through this technology users can achieve a physical connection to real and constructed worlds simultaneously. Users belong to a safe environment through virtual reality which lets them participate in different scenarios without putting themselves at risk in the real world. Virtual reality technology enables people to visualize inaccessible work areas like Mars exploration and extreme temperatures by generating virtual atmospheric conditions using computer graphics software and headset and hand glove accessories. This combination produces realistic presence sensations for users.

#### **1.5.4 Settings**

The setting in the story is the time, place, and environment in which the story takes place. Literary works use the term setting to refer to the historical period along with the geographical location and social environment of the narrative. The historical period together with cultural environment and physical surroundings influenced their lived experiences which shaped their personalities. Literary work settings define the primary direction of its story development with essential influence on its mood and underlying themes. A good setting serves as a key component to engage readers within fictional world. Settings can be a real location in some period of time or a made-up location.