

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the introduction of the research. It contains background of research, statement of problem, research objectives, research significance, definition of key terms, and organization of writing.

### 1.1 Background of Research

Popular culture is the culture which originates from the people<sup>1</sup>. According to Williams (Storey J. , 2001, p. 5), four things the popular culture is well liked by many people, inferior types of work, work settings out to win favour with the people, and culture actually made by the people for themselves. In popular culture universal market ensure that it is truly popular because it makes available commodities people actually want. Popular culture is mass produced commercial culture. It is mass produced for mass consumption and definitely a culture that only emerged following industrialization and urbanization. Also that means popular culture is about satisfaction, ensuring that people get what they want, regardless of whatever they need it or not.

In popular culture there are various kinds of media that are used to create pleasure and entertainment, one of which is popular fiction. The film and also television program has become one of the best alternatives in this day and also as a starting point in any attempt to define popular culture to say that popular culture is simply culture which is widely favoured or well-liked by many people. According

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<sup>1</sup> Storey, John. 2001. *Cultural Theory And Popular Culture; An Introduction 3rd edition*. England: Pearson Education Limited. p. 10

to Maynard (1974, p. VII), films reflect not only the aspirations of individuals, but also those of society as a whole. Through the film the main objective of popular culture is also fulfilled namely as financial gain and popularity becomes the goals. Films are in great demand by various groups and therefore open a broad field to enlarge the commercial industry.

Popular culture itself has to be seen as a diverse and varied set of genres. Saricks (2009, p. 6) defined, genre is defined as any sizable group of fiction authors and/or specific titles that have similar characteristics and appeal. The adventure genre is experiencing a true renaissance, as readers and viewers are clamouring for these action packed tales of missions and treasure hunts, filled with danger and suspense, intriguing details, formidable obstacles, and characters we love and love to hate. In the genre adventure many dangerous scenes performed by the hero and become the main attraction (Saricks J. G., 2009, p. 15). Adventure story is that the hero individual or group overcoming obstacles and dangers and accomplishing some important and moral mission (Cawelti J. G., 1976).

In discussing literature, popular culture has been the object of a great deal of feminist analysis. What may have had the largest feminist impact on popular culture in recent memory comes from Disney in 2013 with the release of the film *Frozen* which marketed a typical princess story. That the story was really an exercise in the feminist standpoint and presenting women's stories their own points of view. According to Adrienne (2015), popular culture's tendency to simultaneously celebrate and neglect this concept is one of the reasons why it is so ripe for exploration. To that end, an understanding of feminism becomes necessary in order to see how inequality and gender are linked in culture.

One of the most striking changes in the humanities in the 1980s has been the rise of gender as a category of analysis (Showalter, 1990). Feminism in popular literature have the same meaning but especially feminism in popular literature seems to consist of the argument that the inequalities in gender power relations are socially and culturally constructed; the development of a more populist but still feminist understanding of the female audiences for popular culture; and the search for a theoretical framework which incorporates class, race, ethnicity and other important social divisions (Strinati, 1995).

Critics about feminism does not mean criticizing women, the simple meaning of feminist literary criticism is that critics view literature with the awareness that the study of gender differences is a unity between culture and literature in our lives (Suharto, 2002) . This things makes a difference in literary works that are built from year to year. Both the difference in the author, reader, character and external factors that support it. Considering the depictions of women in the context of feminism especially gender movements in popular culture this research will provide a deeper understanding of the acts of heroism toward female characters, as well as a heroine in the most popular films and TV series.

According to Modleski (1995) highly critically of the view that gender is merely another aspects which needs to be include to make picture of popular culture more complete and representative that it has been before. Inferiority to high culture are derived from, and refer back to, the sexist constructions of femininity and masculinity in the wider society. The American action cinema constructs gender roles, particularly the portrayal of the female characters as action heroines.

It cannot be denied that feminism has become something important nowadays. What needs to be underlined is that women have the power to build their own identity. We can see this phenomenon now that works made by women are therefore crucial thing. The television commercial is primarily identified with Hollywood, first and foremost a British Product from the early 1960s until the recent years. Stacia (2004, p. 175) states that action films recently have begun to explore the market for sharp and agile female heroes. The image women fighting and power of woman are available, with more women are emerging as female action heroes, with the example *Lara Croft: Tomb Raider (2001)*. Heroism is gendered. Hero stories inscribe the male/female dualism, asserting the male as the norm, as what it means to be human, and defining the female as other- deviant, different, dangerous (Hourihan M. , *Deconstructing The Hero : Literary Theory and Children's Literature*, 1997, p. 67).

Talking about feminism today is inseparable from the existence of gender roles in the concept of masculinity and femininity that are built. Some feminist theories state that biological sex is distinct from gender. Gayle Rubin's essay, "The Traffic in Women" (1975) , for instance, distinguished between sex and gender by asserting that sex refers to biological differences between males and females and gender is the social and cultural expectations and rules assigned to each sex as masculine and feminine roles.

Character is an essential component in writing good literature. Modern fiction, in particular, has taken great advantage of this literary device. Understanding the role of characterization in storytelling is very important for any writer. To put it briefly, it helps us make sense of the behaviour of any character in a story by helping

us understand their thought processes. A good use of characterization always leads the readers or audience to relate better to the events taking place in the story.

The addition of female characters and making women the main characters is one of the reasons why women are the topics to be discussed. The addition of female characters and important roles that were previously dominated by men later in the *Star Wars VII: The Force Awakens* (2015) are played by women, this is what make it different from previous explanation. The enthusiasm of the fans is what brought this film continues to get a response from the audience. Since the release of this series, this film has become a cultural phenomenon and has produced many films, books, video games, and television series.

This research is examining *Xena: Warrior Princess* (1995) *season 1-10* and *The Hunger Games Movie* (2012). *Xena: Warrior Princess* is an American action fantasy television series, the first season is the television series commenced airing in the United States and Canada on September 1995. *Xena: Warrior Princess* showed strong female protagonist and it has acquired a strong characters. The main characters is Xena. Aware that the character of Xena had become very successful among the public, the producers of the series decided to launch a spin-off series based on her adventures. Xena became a successful show which has aired in more than 108 countries around the world since 1998. It aired on Heroes and icons in 2016-2019.

In this research, evidence that Xena is the main character, barely into the first scene of the film, she says:

***“Xena : Is one woman too much for you?”***

In the quotation from the all conversation, Xena showed to describe the heroine character, in representation of female characters is wider with confidence heroines who embody differing personalities and strength.

The Hunger Games is an American fiction-adventure film based on Suzanne Collin novel 2008 which the same name. The film was released on March 2012 in US and UK. The Main characters is Katniss Everdeen who lives in the dystopian, post-apocalyptic nation of Panem in North America. The Capitol, a highly advanced metropolis, exercises political control over the rest of the nation. The Hunger Games is an annual event in which one boy and one girl aged 12 – 18 from each of the twelve districts surrounding the Capitol are selected by lottery to compete in a televised battle to the death.

In this research, evidence that Katniss is the main character, barely into the first chapter of the book, she says:

*“And if a girl from District Twelve of all places can defy the Capitol and walk away unharmed, what is to stop them from doing the same?...”* (p. 21)

In the quotation word “a girl” is used to describe the heroine character, in representation of female characters is wider with independent heroines who embody differing personalities and strength.

This research is examining *Xena: Warrior Princess Movie* (1995) *season 1* and *The Hunger Games Movie* (2012) in terms of women character as object of the research. With an aim to examine the physical representation of female heroes in action films, this research will focus on the analysis of the crucial aspects of physical action – through character/role development. It is important to investigate the specific functions of women character as a hero in man story that written by

man author in popular literature can solve the case with their elements of femininity and masculinity that represented by women character (heroine).

The term 'action hero' refers to a protagonist in film which usually suggests that the role is played by a male for the reason that the work of fiction has only been acknowledging men to play that part and women are just the side-kicks. In every action films, a female leading character has always been called a 'heroine', for she has commonly been character as the romantic interest that needs to be saved by the male hero. The revision of the hero archetype allows us to have a vision of a courageous female hero displaying leadership and assertiveness, rather than just a mere romantic heroine. In relation to that, there are various terms defining the same type of the strong female-bodied hero archetype.

As suggested in the research title, the idea of 'female hero' draws on the notion of narrative 'hero' which according to Bernstein (2001) is defined as "an individual of elevated moral stature and superior ability who pursues his goals indefatigably in the face of powerful antagonist(s)". Her then states that 'heroism' consists of four components: moral greatness, ability or prowess, action in the face of opposition, and triumph in at least a spiritual, if not a physical, form.

To support the analyses, some of previous studies that related to this research. The first of previous study is an Undergraduate thesis with title *Gender Attributes Of Female Detective In Thomas Harris' The Silence Of The Lambs: A Formula Study* (2016) by Suci Pujiastuti Pamungkas. It talks about identifying and interpreting the female characters which describe about how portrayed women in the novel by Thomas Harris. She analyses the character of Clarice Starling as the main characters of hero and she analysed the aspects of femininity and masculinity

represent by Clarice Starling. She used gender attributes and popular fiction in her theory for explain the characters.

The second research has been done by Kurniawan with title *The Symbol Of Heroism Act Of The Characters In Suzzane Collins's The Hunger Games* (2016) which conclude that analysing about heroism act of the main character in the novel. He analysed the heroism act through the symbol of the heroism of Katniss Everdeen in the novel. For the result, she explains that Katniss Heroism act can symbolize other meaning and research found 12 excerpts of heroism act which represent as symbols.

The third research is from Ida Sanggaard with the title *Feminism – Is The Leading Female Character Strong? The American Representation Of The Tough Woman In Action Movies* (2018). That journal talked about how the American action cinema constructs gender roles, particularly the portrayal of the female characters as action heroines. The feminism represent through the femininity and masculinity in Action Movie.

The last research has been done by Lulu Fathinanda with the title is *The Masculinity On Heroine Character In Resident Evil's Movie* (2018). That tells about Heroine of female Characters in the film Resident Evil's. The object were researched by Lulu to find the aspect of masculinity and heroine portrayed in the film.

The similar research analysed and discussed about heroism of the characters through the femininity and masculinity relation in the research. The different between those researchers and this object because the researcher take two different object that is television series and film with the title *Xena:Warrior Princess* and



*The Hunger Games* . The researcher analyse about the main characters in adventure film and adventure television series. The masculinity as the main characters in the object is women. The researcher aims to analysed heroism acts of heroine and masculinity aspect of the heroine in those object as reflected by Xena and Katiniss as the main characters in this adventure object.

## **1.2 Statement of Problem**

The researcher focuses on the research of female characters that form the basis of the problems found in the selected objects. The characters are owned by the main character figures. As the main character she has feminine side in her personality but she also has a side of masculinity as a female character.

In every action films, a female leading character has always been called a 'heroine', for she has commonly been characterized as the romantic interest that needs to be saved by the male hero. Nowadays that heroine is the interesting topic for readers or audiences. According to Bernstein (2010, p. 12) women who have the role to be a hero in the story called by heroine. Heroine appears in the world of America cinema it is because of crisis dominance masculinity in some films.

According to the explanation above, the film *Xena : Warrior Princess* and *The Hunger Games Movie* has many things to be analysed one topic study is about how women describe feminine also masculinity in her personality based on body, language, psyche, and culture. At the previous basic explanation, the researcher effort to observe what the researcher questionable.

In the purpose having almost the same female character, the problem can be formulated as follows:

1. How are the heroism acts of heroine portrayed in *Xena: Warrior Princess* and *The Hunger Games Movie*?
2. How are the masculinity aspects of heroine described in *Xena: Warrior Princess* and *The Hunger Games Movie*?

### 1.3 Research Objective

Based on the background of study and the statement of the problem mentioned above, the objectives of this research are as follow:

1. To find out the heroism acts of heroine portrayed in film *Xena: Warrior Princess* and *The Hunger Games Movie* in differences year.
2. To find out the masculinity aspect of heroine described in *Xena: Warrior Princess* and *The Hunger Games Movie*.

### 1.4 Research Significance

At this part the researcher will show the significance of the research. The purpose of the research divided into some purposes. The significance of this research is directed to the students of literary subjects or the reader in general. The researcher is expected to give contribution such as for the development on the gender studies.

Practically, this research is generally directed to the student of English Literature, the reader and other researchers. This research is a reference for those who are interested in enriching the literary knowledge about heroism act of female characters in *Xena: Warrior Princess* and *The Hunger Games Movie*. The researcher tries to analyse deeply description about feminism in particular based on

heroine. After it, to find out the similarities and the differences of those character and those film from year to different year. Theoretically, this research can be used for adding research about masculinity of the heroine approach especially main character.

### 1.5 Definition of Key Terms

1. **Popular Literature:** Literature that is enjoyed by a large mass of people and favour with large audiences.
2. **Heroism:** Main male or female character in a story or novel following the standards of behaviour considered acceptable and right or quality of being useful or important in person admired for bravery or others good qualities.
3. **Character:** a person in narrative work of art.
4. **Heroine:** The chief female character in a book, play, or movie, who is typically identified with good qualities.
5. **Masculinity:** Qualities, behaviour, roles, or attributes regarded as characteristic of men.
6. **Masculine:** Called manhood or manliness that is the natural energy of masculinity, having qualities or appearance traditionally associated with men such as strength and aggressiveness.

### 1.6 Organization of Writing

The organization of the paper consists of five chapters. The first chapter discuss about background of research, statement of problem, research objective, research significance, definition of key terms and organization of the paper. The second

chapter discuss about the theoretical underpinning related to the whole of the theory about heroin and masculinity in main character from the *Xena: Warrior Princess* and *The Hunger Games*. The theories serves as a base for investigating the research and explains about some literature terms that are used as the concept of the research including the theories of popular culture, feminism, character, gender, heroin, and masculinity.

The third chapter discusses about the methodology of the research, which consist of research design, sample of data, source of data, technique of collecting data, and technique of analyzing data. The fourth chapter is how to find and analyze the data. The result of the research from what the writer found. Finally, the last chapter is about the interpretation toward the result discuss as the conclusions and suggestions.

