

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter explains the general description of the paper. It consists of the research background, statement of the problem, research objectives, research significance, previous study, and definition of key terms.

1.1 Research Background

Films with the theme of post-apocalyptic life have discussions about how living conditions are after disasters such as nuclear bombs, wars, disease outbreaks, or environmental collapse. The characterization of characters in post-apocalyptic-themed films is generally depicted with hard and tough characteristics that have the goal of surviving as long as possible in difficult living conditions.

In post-apocalyptic life, the survivors generally meet and build communities while starting a new civilization again from scratch. The survivors in this post-apocalypse film are unquestioningly willing to do whatever it takes to fulfill their needs. This is because supplies in the post-apocalyptic period is hard to obtain and very valuable. With the lack of available supplies disproportionate to the number of survivors who want to survive, there is potential for conflict later.

The conflicts that then arise in films with the theme of post-apocalyptic life are the focus of discussion in the film story. The plot in post-apocalyptic films tends to depict the condition of the survivors who are willing to do anything to survive, even often, the conflict over the scramble for supply leads to political conflicts and wars. The condition of the survivors, who are affected by feelings of depression,

loneliness, panic, and fear that arise as a product of post-apocalyptic life, makes conflict among survivors very likely to occur.

From the perspective of characterization in the film, the survivors are impossible to identify as good or bad characters. The general knowledge about the characterization of a character in a story is that there are characters who are considered good, called "protagonists", and characters who are considered the opposite, called "antagonists". According to Nurgiyantoro (2013: 258-275), protagonists are characters who fight for truth and honesty and have good character, while antagonists are characters who fight against truth and honesty and have bad character. Generally, the main character of a film story has a good character or disposition, so the main character of the story is commonly identified as the protagonist. However, in some stories with a post-apocalyptic setting, the main character is different from characters in general stories. Based on the previous statement, the main characters in post-apocalyptic stories cannot be categorized into protagonists or antagonists. Seeing this, the main character in post-apocalyptic stories is mostly grouped into another characterization called "antihero".

Based on Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2012), Anti-Hero is defined as; a protagonist or notable figure who is conspicuously lacking in heroic qualities. A central figure in a story that has the character Anti-Hero is in the middle of alignment. According to Morrell (2008), "An anti-hero is a protagonist who typically lacks the traditional traits and qualities of a hero, such as trustworthiness, courage, and honesty. If he were assigned a color, it would be gray." Even though the character's purpose is good, but the way they achieve his goal is not acceptable

by existing standards of goodness. Furthermore, an anti-hero is unorthodox and might flaunt laws or act in ways contrary to society's standards. In fact, and this is important, an anti-hero often reflects society's confusion and ambivalence about morality, and thus he can be used for social or political comment.

A film with the theme of post-apocalyptic life has its characteristics compared to other film genres. The concept of antihero characterization in most characters in post-apocalyptic film stories makes it an interesting thing to study and analyze. The obvious reason why the antihero character contained in a post-apocalyptic-themed film is because the unusual pattern for the figure to develop. the pattern of character development applied to the main character affect the story plot itself and makes this characterization concept quite unique. The film with this kind of plot and characterization concept attracts many audience to watch. Of the many films with the theme of post-apocalyptic life, one of them is a television series titled "*The Last of Us*".

The Last of Us is an American post-apocalyptic television series created by Craig Mazin and Neil Druckmann and produced by HBO. The television series premiered on January 15, 2023, with episodes released weekly. This show is an adaption from the 2013 video game developed by Naughty Dog and published for PlayStation 3 with the same title. The post-apocalyptic life raised in *The Last of Us* television series is caused by an outbreak of fungal infection that attacks the brain function of most humans in the entire United States of America and turns them into cannibalistic creatures.

The Last of Us focuses on the journey of the main character named Joel who is assigned by an organization to deliver a young girl to be used as a research object for making vaccines from the plague that has hit the entire United States. Joel has hard characteristics and does this task for money and supply. His task of delivering a girl who purposed to be used for vaccine research and can be the hope of mankind out of the plague is a task with a good purpose. However, despite carrying out a noble task, it does not necessarily make Joel the main protagonist. Despite being the central character in the film's story, Joel cannot be called a protagonist, nor can he be called an antagonist. This is because, in the course of his journey, it is found that as the main character, Joel does not have the traits and attributes that a protagonist should have, or what is later known as a "Hero". Thus, for the time being, it can be identified that Joel is the main character with the characterization of an antihero.

Characteristics of an antihero is a characterization concept that is more advanced than the previous concept where in a story there are only protagonist and antagonist roles. There are still many people who think that the characterization of a character in a story is limited to protagonists and antagonists. Meanwhile, in practice, the characterization of a character in a story is not only limited to these two characterizations. One of the characterization concepts found in the study of a story is antihero characterization.

Although, the concept of antihero characterization is still unfamiliar and not generally known by most people. Because of this antihero characterization highlights its ambiguity. As stated by Ulqinaku (2021) that, Antiheroes are

characters that share features with both heroes and villains, typified as selfish and rule breakers, but who end up doing something good for society. Based on the above statement, concluded that the Anti-Hero character in a story is the antithesis of the general and simple concept of characterization. This is quite reasonable because the understanding of the concept of characterization in a story also develops with the times. And it was these developments that gave birth to contemporary art, or contemporary art. The development itself made this characterization concept is able to be studied.

The reason the researcher chose *The Last of Us* television series to be the object of this thesis research is that the researcher sees the potential for scientific studies, especially studies on the characterization aspects in it by looking at the phenomenon where the show itself is on the rise and has its hype. From the point of view of his literary studies, the researcher sees a probability that the concept of the characterization of the Anti-Hero in the main character of the television series *The Last of Us* is a different kind and deserves to be studied more deeply through literary criticism.

1.2 Statement of Problem

The researcher found that this research contains a statement that the characterization and character development of the main figure affects the storyline. These circumstances are explained by the statement above and need to be discussed. In order to discuss this statement of the problem, the researcher provides two research questions as the main focus of this research to be discussed and solved. The research questions are listed below:

1. How is Joel's character as Anti-hero roles in Craig Mazin's TV Series *The Last of Us*?
2. How is the character development of Joel as Anti-hero roles that affect the storyline?

1.3 Research Objectives

In this research, analysis of the impact of conflicts towards character development of the main character in *The Last of Us* has several purposes, namely:

1. To identify the anti-hero character of Joel.
2. To understand how the character development of Joel affects the storyline.

1.4 Research Significances

This research can provide a beneficial impact both theoretically and practically which is elaborated on in the following section:

1. Theoretically

This research can contribute to support academic writing field. In order to achieve that, the study will be added as a complement for the existed previous studies. Furthermore, this research is able to give new sight about the Anti-hero characterization concept through literary perspective and to be used as a reference for other researchers, who are going to do similar research.

2. Practically

This research can provide a new sight to the reader about story analysis. To fully enjoy a work of literature, it is necessary to have knowledge and understanding

of the work of literature. To get this understanding, it is necessary to analyze and study in depth. In addition, an in-depth study of a literary work can also be intended as a form of appreciation. Therefore, this research is able to be one of the scientific studies intended to understand a literary work as a whole as well as a form of appreciation for the work.

1.5 Previous Studies

However, this research does not rejoice and let alone, yet is provoked and inspired intentionally as by the previous studies. The first study was a journal from Zamani, Ishanullah, and Badri the title of which is *Karakter Anti-Hero sebagai Counter-Hegemoni Superhero dalam Film Deadpool Analisis Counter-Hegemoni Antonio Gramsci*. This research provided a discussion of how the characterization of the antihero in Deadpool can create conflict in the course of the film's story. To support the process of discussion, this research using a theory of Counter-Hegemony by Antonio Gramsci.

The second study was a journal from Hasanah, Natshir, and Ariani the title of which is *Character Development of Agatha Prenderghast in Cody Kimmel's Paranorman Novel*. This research provided a discussion of what character development is in literary field toward the novel's storyline. To support the process of discussion, this research using two theories, those are; Kenan's Characterization theory, and Chatman's Structuralism theory.

The third study was a thesis from Aricha Hikmah Andari, the title of which is *The Representation of Father Figure in The Last of Us Video Game*. This research provided a discussion of how the character development existed in a video game

created a representation of father figure for a character. To support the process of discussion, this research using Carl Jung's theory of Archetype and movie Studies.

Apart from these three previous studies, this research has some differences compared to them. The differences extracted in the table below:

No	Name of Studies	Topic of Discussion	Theory Used
1	<i>Karakter Anti-Hero sebagai Counter-Hegemoni Superhero dalam Film Deadpool Analisis Counter-Hegemoni Antonio Gramsci</i>	Anti-hero as a characterization concept that can create conflict in <i>Deadpool</i> film	Antonio Gramsci's Counter-Hegemony theory.
2	<i>Character Development of Agatha Prenderghast in Cody Kimmel's Paranorman Novel</i>	General Character Development in <i>Cody Kimmel's Paranorman Novel</i> .	Characterization theory by Kenan and Chatman's Structuralism theory.

3	<i>The Representation of Father Figure in The Last of Us Video Game</i>	Representative factors of father figure in a main character in <i>The Last of Us Video Game</i> .	Archetype and Movie Studies theory by Carl Jung.
4	<i>Anti-Hero Roles of The Main Character in Craig Mazin's TV Series The Last of Us</i>	Character Development of the Anti-hero main character.	Rimmon Kenan, and Chatman's Characterization theory.

Table 1. Comparison between this research with the previous studies

This research is different from the studies mentioned above. This research focuses on identifying the main anti-hero character through characteristics, symptoms, and other aspects contained in the concept of characterization theory from Rimmon Kenan in more detail and presented with both captured scenes and quotes from *The Last of Us* script.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

In order to clarify the key terms used in this study, some definitions are put forward:

1. Characterization: Characterization is the nature, behavior, desires, and instincts that exist in a character (Chatman, 1978). Characterization is a means for the author to show directly how the nature or character of a

character is. According to Petrie and Boggs, this characterization is presented in the story to make the characters look more real or look more like humans in the real world through their actions (Petrie & Boggs, 2012)

2. Character of Anti-hero: The main character of a story whose characteristics lack of heroic attributes. As a main character used to define kindness action, an anti-hero main character has a good purpose despite of unacceptable manner.
3. Conflict: According to Cambridge Dictionary, conflict is a form of disagreement between two people that includes opposing opinions. Conflicts in literary works are not only in character-on-character only, but also against the environment, or even on the characters themselves.
4. Character Development: Character development in a movie is the cause of conflicts and plots in the story, characters will not be the same person when entering a story (Petrie & Boggs, 2012). This development is because the characters will experience many conflicts and face the plot, so the characterization will continue to develop.