

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter explains the general description of the paper. It contains research backgrounds, statement of the problems, research objectives, research significances, conceptual frameworks, definition of key terms, and previous studies.

1.1 Research Background

Popular Culture is a phenomenon which includes a mass production of a certain materials which then being distributed to many people for them to enjoy and also to make a profit off of it (Gelder, 2018). This means that popular culture cannot be escaped from because of how its nature being a culture that is massively produced amongst the society. Among the society it is hard to avoid the phenomena of popular culture because it is like water between fishes. It is all around and cannot be avoided whatsoever. It has become part of the society economical tools which help the stability of it. No wonder that it is being called popular due to how many the materials are being produced and gained many consumers from all kinds of people.

One of the things that is being massively produced is none other than popular literature. According to Gelder one of the main characteristics of popular literature is that it does not tend to use the 'autonomous' language of the art world, although this is not to say that it is without any artistic merit. It simply means that popular fiction, as a form of literary production, occupies a different position altogether in the literary field, one that is not so dependent upon, or engaged with, art world discourse. It means that popular literature is not necessarily being excluded as part of the art work or literature, it just means that it mostly focuses on the production of it, that is why it does not usually have the same word choice as what can be considered a high literature works. This is because of the main focus of popular literature is to produce as many works as possible therefore it needs to use an understandable word choice to make it feel relatable hence can be enjoyed by all kind of people from the society. That is why in popular works there is usually a formula on how to make it a form of literature that would be enjoyable or making

a huge amount of profit. Therefore, it can be understood that basically popular literature at the end of the day belongs to the people. There are many kinds of popular literature that exist in our society, some of them are written and some of them are being spread verbally and through action. The example of literary work is novel, poetry, non-fiction, drama, movie, and short story, further explanation can be seen in the next chapter.

Now that technology has evolved, people tend to find ways to spread popular literature through many ways. Before the technology evolved one of the forms of entertainment that usually being used as a tool to spread popular literature is just literary works such as books, poetry, and drama. Now that the technology has allowed people to do more than just written text but also audio and visual, movie then started to be considered as a media to showcasing popular literature or culture in today society. Same as literary works, movie also has some certain formula that would make it sell to the audience and making lots of profits upon its release. Because of the nature of the popular culture itself is that it is to create lots of profit, therefore, nowadays there are many ways for people to be able to enjoy movie anywhere and anytime. Before the internet is accessible to a lot of people, those who intend to get some entertainment in a form of movie usually goes to the cinema. Sometimes if the people want to watch it at home they usually rent or buy the DVD of certain movie for them to be taken home and watch it with their family or friends.

Now that the internet already accessible to almost everybody, there are many streaming platforms that provide tons of movies and TV-series to be watched. Some of the most commonly known streaming platforms are such as Netflix, Hulu, HBO Max, Prime Video, Paramount+, and many more. By paying a monthly or even annual fee, people can gain many entertainments value that are being provided by these streaming platforms. The existence of these platforms itself making so many profits due to how much the demands of an easy access entertainment. Many movies in theatre tends to be available on these platforms hence creating even more profit and more popularity (Evens et al., 2024).

One of the most popular and profitable movies that has been made in the year 2023 is none other than *Barbie*. This movie was released on July 21st, 2023 directed

and written by the popular director Greta Gerwig, which then create a very big hype amongst the society due to its popular main character which is Barbie who has been an American pop icon for such a long time ago. The movie also consisting of many A-list actors and actresses, the main character Stereotypical Barbie is being played by Margot Robbie who also known from playing the character Harley Quinn in a DC Comic cinematic universe, there's also an Academy Award nominee and the main actor of the most notable movie entitled *La La Land*, Ryan Gosling who plays the Beach Ken role. The supporting cast also consisting of many talented and brilliant people such as, America Ferrera (*Sisterhood of The Travelling Pants*), Ariana Greenblatt (*Avengers: End Game*), Issa Rae (*The Hate U Give*), Kate McKinnon (*Ghostbusters*), Michael Cera (*Superbadi*), and many more talented people that is according to one of the website that contain information about any kinds of movie which is called the IMDB. Other than the amazing casts of the movie, it also received many praises because of how different the ideology that is being presented in the movie to the usual Barbie storyline that has already been showcased before.

It can be seen on how the movie has several nominations in many prestigious awards as it can be seen from the IMDB site that this movie receive many awards such as the Golden Globe Awards where it receives 9 nominations and won 2 nominations, there's also the Critic's Choice Awards with 18 nominations and 6 wins including the award for Best Original Screenplay. Some of the most impressive awards are the Movie of The Year from the American Film Institute Awards, the Best Supporting Performance from the Boston Society of Film Critics, the Best Animation/Family Trailer from the Golden Trailer Awards, and many more. It can be expected that the movie will receive more nominations in the award season especially the Academy Award due to its popularity among the society. The release of the movie triggered a social phenomenon such as people start wearing pink colored clothes when they went to see the movie without even being told that they need to wear pink. People all over the internet also start dressing up as Barbie more often and wear make-up to mimic the plastic look of Barbie.

Ken Gelder believes that a successful popular literature is a work where the purpose of the works is for 'entertainment' and how it is aware of the fact that the work itself can be identified as a form of industrial production or 'manufacture', and how much of the possibility of this work's commercial and merchandizing potential (Gelder, 2018). Looking at how successful the *Barbie* movie is by the numbers it makes and all the profits from the screening of the movie and also looking at how it impacted its audiences by the way they dressed, act, or speak, it can be said that it has successfully becoming one of the most popular form of popular entertainment in today's society. As it is stated before that this success did not just come from nothing. There are some aspects that help making *Barbie* one of the most popular movie in this century.

Other than how the director has taken a very different directions from the usual *Barbie* animated movie, Gerwig also used the icon *Barbie* as a tool to deliver a social message and commentary through her movie regarding the situation of many societal problems. One of the focus of Gerwig's commentary is the feminism issue in current society. *Barbie* heavily tackled the problems of patriarchy in the real-life situations which can be felt a little relatable to the audience especially the female audience. One of the most interesting things that this movie managed to tackle is from how the director and writer showing the audience the monologue that. The most unique thing of the movie is how Gerwig used the adventure formula which usually consists of male main character and turned it around and used *Barbie* as the female main character or hero. This of course goes against the usual stereotypical damsel in distress scenario that usually being given to the female character in any adventure movie.

The history of *Barbie* itself is started way back from 1959 with the good intentions to give girls a toy where they will not always be acting up as the mother for their baby doll. At first *Barbie* is a fashion doll created and invented by Ruth Handler the co-founder of Mattel, Inc., which is one of the biggest toy company in the United States. Ruth was being inspired to create the *Barbie* doll by watching her daughter play with paper dolls of adult women, Ruth wanted to create a toy that gives girls all over the world the imagination of themselves once they have grown

up. Barbie itself has evolved throughout the decades to reflect on the changing times and trends in the real world. So far, Barbie has had more than 250 careers, from teacher to even an astronaut to a scientist. She has been a popular icon for many generations throughout the decades making Barbie to be one of the most influential toys in history with more than a billion dolls being sold worldwide even to this day and continue to inspire and empowering girls from all over the world with different backgrounds.

Barbie is so popular that even the movie has gained so many profits making \$1 Billion in its opening week. *Barbie* itself is a movie about how the main character named Barbie who lives in 'Barbieland' where everything is being ruled by Barbies until one day the main character, Stereotypical Barbie started experiencing weird things that cannot be explained such as started feeling sad or even have the thoughts of death, because of those problems like it or not, Barbie needs to embarks on a quest to the real world to fix this problem so that she can get back to be the happy, pretty Barbie that she used to be. Little did she know that she will be faced with many revelations during her quests and ended up questioning everything she has known all her life.

From the previous explanation it can be seen that certain literary works can be popular due to the use the adventure formula in the work itself. Saricks believes that the adventure formula may be dominated by male protagonist but not for long. In the *Barbie* movie which is set in an adventurous situation consisting of female heroes or main characters where most of the time if a literary work has a female protagonist then it usually fitted into the romance formula. With that being said it is very important to redefine the true meaning of what an adventure formula is and how it is not solely just based on the male characterization but the use of other aspects that are usually being represented in the adventure formula.

1.2 Statement of Problems

In this research the researcher has redefined the definition of the adventure formula and rethinking on what makes a movie can be considered an adventure genre, given the situation that this movie has a heroine as the main character in the

movie. Therefore, there are two problem formulations that are being studied in this paper. They are:

1. What are the adventure formula aspects that are being represented in the *Barbie* movie?
2. How are these aspects support the redefining of the adventure formula in the *Barbie* movie?

1.3 Research Purposes

According to the formulation of the problem, there are two objectives to be achieved in this study. They are:

1. To identified what are the adventure formula aspects that are being represented in the *Barbie* movie.
2. To know how are these aspects support the redefining of the adventure formula in the *Barbie* movie.

1.4 Research Significances

Theoretically this research significances can help breaking the statement of research where the adventure genre always have a male hero as the main character and only use women as a side character or a damsel in distress. In reality, the society nowadays are more welcoming towards a female heroine as the lead character in an adventure genre work. The researcher also hope that this research will help others who are interested in the adventure genre related research.

Whereas the adventure genre itself according to Cawelti and Saricks always has a male protagonist or hero while the women character usually being perceived as an object and reward for the hero. By conducting this research looking at some of the characteristics in the adventure genre such as *pacing*, *story line*, *characterization*, *frame/setting*, *tone/mood*, and *style/language*, it can be found how those characteristics have matched with what the adventure genre usually is about.

The significance of this research is also as a practice to broaden the researcher's and the reader's knowledge regarding of the definition of the adventure genre by Saricks and Cawelti. By analyzing the *Barbie* movie, it is expected that the research and the reader may learn on what it meant for a literary work to be considered as an

adventure genre by looking at some of the characteristics that can be identified in the adventure genre according to Saricks and Cawelti.

1.5 Conceptual Framework

The main thing about the fantasy of the adventure storyline is that usually the hero or the group of heroes are overcoming obstacles and dangerous situation in order to let it accomplish an important and moral mission (Jiménez, 2020). This means oftentimes but not always the hero's obstacles are usually the results of the machinations of a villain, and in additions to it, the hero very frequently receives, as a form of side benefit is the favors of one or more attractive young lady, that is according to Cawelti. In his theory of formula adventure Cawelti seems to highlight that the main character has to be a hero and not a heroine, that is why in his formula the ladies usually just perceived as a mere object or a reward for the hero and not a whole complete character. In the traditional adventure formula, the female character usually just being portrayed as this damsel in distress or a prize once the hero has accomplished the mission successfully. Meanwhile according to Cawelti, if the main character is a female then it is categorized as romance, because usually female is embarking on this journey of love where all that could fit them is just love and romantic relations and feeling. Cawelti believes that the action-packed genre are usually for men which consisting of a male main character or hero (Cawelti, 1977).

Cawelti stated that in order to be considered as an adventure formula then it must have a character which the audience identifies as someone who is passing through the most frightening perils some triumph, have a very strong character that usually starting out struggling during battles but then becoming stronger and can overcome his struggle. He believes that the adventure formula since the beginning of civilization was made for men because even in the early ages women only stay at home and tend for their children while the men is out adventuring and hunting to provides for the family (Paredes, 1976).

It is very important to look at the characteristics of a certain work to match what kind of formula that it can be categorized into. The way people can look at it is through the intrinsic aspects of the film itself and how it can connect to the characteristics of a certain formula itself. According to Damono, some of the most

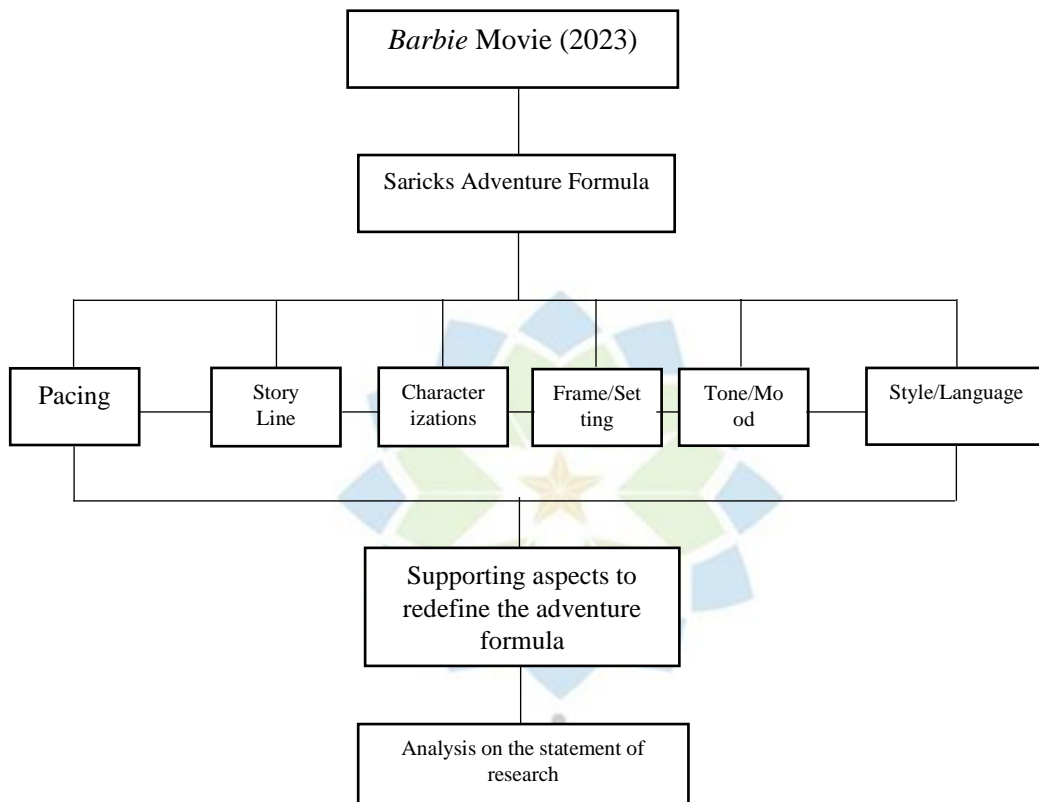
important aspects of a work are the 1) theme, 2) plot, 3) setting, and 4) characterization. So from those aspect of the work it can be seen that whether or not the work can be categorized to a certain formula or not (Nugraha, 2020).

In his work, Saricks believes that in order to be considered as an adventure work is not limited and can be seen through its elements and characteristics, he focuses on the elements aspects that are being showcased in the work, if it matches the formula then it can be considered as an adventure work. Therefore, the prototypical adventure formula usually consists a hero on a mission and he must face a variety of obstacles along his journey. The reader gets a glimpse of how the setting is usually exotic and ancient. The reader also gets to feel thrilled and excited while enjoying the work because of the suspense that it created. According to Cawelti, the adventure formula consists of these very important characteristics (Cawelti, 1977)they are pacing, story line, characterization, setting/frame, tone/mood, and style/language.

From those characteristics, a film can be categorized into the adventure film by looking at whether those characteristics exist in the film or not. Even though according to Cawelti and Saricks that the adventure formula is centered on men it didn't mean that women cannot be included in the adventure formula. As long as most of the characteristics available in the film then it does not minimize the chances of the film is not part of the adventure formula just because it has a heroine instead of a hero. Because according to Saricks for now, the Adventure genre remain primarily a man's world, but perhaps not for long. Then it is said that the male-dominated genre that is the adventure genre can become a formula that is also available for women (Saricks, 2004). Considering how times have changed and society has shifted its view regarding women then it is no surprised if nowadays the adventure formula is not just for men but also for women. The ideology nowadays have pushed the feminism movements further into the adventure formula by making films with strong heroine and no love story whatsoever (Nugraha, 2020; Setyanto et al., 2020). The feminism agenda has helped women to move into the adventure formula and not just being placed as an object or a damsel in distress every time a

female character exist in the adventure works. A schematic work for the research that is about to be conducted is can be seen as follows;

Outline 1. Conceptual Framework



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1.6 Definition of Key Terms

These definitions of key terms are made in the intention to avoid any misunderstanding from the terms used in this research.

Redefining: ‘Redefining’ derives from the word ‘define’ and ‘redefine’ which according to the dictionary means that ‘redefining’ is an attempt in re-explain certain explanation or give a new definition and try to re-evaluate the already existing definition. Generally, it means changing or altering the definition, nature, or scope of the whole thing.

The Adventure Formula: Based on the Oxford Dictionary, "adventure" is often defined as an unusual and interesting experience or activity involving risks and obstacles. It includes a variety of experiences, from exciting travel and exploration

to bold and challenging efforts. An adventure usually means a departure from everyday life and invites individuals to participate in an unpredictable or courageous experience. It is characterized by the spirit of carrying out something new or bold that often leads to personal growth, discovery or satisfaction with the unknown (Cawelti, 1977; Lindqvist, 2003). According to Cawelti, the concepts of formulas are epic structures or patterns that are repeated within popular genres such as adventure, mystery and romance. He argues that the formulas provide a framework for telling stories that meet specific cultural and psychological needs, and that they can be seen as a limitation and a creative tool for writers. From Cawelti's point of view, the formula contributes to the popularity of certain types of novels by providing the public with a satisfactory narrative structure (Cawelti, 1977; Chen, 2015). Therefore, the adventure formula is a literary formula that consist of hero embarks on an adventure to complete certain missions.

Movie: A movie is a form of entertainment, a story by sound and a sequence of images that delude the continuous movement. It is a special language of projected moving images with sound. Movies are often seen as a series of still images or moving images produced by taking photographic images with cameras or creating images using animation techniques or visual effects (Petrie & Boggs, 2012).

Barbie: Barbie is a fashion doll made by American entrepreneur Ruth Handler by the American toy company Mattel and brought to life in 1959. The toy is the character of the Barbie brand, which is a series of fashion dolls and accessories. Barbie has been an important part of the toy fashion food market for over six decades.

Heroine: According to the dictionary the word 'heroine' means the chief female character in a book, play, or movie, who is typically identified with good qualities, and with whom the reader or audience is expected to sympathize. The terms 'heroine' usually refers to a female protagonist or a woman admired for her courage, bravery, noble qualities, or outstanding achievements.

1.7 Previous Studies

The researcher finds several studies that highlight the female heroine in its adventure storyline, just like how the movie *Barbie* highlight the female heroine in

the adventure story that it is showcasing. After a long research, the researcher has found three studies that could help the success of this research. The relevant studies can be seen as follows. The first relevant previous research that the researcher believes can help conducting this research is an article entitled '*Action Adventure Formula In Mulan 2020*'(2020) written by Zulfa Nur Azizah, Siti Awalia Maryani, and Siti Hotimah Afriani. The article itself talks about the adventure formula that can be seen through the narrative analysis that is being conducted by the authors. Although Mulan the main character is a female it can still be concluded that the movie can be categorized as an Adventure movie because how the narrative elements match the qualification of how an adventure formula should be (Azizah et al., 2022). The study used the Cawelti adventure formula theory in conducting the research. Therefore, this study can help prove how the *Barbie* movie can be categorized as an adventure movie from the narrative aspect itself even though it has a female heroine and not a men hero to lead the adventure and having a lot of fight scene like how it is portrayed in the Cawelti's adventure formula but both of these movies has proven that even with a women main character the adventure genre can still be conducted regardless of their sex.

The second study that helps solve the research is an article entitled '*The Monomyth in James Cameron's The Terminator: Sarah as Monomythic Heroine*'(2008) written by Donald Palumbo. In this study, the author conducting a research on how the main character Sarah O'Connor in the movie *Terminator* have a very significant roles for the process of monomythic adventure that is being showcased in the movie. Even though Sarah is a female she still becoming one of the key-ingredients to create the adventure formula in the movie. The study focuses on how the character behave and how the director characterized her so that she can be seen as an important heroine to the adventure formula that is being used in the movie *Terminator* (Palumbo, 2008). The theory that is being used in this research is the feminism theory where it helps the progression of having a female character as the key to saving the whole plot of the movie. The researcher believes that this study could help looking at how the characterization on Barbie in the movie *Barbie* create a significant role in applying the adventure formula into the movie.

Last but not least, an article entitled '*Damsels and Heroines: The Conundrum of the Post-Feminist Disney Princess*' (2013) written by Cassandra Stover. This study focuses on differentiating what damsels are and what heroines are and how society has shifted its ideology on how they see a Disney Princess. The author conducted this research by looking at the social phenomenon that is happening such as the feminism movement and how it takes part in turning a damsel into a heroine (Stover, 2013). This study used the post-feminism theory to help conducting the research. This paper helps proving how the character or the icon Barbie is no longer just be seen as an object but rather more as a hero who can be anything. This of course looking at how the main production company of Barbie, Mattel has marketed Barbie as someone who has multiple careers and can be anything she wants, making an impression that Barbie is no longer a damsel and has turned into a heroine. From this article it can also be understood how heroine slowly filling up the adventure genre from time to time. From having them only as an object and prize to becoming the actual heroine who eventually saves the day. This of course being influenced by the things that are happening in real life on how the world finally sees women as more than just a housewife or some sorts but also can be anything and having the same opportunity as men does.

The researcher believes that with these previous studies, they can help the process of the paper hence making this one of the first of many to come regarding the study on the *Barbie* (2023) movie.