

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a general description of the paper. It consists of six components such as research background, statement of the problem, research objective, research significance, previous study and definition of key terms.

### 1.1 Research Background

Whether a film could be classified as a literary work or not? This topic is certainly still a subject of endless debate. Just like novel, drama, poetry. Films are could be considered as a literary works because a film contain a literary element. Films and dramas are very similar literary works, but the two literary works have several differences including the medium to present them. Klarer (2004:56) pointed that "At the beginning of the twenty-first century, it is impossible to neiglect film as a semi-textual genre both influenced by and exerting influence on literature and literary criticism. Film is predetermined by literary techniques; conversely, literary practice developed particular features under the impact of film." Film can be seen as an inherent part of literature. The mutual influence between film and literature is a key point, given that both have a significant influence on each other. Film, as explained in then paragraph above, borrows literary techniques in its narrative, such as plot, character, and dialog, indicating that film contains literary elements. In addition, films have also shaped the development of literature by influencing the structure and style in literary works, even contributing to the development of post-modern fiction by borrowing some of its structural features. In this way, film is not only a separate visual medium, but also an extension of literary works in visual form, supporting the view that film is part of a wider literary work.

Film itself is a set of images that are arranged and can move. Sparshott, (1971:24) said that "A film is a series of motionless images projected onto a screen so fast as to create an impression of continuous motion in the mind of the viewer." Film also has sound effects, music and others. A film usually has a purpose to convey a message, or just as a medium of entertainment. Films are also built by many elements, such as: plot, characters, cinematography, sound, genre, and others. The elements that build the film can certainly be analysed, so that it can make it easier to understand what is contained in the film itself. Barsam and Monahan in (Wangsa, 2023) explained that "A film is a story recorded in a collection of film strips/celluloid, shown on a screen at a certain pace to give the impression of motion." Films can convey messages for many purposes, including entertainment, moral teaching, education, knowledge, etc.

Before the concept of hegemony was introduced into British cultural studies, popular culture already had two different views, the first view popular culture as structure. Storey (2010: 4) said that “The first tradition viewed popular culture as a culture imposed by the capitalist culture industries; a culture provided for profit and ideological manipulation.” And the second view is popular culture as agency. Storey (2010: 4) explained that “The second tradition saw popular culture as a culture spontaneously emerging from below; an ‘authentic’ folk, working -class or subculture – the ‘voice’ of the people.” But after the concept of hegemony was introduced popular culture was neither 'folk', working class, or an authentic subculture, nor was it a culture imposed by the capitalist culture industry, but rather popular culture was a balance between the two, a contradictory mix of the lower and upper classes, the commercial and the indigenous characterised by 'resistance' and 'incorporation', 'structure' and 'agency'.

Because popular culture is a combination of popular culture as structure and popular ‘culture’ as ‘agency’, ‘capitalist’ and ‘working class’. So that popular culture products must benefit all parties, Fiske (2005:2) stated that “Popular culture is made by subordinated peoples in their own interests out of resources that also, contradictorily, serve the economic interests of the dominant.” Popular culture products are usually produced by people with limited resources, and usually address topics that occur in everyday life, whether it is a growing trend or a norm in society. Therefore, it is usually liked by the people and the dominant group gets material benefits. There are many products of popular culture, one of which is film.

Films are one of the products of popular culture that can penetrate all levels of society, a film is usually used to convey messages or just for entertainment. Storey (2003:1) stated that “The first was popular culture as a quasi-mythical rural “folk culture,” and the other—and it was very much the “other”—was popular culture as the degraded “mass culture” of the new urban-industrial working class.” Popular culture is a culture that involves the general public, and the content of this culture usually reflects the current trends, norms, and preferences in the society. In popular culture a film is produced with the aim of entertainment, and a successful film according to popular culture is a film that is easy to understand, liked by the public, and generates a lot of income. A film that is liked by many people definitely has great selling power and earns a lot of money.

In popular culture a film must be liked by the public in order to produce a lot of money. To achieve this, a film must fulfil many aspects. one of which is easy to understand, whether from the storyline, characters, or other elements. Popular films usually follow a fixed rule in

producing them, which is called a formula. Campbell (1949) said that “The standard path of the mythological adventure of the hero is a magnification of the formula represented in the rites of passage: separation-initiation-return: which might be named the nuclear unit of the monomyth.” Cawelti (1976:5) stated that “In general, a literary formula is a structure of narrative or dramatic conventions employed in a great number of individual works.” A formula is a certain pattern or recipe used in filmmaking. This pattern includes various elements such as plot, characters, cinematic style, themes, and other elements that give a specific identity to a particular type of film. This film formula creates expectations among the audience. For example, in an adventure film, the audience will expect to see a hero who goes on an adventure in search of truth and who they are.

One example of a very popular formula is the "heroic journey" that is often used in adventure films. Heroic journey involves a main character who faces great challenges, grows as an individual, and eventually overcomes obstacles to achieve his or her goal. The heroic journey theory was first introduced by Joseph Campbell in his book *The hero with thousand faces*. Campbell (1949) said that “Although there are variations in the presentation of the hero's story in an adventure film, there are consistent patterns that appear in the main character in the adventure story. This concept is introduced by the term Monomyth and has become the basis for superhero adventure genre films.”

The heroic journey is a journey taken by the hero, the journey usually has many obstacles but provides new strength and knowledge for the hero who manages to pass all the obstacles. Campbell (1949) said that “Hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man.” The heroic journey is the foundation of many adventure stories in popular culture. It is a narrative that describes the journey of the main character, often referred to as the hero, through a series of events that are full of uncertainties, challenges and tests. In this journey, the hero is faced with a wide variety of obstacles, both physical and psychological, that they must overcome. In fact, some of these obstacles can take the form of evil creatures or enemies, while others are internal conflicts or moral contradictions that require making difficult decisions. During these hero journeys, they often grow and develop as individuals. They learn about values, courage, sacrifice and justice. This process shapes the hero's character and gives meaning to their story. The ultimate goal of the journey is to reach an important achievement or understanding, which may include saving the world, restoring peace, or discovering the true self. The heroic journey presents a number of messages and

lessons that can influence and inspire viewers, making it one of the most powerful elements in popular culture narratives.

*Iron Man (2008)* is a superhero adventure film directed by Jon Favreau and produced by Marvel Studios. The film tells the story of Tony Stark, a billionaire genius who develops an advanced suit of armour that allows him to become the superhero known as Iron Man. The film's storyline develops when Tony Stark decides to use the technology that he created to fight against crime. This film is one of the popular films that is widely loved by the people. The film that was directed by Jon Favreau has a rating of 7.9 out of 10, and made a profit of 585.8 million USD with a production cost of only 140 million USD. Which is a very fantastic number and proof that this film is a successful film because it can be liked by the public and make a lot of money.

This film is used as a research object by researchers because there are a few issues that can be analysed and made into a research topic. One of the interesting aspects to be studied is the heroic journey experienced by the main character in the film, Tony Stark aka Iron Man. In addition, the film *Iron Man (2008)* has historical value in the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) film world because this film is the first film released by the MCU for the Iron Man series, there are actually 3 Iron Man film series released by MCU, namely; *Iron Man (2008)*, *Iron Man 2 (2010)*, dan *Iron Man 3 (2013)*. This is a consideration for researchers to make this *Iron Man (2008)* film one of the research objects that will be used by researcher.

In this study, researchers will use comparative literature. Warren (1942:47) said that “Comparative literature confines it to the study of relationship between two or more literatures.” Meiliana (2018:3) stated that “The term comparative Literature is difficult to define for it evolves not one but two or even more than two literatures in comparison at the same time.” Based on the explanation above, the researcher can conclude that, in comparative literature there must be at least two literary works, because if there is only one literary work, comparison cannot be made. On this principle, the researcher looked for another literary work to compare with the first film that had been determined by the researcher, which was *Iron Man (2008)*. The researcher found several works that have similarities with the topic of the problem to be analysed in the first film, which is the heroic journey carried out by the main character in a film.

*Blue Beetle (2023)* also a superhero adventure film by Angel Manuel Soto, but this film is produced by DC Studios. The film tells the story of a Jaime Reyes who has just graduated from college, and must face a family economic crisis that requires him to get a job immediately. Instead of getting a job Jaime Reyes is chosen to be the host of an ancient

artifact named Scarab and makes him face many obstacles. *Blue Beetle (2023)* is an adventure superheroes film, also one of the popular films. The film directed by Angel Manuel Soto has a production cost of 120 million USD, this film is also quite successful at the box office and is liked by many people.

The selection of *Iron Man (2008)* and *Blue Beetle (2023)* as the subjects of this research is for a very important reason. The film is an interesting subject because it suspected applies the Heroic journey theory popularized by Joseph Campbell. This theory has become a key guide for many screenwriters and directors in creating stories that have emotional depth and parallels to the human experience. The film was very successful in applying the principles of this theory in its narrative. With a very precise selection of characters, journeys, obstacles, and character growth, the film is able to present a very strong and deep story.

## 1.2 Statement of Problem

In popular culture a film can be loved by many people, but there are also many films that are not loved by many people. This depends on how the film is produced, such as who is cast in the film, or how the conventional formula is applied in the movie, which makes the movie easy to understand by many people.

Based on the that problem, the following questions are formulated:

1. What are the description of character of Tony Stark and Jaime Reyes in the *Iron Man (2008)* and *Blue Beetle (2023)* Films?
2. How do the character of Tony Stark and Jaime Reyes affect their heroic journey in the *Iron Man (2008)* and *Blue Beetle (2023)* Films?

## 1.3 Research Objectives

According to statement of problem above, this research has two main objectives as follow:

1. To find out what are the description of character of Tony Stark and Jaime Reyes in the *Iron Man (2008)* and *Blue Beetle (2023)* Films.
2. To find out how do the character of Tony Stark and Jaime Reyes affect their heroic journey in the *Iron Man (2008)* and *Blue Beetle (2023)* Films.

## 1.4 Research Significances

Based on the research background, this research is aim to provide insight and scientific contribution to literary studies, especially genre formula studies. The researcher is a student who studies literature and feels suitable for this research because the researcher is able to



apply the literary theories that have been studied previously. There are several benefits that can be obtained from the results of this research:

1. Theoretically, with this research, researchers gained experience in analysing the adventure genre formula. This research is aim to enrich the study of popular films, especially in analysing the adventure genre formula.
2. Practically, the benefit of this research is to provide knowledge about the adventure genre formula (Heroic journey) used in the *films Iron Man (2008) and Blue Beetle (2023)* by classifying it into the adventure formula according to Joseph Campbell's theory.

### 1.5 Previous Study

To support and facilitate the researcher in conducting this research, the researcher has read several previous studies that are relevant and related to the research to be conducted by the researcher. Some previous studies found by researchers will be presented below:

The first previous study is a thesis entitled *Heroic journey in C.S Lewis the Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian (The Return to Narnia novel)* this research was conducted by Cici Nurdia in 2016 using qualitative method. The writer conducted research on how a hero is depicted in the novel, using the heroic journey theory developed by Joseph Campbell. In addition, in this study the writer also analysed how is archetypes of character constructed in the novel, using the theory of character archetypes developed by Crsitopher Vogler. The result of this study is that the author found elements of the heroic journey in the novel, but not all stages were found in the novel. The first stage is *Departure* which contains 5 stages but the author only found 4 stages in the novel. Then the second stage is *Initiation*, the author only finds 4 stages out of 6 stages. The last is *Return* the author only finds 2 stages out of 6 stages. In addition, the author also found 8 characters archetypes in the novel. (Nurdia, 2019)

There are some differences and similarities in the research conducted by Cici Nurdia with the research that the researcher will conduct. Some of the differences include the object, the object used by the writer in her research is a novel entitled the *Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian (The Return to Narnia)* while the object in this research are films. Although these two studies both use the heroic journey theory developed by Joseph Campbell, but there are differences in these two studies, the research conducted by the researcher also explores how the background of the hero affects their heroic journey.

The second one is thesis entitled *The Construction of Adventure Formula Through Heroes in Rick Riordan's the Red Pyramid*. This research was conducted by Yuli Andriyani in 2019. The writer used qualitative method in this research. The writer analyses how the heroes are depicted in the novel *The Red Pyramid* by using the heroic journey theory by Joseph

Campbell, and how the heroes build an adventure formula in the novel *The Red Pyramid* by using the adventure formula theory by Cawelti. The results of this study show that heroes are depicted through a series of travel stages, *Departure, Initiation, and return*. And the adventure formula has three elements, which are the group or individual hero, obstacles dangers, and the triumph. (Andriyani, 2019)

There are several similarities between the research conducted by Yuli Andriyani and the research that will be conducted by researchers. Some of them are in the application of theory, these two studies both use the theory of heroic journey from Joseph Campbell and the theory of adventure formula from Cawelti. But these two studies also have differences, such as the objects used in these two studies are different, the object used in this study are films, while the object carried out by the previous writer is a novel.

The third previous study is a thesis entitled *Comparison of Gothic Elements in Television series Wednesday (2022) and The Chilling Adventures of Sabrina (2018)*. This research was conducted by Syifa Aulia Khairunnisa in 2023, the author in this study used 2 research methods, the first is qualitative method and the second is comparative method. The author analyses what gothic elements are in the two films, and how the similarities and differences are in the two films using the Gothic elements theories of Fred Botting, Ann B. Tracy and Mary Ellen Snodgrass. The results of this study show that there are 18 differences in the two films. (Khairunnisa, 2023)

There are several similarities between the research conducted by Syifa Aulia Khairunnisa and the research that will be conducted by researchers. One of them is the use of comparative methods and also makes the film as its object. But these two studies also have differences, such as the topic analysed in this study, this study analyses the gothic elements in the film while the research that will be conducted by the researcher is the heroic journey.

Number four is a thesis written by Muhamad Vikry with the title *An Analysis of Conversational Implicature in the Iron Man 3* in 2014. This research used qualitative method and used the film as the object of the research, and use Grice's theory. This research analyses the types of conversational implicature resulted from the non-observance maxims which have been done by the characters of the film Iron Man 3. The result of this research shows that there are 13 conversational implicatures in the film. (Vikry, 2014)

There are some similarities and differences between the research conducted by Muhamad Vikry and the research that will be conducted by researchers. The similarity is using the Iron Man film as the object of research. The difference is in the topic and the theory used.

## **1.6 Definition of Key Terms**

In order to prevent misunderstandings regarding its use, some key terms which contained in this research are put below.

1. Formula: Formula is a certain pattern or recipe used in filmmaking or standard and accepted way of doing or making something. Formulas function as a medium to

generalise the characteristics of a large group of individual works and combinations of cultural materials and specific story archetypes.

2. Heroic Journey: Standard path of the mythological adventure of the hero is a magnification of the formula represented in the rites of passage: separation-initiation-return: which might be named the nuclear unit of the monomyth. Heroic journey is the narrative story that appears in drama, stories, myth, religious ritual, and psychological development.
3. Film: Film is a series of moving pictures recorded with sounds that tells a story, shown at the cinema/movie theatre. film is a group of images recorded along with sound and tells a narrative story. a film can be enjoyed on a widescreen such as in a cinema or on a glass screen at home. a film is usually not only used as a medium of entertainment, but it can also make the audience feel and understand what the film maker wants to convey.
4. Iron Man: Iron Man is a fictional robot that has a wide range of powers and abilities. Iron Man has powered armour that gives him superhuman strength and durability, flight, and an array of weapons. The armour was created and worn by Stark.
5. Blue Beetle: Blue Beetle is a superhero who gets his superpowers from an ancient alien artefact called a scarab. The scarab chooses humans as its host to live in, and then the host gains the power of the blue beetle.