

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the research background, research problem, research purpose, research significance, conceptual framework, and previous studies.

### 1.1 Research Background

Originating in the late 19th century, these vibrant publications experienced a meteoric rise in popularity throughout the 20th century, becoming an integral part of global popular culture. Comic books encompass a diverse array of genres, such as superheroes, fantasy, science fiction, and adventure themes, catering to a vast spectrum of readers. Among these genres, superhero stories stand out as the most iconic and enduring. These tales of ordinary individuals transformed into extraordinary superheroes, battling against formidable foes and safeguarding humanity from imminent threats, have captured the imaginations of readers worldwide.

According to (Hourihan, 1997), hero and adventure stories have a significant influence on shaping perception and establishing values. Superhero comics as a development of hero and adventure stories have become a dominant force in popular culture by using heroism as a central concept and continuing to inspire generations of fans cause superheroes stories is one of kind from hero stories. They provide readers with a sense of hope, courage, and the belief that anyone can rise up to be a superhero. Superheroes have captured the imagination of fans and left a lasting impact on popular culture.

This is in line with the fact that superhero comics have impacted various forms of media, including movies, TV shows, and video games. With the increasing popularity of superheroes, comic books have not only served as a medium for storytelling and artistic expression but also for popular cultural engagement. Marvel Comics and DC Comics are the two biggest publishers in the comic book industry. They have created iconic characters that have become household names and have inspired countless adaptations in other forms of media. Their influence on pop culture is undeniable and continues to grow with each new generation of readers and fans, making them cultural powerhouses in their own right.

As a result, when people think of superheroes, they often think of the characters created by Marvel and DC. According to (Mergen & Wright, 2002) this dominance can be attributed to the unique approach these publishers took in crafting their superheroes. Unlike the one-dimensional crime-fighting heroes of the past, Marvel and DC's superheroes were complex and relatable. These superheroes have become cultural icons, representing the best of humanity and continuing to captivate audiences of all ages.

By being people top mind Marvel and DC comics concept had been mainstream portion of superhero comics. DC with their tend to use human-like creature superheroes such as Wonder woman from gods race and Superman from aliens race, and Marvel which priotizes human superheroes who gain powers through genetic changes or advanced technology like Spiderman and Ironman. But in another way, on superheroes comics scene there's some publishers that facing this mainstream concept that had been created by Marvel and DC with their comic and make anti-mainstream concept or in another world is parody. By using comics ability to visually exaggerate and satirize characters and situations, making them ideal for delivering sharp social commentary. The combination of witty dialogue and clever illustrations in comics allows for a multi-layered approach to parody, engaging readers on both intellectual and visual levels. It make comics can be the modern use of parody,

though, does not seem to aim at ridicule or destruction. In this way parody implies a distance between the backgrounded text being parodied and the new work, a distance usually signalled by irony. But the irony is more playful than ridiculing, more critical than destructive (Hutcheon, 1978). The irony in modern use of parody is often used to provoke thought and engage with the text being parodied, rather than simply mocking or belittling it. This form of irony adds depth and complexity to the parody, allowing for a more nuanced critique or commentary on the original work. It encourages readers to think critically about the themes and ideas being presented, fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation of both the parody and the original text.

Especially comics, with their unique blend of visual storytelling and humor, stand as one of the most effective mediums for parody in literature. Comic book writers can use their work to critique or satirize certain social and political conditions. Comic books, a captivating realm of popular literature, seamlessly blend sequential art with text, weaving intricate narratives that transport readers to fantastical worlds and thrilling adventures. In the world of comics, writers have the freedom to create their own unique worlds and characters. Through their work, they can explore various aspects of human life and society, such as love, loss, hope, fear, and conflict.

These day superheroes are no longer seen as simply crime fighters but as symbols of hope and inspiration (Darowski, 2014). They represented the best of humanity, and they showed that even ordinary people could achieve great things. They struggled with the same problems as ordinary people, making them more human and inspiring. This is what has been shown by these two hero comic publishers, like Marvel's X-Men comics, which have been used to explore issues of racism and discrimination, and DC's Superman comics, which have been used to promote the ideals of truth and justice. Nevertheless, one Dynamite Entertainment comic book presents superheroes from an alternative viewpoint to the popular one, which is behind the dominance of these two companies' comics. The comic book, written by Garth Ennis and Darick Robertson, is titled *The Boys* (2006). This comic was originally published by Wildstorm Comic under DC Comic, but after the release of the 6th issue, it was taken

over by Dynamite Entertainment. This comic also received a series adaptation with the same title, namely *The Boys*, in 2019 and a spin-off series titled *Gen V* in 2023, which was produced by Erick Kripke and broadcast by the Amazon Prime Video streaming service.

If mainstream superhero comics are usually set in a fantasy world where the protagonist is typically a good guy who tries to save the world without pursuing wealth or fame, *The Boys* set in a fictional world where superhumans or "supes," exist, are employed, and become assets of a company, Vought International. *The Boys* is contrary to most superhero comics, in which superheroes are idealistically portrayed according to the heroism concept, following the fundamental belief that heroes are good and villains are bad (CHOMSAENG, 2021). *The Boys* is shown for people who have reached adulthood who, as children, were accompanied by mainstream superhero stories but felt that they were no longer relevant because of the use of monotonous, clichéd, and light story plots. *The Boys* came up with a complex and dark story, from jokes to political games and corruption.

This comic introduces a parody of all of that hero mainstream concept. This comic has accommodated and deconstructed all the ideas behind superhero stories. According to (Thomson, 2005), hero functioned like a mirror, reflecting back on the group an idealized image of itself, an ideal concentrated and so given an almost superhuman form. *The Boys* is a "what if" when we shatter this mirror and reveal their hidden flaws, their humanity, and their all-too-human weaknesses. This is not something that Marvel Comics or DC Comics can do, because these two publishers are the ones who build idealism and become center figures in the superhero comic scene. They design characters with intriguing abilities, and *The Boys* twist them to have different viewpoints. *The Boys* is not a copy, but this comic was inspired. By applying observe, imitate, and modify, Garth Ennis managed to create new colors in the superhero comic scene by being the opposite of the existing mainstream formula.

## 1.2 Statement of Problem

The problem lies in the perceived lack of clise and originality in the superhero genre. The mainstream superhero genre often follows a predictable formula, with characters embodying ideals of justice and morality. This can lead to a sense of repetitiveness and a lack of innovation. The questions raised in this research include the following.:

1. What kind of parody does *The Boys* comic portray?
2. How does parody in *The Boys* comic facing mainstream notions of superhero concept?

## 1.3 Research Purpose

To describe and examine the problems above, the author set out several goals to help readers of this research. The research objectives based on the problem formulation are:

1. To reveal the kind of parody contained and portrayal in *The Boys* comic.
2. To know how *The Boys* comic facing mainstream notions of superhero concept.

## 1.4 Research Significances

The research will to examine how these representations facing the usual ideas of superhero and offer a more complex understanding of these figures. Through an analysis of *The Boys'* use of parody, the study aims to explore how satire can be used to criticize dominant narratives in popular culture and provide social commentary by questioning conventional beliefs. Additionally, the research seeks to provide insights into the established conventions of superhero stories and how parodies like *The Boys* both adhere to and deviate from these norms. Finally, the

analysis aims to investigate the potential impact of satirical superhero narratives on future storytelling in popular culture and whether there will be a growing demand for alternative interpretations of established genres or if mainstream media will incorporate elements of these parodies into their own superhero narratives.

### **1.5 Previous Study**

One of the studies entitled *An Analysis of The Commodification of Superheroes in The Boys Series* by Pakapol Chomsaeng and Nanthanoot Udomlamun (2021) this research is both a textual analysis and a qualitative research. This study is an analysis of the Amazon Prime Video television series, *The Boys* (Season One) by Eric Kripke in order to identify how corporate capitalism is portrayed in the series and how the commodification of superheroes in a capitalist society can corrupt the concepts of heroes and superheroes. In a capitalist world, many big global companies gain profits through the exploitation of labour and ideas. Many companies implement corporate social responsibility projects and publicize them as an evidence of their contribution to social and community development, with the ultimate aim of building a positive public image of the company and making more money. Through an in- depth analysis and discussion of corporate capitalism, commodification and hero culture, the study concludes that Vought International has created a vicious cycle in which superheroes are created and commodified for the benefits of the company which spends the profits on the creation of more superheroes. The process results in a change in the consciences of the superheroes. Aiming for money and popularity, they become selfish and start to drift from their heroic path, and some even perform non- heroic acts to maintain their status in the society.

The next is the research entitled *Superhero Films: A Fascist National Complex or Ex ascist National Complex or Exemplars of Mor emplars of Moral*

*Virtue?* By Chris Yogerst (2017), his paper aims to build on the many definitions of a superhero and find a framework that we as scholars can use to evaluate how superhero films present inspirational moral virtue and not zealous nationalism of any kind. In the process I want to address the problems with some of the scholarly work done on the connection to superheroes and heroism both historically and immediately after 9/11, particularly those who have argued that American superheroism is a fascist myth, and show how the recent evolution of the superhero genre in film gives us much to learn from. Therefore, superheroes do not create a fascist national complex but are instead popular because they create and revolve around inspirational virtue, such as those Mark White used to describe Captain America. All superheroes are inspirational because of these moral virtues: courage, humility, righteous indignation, sacrifice and responsibility, and perseverance. These virtues may be applied differently, but their role in defining superheroes transcends individual characters.

Finally, is *Parody and Burlesque of Heroic Ideals in Wycherley's Comedies: A Critical Reinterpretation of Contemporary Evidence* by Cynthia Matlack (1972). This essay offers a critical reinterpretation of the parodic and burlesque elements in William Wycherley's comedies, arguing that they function not simply as a means of satirizing heroic ideals but also as a way of exploring the complex relationship between the individual and society. Through a close examination of Wycherley's plays, the essay demonstrates how the playwright uses parody and burlesque to critique the heroic ideals of his time, while also suggesting the possibility of alternative ways of living.

## 1.6 Definition of Key Term

There are the clarifications of the key terms used in this research. The researcher clarify the key point , as follow:

Parody is a literary or artistic work that imitates the style and form of an original work in order to create a humorous or satirical effect. It is a form of literary criticism that uses humor to point out the flaws or absurdities of the original work. According to literary critic Northrop Frye, parody is a form of imitation that deliberately exaggerates or distorts the characteristics of the original work in order to create a comic effect. Parody can be found in various forms, including literature, film, music, and art.

Superhero is a fictional character who possesses extraordinary powers and abilities and uses them to fight evil and protect the innocent. Superheroes typically have a strong moral code and are dedicated to justice. According to comic book historian Peter Sanderson, "A superhero is a character who has extraordinary powers, uses those powers to fight evil, and has a strong moral code." Superheroes have been featured in various forms of media, including comic books, film, television, and video games.

Comic is a sequential art form that uses a series of panels to tell a story. Comics can be either humorous or serious, and they can cover a wide range of topics, from superheroes to romance to politics. According to comic book artist Scott McCloud, "Comics are a medium that combines words and pictures to tell a story." Comics have been around for centuries, and they continue to be a popular form of entertainment and storytelling today.