

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Literature is a type of art that employs language as a medium to produce creative, beautiful, and significant works. Literature offers insights into the human experience and frequently reflects the cultural, social, and historical circumstances in which it was written. Literature is essentially an art form of artistic communication that uses language to provide the reader with a special and memorable experience. It frequently uses literary techniques to communicate deeper meanings and insights into the human condition, such as metaphor, symbol, and myth. Literary works can be defined as creative works of fiction or nonfiction that are written with artistic intention and use language as their primary means of expression. These works often explore complex themes, characters, and ideas, and can be appreciated for their aesthetic, intellectual, and emotional qualities. According to literary scholar M.H. Abrams, "A literary work is a work of art that employs language as its medium, to convey an artistic vision or message, and that is intended by the author to be received aesthetically rather than purely informatively or instrumentally" (Abrams, 2001).

In literary works, the description of social life or society is often used as a form of ideological communication or criticism of an author to his audience. One of the depictions that are often found in literary works is the depiction of

the construction of gender in society and social life. A literary work according to Swingewood is a sociocultural document that can be used to see a phenomenon in society at the time. This is what is then classified as a literary documentation referring to the reflection of the times. Swingewood quoted Louis De Bonald as saying that by doing a close reading of a "national" literary work, you will know what happens to that society. Stendhal's novel is "Mirror Journeying Down the High Road." (Swingewood, *The Myth of Mass Culture*, 1972, p. 13). Furthermore, the literary work is positioned as the central discussion that focuses on the intrinsic discussion of the text by connecting it to the phenomena that occurred at the time the work was created. "It is the task of a sociologist of literature to relate the experience of the writer's imaginary characters and situations to the historical climate from which they derive. He has to transform the private equation of theme and stylistic means into social equations" (Swingewood, *The Myth of Mass Culture*, 1972, p. 14), Swingewood explains that connecting the experience of imaginary characters with history, themes, and styles is the most relevant way to know the correlation of literary work with social patterns that lie beyond the text.

Gender is a fundamental element in the formation of values in society, gender is constructed and differentiated based on biological gender such as a person's physical characteristics, reproductive organs, hormones, and genetic content. The result of this process is thinking about how gender behaves in social life. In this case, the result of the mindset among them is masculine and feminine. These two types of roles represent the individual's depiction of living

his or her social life in roles, norms, and social expectations. Such depictions are reflected in different behaviors, expressions, and also cultural norms.

Masculinity is related to sex and gender, but both are different entities. Sex, or gender, consisting of male and female, is a biological state of the human being from birth. Sex is related to the functions of the human body such as chromosomes, hormones and reproductive organs, sex is considered to be a condition whose nature will never change. Gender is a form of social and cultural construction that is dynamic and can change over time. (Kurnia, 2004). Gender is defined as a perception that refers to the role, behavior, expression, and identity of both male and female individuals that is not inherent from birth and clarifies the female (feminine) or male (masculine) nature that is the result of a sociocultural construction (Sasmita, 2017). Masculinity is a concept related to social roles, behaviors and certain meanings attached to men at a certain time. In Social construction, masculinity is a way of being a man (Otnes C., & L. Tuncay-Zayer, 2012). Masculinity is a culturally idealized form of masculine character (Connell, R. W, 2000) which is associated with a number of attributes, behaviors, roles, images of virility, power and domination inherent in men that are seen as a result of social construction in society.

Masculinity is understood as a way for men to affirm what they believe is their virility (Permata, D., Priyatna, A., & Rahayu, L. M., 2016). There is a diversity of certain concepts of masculinity that make a man a benchmark to being a masculine man (Fathinah, E., Priyatna, A., & Adji, M., 2017). In general, it is believed that the masculine character inherent in men is identical

with the strong, hard, and sweaty nature, while feminine women are often identified with the weak, gentle and graceful nature of a princess. The traditional concept of masculinity is the presence of values between power, power, perseverance, action, control, independence, self-satisfaction, male loyalty, as well as high and other hard work that is viewed lowly are interpersonal relationships, verbal abilities, domestic life, tenderness, communication, women, and children (Sari, 2020).

The psychology of Janet Saltzman Chafetz presents seven concepts of characteristic masculinity in the sphere of society, namely: male physical appearance, male functional, male sexual, male emotional, male intellectual, male interpersonal, and male personal character (Sari, 2020). The differences in gender view resulted in the emergence of a patriarchal culture, where women were viewed as submissive beings compared to men, men were regarded as more superior individuals compared with women (Kurnia, 2004), the culture of patriarchy led to the existence of male domination, giving privileges to men and furthermore this situation has created a gap between men and women.

As the time went by, the modern concepts of masculinity emerged which contrasted with the traditional masculinity. The modern concept of masculinity describes men as individuals with a caring, sensitive, more expressive and willingness to do domestic work. (Fathinah, E., Priyatna, A., & Adji, M., 2017). Activities that were initially considered to be done only by women are now reasonably done by men, for example, now it is no longer a taboo if men go down to the kitchen or a profession that requires cooking skills such as chefs

are now generally performed by men. A shift in the form of masculinity as a result of this various ideas have emerged that criticize the concept of traditional masculinity that is no longer used as a standard for how men should behave, men who used to be men where it's depicted in traditional concept, is considered inactive in the domestic sector and a real man must be strong, tough and should not cry. This condition has caused man to never see his own feelings. (Ramadhani, A. F., & Suratnoaji, C. , 2021)

The understanding of masculinity can also be different everywhere. The presence of cultural and historical differences can affect the stereotypes and masculine values that exist in a particular society. Demartoto in (Sari, 2020) mentions that masculinity is a concept that is reconstructed by culture so that the conception of masculinity in a culture with other cultures can be different, as with the use of cosmetic in men in Korea due to the importance of an appearance and the presence of demands to use the product skin care can support their performance and careers (Maulina, E., Chan, A., & Ridwan, A. , 2017). Increasing awareness of caring for oneself that was once seen as an activity done only by women, is now done by men as well as in its development born the term metrosexual male that leads as a lifestyle especially in men in the city who have more income and care about the appearance and image of himself. (Maribeth, 2019). With the evolution of the times, the values of masculinity and femininity began to shift or even merge into one, what was once considered a feminine region can now also be attached to the realm of the masculine realm

(Noviasari, 2011), this shows that the concept of masculinity is the result of a form of a social construction that is dynamic and can change over time.

Movies are a type of art and entertainment that combine sound, effects, and narration to provide the spectator with a visual and emotional experience. Movies can be a potent form of expression and communication with the capacity to reflect and shape cultural, social, and historical circumstances. A filmmaker and critic François Truffaut defined movies as "a universal language, understood by audiences all over the world because it speaks to the heart" (Hitchcock/Truffaut, 1967). The connection between movies and literature might be characterized as one of intertextuality and adaptation. Movies frequently take literary works as their sources of inspiration, translating their plots, characters, and ideas into a visual and audio format. Filmmakers can find plenty of inspiration from literary works, which often have gripping plots, enduring characters, and challenging subjects. By adopting these literary classics, filmmakers can reach a larger audience and present their takes on the original works. However, since authors frequently incorporate cinematic devices and topics into their writing, films can also serve as inspiration for literary works. The two art genres can inform and affect each other in different ways since they share characteristics in common, such as story structure, character development, and thematic investigation. The relationship between literature and film is essentially one of creative inspiration and exchange, with each art form offering distinctive ways of presenting stories and examining the human experience.

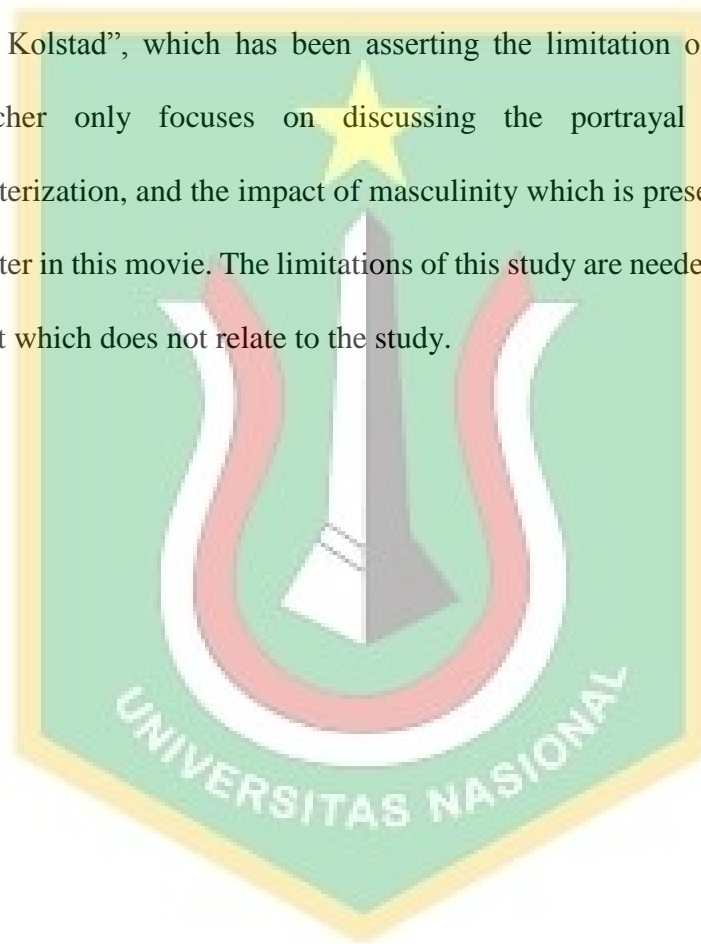
The action thriller "John Wick" was released in 2014 and was directed by Chad Stahelski and David Leitch. The film tells the story of John Wick (played by Keanu Reeves), a former hitman who seeks revenge on the individuals who killed his pet dog. The film has been critically appreciated for its choreography, action sequences, and cinematography. In terms of masculinity, John Wick himself is portrayed in "John Wick" as a stereotypically traditional man. John is a stoic and emotionally repressed character, who demonstrates physical power, combat prowess, and a tireless resolve to achieve his goals. He is depicted as an expert killer, capable of eliminating several adversaries at once, and he exhibits a high level of competence in the use of weapons and hand-to-hand combat. The capacity of John Wick to maintain composure and concentration under pressure is one sign of a manly character. He demonstrates a kind of strength that is both physical and mental, which enables him to fight off endless foes and overcome impossible challenges. Traditional masculinity is defined by this idea of calm, inner strength, which is demonstrated by John Wick's refusal to give in or compromise his principles. John Wick, meanwhile, is more emotionally vulnerable because of his masculinity. He has a great commitment to those he cares about and laments the deaths of his wife and dog throughout the films.

According to the idea above, this study is an attempt to analyze the portrayal of masculinity presented by the main character of John Wick Movie 2014 by Derek Kolstad based on seven concepts of characteristic masculinity by Janet

Saltzman Chafetz which was supported by Alan Swingewood reflection theory which aims to unsolved the portrayal of masculinity and its relations to society.

1.2 Limitation of the Problem

The title of this thesis is “Masculinity Portrait in John Wick – 2014, by Derek Kolstad”, which has been asserting the limitation of this study. The researcher only focuses on discussing the portrayal of masculinity, characterization, and the impact of masculinity which is presented by the main character in this movie. The limitations of this study are needed to minimize the subject which does not relate to the study.



1.3 Research Questions

Based on the background that has been described, the formulation of the problems that occur in this study are:

1. How does John Wick's character portray masculinity in John Wick 2014?
2. What traits of masculinity and how much is presented by John Wick in John Wick 2014?
3. What is the influence of John Wick's characteristics on the portrayal of masculinity?

1.4 Objective of the Research

1. To analyze the portrayal of masculinity in John Wick's character.
2. To analyze the traits of masculinity which are presented by John Wick.
3. To analyze the influence of John Wick's characteristics on the portrayal of masculinity.

