

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

The Hunger Games is a movie that deals with the survival of the world's condition after a post-apocalyptic or disastrous condition. The movie is set in Panem, the future of North America, which will experience war. In the movie, there are 12 districts that are controlled by the Capitol. The Capitol is a dictator government that likes to take control of the citizens in the Districts because the Capitol does not like citizens who are against their regulations.

One of the ways of controlling the citizens is for the Capitol to make a game show called *The Hunger Games*. *The Hunger Games* is a game show that puts one girl and one boy from each district to fight until death. The Capitol will put all of the participants of the game, called Tributes, in an arena and they are forced to fight with each other, so there will only remain one Tribute. The survivor of the game will become the winner. The game is controlled by a game maker, who creates weapons such as fireballs that can attack the Tributes. The game maker also makes a harsh environment for the Tributes so they will suffer from that and then die. Because of this, the Tributes do not have any other choice to kill each other even though they come from the same Districts because that is the only way they can end the suffering that they feel. The Capitol also lures the Tributes to meet each other in the middle of the game to the supply that the Tributes need to finish the game. The Capitol expects

an entertaining show by seeing the Tributes killing each other. This is why the Capitol broadcasts the game to all District citizens. When the game is on show, all of the people must watch the game even though they should have been working. The show is not to relieve the people from work stress but instead it reminds the citizens from the 12 Districts that the Capitol is superior. The people are constantly reminded that their own time is approaching as one day they will also be forced to play in the game and become the one dead or if surviving, then the survival itself will not last long because another new winner will likely kill that Tribute in the end.

The Hunger Games movie tells about a teenager, named Katniss Everdeen that lives in District 12. She is a volunteer Tribute for her little sister who was forced to join the game. The movie depicts how Katniss with her individualism skills manages to survive in the game and becomes a hope for people from the districts to obtain their freedom from the Capitol(Collins, 2017).

Katniss's experience in becoming a survivor while also fighting for the people's freedom from the Capitol is interesting for me to analyze. It seems that *The Hunger Games* movie, through the character of Katniss is displaying the theme of individualism spirit of the United States of America (U.S.A.) citizens. According to Mennell, individualism is the selfishness characteristic of someone, by means that someone is not caring about other people and only care about him/ themselves (2000, p. 2). It can be a negative yet a positive quality when it deals with the selfishness of fighting for a society's freedom, like the case with Katniss. The freedom that Katniss is fighting for is in order that her people will have equal rights in society. Menell (2000) is of the opinion that all people have the same rights to be happy, enjoy their

life, and live safely in society. This theory of individualism is supported by an American politician, Tocqueville as said by Menell (2000, p.2) who says that each individual has the ability to face a certain struggle. Tocqueville adds that an individual has a full right to have an ambition to survive and be strong in a society. Similary, according to Mahmoudi and Yahi (2017, p.7), individualism is his or her own character that an individual has to have without being influenced by society and act independently. I believe, this individualism spirit can be seen in the main character of the movie, i.e. Katniss Everdeen.

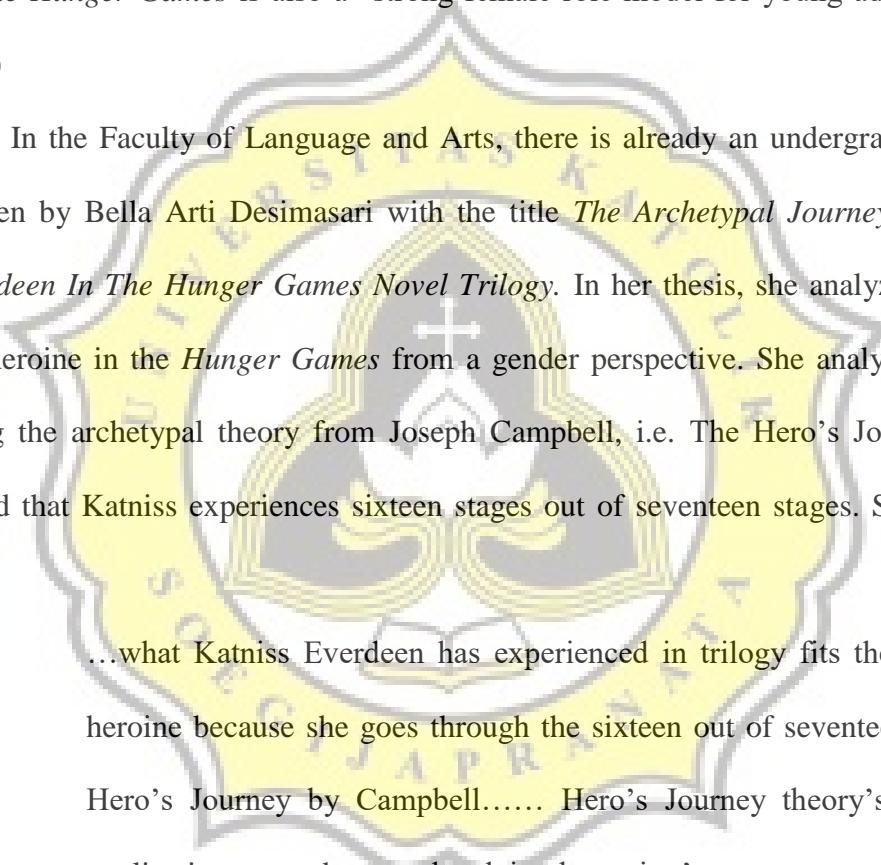
There are some researchers who already analyzed Katniss' character by using a different theory other than American individualism. Kristin Loobek from Concordia University, for example, analyzes Katniss using a feminism approach. She saysthat Katniss is the example of the second-wave and third wave feminism because she shows both the feminine and masculine sides of her. Loobek states the following:

Katniss Everdeen, the protagonist of *The Hunger Games* would be an example of the second wave [she does not stay at home and go to the forest to hunt. She makes herself have the same rights with man]..... sparked debate of feminist themes. Everdeen holds many “feminine” and “masculine” characteristics. She is a nurturing caregiver... (2015, p.12)

Lobek continues to inform that,

Katniss, can be seen as an embodiment of third-wave feminism in its flexibility of sexuality and support of female empowerment (p. 12).

On the other hand, Rebecca Anderson compares Katniss Everdeen with Bella Swan, the woman character from *Twilight* movie. Rebecca compares both of them through a cultural examination. She states that Katniss is a strong character that has some stereotypes in *The Hunger Games*. Anderson states in *Twilight* that the main character Bella Swan “exhibits strong female character”. Likewise, Katniss Everdeen in *The Hunger Games* is also a “strong female role model for young adults” (2015, p.41)

In the Faculty of Language and Arts, there is already an undergraduate thesis written by Bella Arti Desimasari with the title *The Archetypal Journey of Katniss Everdeen In The Hunger Games Novel Trilogy*. In her thesis, she analyzed Katniss, the heroine in the *Hunger Games* from a gender perspective. She analyzed Katniss using the archetypal theory from Joseph Campbell, i.e. The Hero’s Journey. She found that Katniss experiences sixteen stages out of seventeen stages. She reported that,:


...what Katniss Everdeen has experienced in trilogy fits the criteria as heroine because she goes through the sixteen out of seventeen stages of Hero’s Journey by Campbell..... Hero’s Journey theory’s terms and application must be translated in the writer’s way to correspond The Hunger Games trilogy (Desimasari, 2016, p.102).

As seen above, most researchers use a Gender Studies approach to analyze Katniss. In this research, I want to analyze Katniss Everdeen’s character using an American Individualism theory which relies on Ralph Waldo Emerson’s self-reliance. I believe that the American Studies perspective of individualism is relevant because

the director of the story is an American and the movie takes place in North America. The film shows about Katniss who survives in the game and is depicted as an American survivor, who does something in what she believes in, to survive for whatever obstacle is in front of her.

The action of doing something right by trespassing or doing something against the majority is following the American's individualism theory from Ralph Waldo Emerson. Emerson, who is an American essayist who writes "Self-reliance", is the founding father of transcendentalism. It was Emerson, who encouraged the American citizen to not go in conformity with the government, but instead to rely on the strength of each individual to survive from whatever obstacle was in front of them. Emerson's famous self-reliance philosophy is:

To believe your own thought, to believe that what is true for you in your private heart is true for all men, — that is genius. (Emerson, 1841)

Emerson writes that to believe in our own thought is a genius. It means that an individual, one must have trust in him or herself to do what he or she wants, because whatever becomes the intention of the self must already have had a deep thinking, and as such is a genious. It is from this philosophy that most Americans are judged as individualistic not in a negative sense, but in a positive one because the individualistic characteristic shows that they rely on their inner strength, and that by doing so they are confident in what they will do. Emerson's thinking is supported by Capper who believes that self-reliance involves many aspects. He points out the following:

It is easy to see that a greater self-reliance must work a revolution in all the offices and relations of men; in their religion; in their education; in their pursuits; their modes of living; their association; in their property; in their speculative views (1882, p.8)

This thesis aims to see how Katniss as the main character of *The Hunger Games* exercise her self-reliance, which is influenced by the condition of her society who feels empowered by an unjusticed leader. This is why the title of my thesis is “Ralph Waldo Emerson’s Self Reliance in Katniss Everdeen’s Individualism ”.

1.2. Field of the Study

This research is related to the field of literature that deals with the course in American Studies, which studies about American individualism that is influenced by Ralph Waldo Emerson’s philosophy of self-reliance..

1.3. Scope of the Study

In analyzing Katniss Everdeen’s character from *The Hunger Games* movie, the philosophy of self-reliance, founded by the American essayist, Ralph Waldo Emerson becomes the basis of discussing the individualism character of Katniss.

1.4. Problem Formulation

My problem formulation of this research is: How does Katniss Everdeen show American self-reliance?

1.5. Objectives of the Study

With regards to the problem mentioned above, this research has the objective:
To know how Katniss Everdeen show her American self-reliance

1.6. Significance of the Study

This study is significant to do because it applies the theory of American individualism by use of Emerson's self-reliance philosophy on U.S.A. individualism that was studied in the American Studies class.

1.7. Definition of Terms

1.7.1. Individualism

Individualism is an ideology that individual believe and practice which is consist self-confidence, self-reliance and independence act (Primadany, 2017). So, individualism spirit is the spirit of doing individual actions that supports the idea of independence or frees to do as one believes in.

1.7.2. Self-reliance

Self-reliance is defined as the belief of relying on one's own action as being the best thing to do. Commonly people are relying onto other people but in self-reliance, they rely in their selves. Kateb claims that Self-reliance is the act with our own strength without someone's help. (cited in Bhagwanani, 2013)

1.7.3. Philosophy

Philosophy is a systematic attempt to discuss people, rule, and world by giving a rational reason or by experiencing it (Krishnananda, 2019). It comes from someone 's idea after they see something or experience it but it does not come from ordinary people. So, philosophy is a thinking produced by academic scholars.

1.7.4. Transcendentalism

Transcendentalism was “a group of new ideas in literature, religion, culture, and philosophy that emerged in New England in the early to middle 19th century”. It is a group of new ideas that protest against the culture and society in 19th century (Waldo et al., 1836). Transcendentalism is a philosophy movement that puts highly on mankind’s intuition and imagination as being better than any kind of logic or scientific reasoning.

