

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Indonesia is a country that is very rich in various cultures and arts. One of the most popular arts in Indonesia is Wayang kulit. Wayang in Indonesia is ‘bayang’ or ‘bayangan’; in English, we called it a shadow. The word also suggests a ‘play’ or ‘performance’ in the Javanese concept. Thus, Wayang can be further understood as a play and a reflection of the Javanese philosophy of life (Moebirman, 1967). Wayang kulit becomes a cultural expression and tradition in Indonesia, many people of all ages like it.

In Wayang kulit, there are two great epics called Ramayana and Mahabharata. In this research, the writer chooses the great epic of Mahabharata written in the contemporary form of a novel by Nyoman S. Pendet. The writer is interested in choosing the *Mahabharata* novel by Nyoman S. Pendet because the author rewrites epic Mahabharata in the Indonesian language novel which makes Indonesian people who want to read it can be easier to understand it. Besides that, the characters, settings, and plot in this novel have also adjusted to Indonesian spelling. Later on, the main object of this analysis is the journey of Arjuna. In Mahabharata, Arjuna experiences a dynamic and challenging journey that forms him to be an unbeatable and master of archery. According to Pendet (2003) Arjuna is the third son of King Pandu and Dewi Kunthi who was born by the grace of Lord Indra (the God of war in

Hindu mythology), Arjuna is one of the heroic figures from Pandawa side. He has four brothers named Yudhistira, Bima, Nakula, and Sadewa. All of them together with Arjuna are called Pandawa. Arjuna is a character who has a soft-hearted and handsome appearance. He has other names such as Janaka (Janaka means the most handsome man in the universe), Partha (Partha means the hero of the war), Dananjaya, and Permadi. In his youth, Arjuna was trained into a formidable knight. He is a beloved student of Drona. Drona gives him a weapon called Brahmasta. Arjuna also acquires a powerful weapon from Lord Siwa when he completes his ascetic meditation named Pasupati. Arjuna is also the beloved cousin of Lord Krishna (King of Dwaraka). In the Bharatayudha war, Lord Krishna is a coachman for Arjuna's chariot with destiny to win the battle. Post-Bharatayudha war, Arjuna with his four brothers and Drupadi climb the Himalayas to fulfill their heavenly journey to immortality (pp. 88, 111, 295 & 296).

According to Joseph Campbell (2004), there are several stages in the theory of Hero's Journey; there is a structural element that can be seen from the Archetypal theory and storyline of a heroine called "Monomyth". After that, it is developed as "The Seventeen Stages of Hero's Journey" with the seventeen stages divided into three big stages that cover all the stages: Departure, Initiation, and Return. The Hero's Journey by Joseph Campbell can be seen through Arjuna's journey to become the real hero in Mahabharata.

There are some reasons why the writer is interested in researching Arjuna. The personal reason is the writer is interested in researching the heroic journey of Arjuna. First, Arjuna is a central character in Wayang kulit who gives good examples as a responsible knight. Second, he is a character symbolizing purity and sincerity. It is because Arjuna does not want the Bharatayudha war to occur. Yet he has chosen the path of truth or in the Sanskrit language called 'Dharma'. He obediently accepts and carries out the responsibility as a knight to uphold justice regardless of many challenges that must be faced by Arjuna. One of the challenges is he and his four siblings, also Drupadi must be exiled in the forest for 12 years. Then he experienced various problems and injustices designed by Kurawa. Arjuna never gives up and lives according to what is given by destiny to him due to his perseverance and sincerity. Arjuna manages to fulfill the twelve years of exile in the forest that forges him to be wiser. Hence, it makes him ready for the great battle in Kurukshetra, with the blessing and weapons has been given by the gods so that he can uphold justice and truth.

There are some works of research regarding Arjuna. The first research has been done by Yuliani (2011) entitled *Tokoh Arjuna Sebagai Titik Temu Antara Wayang Gombal dan Carita Baratayuda*. The result of Yuliani's research was Arjuna has two different characters. In Wayang gombal lakon Cantrik Janaloka, Arjuna becomes an antagonist character, while in the Carita Bharatayudha; Arjuna becomes a protagonist character (Yuliani, 2011). Moreover, the second research about Arjuna was written by Krishnapatria (2017) entitled *The Battle between Arjuna and Karna in Mahabharata Comics by R. A. Kosasih and Kurukshetra Game: An Adaptation Study*. The result of

Krishnapatria's research was there are three significant differences between the Mahabharata comic and the Kurukshetra game version game. The first difference lies in the story plot, in the comic version, it is told that when Arjuna and Karna fight they both ride a chariot, however in the Kurukshetra game Arjuna and Karna stand facing each other and their fight looks like a shooting game. The second difference is in the depiction of the characters, in the comic version Arjuna and Karna are depicted almost the same in terms of physical, muscles, and facial images, while in the game version it can be seen that the differences between Arjuna and Karna's characters are from their two different colors of clothes. Arjuna wears pink cloth and Karna wears blue cloth. Moreover, in the Kurukshetra game, the player can also feel the atmosphere of Kurukshetra's field. The last difference is in terms of weapons. In the comic version, Arjuna only carries his famous weapon, namely Pasopati and his bow Gandiwa, while in the game version Arjuna has more complete weapons such as Kontra, Nagastra, Chandrastra, Suryastra, and Pasopati (Krishnapatria, 2017).

Of the above research works, none of them focuses on the journey of Arjuna as a hero, so the writer decides to write the research on the heroic journey of Arjuna in the *Mahabharata novel* by using the Hero's Journey theory proposed by Joseph Campbell and analyzes his life virtues in becoming a hero who gives a good example in Mahabharata.

1.2 Field of the Study

The field of this research is literature especially on the Hero's Journey of Arjuna in Nyoman. S. Pendit's novel *Mahabharata*.

1.3 Scope of the Study

This research focuses on the heroic journey of Arjuna on the twenty parts selected in the *Mahabharata* novel by Nyoman .S. Pedit seen from Hero's Journey theory perspective also Arjuna's life virtues on his journey in becoming a hero.

1.4 Problem Formulation

In this study, the writer formulates two research problems as follows:

1. How is Arjuna's journey on the twenty parts selected in the *Mahabharata* novel?
2. To what extent does the journey of Arjuna on the twenty parts selected in the *Mahabharata* novel fulfill the criteria of Joseph Campbell's Hero's Journey?
3. What are the life virtues showed by Arjuna in his journey on the twenty parts selected in the *Mahabharata* novel?

1.5 Objectives of the Study

With regard to the research questions mentioned, this study is conducted to achieve these following objectives:

1. To retell Arjuna's journey on the twenty parts selected in the *Mahabharata* novel.
2. To compare to what extent the journey of Arjuna on the twenty parts selected in the *Mahabharata* novel fulfills the criteria of Joseph Campbell's Hero's Journey.
3. To mention what kind of the life virtues showed by Arjuna on the twenty parts selected in the *Mahabharata* novel.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The writer wanted that through this research, other students could have a better understanding of the heroic journey of Arjuna framed in Campbell's Hero's Journey theory; and his life virtues on becoming a hero in the Mahabharata. Also, the writer hoped that this research could be a motivation for other students in doing other research in the field of literary work.

1.7 Definition of Terms

For a better understanding, the writer deploys several terms that were defined in this study as follows:

a. Mahabharata

Mahabharata is a combination of the words "Maha" which means great and 'Bharata' which means Bharata people, so Mahabharata is the great battle of Bharata people (Pendit, 2003, p. 10).

b. Hero and Heroine

The myth of a hero and the story of heroism become very famous when it is viewed from the structure of heroism. One hero and another hero have a similar heroic structure. The story of a hero is always identical to the struggle of a hero to save the world in various forms of heroism. A hero is someone who gives his or her life for something bigger than their lives, and usually comes with the courage to the truth (Moyers & Campbell, 1991, pp. 59 – 119).

c. Life virtue

Life virtue is a good life carried out by someone according to his or her mind and rationally based on good values and moral so that it can produce positive effects for someone's life (Ikechukwu, 2015).

