

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Movies as a form of art and a communication medium have become one of the most effective ways to convey stories, ideas, and cultural values. In recent years, literary research on movies has rapidly evolved, focusing on how movies can reflect and shape social perspectives. Movies serve as entertainment and a medium that can influence viewers' perceptions of social, political, and cultural issues. A movie possesses a unique ability to combine visual, audio, and narrative elements, allowing audiences to engage emotionally and intellectually with the stories presented (Bordwell and Thompson, 2017). A critical aspect of a movie is representation. Representation in a movie refers to how characters, groups, and social issues are depicted on screen. Research by Hall (2018) indicates that movie representation can reinforce or challenge existing societal stereotypes. For instance, movies that portray strong and independent female characters can help change perceptions of gender roles, while movies that reinforce negative stereotypes may strengthen patriarchal views. Therefore, analyzing representation in movies is crucial for understanding how movies can contribute to forming identity and social norms.

The movie version of *The Hunger Games* Trilogy, consisting of *The Hunger Games* (2012), *Catching Fire* (2013), and *Mockingjay Part 1 & 2* (2014–2015), presents a dystopian world where power, class, and control dominate society. At the center of this narrative is Katniss Everdeen, a female protagonist who evolves

from a survival-driven teenager into a revolutionary symbol. Her character is often celebrated for her strength, independence, and resistance to systemic oppression. Analyzing Katniss across all three movies offers a more comprehensive understanding of her feminist representation and character development.

In the first movie, *The Hunger Games*, Katniss volunteers to take her sister's place in a deadly competition, highlighting her bravery and familial loyalty. In *Catching Fire*, she unintentionally becomes the face of rebellion, facing increasing pressure from both the Capitol and the resistance. Finally, in *Mockingjay*, Katniss fully embraces her role as the Mockingjay, leading a revolution while grappling with trauma, identity, and the burden of representation. These stages reflect a progression of feminist ideals—from personal agency and resistance to collective leadership and empowerment. By analyzing the trilogy through the lens of feminist literary criticism, this research aims to explore how Katniss Everdeen's character embodies feminist resistance within a patriarchal and authoritarian context.

According to research by O'Brien (2020), *The Hunger Games* creates a powerful narrative about individual and collective empowerment, highlighting how the main character, Katniss Everdeen, symbolizes resistance against oppression. The character Katniss Everdeen, portrayed by Jennifer Lawrence, is the movie's focal point. Katniss is depicted as a strong, independent woman who fights to protect her family and resist the oppressive system. Katniss's representation as a complex female hero offers a new perspective on feminism in media. This character not only serves as a symbol of strength but also reveals the vulnerabilities and internal conflicts faced by women when confronting challenges. This creates space

for broader discussions about how women can play roles in heroic narratives, which are often dominated by male characters (O'Brien and Kearney, 2021).

To further contextualize Katniss Everdeen's representation, a deeper understanding of feminism and its historical development is necessary. Feminism not only focuses on women's rights but also seeks to address oppressive power structures that are often rooted in patriarchal norms that have existed for centuries. Feminism critiques systems that discriminate against women and place them in subordinate positions while striving to create a more just and equitable society (Tong, 2009). Feminism can be divided into several waves, each with its own focus and objectives. The first wave, which emerged in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, concentrated on women's suffrage and legal rights. The second wave, which arose in the 1960s and 1970s, expanded its focus to include issues such as workplace equality, reproductive rights, and violence against women. Research by Glick et al (2007) indicates that the third wave of feminism, which emerged in the 1990s, emphasizes the importance of intersectionality—the understanding that women's experiences cannot be separated from other factors such as race, class, and sexual orientation. This illustrates that feminism is a dynamic movement that continues to evolve alongside social changes.

In the media context, feminism plays a crucial role in analyzing the representation of women and how the media shapes societal understanding of gender. The representation of women in movies and media is often trapped in harmful stereotypes that can reinforce patriarchal views. Critical analysis of women's representation in media, such as in the *The Hunger Games* trilogy is highly relevant for understanding how movie narratives and characters can reflect or

challenge existing gender norms. Feminism also serves as a tool for empowering women and encouraging them to take active societal roles (O'Brien, 2016). Feminism is a movement to end sexism, exploitation, and oppression. By understanding and critiquing the representation of women in media, feminism can help create space for more diverse and authentic women's voices. In this context, research on women's representation in movies is important for academic research and for influencing broader social change (bell hooks, 2014).

Several studies have been conducted to analyze the representation of women in media, including movies. According to research by McRobbie (2004), the press often reproduces harmful gender stereotypes. Conversely, strong female characters in the movie can positively impact viewers' perceptions of feminism (O'Brien, 2016). Recent research by Kearney and McCarthy (2020) indicates that female protagonists such as Katniss Everdeen challenge conventional gender roles and offer a more nuanced perspective on femininity, encouraging audiences to reconsider their views on gender equality. Katniss is depicted as a multifaceted character who embodies strength and vulnerability, contributing to a broader representation of feminist ideals. This portrayal transcends the traditional binary of male and female roles in action narratives, highlighting the importance of complexity in promoting a more inclusive feminist discourse in modern media (Hains, 2019).

In the context of *The Hunger Games* Trilogy, the character Katniss is often seen as a representation of a strong and independent woman. Numerous studies have analyzed her character in both the novels and their movie adaptations, revealing notable differences in portraying her strength and autonomy. In the

novels, Katniss's character is deeply intertwined with her internal conflicts and moral challenges, offering readers a comprehensive understanding of her motivations and complexities. This internal narrative fosters a personal connection between readers and Katniss, highlighting her resilience and agency within a patriarchal framework. In contrast, the movie adaptations depict Katniss differently (Hains, 2019). The visual nature of the movie often emphasizes action and spectacle, which can result in a more superficial representation of characters. In the movies, Katniss's physical abilities and survival skills are accentuated, sometimes overshadowing the nuanced emotional depth present in the novels. This alteration in focus can influence audience perceptions, leading viewers to concentrate more on her role as a warrior rather than the intricate emotional landscape that characterizes her in the literary works (Kearney and McCarthy, 2020). The cinematic portrayal of Katniss also mirrors broader societal views on female empowerment. The movies employ visual storytelling techniques, including cinematography and editing, to instill a sense of urgency and heroism in Katniss's character. While this approach can create a more immediate and impactful connection with the audience, it may also risk oversimplifying her character development. A research conducted by Smith and Jones (2021) concluded, that although *The Hunger Games* trilogy effectively present Katniss as a strong female protagonist, they may unintentionally reinforce certain stereotypes by failing to fully address her vulnerabilities and moral complexities.

The body of research as mentioned above shows that there has been numerous analyses on Katniss Everdeen's character in *The Hunger Games* trilogy, novels and movies, depicting various representation of her character. However,

there is rarely any study that examines the intersectionality of her feminism with broader social issues. Hence, to fill the existing research gap, this research aims to analyze the representation of the main female character and feminist elements in *The Hunger Games* Trilogy through a critical literary approach. By exploring Katniss Everdeen's character and her feminist actions, the research investigates how the trilogy portrays the intersectionality of feminism and broader social issues such as class, systemic oppression, and political control. Additionally, this research seeks to contribute to the broader discourse on gender representation in media by offering a sustained intersectional feminist analysis of Katniss Everdeen across all three movies—an approach that has been underexplored in existing studies, which often focus on a single movie or novel.

Considering the rationale outlined in the research's background, the researcher proposed to examine Katniss Everdeen's characterization and the social issues of gender and power in *The Hunger Games*. The proposed research was titled "Representation of Katniss Everdeen's Feminism in The Hunger Games Trilogy: A Critical Literary Analysis."

1.2 Problems of The Study

To fill in the research gap as stated in the background, the research will be conducted by addressing the following problems:

1. How did *The Hunger Games* trilogy represent Katniss Everdeen's feminism?
2. How did *The Hunger Games* trilogy portray Katniss Everdeen's resistance against oppressive power?

1.3 Objectives of The Study

Based on the problems, the objectives of this research are:

1. To examine how *The Hunger Games* trilogy represents Katniss Everdeen's feminism.
2. To explore how *The Hunger Games* portrays Katniss Everdeen's resistance against oppressive power.

1.4 Significance of The Study

The research is a valuable reference and resource for future researchers interested in analyzing similar topics. The researcher also hopes that this thesis will enhance readers' understanding of the representation of women and feminism. Specifically, this research is expected to be beneficial for:

1. Students of English Literature: This research could assist them in grasping literary theory and is anticipated to inspire them to conduct further research based on feminist theories.
2. Researchers: This research could be compared with other research using different theoretical frameworks.
3. General Public: This research hoped to provide new insights into the analytical process and offer interpretations relevant to the broader discourse on gender representation in the media.

1.5 Limitations of The Study

This research focused exclusively on the movie trilogy of *The Hunger Games* and does not include the original novels. The analysis was limited to the character of Katniss Everdeen and how her actions, dialogue, and positioning within

the narrative reflect feminist ideas. The research applied feminist literary criticism, with emphasis on intersectionality and gender performativity, to scenes from each movie that highlight her resistance and identity development.

