CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter gives information of the introduction of the study which is classified into some sections. The sections are background of the study, purpose of the study, research question, subject of the study, scope of the study, significance of the study, research methodology, clarification of related terms, and organization of the paper.

1.1. Background of the Study

In the period of colonization by Western society towards other countries in the world, men dominated many aspects of life. The aspects such as economy, military, government, etc. were dominantly upheld by men (Connell, 2005). Their domination in such aspects shaped them as a group who dealt with some challenging jobs that needed bravery, much energy and thought, such as a miner, a sailor, a politician, and so on. These characteristics of masculinity were considered as the proper roles of men in a society (Gilder, 1973 as cited in Ashe, 2007). Because of this situation, women could not be considered as a group that can achieve the characteristics of masculinity. Instead, they were attached to the traits of femininity, such as being weak and dependent upon men. As a consequence, these traits limited women to enhance their lives' "advancement" in society in the past (Sultana, 2011).

The limited roles of women finally decreased slowly along with the beginning of Renaissance and the rise of Protestantism in Europe from 14th to 16th centuries. In these centuries, women and other groups who were oppressed tried to liberate themselves. They started to question their roles and masculinity in society, and the question has continued until now. This movement of liberation came to be called as feminism that later influenced masculinity. As an effect of the liberation, masculinity

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has now come to consider not only appropriate for men but also for women, as it is not about the ideal way of males' lives but a social practice of gender (Connell, 2005). By this means, women can also have the sense of masculinity or can be called as masculine women.

In literary works, those masculine women can be found in many films or TV series. Examples of TV series are *Xena: Warrior Princess* (1995-2001) and a film adaptation of *Lara Croft: Tomb Raider* (2011). Xena is a woman in the ancient time that has a different character from other princesses at that time. She is portrayed as an energetic and brave woman and often fights with men in the film. Meanwhile, Lara Croft in *Tomb Raider* is a woman in modern era with her weapons to destroy her enemies (Kennedy, 2002). However, although feminism has made women able to show their masculine sides, masculinity in film is still predominantly attributed to men rather than women.

This attribution can perpetuate the stereotype in a society that masculinity is considered only attributed to men. This is because film is a tool that transfers certain cultural norms to be adopted by the audiences (Gates, 2006). Therefore, when the audiences from another culture watch a film, they can adopt the culture of the film they watch. The reason is that masculine traits are not naturally created, yet they are perceived individually "based on information given" in a society (Schrock & Schwalbe, 2009, p. 280).

The issue of men and masculinity in films has been analyzed by many researchers. Smelik (1998) is one of the researchers who suggest that film attributes masculinity to male characters. Corrigan and White (2012, p. 227) add that male characters in traditional "movie narratives" are portrayed as the center of the movie, for they are a group who has "more power and activity than their female partners". There are many films that portray men and masculinity, such as *Ben Hur* (1959), *Hunger games* (2012), *Guardian of Galaxy* (2014), etc. These are the examples of films that portray males' domination in films. In addition, these films show masculine traits that are attached to men in facing dangerous situation in those films. For

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example, in *Ben Hur* (1959), although the main male character is similarly guilty as the female one, but he is treated more brutally than the female.

There are some related studies of masculinity in films. The first is a study conducted by Woloshyn, Taber, and Lane (2013). The study was about the discourses of masculinity and femininity in *The Hunger Games*: *"Scarred," "Bloody," and "Stunning"*. Another relevant study was conducted by Hibbeler (2009). In her research, Hibbeler analyzed male characters in Disney animated films and how they represent masculinity based on Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity (1987) and social learning theory by Tan (1986).

The films discussed above have adult male characters who represent the masculinity. However, characteristics of masculinity can also be found through portrayals of children's literature, such as in novels, short stories, picture books, films, etc. In addition, characteristics of masculinity in children's literature are often attributed to boys rather than girls. In many films, boys are often portrayed as strong, brave, and competitive characters. Meanwhile, girls often portrayed as the opposite of the boys, such as being weak, sensitive, and dependent upon others. Based on the explanation of masculinity in children's literature, the researcher finds a film that portrays children characters that show masculine characteristics in society. The film is *The Little Rascals* (1994) directed by Penelope Spheeris. The film reveals many scenes that show masculine traits of men, such as being strong, powerful, competitive, brave, and so on. There are four previous studies about this film that will be explained below.

The first study of *The Little Rascals* (1994) was conducted by Guldin (2011). The study is about the portrayal of fat kids in 17 children's popular films. In the study, *The Little Rascals* (1994) belongs to one of the lists, but the analyses do not go deeply into the film. Instead, the study analyzed two characters in the film: Spanky and Buckwheat. The second is a critic from Christian Organization about sexual

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innuendo in *The Little Rascals* (1994) in the form of a website (Carder, 2000). The third is an essay article written by Jennings and Oman (2012) about the gender cues in *The Little Rascals* (1994). In the essay, they only describe how boy and girl characters distinguish each other. The fourth is an essay in an informal blog written by Shielagm (2012) about the maturity of the character Spanky McFarland in *The Little Rascals* (1994).

From the previous studies of *The Little Rascals* (1994), the researcher found that masculinity in the film is rarely analyzed. For that reason, the researcher is interested in conducting research on the construction of masculinity in *The Little Rascals* (1994).

1.2. Purpose of the Study

The study aims to find the construction and the types of masculinity of the main characters by using the theory of Masculinity by Connell (2005). The characters that will be analyzed are Alfalfa Switzer and Spanky along with his friends who belong to 'He-Man Woman Haters' Club'. Alfalfa and Spanky along with his friends are chosen because they have different view towards women and masculinity.

1.3. Research Question
In conducting the study, the researcher provides a question that guides the study:

1. How is masculinity constructed in *The Little Rascals* (1994)?

1.4. Subject of the Study
Subjects of the study are the boy characters in a film released by Universal Pictures entitled *The Little Rascals* (1994). The film was analyzed because the main characters are children and the boy characters dominantly appeared than the girl characters. Thus, the researcher was interested in analyzing the film to see construction of masculinity among the boy characters in the film.

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1.5. Scope of the Study

The study of masculinity in *The Little Rascals* (1994) will be limited to study the main characters Alfalfa and Spanky along with his gang of 'He Man Woman Haters Club'. The reason is to see how masculinity is constructed in the film through the boy characters of the club due to many boy characters in this film than the girl characters.

1.6. Significance of Study

This study is expected to gain readers' awareness about masculinity and the types of masculinity in the film. The researcher expects readers to have new knowledge of masculinity through *The Little Rascals* (1994) because the previous studies regarding the film did not analyze masculinity and its types as the main topic of the studies. In addition, the characters in the previous studies are portrayed as adults not children.

1.7. Research Methodology

In order to find how masculinity is constructed in *The Little Rascals* (1994), the researcher applies qualitative method because the data are in the forms of dialogues and shots. There are some theories applied to conduct this study. First is the theory of masculinity proposed by Connell (2005). Second is Heintz and Stracey's (2006) film theory that consists of *mise-en-scene* and film techniques. Third, Boggs & Petrie's theory of characterization (2008) is used to see the construction of masculinity through the characterization of the main characters Alfalfa and Spanky and the gang.

1.8. Clarification of Related Terms

Social Construction: A concept of how knowledge is socially constructed in society (Berger & Luckmann, 1991).

Masculinity: A place in gender relations includes a set of practices conducted by men or women that are considered to be masculine (Connell, 2005).

Film: A medium that functions to describe the world and its values to its viewers through the motion pictures (Corrigan & White, 2012).

1.9. Organization of the Paper

Organization of this paper is divided into five chapters that are shown below.

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CHAPTER 1

This chapter provides the introduction of the study which includes background of the study, purpose of the study, research question, subject of the study, scope of the study, significance of the study, research methodology, clarification of related terms, and organization of the paper.

CHAPTER II

This chapter provides theoretical frameworks used in the study and other researchers' ideas related to the topics of the study. It consists of theory of masculinity with its types and characteristics, film theory, elements of *mise-en-scene*, theory of characterization, and discussion of previous studies.

CHAPTER III

This chapter explains the methodology used in this study, data source and context, research design, and data presentation.

CHAPTER IV

This chapter provides the findings of the analyzed data and the discussions of the findings that provides the answer of the research question.

CHAPTER V

This chapter provides the conclusion and the interpretation of the study. This section also provides the suggestion for further research in accordance with the study.