

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides the nature of the present research. It covers the background of study, the research questions, the aims of study, the scope of study, the significance of study, the research methodology, the subject of research, the data analysis, the clarification of terms, and the organization of the paper.

1.1 Background of the Study

Social revolutions have given a chance for women to participate in a bigger role in the society, for instance by occupying a position as a leader (Carr, 2007, p.128). Capturing this social revolution, the story about woman as a leader has been adapted in various novels as well. One of the novels adapting a story about female leader is a fantasy fiction targeted young adult readers by Suzanne Collins entitled *Mockingjay* (New York: Scholastic Press, 2010). The novel talks about a brave 17-year-old- woman named Katniss Everdeen whose life has changed after she was crowned as the winner of the annual games organized by the Capitol called the Hunger Games. Katniss, who comes from a poor area in District 12, has fired up the spirit of revolution of people living in districts to overthrow the President Snow's tyrannical government after being crowned as the winner of the Hunger Games. Therefore, Katniss is appointed as the Mockingjay

– the leader who represents the face, the voice, and the embodiment of the revolution.

Previous research on female leadership tended to apply feminist criticism as the theoretical framework, as it was conducted by Khaleghi (2011) discussing the issue of female leadership in two selected novels by Gloria Naylor entitled *The Women of Brewster Place* and *Mama Day*. The analysis was framed within Black Feminist's perspective to discuss motherhood and its connections to African models of female leadership. The discussion of the research itself revolved around the social acceptance of female leadership. The result showed that the two novels value the independence for women to oppose the issue of women being controlled by men.

Rather than focusing on the social acceptance of female leadership, the present research focuses on the main female character's performativity, subjectivity, and agency as female leader. Therefore, the research employs the notions of gender performativity (Butler, 1990), subjectivity and agency (e.g. Butler, 1993-1997; Mansfield, 2000; Nealon & Giroux, 2003; Hall, 2004; and Woodward, 2004). The discussion is closely related to the terms such as subject, self, performative actions, society, social rules, and so forth. It is due to the three notions highly appreciate the contribution of 'self' as well as 'social rules' as the fundamentals to the construction of a subject's identity (Butler, 1990; Mansfield, 2000; Nealon & Giroux, 2003; and Hall, 2004).

Butler (1990) defines gender performativity as sequence of actions that determine to what gender somebody belongs to. Therefore, gender performativity does not merely refer to deconstruction of social convention of gender. It is because the decision in choosing a particular gender depends on the one who chooses it. Whether somebody decides to conform or to subvert the social convention of gender, it depends on the performative actions that are performed by the person. In this state, the issue of gender performativity is closely related to the notion of subjectivity and agency. As Butler (1993, p.4) puts it, agency can be traced from the relation between culture and nature presupposed by some models of gender construction adopted by an individual. In other words, a person can actually adopt and explore her or his own identity, including her or his gender identity (Woodward, 2004, p.8). When a person is able to perform her or his performative actions, it means that the person as a subject has an agency. It is because the performative actions performed by an individual indicate that the person has the ability to respond to her or his social and historical contexts while changing them in the process.

Research applying the theory of gender performativity has been conducted by several researchers, for example Kover (2005) and Stelmok & Wilson (2005). Kover (2005) analyzed an American TV Series entitled *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* to uncover the clash between Buffy's feminine and girlish looks and her performance as heroic and super strong that holds the potential to re-define femininity. She noted that the performative actions in the series are re-

contextualizing the norms of femininity and masculinity in a parody manner so that can be considered a subversive repetition of these norms. Meanwhile, Stelmok & Wilson (2005) analyzed a collaborative work of playwright Oscar Wilder and illustrator Aubrey Beardsley entitled *Salomé* which adapted an issue on patriarchal subversion, in which they believed that it is a notion of deconstructing the social convention of gender.

To add more, the research discussing the issues of subjectivity and agency has also been conducted by several researchers, for example Radway (2001) and Bollobás (2008). Radway (2001) focused her study on the production of girls' subjectivity through two zines produced by young women, *Riot Grrrl* and *Bitch Rag* in which she discovered the effort to understand girls as cultural producers and as agents who can speak and act on their own behalf from the two zines. Whereas, Bollobás (2008) discussed the issues of subjectivity and agency in relation with the notion of gender performativity proposed by Butler (1990) in Carson McCullers' *The Ballad of the Sad Cafe* and David Hwang M's *Butterfly*. Throughout the research, Bollobás presented a notion that subjectivity can be performative.

Regarding the story of the novel, Katniss, meets a challenge in performing her actions due to the fact that she is a woman who has a role as a female leader. Her society demands her to be a proper female leader, by giving an image of well-dressed rebel with beautiful makeup and shining hair. She is also expected to avoid risky tasks since she is a precious symbol of revolution. However, Katniss

shows her disagreements towards the arrangements that have been settled by her society. She can manage to negotiate with the image of the Mockingjay that is expected by her society, but she refuses to be banned to go to the battlefield. In this state, it can be said that Katniss understands that her identity as a female leader, to some extent, should be adjusted with the social conventions and, at the same time, stands for her own conscience of how a female leader should be and should do. Therefore, the research observes the main female character's actions, decisions, choices and encounters with other characters to unearth the portrayal of female leader as well as the emergence of the issues of subjectivity and agency in the novel.

1.2 Research Questions

The research is conducted in an attempt to answer the questions as follows:

1. How is a female leader portrayed in Suzanne Collins' fantasy fiction *Mockingjay*?
2. How does the main female character perform her subjectivity and agency as a female leader in the novel?

1.3 Aims of the Study

The research is aimed to discover:

1. How a female leader is portrayed in Suzanne Collins' fantasy fiction *Mockingjay*.
2. How the main female character performs her subjectivity and agency as a female leader in the novel.

1.4 Scope of the Study

The present research provides a textual analysis of the portrayal of female leader in relation to the notion of gender performativity and elaborates the meaning of female leader's subjectivity and agency presented in Suzanne Collins' *Mockingjay* (New York: Scholastic Press, 2010). The analysis on the portrayal of female leader is limited to the issues of the society's expectations of how the main female character should behave as a leader and the main female character's repetitive actions to present herself as a female leader. Meanwhile, to reveal the issue of subjectivity and agency, it is gained by observing the main female character's actions, decisions, choices, and encounters with other characters as female leader.

1.5 Significance of the Study

While previous research on female leadership applied feminist criticism as the theoretical framework, this research delves further into the analysis of gender performativity (Butler, 1990), subjectivity and agency (e.g. Butler, 1993-1997; Mansfield, 2000; Nealon & Giroux, 2003; Hall, 2004; and Woodward, 2004) in order to analyze the portrayal of female leader and the female leader's

subjectivity and agency in Suzanne Collins' *Mockingjay* (New York: Scholastic Press, 2010). Since this research applies a different approach from the previous research, it is expected that the research offers a different perspective in understanding the issue of female leadership in a novel. Therefore, the difference in the findings and conclusions also enrich the knowledge since they come from different approaches and provide relevant reference about female leader's subjectivity and agency as well as the portrayal of female leader in a novel for other researchers.

1.6 Research Methodology

The research is conducted within a qualitative method since the data are in textual form – collected from the narrative events of the female character's actions, choices, and encounters with other characters as a female leader in Suzanne Collins' *Mockingjay* (New York: Scholastic Press, 2010) – and are analyzed by describing, elaborating, and interpreting the findings. As Hancock (2002, p.2) proposes, the data of qualitative method are used to develop concepts and theories that help people to understand the subject of the study. Therefore, by using content analysis that passes through the two level of analysis – manifest and latent levels (Hancock, 2002, p.17), the data in the present research are analyzed to develop the concepts of gender performativity, subjectivity, and agency.

1.7 Subject of the Research

The research revolves around the main female character in a fantasy fiction entitled *Mockingjay* by Suzanne Collins (New York: Scholastic Press, 2010). It is the third book of the trilogy *The Hunger Games*. The analysis focuses on the third books because the story elaborates the main female character that is finally appointed as the Mockingjay – the leader of revolution – after being crowned as the winner of the Hunger Games. Therefore, the issue of portrayal of a female leader in relation to the notion of gender performativity as well as the female leader's subjectivity and agency can be traced throughout the story.

1.8 Data Analysis

The analysis in the present research adopts content analysis that consists of two level of analysis, namely manifest (descriptive) and latent (interpretative) levels. The steps of analysis are conducted as follow:

1. Firstly, reading throughout the novel carefully in order to understand and to discover the issues presented in Suzanne Collins' *Mockingjay* (New York: Scholastic Press, 2010). Through four times of reading, the textual evidences are finally gathered from the novel regarding the issue of a female leader related to the notions of gender performativity, subjectivity, and agency.
2. Secondly, writing brief notes in the highlighted textual evidences to simply identify and to give label to the textual evidences that are related to the issues of gender performativity, subjectivity, and agency in the main female

character's actions, decisions, choices, and encounters with other characters regarding her role as a female leader.

3. Thirdly, listing the textual evidences in the form of tables based on the notes so that the issues of female leader in relation to the notions of gender performativity, subjectivity, and agency can be easily categorized for further analysis.
4. Fourthly, analyzing the textual evidences as well as presenting and interpreting the data framed within the related theories in order to answer the research questions. The primary theoretical frameworks applied in this research are gender performativity, subjectivity, and agency in which the analysis of the textual evidences is engaged with respect to the fact that the novel analyzed in this research is considered as fantasy fiction.
5. Finally, the findings of the research are discussed so that the conclusion can be drawn.

1.9 Clarification of the Terms

To avoid misconception and misunderstanding, there are some significant terms that have to be clarified for the purpose of the present study:

1. Agency (Self)

Agency is the degree of control which a person can exert over who he or she is (Woodward, 2004, p.6). It is the term that is closely related to someone's

desire since it is seen as subjective, as an attribute or trait inhering in the will of an individual subject (Kover, 2005). It means that when someone posits an agency, she or he is able to stand for her or his own belief, ideology, and even to define her or his own identity.

2. Gender Performativity

Gender Performativity refers to gender identity which is shown by someone's repeated actions (Felluga, 2002). It is rooted from the concept of 'performativity' which refers to someone's decision to take a role as a particular gender which is implemented in the sequence of actions (Salih, 2002). The term 'performativity' itself should be differentiated to 'performance'. While 'performance' means that somebody does a particular gender in a particular time or situation, 'performativity', as it has been mentioned before, is one's decision to perform particular gender in the sequential actions which last for longer time and may become one's identity (Butler, 1993, as cited in Osbourne and Segal, 1993).

3. Performative Action

Performative action is the sequential actions which last in a long time and may construct one's identity (Felluga, 2002).

4. Subject

An individual or a person whose identity is highly influenced and constructed by her or his social circumstances (Nealon & Giroux, 2003).

5. Subjectivity

Subjectivity refers to general principle that does not allow people to be distinct selves and at the same time encourages and makes people understand their interior lives inevitably seem to involve other people (Mansfield, 2000).

It gives an assumption that an individual is meaningful because of the fact that she or he is connected or linked to the things outside her or him, such as social groups, social conventions, linguistic aspects, and so forth.

1.10 Organization of the Paper

This research consists of five chapters. It is organized as follows:

CHAPTER I

This chapter focuses on introduction of the research including the background of study, the research questions, the aims of study, the scope of study, the significance of study, the research methodology, the subject of research, the data analysis, the clarification of terms, and the organization of the paper.

CHAPTER II

The second chapter discusses the theoretical frameworks and the literature reviews as the foundation of the research.

CHAPTER III

In the third chapter, the discussion revolves around the research methodology describing the steps and procedures of the study as well as the data sources in conducting the study.

CHAPTER IV

The fourth chapter presents the findings and discussion of the research. It is the section where the data are elaborated and interpreted in relation to the theories that have been elaborated in CHAPTER II.

CHAPTER V

As the last chapter, this section provides the conclusion of the research and the suggestions for further research.