

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

Studying masculinity in cinema is important to see how men are represented in the media. The study of masculinity in cinema was not noticeable until the 1980s (Alorda 2013, 3), as masculinity studies emerged in the United States due to the feminist and gay liberation movements of the 60s and 70s. Teresa de Lauretis (1987, 5) stated that modern mass media, especially film, have a vital relevance for establishing gender ideals as "the construction of gender is both the product and the process of its representation."

Representation of masculinity in cinema varies differently, based on the socio-culture in the era. This study will explore Hollywood masculinity in the 1960s. Historically, traditional masculinity in the 1960s was challenged by the protest of homosexuals, youth promiscuity, to the second-wave feminism movement (Woodman 2005, 92). Second-wave feminism is a feminist movement in the West during the 1960s to 1970s (Beasley 2005, 255). One of the vital points of this feminism movement that also resulted in youth promiscuity is the liberation for free sex. Many social movements also happened in that era, namely Vietnam War and Civil Rights Movement.

Hollywood cinema in the 1960s naturally followed the socio-culture moments happening in the era; thus, traditional masculinity traits shown in cinema were portray the socio-culture in that era. There are different representations of

masculinity traits in 1960s Hollywood cinema. 'Angry Young Men' films try to portray negative post-war themes by showing frustrated male protagonists trying to break free from social expectations using alcohol, sex, sports, and money (Dirks 2020). However, the liberation of sexual scenes in cinema makes the 1960s 'sensual' in a sense, as men are portrayed way more sex driven. Westerns, a masculine genre, were also beginning to be faded. However, in the second half of the 1960s, cinema was starting to soften its portrayal of men, embracing the social protest of homosexuals. Films like *Midnight Cowboy* (1969) won Best Picture at Oscars, and *The Gay Deceivers* (1969) portray queer men. Even so, their portrayals were leaning more into stereotypical depictions.

In the twenty-first century, specifically the 2010s, the representation of masculinity in cinema has changed a lot due to the socio-culture movements. Many movies have shown different variations of masculinity, as terms like "new man" have also emerged. A superhero film like *Deadpool* (2016) was negotiating traditional masculinity that is usually portrayed in superheroes films (Rada 2018), and a war movie like *The Yellow Birds* (2017) is contesting hegemonic masculinity that is usually portrayed in war movies (Arafah and Kristanto 2019).

In this study, a film about to be analyzed is *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood*. *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood* (2019) is a film written and directed by Quentin Tarantino, an Oscar-winner director. He is critically acclaimed with his works *Reservoir Dogs* (1992) and *Pulp Fiction* (1994) (IMDb). *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood* is a film about a faded actor who works his best to chase fame and success with his stuntman at the end of the Hollywood Golden Age in 1969.

Classical Hollywood cinema, especially Hollywood Golden Age, is when high-budget films and glamorous actors foster. The significant reason to choose this film as an object is that this film is the only significant film released in the 2010s representing Hollywood in the 1960s. The glamorous actors cast for this film, Leonardo di Caprio, Brad Pitt, and Margot Robbie, also added to the touch of the golden age of Hollywood. This film brought people back to the 1960s aesthetic.

There are a plentiful of 2010s movies set in the 1960s. *Green Book* (2018) is a film set in the 1960s, which tells the story of a white driver and a black pianist. The other 2010s film that set in the 1960s is *La La Land* (2016). *La La Land* is a musical film telling the story of the struggle of the two lovebirds chasing their dreams in Hollywood. On the one hand, while both movies were set in the 1960s, *La La Land* did not portray much of the vast socio-culture happening in the era, and *Green Book* only focuses on the racial tensions in the era.

On the other hand, *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood* shows many of the 1960s Hollywood cultures, one of the factors thought of in this research. *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood* shows the fall of the Hollywood television scene, the hippie movement alongside the rise of cult, which portrays the end of the 1960s very well. These representations of the 1960s socio-culture could help the writer analyze the portrayal of hegemonic masculinity since the study tries to discover the contradiction of the 1960s masculinity with how it is represented in the movie.

In order to analyze this, the writer is using Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity. The hegemonic masculinity concept helps understand many aspects

of life, including the representations of masculinity in the mass media (Connell 2005). Hegemonic masculinity is "a question of how particular groups of men inhabit positions of power and wealth, and how they legitimate and reproduce the social relationships that generate their dominance" (Carrigan, Connell, Lee 1985). Donaldson (1993) supported this argument, adding that the difference between hegemonic masculinity and other masculinities is the control of men and the representation as "universal social advancement." This statement shows that hegemonic masculinity is not always dominant but is also institutionalized in social structures and ideologies. Therefore, hegemonic masculinity is never static. Hence, Connell's hegemonic masculinity theory is used to analyze the issue brought up, looking at how and why 1960s masculinity is being reframed in the recent era.

Many previous studies about masculinity in the 1960s were portrayed in literature work, especially cinema, and a study on masculinity in the different decades. The first related study was a study by Woodman (2005) using *The Gay Deceivers* as its object material, revealing that the 1960s shift in sexuality and gender in the film is very attached to the decade on when it was made. However, the stereotypical portrayals of the gay man made the film seem to win out masculinity's hegemonic construction, using close reading to explore the phenomenon with Connell's hegemonic masculinity theory. The second related study is a study by Andersen (2014), who studied on 'beach party' themed films in the 1960s, found that the films show fascination with racial difference and how the surfer associates with that exoticism that threatened themselves with their

masculinity and whiteness, using several theories which are gender, masculinity, and race.

The third related study is a study by Meloy (2009), arguing that there are changing perceptions of ideal masculinity in Postwar America, using qualitative method and Connell's hegemonic masculinity theory. The fourth related study is about masculinity and violence in twenty-first-century America by Alorda (2013). She found that the films used in the study show signs of interpersonal violence, institutional violence, structural violence, and heroic violence to show masculinity, using qualitative methods and several masculinity theories. What differs from the writer's study from the writer will explore the reframed representation of the 1960s masculinity in cinema released in the 2010s, using a film that sets in the 1960s and is released in 2019, *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood*. Based on those previous studies, it is known that hegemonic masculinity is represented because of many factors. Those previous studies have not discussed the possible reframing of the 1960s hegemonic masculinity in the twenty-first century

This study will focus on how the 1960s Hollywood masculinity is represented in a 2010s film since I argue that there is a hint of reframing at work. Studies on the 1960s masculinity in films are plenty, and most of them are researched on how the films depict masculinity in the era's society. A study by Woodman (2005) shows that *The Gay Deceivers* film portrays the 1960s alternative masculinity, where queer man is the main character, showing that films could be used to show the socio-culture reality happened as a form of

representation. Nevertheless, the film fails to show it in a non-stereotypical way. Meanwhile, Andersen (2014) shows that the attempt of beach party genre films in early the 1960s to reinvent white hegemonic masculinity was failed to be done as their portrayal is, instead, damaging their manhood and whiteness. Meloy (2009) also shows that the film is used to criticize the "increasingly aggressive feminist force" and a loss of masculine empowerment in the 1960s. These show how extremely dynamic the representation of hegemonic masculinity in cinema is.

Connell (2005) argued that "hegemony relates to cultural dominance in the society as a whole," and not only gender relation but also the subordination between groups of men. These different representations and criticism of the 1960s Hollywood masculinity show that reframing is possible. Thus, this study focuses on how the representation of the 1960s masculinity is reframed in the recent era, how and why the contradiction happens. Hence, I argue that there is a reframing of the 1960s masculinity in portraying the main characters in *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood*. The first main character is an actor from the middle class, while the second main character is a stuntman from the working class.

To pursue the aim of this study, hegemonic masculinity by Connell is used as the theory together with qualitative method, using narrative and non-narrative as the approach. The deep analysis and interpretation of the text is the basis of conducting this research; thus, qualitative research is chosen. Qualitative research focuses on the deep analysis and interpretation of text and image of the object (Cresswell 2007). In order to analyze the data, due to the use of film, narrative and non-narrative analysis approaches are used, as they are the primary method of

analyzing film. Films have a relationship with language as it is a way to communicate from the abstraction to the reflection of real-life (Gianetti 2014).

These approaches are used because the writer focuses on interpreting text rather than numerical data, which is an approach of the quantitative method. Narrative and non-narrative aspects are closely analyzed. A narrative is essential to know the characters' progress throughout the film, and non-narrative is used to encode the symbolism shown throughout the film. The narrative is applied by analyzing the structures of the film, focusing on which the main characters' scenes are shown. At the same time, the non-narrative is applied by analyzing the mise-en-scene and camerawork to find the symbolism within each main character. Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity is accompanying the interpretations of these approaches.

## **1.2 Statements of The Problem**

Based on the Background of The Study above, male characters in *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood* bring masculinity issues. Some interesting ideas arise and need to be discussed:

1. How is the 1960s masculinity represented in both main male characters of *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood*, Rick Dalton and Cliff Booth?
2. To what extent does this representation reframe 1960s masculinity?

### 1.3 Objectives of The Study

Based on the Statement of the Problem, the objectives of this study are:

1. To analyze the 1960s masculinity represented in both main male characters of *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood*, Rick Dalton and Cliff Booth.
2. To explain the extent of the 1960s masculinity reframing in *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood* film.

### 1.4 Significances of the Study

This study helps increase the understanding of the 1960s counterculture and knowledge and ideas about the issue of hegemonic masculinity in film for the writer. As for society, this study could hopefully help people understand the effect of the 1960s counterculture toward gender and how important it is to show that in cinema and understand how far society in the twenty-first century has changed in showing diverse portrayals of masculinity. This study can contribute to cultural studies in enriching the knowledge of men's representation in cinema and how the culture in which it was set and released affects the portrayal. This study could also hopefully help those who are interested in studying hegemonic masculinity in cultural studies.



### 1.5 Definition of Key Terms

Hollywood : a neighborhood in the central region of Los Angeles, California, and now associated with the United States film industry.

Classical Hollywood Cinema : refers to the filmmaking that became the characteristic of American cinema between the 1910s to the 1960s (Bordwell et al. 1985)

Masculinity : refers to "socially, historically and culturally variable and as constituted in relation to or as against, that which is deemed non-masculine" (Beasley 2005).

Hegemonic masculinity : is "a question of how particular groups of men inhabit positions of power and wealth, and how they legitimate and reproduce the social relationships that generate their dominance" (Carrigan, Connell, Lee 1985)

Reframing : the contradiction of reality and its representation.