CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Superhero movie is one of movies genre that have successfully entertained its viewers. Superman, Spiderman, Batman, X men and Iron man are such popular superhero movies with rate about seven until eight to ten viewers (imdb.com). Those kinds of movies were taken from comics. The first comics conceived a renewed interest in Superheroes by Marvel Comics-led with the revival of these masked men in 1960s. These new marvels, such as Spider-Man and X-Men, were high-flying heroes with real-world problems – the perfect foil for the silver screen. Though some of these early comics – book heroes, including Superman, Batman and Captain America did make their way into radio, television and film serial (Burke 2008).

Nevertheless, Superhero movie is not always adapted from comics, but some of them are based on games. For the examples, X-men and The Hunger Game produced by Hollywood. However, superhero movies are not always dominated by Hollywood itself, but some of them are also from another production. Bollywood created by the English – language press in India in the late 1970s has now become a dominant global term which refers to the prolific and box-office oriented with Hindi language film industry located in Bombay (renamed Mumbai in 1995). As

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an Indian cinema, Bollywood has also produced several superhero movies, such as Krissh, Koi Mil Gaya, RA.ONE, and so on. However, RA.ONE is the most controversial one, because they have pro and contra issues.

RA.ONE movie is an Indian science fiction superhero film directed by Anubhav Sinha and starred by Sharukh Khan, Kareena Kapoor, Arman Verna, Arjun Rampal, Shanana Goswani, and Tom Wu. This film tells a story about an employee named Shekhar Subramanium (Sharukh Khan) who works at a company. One day, his Director told him to create a new game with different packaging using some of sophisticating new technology products created by his company. Inspired with Prateek (Verma), his son's wishes, and his wife Sonia's (Kareena Kapoor) request, he created a game with two his friends, an Indian computer programmer named Jenny (Shahana Goswami) and a Chinese colleague named Akashi (Tom Wu). The game that they created consists of level one, two and three. They then created a superhero and a villain who cannot die easily. The hero is named G.One, which stands for *Good One* which in Hindi's culture means "life" starred by Sharukh Khan, while the villain is named RA.ONE which stands for *Random Access Version-One* enemy starred by Arjun Rampal.

When launching the game, Prateek – Shekar kid is trying to play but not complete – in third level. Due to the game being played is not finished, the system errors and make the characters, Superhero and Villain came out in the real world. Then, one of those characters, the villain

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looked at Prateek who uses the name "Lucifer" in playing the game. With the strength, finally the Villain know where Prateek ranging from London to India and finish the game assisted by superhero, G.ONE.

Thus, this film received achievement as the India's first social game. According to the Ficci-KPMG, Indian Media and Entertainment Industry Report 2011, there are 8-10 million social media gamers in India. Social games are played as a way of social interaction. Successful social games are Farmville, Cityville, and Mafia War. Globally, social gaming is a $1-billion market. Thus, to boost up the popularity of RA.ONE movie, according to Shailja Gupta, the head of Red Chillies Entertainment digital and new media, an online game was created and named RA.ONE as same as the name of the movie adapted. In other words, this on line game is just one part of the digital marketing strategies. And, never before has any superhero movie conducted this marketing strategy model in India." she says. (afaqs.com)

However, RA.ONE has launched the game that will also be available across five platforms – social networking sites (Facebook, Twitter), iPads/iPhones, Android, Nokia's Ovi store and DTH. (hindustantime.com). Red Chillies Entertainment also has declared a tie-up with Sony Computer Entertainment Europe (SCEE) to build a full cycle game on PlayStation. The video game version of the movie will be called RA. One – The game and will be available on PS2 and PS3 (through PSN download). Speaking on the games, Sha Rukh Khan said that:

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It has been a dream since childhood to be somehow involved designing or making them as all kids dream of. So now, many years down the line the dream is full filed! Double pleasure gaming and movies. RA.ONE on PS1 and PS3 feeling like a kid all over. Hope everyone enjoys the game and also the movie. The game is awesome fun. G.One looks cool, so does RA.ONE and Kareena in avatar which everyone will enjoy too thrilled. Finally can play a game, be a gamer and the game itself...YAY!!! (webcitation.org)

It means the production of the movie realizes the importance of the gaming route to connect with the Indian audience and has been involved in the pre-production stage. It is to maintain closeness of the game storyline with that film. The game was published by SCEE and released before the film. SCEE is committed to a certain high decibel launch of the game as the first game released, and will establish creatively the key characters of the film through the game itself.

Moreover, this movie has countless criticism and compliment from a wide range of local critics even from overseas. Mayank Shekar's reviews this film merely wants to show special effects and it is not excessively as well. By existence of a scene, Superhero supposed to be save the people even the world rather than in action by jumping around the right of the train. As the journalist, he stated this superhero movie is a highlight scene film and the located is overly like Hollywood movie. Thus, he gives some suggestion that it is possible amazing if adjusting the sequence becomes a reasonable plot which is the superhero should against the 'human' opponent (hindustantime.com)

Besides Shekar's point of view, there is another criticism from Rachel Saltz, Journalist from New York Times said that RA.ONE is

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technically as sophisticated as anything Bollywood has produced. It relies on action and effects and Bollywood's trump card. She said that the exposition is long-winded and confusing as the rules of the game between the virtual and the real worlds (newyorktimes.com). According to Prashant Singh, stated that Sharukh Khan was upset about some silly review of his ambitious superhero project, RA.ONE. She was adding that SRK wants the sequel and left it at the end shows how G.One has come back (hindustantime.com).

In other words, some responses and criticism about this movie is concern on the technologies used and superhero concepts. For this reason, the writer focuses the study on the representation of Indian Superhero using special effect from sophisticated technology in this RA.ONE movie. Therefore, the film's highlight is high-tech VFX shots, which were outsourced from multiple specialty studios in London, Paris and Bangkok so that this movie receives awards as best visual effect in Asian Film Award (webcitation.com)

Due to the 90 percent filming location in England, it may reflect the relation between India – British. Thus, since British and India are having colonization relationship in the early seventeenth century (1858 – 1947), the writer wants to know whether there is any influence from British colonization on the representation of Indian superhero in this movie (sscnet.ucla.edu). Hence, the writer uses mimicry theory from Homi Bhabha. This theory is about the imitation between the colonized and the

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colonizer by adopting the colonizer's cultural habits, assumption, values and institution (Ashcroft, Griffiths, Tiffin 2008).

B. Statement of the Problem

From the background of the study above, there is a point to be explored whether there is any influence from British colonization on the representation of Indian superhero in the movie:

- How is Superhero represented in RA.ONE as an Indian movie?

C. Objective of the Study

From the explanation above and the Statement of the Problem, this study will explore and discuss about whether there is any influence from British colonization on the representation of Indian superhero in RA.ONE film.

D. Significance of the Study

This study is desired to provide a contribution to the writer, readers, and the student of Cultural Studies especially in English Department Faculty of Humanities Universities' Airlangga. For the writer, this study provides knowledge about film studies and particularly about colonization within mimicry – adopting culture from colonized.

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For the readers, this study affords advantages in film as popular culture and conveys the impact from its colonized from all of the aspects. Thus, the readers give more perception towards colonization issues so that they can improve their awareness with surroundings even with their cultures. Hence, the readers will realize with the impacts. In the other hands, this thesis is also helpful to offer the references about the influence of colonization between the colonizers and the colonized country, especially concerned with mimicry issues.

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E. Definition of Key Terms

There are some important terms used in this study. These are the definition of key terms that help to guidance the readers in understanding about the terms that used in the analysis. The definition of key terms is involved from the trustworthy resources in accordance to catch a correct meaning.

Superhero : a character which identified "With great power comes great responsibility". The origin of the 'power' and the 'responsibility' or special abilities a hero will use usually occurs first in the story (Burke 2008).

Post – Colonialism : the effects of colonization on culture and societies. It had a clearly chronological meaning, designating the post-independence period and used by literary critics to discuss the various cultural effects of colonization (Ashcroft Griffiths & Tiffin 2000).

Mimicry : it is copying process of the colonizing culture, behavior manners and values by the colonized subject is reproduced as 'almost the same, but not quit' (Bhabha 1994:86 cited p. 125).

Diaspora : the voluntary or forcible movement of peoples from their homelands into new regions is a central historical fact of colonization (Ashcroft Griffiths & Tiffin 2001).

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CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW