

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### A.1 Background of the Research

Puberty is the stage in a person's life when their body begins to mature physically. According to Alan D. Rogol (2002), puberty is a dynamic development period marked by rapid changes in body size, shape, and composition, all sexually dimorphic. The adolescent growth spurt is one of the hallmarks of puberty. Body compositional changes, including the regional distribution of body fat, are substantial and sexually dimorphic during the pubertal transition.

The researcher intends to conduct research with a movie entitled *Turning Red*. *Turning Red* is a 2022 American computer-animated coming-of-age fantasy comedy film about a teenage girl named Meilin Lee, a 13-year-old Chinese-Canadian student who, due to a hereditary curse from her culture, transforms into a giant red panda when she experiences strong emotions. The researcher chose *Turning Red* because this movie portrays the process of a young girl's maturation.

The previous research related to this topic is done by Wahyu Riyatno (2012) entitled *The Contribution of Conflicts toward Maturity Process in the Main Character in Carl Hiaasen's Hoot*, this research pointed out the conflicts experienced by the main character and the contribution of the conflict toward the

main character's maturity process. In relation to the main character's maturity process, *Turning Red* also contains Meilin's maturity process.

Some reviews also state that *Turning Red* is about maturity. The previous review by Tyler Bey (2022) entitled *In Pixar's 'Turning Red,' a panda and puberty steal the show*, showed how Meilin went through puberty, such as physical changes, emotional outbursts, and so on. The researcher will also focus on Meilin's phases when experiencing puberty.

The other previous review by Richard Lawson (2022) entitled *Turning Red Is a Puberty Story Aimed at Parents*, this review showed that this film does not only discuss Meilin's physical riots with the complicated emotional tension of going through puberty, this film also shows how the daughter's relationship with her family. The researcher also will focus on how Meilin's relationship with her family, such as her mother, father, and grandmother, in viewing puberty.

Emily Clute (2022) gave a review toward *Turning Red* movie, she showed that this film is not only about maturity but also the red panda, which has its own meaning for people of Chinese descent. The researcher will also focus on the myths about maturity based on the perspective of people of Chinese descent, namely Meilin's family, the mother, father, and grandmother.

*Turning Red* contains several myths of puberty. Myth is defined as a classic or legendary story that usually focuses on a particular hero or event and explains

mysteries of nature, existence, or the universe with no true basis in fact. According to John Antony Cuddon (1928), myth —*múthos* (anything uttered by word of mouth), generally, a myth is a story that is not 'true' and involves supernatural – or, at very least, supra-human beings. Myth is always about creation and explains how something came to exist.

Chinese myths have been used to interpret opaque, fragmentary, or corrupt mythic narratives that express a surface meaning but also convey a deeper underlying reality. The majority of the world, including China, views menstruation with fear and is surrounded by taboos and rules. Menstrual blood has traditionally been regarded as unclean and polluting by the Chinese due to its magical power and potential for harm. It has great power when used in magic and counter-magic, as well as exorcising evil spirits (Ming, 1980). Meilin's family, particularly the other female relatives, regards their menstruation as a source of shame, and their beliefs are influenced by their culture itself. This led to differences of perspective about the puberty myth between Meilin's mother, father, and grandmother.

Furthermore, Meilin's family, especially the females, turns into pandas when they hit puberty, this is because Meilin's family is of Chinese descent, and China is synonymous with pandas. In *earthstoriez*, giant pandas are regarded as "sacred creatures of the forest" and "living fossils" and are the only mammal to have survived the Pleistocene, three million years ago, going back to the time of the saber-toothed tiger. Chinese people adored this gentle giant, regarding them

as a symbol of peace. As such, they are offered as valuable gifts to royalty or politicians and a gesture of goodwill to foreign countries till today. Considered symbols of strength and bravery, the early Chinese emperors kept them to ward off evil spirits and natural disasters, and warriors were often compared to giant pandas. Meilin is of Chinese descent, in China, the myths about maturity are usually associated with pandas. This topic has not been studied before, so this research examines the myth of puberty in *Turning Red* movie.

Based on the reasons above, this research focuses on the issues from perspective Meilin's family, such as her mother, father, and grandmother on the myth of puberty in *Turning Red* movie. This study also applies the theory of sociology of literature, the abjection, and the other supporting theory.

### **A.2 Problem of the Research**

As stated in the research background, the purpose of this study is to answer the following question:

How are the perspectives of Meilin's family on the myth of puberty reflected in *Turning Red* movie?

### **A.3 Objective of the Research**

Based on the research problem, this research objective purposes to answer the problem question in order to analyze the perspectives of Meilin's family on the myth of puberty as reflected in *Turning Red* movie.

#### **A.4 Significance of the Research**

The research has two significances; they are explained theoretically and practically.

Theoretically, this research is expected to give positive contribution toward the development of theory in literature, especially in studying the sociology of literature. In addition, this research can assist the readers in understanding and applying the theory to analysis.

Practically, this research is hoped to result in such new information, knowledge, and support for the readers concerning the study analysis of the sociology of literature in the literary works, and also this research is expected to serve as an additional source in further research as well.

#### **A.5 Limitation of the Research**

Regarding the problem, the research will concentrate on analyzing the perspectives of Meilin's family on the myth of puberty as reflected in *Turning Red* movie.

#### **A.6 Definition of Key Terms**

In order to make this study understandable and avoid wrong interpretation, the research presents some explanation related to some terms discussed in the study:

## **1. Perspective**

In *Merriam-Webster's Online Dictionary*, perspective is a mental perception or possibility, a way for gaining a boundary perception on the world stage.

## **2. Myth**

In *A Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, Myth (GK *múthos*, 'anything uttered by word of mouth'), generally, a myth is a story that is not 'true' and involves supernatural – or, at very least, supra-human beings. Myth is always about creation and explains how something came to exist (1928-1966, p.470).

## **3. Puberty**

Puberty is the period in a person's life when he or she becomes sexually mature. It is a process that occurs between the ages of 10-14 for girls, meanwhile 12-16 for boys. It causes physical changes and has different effects on boys and girls.

## **4. Abjection**

Abjection is a literary term that refers to subjective horror, or person's reaction to physically or emotionally disturbing subject matter.

## **5. Chinese Culture**

Chinese culture refers to a diverse set of behavioral norms and beliefs shared by Chinese people to varying degrees. It is based on an ancient civilization and incorporates folk culture, dominant philosophical ideas, and religious traditions. Chinese culture has profound effects on its members in intrapersonal, interpersonal, and transpersonal domains (Chan & Leung, 2014).

## **6. Turning Red**

*Turning Red* is an American computer-animated fantasy comedy film produced and distributed by Pixar Animation Studios and Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures in 2022. The story follows Meilin Lee “Mei”, a 13-year-old Chinese-Canadian student who, due to a hereditary curse from her culture, transforms into a giant red panda when she experiences strong emotions.

### **A.7 Organization of the Research Report**

This research is arranged into five chapters. The first chapter consists of a background of the research, the problem statement of the research, objectives of the research, significance of the research, limitation of the research, definition of key terms, and organization of the research report. The second chapter will discuss the theoretical framework and review of related researchers. The third chapter

will state the research method, including the type of research, data, source of the data, method of collecting data, the technique of collecting data, and method of analyzing data. In the fourth chapter, data analysis will be discussed further. The last chapter will be the conclusion and suggestions.

