

# Chapter I

## Introduction

### 1.1 Research Background

Lord of the Flies is a novel written by Nobel Prize-winning author William Golding in 1954. The story revolves around a group of boys who find themselves stranded on a remote island after their plane crashes. With no adults present, they must fend for themselves and attempt to establish their society. Initially, they strive to maintain order and collaborate, but desires, fears, and chaos emerge as time passes.

This novel marks Golding's debut and received numerous positive reviews, capturing the attention of literature enthusiasts. It found a place in the Modern Library's 100 Best Novels, securing the 41st position on the editor's list and the 25th position on the reader's list. It also ranked 70th in the BBC's Big Read Poll, and Time Magazine recognized it as one of the 100 Best Young-Adult Books of All Time. In 2005, it was acknowledged as one of the 100 best English-language novels published between 1923 and 2005.

In this novel, writers identify a significant concern that can be explored as a research topic, which is the lack of female characters in the novel "Lord of the Flies." The only female character portrayed in the novel is Piggy's aunt. Nevertheless, the issue of femininity is also explicitly addressed within the story. For example, in the memory of the main character named Ralph, he refuses to read

a book on his bookshelf because it talks about two girls (Lord of The Flies: 100). There is also a scene where the boys reject tying up their long hair because they believe it would be like girls (Lord of The Flies: 153).

From the quote, the writer feels that Ralph, as the main character, gives off a strong sense of masculinity and an anti-feminine impression. In the novel, Ralph is chosen as the leader of the group because of his rational thinking, ability to remain calm in various situations, and his physical stature compared to the other children (Lord of The Flies: 12). This makes Ralph suitable to be the leader. According to the writer, Ralph represents masculinity in the novel "Lord of The Flies." Therefore, the writer will focus the research on the character of Ralph. In contrast to Ralph, Piggy's character highlights more feminine qualities. In the novel, Piggy is portrayed as the weakest among the boys, overweight, wearing glasses, and suffering from asthma, which leads to him being seen as unmanly. Ralph, the leader of the group, consistently makes rational and sound decisions, and his actions for the group are always purposeful. In contrast, Piggy's actions often stem from what he recalls his aunt saying in his memory. For example, in the novel, when Piggy is required to run, he does so with wheezing breath, and he stops to say that he's not allowed to run because of his asthma, as per his aunt's instructions (Lord of The Flies: 11).

Despite having more knowledge than the other boys, Piggy's position on the island is inferior due to his association with feminine traits in his body and background. Piggy's limitations are proven in the rejection by Ralph and Jack,

driven by their fear of what is considered feminine, and the display of Ralph and Jack's masculinity further emphasizes their exclusion of Piggy. Compared to Ralph, Piggy's fat body, physical health issues, and perceived unmanly background harm his social interactions. In particular, Piggy's weight even prevents him from being called by his real name. Piggy's inability to make others call him by his real name indicates that he has lost his subjectivity and that his identity is defined by others, possibly making him less important in a society that values masculinity.

Ralph's masculinity can be seen in the way he delivers his speeches, "my father's in the Navy, he said there aren't any unknown islands left. He says the Queen has a big room full of maps and all the uncharted islands in the world are drawn there.... And sooner or later, the ship will be put in here. It might even be my Daddy's ship. So you see, sooner or later we shall be rescued." (Lord of The Flies: 35-36) With his words, and because a male figure appeared in his speech, Ralph's audience started to like him, and they now respected him. Everyone applauded him.

Given the numerous issues present in this novel, the literary theories the writer are employed are hegemonic masculinity theories. Feminism, in general, is a movement that seeks to challenge and change power structures that perpetuate gender inequality and create a more just and equitable society for all genders. According to Hannam (2007:22), feminism is an acknowledgment of the power imbalance between the two genders, with women's roles being subordinate to men.

Masculinity studies is a fairly recent movement that examines how men are defined by their maleness. This theory analyzes how gender stereotypes affect men and how they contribute to power structures in society. According to Kimmel, an American sociologist specializing in gender studies, masculinity gives men the capacity to act, and that action is to reject femininity because men are afraid of being seen as weak by other men.

The theory that are used to analyze the literary structure is structuralism, according to Kutha (2004:91), which defines structuralism as an understanding of elements, namely the structure itself and the relationships between one element and another. As per the definition of structuralism by Taum (1997:38), literary structuralism theory is an approach to literary texts that explores the overall relationships between various textual elements. The individual elements of the text are not important on their own.

In brief, the research background delves deeply into the significant themes of gender stereotypes and hegemonic masculinity in Golding's novel "Lord of the Flies." This classic work serves as a powerful tool for exploring how literature reflects and critiques the social and economic structures, especially concerning the portrayal of gender roles and the complexity of power. Through an analysis of the interactions and behaviors of the characters on the isolated island, The Writers acquire a deeper understanding of how these themes are intricately integrated into the storyline. This research are provided a comprehensive examination of the

critical aspects of the novel, shedding light on its relevance and broader implications in the context of society and human nature.

## **1.2 Identification of the Problems**

The novel 'The Lord of The Flies by Golding, tells the story of a group of boys who find themselves stranded on an uninhabited island without any adults.

The novel explores how this group of boys endeavors to survive on the island. The absence of adult males compels them to mature prematurely, starting from attempting to establish their civilization to creating power systems. The issue of power dynamics is prevalent in the novel, where those with physical strength and instill fear can assert dominance, depicting how individuals with strong masculine figures can seize control.

Golding deliberately omits any female characters in his novel; the only female character mentioned is Piggy's aunt, but only in Piggy's flashback memories of her words. The absence of female figures in the novel gives rise to gender stereotype issues, particularly regarding femininity and masculinity.

Therefore, to comprehend the issues of hegemonic masculinity associated with gender stereotypes, the writer analyzed the novel using hegemonic masculinity theories by Messerschmidt as foundations.

## **1.3 Limitations of Study**

The analysis of this novel is focused on the main character Ralph. The selection of this character is based on how Ralph can lead his group as a strong and gallant man, and Ralph also represents masculinity and anti-feminism.

Therefore, based on the topics that the writer addressed, namely gender stereotypes and their relationship to hegemonic masculinity, Ralph as the main character is considered suitable to be the focus of the research.

#### **1.4 Research Questions**

In connection with the issue that has been presented previously, the research problems to be addressed in this study are framed into two central questions, namely:

- 1 How does the author's portrayal of gender stereotypes and hegemonic masculinity contribute to the overall themes in the story?
- 2 How are the characterization of the main character, portrayed as masculine and able to handle the challenges of leadership and power in a society where hegemonic masculinity is established?

#### **1.5 Objectives of the Study**

Through this research, the writers aim to address the issues raised, particularly those related to masculinity and anti-feminism, and their influence on power structure in this novel. Therefore, the main objectives to be achieved include:

- 1 To understand how the author's portrayal of gender stereotypes and hegemonic masculinity contribute to the overall themes in the story, thus, it can enhance the writer's insights into gender stereotypes and hegemonic masculinity influenced by them.

- 2 To deeply understand how the characterization of the main characters, are portrayed as masculine and able to handle the challenges of leadership and power in a society where hegemonic masculinity is established, therefore the writers can gain a new perspective on how gender stereotypes can affect to power in a society.

### **1.6 Significances of the Study**

This research was conducted to find out more about how gender and its relationship with power are depicted in literary works. Therefore, the main interests that can be obtained from this research include:

- 1 Investigate the Understanding of Power, Authority, and Gender Stereotypes: This research contributes to the analysis of gender stereotypes and hegemonic masculinity within the novel, with a focus on identifying how males, particularly masculinity, can acquire or maintain power. Additionally, the research provides a profound understanding of how gender stereotypes are reflected in the narrative and characters of Lord of The Flies, illustrating the influence of specific environments and situations on gender perspectives.
- 2 Development of Literary Analysis: Through this research, readers can critically understand literary works. They can explore how authors use characters and narratives to depict and comment on gender stereotypes and hegemonic masculinity.
- 3 Considerations for Further Research: The findings of this research can serve as a foundation for further research in the fields of literature, and gender

studies. Subsequent research could delve deeper into understanding the relationships among gender stereotypes, power, and social dynamics in literary works.