

ACTION OF ADVENTURE FORMULA IN *MULAN* 2020

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Abstract

Films that have action and adventure genres appeal to the audience by displaying scenes that have a sense of tension due to murders, resistance, and extreme actions played by the characters. This research focuses on the narrative and analysis formula fiction. The analysis conducted on the film *Mulan* 2020 aims to understand the fiction of action and adventure formula, as well as what the action functions in the adventure formula. The research data is in the form of information about film units related to the formulation of the problem which includes John G. Cawelti's four formulaic fictions, namely storylines, characters, settings, and situations contained in the animated film *Mulan* 2020. The data collection technique used in this study is the method of observation and literature study. The film *Mulan* 2020 is an adaptation of one of Disney's animated live-action films of the same name. Overall, this film presents action and adventure that amazes and attracts the audience by displaying the martial arts skills of the main character. In each of her struggles, this film gives us a deep understanding of how the character Mulan fights for truth and freedom. And more interestingly, Mulan is a strong woman.

Keywords:

Action, Adventure, Formula Fiction

INTRODUCTION

Apart from being an audio-visual art, the film has now been recognized as the dominant form of visual mass communication media because it can be enjoyed in a variety of ways. The film has a great influence because of its ability to record the reality that develops in society and its message can be accepted by society. *Mulan* 2020 is an American fantasy action drama film directed by Niki Caro using a screenplay by Elizabeth Martin, Lauren Hynek, Rick Jaffa, and Amanda Silver, produced by Walt Disney Pictures. This film is a live-action remake of the 1998 animated film of the same name produced by Disney. Set against the backdrop of imperial China in the fifth century, the film *Mulan* tells the story of a girl named Hua Mulan (Liu Yifei) who is the first child of a former warrior named Hua Zhou (Tzi Ma). Hua Mulan grows into a beautiful girl with a strong character. The film *Mulan* 2020 is indeed very interesting to watch because this is the



newest film. On the other hand, what is more, important for this film is a live-action film, thus adding a special attraction for film lovers. In *Mulan 2020*, because it is an action film, the words of the characters are firm. There are also many sayings in action films, particularly 2020's *Mulan*, that have an implied meaning to the characters.

This research is a study using a formula (genre) study approach by John G. Cawelti, in the book *A Short Guide to Writing about Film* by Timothy Corrigan". The genre itself comes from French which means "type" or "kind". By analyzing the genre, films can be categorized into certain types of films. This study examines the genre characteristics in the *Mulan* film as drama, adventure, and action films. Genre analysis in the animated film *Mulan 2020* is carried out by describing the characteristics of the film genre, so this analysis needs to use an approach through John G. Cawelti's adventure genre theory and also action genre theory. According to Pratista, the types of film genres are divided into two groups, namely: primary parent genres and secondary parent genres. Secondary genres are major and popular genres that are developing or are derivatives of primary genres, such as disaster films, biographies, and films used for scientific study. Meanwhile, the primary genres are the main and popular basic genres since the early developments of cinema in the 1900s to 1930s such as Action Films, Dramas, Historical Epics, and Fantasy. Horror, Comedy, Crime and Gangster, Musical, Adventure, and War (Pratista, 2008, p. 13).

Handi revealed in his latest communication journal that films in the adventure genre tell stories of travel, exploration of a tourist object, or expedition to a place that has never been visited. This film with an adventure genre presents exotic natural panoramas such as jungles, mountains, savanna, deserts, oceans, and remote islands (Handi Oktavianus, 2015: 2). Meanwhile, Wildan argues that the action or action genre is a genre that provides tense scenes when watched. This genre provides a tense story with chases, shooting, and racing. In one scene, this genre uses cars, motorbikes, planes, ships, and horses as a means of transportation during chase scenes. In the action genre, there are protagonist and antagonist characters who are both related to each other in a story conflict. In action films, this genre can be connected with other genres (Wildan Fauzi, 2018).

The film *Mulan 2020* also has elements of literary works that in the context of popular fiction are called formulas. So, it can be said in general, that formulas can be equated with elements. In KBBI formula means a fixed arrangement or form (KBBI, 2016) According to Cawelti (in Adi, 2016: 209) formula is defined as a combination or synthesis of several specific cultural conventions with universal story forms or archetypes. Besides that, Cawelti also revealed that formula is like the type of popular story that determines what type of literature the story belongs to. The adventure formula in the film *Mulan 2020* can be described as a convenient way of defining and developing certain types of situations, patterns of action or situation developments, certain groups of characters and the relationship between them, and arrangements according to characters and actions (Cawelti, 1976).

Based on these reasons, the researcher wants to identify the formula contained in the *Mulan 2020* film as the object of study in this study to identify its suitability with the criteria for action and adventure genre stories. Several previous studies discuss similar theories or studies, including: the first research relevant to this research was written by Moh. Mahrush Ali and Isytifana Yaquti, with the title "Film Genre Analysis on Nussa Animated Films" have similarities with this research. The similarity of this research is the study of a genre in a film.

The results of Mahrush and Isytifana's research concluded that the analysis of the characteristics of the film genre Nussa as a drama, adventure, and comedy genre follows the characteristics of the drama, adventure, and comedy genres. Nussa is an educational film with the genres of drama, adventure, and comedy. The elements described are also supported, reinforcing the drama, adventure, and comedy genres. Through this film, the audience is invited to feel the emotions felt by the main character. In addition, this film also contains a lot of moral values.

Second, further relevant research is the Unesa Student Journal, namely Larasati, in 2019 entitled "Fiksi Formula Dalam Komik Detektif: Misteri Gerbang Masa Depan Karya Rezky Ramdani Dan Misteri Hantu Festival Karya Rasyiqah Annisa Thohira Kajian Formula John G. Cawelti". Larasati's research has the similarity with this study is that it uses the theory used to study the Formula theory by John G. Cawelti, while the difference lies in the subject and object of the research.

Research on an object of the fantasy film *Mulan 2020* by Niki Caro has not been analyzed too much, because this film is a remake of the 1998 animated film with the same name, but was released again with the latest version in 2020. The research analyzes this film based on the lens of the story genres presented in "*Mulan 2020*" including the following. This study aims to identify the function of action in the adventure formula in the *Mulan (2020)*. It is hoped that this research can add to the wealth of research in the field of literature, especially useful as an example of the study of John G. Cawelti's formula to understand the adventure formula. The results of this study are practically expected to be useful for increasing knowledge for readers to get to know more about the theory of formulas and genres in popular literature in the form of films. As for researchers in particular, they can recognize the theories and methods for studying formulas in a literary genre, and become a reference for further research, especially on the study of John G. Cawelti's formulas. The theory used to examine this research is formula theory with a structural approach. This formula theory analyzes the elements that build in popular literary works.

According to John G. Cawelti (1976) in his book, a formula is a combination or synthesis of several certain cultural conventions with a more universal form of story or archetype. The concept of the formula is a way of generalizing the characteristics of a large group of individual works from certain combinations of cultural material and basic story patterns. So it can also be said that the general definition of formula has become a genre concept. Formula and genre can be understood not as two different things, but as a

reflection of two phases or aspects of a complex process of literary analysis, this way of looking at the relationship between formula and genre reflects the way popular genre develops. Last, genre can be comprehended as in universal view while formula as cultural one (Sudarisman & Pauji, 2022, p. 20) Therefore, this research is very suitable for using formula studies, because it focuses on the genre aspects of the film *Mulan 2020*.

The data sources used in this study are primary data and secondary data. Primary data from the film *Mulan 2020*, as well as secondary data from various article sources on the internet. The data collection techniques used in this study are observation methods and literature studies. Observations were made by watching the film *Mulan 2020* repeatedly and noting the important things in each scene. Researchers collect data and information about the object of research as materials used in research. With literature studies, data can be obtained from documents such as information from books, journal articles, and supporting data from online media. Data collected from observation and literature study will be analyzed through three interrelated stages: data reduction, data presentation, verification, and conclusion.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Mulan 2020 is an American adventure and action film directed by Niki Caro using a screenplay by Elizabeth Martin, Lauren Hynek, Rick Jaffa, and Amanda Silver, produced by Walt Disney Pictures. This film is a live-action remake of the 1998 animated film of the same name produced by Disney. Set against the backdrop of imperial China in the fifth century, the film *Mulan* tells the story of a girl named Hua Mulan (Liu Yifei) who is the first child of a former warrior named Hua Zhou (Tzi Ma). Hua Mulan grows into a beautiful girl with a strong character. The film *Mulan 2020* is indeed very interesting to watch for research, this is because this is the newest film. On the other hand, what is more, important for this film is a live-action film, thus adding a special attraction for film lovers. In *Mulan 2020*, because it is an action film, the words of the characters are firm. There are also many sayings in action films, particularly 2020's *Mulan*, that have an implied meaning to the characters.

Adventure Analysis in the Film *Mulan 2020*

The adventure genre is a story of heroism, in which a group of people, or the main character, goes on an epic journey, overcomes obstacles and dangers, and completes several important missions. As such, adventure fiction is usually packed with action, featuring the main character on a mission, and often set in exotic locales. In carrying out these missions, whether they involve physical quests or puzzles, the main character struggles to decipher the code that leads to a search for treasure or to save the world. Thus, the typical Adventure saga features the main character on a mission, and he has to face various obstacles along the way. These adventures usually involve dangerous situations, narrow exits, problems that must be solved with intelligence and skill, and acts

of courage. The adventure genre can also be combined with most other genres, for example, romance and fantasy.

In the film *Mulan 2020*, this film presents Mulan's journey to save her people (Battalion). It began when an Emperor (Jet Li) issued a decree that one man from each family had to join the imperial army to fight against the attacks by the Rouran nation led by Buri Khan. However, Mulan's family only has one man, his father. Mulan's father's condition was very weak and it was certainly not possible to go into battle. After seeing her father's condition, and to maintain family honor and save her father, Mulan decided to replace her father on the battlefield. He left the house with his father's war equipment and went to the army training barracks disguised as a man. Mulan's disguise is the beginning of Mulan's journey to thwart the Rouran army's goals, namely to take revenge on the Battalion nation.

Mulan conducts military training under the guidance of commanders sent by the Emperor. As the training was over, it was also reported that a mutiny had occurred in the Battalion's Northern section of town. So the Battalion soldiers came to the scene and they went to war. In this war, Mulan and several other soldiers were ordered by commanders to chase Buri Khan's cavalry. However, all that remained was Mulan. And with her courage, Mulan chased the troop herself and then Mulan met with the magician envoy Buri Khan or the Rouran people.

Mulan and the witch do battle, but Mulan loses. The witch tells Mulan that her strength will not be maximized if she lies to herself by becoming someone else, namely disguised as a man. From the witch's words, Mulan realized and decided to reveal her true identity (a woman) and then returned to the battlefield.

Mulan returns with enthusiasm and she tricks the enemy so that the enemy can be defeated. After the battle, the commander and other soldiers realize Mulan's identity, and Mulan is kicked out of the squad. However, when Mulan leaves the army she again meets the witch and the witch says that Buri Khan's special forces will attack the Battalion's palace. With Mulan's courage, he returned to the army and told the Rouran people's goals. Arriving at the palace sure enough, if the palace has been attacked. The commander orders Mulan to save the Emperor and he manages to defeat Buri Khan and his army. Mulan has managed to save the Battalion nation.

Mulan's journey in the film *Mulan 2020* describes the adventure genre in it. Because the story is full of action and features the main character (Mulan) on a mission, which is to save the Battalion from the rebellion of the Rouran people. In carrying out her mission, Mulan experienced many obstacles and dangers because she had to fight against enemies. However, with courage and determination in the end Mulan made it through. This characterizes the adventure genre in terms of storylines. The story setting in the old dynasty era, and featuring a tense and threatening dark mood, is also a feature of the adventure genre in the 2020 *Mulan* film.

Action Analysis in the Film *Mulan 2020*



The action genre is a film genre that is usually characterized by fight choreography, explosions of fire, gunshots, etc. In terms of story, action films usually tell about one character who has to risk his life. Because lives are at stake, it's no wonder there are lots of fights and scuffles between the characters. Usually, the goal is no joke: survive, save loved ones, and even save the world.

Mulan 2020 is a film that belongs to the action genre. This film starts with a kingdom in China that is being infiltrated by enemy forces. Hua Mulan is the daughter of one of the former soldiers in the Chinese empire. However, unlike other girls, Mulan is more adventurous and has extraordinary courage. Since childhood behavior often makes the people around her pay attention to Mulan. However, this disappointed her parents, because Mulan had to marry a good man and daughters should not be reckless and brave like Mulan.

This film features some very interesting action scenes. Apart from the interesting action, the 2020 *Mulan* film has stunning visuals in the amazing depiction of each scene. Do not forget that the character Hua Mulan, who has a beautiful face and a brave soul, also gives an interesting impression to the audience. As for some of the actions shown in the film *Mulan 2020*, they include military training before going to war, in which in this scene Hua Mulan disguises herself as a man who is going to war, her actions in training are always amazing so that others always praise her. Then there were wars or large-scale meetings between the Chinese empire and the Rouran tribe led by an enemy named Bori Khan. Then at the end of the story, when Bori Khan is about to kill the king the Chinese emperor, Mulan again shows her action against and kills him so that the girl can save the king.

Each unique skill possessed by the Hua Mulan character can set it apart from other characters. Mulan is a girl who makes use of her training skills by using arrows, swords, spears, and even hand-to-hand combat. These scenes are unique in that they add a challenging element of surprise to each fight, bringing the audience into a tense situation. In addition, this film also utilizes the environment as a place or background that supports the main character to take actions such as climbing walls, trees, cliffs, and tall buildings which are used to jump or run swiftly from enemy attacks. The use of this environment can also add to the clever impression that Mulan's character has in utilizing the surrounding environment to save herself.

The Action Function in Formula Adventure in the Film *Mulan 2020*

Action in a film will refer to the scenes where the main character fights while carrying out his mission. These battles become part of the main character's rescue of himself or others in a tense situation between life and death, in harmony with the elements in the adventure formula. In the film *Mulan 2020*, action is a prominent part of this adventure film. Because the main character fights bravely to save his people. This is also a function of the action genre as illustrated in the adventure formula as follows:

1. Storyline



In the adventure formula, the storyline in this formula will focus on the thrilling actions carried out by the main character, either to save himself or others. This action is part of the character's struggle in carrying out his mission. In the film *Mulan 2020*, the action is described when Hua Mulan (the main character) and troops from her people fight against the Rourans as rebels. The battle becomes an action function in the adventure formula, because as a feature of the adventure formula according to John G. Cawelti which refers to the storyline, where in the adventure formula there are tense actions carried out by the main character both individually and in groups. This will later become the main character's rescue for himself or others in completing a mission. So that the end of the story in a film that has an adventure formula will feature the main character who survived and all problems can be resolved.

2. Situation

In situations in a film, action is also part of it, especially for the characteristics of the adventure formula. As explained by John G. Cawelti's theory, in a life-threatening situation, this genre will display a dark and tense mood. This situation can be described by the actions of the main character. In *Mulan 2020*, the main character, Hua Mulan, fights against the rebels from Ruoran. The battle created a tense situation, in which it can be said that the function of the action here is as the mood during Hua Mulan's adventures in carrying out her mission.

3. Character

The action function in the adventure formula for the characters in the film *Mulan 2020*, provides an overview of the main character (Hua Mulan) in overcoming challenges and obstacles. Where Hua Mulan can escape from danger when carrying out her mission, and Hua Mulan shows her fighting skills bravely. This is in line with the characteristics of the adventure formula where in this genre the character will be in danger and threatening obstacles, and to overcome them the character must save himself or others. In the film *Mulan 2020*, of course, Hua Mulan fights to save her people, namely the Battalion nation.

4. Themes

The action in *Mulan* is also used to reinforce story themes raised in the film, such as courage, honor, and self-strength. Through Mulan's actions, this film highlights the importance of courage, sacrifice, and a strong determination to fight injustice. In *Mulan 2020*, Action Function is when Mulan decides to take her father's place in the army and goes to war disguised as a man. This decision set off a chain of events that led him to save China from invasion. Mulan herself didn't join the army solely to save her father from conscription. But, he did it because he would rather swing a sword than stay home and get married. Thus, Liu's agile move was not only a heavy blow to the Rourans but also a women's liberation action. There's also a new layer of mystique that owes a lot to *Star Wars*, heroic films, and Chinese folklore too. Mulan not only hides her gender but also hides her soul or chi. Here, chi becomes the magical energy equivalent of the Force in *Star Wars*.

5. Visualization

The action scenes in the film *Mulan* 2020 are huge and explosive to provide an interesting visual experience for the audience. In this film, Mulan isn't a superhero, she's an ordinary girl who can do the most astonishing things with her body and mind. Therefore, the action scenes are realistically created. The action scenes in *Mulan* are designed to provide viewers with an engaging visual experience. The visuals in the film *Mulan* 2020 are very beautiful and amazing. The film features vast, beautiful landscapes, beautiful costumes, and superb cinematography. The film also features stunning visual effects and spectacular action scenes. Some of the eye-catching visuals include the big battle at the end of the film and the scene when Mulan uses her skills to save her friends. Acrobatic moves and dynamic combat are rendered with stunning special effects, creating an enthralling cinematic experience.

CONCLUSION

Based on the explanation above, it can be seen how the film *Mulan* 2020 represents the characteristics of the action and adventure genre which is analyzed using John G. Cawelti's theory. And the film represents the function of action in the adventure formula. The answer is clarified by using scenes from the film *Mulan* 2020 according to the characteristics of the action and adventure genre that represent the descriptions described.

Mulan 2020 is a live-action film in the action and adventure genre. This film is a live-action remake of the 1998 animated film of the same name produced by Disney. The elements depicted in the film *Mulan* 2020 support and reinforce the action and adventure genre. The components used are characters, settings, situations, plot structure, theme, and visualization. Background elements are depicted with the Chinese empire in the fifth century. Mulan's character is described as a strong and brave woman. And, the plot structure and events used are linear because the storyline occurs sequentially. Thus, the analysis of the characteristics of the *Mulan* 2020 film genre as an action and adventure genre follows the characteristics of the action and adventure genre. Through this film, the audience is invited to feel the emotions and tensions felt by the main character. In addition, this film also contains a lot of moral values.

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