CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1. 1.   Background of the Study

In human life, diversity in terms of race, ethnicity, nationality, culture, and religion has been a blessing bestowed upon humans by god. The people can coexist peacefully, show mutual respect, and put up with disparities in race, ethnicity, customs, culture, and religion despite their diverse circumstances. The main concepts of multiculturalism are cultural diversity, various forms of civility, the absence of sexism and racism, and the absence of all forms of intolerance and social supremacy. The presence or existence of two cultural realities in a society that coexist peacefully, respect one another, and practice mutual tolerance, as well as the recognition of equality, tolerance, and equality between two or more cultures, is known as multiculturalism.

Generally speaking, a society is made up of individuals who coexist in a community with diverse backgrounds. Culture-related differences can be observed in things like customs, habits, language, beliefs, and so forth. It is observable in numerous nations. Ethnic, linguistic, and cultural variety are on the rise as a result of the growing immigration of people from different areas and nations. We call this state of affairs multiculturalism. The phrase suggests that there are many different sorts of civilizations and that every culture is distinct. There has been a growing discourse about multiculturalism since the early 2000s. Multiculturalism is frequently used interchangeably with concepts like plurality and heterogeneity. It would be more suitable to identify diversity with heterogeneity rather than

plurality, according to Chen and Hamilton (2015), if individuals perceive variety in terms of variations, such as types of ethnic groups, languages, and views. Speaking of the importance of understanding diversity, a wide range of media, particularly literature, entertainment, and popular culture items, depict multicultural values through television, movies, ads, magazines, and other mediums.Rapid technological development has made movies a more interesting and essential entertainment medium for most people (Rudy, Simanjuntak, & Simanjuntak, 2022). American movies often depict a society consisting of individuals with different cultural backgrounds. This is educational and interesting because movies, as popular entertainment media, play an important role in society. It should be realized that many aspects of everyday life can be reflected in movies. Therefore, Cortés (2000) argued about multiculturalism and that various elements of media, including movies, can shape a person's mindset when perceiving the meaning of being diverse.

Pixar Animation Studios and Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures present the 2022 American animated adult fantasy comedy-drama *Turning Red* movie. Domee Shi directed and Lindsey Collins produced the movie, which was based on a narrative by Shi, Julia Cho, and Sarah Streicher as well as a screenplay by Shi and Cho. This is the first Pixar feature picture that a woman has directed exclusively. The story of Mei Lee, a 13-year-old Chinese-Canadian girl who becomes a gigantic red panda when she feels intense emotions because of a family curse, is told in this 2002 movie, by his parents and finds that he changes only when in a high emotional state. When Mei returns to human form, her hair remains red, so she goes to school wearing a toque. Ming initially believes Mei is

having her first period, but finds out the truth when she gets into an argument with a school security guard, causing Mei to go from being embarrassed to running home in a panic and crying, which is set in Toronto, Canada. Mei Lee, 13, resided in Toronto in 2002 with her parents, Ming and Jin, and assisted in maintaining the family shrine honoring Mei's maternal ancestor, Sun.Set in Toronto, Ontario, in 2002, the movie follows Mei Lee, a 13-year-old Chinese-Canadian student who transforms into a giant red panda when she experiences strong emotions due to a hereditary curse. Mei Lee, then 13 years old, lived with her parents, Ming and Jin, in Toronto in 2002. Mei Lee helped maintain the family shrine honoring her maternal ancestor, Sun Yee and tried to live up to Mei Lee's mother's expectations. Mei Lee keeps other aspects of her hobbies hidden from Ming, such as the fact that she likes the boy band 4 Town together with her pals Miriam, Priya, and Abby. One evening, Mei is unintentionally humiliated in front of everyone when overbearing and rigid Ming notices that she is interested in Devon, the seventeen-year-old neighborhood convenience store worker. Mei had a nightmare about a red panda that night. He found that he had transformed into a massive red panda when he woke up the following morning.

The purpose of this study is to illustrate how diversity is portrayed as multiculturalism. The movie provides a blend of modern Canadians who live with traditional Chinese culture, providing a movie viewpoint on young people and cultural identity. The movie explores themes of cultural pride and self-acceptance through Mei's transformation into a huge red panda that symbolizes modernity and tradition while presenting the universal qualities of identity creation. The purpose of *Turning Red* stems from how strongly modern society needs accurate

depictions of multicultural perspectives. The nuanced nature of multicultural identity creation is not well represented in the general population, although we live in a society where globalization and cultural diversity are growing in popularity. The movie successfully combines Chinese culture with present-day Canadian life, presenting a story and relevant viewpoints on cultural identity and youth. By overcoming differences in culture and embracing variety, the movie not only entertains but also generates meaningful conversations about identity, belonging, and the need to embrace their background in an ever-changing world.

By focusing on those vital points, the author addresses the issue of multiculturalism by illustrating a character's journey of self-discovery and acceptance of Mei Lee's dual cultural identity. To write this research, a movie as an entertainment medium helps bring ideas and other cultures right to other people's faces. This movie portrays those ideas and cultures in a way that is new to everyone. This research offers a new way of understanding that process, which fills the gap between the previous studies that only focused on one aspect of cultural representation.

1. 2. Research Question

After having an explanation of the background above, the problem could be formulated as follows:

  How is pluralist multiculturalism delineated in the movie *Turning Red* (2022)?

1. 3. Research Objective

The current study aims to investigate the delineation of multiculturalism by applying Stuart Hall's theory (2021) on pluralist multiculturalism theory through

four features of multiculturalism, including recognition of cultural diversity, coexistence and mutual respect, cultural relativism and equality, and preservation of cultural identities. The main focus of this study is the characters and settings.

1. 4. Uses of the Study

The study aims to investigate multiculturalism in the *Turning Red* (2022) movie. The research seeks to delve into multiculturalism within the *Turning Red* movie, catering to both general viewers and prospective authors. It enriches conversations surrounding multiculturalism in media by delving into narrative strategies, character evolution, and depictions of various cultures. By examining audience responses and societal impacts, it presents significant viewpoints on fostering inclusive narratives. Then, it establishes a cornerstone for comprehending how the media shapes attitudes toward diversity and cultivates cross-cultural empathy.

1. 4. 1. Theoretical Uses of the Study

This study enhances the theoretical understanding of multiculturalism in movies by intricately examining the representation of diverse viewpoints in the animated *Turning Red* movie. Employing Stuart Hall's theory, the author conducts a comprehensive analysis of the movie, offering a nuanced insight into its themes and the depiction of multiculturalism.

1. 4. 2. Practical Uses of the Study

This study not only aims to enhance the audience's understanding of multiculturalism but also highlights its profound importance within a multicultural society. By delving into themes of understanding, acceptance, and self-discovery, *Turning Red* emerges as a poignant and culturally resonant animated movie

capable of connecting with viewers from various cultural backgrounds. Its primary objective is to underscore the significance of embracing cultural diversity, making it both relatable and educational. Essentially, the movie serves as a compelling testament to the vibrancy and interconnectedness of diverse cultures, fostering greater empathy and understanding among global audiences.

1. 5.   Scope of the Study

This current study aims to investigate the delineation of multiculturalism in the movie*Turning Red* (2022). The study will analyze the cultural aspects of Chinese culture and Canadian culture in Toronto as it is the setting of the movie. As depicted by the Mei Lee family, who inherited their ancestral heritage and traditions. This study usesthe multiculturalism theory by Stuart Hall (2021) to help analyze the pluralist multiculturalism in the movie *Turning Red* and examine how both cultures depict characters and settings through the four features of pluralist multiculturalism, which are recognition of cultural diversity, coexistence, and mutual respect, cultural relativism and equality, and preservation of cultural identity by James B. Mack (1994) in his essay about multiculturalism.