

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Nowadays, in many cases women are allowed and capable to express their ideas and their will. There are many public workfields in which people can find women working such as in the field of education, business, military. For example, it is proven by my personal experience in where I live in female-dominant environment, which means the majority of people around me are female and they are able to live their own life. I live with my aunts and my female friends who live independently by working and taking the job they want as career women. They are no longer under obligation to only stay at home and become housewives. All confirm that women are equal to men to take the job they want.

Women are no longer under the obligation to stay at home and take care of the house as mothers or housewives. Sullivan (1994) says that women's roles are no longer determined by the so-called women's nature which implicitly dictates women to be the ideal figure of a mother, whether it is symbolic or actual mother.

In the past, women and power were two separate things. Women were considered as weak and gentle. Therefore, they are not suitable for doing hard work in the male-dominant workfields. Knight writes in her book *Female Action Heroes: A Guide To Women In Comics, Video Games, Films and Television:*

In the late 19th century, women were second-class citizens, a situation that was reflected in the literature of the time, from novels to dime novels and newspapers (all that was available before the advent of radio, television, and films). Women were typically portrayed as weak, unintelligent, and needing to be rescued (damsels in distress). (Knight, *Female Action Heroes ; A Guide to Women In Comics, Video Games, Film, and Television*, 2010, p. xvi)

However, over time, there are many female characters who are represented as powerful, wonderful, and brave.

The image of women as powerful beings attracts the writer to choose the character of Artemisia from the movie *300: Rise of An Empire*. In the real history Artemisia was the daughter of The King of Halicarnasus She had a husband and also a wealthy life. Whereas in the movie, Artemisia is portrayed as a Greek girl who is betrayed by the soldiers of her own people. She is violently abused and raped until she is dying, then she is dumped on the roadside. When one of the right-hand men of Persian King sees her lying on the roadside, he decides to take her to Persia and takes care of her. Later on, Artemisia is taught to protect herself, especially using sword. Artemisia proves that she is a sword master. Years passed by, and as a sign of gratitude to the king who is willing to take a good care of her, Artemisia always gives a sign of gratitude in the form of victory to the Persian in the battlefield. In the movie, Artemisia is portrayed as a figure of Persian's war strategy expert who is full of strength and courage, and does not hesitate to take decision. Artemisia's characteristics make her favoured by King

Darius who rules the Persian kingdom above his son. With the ability and courage she possesses, Artemisia creates an identity for her own self by being the commander of the naval forces who is respected by her army and feared by her enemies.

In the writer's point of view, the characteristics of Artemisia in the movie *300: Rise of An Empire* represent the characteristics of girl power which exist within a woman. Girl power is often related to freedom for women to express themselves, and the opportunity to choose the life they want (Zaslow, 2009). The image of girl power is linked to the third wave feminism which emphasizes on female solidarity, the ability to control their relationship, and female sexual desires (Zaslow, 2009). Therefore, the writer will find out whether Artemisia, as a commander, represents girl power in her appearances and her actions.

Artemisia is not the only female hero in a movie. Nowadays, there are so many films about female heroes and strong female characters that depict the imagery of girl power, such as *Joan of Arc* (2003-2005, tv series), *Mulan* (1998), *Bridget Jones Diary* (2005), *Catwoman* (2004), *The Hunger Games* (2012), and *Snowwhite and The Huntsman* (2012). Eventhough in the movie *300: Rise of An Empire* Artemisia plays as a villain, but the writer thinks that she is still considered as a female hero for her people because she does whatever it takes to defend the Persian and defeat all of the enemy of her people.

This research is inspired by two studies entitled *The Representation of Girl Power in Miley Cyrus' Appearances* conducted by Avisha (2015), and also *Merida's Challenge in Becoming a Third Wave Feminist in Medieval Time*

conducted by Kusmayanti (2015). Avisha's research analyzes the idea of girl power that exists in Miley Cyrus' music video entitled *Wrecking Ball*. Meanwhile, Kusmayanti emphasizes the freedom of Merida, the female hero of a movie entitled *Brave* named to be whatever she wants to be. Both study find out that Miley Cyrus and Merida are expressing girl power through the way they act and behave.

The similarity between my study and the study of Avisha and Kusmayanti is that all are based on girl power theory. Other similarity is that all are using a movie as the object of analysis. The differences of this study with other studies are on the focus of the object of the study which is visual images, particularly those of Artemisia from a movie entitled *300: Rise of An Empire*.

1.2 Field of the Study

The field of this study is literature, especially Gender Studies.

1.3 Scope of the Study

The scope of this study is girl power image represented by third wave feminism found in the visual images of Artemisia.

1.4 Problem Formulation

1. What are the visual images of Artemisia in *300: Rise of An Empire* which represent girl power?
2. What are the properties used by Artemisia in *300 : Rise of An Empire* which represent girl power?

1.5 Objectives of the Study

1. To analyze Artemisia's visual images in the movie 300 : Rise of An Empire that reflect girl power theory.
2. To describe the properties used by Artemisia in the movie 300 : Rise of An Empire that reflect girl power theory.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The writer expects that this study will be useful for students who take Gender studies. The writer also hopes that the readers will get more knowledge on girl power especially on Artemisia's representation of girl power seen through her visual images.

1.7 Definition of Terms

1. **Feminism:** a movement to get equality for women in the field of education, social class, economic, and politic with men (Avisha, 2015).
2. **Third Wave Feminism:** a movement that appeared in the middle of 1990s which redefined women as assertive, powerful, and have control of their own sexuality (Burkett & Brunell, 2017).
3. **Girl Power:** a movement which was popularized in 1990s by the british pop group Spice Girls, which reflected that women can choose when the time to be girly and to be powerful , when to take time as mothers and as professionals, when to be sexy for male and when to be sexy for their own self as the aspects(Zaslow, 2009).
4. **Heroine:** a main female character in a book or film. A brave woman that earn respect and admired by people also categorized as heroine according to Cambridge Learner's Dictionary (2017).