

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Literature is a written work. Literature comes as a writer's contemplation of the existing phenomenon (Wiryadi, 2020). Therefore, literary works have a deeper understanding, not only a fantasy that comes from the imagination of the author, but also of the appearances of the author's creativity in exploring and processing the ideas that exist in their mind. The literary works are supposed to be related to the reader because the literary works are dedicated to the reader as the final judge of the works. Readers also have to find the meaning and value of literary works, so the literary works have value in it. A literary work can be more valuable if there are people who appreciate it. It was created not only to get a piece of information while reading it, but also to make the readers interested and enjoy the work and think about how to give appreciation the work (Barnet, Burto, & Cain, 2008). Therefore, it is necessary for readers to give their responses and feedback on related works.

One of the most popular literary works created by Marvel Studios is *Captain Marvel*. According to the data from the Microsoft website, *Captain Marvel* is a movie set in the 1990s. Marvel Studios created *Captain Marvel* with a new adventurous story which is different from a previously created story of the Marvel Cinematic Universe that follows the journey of Carol Danvers as she becomes one of the most powerful heroes in the universe. In this movie, it is told as Carol Danvers has a galactic war between two alien races that reaches Earth, Skrulls and The Kree. Danvers finds herself and her small team at the center of the maelstrom.

The movie is directed by Anna Boden and Ryan Fleck, originally written by Anna Boden, Ryan Fleck and Geneva Robertson-Dworet. VVTIIB Weebly stated, “The comic book Carol Danvers was originally the head of security on the USAF base that Mar-Vell’s secret identity worked at a job that got her into the position where a scheme to attack Mar-Vell ended with her DNA getting altered to be part-Kree, giving her superpowers.” Graeme Mcmillan and Aaron Couch (2019) on Hollywood Reporter website said that Carol Danvers used those powers under a variety of different superhero identities, from Ms. Marvel to Binary and Warbird before eventually taking on *Captain Marvel* in 2012.

But VVTIIB Weebly stated again that in the movie, Carol Danvers is a fighter pilot who helps her mentor (a Kree defector named Mar-Vell) test a light-speed engine. In the movie, Mar-Vell (Annette Bening) is a military scientist who developed a light-travel drive. She covers her identity as a human, but she was actually a Kree who was helping the Skrulls try to escape to a new galaxy using this drive. She dies and gives Carol her powers from that engine. It happened as they try to escape Kree who want the engine, Mar-Vell gets shot and Carol shoots the engine to keep it out of the hands of the Kree and it caused an explosion. She ends up absorbing the engine’s power and losing her memory. Mar-Vell, in comic book mythology, was Marvel’s original figure of *Captain Marvel* and was told as male. Hollywood Reporter website, Graeme Mcmillan and Aaron Couch stated again that he was a Kree warrior who turned against his people and defended Earth against the Kree for years, bringing the Avengers into the Kree and The Skrulls War in a fan-favorite storyline and, in the end, died of cancer in Marvel’s first graphic novel, *The Death of Captain Marvel*.

Discussion on a girl as a superhero cannot be separated from the term of Girl Power. According to Cambridge Dictionary, Girl Power is a concept of thinking that a female, especially girls have to live independently of men. They should believe in themselves to achieve their dream in many aspects. The aspects potential could be in social, economical, and political aspects (Wiryadi, 2020). After the term of “girl power” became very famous that people around the world start to talk about, it starts giving many influences on the lives of women in the world. Through this research, the researcher wants to show that women have the same right just like men. This research is expected to give women self-confidence to show their capability and strength to lead the world for the better.

By the explanation above, the researcher decided to use *Captain Marvel* as the object of the research. There are several reasons why the researcher is interested to take the Girl Power issue and choose *Captain Marvel* in her research. The first reason is the misconception/myth that women are not suitable to be a leader. It is a phenomenon that is still a major topic in terms of equality for both men and women. Many stereotypes arose because of women’s behaviour who are mostly feminine that lead to a statement that women are not suitable to be a leader. This research proved that the statement is not true. The second reason is the issue of women are weak and powerless. Women of all backgrounds and professions can sometimes find themselves being perceived as weak, no matter how hard they fight against the stereotype. One well-known, and recent evidence of this is Hillary Clinton. From Templar Website, we can know whether you were for or against Clinton becoming president, the narrative that immersed her campaign proved that it is still difficult for us to treat men and women equally. Thus, if women use “powerless” speech more

often than men, it may cause women will put in positions where they do not use their power (lack of power), while men will put in positions that show their strength. On the other half, Lakoff (1975) noted that she showed gender differences in speech to women's subordinate status. Women represent with “powerless” speech because of uncertain, insufficient, and not confident with themselves. Examples of powerless speeches are often tag questions like “Do you understand what I am talking about?” Women nowadays who are not hesitant to use assertive speech will not use that kind of question. Instead of using that speech, women nowadays will try direct clarifying sentence such as, “Let me hear what you think about this idea.”

Wienclaw (2011) said, “Gender stereotyped roles are the result of complex interactions between biological and social forces.” He also states that biologically, people are segregated into two, man and woman whose difference is obvious in their reproductive organs. While man has penis and scrotums that produce sperms, woman has a vagina and a womb which produces ovum. Woman’s reproductive organs enable her to get pregnant and deliver babies. As a person who gives birth, woman is thought by the society to take care of the children and stay at home. It can be seen that those biological differences are often (mis)used by society to position woman as "weak and inferior". As someone who stays at home and takes care of the children, woman is assumed to use less muscle strength compared to man who works outside the house. As a result, man is considered physically stronger than woman, so man is mostly viewed as the head of a family who has power over woman and children (Wienclaw, 2011). This research proved through Carol Danvers that women cannot be stated as weak and powerless because of their biological “nature”. Women are not always seen as a person who take care of children and becomes weak because of that.

Carol proved through Captain Marvel that nowadays women can be anything and do anything based on her passion.

1.2 Statements of the Problem

In addition to the background of the study, this study aims to answer the following question:

In what way does Carol Danvers represent Girl Power in *Captain Marvel*?

1.3 Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is divided into two aspects, which are theoretical and practical. Theoretically of this research can be used as a helpful reference in order to understand the content of the movie, especially the understanding of the movie from Carol Danvers personality representative of girl power side. Practically, this research can be used as a reference for those who are interested in studying or analyzing this movie. Moreover, this study can also be used as a supporting source for teaching.

1.4 Operational Definition of Key Terms

This part explains about the definition of terms that become the keywords of this study, namely:

1. Girl Power

Girl Power is a cultural phenomenon that emerged in the 1990s and early 2000s. It represents the idea that women can do everything they choose, especially on a personal level, make their own decisions, make sure that their voice or opinion would be heard, be aggressive and be active (Hains, 2005, p. 1). There are many characteristics of Girl Power such as it offers girls and

women a sense that they can choose when to be girly and when to be powerful (be versatile) (Zaslow E., 2009, p. 3). It means that they can be everything; a mother that raises children, a career or successful woman, a beautiful woman for man or follow about beauty standards for their own pleasure. Girl represented in “girl power” also believed that they should be treated as equally as men, have control over their bodies, and become self-determined.

2. Feminism

According to Britannica, feminism is the belief in social, economic, and political equality of the sexes. Although largely originating in the West, feminism is manifested worldwide and is represented by various institutions committed to activity on behalf of women’s rights and interests. Feminism is a phenomenon in society and related to women. The proponent of feminism, the feminist, rejects the history, the rules, and male-dominated world or patriarchal society. However, some people say that feminism is not needed because feminists are against all men (Anderson, 2016, p. 2). Most people also think that feminism is a bunch of angry women who want to be like men while the definition of feminism itself is a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression (Hooks, 2000).