

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1. Background of the Study

A fairytale is a work of literature that usually targets children as the main readers to enjoy the story. Generally, people realize that fairytale contains story which seems impossible to happen in real life. For its characterization, fairytale or also called as a wonder tales or fable, presents queens, giants, elves, ogres, trolls, witches, dragons, talking animals, even fairies as the characters of the story (Discovering Fairy Tales). The story sometimes comes from an inspiration of an event that people feels amazed about it and expect it as a miracle. A fairytale is a creative story that is recognized as a fantasy for entertaining purpose whose figures sometimes can be scary, funny and weird (Susilo 184). The definition by Susilo says that fairy tale is basically a creative story because the characters within it are not real and it is just told to amuse readers. As an example, a very famous fairy tale entitled *Cinderella* puts fairy god mother that is able to turn mice into horses, pumpkin into a golden carriage, a rat into a coachman and lizard into footmen in which those things are impossible to be happened in real life.

Furthermore, the plot of fairy tales sometimes tells about the releasing of poverty, maltreatment and subjection (Warner). Beside for entertaining result, the plot of a fairy tale also tells about the characters' effort to pursue a particular goals as stated previously. As the result, many fairy tales ends happily. However, there is also a fairy tale presents bad ending such as *Red Riding Hood* by Charles

Perrault. In the fairy tale story by Perrault ends tragically in which the main character, the little girl in red riding hood and her grandmother are died and eaten by the villain, a wicked wolf. This kind of story is able to frighten children even more when they read it as a bedtime story. Otherwise, almost all of fairy tales written by Brothers Grimm serve a happy ending and introduce the main characters as the hero (Warner).

There are many famous fairy tales written by Brothers Grimm and one of them is a fairy tale entitled *Hansel and Gretel*. It tells about two children, Hansel and Gretel, of a poor wood cutter. Because of fearing from starvation, their parents, the poor wood cutter and his wife or their step mother, they are left in a forest alone. However, they find a witch house completes with jewelry and they succeed to kill the witch then they come back home bringing the jewelry to reunite with their father again to live happily. Generally, fairy tale that comes from western countries with the cultural background of western society and literary work is essentially a representation of people's daily lives (Rosyidah). As well as definition above, Brothers Grimm's Hansel and Gretel also represents the condition of middle class in nineteenth century in which constant hunger and shortages of food, infanticide was a common practice in the middle ages (Grimm's Fairy Tales).

Many popular fairytales are rewritten or adapted in terms of text or picture and the content is modified so that they can be more easy to be accepted by children and adult people (Malafantis). There are many films whose ideas come from famous fairy tales and he transformation becomes so popular such as some

films adapt *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *Pinocchio*, *Bambi*, *Aladdin*, *Sleeping Beauty*, *Cinderella* (Beach). Occasionally, film directors whose films are inspired from fairy tales give special effects done by modern technology in order to make them become more interesting. Because the progress of technological increases rapidly and the spreading of the classic fairytale becomes a trend, fairytales spread among people packed in film industry. Nonetheless, some film directors also retells the fairy tale into a film differently including a based fairy tale film, *Hansel and Gretel Witch Hunter*.

*Hansel and Gretel Witch Hunter* is a film adapted from the popular Brothers Grimm's *Hansel and Gretel*. The film is interesting since it is based on Brother Grimm's bed time story which has been turned into a modern version supported by advanced technology. *Hansel and Gretel Witch Hunter* is produced by Thomas Wirkola in 2012 and starred by Jeremy Renner (as Hansel) and Gemma Arterton (as Gretel). In the *Hansel and Gretel Witch Hunter*, Hansel and Gretel are no longer described as two kids who are lost in the woods and trapped by an evil witch in a bread Candy. Both of them grow up and they appear as the Witch Hunters who fight against the Evil Witch by using some weapons such as shotguns and arrows. In addition, as the achievement, *Hansel and Gretel Witch Hunter* film has received Golden Thriller Award 2013 with the category Best Voice Over TV Spot.

This Wirkola's version begins from Hansel and Gretel's bitter experience in childhood in which they are left by their father in the middle of a forest alone. The father deliberately leaves them forced by their mother who is fearful with the

villagers burning her house because she is believed as a witch. Both of Hansel and Gretel's parent died tragically because the villagers burn their mother and father with hanging them in front of their house. This tragedy becomes the motivation of Hansel and Gretel to fight against cruel witches who cause troubles in the villagers. Several years later, Hansel and Gretel are increasingly recognized across the country because of their expertise in conquering the Evil Witch. According to the issue explained above, this study focuses on Gretel's portrayal as powerful, rational, brave, and emotional. Even though she sometimes keeps showing her femininity such as styling her hair into braided hair, she keeps being a strong woman. This study focuses on the female characters, Gretel, in *Hansel and Gretel Witch Hunter* film.

The *Hansel and Gretel Witch Hunter* is a very interesting film. Unlike the popular version bedtime story by Brothers Grimm, the film tells the story of Hansel and Gretel in different interesting way. In the Brothers Grimm version, it tells that both Hansel and Gretel have to be left in a forest because they are poor living and foods will be more affordable for a wood cutter, Gretel's father, in buying food only for two people, him and his wife. However, instead of telling the poorness, the film tells that the parents try to save them by escaping them from death run into the forest. In the Brothers Grimm version, it also tells that their mother persuades their father to do so. However, in the film, it tells that their mother is a good witch and loves them very much. The contrast showed above makes the film become more interesting. Moreover, the film also tells the bravery of Gretel in fighting wicked witches. The film shows that Gretel is not only an

innocent little girl but also showing Gretel's characteristic in adulthood as brave, beauty, feminine and masculine female.

Gretel, as the female witch hunter, often acts like a man. She often deals with some harmful tasks requested by society to kill wicked witches. For several times, she fearlessly does some manly action such as shoots evil witches harshly and bites the nose of the sheriff. The film shows that Gretel succeeds almost all of the task. Gretel even becomes the leader for her witch hunter team consisting she herself, her brother and a male villager. There are also many times in which Gretel saves both of her teammates from evil witches. In the matter of appearance, Gretel are often wearing the clothes considered as masculine outfits such as trousers and jacket whose colors are dominated with black color. Moreover, the film shows that other women always let her hair loose while Gretel prefers to tie her hair. However, Gretel does not leave her portrayal as feminine woman that she still has a long hair, sometimes wearing a white long pajamas gown and nurturing toward her only brother, Hansel.

The explanations above clearly shows how Gretel attempts to oppose some feminism notions such as traditional gender role yet patriarchy system yet without leaving her figure as woman who is caring, emotional, weak and nurturing. However, she is also defined as brave, strong, powerful and aggressive. Hence, since the study focuses in Gretel, the writer believes that a term namely Girl Power to reveal Gretel's representation. In analyzing the study, indeed the writer uses feminism as theoretical background. The theory is very helpful to look at the main character representation and to dig a hidden message of the film. Moreover,

the writer also uses qualitative method by concerning on both narrative and non-narrative aspects of the film.

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

Based on the background of the study, the writer states the problem as follows:

1. How are the girl power represented in Gretel's figure as the main female character in *Hansel and Gretel Witch Hunter* film?

## 1.3 Objective of the Study

As it has been mentioned in the statement of the problem, the objective of the study is:

1. To investigate and analyze the representation of girl power in Gretel as the main female character in *Hansel and Gretel Witch Hunter*.

## 1.4 Significance of the Study

This research will be discussed in depth related to the representation of girl power in *Hansel and Gretel Witch Hunter* film. To reveal the issue, the writer arranges the analysis by concerning toward the main female character, Gretel. The representation of girl power can be seen in terms of clothes, make-up, dialog that is used by Gretel. In *Hansel and Gretel Witch Hunter*, there are many scenes filled with violence and even there is a wild chase and fistfight are decorated buffeting

weapons and magic that creates a stressful experience. Even though the film fulfilled with some violence scenes, but Gretel, as the main female character, takes a big role that makes the film more interesting.

Gretel character is played by Gemma Aterton that Gemma has to act as a woman who is ambitious, rational and strong. Gemma is asked to do so in order to portrait a women who has power. From the result of this study, the writer hopes that it provides useful result for audience in general and academics in specific. The writer hopes that this study is very useful for audience to become more aware that each film contains about representation leads to an ideology, especially an adapted fairy tale film whose main character is female. Specifically for academic field, the writer also hopes that this study can be a reference for those who are interested to analyze an adapted fairytale film especially in the sphere of female character representation. This research is very helpful to enrich students' knowledge about girl power representation.

According to the significance that is provided by this study's result, it shows clearly that the writer focuses in the main female character, Gretel, from the beginning until the ending of the film, *Hansel and Gretel Witch Hunter*. Since the focus of the study is Gretel as the main female character, it is able to reveal the portrayal of girl power of its main female character. Therefore, the analysis is about the representation of girl power toward the main female character.

## 1.5 Definition of Key Terms

- Fairytales : Folklore or fable whose characters of the story do not exist in real life such as witch, ogres, trolls, giants, elves and talking animals. (Discovering Fairy Tales)
- Feminine : a term that is related to the traditional gender role to define how to be women as constructed by society which makes women to occupy inferior role (Hekman 100)
- Girl Power : a discourse describes the duality of masculinity and femininity in a girl or a woman (Inness 120)
- Representation : a description or a portrayal of someone or something in particular way or condition, such as the representation of womanhood in metropolis city (Oxford Online Dictionary)