

CHAPTER I

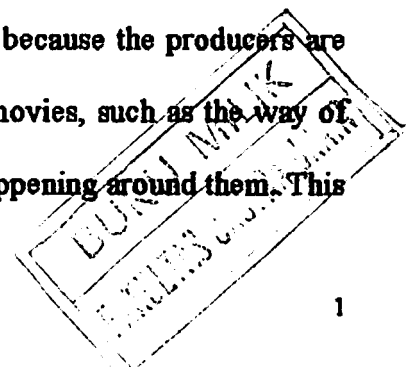
INTRODUCTION

A. BACKGROUND OF THE PROBLEMS:

Lately there are many movies made based on history, for example: Evita, Arthur, and the latest is The Messenger: The Story of Joan of Arc written and directed by Luc Besson. It happens because most people consider watching a movie is more interesting than reading a history book. We are having a hard time in reading a history book; while watching a movie is more enjoyable. And movie can help people to enjoy history because there are many people who are interested in certain history after they see a movie of it.

History, as Michel Foucault says, is certainly the most erudite, the most aware, the most conscious and possibility the most cluttered area of our memory; but it is equally the depths from which all beings emerge into their precarious, glittering existence. History has become the unavoidable element in our thought (The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences 219). A certain historical consciousness is found in all civilizations (Encyclopedia International 458). Hegel says that history begins with emergence of a will to hand things down, to make memory last (Twentieth-Century Literary Theory 105). Still, there are less people who enjoy reading a history book.

Movies based on certain history always usually have different interpretation according to the time when the movies are made. It happens because the producers are influenced by the condition of the time when they make the movies, such as the way of thinking, understanding, and accepting something which is happening around them. This



also happens in movies based on Joan's history. Joan of Arc is a peasant girl who is widely known as a heroine from France. Accordingly, there are many movie versions on her.

In 1899 Georges Melies produced the very first film on Joan of Arc. This silent movie presented Joan of Arc more like the historians see her. It means that it presented Joan like a saint. In 1999 from internationally acclaimed director Luc Besson and all-star cast led by Milla Jovovich as Joan, two-time Oscar winner Dustin Hoffman as the Conscience, two-time Oscar nominee John Malkovich as King Charles VII and Oscar winner Faye Dunaway as Yolande D'Aragon, comes The Messenger: The Story of Joan of Arc. Also in 1999 there was also a television series about Joan of Arc which entitled Joan of Arc which cast by Leelee Sobieski as Joan of Arc.

The differences which appear between the movie version and the history give the writer an idea to study Luc Besson's movie The Messenger: The Story of Joan of Arc based on the legitimized France history about Joan of Arc. The writer wants to know what kind of differences which appear so strong in the movie if we relate it to the legitimized France history of Joan of Arc; since the movie version is presented presumably different from the historical text version. Indeed, Luc Besson wants to break the people's image of Joan of Arc which has traditionally had one sided perception. Through this movie we can see Joan of Arc as a normal human being than as a saint. She is just like us and other people who also watch this movie.

While according to the historian such as David Herlihy, Joan of Arc is a saint and heroine of France, an illiterate peasant girl who decisively turned to tide of her country's fortunes in the Hundred Years' War. In Joan of Arc's mission of expelling the English

and their Burgundian allies from the Valois kingdom of France, she felt herself to be guided by the “voices” of St. Michael, St. Catherine, and St. Margaret (The New Encyclopaedia Britannica 377). For her action, as said by Kathleen McGowan, Joan of Arc who is widely claimed as Saint Joan of Arc is honored by the people of France as one of their greatest heroines (Compton’s Picture Encyclopedia 112).

From those statements above, the writer can say that there are differences between Luc Besson’s movie version and the historian version about Joan of Arc. It gives enough reason for the writer to dig more about those differences.

B. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEMS:

According to the background of the problem above, the writer can say that Luc Besson’s movie The Messenger: The Story of Joan of Arc has differences referring to the legitimized France history of Joan of Arc who in French is addressed as Jeanne d’Arc. Those differences can be formulated into statement of the problems:

1. How do the historians see Joan of Arc?
2. How is the movie version presented differently than the historical text version?
3. What factors influence those differences?

C. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:

The objective of the study are:

1. To know more clearly about the description Joan of Arc according to the historical perspective.

2. To know the differences about how Joan of Arc is described and visualized by contemporary screen-writers and director into a movie. In this case the movie is The Messenger: The Story of Joan of Arc.
3. To know the cause of those differences which appear in Luc Besson's movie The Messenger: The Story of Joan of Arc.

D. LIMITATION OF THE STUDY:

Although there are many movie version of Joan of Arc's movies and television series but this study is limited only on the differences of the character of Joan of Arc in Luc Besson's movie The Messenger: The Story of Joan of Arc compared to the legitimized France history of Joan of Arc. In this case it is because The Messenger: The Story of Joan of Arc is the newest movie version of her while the television series Joan of Arc – according to the writer – is not as popular as the movie version. In her study, the writer will ignore the existence of other characters appearing in the movie.

To know about the people opinion's nowadays about Joan of Arc, the writer is going to limit the opinion from the casts and the filmmakers themselves because they consist of people from different countries, such as: French, American, Turkish, and English.

E. SIGNIFICANT OF THE STUDY:

The writer hope that her study on this movie can give a good input for other students, especially students of the English department of Airlangga University, who are

also interested in new historicism reading. It is hoped that this thesis will give such a good contribution to the writer's faculty and university.

F. THEORY OF THE STUDY:

To reach the objective of the study that the writer has already mentioned above the writer has to use a theory which is relevant to this study. In this case because the differences which emerge are related with how Luc Besson, as an interpreter, sees or interprets Joan of Arc in his movie then the writer is using the New Historicism theory. In this case the writer sees Luc Besson as a new historicist who interprets the history of Joan of Arc into his movie The Messenger: The Story of Joan of Arc.

According to D.G. Myers in New Historicist interpretation, history is not viewed as the cause or the source of a work. Instead, the relationship between history and the work is seen a dialectic: the literary text is interpreted as both product and producer, end and source, of history. History is no longer conceived, as in some vulgar historical scholarship, as a thing wholly prior, a process which completes itself at the appearance of the work. Literary works are both what a culture produces as well as what reproduces the ideology (The New Historicism in Literary Study 3).

"The whole point" of the New Historicist enterprise, Jean E. Howard says in "The New Historicism in Literary Study," "is to grasp the term of the discourse which made it possible [for contemporaries] to see the 'facts' [of their own time] in particular way – indeed, made it possible to see particular phenomena *as facts at all*" (4). The New Historicists see fact that the people of the time did not, and this special insight is what

enables him to grasp the “discursive practices” that “produced” the facts that the people *did* see (4).

G. METHOD OF THE STUDY:

In collecting the data and information which are related to the study; first, the writer traces the historical sources by reading books about the history of Joan of Arc, especially from encyclopedias. Second, the writer has to browse the internet to have more information about the movie and its stuffs. It happens because the movie – which is more familiar in this country entitled Joan of Arc – is released in this country last month, October 2000. And here, in Surabaya, it is released this month, November 2000, about a year after it was released in United States at November 12, 1999.

Due to the shortage of historical sources which are written in English and the writer’s difficulties in reading historical sources which are written in French; then the writer is not able to provide an adequate number of sources related to Joan of Arc. However the writer is still able to look for information related to her study. The main source is mostly taken from the “New Encyclopedia Britannica,” 15th Edition, 1989. Because according to the writer this encyclopedia contains the most complete information about Joan of Arc. This encyclopedia writes some information about her from many historical sources and mostly taken from books written by France historians. Beside this Encyclopedia the writer also uses a book wrote by Vita-Sackville West about Joan of Arc entitled “Saint Joan of Arc.” West wrote it based on the France documents of Joan.

For the movie, the writer prefers to read the movie-script from the internet and use the VCD to help the writer understand the visualization of the movie-script. In this case it is possible because the screenwriter and the director of the movie is the same person, Luc Besson.

H. DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS:

1. **Legitimized history:** the history version in which the historians believe as the truth or the real version.
2. **Saint:** an uncommonly patient, benevolent, unselfish person; always acts in the name of the church and the holy Christ (The New Grolier Webster International Dictionary of The English Language 846).
3. **Movie-script:** manuscript or typescript especially of an actor's part in a movie.
4. **Director:** a person who directs, supervises, and instructs the actors and actresses, the camera crew and etc, during the making of a movie (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English 245).
5. **Screenwriter:** a person who writes the movie-script.