

**THE REPRESENTATION OF NANISCA AND IZOGIE'S STRUGGLES
FOR LIBERAL FEMINISM IN *THE WOMAN KING* FILM**

FINAL PROJECT

**Presented as Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements
to Obtain the *Sarjana Sastra* Degree in English Literature**



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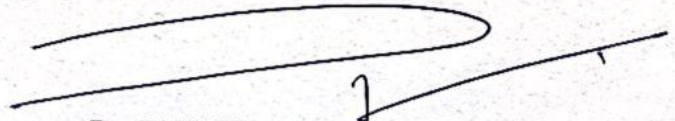
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STATEMENT OF WORK ORIGINALITY

Hereby, I honestly declare that the undergraduate thesis I wrote does not contain the works or part of the works of other people, except those which were cited in the quotations and the references, as a scientific paper should. If my statement is not valid in the future, I absolutely agree to accept an academic sanction in the form of revocation of my paper and my degree obtained from that paper.

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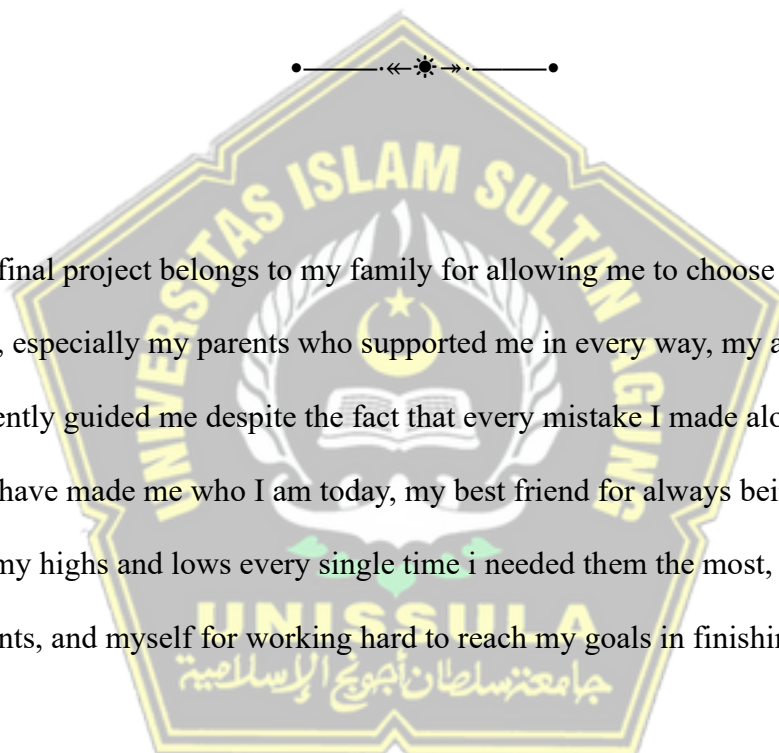
MOTTO AND DEDICATION

“You are powerful. More than you even know. Do not give away your power”

Izogie (The Woman King)



This final project belongs to my family for allowing me to choose my own life path, especially my parents who supported me in every way, my advisor who patiently guided me despite the fact that every mistake I made along the way would have made me who I am today, my best friend for always being by my side in my highs and lows every single time i needed them the most, my fellow students, and myself for working hard to reach my goals in finishing my study.



The Representation of Nanisca and Izogie's Struggles for Liberal Feminism in *The Woman King* Film

Nabillah Unzila Rahma

ABSTRACT

Rahma, Nabillah Unzila. 30801900029. *The Representation of Nanisca and Izogie's Struggles for Liberal Feminism in The Woman King Film.* Final Project Faculty of Language and Communication Science. English Literature Study Program. Sultan Agung Islamic University Semarang. Advisor: Dr. Didik Murwantono, M.Hum.

The Woman King is a film by Gina Prince that describes the persistence of female soldiers. Liberal feminism is one of the strong issues in the film *The Woman King*. The purpose of this study is to explain the struggles of liberal feminism that occur in the main characters' Nanisca, the leader of the female warriors, and one of her soldiers named Izogie.

This study uses the theory of liberal feminism from John Stuart Mill and Harriet Taylor and applies descriptive qualitative research to analyze data collected from dialogues, monologues, and narratives in films. In collecting data, researchers used several steps, namely data collection by watching films, reading scripts, identifying data, and reducing data that is less relevant.

The results of this study are the first to explain the liberal feminism are depicted in the main character which consist of brave, motivative, strong, decisive, and the chosen. Second, explain the main characters' struggles for equality which consists of equal liberty, equal right, the suffrage, and equal education so that it can dissect thoughts that have a sense of value both positive and negative.

Keywords: *The Woman King, Liberal feminism, Struggles of equality*

INTISARI

Rahma, Nabillah Unzila. 30801900029. *Representasi Perjuangan Nanisca dan Izogie untuk Feminisme Liberal dalam Film Woman King.* Program Studi Sastra Inggris. Fakultas Bahasa dan Ilmu Komunikasi. Universitas Islam Sultan Agung. Pembimbing: Dr. Didik Murwantono, M.Hum.

The Woman King adalah film karya Gina Prince yang menggambarkan kegigihan prajurit wanita. Feminisme liberal menjadi salah satu isu kuat dalam film *The Woman King*. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menjelaskan tanda-tanda feminisme liberal yang terjadi pada karakter Nanisca, pemimpin pejuang perempuan dan salah satu prajuritnya bernama Izogie.

Penelitian ini menggunakan teori feminisme liberal dari John Stuart Mill dan Harriet Taylor dan menerapkan penelitian kualitatif deskriptif untuk menganalisis data yang dikumpulkan dari dialog, monolog, dan narasi dalam film. Dalam mengumpulkan data, peneliti menggunakan beberapa langkah yaitu pengumpulan data dengan menonton film, membaca naskah, mengidentifikasi data, dan mengurangi data yang kurang relevan.

Hasil dari penelitian ini yang pertama, menjelaskan feminisme liberal yang digambarkan pada tokoh utama yang terdiri dari pemberani, motivatif, kuat, tegas, terpilih. Kedua, menjelaskan bagaimana perjuangan tokoh utama dalam memperjuangkan feminisme liberal yang terdiri dari persamaan kebebasan, persamaan hak, penderitaan, dan persamaan pendidikan sehingga dapat membedah pemikiran-pemikiran yang memiliki nilai positif maupun negatif.

Kata Kunci: *The Woman King, Feminisme liberal, Perjuangan kesetaraan*

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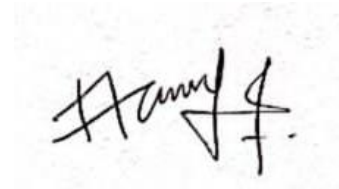
For the foremost, I would like to send my highest gratitude towards the Almighty Allah *Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala* for blessing me with knowledge, strength, and ability to finish this final project. Secondly, *shalawat* and *salam* are always delivered towards our prophet Muhammad *Shallallaahu 'Alaihi wa Sallam* as the Great model who guided us muslim from the darkness into the right path of Islam. This final project is a form of fulfilling the requirements in obtaining *Sarjana Sastra* Degree in English Literature Study Program of Sultan Agung Islamic University. This final project would never have finished without the support, encouragement and guidance from several people. Therefore, i would like to send my deepest gratitude and appreciation for those people below:

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

FINAL PROJECT	i
PAGE OF APPROVAL	ii
PAGE OF VALIDATION.....	i
STATEMENT OF WORK ORIGINALITY.....	i
MOTTO AND DEDICATION.....	i
ABSTRACT.....	ii
INTISARI.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vii
CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION.....	1
A. Background of the Study.....	1
B. Problem Formulation	5
C. Limitation of the Study	5
D. Objectives of the Study	6
E. Significance of the Study	6
F. Organization of the Study	6
CHAPTER II REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE	7
A. Theoretical Framework	7
A.1. Synopsis of <i>The Woman King</i> Film.....	7

A.2. Feminism in Reviews	12
B. Theoretical Approach	16
B.1. Liberal Feminism Theory	16
CHAPTER III RESEARCH METHODS	22
A. Type of Research	22
B. Data Organizing	22
B.1. Data Collecting Method.....	22
B.2. Type of Data	24
C. Analyzing the Data	24
CHAPTER IV FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION.....	25
A. The liberal feminism is depicted by Nanisca and Izogie in <i>The Woman King</i> film	25
A.1. Brave Personality of Nanisca	25
A.2. Motivative Personality of Nanisca	27
A.3. Strong Personality of Izogie	28
A.4. Decisive Personality of Nanisca.....	30
A.5 The Chosen King of Nanisca.....	32
B. The main characters Nanisca and Izogie struggles from liberal feminism	33
B.1 Equal Liberty	34
B.2 Equal Right.....	35

B.3 Equal Education.....	37
CHAPTER V CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION	39
A. Conclusion	39
B. Suggestion.....	40
REFERENCES.....	41
APPENDICES	43



CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Literature is an instruction that has meaning or teachings with a certain beauty. Usually, this work is expressed in oral or written form. Literature pertains to written creations that hold imaginative, artistic, or intellectual significance, commonly distinguished by the utilization of language to communicate concepts, feelings, and encounters (Hassan 1). It encompasses diverse modes of written communication like novels, poems, dramas, essays, short stories, and other forms of literary compositions. While literary works themselves have the meaning of means of conveying messages about life conveyed through novels, songs, theatre, films, etc.

One of the deliveries of literary works is through film. The film is a communication medium in the form of audio visuals to convey a message to a group of people. In making a film, you have to go through a thought process in the form of searching for ideas and story ideas. Graeme Turner in Sobur, who reveals that film is not just a reflection of society (Sobur 127). It should be a representation or picture of reality and films also “re-present” reality based on the codes, conventions, and ideologies of its culture.

Films are a widely consumed form of media that have integrated themselves into human existence. The narratives within films are carefully crafted to effectively transmit messages to the viewers. These messages or values

embedded in films possess the capability to influence the audience's thoughts, emotions, and actions.

It can be concluded that, film serves as a communication medium that effectively conveys events from both the past and the present, making it highly accessible to the general audience due to its visual clarity. This is in contrast to written literature, where readers often interpret the narrative through their own imagination. Films, on the other hand, present a more tangible narrative through various scenes.

The distinction between viewing film as a representation of societal reality versus perceiving it as a mere reflection of reality is important. When films are seen as reflections of reality, they essentially mirror actual events onto the screen without altering or interpreting them. On the other hand, when films are regarded as representations of reality, they go beyond mere imitation and instead mold and present reality through the lens of cultural codes, conventions, and ideologies. In this context, films become active agents that interpret and reinterpret reality, contributing to the shaping of cultural perceptions and perspectives.

According to Tong, feminist thought is old enough to have a history complete with a set of labels. There are liberal, radical, Marxist/socialist, psychoanalytic, care-focused, existentialist, postmodern, women of color, global, postcolonial, transnational, and ecofeminist (Tong 15). The researcher selects the framework of liberal feminism to analyze the character of the woman soldier, Agojie, as it aligns with the values and principles of liberal feminism.

Liberal feminism is a theoretical perspective primarily concerned with matters like employment, education, and political entitlements. It also delves into the impact of personal life on the broader spectrum of equality. This brand of feminism emphasizes the legal rights of women and the pursuit of gender parity. Advocates of liberal feminism assert that women deserve equal rights to men and that their inclusion in public affairs is equally vital as men's involvement in society. They advocate for women's active engagement in economic activities, education, decision-making processes, and legal advancements (Mukul 28).

Based on this quotation, A woman is free to determine her rights fully, so that women are able to develop their intellectual capacities and morality.

As we know, liberal feminism consists of two parts, namely classical liberal feminism, and egalitarianism. Classical liberal feminism places more emphasis on individual freedom rights such as women's suffrage, the right to own land, and the right to freedom of expression. Meanwhile, egalitarian liberal feminism emphasizes equal and fair opportunities for women in accessing resources.

One of the figures discussing Liberal Feminism is John Stuart Mill. According to John Stuart Mill, in the context of liberal feminism there are four main focuses. The first one is equal rights, which means equal rights between women and men, including the right to be free from discrimination based on sex. Equal education, namely the right of women to receive education that is equal to men, so that they have the same opportunities and knowledge. The suffrage, right

to vote or vote in the political process, which allows women to participate in political decision-making. Equal liberty, namely equality in freedom, so that women have the right to make decisions and live life without any unfair obstacles. This is supported by Graeme Turner in Sobur refuses to see the film as a reflection of society. Turner argued that the meaning of the film as a representation of the reality of society is different from film as merely a reflection of reality (Sobur 127). As a reflection of reality, films simply transfer reality to the screen without changing that reality. Meanwhile, as a representation of reality, films shape and re-present reality based on the codes, conventions, and ideologies of culture.

One of the films with liberal feminism is *The Woman King*. This film, produced by Gina Prince-Blythewood tells the story of a historical film that tells the story of the Agojie, a unit of female soldiers of the Kingdom of Dahomey in West Africa during the 17th to 19th centuries.

In this film, the story of General Nanisca, along with the Agojie fight to free the Dahomey women who were kidnapped by slave traders from the Oyo Empire. General Nanisca is the leader of the Agojie group. In her mission to rescue the Dahomey women, she also begins training a new generation of warriors to join the Agojie in protecting the kingdom.

Although set hundreds of years ago, the film adapted from Stevens and Maria Bello's story in 2015 has issues that are close to current events, which are related to women's rights and struggles against oppression and serve as a reminder and inspiration for women victims of rape to speak out, spark courage

for those who are still unable to choose their life path, and inspire those who want to be free from all injustice and limitations.

Therefore, the researchers were very interested in analyzing the struggles of liberal feminism that depicted from Nanisca and Izogie in the film *The Woman King*. The researcher believes that liberal feminism in the film contains very important lessons to be learned because it provides new knowledge to the reader that liberal feminism has an effect on oneself and others around her. Thus, the researcher gives the title of this final project with “The Representation of Nanisca and Izogie Struggles’s for Liberal Feminism in *The Woman King* Film.”

B. Problem Formulation

In this study, two problem formulations will be examined in considering the study's context. The problems are appeared below.:

1. What liberal feminism are depicted in characters Nanisca and Izogie in the film *The Woman King*?
2. How does the main characters Nanisca and Izogie struggles for equality reflected in the film *The Woman King*?

C. Limitation of the Study

This research only focuses on liberal feminism in Nanisca and Izogie behavior using liberal feminism theory by John Stuart Mill and Harriet Taylor. This thesis only analyses Nanisca and Izogie as the research subject. Journals, articles, synopsis, and other sources are referenced in this research.

D. Objectives of the Study

In connection with the problem formulation above, the purpose of this study is to provide an overview of:

1. To describe the liberal feminism depicted in the main characters Nanisca and Izogie in the film *The Woman King*.
2. To explain the main characters Nanisca and Izogie struggles for equality reflected in the film *The Woman King*.

E. Significance of the Study

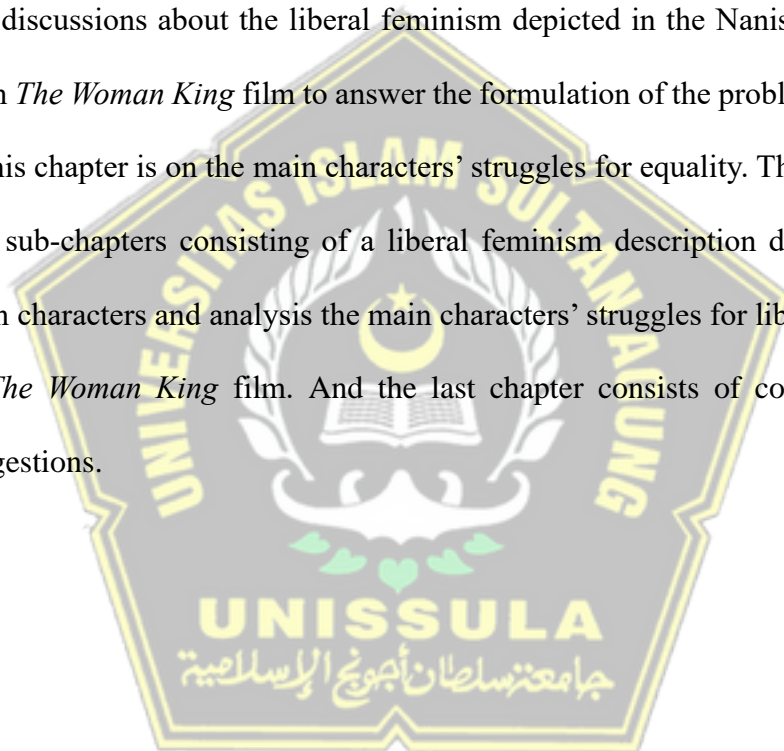
This research is important in terms of its contribution to literature. The results of this study are expected to be a useful focus for readers on the depicted and struggles of liberal feminist behavior. Raising the topic, the representation of liberal feminism from Nanisca and Izogie in *The Woman King* film using John Stuart Mill and Harriet Taylor theory.

F. Organization of the Study

This study is divided into five chapters. In each chapter, several things are discussed, among others: The first chapter contains the background, problem formulation, limitation of the study, object of the study, significance of the study, and organization of the study. The second chapter contains a theoretical framework and theoretical approaches. The theoretical framework consists of two sub-chapters containing a synopsis of *The Woman King* film and feminism

in review. While the theoretical approach consists of the theory of liberal feminism.

The third chapter is about how the data was obtained. This section is explained with sub-chapters containing the type of research, data organization based on data collecting method and type of data, and analyzing the data. The fourth chapter contains findings and discussion. This chapter consists of findings and discussions about the liberal feminism depicted in the Nanisca and Izogie form *The Woman King* film to answer the formulation of the problem. The focus of this chapter is on the main characters' struggles for equality. This chapter has two sub-chapters consisting of a liberal feminism description depicted in the main characters and analysis the main characters' struggles for liberal feminism in *The Woman King* film. And the last chapter consists of conclusions and suggestions.



CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

In this chapter it contains a theoretical framework and theoretical approaches. The theoretical framework consists of two sub-chapters containing a synopsis of *The Woman King* film and feminism in review. While the theoretical approach consists of the theory of liberal feminism and semiotic analysis of Roland Barthes.

A. Theoretical Framework

A.1. Synopsis of *The Woman King* Film

West Africa, 1823 – An opening crawl states that the kingdom of Dahomey has crowned a young king, Ghezo. Their enemies, the Oyo Empire, have teamed up with the Mahi people to capture Dahomey villagers and give them to European slave traders. The Oyo have an advantage with their guns and horses. Dahomey has a group of female amazon warriors, the Agojie, led by General Nanisca, who are set to protect their kingdom.

The Agojie infiltrate a Mahi village, slaughtering the soldiers before coming across the captured villagers and freeing them. In the morning, the Agojie mourn their dead and escort the captives back home. The warriors return home before more Oyo arrive, and Ghezo considers Nanisca to be his most trusted soldier.

A young woman, Nawi, is brought to a man who would marry her, even though he is older and brutish. When Nawi doesn't respond to the man,

he slaps her, and she responds by pushing him hard enough for him to fall over. He is angered and refuses to marry her. Nawi's father brings her to the Agojie and offers her to the king. She is taken in by an Agojie soldier, Izogie.

Oyo soldiers, led by General Oba Ade, come across the corpses of their comrades. Oba Ade insults them for letting their fellow soldiers get murdered by women, and they plan their next move against Dahomey.

Ghezo addresses his council to discuss the Oyo threat. Nanisca also brings up the slave trade and says it casts a dark shadow on their kingdom to be selling off their people. She proposes that they deal in gold or palm oil for trading. Ghezo tells Nanisca to show him how much palm oil they can produce before he makes his decision.

Nanisca's right-hand woman Amenza addresses the new Agojie recruits, telling them they will fight and potentially die for their kingdom. Several women leave, but a large group, including Nawi, choose to stay. Izogie then tells Nawi to go bathe, so she does and speaks personally to Nanisca.

The women begin their training. Nawi does not understand why they begin with ropes, feeling she should start with a bladed weapon until Nanisca allows her to try on a wooden statue to decapitate it. The sword is too heavy for Nawi, and Nanisca chops the head off with one swing. At night, Izogie speaks to Nawi and talks about how her mother allowed men to abuse her until she fought back. The women continue training later on by running, firing rifles, and learning combat skills.

Nawi plays a prank where she sets off a small explosive on one of the statues. She takes the blame for it as Nanisca chastises her for it. Later, Izogie tells Nawi about how Nanisca's deeds are considered legendary since she rose to her ranks after being a captive and left for dead.

Amenza visits Nanisca in her hut, then tells her, using special nuts, that she sees somebody from Nanisca's past coming back for her. Outside, Nanisca watches as Nawi practices her sword-wielding skills on one of the statues.

The Oyo arrive at the kingdom's gates for a confrontation with Ghezo. When Oba Ade steps forward, Nanisca becomes horrified, as Oba Ade raped her repeatedly when she was a captive. They order tributes and demand 40 Agojie warriors, but Ghezo only allows 20. Nanisca tells Amenza that her vision was true.

Portuguese settlers arrived in Africa, led by Captain Santo Ferreira and his friend Malik, the latter whose mother was Dahomey. When Malik sees the captured natives, he feels horrified. The men join the scene as the Agojie confront the Oyo. Nanisca says they will not give them tributes and instead delivers Oba Ade the severed heads of his men. A fight breaks out between the two tribes, wherein Nawi sees an opportunity to free the captives, which Nanisca says deviates from their plan. After they escape, Nanisca chews Nawi out for it, but Amenza privately tells Nanisca that it was she who deviated from the plan, as she was more concerned with killing Oba Ade.

Ferreira and Malik meet with Oba Ade and his soldiers as they are discussing plans for the Oyo to team up with other tribes to invade Dahomey and capture more villagers to sell off. Malik appears uncomfortable with the news. He later goes by the water to bathe, where he is found by Nawi. She accuses him of being a slave, but he denies it and tells her about his Dahomey heritage. He gives her a piece of jewellery before she retreats to the others.

The kingdom holds a small tournament where the Agojie trainees go through an obstacle course involving thorn bushes, climbing a wall, fighting enemies, and finally decapitating one of the statues. Nawi comes out as the victor, and Ghezo acknowledges her skill and talent. Later, while tending to Nawi's wounds, Nanisca feels something on the girl's arm. She goes back to her room and is followed by Amenza, as Nanisca asks her about a child that she had given up long ago because she is beginning to suspect that Nawi might be that child.

Ferreira speaks to Ghezo about his plans to potentially cease Dahomey's part in the slave trade, telling him that his riches come from the slaves, and without them, his kingdom would be nothing and unprotected. Ghezo retorts that if the Europeans are no longer of use to him, then they are also unprotected.

Izogie senses that Nawi might like Malik after watching them speak discreetly while Ferreira was talking to Ghezo. They later meet in secret, where Nawi gives Malik a totem to keep him safe. When he says that he has nothing to give her, she simply takes one of his knives.

Nawi goes to bathe and encounters Nanisca, who chastises her for sneaking off for Malik. After arguing, Nanisca approaches Nawi and tells her about the baby she gave up. She was a product of rape, and Amenza helped Nanisca hide her and give her away. Nanisca remembers cutting the child's left arm and sticking a shark tooth in it. Nanisca cuts into Nawi's arm and pulls out the tooth, confirming that Nawi is indeed her daughter, and therefore the daughter of Oba Ade as well. Nawi leaves in disbelief.

The following morning, Nanisca and some of her soldiers keep an eye out on the Oyo camp. They set fire to their gunpowder and cause multiple explosions, scaring their horses away and leaving them vulnerable. The Agojie launch an attack, leading to a fierce and bloody battle that leaves many Oyo and Agojie dead and leads to some of the women, including Izogie and Nawi, getting captured. On a wagon heading away, Nawi finds out the woman's binds have come loose, and she encourages her to roll off the cart and run back to Dahomey. While captive, Nawi helps Izogie try to fix her broken arm.

The young woman returns to Dahomey and informs Nanisca about the Oyo's plan to retaliate against the Agojie. Ghezo promotes Nanisca but forbids her from acting any further, but she and Amenza go behind his back to rescue the others.

When the European slavers come for the captives, Izogie and Nawi initiate a fight against them, but Izogie is fatally shot and dies in Nawi's arms as she wails for her sister. Nawi is imprisoned, but Malik goes to visit her and

tells her how the captives are bound for England, and he wishes to protect her. They are implied to make love after.

Nanisca leads the warriors into the European camp for an attack. They set fire to their camp and attack the men before freeing the captives. Malik turns on Ferreira and frees the captives, causing them to drag him into the water, where they beat him and hold his head underwater until he drowns. Nawi helps Nanisca engage in battle as she finally goes to face off against Oba Ade. The man attempts to beat Nanisca, but she overpowers him and impales him, finally killing him. Everyone returns home, and Nawi parts ways with Malik.

The Agojie return home with their captives, and Nanisca is confronted by Ghezo. While he acknowledges that she disobeyed his orders, he is thankful to her for ending the Oyo Empire and officially promotes her to the title of Woman King. Everyone cheers for her.

Nawi goes to pay tribute to Izogie, and she is joined by Nanisca. She then addresses Nawi as her daughter. The two then go join the others to dance in celebration.

A.2. Feminism in Reviews

Feminism in the Big Indonesian Dictionary is a women's movement that demands full equality of rights between men and women. A series of social, political, and ideological movements that share the goal of defining, building, and achieving gender equality in the political, economic, personal, and social spheres. Some scholars consider feminist campaigns to be the main

force behind historical social change toward women's rights. Women have the right to live, the right to support, and the right to live their own lives or the lives of those around them.

The background of feminism is the inequality of relations between women and men in public life, then an effort arises to eliminate the inequality of relations. Many people interpret feminism as a demand for the emancipation of women, whereas in this case feminism refers to social movements carried out by women in fighting for their rights fairly with men. From there came the Equal Rights movement that seeks to liberate women from the bonds of the domestic environment or the family and household environment.

Basically, feminism is an implementation of gender justice within the framework of democracy and Human Rights. This movement arose in Europe in the 14th - 18th centuries. At that time, the dominant idea at that time was rationalism, which came along with the worship of reason, mind, and ratio. The idea of rationalism also influenced the birth of the prancer revolution in 1789-1793 with its slogan of freedom from oppression (*liberte*), recognition of equal rights (*egalite*), and the spirit of brotherhood (*fraternite*) which was used as a motto to undermine The researcheritarian royal regime and was replaced with republic power using a democratic system.

After the French Revolution, some laws that were detrimental to women were still enforced and re-enacted. History shows that women do not

necessarily get the same rights as men even though the ideas of liberty, egalite, and fraternity appear as universal human values.

Pioneer of the feminist movement, Mary Wollstonecraft in her work *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* suggested that women, especially from the middle class an oppressed class that must rise from the shackles of the household. Women's lives are only focused on a limited home environment, while men can master the environment and life outside the home. That's where women feel bound in this situation. The situation of injustice arises because of the cultural structure created by humans and not something natural as previously believed by many cultures in the world.

As noted by historical scholars Maggie Humm and Rebecca Walker in Zhen's work, the feminist movement is categorized into distinct phases known as 'waves,' commonly referred to as the three waves of feminism (Zhen 378). Initially, the feminist movement emerged with a focus on advocating for the "rights" and 'equality' of women, serving as the fundamental basis for its activism. However, during the late 1960s, feminism shifted its discourse to encompass the concepts of 'oppression' and 'freedom,' transforming itself into a 'liberation movement' for women.

In the 20th century the movement of feminism is seen by the public as a movement of Critical Legal Studies, namely a movement that criticizes the logic of law, is manipulative and dependent on political, economic law, the role of law as a pattern-forming social relations and the formation of a hierarchy by non-fundamental legal provisions. But one thing that unites

feminists is their belief that society and the legal order are patriarchal. The rule of law that is neutral and objective is often seen as a cover in political and social considerations driven by ideology. However, the ideology possessed is often not in favor of the interests of women.

Patriarchy in society is the cause of subordination, domination, and injustice towards women. As a consequence, women have demanded gender equality. In our previous society, men were believed to be in control of everything. They own the source of all life and have power over everything, but women are one step or several steps behind men. Women's voices and actions are not as important as men's. This is one of the ideas of patriarchy. Patriarchy is a social arrangement that privileged men, in which men as a group dominated women as a group both structurally and ideologically (Hunnicut 78). This principle has been maintained by society for centuries and has caused some problems for the next generation. Male dominance in public spheres such as education, business and politics leads to gender oppression and discrimination. Women's roles are marginalized, their voices suppressed, their rights suppressed, and gender inequality created. As a result, feminism seems to be putting an end to all patriarchal practices.

Feminism has received a lot of attention in recent years. Feminism was born to achieve equality for women and enable them to achieve their rights. It is an intellectual, political, or social movement focused on women's everyday life experiences. Feminism seeks justice for women, seeks to achieve equality between women and men, elevate women's voices, and

empower women. Feminism is a movement that opposes patriarchal culture, fights for gender equality, and eliminates the primacy of men and women in society. The goal is to achieve gender equality. Feminism is a collection of movements and ideologies that share a common goal of defining, establishing and realizing women's equal political, economic, cultural, personal and social rights. Women should have the same rights and opportunities as men, and feminism is a true means of defending women's roles and rights in society. If society allowed women equal rights, they would enjoy equal status in many areas of life.

B. Theoretical Approach

B.1. Liberal Feminism Theory

Liberal Feminism was born in the 17th century and formulated by Mary Wollstonecraft in her writing *A Vindication of the Right of Women* (1759-1799). Liberal feminism focuses more on the Liberal ideology where women and men are created equal and have equal opportunities. Women are free to make their choices and those choices are good choices for them. According to Cottais, liberal feminists assert their entitlement to engage actively in societal roles and receive equitable treatment comparable to their male peers. Within liberal feminism, there exists a historical stance against the practice of prostitution. Therefore, those who advocate for a feminism focused solely on achieving parity between genders are essentially aligning with the principles of liberal feminism (Cottais 1).

According to Ghorfati and Medini, liberal feminism is a specific strategy for attaining gender equality. It places emphasis on the capacity of a single individual to change anti-women discrimination (Ghorfati 18). Women frequently became the property or objects of males. Women are viewed differently than men as a result of this issues. Not due to the fact that they have the ability to stand alone, but rather because of social rule, they are unable to do so. Female voices are muted. Because they are not given the same opportunities as men in subjects such education, economy, and other areas, women are unable to advance personally. Because society forbids it, they are unable to exercise their right to self-determination and make decisions about their lives. The liberal feminist movement is sparked by these factors.

There are several goals in this theory of liberal feminism, the most important of which is explained by Tong that the general goal of liberal feminism is to create a just and caring society where freedom flourishes (Tong 18). These liberals believe that a just society will allow individual men and women to demonstrate their independence. This is further reinforced by Tong that to achieve equality, a woman must be able to change existing systems, structures and attitudes of oppression (Tong 21). Regarding education, Tong also explains that education is the best way for women to equalize their position in society so that women are not underestimated and oppressed (Tong 16). Wollstonecraft also argues in Tong's work that if a society wants to achieve sexual equality or gender justice, society must

provide the same political rights to women and the same economic and educational opportunities that men enjoy. It can be concluded that women can become independent and not depend on men as long as they have the same opportunities as men.

Decades ago, women were employed only in domestic areas such as household chores and were not given the opportunity to develop their skills. It is always the men who make the money while the women stay home and take care of the children. This inequality gives rise to the liberal feminist movement. "In order to be her husband's partner and not a servant, a wife must earn income outside the home (Tong 18). Liberal feminism seeks to help people use their abilities and democratic processes to help men and women achieve equality in law and society. She fights to free women from dictatorial gender roles. A role used as a social defense to make women inferior and deprive them of opportunities in business, education and everything else.

It emphasizes the freedom women get. This means that women are free to do what they want without cultural or social pressure. Women are free to express themselves in society. Women and men are equal and should be given the same rights and opportunities. Women shouldn't be forced by men or society to do things or be things they don't want to be. The common goal of liberal feminism is to create a society that respects the freedom of decent and self-improvement so that both women and men can improve. Women and men are equally likely to exercise reason. With the existence of liberal

feminism, women and men are expected to be equal in many aspects of life. As Tong pointed out, equal opportunity has always been associated with liberal feminism, stating, "One of the contemporary political goals most closely associated with liberal feminism is equal opportunity, which is why large-scale economic restructuring has been and the real redistribution of wealth" (Tong 12). People have the right to choose what they want without the intervention of others. In this case, both men and women, as individuals, are free to make choices about their lives without interference or pressure from others. As long as it doesn't bother anyone, it's free. That means they have equal opportunities. Men and women should be given equal opportunities in other areas of life, such as politics and business. Feminism exists to erase the patriarchal values and oppressed women held in society.

Liberal feminism explicitly states that socially and culturally constructed gender inequalities exist. A major encouragement of liberal feminism is that women should be as free to choose their social roles as men are. Feminism therefore worked to eliminate the historical structures of patriarchy that denied women civil rights. The fundamental focus is on women's equal rights in law, education and employment, changing marriage laws, unjust divorce, property rights and liberation from all inhumane powers. According to John Stuart Mill and Harriet Taylor, in the history of liberal feminism, there have been several struggles. Among them are:

1. Equal Education

A Vindication of the Right of Woman by Marry Wollstonecraft refutes the idea that almost the same as Immanuel Kant in his book Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Moral about society is required to have the idea that women should get the same education as men. Education is the best way for women to be able to include their position in society so that women are no longer underestimated and oppressed (Tong 14). Thus, education is a way for women to hone their thinking skills by teaching rational things so that women can get used to independent habits without relying on men.

2. Equal Liberty

John Stuart Mill and Harriet Taylor combined Melly Wollstonecraft's thoughts on rationality. However, their understanding of rationality does not focus solely on morals as an autonomous form of the individual but rather uses rational thinking to obtain their desires. Mill and Taylor argue that the way to maximize one's happiness is by allowing individuals to pursue their desires as long as those individuals do not hinder each other's process. Mill and Taylor's argument is made clear by Tong that women can lead a company or do another job in the same way as man do without care about the gender (Tong 8).

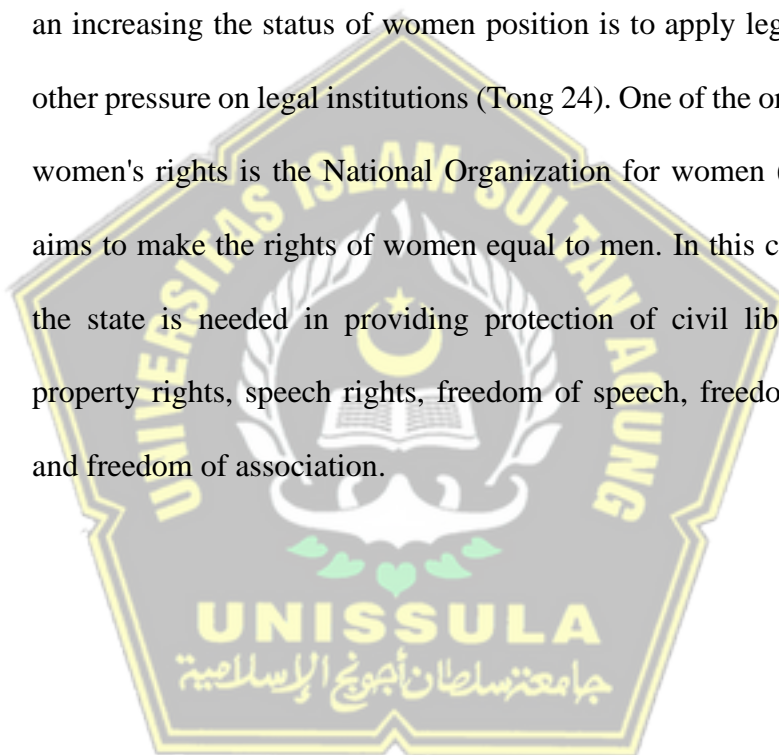
3. The Suffrage

Mill and Taylor believed that women needed the right to vote to be equal to men. Supported by Tong, they assume that voting is a way that

gives power to someone, not only as an expression of political views but as a modifier of structures, systems, and attitudes that contribute to oppression (Tong 21)

4. Equal Rights

In the mid-60s, liberal feminist figures joined the Women's Right group. According to Rosemary Putnam Tong, the purpose of the group as an increasing the status of women position is to apply legal, social, and other pressure on legal institutions (Tong 24). One of the organizations of women's rights is the National Organization for women (NOW) which aims to make the rights of women equal to men. In this case the role of the state is needed in providing protection of civil liberties such as property rights, speech rights, freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and freedom of association.



CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODS

A. Type of Research

This researched used a qualitative method as the type of research. Qualitative researched was used as a form of in-depth analysis and understanding. The data produced were not in the form of numbers, but a description. Qualitative method was the process of collecting, analyzing, and interpreting non-numerical data, such as language. According to Mcleod, qualitative could be used to understand how an individual subjectively perceived and gave meaning to their social reality (Mcleod 32). Thus, the line could be drawn such that participants found themselves as the center of information and did not need to involve other participants to obtain statistical results. The results of the qualitative research were in the form of texted, words, or depictions rather than numbers or statistics. The test focused more on finding information, after which it shifted to the results of the research.

B. Data Organizing

B.1. Data Collecting Method

The data collection approach involves the analysis of a data collection procedure in a number of ways that are pertinent to the research. The steps for gathering data for the study were as follows:

B.1.1. Watching the film and reading the film script

The first step was to watch *The Woman King* film repeatedly as a medium of understanding to determine the intrinsic and extrinsic elements of the film. Second, reading the script of *The Woman King* repeatedly with the aim of understanding the content of the story more deeply made it easier to analyze and interpret each scene. Understanding is the result of research and is due to an iterative process in which data, concept and evidence are connected with one another (Becker 19).

B.1.2. Identifying the Data

After watching *The Woman King* film repeatedly and observing the film script, the next stage was to identify the data sequentially from the beginning to the end. According to Fine and Hallett qualitative is particularly well suited both to identify causality and to uncover fine descriptive distinctions (Fine 188). At this stage, the researcher divided the scenes contained in the dialogue, monologue, and descriptions related to the two problem formulations to facilitate the analysis of the two problem formulations. This step aims to separate data from non-data in the sense that only potential data have been analyzed.

B.1.3. Classifying the Data

The next stage of data collection was classification. At the data classification stage, the data were classified according to the research problems. Some of the data that had been collected and grouped would make

it easier to answer the problem formulation. The data were classified in the form of an attachment table. The data contained columns of numbers, quotes from film, typed of theory, references, and comments.

B.1.4. Reducing the Data

In the data reduction stage, all data results were selected. Data information that was similar, weak, and did not have a strong relationship to the problem formulation was eliminated so that it was not used to answer the problem formulation. This step aims to simplify the existing data. Therefore, the most powerful and potential data were used to explain the problem formulation.

B.2. Type of Data

Two types of data used in this study were primary data and secondary data. The primary data were obtained from *The Woman King* film. The secondary data were obtained from film scripts, several journals and article.

C. Analyzing the Data

Data analysis was the final step in the study. At this stage, the data that had been analyzed were finalized. This study used a qualitative approach in the form of data collection methods through dialogues, monologues, and quotes from the film. This research also involves feminism theory in data analysis. Each of the findings in the research was further strengthened with data from films, film scripts, journals, articles, acetract. Which were closely related to this research.

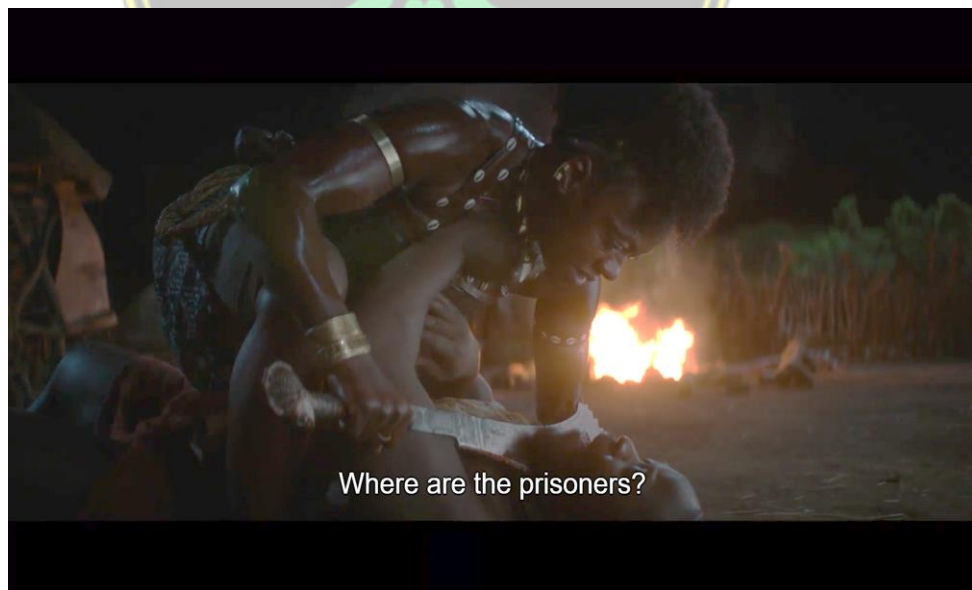
CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter consists of findings and discussions about the liberal feminism from Nanisca and Izogie in *The Woman King* film using John Stuart Mill and Harriet Taylor's theory to answer the formulation of the problem. The focus of this chapter is on liberal feminism are depicted in the leader of female warrior, Nanisca, and one of Agojie warrior, Izogie. This chapter has two sub-chapters consisting of an analysis of liberal feminism depicted from Nanisca and Izogie and an analysis of the main characters Nanisca and Izogie struggles for liberal feminism reflected in *The Woman King* film.

A. The liberal feminism is depicted by Nanisca and Izogie in *The Woman King* film

A.1. Brave Personality of Nanisca



Picture 1: Nanisca slits his throat, doping him to the ground (4:45)

The first image shows a woman carrying a sword and placing it on a man's neck. Her name is Nanisca. She is the leader of a group of female soldiers called Agojie.

(In battle)

Nanisca : “You challenge the King of Dahomey?”

Village Leader : “No! we are farmers, we did nothing!”

Nanisca : “Where have you taken our people?”

Village Leader : “We took nothing!”

Amenza : (calling Nanisca by her title of General) Miganon!

(Amenza yanke down the fabric door of the woman prisoner hut)

(Nanisca slits his throat, doping him to the ground)

Izogie : (Talking to the woman prisoner who were saved)

“You will be home soon.”

(The Woman King 4:30 – 5:08)

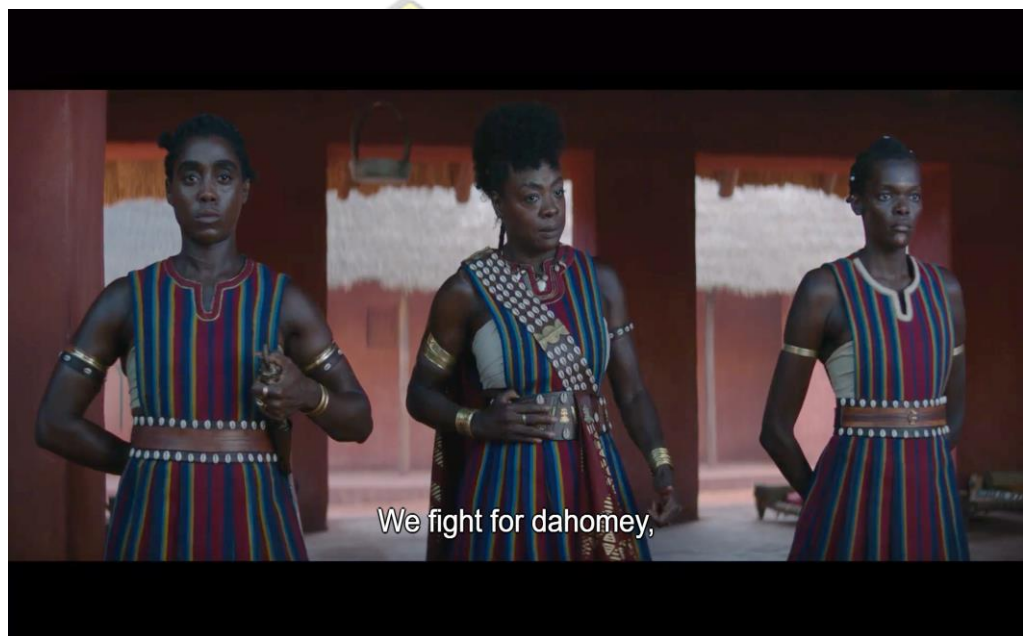
Here Nanisca with an angry tone and pointing his sword asked where the Dahomey female prisoners were to one of the male villagers who kidnapped the female prisoners. Shortly afterwards Amenza tells Nanisca that she found the female prissoners in one of the houses. In that house there were a lot of Dahomey women who were detained by the villagers. At the same time Nanisca immediately swiped her sword at the villager's neck and killed him.

These villagers kidnapped Dahomey women because they were going to make these women slaves. Not only that, the women were also bought and sold by

the villagers. Finally, the Dahomey women prisoners were free. Agojie won the war. Nanisca and her troops took the women prisoners back to Dahomey.

This passage clearly shows that with Nanisca's courage in leading a war, Nanisca and his soldiers can save someone's life. Not only that, Nanisca and her soldiers also managed to save the rights of the women prisoners.

A.2. Motivative Personality of Nanisca



Picture 2: Nanisca delivered her speech in front of her soldiers (18:38)

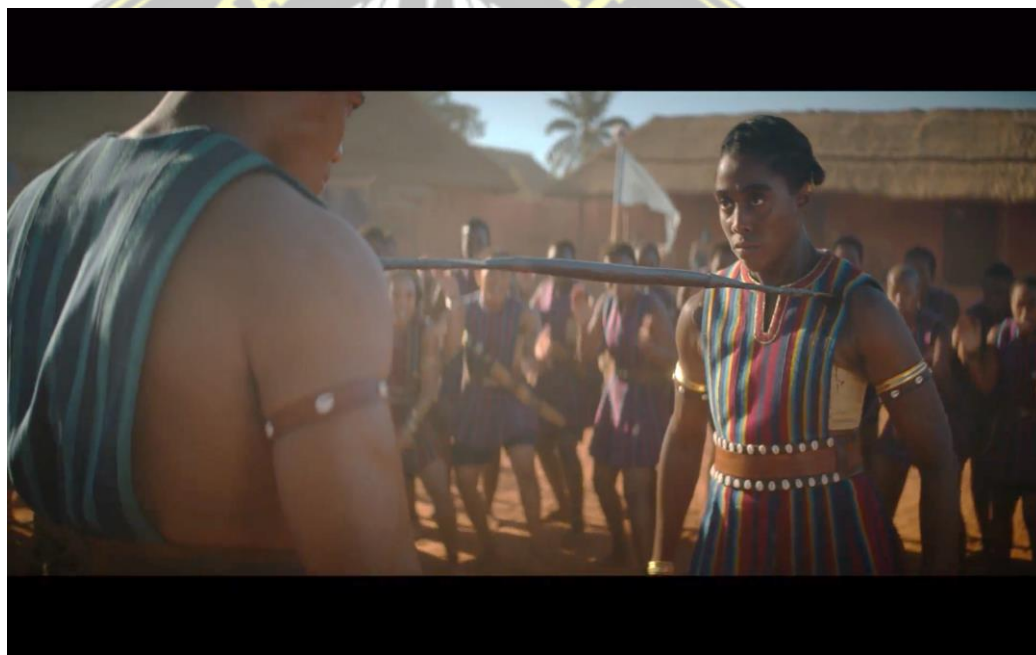
Nanisca is seen with her two soldiers, Izogie and Amenza. In this section with a loud voice, Nanisca gives a speech in front of her soldiers. Because by expressing her speech Nanisca also builds the spirit of her soldiers to be a strong soldier when faced with war later.

Nanisca: "We fight or we die. We fight for Dahomey, for our sisters, for our great king. You will be revered. You will be paid for your work. Your opinion will be heard."

(The Woman King 18:38 – 19:00)

Nanisca reassured his soldiers with the phrase “We fight or we die. We fight for Dahomey, for our sisters, for our great king.” From Nanisca's speech, it can be concluded that the female soldiers were required to give all their blood for Dahomey. At the end of her encouraging speech, the chief of the women soldiers said that “Your opinion will be heard” which means that Nanisca is very accepting of any opinion from her soldiers as long as it is beneficial to her, her army, and Dahomey.

A.3. Strong Personality of Izogie



Picture 3: hand-to-hand combat muscular soldier vs Agojie soldier (28:39)

Seen in the fourth picture, Izogie is practicing strength with one of the male Dahomey Warriors. There is one iron that has a sharp tip, used as a tool to train strength between Izogie and Esi. Izogie as a representative of the female army,

Agojie, while the opponent of Izogie is a Dahomey male soldier by the name of Esi. They put the two sharp ends of the iron on their shoulders.

In one area, a large group of Agojie women practice fighting with machetes led by Tara. The heavy weapons ring out with each hit. Another large group in a drill; lunging, spinning, shooting with spears, led by a young, muscular soldier named Esi. And another group working on their hand-to-hand combat, led by a strong Agojie named Izogie.

(The Woman King 23:39 – 29:05)

This strength exercise is called hand-to-hand. If one of the opponents bleeds from the shoulder and walks backwards out of the circle of the match, it is declared lost. This strength training takes place quite fiercely. Soon Izogie won the hand-to-hand.

The Agojie and Dahomey men always practiced strength together with the goal that the Agojie would not be taken lightly by the Ghezo King and his civilians. This shows that Agojie also deserved an education equal to that of the Dahomey men, namely war training.

A.4. Decisive Personality of Nanisca



Picture 4: Nanisca and King Ghezo having a conversation (1:37:31)

It depicts the Chief of Agojie, Nanisca, conversing with the King of Dahomey, King Ghezo. Nanisca with her angry face was negotiating fiercely with the King of Ghezo. The king invites Nanisca to come to his coronation feast to take the place of King Ghezo. But unfortunately, Nanisca chose not to come to the party, because Nanisca thought that the soldiers who were being kidnapped by the Oyo nation must be rescued. As a firm and responsible leader, Nanisca completely ignored what King Ghezo said to Nanisca.

Nanisca : “My king, it is a great honor. But perhaps it is too soon, when we have lost so many soldiers and the people are grieving.”

King Ghezo : “Grieving? No one is grieving. We have won. We have thrown off the yoke.” Nanisca: “My king, I wish to seek our lost Agojie. Some were taken captive.”

King Ghezo : “They will be sold, used by the men. Nanisca, the moment you seek is here. The few have been sacrificed for the many. Now we must move forward.

Nanisca : “I can go alone. Let me try.”

(The Woman King 1:37:31 – 1:37:59)

Nanisca nevertheless chose to go and save her three soldiers. The Ghezo King was so convinced that the kidnapped soldiers were weak soldiers that he allowed the three soldiers to be kidnapped and sold by the Oyos. Nanisca still did not want to, for Nanisca this was not one of the ways to hide and be silent, but Nanisca had to go alone and leave her coronation party for the sake of saving her soldiers. This shows that Nanisca is a very responsible leader and is firm with her choices. No wonder The King of Ghezo made him a leader in his place.

A.5 The Chosen King of Nanisca



Picture 5: Nanisca is crowned king by King Ghezo (1:37:31)

Nanisca is seen in this section being sworn in as King in place of King Ghezo. Here Nanisca is seen carrying a sword that King Ghezo gave to her as a symbol that Nanisca was legitimate to hold the responsibility of King Ghezo.

(King Ghezo looks at Nanisca)

King Ghezo: “Heroes of Dahomey! behold the bravest of brave, chosen by Ghezo, Ghezo elevated in his name to the sacred title of Kpojito, Nanisca, The Woman King.”

(The crowd cheers. He holds out his hand. Nanisca rises and walks up the steps to the dais. She stands with Ghezo, who lifts her arms. Louder cheers erupt! Music plays)

(The Woman King 2:01:15 – 2:01:32)

The Agojie and the male soldiers of Dahomey cheered upon Nanisca's elevation as King of Dahomey. For his persistence, his responsibility, his struggles in leading the army, Nanisca was crowned King by King Ghezo in his place. Not only men can lead a government, but women also have the right to lead and manage a government.

B. The main characters Nanisca and Izogie struggles for liberal feminism

Liberal feminism emerged in the 18th century through the ideas put forward by Mary Wollstonecraft in her work, 'A Vindication of the Rights of Woman' (1759-1799). This perspective of feminism is firmly rooted in Liberal ideology, which advocates for the equality of women and men, ensuring they have equal opportunities. A key tenet of liberal feminism is to emphasize individual autonomy, giving women the freedom to make their own choices, as deemed beneficial to them. In particular, liberal feminism was the first feminist movement based on the principles of liberalism, which placed significant emphasis on personal freedom and autonomy. Pioneering thinkers such as John Stuart Mill and Harriet Taylor played an important role in championing various aspects of liberal feminism throughout its historical development as depicted in the film *The Woman King*. In this section, the researcher will illustrate the outcomes of symbol analysis pertaining to liberal feminism by utilizing dialogue excerpts from the film *The Woman King*.

B.1 Equal Liberty

John Stuart Mill and Harriet Taylor integrated Melly Wollstonecraft's ideas about reason. Their conception of rationality, however, placed more emphasis on the use of reason to fulfill a purpose than on morality as an autonomous aspect of the person. According to Mill and Taylor, letting people follow their interests as long as they don't get in the way of each other's pursuit is the best approach to maximizing pleasure. Mill and Taylor's opinions are illustrated in the following dialogue.

(In battle)

Nanisca : “You challenge the King of Dahomey?”

Village Leader : “No! we are farmers, we did nothing!”

Nanisca : “Where have you taken our people?”

Village Leader : “We took nothing!”

Amenza : (calling Nanisca by her title of General) Miganon!

(Amenza yanke down the fabric door of the woman prisoner hut)

(Nanisca slits his throat, doping him to the ground)

Izogie : (Talking to the woman prisoner who were saved)

“You will be home soon.”

(The Woman King 4:30 – 5:08)

In the first dialogue there is liberal feminism about equal liberty where the female warrior, Agojie fights against the villagers to free the female prisoners of the Dahomey tribe who are used as slaves, this shows that female prisoners have no right to be slaves, so Agojie fights to free and fight for the

rights of the female prisoners. from the explanation It is clear that Mill and Taylor's equal liberty is made clear by Tong that women can lead a company or do other work in the same way as men regardless of gender (Tong 8).

B.2 Equal Right

Liberal feminists joined the Women's Right movement in the middle of the 1960s. The purpose of the group as an increasing the status of women position is to apply legal, social, and other pressure on legal institutions (Tong 24). The National Organization for Women (NOW), which seeks to provide women's rights parity with those of men, is one of the groups fighting for women's rights. There are three scenes that explain about Equal Rights found in the film *The Woman King*.

Nanisca : “We fight or we die. We fight for Dahomey, for our sisters, for our great king. You will be revered. You will be paid for your work. Your opinion will be heard.”

(*The Woman King* 18:38 – 19:00)

The first is dialogue two. In this second scene, Nanisca is seen giving a speech to encourage her soldiers, this illustrates liberal feminism about equal rights, where women have freedom of speech and opinion.

Nanisca : “My king, it is a great honor. But perhaps it is too soon, when we have lost so many soldiers and the people are grieving.”

King Ghezo : “Grieving? No one is grieving. We have won. We have thrown off the yoke.”

Nanisca : “My king, I wish to seek our lost Agojie. Some were taken captive.”

King Ghezo : “They will be sold, used by the men. Nanisca, the moment you seek is here. The few have been sacrificed for the many. Now we must move forward.

Nanisca : “I can go alone. Let me try.”

(The Woman King 1:37:31 – 1:37:59)

Next on the second scene is the fourth dialogue reveals that Nanisca is trying to save her soldiers who were kidnapped by the Oyo people while King Ghezo is holding a party, in this case showing that women have freedom in choosing decisions.

(King Ghezo looks at Nanisca)

King Ghezo : “Heroes of Dahomey! behold the bravest of brave, chosen by Ghezo, Ghezo elevated in his name to the sacred title of Kpojito, Nanisca, The Woman King.”

(The crowd cheers. He holds out his hand. Nanisca rises and walks up the steps to the dais. She stands with Ghezo, who lifts her arms. Louder cheers erupt! Music plays)

(The Woman King 2:01:15 – 2:01:32)

Apart from dialogue four, there is scene five which explains about her persistence, Nanisca was appointed King by King Ghezo in the Dahomey kingdom. This shows that women have the right to lead a government.

From several scenes above that discuss equal rights, it is very clear that of speech, freedom of religion, and freedom of association are protected.

B.3 Equal Education

The book *A Vindication of the Right of Woman* by Mary Wollstonecraft disproves the notion that women should all women's rights ranging from property rights, rights of expression, freedom have the same education as men, much like Immanuel Kant did in his book *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* concerning society. Education is the best way for women to be able to include their position in society so that women are no longer underestimated and oppressed (Tong 14).

In one area, a large group of Agojie women practice fighting with machetes led by Tara. The heavy weapons ring out with each hit. Another large group in a drill; lunging, spinning, shooting with spears, led by a young, muscular soldier named Esi. And another group working on their hand-to-hand combat, led by a strong Agojie named Izogie.

(The Woman King 23:39 – 29:05)

There is one scene that explains about equal education, namely in the third narrative where the female soldiers, Agojie, are practicing war, this shows

that not only men have the right to practice war but women also have the right to practice war. From the scene it can be concluded that education helps women develop their critical thinking abilities by introducing them to logical concepts that will help them to stop depending on males.



CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The final chapter in this study is chapter five. Within this chapter, there are two sub-sections that provide a conclusion and suggestion based on the discourse presented in chapter four.

A. Conclusion

After analyzing the film, *The Woman King*, this research centers on the symbolism present within the framework of liberal feminism theory in the film. Building upon the findings and discussions in Chapter four, this study delves into the manifestation of liberal feminism within the film and scrutinizes the meaning of liberal feminism experienced by the female warriors known as the Agojie, especially on the Nanisca and Izogie.

From these discussions, it can be concluded that this study illuminates the significance of liberal feminism within the character of Nanisca and Izogie as a female warrior. Liberal feminism is discernible in the portrayal of Nanisca and her fellow warriors, reflecting their courage, determination, and mutual reinforcement. The research further categorizes the instances of liberal feminism depicted in the film into several aspects: equal education, equal liberty, suffrage, and equal rights. These themes are depicted through various dialogues and narratives in *The Woman King*.

All these scenes are epitomized through the character of the Agojie female warriors, where Nanisca as their leader and Izogie as a one of the female warrior plays a pivotal role within the group. However, each warrior also holds

responsibilities towards one another. Owing to her unwavering determination, Nanisca is elevated by King Ghezo to become the King of Dahomey and Izogie manages to win in the strength training against one of the male warriors. Consequently, it can be inferred that women possess the right to govern, make autonomous decisions, and participate freely within the realm of governance, encompassing aspects such as education, the right to voice their opinions, and the freedom to associate.

B. Suggestion

This study employs the methodology of analyzing symbolism through the lens of liberal feminism theory to dissect *The Woman King*. The primary focus of this research is on the manifestation of liberal feminism and its significance within the context of the film. Furthermore, this study proposes potential avenues for future researchers to delve into the analysis of *The Woman King* from a liberal feminist perspective, either by examining the character of Nanisca or exploring the portrayal of another character, like Izogie.

Additionally, this study encourages further researchers to explore the representation of various other feminist themes present within the film. By engaging with the findings presented in this research and immersing themselves in the narrative of *The Woman King*, The researcher aspires that readers will recognize the inherent right of women to make choices autonomously and to enjoy equal rights alongside their male counterparts.

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