

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of The Study

Sexual crime is a crime that can leave victims shocked, fearful, insecurity or angry, saddened, or even traumatized. According to Sasha N. Canan and Mark A. Levand (2019) in their research *Feminist Perspective on Sexual Assault*, explained that the understanding of sexual crime is a sexual act that refers to behaviour either through physical contact or without physical contact. According to Ainal Fitri, Muhammad Haekal, Almukarramah, and Fitri Meliya Sari (2021) in their journal *Sexual Violence in Indonesian University: On students' critical consciousness and agency*, says that some forms of sexual violence, including rape, intimidation, or sexual harassment that can involve touching someone's body part without consent, stalking, and catcalling (verbal sexual harassment) are occurring within the university environment.

After knowing what sexual crime and what it means, it is change into dependent on a culture or social habit either known to or less frequently about the rape culture. According to Nicole L. Johnson and Dawn M. Johnson (2021) in their research *An Empirical Exploration into the Measurement of Rape Culture*, says the term of rape culture has been since 1970s when the rise of second-wave of feminism. which the rape culture itself basically has the meaning of social norms to normalize sexual crime. They also quote a theoretical statement from Martha R. Burt who says that a “*a pervasive ideology that effectively supports or excuses sexual assault.*” They also restated another Martha Burt's statements that there were hypothesized that the chain culture or the original reason of rape culture was made are because Traditional gender roles, Sexism, Adversarial sexual beliefs, Hostility toward women, and Acceptance of violence.

Based on the above description of sexual crime and the rape culture, according to the theory used in the study, the relation rape culture and feminism movement is particularly strong. Feminism itself is an expressing and speak up movement about social issues relating to gender equality, sexual crime, and other social issues. And more focused, the relationship between the rape culture and the feminism, which is that one of the focus movements is to fight for the rights of women who are oppressed of social problems, and to free women who are victims of rape and they can no longer feel alone, because for the

feminism “all women are sisters.” (*Feminist Thought (2014): A More Comprehensive Introduction (Fourth Edition)* by Rosemarie Tong)

Feminism and sexual crime are both a discussion and a matter which is now widely known but still sensitive to some people when they want to talk about it. Either because of the stereotypes that have existed since the dawn of time or because people feel that such talk like this is not something they should be talking about seriously, is that women have neither a higher level nor a higher position, but both women and men have equal rights in various ways, such as politics, economics, the right about facing sexual crime and education. As the definition of gender equality based on Sokol Pacukaj, Behxhet Brajshori, and Eriona Deda (2021) in their journal *Gender Equality, a Priority for the Social, Economic, Political and Educational Development of a Country: The Case of Albania*, that quoted Paho’s statement increase and strengthen civic participation, by placing more emphasis on women and other gender equality advocates, in identifying priorities, and formulating and monitoring health and program policies at the regional, national, and local levels.

As for sexual crime, based on Tanya Serisier (2018) *Speaking out, and beginning to be heard: Feminism, survivor narratives and representations of rape in the 1980s*, it is considered taboo or sensitive to speak up, since the victim usually takes the blame for the sexual crime, blaming the for using revealing clothes, blaming the victim for getting drunk, blaming the victim for why he or she did not shout or fight over the perpetrator, which leaves the victim unwilling to tell anyone about until refuse to report to the police or the authorities.

According to International Commission of Jurists (2015) *Sexual Violence Against Women: Eradicating Harmful Gender Stereotypes and Assumptions in Laws and Practice*, no matter how sexual abuse a woman may be subjected to eventually being reported to the authorities, investigated and perpetrators brought to justice, it is still incredibly rare. On various occasions women often do not report to the law when they are confronted with sexual violence, and when they want to do legal action, they must face the series of obstacle.

Feminism is a movement that speaks out of gender equality between women and men in any various social problems, included problem about sexual crime both men and women. Unfortunately, there are still too many people or perceptions who sees both feminism and gender equality as a movement that it is as just discuss about women be at a higher level than men or women should be respected more than men. This kind of

understanding or response ultimately impairs the original value and also the purpose of the movement. Based on Alan Coffee (2013) in his paper entitled *Mary Wollstonecraft, freedom, and the enduring power of social domination* (ResearchGate) that quoted Mary Wollstonecraft's statement, an English writer, philosopher, and advocate of women's rights, she suggests that both women and men should be treated as rational beings and imagines a social order founded on reason.

Based on explanation above that feminism also movement that fight for sexual crime, then sexual abuse or sexual crime itself is a sexual crime committed by one person to another by force, kidnapping or touching any part of a person's body without his or her permission that could make one uncomfortable, scared or even traumatized. Linda M. Williams and Scott Walfield (2016) mention in their research *Rape and Sexual Assault* (ResearchGate), that Sexual Abuse is usually rarely committed by foreigners, but that the perpetrators are commonly known by the victims, such as friends, employees, spouses or even classmates. Sexual Abuse can occur to anyone whether male or female, even between siblings, sexual abuse of minors, sexual abuse of those with special needs (disability), and even sexual abuse committed under the influenced of alcohol or drugs.

In her research Sandra Schwark (2017) *Visual Representation of Sexual Violence in Online News Outlets*, she quoted a report from the United Nations Statistics Division (2015) that, one in three women in the world has had at least been physically or sexually abused in their lives. Sandra Schwark (2017) also quotes from Bundeskriminalamt (2015), that in most cases the victims knew the perpetrator prior to the act of sexual assault. Another source from psychologytoday.com in their article *Sexual Abuse*, stated the data from National Institutes of Health that in America, one in three women, also one in four men experienced sexual violence in their lifetimes.

Feminism itself has several ideologies that share a focus of thought and concern that emphasize gender equality. According to Rosemarie Tong in her book *Feminist Thought (2014): A More Comprehensive Introduction (Fourth Edition)*, there are seven ideologies of feminist. Among the seven ideologies are Liberal Feminism, Radical Feminism (Libertarian and Cultural Perspectives), Marxist and Socialist Feminism (Classical and Contemporary), Psychoanalytic and Care-Focused Feminism, Existentialist and Postmodern Feminism, Women of Colour Feminism, Ecofeminism. Nordic Feminism is feminism ideology that fights for women's life in the Nordic countries (*An Unholy Union? Eugenic Feminism in the Nordic Countries, ca. 1890-1940 by Merle Weßel, 2018*). The

other ideology of feminism is ecofeminism which was originated by feminist figurehead Francoise d'Eaubonne in the 1974 through his published written inscription.

According to The Guardian in their article review *Promising Young Woman review – a deathly dark satire of gender politics* (written by Peter Bradshaw, April 2021), the Promising Young Woman movie was the debut of actress Emerald Fennell as director and writer. Emerald Lilly Fennell or known as Emerald Fennell is an actress, filmmaker, and also writer, was born October 1, 1985, in Hammersmith, London, England. Both Promising Young Woman, Emerald Fennell and the main actress Carey Mulligan won many prestigious awards, some of them are Best Original Screenplay at Academy Awards (Promising Young Woman), Courage in Filmmaking Awards (Emerald Fennell), and Best Lead Actress at AACTA International Awards (Carey Mulligan), and many of the other awards. (IMDb: Ratings, Reviews, and Where to Watch the Best Movie and TV Shows, celebrities)

The film is about a girl named Cassandra Thomas or Cassie, avenging her friend Nina, who died of suicide from depression after having been sexually abused by her classmates. The film relates how Cassie would come to the club to frame the men by acting drunk and then at such times the men who approached her would offer her “help” either to make small talk, offering her a ride home or in the end an offered to stop at the man’s residence.

From what the researcher described above, the researcher is trying to observe and learn about the issues such as rape culture, gender equality and also feminism. From the depiction of the movie itself when look at everyday life such as sexual crime, the social inequalities resulting from gender and stereotype gender are still often get ignored by people. One such example is that the catcalling or the phenomenon of verbal sexual harassment, as the research by Kari Walton and Cory Pederson (2021) *Motivations Behind Catcalling: Exploring Men’s Engagement in Street Harassment Behaviour* (ResearchGate), Catcalling is common to do by a person or a group of people in public areas by uttering words that make the receiver uncomfortable, while most of the victims are female and the perpetrators is male. These issues somehow seem to be ordinary things that most people take for granted. They think that this is just a fun joke, which is obviously sexual harassment, sexual abuse, not something that anyone can take for granted.

Through Carey Mulligan as Cassandra Thomas or Cassie, how is it that there is little justice in the treatment of rape culture and sexual crime issues, especially when the perpetrator has a well background, comes from the elite class, the personal branding is

innocent and clean. Cassie shows how the fighter of justice try to uphold the truth and want the perpetrators to have their due reward, even if that means sacrificing her own time, effort, and her lives.

Based on the foregoing explanations, researcher is interested to learn more about what forms of the rape culture portrayed in the movie and affected the main character, Cassie from the perspective of feminism. Hence, researcher prefer the title “***The Portrayal of Rape Culture in The Promising Young Woman (2020) Movie: A Feminism Perspective.***”

B. Problem Statement

The problem of the study is dissected further into the research questions:

1. What forms of rape culture portrayed in the Promising Young Woman movie?
2. How did rape culture affect Cassie as portrayed in the Promising Young Woman movie?

C. Objective of the Study

Based on Locke, Spirduso, and Silverman (2013) in John W. Creswell (2014)’s book *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, stated that the objective of the study shows why researcher want to learn this topic or what researcher want to achieve. The formulation of the problem described above would suggest objectives of the research:

1. To identify the forms of rape culture that portrayed in the Promising Young Woman movie.
2. To explain how the rape culture affected Cassie as portrayed in the Promising Young Woman movie.

D. Advantages of the Study

1. Theoretical Benefit

The study contributes to the body of knowledge, especially literary study on main actress Promising Young Woman’s movie, Cassandra Thomas, or Cassie.

2. Practical Benefit

The study enriches the present researcher’s understanding of feminism perspective as depicted in Promising Young Woman movie.