

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### A. Background of the Study

*300* is a 2007 movie adaptation of the graphic novel of the same name by Frank Miller, and is a fictionalized retelling of the Battle of Thermopylae. The movie was directed by Zack Snyder while Miller served as executive producer and consultant. The movie was shot mostly with a super-imposition chroma key technique, to help replicate the imagery of the original comic book. *300* was released in both conventional and IMAX theaters in the United States on March 9, 2007, and on DVD, Blue-ray, and HD DVD on July 31, 2007. Duration of this movie is about 117 min.

At the MTV Movie Awards 2007, *300* was nominated for Best Movie, Best Performance for Gerard Butler, Best Breakthrough Performance for Lena Headey, Best Villain for Rodrigo Santoro, and Best Fight for Leonidas battling "the Über Immortal.". It eventually won the award for Best Fight. *300* won both the Best Dramatic movie and Best Action movie honors in the 2006-2007 Golden Icon Awards presented by Travolta Family Entertainment. In December 2007, *300* won IGN's Movie of the Year 2007, along with Best Comic Book Adaptation and King Leonidas as Favorite Character. At the 2008 Saturn Awards, the movie won the award for Best Action/Adventure/Thriller movie.

*300* entered active production on October 17, 2005, in Montreal, and was shot over the course of sixty days in chronological order with a budget of \$60 million. Employing the digital backlot technique, Snyder shot at the now-defunct Ice storm Studios in Montreal using bluescreens. Post-production was handled by Montreal's Meteor Studios and Hybride Technologies filled in the bluescreen footage with more than 1500 visual effects shots. The post-production lasted for a year and was handled by a total of ten special effects companies. This movie has spent the budget about \$70 million, and from the gross revenue this movie got \$456,068,181. The movie's opening was the 24th largest in box office history, although critics were divided over its look and style.

Some critics have raised more general questions about the movie's ideological orientation. The *New York Post's* Kyle Smith writes that the movie would have pleased "Adolf's boys," and *Slate's* Dana Stevens compares the movie to *The Eternal Jew*, "as a textbook example of how race-baiting fantasy and nationalist myth can serve as an incitement to total war." Roger Moore, a critic for the *Orlando Sentinel*, relates *300* to Susan Sontag's definition of "fascist art." However, *Newsday* critic Gene Seymour stated that such reactions are misguided, writing that "the movie's just too darned silly to withstand any ideological theorizing." Snyder himself dismissed ideological readings, suggesting that reviewers who critique "a graphic novel movie about a bunch of guys stomping the snot out of each other" using words like "neocon," 'homophobic,' 'homoerotic' or 'racist' " are "missing the point." Since

its world premiere at the Berlin International Film Festival on February 14, 2007, in front of 1,700 audience members, *300* has received generally mixed reviews. While it received a standing ovation at the public premiere, it was reportedly panned at a press screening hours earlier, where many attendees left during the showing and those who remained booed at the end. But there are some positive critical reviews about this movie.

Critical reviews of *300* are divided. Rotten Tomatoes reports that 60 percent of North American and selected international critics gave the movie a positive review, based upon a sample of 214, with an average score of 6.1/10. Reviews from selected notable critics were 47 percent positive, giving the movie an average score of 5.7/10 based on a sample of 38. At Metacritic, which assigns a normalized rating out of 100 to reviews from mainstream critics, the movie has received an average score of 51 based on 35 reviews. All of that was not get out from the director of *300* who successfully made the movie as good as possible.

The director of *300* (Snyder) was born at March 1, 1966 in Green Bay, Wisconsin, US and was raised in Greenwich, Connecticut. He is an American moviemaker, screenwriter and producer. His father was an executive recruiter and his mother was a painter and a photography teacher at Day Croft School, which Snyder later attended. Zack attended Camp Owatonna in Harrison, Maine during the summer months as a child. Snyder's mother inspired him to study painting a year after high school at Heatherley School of Fine Art in England, although he had already begun moviemaking. Afterward, Snyder

attended with the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, California. Snyder still lives in Pasadena with his second wife, producer Deborah Snyder, and his six children.

By the background above, Snyder can make and yield masterpiece in form of big movies. He was inspired by his mother who works as a painter and a photography teacher to follow his mother by working art. Snyder himself has had contagious artistic blood by its mother. So, it's not impossible that he can yield many interesting movies. So far, he finished three big movies, one of them is *300*. In this movie Snyder was adapted from writer-artist Frank Miller's Dark Horse Comics miniseries of the same name. The movie is a shot-for-shot adaptation of the comic book, similar to the movie adaptation of *Sin City*. Snyder photocopied panels from the comic book, from which he planned the preceding and succeeding shots.

Beside *300*, Snyder also finished some movies there are his feature movie debut with the remake *Dawn of the Dead* (2004). His Warner Bros. movie *Watchmen* was released on March 6, 2009; the movie made \$25,153,000 on its first day. His follow-up project titled *Guardians of Ga'Hoole* is currently filming, due for release in 2010. In the fall of 2009, Zack Snyder is scheduled to start work on a movie called *Sucker Punch*, which is scheduled for release in late 2010. The movie is based on an original script, written by Snyder and Steve Shibuya, about an insane young woman who fantasizes of escape with her fellow inmates. Snyder was also approached to make *X-Men: The Last Stand*, as well as the prequel *X-Men Origins:*

*Wolverine*. He turned down the latter because he was busy filming *Watchmen*. Snyder's body of work has earned him a number of awards, including two Clio Awards and a Gold Lion Award for his Jeep "Frisbee" commercial. He also won an award for his humorous commercial "General's Party". From the *300* itself, Snyder got 10 awards at MTV Movie Award 2007. It is caused by a good concept in making the *300* movie and also was supported by good story of *300* movie. The story or plot of the *300* movie will the writer draw in the next paragraph.

The plot of *300* begin from through Dilios' narration, the life of young Leonidas is depicted, chronicling his journey from a boy to a man per Spartan doctrine. Years later, after Leonidas is crowned King, Persian messengers arrive at Sparta demanding its submission to King Xerxes. Offended by their threats and behaviour, King Leonidas and his guards kick the messengers into a well. Knowing that these actions will precipitate a Persian attack, Leonidas visits the Ephors -- ancient priests whose blessing he needs to convince the Spartan council to authorize going to war. He proposes a strategy to repel the numerically superior Persians by using the terrain of Thermopylae (the Hot Gates)—his plan involves funnelling the Persians into a narrow pass between the rocks and the sea. The Ephors consult the Oracle, who decrees that Sparta must not go to war. After Leonidas departs a messenger from Xerxes appears, rewarding the Ephors for their covert support and revealing that they have been corrupted by Xerxes.

Denied by the Ephors, Leonidas follows his plan anyway. While he does not require the council's permission for this, taking such a small force turns what had been a bold strategy into a certain suicide mission. Leonidas hopes that the sacrifice of himself and his men will spur the council to defy the Ephors and all of Greece to unite against the threat to freedom and democracy (represented by Greece) posed by slavery and tyranny (represented by Persia).

Along the way to Thermopylae, the Spartans are joined by Arcadians and various other Greeks. They construct a wall at Thermopylae to contain the approaching Persian advance. Meanwhile, Leonidas encounters Ephialtes, a hunchbacked Spartan whose parents fled Sparta to spare him certain infanticide. Ephialtes asks to redeem his father's name by joining Leonidas, warning him of a secret path the Persians could use to outflank and surround them. Leonidas is sympathetic to the eager warrior but rejects him, as Ephialtes cannot properly hold a shield, which would compromise the Spartans' phalanx formation.

Prior to the battle, the Persians demand that the Spartans lay down their weapons. Leonidas refuses, and with their tightly-knit phalanx formation the Spartans use the narrow terrain to repeatedly rebuff the advancing Persian army. Xerxes personally approaches Leonidas to persuade him to surrender, offering Leonidas wealth and power in exchange for his loyalty. Leonidas declines, promising instead to make the "God-King" bleed. Outraged, Xerxes sends in his elite guard, the Immortals, whom the Spartans dispatch. As the Spartans continue to defeat Xerxes' forces, Ephialtes defects to the Persian

king and reveals the location of the secret path. When they realize Ephialtes' treachery, the Arcadians retreat. Leonidas orders a reluctant Dilios to return to Sparta to tell the Council of their sacrifice.

In Sparta, Queen Gorgo reluctantly submits sexually to the influential Theron in exchange for help in persuading the Spartan council to send reinforcements to Leonidas. Following her address to the Council, Theron publicly betrays the Queen, prompting the councilmen to cry out in outrage and Gorgo to kill him out of rage, which spills open a bag of Xerxes' gold from his robe. The exposure of Theron's treachery, along with their Queen's plea, prompts the Council to unite against Persia. Meanwhile, at Thermopylae, the Persians use the goat path to surround the Spartans. Xerxes' general demands their surrender, again offering Leonidas titles and prestige. Leonidas seemingly bows in submission, allowing one of his men to leap over him and kill the general. A furious Xerxes orders his troops to attack. As Persian archers shoot at the remaining Spartans, Leonidas rises and hurls his spear at Xerxes, cutting the King on the cheek, thus making good on his promise to make "the God-King bleed." Visibly disturbed by this reminder of his own mortality, Xerxes watches as all of the Spartans are cut down by a massive barrage of arrows. Concluding his tale before an audience of attentive Spartans, Dilios declares that the Persian army, depleted by desertions out of fear the heavy casualties they suffered at the hands of a mere 300 Spartans, now faces 10,000 Spartans commanding 30,000 Greeks. Although still outnumbered, Dilios declares that the Greeks shall have victory. Praising

Leonidas' sacrifice, Dilius leads the assembled Greek army in a charge against the Persian army, the Battle of Plataea.

From the summary above, the writer knows that Persian wants to colonize Spartan, while Leonidas as the king of Spartan wantn't accept king Xerxes as king of Persian to colonize the Sparta. By the occurrence, the Spartan will do anything in order to maintaining their independence, although by war. The Spartan haven't afraid to face Persian by war although they lose in number. In this story Persian has much army than Spartan. With little army, Spartan don't want to defeated by Persian who has many kinds of army. They fight until the last energy to get the victory.

Considering the above explanation, the writer wants to analyze the movie using Marxist approach because of some considerations. At least there are four reasons the writer choose Zack Snyder's movie *300* (2007) as the object of study. First, this movie reflects of Spartan and Persian's culture in that period. The writer wants to know a lot about Persian and Spartan's culture in that period. In this movie there are a lot of differences of culture between Persian and Spartan. In this movie Persian is depicted as a big nation that has an arrogant king which is bar-bar, cruel, sly, corrupted and thirsty of blood. He wants to find a lot of nation to be colonized. They always make expansions to get more land and water. They also have known of modern weapon to war. So, they are never afraid to face other nation. While Spartan is depicted as a gallant nation, has a wise king which is good looking and brave man.



Second, the writer wants to know about class struggle in this movie. Class struggle is the basic humanity for life, in which people must struggle for their equal position in every aspect of life. Class struggle in this movie occurred when Persian offering to Spartan to be Persian's colony. Persian depicted as a big nation which will find some colonies. Later the colonies will become slave by Persian. From the story above, there is a class struggle between Persian and Spartan. So, the writer is interested to explore the struggle of Spartan to get freedom from Persian's slavery and tyranny.

Third, this movie becomes controversy in the world. Since its opening, *300* also attracted controversy over its portrayal of Persians. Various critics, historians, journalists, and officials of the Iranian government including President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad denounced the film. As in the graphic novel, the Persians were depicted as a monstrous, barbaric and demonic horde, and King Xerxes was portrayed as androgynous. Critics suggested that this was meant to stand in stark contrast to the masculinity of the Spartan army.

And last, this movie has earned many international awards and nominations such as At the MTV Movie Awards 2007, *300* was nominated for Best Movie, Best Performance for Gerard Butler, Best Breakthrough Performance for Lena Headey, Best Villain for Rodrigo Santoro, and Best Fight for Leonidas battling "the Über Immortal." It eventually won the award for Best Fight. *300* won both the Best Dramatic Film and Best Action Film honors in the 2006-2007 Golden Icon Awards presented by Travolta Family Entertainment In December 2007, *300* won IGN's Movie of the Year 2007,

along with Best Comic Book Adaptation and King Leonidas as Favorite Character. At the 2008 Saturn Awards, the movie won the award for Best Action/Adventure/Thriller Film.

Stimulated by all of facts and reasons clarified above, the writer described the struggle in Zack Snyder's *300* movie (2007) by employing Marxist. The writer chooses the title "STRUGGLE OF SPARTAN TO MAINTAIN THEIR INDEPENDENCE IN *300* MOVIE (2007) BY ZACK SNYDER: A MARXIST APPROACH"

## **B. Literature Review**

Dealing with the subject of the study about Zack Snyder's *300* movie (2007) such researches have been done by the other researcher. But the writer finds that the previous researchers use the different object of study to be analyzed. For instance, the first research has been done by AnNur Fitriana (UMS, 2008), *The Struggle for Life Reflected by Leonidas in Zack Snyder's 300 Movie: An Individual Psychological Approach*. In this research, she just focuses on the analyzed of king Loenidas as the major character. She fuond in her research that the struggle and great effort of Leonidas can be spirit for the Spartans to reach the freedom and happy life.

The second previous research has been done by Natalia Kosasih (Christian University Petra of Surabaya, 2009), *Representasi Budaya Persia Dalam Film 300*. In this research, she found that *300* movie presenting of Persian cultures more seen from clothes aspect and appearance where Persian'

people including its king wearing many piercing and ornament of gold in whole part of their body as sign of social class. Another aspect is like time and awareness of time, confession and appreciation, relations, norm and value, and also attitude and trust.

Related to the previous study above, the researcher also analyzes Zack Snyder' *300* movie (2007) but with different topic that has not ever been studied before. In this study the researcher will analyze the struggle of Spartan to maintain their independent by conducting Marxist Approach.

### **C. Problem Statement**

From the background of the study above the problem statement is “How is the struggle of Spartan to maintain their independence reflected in *300* movie (2007)?

### **D. Limitation of the Study**

To make it easy for the writer to conduct the study, the writer will make a limitation to the research. The writer will only focus on how the struggle of Spartan to maintain their independence reflected in *300* movie (2007) by using Marxist approach.

### **E. Objective of the Study**

According to the problem statement above, the writer has some objectives on this study as follows:

1. To analyze the structural elements of the movie, such as character and characterization, setting, plot, point of view, theme *mise en scene*, cinematography, sound, and editing.
2. To analyze the movie based on how the struggle of Spartan to maintain their independence reflected in *300* movie (2007) by using Marxist approach.

## **F. Benefit of the Study**

By presenting this research paper, the writer hopes that it will give some benefits as follows:

### **1. Theoretical Benefit:**

- a. To give some information which can be used by those who are interested in analyzing this literary work.
- b. To give a contribution to other literary research especially in the study of *300* movie by Zack Snyder's literary work.

### **2. Practical Benefit**

This research has benefit to give deeper understanding about the content of the play especially from the Marxist approach in *300* movie.

## **G. Reserch Method**

### **1. Type of the Research**

In this research, the writer uses a descriptive qualitative research. It is a library research while data source are using literary data. It purposes to analyze the movie using marxist approach.

## **2. Object of the Study**

The object of the study is *300* that is written in 2007, published by Zack Snyder in United States, on March 9, 2007.

## **3. Data and Data Sources**

### **a. Primary Data Source**

The primary data is the *300* movie by Zack Snyder's and it is taken from dialogue, attitude and all of the statement in the text of the film which relevant with the research.

### **b. Secondary Data Source**

The secondary data are taken from other sources which are related to the primary data that support the analysis. They are books and virtual references.

## **4. Data Collecting Method and Techniques**

The method of data collection in this study is library research. The present writer collects the data, and then records the evidences from the primary and secondary data. In collecting data, the writer takes some procedures as follows:

- a. Watching the work many times until the writer gets adequate information or data to be analyzed.
- b. Arranging the data into several groups based on its classifications
- c. Selecting particular parts considered important and relevant for analysis
- d. Drawing conclusion based on the analysis of the data.

## **5. Data Analyzing Technique**

The steps of analyzing the data of this research are by analyzing the structural elements of the work and analyzing the Marxist perspectives of the work. Analyzing the data of this research is trying to clarify the obtained data by selecting the necessary ones.

## **H. Research Paper Organization**

In order to make the research easier to follow, the research paper is organized into six chapters. Chapter One is introduction, covering the background, review of the literary of study, limitation of the study, problem statement, object of the study, benefit of study, research method and paper organization. Chapter Two is underlying theory in which the writer explains the theory of Marxist that will be employed in this study and theoretical application. Chapter Three is the social background of the Spartan society aspects of social reality in that time. Chapter Four includes the structural analysis of the movie by describing characters and characterizations, setting, point of view, plot, style, and theme of the movie and also a brief discussion. Chapter Five presents the Marxist analysis and discussion deal with the problem of the movie. The last chapter consists of conclusion and suggestion.