

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### A.1 Background of the Research

Heroism is an act of bravery and selflessness. Reflecting society's greatest moral standards. A person becomes a hero when they can overcome fear and refuse to take the easy route. Heroism can be found in everyone, in any form or way. Everyone has a hero, and everyone is a hero. "They are driven by virtue rather than gain, and they act voluntarily to serve others and are not afraid to take risks" (Kohen, 2013).

Heroism can manifest itself in many different forms, but sadly, some ordinary people do not get recognized for the heroic acts they perform. Many people fail to recognize heroism in individuals because they only think of superheroes. In reality, anyone can achieve heroism as long as they strive for it.

According to Berens (2010), "Hercules, Achilles, and Odysseus become the description of hero inheritance in ideal Greek culture outwardly that is own body athletic, strong in a way that is physical, magical, and has a handsome face." Cultural heritage is still preserved in the fictional role of superhero films. It is not surprising that the meanings of hero and superhero are often considered to be similar, even though they are two different things.

Superheroes in popular culture such as Spiderman, Captain America, Batman, and others often contradict the representation of hero figures in the real world. Superheroes in popular culture, apart from being ideal in physical appearance, are also equipped with super-sophisticated vehicles and weapons. The statement was confirmed by Russel (2014), in his study entitled "Heroic Moments: A Study of Comic Book Superheroes in Real-World Society," which suggests that wearing a costume or possessing abilities are not prerequisites for becoming a hero. Alternatively, being kind to others would suffice to make someone a hero.

The representation of heroes in real life is less attractive because heroes in the real world are not as grandiose as the fictional superheroes, such as when performing thrilling actions like Superman flying to save Earth from an alien invasion or saving people by deflecting bullets from bad guys. Therefore, the paradigm of being a hero in society is starting to change with the existence of superhero films, as society considers that in saving other people, heroes must carry out superhuman actions.

As far as this research is concerned, previous studies that raised the topic of heroism were more interested in examining it from the perspective of superhero films. Therefore, the researcher saw it as an interesting factor to choose ordinary human beings as the subject of discussion on the topic of heroism. The study will discuss protagonist Ben Randall from the film "*The Guardian*."

According to IMDb (2006), *The Guardian* movie, released in 2006, tells the story of two rescue swimmers from different generations named Ben Randall. In the story, Ben Randall is one of the core rescuers of the US Coast Guard. In carrying out his role as a rescue crew, Ben prioritizes his work over other aspects of life, such as his married life.

Ben Randall's character in the film *The Guardian* displays several factors of what is defined as heroism. The factors of heroism presented in the film *The Guardian* include the traits, the reflection of gestures and facial expressions, as well as social relations which are reflected in dialogue between characters. To interpret the signs of heroism in the film *The Guardian*, researchers used textual analysis theory from Alan McKee.

The topic of heroism has existed since long time ago, starting with stories about famous Greek heroes such as Hercules, Achilles, and others. Over time, these hero characters began to change into several types. According to Wurdeman (2022), there are several types of heroism, namely the classical hero, the epic hero, everyman hero, the superhero, the anti-hero, and finally the tragic hero.

There were many studies done by previous researchers related to heroism; one of them analyzed the topic of heroism using the protagonist from an epic poem entitled Beowulf. Researcher named Reynolds, W (1978), in his study entitled "Heroism In "Beowulf": A Christian Perspective" uses the protagonist Beowulf as a research object. From the

researcher's point of view, it can be concluded that this study is included in the epic hero category because, according to Labiak (2015) "Epic hero, these people closely resemble the classic heroes, and they are the main characters in epic poems. Heroes in this group also exhibit superhuman strength and courage, but they do so because they have a mix of divine and mortal heritage."

For the classical hero type of heroism, Wurdeman explains, "Classical hero characters originate from humble beginnings or seem average, yet they have a unique skill that makes them stand out." They could have discovered this talent as part of the call to adventure, or they might have known about it all along." Because of that, a study entitled "Heroism in Harry Potter Series" by Steveker L (2019) classified it as a classical hero. This paper also explored how fictional heroism in the twenty-first century challenges the idealized forms of a somewhat simplistic masculinity associated with genres like epic, romance, and classic adventure stories. It also takes up the various conceptions of heroism that are conjured up in the Harry Potter series.

There is also an example of the superhero type as an object; for example, in Daneswara's (2014) thesis entitled "The Aspects of Heroism Reflected in *Spider-Man 2* Movie" in her study, she focused on the protagonist. Peter Parker, also known as Spiderman as the object of the

research. She argued for the nature of heroism in Peter Parker using Dr. Andrew Bernstein's theoretical and sociological approach. The character exhibited heroism through prowess, moral greatness, action in the face of opposition, and triumph. Overall, Peter Parker was portrayed as a hero through his activities, dialogues, and scenes.

As far as researchers are concerned, many studies that have analyzed the topic of heroism do not use ordinary people as an object. Because of this, researchers have identified a gap in this study and have used Ben Randall as an example of an ordinary person to show that heroism can be accomplished without superpowers or advanced technology.

### **A.2 Problem of the Research**

Based on the explanation above, this research focuses on answering the following questions: “

1. What factors influence the heroism of Ben Randall in *The Guardian* film?
2. What kinds of heroism are reflected in Ben Randall's character from *The Guardian* film?”

### **A.3 Objectives of the Research**

Based on the problem formulation above, the focus of this research is to find kinds of heroism in Ben Randall's character reflected in the film *The Guardian*.

#### A.4 Significance of Research

Theoretically, this research is useful for increasing insight and references on the topic of heroism using textual analysis theory.

Practically, this research can also be used by further research to develop ideas regarding the topic of heroism which is relevant to be realized in social life.

#### A.5 Definition of Key Terms

- *The Guardian*:

An American action-adventure drama film released in 2006, this film is directed by Andrew Davis.

- Ben Randall:

The protagonist from *The Guardian* film is a Coast Guard rescue swimmer.

- Heroism:

Heroism is seen as the apex of human behavior. Looking at a heroic act is a compelling action. It literally absorbs our attention. We frequently feel that, as human beings, we might want to attain chivalrous status. (Franco, 2016)

- Altruism

Willingness to do things that bring advantages to others, even if it results in disadvantage for yourself (Cambridge Dictionary)