

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of The Study

Oftentimes, heroism is seen as an apex of human behavior. Looking at a heroic act is a compelling action. It literally absorbs our attention. We frequently feel that, as a human being, we might want to accomplish chivalrous status. This objective has a slim chance and is only for a chosen few with uncommon abilities or luck. According to Z. E. Franco, Blau, and Zimbardo (2011), “Heroism is a concept that is simple as its surface, a straightforward definition that is at first satisfying is to act in a prosocial manner despite personal risk. However, this surface masks a number of subtle, interrelated paradoxes that arguably make heroism one of the most complex human behaviors to study” (Z. E. Franco, Blau, and Zimbardo 2011).

Hero is a figure that is very reliable and always be remembered by everyone. Hero also has the power to protect the weak. Because of that, Hero has his own stigma in people's minds. Examples of people's stigma of heroes are that they must have a good body, high intelligence and good attitude. It literally means protector or defender. Interestingly though, many dictionary definitions of the word “hero” refer to men. In other words, this refers to a person of great courage and strength, celebrated for their bold exploits and to individuals known for “feats of courage or nobility of purpose or

prominent people known for their accomplishments (Goethals and Allison 2012). People's perception of what is created and displayed in Hollywood films is often more of the 'American version' implemented in the creation of hero figures and villains in American action films.

Furthermore, not only in terms of the physicality that a hero must have, a hero must also have a leadership attitude and a good and brave habit. All of heroes' behaviors will be imitated by their fans, usually what a hero does, because every fan usually thinks of themselves as a hero and wants to be a hero. There are four concepts of heroism according to Franco, Z. E., Blau, K., & Zimbardo, P. G. Number one, the concept of heroism is a way to combine several courageous actions that have been largely and independently discussed in the literature. Secondly, it is believed that a simple presence of risk and its pro-social behavior is not enough to define the term "heroism". Number three, heroism is viewed as a distinct form of other pro-social activities such as altruism and compassion. It may represent an entirely different behavior. Lastly, even though heroism is seen as a primarily positive and pro-social act, a simple comprehension of this behavior misses the important aspects of the phenomenon that sometimes contain negative features.

Most Hollywood films portray a hero who is identical to the concept of masculinity. The figures of male hero shown are young, white, handsome, and aesthetic. The hero is also shown to be in a romantic relationship with a woman

(heterosexual) as one thing that builds masculinity. In the film *Spiderman*, Peter Parker as the main character (hero) is very clearly visible with characters of masculinity. He also has a relationship with a beautiful woman named Marry Jane. The hero symbol in Hollywood films is represented through the protagonist who is more often shown as a strong figure with a muscular body because a hero must take bold and dangerous actions to protect the weak. This can be seen in the cartoon *Popeye*, *He-Man*, and *Hercules*. Physically, they have the body shape which portrays a hero. Their body shape is strong and muscular. An ideal body or at least a normal body shape allows them to perform heroic actions. Allison said that “To identify the characteristics of their preferred hero characters. The 24 characteristics derived from this work were: active, beautiful, brainy, brave, brilliant, caring, confident, dresses well, famous, friendly, funny, gentle, good, good-looking, helpful, honest, important, kind, loving, loyal, rich, skillful, strong and warrior” (Goethals and Allison 2012).

Hollywood film is a real collaboration between the artistic and entertaining sides. These films are not only entertaining but can also be enjoyed as works of art. Amazingly, filmmakers in Hollywood know what the audiences want to see in their work, while maintaining the artistic side and quality of cultivation. This might answer the question about why American films are so loved by audiences around the world, including Indonesia. According to turner said that Hollywood widely regarded by intellectuals meretricious entertainment for the masses (Silver 2007).

People's perception of what is created and displayed in Hollywood films is often more of the 'American version' such as shown in the creation of hero figures and villains in American action films. Hollywood films more often portray hero figures as American. The portrayal of hero and villain figures is a perception of the 'American version'. That is why Hollywood films have the power to shape it.

With its global potential influence, Hollywood's way of representing and bringing back a hero is very far from the word 'hero' or an attitude that reflects a hero. "Kung Fu Panda 3" is a manifestation of whether a hero must have a good attitude and a good body or have a high intelligence. It will be analyzed by analyzing the reflection of all those values in a rhetorical structure of the film.

In 2016, Kung Fu Panda 3 movie was released. This is a film that displays a comprehensive collection of traditional Chinese culture and aspects as well as various cultural references. This can be seen from the character appearance, martial arts, architecture, landmarks, costumes, custom (traditional and modern), history, language, music, religion, ideology, and philosophy. As a matter of fact, Kung Fu Panda 3 is the third film in the franchise of Kung Fu Panda.

The movie was produced by DreamWorks Animation and Oriental DreamWorks while distributed by 20th Century Fox. Kung Fu Panda 3 was directed by Jennifer Yuh Nelson and Alessandro Carloni. It was written by Jonathan Aibel and Glenn Berger. In addition to that, the movie was produced by Melissa Cobb in

collaboration with Guillermo Del Toro and others as executive producers. This film came from Hollywood studio starring the franchise's original cast members with the addition of three new actors such as Bryan Cranston, Kate Hudson, and J.K. Simmons. 'Kung Fu Panda 3' movie was released in theaters on January 29, 2016 in North America and China. The movie was also released in United Kingdom and Ireland on March 11, 2016 and in Australia on March 24, 2016. It grossed a total of \$518.6 million worldwide. Besides the financial benefit, Kung Fu Panda 3 also gained artistic exposure, as it was nominated for several prestigious awards in animated film such as best animated feature in Annie Award 2017.

Given that this is an animated film and all the characters in the film are depicted through animals, the scenes that don't make sense and go against logic are perfectly acceptable. That is precisely what makes this film with the voices of famous Hollywood stars including Jack Black, Angelina Jolie, Jackie Chan, Dustin Hoffman, Seth Rogen, Lucy Liu, David Cross, and Randa Duk Kim unique.

In addition to Kung Fu Panda movies, there have been many Hollywood films with hero themes, for example Spiderman, Batman, Superman, Hercules and many more. The protagonists (hero) in these films are saviors of family, friends, and people in his environment whose safety is threatened from the evil actions of the antagonists. Those heroes are people who have strengths that are not possessed by ordinary people. With this shortcoming, the hero can protect the people around him from crime.

Generally saying, Kung Fu Panda series are believed to exemplify the new tendency of Hollywood animations where the hero is not only as mindful as the usual hero. The main character named "Po" who is far from the word 'ideal hero'. Kung Fu Panda animation which is one of many Hollywood films that represent heroes portrays a different hero from the portrayals in other films, especially Hollywood films. The hero in this film is depicted through the main character who is Po. Po is a panda that is fat, fat, funny, and loves to eat.

The writer chose Kung Fu Panda 3 as an object to be analyzed using the Theory of Heroism. The writer chose Kung Fu Panda 3 to be analyzed because the movie has a more interesting side compared to Kung Fu Panda 1 or Kung Fu Panda 2. The story of Po as the main character of Kung Fu Panda series remained almost the same with the previous Kung Fu Panda movies (1 & 2). The difference in Kung Fu Panda 3 with previous Kung Fu Panda movies was how Po obtained the power to overcome his obstacle and defeat his enemy, Kai, after going through a heroic journey. In Kung Fu Panda 1, Po as the main character gained his strength by conducting several training activities along with the Furious 5 in order to defeat his enemy. In Kung Fu Panda 2, Po was once again obligated to train with the Furious 5 to increase his strength and defeat the main antagonist. Therefore, it could be concluded that Kung Fu Panda 1 and 2 have no interesting elements to guide Po in the process of undertaking his heroic journey. On the other hand, Kung Fu Panda 3 offered a different story than previous

Kung Fu Panda movies where Po was no longer attached to the Furious 5 and his masters, Shifu and Oogway. Instead, Po was given new role models or figures in the form of his father and his new panda family. In Kung Fu Panda 3, Po was obligated to master the technique of “Chi” in order to defeat Kai, the main antagonist of the movie. Po’s father promised him that he could teach Po in mastering Chi, as long as Po return to the village and join his father along with his panda family. Po who was unable to master “Chi” by himself and desperate to master it agreed to his father’s request. Unfortunately, his father lied to him as he was unable to train Po to master “Chi”. Finally, Kai arrived at Po’s village and Po still was not able to master the technique of “Chi”. As a result, He was forced to fight Kai without the technique. In a turn of event, at the dying moment of his fight, Po was finally able to master “Chi” by the support of all of his family and friends who all believed in him.

The writer analyzed the Kung Fu Panda 3 by using Heroism for human figures even though the main character of the movie was an animal. Po and all of other characters in Kung Fu Panda 3 were all animals, but they behave like they were humans. The characters were able to build a house, temple, or even a hermitage where Kung Fu could be practiced. The characters of this movie were also able to use weapons, clothes, and other tools that are usually used by humans in real life. From those statements and the movie itself, it could be inferred that all of the animals were conducting the habits of humans. Humanizing animals could also be called

Anthropomorphism. Anthropomorphism is imbuing the imagined or real behavior of non-human agents with human-like characteristics, motivations, intentions, and emotions. These non-human agents may include anything that acts with apparent independence. The non-humans are for example animals, natural forces, religious deities, and mechanical or electronic devices. According to (Epley, Waytz, and Cacioppo 2007), Anthropomorphism is the attribution of human characteristic or behavior to a god, animal, or objects. Therefore, all of the characters of Kung Fu Panda 3, including Po, are animal that have been going through the process of Anthropomorphism. In that case, the writer used the Theory of Heroism even though the theory was supposed to be applied to human figures.

In Kung Fu Panda series 1, Po really loves martial arts and really idolizes the Chinese warriors (The Furious Five) namely Tigers, Monkey, Mantis, Viper and Crane. He has a strong desire to become a Kung Fu warrior. Until one day he dreamed of becoming a highly respected Chinese fierce whom even the fiercest Chinese warrior (The Furious Five) is respectful to. But in reality, he was just a fat kid selling noodles. Every day he helps his father Mr. Ping sells noodles in his restaurant, and in line with that, he is a noodle seller. This is far from the word hero. Starting from Po who idolizes someone, a hero should be the person who is idolized not the other way around. Heroes are admired, inspirational, imitated, and aspired but often unrealistic. Due to the lack

of model observer similarity and/or the context, modelers are able to construct themselves (Bricheno and Thornton 2007).

Moreover, in Kung Fu Panda, the main character is a panda called Po. Po begins to reflect a hero in series 2, in particular to season 3. He begins to become a leader who has credibility and is very dependable. This has not made him recognized as a hero yet because he has a leader attitude that cannot be copied by the sidekick hero in this film, bad habits, and body shape that is not ideal for being a hero.

In this study, we will see how Po struggles as the central character in Kung Fu Panda 3 to become a true hero starting from him as the not-ideal hero to him being able to achieve the goals that are always achieved by a hero. This is very interesting to discuss because of these differences, but in the end, Po is recognized as a true hero. In analyzing this movie, the writer also needs previous studies to help in conducting the research. The first is a thesis entitled Heroism: A Conceptual Analysis and Differentiation between Heroic Action and Altruism by Zeno Franco. This thesis explores about the portrayal type of heroes. It contributes by giving sight about how the concept hero is. The second is a thesis entitled Villains, Victims, and Heroism Character Theory and Affect Control Theory by (Bergstrand and Jasper 2018). This thesis explores about the definition of hero. It contributes by giving definition what hero is, what a hero must have, and what is an ideal hero.

Furthermore, this study shows that heroism means to have a good body, have high intelligence and have a good attitude. It literally means protector or defender. Interestingly, this refers to the people who have big courage and strength as the ideal hero. But nowadays ideal hero is not only in terms of the physicality that a hero must have, but also a hero must have leadership attitude, good and brave habits (Goethals and Allison 2012). In this movie, *Kungfu Panda 3*, the main character is not perfect in physical performance, but a true hero has to achieve the goal.

This study uses a theory of Heroism: A Conceptual Analysis and Differentiation between Heroic Action and Altruism Theory by Franco, Blau, and Zimbardo. This theory defines that Heroism represents the ideal of citizens transforming civic virtue into the highest form of civic action, accepting either physical peril or social sacrifice and serves to resolve dissonance in favor of the heroic actor: and a consideration of how to foster heroic imagination. This study uses a qualitative method since this study uses a movie as the research object and considered as text. Text is all written object, image, movies and videos that could produce meaning. McKee explained that textual analysis is a way of gathering and analyzing information in academic research (McKee 2001). The writer argues that this movie represents the ideal hero.

With this study, the writer expects that this study will help other researchers who are interested in using Heroism in cultural product such as movie, music videos,

and video advertisement, especially for student in English Literature. It is also conducted as the writer's undergraduate thesis to contribute to cultural studies program.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Referring to the background above, the writer wants to reveal how the main character in *Kung Fu Panda 3* represent as the ideal heroes?

1.3 Objective of The Study

This study aims to examine how the hero is represent in Kung Fu Panda 3 as the ideal hero through the main character by describing the presentation of Po as the main character. Additionally, the result will indicate the shifting in representing stigma of traditional heroes become to new heroes.

1.4 Significance of the Study

In this study, the significance is used to analyze the heroes character in American modern popular culture. The focus of the study is represent of the heroes character in *Kung Fu Panda 3* which examine the ideal heroes is supposed to be in physical, intelligent, and attitude performance and have to achieving the goal. The writer also hopes that this study will have the reader to get a better understanding the representation heroes in this movie. In addition this study is also assumed to give practical significance, such as movies maker especially on Hollywood production house. It hopes more different when makes hero movies. They will have more reference

in the production of filming in order to improve heroes movie which is different from the usual heroes and makes surprising expectations for the audience

The writer also expect that this study can be more contribute to cultural studies program of English Literature, Universitas Airlangga and it can become reference for further readings and researches on heroism issues.

1.5 Definition of Key Terms

- **Heroism** : heroism is seen as an apex of human behavior. Looking at a heroic act is a compelling action. It literally absorbs our attention. We frequently feel that, as a human being, we might want to accomplish chivalrous status (Z. E. Franco, Blau, and Zimbardo 2011).
- **Hero** : hero derives from the Greek word, *heros*, which means a protector or defender (Goethals and Allison 2012).
- **Anthropomorphism** : the attribution of human characteristic or behavior to a god, animal, or objects (Epley, Waytz, and Cacioppo 2007).