

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter contains research background, statements of problem, research objectives, research significance, conceptual framework, previous study and definition of key terms.

1.1 Research Background

Language is a bridge of interaction between humans. Since ancient times, language has been an effective communication tool for exchanging information. By language, humans are able to express ideas, opinions and arguments that come to mind, both through writing and speaking. Humans can learn many new things from time to time through the language. The development of language makes it a science that is timeless and always has new issues to study, understand and research.

According to Chaer in the journal written by Rima Devianty entitled “Bahasa Sebagai Cermin Kebudayaan” (*Bahasa Sebagai Cermin Kebudayaan*, n.d.), language is a verbal tool for communication. Chaer believes that language is a sound symbol which is arbitrary and functions as a means of communication for a group of people as well as for self-identification. Referring to Chaer’s opinion, language could show humans’ position as social creatures who always need interaction with each other. They may also create works using language, for example literary works.

Literary works are likened to a house that can accommodate various kinds of living and non-living objects, each with its own characteristics and uniqueness. Literature becomes a forum for expressing social phenomena that commonly occur in human life through the art of language as desired. Referring to Bennet and Royle, literature encourages us to reflect on language, especially in the many ways that it is figurative or deceptive or even both. A literary work can show emotional changes through symbols or implied meanings. Literature that is simple but rich in meaning is timeless work and always has a special place for its audience.

Literary works can be enjoyed both verbally and nonverbally. Literature expressed through writing will automatically bind readers to become immersed in

the series of words written by the author. Apart from that, literature conveyed through spoken words accompanied by role play gives a more interesting impression and encourages the audience to have wider and freer imagination. One of the literary works that is loved by many people and is always developing is popular literature.

Popular literature refers to literary works that are widely read, enjoyed, and embraced by a broad audience. It is distinguished by its accessibility, entertainment value, and broad appeal across different demographics and cultural backgrounds. Unlike literary fiction, which may target a more specialized or niche audience, popular literature aims to engage and entertain a wide spectrum of readers.

Popular literature encompasses a diverse range of genres, styles, and formats, including novels, short stories, poetry, graphic novels, and non-fiction. It includes works from various literary traditions and can be found in both traditional print media and digital formats. Popular literature is typically commercially successful, with high sales figures, bestseller status, and adaptations into other media such as film, television, or video games. It is often marketed and promoted to reach a broad audience and maximize its commercial appeal.

Film is a popular literature that everyone craves for. Most people prefer to watch the film rather than reading a book because they think a film does not need a lot of time to be enjoyed. Films are literary works in the form of live images which are often referred to as films. According to Richard Dyer and Ginette Vincendeau (Dyer, 2000), film is an audio-visual media created from photographing or recording moving images that contain a narrative or story. Film is a form of art and entertainment that can convey emotions, messages and stories to its audience. Films can function as quite effective learning media because most people find it easier to understand the material presented through visuals. By watching the films, audiences can derive meaning both explicitly and implicitly.

Through this research, the author aims to analyze the symbols and allegories contained in the film "Hacksaw Ridge". Symbolism and allegory are part of figurative language. Figurative language is the use of words or expressions that do not have a literal meaning but are intended to convey symbolically rich images. In

the context of symbol and allegory analysis, figurative language plays an important role in conveying hidden messages, themes and deeper meanings through a literary work, including films. Figurative language refers to the use of words or expressions in a non-literal way to convey meaning beyond their literal interpretation. It involves employing various literary devices such as metaphors, similes, personification, symbolism, and allegory to evoke imagery, emotions, and deeper layers of meaning in a text. This proposal will discuss what symbolism and allegory appear and contribute to the film as a whole.

Hacksaw Ridge (2016) directed by Mel Gibson, written by Andrew Knight and Robert Schenkkan based on the true story of Desmond Doss, a United States medical soldier in World War II. The film, starring Andrew Garfield, Vince Vaughn, Sam Worthington, Luke Bracey, Teresa Palmer, Hugo Weaving and Rachel Griffiths, was successful in generating positive reactions from audiences, especially critics. This film has a historical background during World War II in the Battle of Okinawa. This battle involved United States troops and Japanese troops located at Maeda Cliff (Hacksaw Ridge).

The film “Hacksaw Ridge” has several symbols and allegories that can be analyzed and discussed how they contribute to the overall resonance of the film. These symbols and allegories are not explained in detail in the film. This can trigger the audience’s mistakes in interpreting the meaning of the scenes that appear in the film.

This film begins with Desmond Doss helping an accident victim and then taking him to the hospital. Desmond, who was considered to have swift steps in providing first aid, received a little praise from the hospital nurse, Dorothy Schutte. Desmond paid attention to the situation around him where sick people received full care and attention from nurses and doctors. He was inspired by this atmosphere and then considered enlisting in the United States Army and aimed to enter the battlefield as a medical soldier who would help save injured soldiers. He was interested in medical matters, but he had no intention of killing his opponent on the battlefield. This is because when he was a child, he almost killed his brother, Harold Doss, from then on he promised not to kill anyone.

Desmond Doss finally enlisted in the United States Army, he asked for the blessing of his parents. His father did not give him permission but he meant it and in the end he still went to the dormitory to get training before going into battle. Although he faced many challenges because he maintained his belief in not holding weapons, he was able to prove that his existence could provide many benefits by focusing on his intention to help anyone who was injured, regardless of nationality. One of the interesting things about Desmond Doss' character is that he always carries a Bible wherever he goes, so that when he is injured, he still looks for his Bible. The Bible is one of the symbols that emerges from the film. There are many more symbols and allegories that can be extracted from the film Hacksaw Ridge. The author is interested in discussing what symbols and allegories appear in the film Hacksaw Ridge. Apart from that, this film is based on a true story, making the writer feel like he is part of the story. The author also studied a lot of previously unknown history regarding World War II. There are many objects whose appearance carries meaning and also a deep message from this film.

This film chooses a ridge as the place where the war between the United States and Japanese troops took place. In this place, many soldiers died on the battlefield. Every day, the number of people who cannot be saved increases, besides that, the Japanese army is an opponent that is difficult to defeat because their capabilities and strategies are more mature than the United States. This shows the assumption that the United States army was on the verge of defeat because they did not really know the location of the battlefield. However, when Desmond Doss, the main character of the film, joined the ridge, there were quite significant changes. He lowered many of the injured people using ropes to receive treatment from other soldiers on guard at the bottom of the ridge. Desmond Doss's persistence in searching for injured people made him discover many secret passages in the ridge. Through this representation of the ridge, it can be shown that there are other things that can be extracted from this place to become a symbol and provide important meaning as the visual symbolism of the film Hacksaw Ridge.

Apart from that, Desmond Doss always carries a bible when he begins his journey to quarantine and training before entering the battlefield. When other

soldiers carried rifles which showed their individual dedication, Desmond Doss remained firm in not touching rifles, let alone killing people. The Bible became an object that was able to defend his principles amidst the abuse from his friends and superiors. Without realizing it, this Bible becomes an allegory where a belief or conviction is able to defeat the perceptions of other people who misunderstand one's thoughts. Things that seem unimportant to them but in fact can bring a lot of good.

1.2 Statements of Problem

The film "Hacksaw Ridge" is filled with symbolism and allegory, but a comprehensive analysis of these elements is lacking. There are many things that can be explored as representations of symbolism and allegory in this film. However, there are not many people can find the symbolism and allegory as well as their meanings in this movie. This indicates a need for a detailed exploration of these literary devices. Additionally, the main character in the film, Desmond Doss, is depicted as a deeply religious individual whose actions are often imbued with religious symbolism. This shows that the use of symbolism and allegory can influence the narrative and character development. Also, this film has the background of World War II, which is an important event in global history. Analyzing symbolism and allegory in historical and cultural settings can provide new insights into broader themes of heroism, sacrifice and morality. Based on the background and statements of problem, the research questions can be formulated as follows :

- 1) What are symbolism and allegory representations that are prevalent throughout the movie "Hacksaw Ridge"?
- 2) How do symbolism and allegory contribute to the overall thematic resonance of the movie "Hacksaw Ridge"?

1.3 Research Objectives

Based on the statements of problem above, the objectives of this research are:

1. To identify the elements of symbolism and allegory interpretations in the movie “Hacksaw Ridge” (2016).
2. To describe the interpretation and contribution of symbolism and allegory elements in the movie “Hacksaw Ridge” (2016).

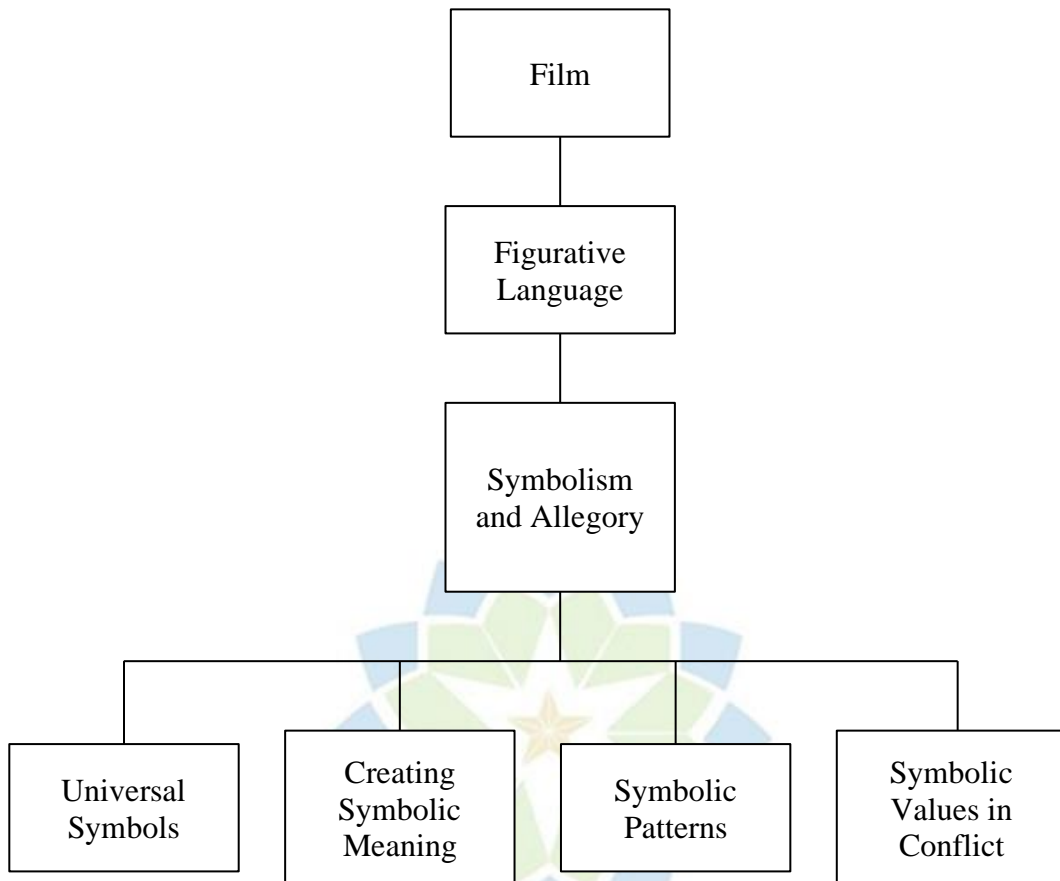
1.4 Research Significance

Theoretically, this research contributed to the academic literature developing more holistic and detailed film analysis methods. By exploring the symbolism and allegory in “Hacksaw Ridge”, this research will provide a framework that can be applied in the analysis of other films, enriching methodological studies in the field of filmology.

Practically, this research contributed in increasing the visual literacy of readers or the society by providing a deeper understanding of the ways symbolism and allegory are used to convey complex messages in films. This will provide benefits for readers and viewers to better appreciate and understand works of visual art in more depth.

1.5 Conceptual Framework

In this research, the author aims to analyze the symbolism and allegory elements found in the movie “Hacksaw Ridge” (2016) as well as their interpretation and contribution to the thematic film as a whole. In exploring the symbolism and allegory in “Hacksaw Ridge” through a figurative language lens, this research draws upon foundational principles of symbolism and allegory theory as elucidated by Dennie W. Petrie and John M. Boggs’ (Petrie & Boggs, n.d.) theory and expanded upon by subsequent theorists. As an additional theory to support the success of the research, the author uses narrative analysis, psychological and sociocultural analysis also other theories which are related to this research.



The Conceptual Framework

1.6 Previous Study

This research is part of popular literature that discusses symbolism and allegory in the film Hacksaw Ridge. In the research there are several previous studies related to the topics.

The first research was written by Halimul Mufti Zain for his thesis at Sultan Agung Islamic University Semarang. He identified and explained the meaning of the symbols that appeared in the novel *The Old Man and The Sea* by Ernest Hemingway. The title of the research is “An Analysis of Symbolism and Meaning Found in *The Old Man and The Sea* by Ernest Hemingway”. This research was published in 2021. The results of this research show that there are three types of symbols in the novel *The Old Man and The Sea*, namely: color, element, and animal. He concluded that symbols have an important role in the novel, including providing an aesthetic effect and deeper meaning. This research is different from

that carried by the author. The author focuses on analyzing the symbol in the movie which could be widely discussed in other aspects. Also, the object of this research is a movie not a novel.

The second study was conducted by Khoirul Nisa for her undergraduate thesis at State Islamic for Islamic Studies of Metro, Lampung entitled “An Analysis of Figurative Language in The Maher Zain's Song Lyric”. She aims to identify any figurative language found in the lyrics of Maher Zain’s songs. In her research, she took 3 songs by Maher Zain, namely Insha Allah, For the Rest of My Life, and Hold My Hand. In conclusion, there were 9 types of figurative language found, namely: Personification, Metaphor, Simile, Hyperbole, Irony, Alliteration, Parallelism, Synecdoche, and Euphemism. The difference between Khoirul Nisa’s research and the author’s is that she focuses on song lyrics and only finds the figures of speech used in each lyric, while the author will examine other forms of figurative language, such as symbols and allegory.

The third research was written by Moch. Burhanudin for his thesis at Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University which was published in 2017. He chose the film Hacksaw Ridge (2016) because this film reconstructs the meaning of heroism and war through the story and character of Desmond Doss. Apart from that, Hacksaw Ridge is a successful war film and received many positive responses and awards. This film was named the best film since Saving Private Ryan (1998). This research is different from that carried out by the author, namely that the author did not examine the nature of heroism in the character of Desmond Doss. The author will also examine matters related to symbolism and allegory found in the movie.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

The key words are defined to avoid misunderstandings in conceiving the keywords in this research. The key terms are clarified as follows:

- Symbolism

Symbolism is the use of symbols in art and literature to represent certain ideas and concepts. In the context of films, symbolism can be realized

through visual elements such as objects, colors, and character actions that have deeper meaning than what appears on the surface (Barthes, 1972).

- Allegory

Allegory is a narrative or representation that uses symbols to convey a deeper meaning or moral message. In film, allegory is often used to illustrate abstract or complex ideas through concrete stories and characters (Fletcher, 1964).

- Descriptive Qualitative Approach

A descriptive qualitative approach is a research method that aims to provide a detailed and in-depth description of a particular phenomenon. This method involves collecting and analyzing unstructured data to identify relevant patterns and themes (Sandelowski, 2000).

- Hacksaw Ridge

Hacksaw Ridge is a film directed by Mel Gibson, released in 2016. This film tells the story of the life of Desmond Doss, a medic in World War II who was known for his bravery in saving lives without using weapons. This film is rich in symbolism and allegory depicting themes such as courage, faith, and humanity (Gibson, 2016).

