

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS

In this chapter, the writer wants to answer the problem formulation “How does Steve Rogers as Captain America show American individualism?”. There are three types of self-reliance that can make someone have an American individualism as shown is Emerson’s philosophy, that is having (1) individual will, (2) originality and creativity, and (3) self-reliance. The following are the discussion based on Steve’s actions and sayings.

4.1 Individual’s will

The first characteristic of self-reliance according to Emerson’s philosophy is believing in one self’s strength. He claims that “To believe your own thought, to believe that what is true for you in your private heart is true for all men—that is genius.” (Emerson, 1841, p.1) According to Emerson, people must believe in their selves and what their heart says. People must not believe what others say but believe in what they see and think. Believing in our self does not only mean believing in it, and doing nothing about it, but instead must follow up by doing an action to support that belief. According to Emerson as cited by Mahlina, an individual should:

“Trust thyself: every heart vibrates to that iron string. Accept the place the divine providence has found for you, the society of your contemporaries, the connection of events. Great men have always done so, and confided themselves childlike to the genius of their age, betraying

their perception that the absolutely trustworthy was seated at their heart, working through their hands, predominating in all their being. And we are now men, and must accept in the highest mind the same transcendent destiny; and not minors and invalids in a protected corner, not cowards fleeing before a revolution, but guides, redeemers, and benefactors, obeying the Almighty effort, and advancing on Chaos and the Dark. (2019, p.26)

Captain America: The First Avengers, is about Steve Rogers' self-confidence of pursuing in his own dream of being independent from his bullies and health problem. The following are the discussion of Steve's actions that proved his self-trust.

4.1.1 Steve's ambition to join the army

Before becoming Captain America, Steve Rogers was just a young man who had a small physique and often got sick with asthma. When the United States of America joined in World War II, Steve wanted to join the army to participate in attacking the Nazis in Germany. However, because Steve had health problems, Steve's registration form to join the army against Nazi Germany was repeatedly rejected. Steve's ambition to join the army is getting stronger when he learns that James Barnes, his friend is on the list to attack the Nazi troops in Germany.



Figure 1: Steve was rejected Military service (Johnston, 2011, 00:08:50)

The following conversation takes place among the Doctor and Steve.

(Steve standing half naked in front of the doctor before he passing his paper to the doctor).

The Doctor : sorry, son.

Steve : (frowned) Look, just give me a chance. Is there anything you can do?

The doctor : I'm doing it. I'm saving your life. (Before he stamps his enlistment with card 4F).

(Johnston, 2011, 00:08:50-00:09:20)

In this scene, the doctor is representing the person who doubted Steve because Steve has asthma and other long list of health issues. The doctor just wants to save Steve's life by rejecting his enlistment to join the army. However, Steve's ambition to join in the army never stopped. He tried to pursue the doctor give him a chance but still the doctor refused him and said it was for his best to safe his life. When the

doctor said “I’m doing it, I’m saving your life.” It is used to signal Steve to stop and burn his dream to join in the war. Steve sighs and then leaves the room.

Steve’s ambition to join the army still did not to stopped there. When Bucky Barnes found out about Steve’s enlistment, he told him that it was illegal to lie on the enlistment form as Steve should know this is the war that he is facing. Bucky who has known Steve since childhood because they both live in an orphanage and he who knows Steve's weakness especially when dealing with bullies also told Steve to forget dream of being recruited in the army.



Figure 2: Steve and Bucky had serious conversation (Johnston, 2011, 00:13:45)

In figure 2, Steve and Bucky had serious conversation about wanting join in the army.

The following conversation takes place among Steve and Bucky.

(Bucky Barnes saw Steve entered the recruitment center)

Bucky Barnes : You’re really gonna do this again?

Steve Rogers : well, it’s a fair. I’m gonna try my luck.

Bucky Barnes : as who? Steve from Ohio? They'll catch you. Or worse, they'll take you. This isn't a back alley, Steve!
It's war!

Steve Rogers : I know it's a war. You don't have to tell me.

(Johnston, 2011, 00:13:45-00:15:03)

In this scene, Bucky also represent Steve's environment. Bucky who is understanding Steve ever since they were kids, and the person who takes care of Steve since his mother's death knows the kinds of illness and enemies that Steve has. He does not want Steve to be the target of other bullies, so, Bucky feels he has the right to protect Steve by forbidding him from enlisting into the battlefield against Nazi Germany. Bucky reminds, Steve not to hides his identity and enlists in the military illegally because Steve will be confronting a big war and not just an attack he usually gets in a small alley with his bullies.



Figure 3: (Bucky and Steve had small argument about the war) (Johnston, 2011, 00:14:48)

The following is the discussion between Steve and Bucky.

Bucky Barnes :why are you so interested to flight? There are so many other important job.

Steve Rogers :what am I gonna do? Collect scrap metal.

James Barnes :I don't...

Steve Rogers :Bucky, come on! There are men laying down their lives. I got no right to do any less than them. That's what you don't understand. This isn't about me.

Bucky Barnes: Yes! Right. Cause you got nothing to prove. (Johnston, 2011, 00:14:35-00:14:50)

In this scene, Steve continued to explain the reasons why he wanted to join the battlefield. In the part where Steve said “there are men laying down their lives” is actually signaling that Steve wanted to join in the army because it is not about him only but also because so many men died on the battlefield. Steve feels it is a sin if he just watched them fight and could not do anything to save them. Eventhough Bucky told him that he can find another job that would not risk his life by saying “Cause you got nothing to prove”, Steve still feels that it is more important to join the army.

Steve's stubborn action about wanting to join in the army, is actually a sign of practicing his Individualism. When Emerson says that to become an individual, he must have by believing in one self, Steve's firm decision is showing that he has his own ways. Steve is a person that believes in himself and that is why Steve forces

himself to have a strong heart to be brave and have some courage to join the army. He knows that he is putting himself in danger by joining in the army that Bucky had doubted his capabilities. However, Steve believes that he can help change fate instead of having to see so many men who died in war, without him involving directly in the war. If Steve does not have any self-reliance, he will not make that decision.

4.1.2 Being a friend with Doctor Erskine

After having overheard Steve's conversation with Bucky about wanting to help in the war, Doctor Abraham Erskine decided to meet Steve in a secluded room where he was awaiting for a test. In treating Steve, Doctor Erskine did not choose Steve because he feel pity on him. Instead, Doctor Erskine has an interest on him and treats him like he knew that Steve actually has some kind of potential.



Figure 4: Steve and Erskine had a deep conversation (Johnston, 2011, 00:29:14)

(At night Erskine came to check on Steve)

Steve Rogers : Why me?

Doctor Abraham Erskine : what it can do, he cannot resist. Schmidt must become that superior man.

Steve Rogers : did it make him stronger?

Doctor Abraham Erskine : yeah. But, you were chosen. Because you are a strong man, has power all his life, but a weak man knows the value of strength, and knows compassion.

Steve Rogers : Thanks. I think.

(Johnston, 2011, 00:26:22- 00:26:57)

In this scene, Erskine said that “you were chosen because you are a strong man” is describing how strong Steve is in using his determination. Erskine especially believes that Steve will definitely use the superpowers he is offering, not only to be a perfect soldier but also to use as a good man, who has good conscience over right or wrong doings. Erskine never doubted Steve that his decision was the right one.

4.1.3 Being honest with Peggy Carter

On the day of the procedure, Steve was seen escorted to a secret facility by Peggy Carter. While they drove together, Steve pointed out so many locations in New York City where he was beaten up by bullies for his size.



Figure 5: Steve and Peggy had a talk about his bullies (Johnston, 2011, 00:30:25)

Peggy Carter was known as founder of S.H.I.E.L.D. She is seen taking Steve into a secret facility. Steve tries to make friends with her by talking to her. This situation can be seen from the dialogue below:

Steve Rogers : I know this neighborhood. I got beat up in that alley. And that parking lot. And behind that diner.

Peggy Carter: Did you have something against running away?

Steve Rogers : you start running they'll never let you stop. You stand up, push back. Can't say no forever, right?

(Johnston, 2011, 00:29:43-00:30:01)

Despite of his awkwardness, Peggy notices Steve don't know how to talk with a woman. Steve then admits that this is his longest conversation with a woman.

Peggy Carter : you don't know how to talk with a woman, do you?

Steve Rogers : this is the longest conversation I've had with one. Women aren't exactly lining up to dance with a guy they might step on.

Peggy Carter : you must have danced?

Steve Rogers : well, asking a woman to dance always seems so terrifying.

(Johnston, 2011, 00:32:24- 00:32:45)



Figure 6: Steve and Peggy had another conversation about woman (Johnston, 2011, 00:32:22)

As seen in the screenshot of figure 6, Steve was being open about how he never had a good conversation with woman before. Steve not only talked about his being bullied but also his relationship with woman to Peggy. This makes Steve especially original. He does not imitate other people and does something that is right for him. Steve do not want to use the opportunity to flirt with Peggy and making Peggy uncomfortable. This is why, Peggy was charmed by his sincerity and his good moral values, and thus, agree with the Doctor Erskine's choice of giving Steve a super power.

4.1.4 Becoming a super soldier

As soon as Steve arrived at the secret facility, Steve was being instructed to remove his clothes as the experiment begins. Doctor Erskine who knows Steve's weakness, tried to stopped the reactor but Steve still told them to continue eventhough he had to feel pain. Doctor Erskine treats Steve like a dad to his son. That is why , he still couldn't stand to watching Steve screaming like that.

Dr. Erskine : Steven! (He knocks on the pod)

Dr. Erskine : kill the reactor, Mr. Stark! Turn it off! Kill it! Kill the reactor!

Steve Rogers : (stubborn) No! Don't! I can do this!

(Johnston, 2011, 00:36:40-00:37:26)

In this conversation, Steve showed how he is being confident to continue believing in himself as they began with large amounts of vita radiation to him. The treatment was extremely painful, but Steve said to continue the process.



Figure 7 Steve is transformed to Super Soldier (Johnston, 2011, 00:35:00)

As seen in figure 7, Steve went from being 5'4 tall and weighing 95 pounds to being 6'2 and weighing 240 with the serum also curing his previous medical afflictions. It shows Steve's transformation. He went from a smaller guy with numerous health problems into super soldier. People are starting to gain respect for Steve, which is giving Steve more confidence in his self-reliance.

4.2 Originality and creativity

Emerson also has the philosophy to “Insist on yourself; never imitate” (1841, p,18). In this philosophy, Emerson wants people to be original. In order to original, it is important then to be honest to others. According to Emerson, when people believe in their inner self, they will show their true self and not imitate others. This, however, also means that, an individual must finish whatever they have accepted as their task and responsibility. “Every great man is unique.” (1841, p.18), which means that each individual should know their own strength.

Steve understands that by accepting the duty to be a super soldier in the army, he has the responsibility to take care of his country. Consequently, Steve also understands that he should use all of his skills and strength to lead the war. To lead the game of war, however, he must rely on honesty and be original. This is because, an Individual’s will is also the example of an individual’s originality and creativity.

Emerson claims “It is easy in the world to live after the world’s opinion; it is easy in solitude to live after our own; but the great man is he who in the midst of the crowd keeps with perfect sweetness the independence of solitude” (1841, p.5). This means that although in some cases people may have to conform to society’s rules; it does not mean that people need to sacrifice themselves. This is the main reason why Steve has a strong will to help, because it was his original idea to not want to see people die without himself doing something important for the country.

4.2.1 Steve has integrity as a leader

Steve Rogers repeatedly tries to enlist to fight in World War II despite being rejected multiple times. He thinks that he has individual's right to fulfill his duty to fight in the war. This can be seen in the dialogue below:

(Doctor Erskine enters the room as Enlistment office quietly leaves)

Doctor Erskine : Thank you. (To Steve) so, you want to go overseas. Kill some Nazis?

Doctor Erskine : No, it's not exams I'm interested in. it's the five tries. But you didn't answer my question. Do you want to kill Nazis?

Steve Rogers : I don't like bullies. I don't care where they're from.

Doctor Erskine : Well, there are already so many big men fighting this war. Maybe what we need now is the little guy, huh? I can offer you a chance. (Johnston, 2011, 00:15:43-00:16:00)

In the conversation above, Steve believes in doing what he thinks is right and thus, shows his braveness. Growing up with numerous problems and also being bullied a lot was one of the reasons Steve was determined to join the fight against the Nazis. He knows he should be given the opportunity to fight back as a good citizen.



Figure 8: Steve confronts that he doesn't like to be bullied (Johnston, 2011, 00:16:21)

As seen in figure 8, when Steve was asked about his wanting to join the army, Steve was being confident in saying “I don't like bullies, I don't care where they're from” is a signal that he does not like the threats he has been receiving from his bullies. He feels that it is high time for him to fight back the bullies to show his integrity. He believes that his convictions about freedom and justice will help his decision-making and provides people to follow his leadership. This is why Steve is respected by Doctor Erskine and Steve is not scared of being tortured with the pain to transform himself as a super soldier.

4.2.2 Steve's leadership skill is shown by handling the fake grenade

Following the training for the Military Service, Steve being evaluated. From here on, Steve then tries his best to show that he can be a good and dependable soldier. When the commander threw a fake grenade, Steve without thinking quickly jump on top of it covering it with his body. The conversation can be seen as follows:

Doctor Erskine : Brandt, yes, I know. I am well aware of your efforts.

Colonel Phillips : then throw me a bone. Hodge passed every test we gave him. He's big, he's fact, he obeys order. He's a soldier.

Doctor Erskine : He's a bully.

Colonel Phillips : You don't win wars with niceness, doctor. (He takes a hand grenade) you win war with guts. (He throws the grenade at where the new recruits are training) Grenade!

Steve Rogers : Get away! Get back! (Waits for the grenade to go off but nothing happens)

Officer : it was a dummy grenade. All clear. Back in formation.
(Johnston, 2011, 00:24:03- 00:24:25)

The dialogue above shows Colonel Phillips still doubting to Steve's skill since he is skinny. However, Doctor Erskine still believe on Steve that Steve is a perfect choice after saw how Steve has used his instinct over the fake grenade. This can be done only by skilled Steve and his ambitions for saving his country. The grenade is just an alibi to deceive the soldiers, and to find out which of the soldiers are loyal to the country.



Figure 9 Steve throw himself into the fake grenade (Johnston, 2011, 00:24:03)

The fake grenade above proves that Steve trusts himself highly. He knows what he had done. He did it to impress Colonel Phillips and Doctor Erskine and prove that he is a worthy soldier to kill Nazis.

4.3 Self-reliance

The key for self-reliance according to Emerson is also on the persistence to believe that seeking one's own way is not a selfish thing to do, but it shows how true someone can be to one's own intentions. Emerson has said

“I will seek my own. I do this not selfishly, but humbly and truly. It is like your interest, and mine, and all men, however as long as we have dwelt in lies, it is to live in truth. Does this sound harsh to-day? You will soon love what is dictated by your nature as well as mine, and, if we follow the truth, it will bring us out safely at last” (1841, p.14).

This means that in seeing how good is Steve as an individual, he should prove how humble he is by not being selfish. By doing it, he will not regret his own actions.

4.3.1 Steve's strong determination to survive the experiment

The action that shows Steve is nervous and worried can be seen when Doctor Erskine is doing the project to re-birth Steve into becoming a super soldier. The situation began when Steve was strapped into the vita-ray chamber especially when Erskine revealed that the injection had plenty of penicillin. Steve was nervous as he considered what could be coming up next.



Figure 10: Steve holding his pain during the serum experiment (Johnston, 2011, 00:30:14)

Figure 10 above shows how, Steve was doing his best to survive from the experiment of becoming a super soldier. Steve's action of staying in the room and of staying in the room and asking the people to continue the experiment is proof that Steve practices self-reliance because he keeps true with his ambition and believes that he can be transformed into someone having better life.

4.3.2 Dare to crash into the ice

After having witnessed Schmidt's death, Steve desperately attempted to change his flight path away from the United States. In the airplane, Steve realized that the landing controls had been damaged, thus leaving it permanently stuck on autopilot. Unfortunately, as Steve descended the ship down, he crashed and got trapped in the ice.



Figure 11: Steve's plane about to crash on the ice (Johnston, 2011, 01:32:40)

Below is last conversation that takes places between Steve and Peggy, before the airplane crashed on the ice.

Peggy Carter : Steve, is that you? Are you alright?

Steve Rogers : Peggy! Schmidt's dead.

Peggy Carter : What about the plane?

Steve Rogers : That's a little bit tougher to explain.

Peggy Carter : Give me your coordinates, I'll find you a safe landing site.

Steve Rogers : There's not going to be a safe landing. But I can try and force it down.

Peggy Carter :I'll get Howard on the line, he'll know what to do.

Steve Rogers : There's not enough time. This thing's moving too fast and it's heading for New York. [*referring to Schmidt's plane, speaking through the plane's control*] I gotta put her in the water.

Peggy Carter : Please, don't do this. We have time. We can work it out.

Steve Rogers : Right now I'm in the middle of nowhere. If I wait any longer a lot of people are gonna die. Peggy, this is my choice. [*as he's forcing the plane down towards the water*] Peggy?

Peggy Carter : I'm here.

Steve Rogers : I'm gonna need a rain check on that dance.

Peggy Carter : [*with tears in her eyes*] Alright. A week, next Saturday, at the Stork Club.

Steve Rogers : You got it.

Peggy Carter : Eight o'clock on the dot. Don't you dare be late. Understood?

Steve Rogers : You know, I still don't know how to dance.

Peggy Carter : I'll show you how. Just be there.

Steve Rogers : We'll have the band play something' slow. I'd hate to step on your... [*the line goes static and Peggy begins to cry*]

Peggy Carter : Steve? Steve? Steve? (Johnston, 2011, 00:01:32- 00:01:40)



Figure 12: Steve's plane trapped on ice (Johnston, 2011, 01:42:36)

As seen the figure 12, after Steve's plane crashes into the ice and gets stuck there, the soldiers announce Steve's death and make Steve a superhero ready to protect their country. The ending of Steve's life, who sacrificed himself in the honor of the country shows that Steve has succeeded and that he was more than a good soldier. He thought of a way to only sacrifice himself rather than make many other people die with his airplane crash. This is why people gave high respects on Steve, who killed the Nazi leader. Steve has truly shown his patriotism and was given an honor to have been built a museum to commemorate his services.