

Hero as Myth Depicted in Riordan's *Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief*

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Abstract

This thesis discusses about the pattern of hero in myth in novel entitled Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief written by Rick Riordan. The aim of the analysis is to discover the dynamic pattern in hero character especially in myth. Besides, the dynamic pattern, this thesis also discovers the meaning of the pattern. This thesis employs library research and descriptive qualitative method. In library research, the writer involves the data required from books, journals, and articles in the internet sites, then descriptive qualitative applies to elaborate and to perform the data concerning to the problems analyzed. In analyzing the formulated problem, the writer applies archetype approach, the review of myth, the review of hero, and the pattern of hero in myth theory. As the conclusion of the analysis, Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief novel has fulfilled the pattern of hero in myth. The patterns of hero in myth that exist from the ancient time keep dynamic until today. The pattern includes the different of birth and parentage, divine blessing, process of atonement, individuation, contacts with metaphysics and the descent to the death.

Key Words: death, hero, metaphysics, myth

Introduction

Myth about hero is told and told again from generation to generation in every culture. The story is already being found since a long time ago until now. Myth derives from Greek, *mythos*, which means story or word. Ferrel (2000: 5) stated that myth is a story that attempt to provide an understanding of the real world at the time it is conceived. Myth is a description of our real live. It contains our aspiration and inspiration toward the world. It presents the problems and solutions of life.

The stories of myth from the past time until today have been created, recreated, and facing lot of modifications. Thus, archetype is produced through those processes. According to Shankar (2009), an archetype is a model which is being copied, patterned, and emulated. In literary, the model has lots of form, such as symbols, descriptive details, characters, themes, narrative designs, and plot patterns. Archetype is a universal pattern. Ferrel (2000; 15) adds archetype is stated as universal because the pattern expressed remains the same no matter who tells the story, when the story is told, or where the story is made.

In *Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief* novel, the writer would like to reveal one kind of archetype. It is the pattern of hero as archetype of character in myth. In myth, it produces the character of hero, in which the hero performs good deeds and virtue (Campbell, 2008; 15). Hero becomes a living model as a good one and its enemy as the evil.

Hero character is the recurrent character. This character can be found in every culture's story through the centuries from the past, present, and future. That is why hero as a character can be included as archetype. Archetype in myth relates with Jung's theory of collective unconscious where Jung stated that archetype in myth is produced by collective unconscious that describes in consciousness. Campbell (2008:3) states that hero character is produced from human deeply thought that did not exist in the real world. Hero is the imaginative combination of human to express their ideal figure which has been always admired, stated as someone phenomenal, and touched the heart of the people. Hero has many forms, and hero always face lots of modification, but hero produces constant patterns that arise in myths.

Finally, this thesis is focused on the pattern of hero in myth especially in Riordan's novel; *Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief*. The approach used is archetype and it also reviews myth as the theory to support the discussion to the analysis will be centered to the pattern of hero in myth.

Method

The approach applied in this thesis is archetypal approach which is applicable and available in answering the problems formulated. In this analysis, the writer applies library research and descriptive qualitative method. Library research is the method of making this paper by collecting, reading, and analyzing the data that relates to the research. The main data source in this research paper is *Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief* novel by Rick Riordan. Data is the information that is taken from the data source to be analyzed. The data in this paper are in the form of narrations and dialogues.

Discussion

Mythology produces lots of archetypes in literature. One of the archetypes is hero character that exists inside of the story of myth. All cultures around the world employ hero character to build the mythology stories. Hero recurs in different works, in different cultures and in different periods of time. Hero has lot of variations faces and shapes from the culture that creates them. Some certain patterns of hero were recognized time by time from thousand years ago until now.

Responding the problem formulated in the first chapter questioning about the pattern of hero in myth, respectively this chapter provides the answer of the question analyzed from Riordan's *Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief*. We will see whether hero's pattern in myth is still the same as the ancient hero's pattern or not through this analysis. Besides knowing the pattern, we also can know the meaning of those patterns coloring the hero's pattern related with psychology in archetypal exploration.

The Different Birth and Childhood

The birth and childhood of hero in myth is different from other narrative genre. As seen in the novel *Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief*, novel talks about Greek mythology. Percy Jackson is a young hero that has one divine parent and one human parent. His mother is human and his father is the God of Sea, Poseidon. Percy as the son of the god of sea symbolizes the existence of divine image among human surrounding in the world. Percy is stated to be different, "You're a half-blood" (Riordan, 2006; 43). Since Percy arrives on the Camp of Half blood, Percy has a new friend, Annabeth. Annabeth is a young girl who already knows her real identity as a half blood.

The dialogue is talking about Percy that still does not know his real identity. He thought he is a common human. There, Annabeth tells him and gives him explanation about the food, nectar and ambrosia that she gives to him. That food is given only for half blood and definitely not the food for human because that food can kill human. Half blood means half human and half god combination and Percy Jackson is half blood based on Annabeth explanation.

This different birth and parentage pattern gives meaning that human psyche indicates human hope in which the existence of god in human is formed through his child which is semi divine. It shows that god really exists among human.

In relation with the different birth and parentage of hero, hero grows up in uncommon condition. In the novel, it is reflected by hero who does not know his father.

My mom doesn't like to talk about him because *it* makes her sad. She has no pictures. See, they weren't married. She told me he was rich and important, and their relationship was a secret. Then one day, he set sail across the Atlantic on some important journey, and he never came back. Lost at sea, my mom told me. Not dead. Lost at sea. (Riordan, 2006; 13)

"I'm sorry about your mom, Percy. But that's not what I mean. I'm talking about your other parent. Your dad."

"He's dead. I never knew him."

Annabeth sighed. Clearly, she'd had this conversation before with other kids. "Your father's not dead, Percy."

"How can you say that? You know him?"

"No, of course not."

"Then how can you say—"

"Because I know *you*. You wouldn't be here if you weren't one of us." (Riordan, 2006; 42)

From the first quotation above, it explains that Percy does not know about his father. He thinks that his father has been dead since he was born because he never meets him or lost at the sea as her mother told him. Percy's mother does not give more information about the figure of Percy's father. There is something mystery about this

because his mother give very limited information. In the second quotation, it tells about the dialogue between Percy and Annabeth. Percy does not have any portrait about his father in his mind. Annabeth knows that Percy's father must be a god. Percy is one of half blood, like as other camper that lives in Half blood Camp.

Hero has divine blessing. This is because hero is God's chosen people. Hero is created with some of the character from divine being. Hero that is born as human is mortal and frail, but gods is sprung by certain powerful ability that has the ability to maintain life and achieve the quest.

Based on the novel, *Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief*, Percy which is the son's of human mother and god father springs certain ability that somehow in the human world, that ability is lackness.

I have moments like that a lot, when my brain falls asleep or something and the next thing, I've know that I've missed something, as if a puzzle piece fell out of the universe and left me staring at the blank place behind it. The school counselor told me this was part of ADHD, my brain misinterpreting things. (Riordan, 2006; 7)

I have dyslexia and attention deficit disorder and I had never made above a C- in my life. (Riordan, 2006; 4)

Percy is considered has ADHD and dyslexia. ADHD is the condition makes Percy's brain misinterpreting things. Then, dyslexia is unable to read alphabet. Therefore he has difficulties in reading English word in written form. Because of that, Percy often makes troubles on his school and gets bad scores on every lesson he takes. Actually both are the divine blessing which has not develops well. Those divine blessings bring negative impacts to his ordinary human life.

She'd send me right back to Yancy, remind me that I had to try harder, even if this was my sixth school in six years and I was probably going to be kicked out again. I wouldn't be able to stand that sad look she'd give me. (Riordan, 2006; 4)

In the narration, Percy thinks that he should not makes any troubles on his school anymore. Percy needs to study harder and keeps calm. Those are something which is too hard for him. Therefore, as stated in quotation, Percy is afraid to be kicked out from the school because he already moves from one school to another school for several times that makes his uncomfortable to adapt again.

Hero would have some powerful strength that ordinary people does not have. Dyslexia and ADHD for Percy in his heroic journey are his super power. Dyslexia makes Percy to be able to read Ancient Greek naturally. And then ADHD is very important to Percy because it can save his life from dangerous battles.

I now understood what Annabeth had said about ADHD keeping you alive in battle. I was wide awake, noticing every little detail. I could see where Ares was tensing. I could tell which way he would strike. At the same time, I was aware about Annabeth and Grover, thirty feet to my left. I saw a second cop car pulling up siren wailing. Spectators, who had been wandering the street because of the earthquake are starting to gather. Among the crowd, I though I saw a few who were walking with the strange, trotting gait of disguised satyrs. They were shimmering forms of spirits too, as if the dead had risen from Hades to watch the battle. I heard the flap of leathery wings circling somewhere above. (Riordan, 2006; 163)

Conclusion

Myth is the product of human creativity that pours collecting unconscious into consciousness. Myth concerns on the story of the origin of the world, and the nature of universe and the figure of god and goddess. In myth, there produce lots source of archetypes.

Archetype is the motif that appear again and again from the past, present, and future. In literary, it can be in form of theme, plot, character, others. Archetype connects with psychology, where when identifying archetype, we can know about the indication of the production of the archetype. How archetype is produced and why it always keeps the same through the times and it is universal. This paper concerns on the archetype of hero in myth using the novel written by Rick Riordan, *Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief*. The writer digs out the pattern and its meaning relates with our universal psyche.

Completed doing the analysis, the writer concludes that the pattern of the hero in myth is dynamic; still has same pattern with the classic hero from the classic myth. There are several patterns that occur in the character of hero in myth. They are specialty of the birth and childhood of the hero, divine blessing, atonement, individuation process, metaphysic, and the descent to the death.

Each of the patterns has their own meaning, which describes human aspiration and inspiration. Human creates hero as the ideal figure by combining experiences, senses, conceptualizations, and imaginations from the collective unconscious. Through the character of hero in myth, human in every generation carries out human's

hopes, fears, thoughts and values that underlie human behavior. All societies have similar hero stories not because they coincidentally make them up on their own, but because heroes are a kind of metaphor for the human search of self-knowledge.

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