JOSEPH CAMPBELL'S MONOMYTH AS PRESENTED IN *SPIDER-MAN* FILM

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A FINAL PROJECT STATEMENT

I certify that this graduating paper is definitely my own work. I am completely responsible for the content of this graduating paper, other writer's opinion of findings include in the graduating paper are quoted or cited in accordance with ethical standards.

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ABSTRACT

The title of this graduating paper is *Joseph Campbell's Monomyth as Presented in Spider-Man Film*. The writer had chosen *Spider-Man* film because of the theme contained inside, it is about heroism. The theme was chosen for one single reason. Heroism is a natural identifying feature in every human. The method used in this research is qualitative, by using descriptive analysis. The function of this research is to describe what Joseph Campbell means by *monomyth* or *hero's journey* as an expert in mythology, and how the theory can be applied in *Spider-Man* film. As a consequence, the theory of *monomyth* or *hero's journey* will be used as a reference. According to the theory, the hero's journey and hero as a main character in many stories, fairytales, and myths around the world, unconciously appears in similar shapes and patterns, even the author is unconcious about that. Since all of the examples in Joseph Campbell's theory are mythological story, it becomes interesting to find out the compatibility of the theory when it is applied in the post-modernism story or film such as *Spider-Man*. The result of this research is to give conclusion that the pattern of Joseph Campbell's theory actually has a relevance and fit when it is applied in *Spider-Man* film, eventhough this film is categorized as a post-modernism film.

Keywords: film, heroism, *Spider-Man*, Joseph Campbell, *monomyth*, *hero's journey*.

ABSTRAK

Judul skripsi ini adalah *Joseph Campbell's Monomyth as Presented in Spider-Man Film*. Penulis memilih film *Spider-Man* karena tema yang terdapat didalamnya yaitu tentang kepahlawanan. Tema tersebut dipilih karena satu alasan. Kepahlawanan merupakan sifat alami yang dimiliki setiap manusia. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah kualitatif dengan menggunakan analisis deskriptif. Fungsi dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mendeskripsikan apa yang dimaksud *monomyth* atau *hero's journey* menurut ahli mitologi, Joseph Campbell dan bagaimana hal tersebut dapat diterapkan didalam film *Spider-Man*. Sebagai tindak lanjutnya, teori *monomyth* atau *hero's journey* itulah yang akan digunakan sebagai acuan. Menurut teori tersebut, perjalanan pahlawan dan pahlawan sebagai tokoh utama dalam banyak cerita, dongeng dan mitos di berbagai negara di dunia ini muncul dalam bentuk dan pola yang hampir sama dengan tanpa disadari, bahkan oleh pengarangnya sendiri. Karena semua contoh dalam teori Joseph Campbell adalah cerita mitologi, maka akan menjadi menarik untuk mencari tau aspect kesesuaian teori tersebut ketika diaplikasikan kedalam cerita atau film pos-modernisme seperti *Spider-Man*. Hasil dari penelitian ini memberikan kesimpulan bahwa pola yang dimaksud dalam teori Joseph Campbell ternyata memiliki relevansi dan kecocokan ketika diterapkan dalam film *Spider-Man*, meskipun film ini termasuk kedalam film era pos-modernisme.

Kata kunci: film, kepahlawanan, *Spider-Man*, Joseph Campbell, *monomyth*, *hero's journey*.

MOTTO

And fear ALLAH. And ALLAH teaches you. And ALLAH is knowing of all things. (Q.S Al-Baqarah: 282).

Be a Good Moslem, or Die as a Syuhada.

With Great Power, Comes Great Responsibility.

DEDICATION

This Graduating Paper is dedicated with Love, Honour, and Affection to:

My Beloved Parents (Mardini and Abdul Aziz)

My Sister (Siti Aminah)

My Brother (Zainal Abidin)

ALL of My Lecturers in English Department

And Ade' for her patience (Siska Dewi Purwati)

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

Art and humanity research begins with a desire to understand the human condition. For centuries, literature has provided the source of material for reflection on what it means to be human. While literature continues to enlighten us, for some time film has provided a visual alternative (Yazdani, 2011: 1). Both, come from the human, and for the human. They show the portrayal of human in different shapes.

Yazdani also mentioned that, film not only offers a narrative similar to literature, it also provides an audio-visual feast for the senses, and in the quick-fix, past-paced, Technicolor whirl of the twenty-first century, it is this feast which best mirrors our experience of modern life (2011: 1). Film is also a loaded word nowadays. It is fulfilled by many interpretations, meanings, significances, and another interesting side. At least there are some meanings that represent what is the film means exactly.

First, film is a new literature work in the world of literature. The film is one of some potential industries, United States prove that by creating many internationalized films, one well-known is Hollywood. The history of Hollywood is bound up with he history of America. As a nation growing to become an international superpowing during the twentieth century, America took the lead in global politics, manufacturing and business (Geraghty, 2011: 8), that is why

United States' film is appropriate to be used in taking examples for every kind discourse. United States' films also can be assumed as forms of cultural discourse. Second, we are as a society use the filmic form to tell stories about who we are and our society-they are a record of what makes us human and what concerns us in the everyday. Even with the influence of new media technologies that have changed the way we now watch films (not in the cinema but at home and online) films are still very much part of the media landscape (Geraghty, 2011: 8).

Third, the film is visual media, and it is included in popular culture domain. As popular literature work, the film brings messages by using its own way. One of those messages is myth. In Jungian psychology, myths are collective dreams, the communal expression of a culture's goals, wishes, anxieties and fear as cited in (http://web.calstatela.edu/faculty/sfischo/classicalHeroes.html).

Talking about film, it has something to do with photography. Photography is a form of self-expression (Prakel, 2010: 6). For many photographers, that is where the subject begins and ends. Their aim is to refine a personal vision, whatever the subject-to create the most beautiful, the most moving, or the most communicative image possible (2010: 6). To make interaction, it is important to make images or pictures, even moving photograph such as film visible, unhidden and effective in sending messages to the audience.

This research tries to analyze American's myth in seeing hero, especially Superhero. *Spider-Man* film is chosen by the writer.*Spider-Man* film is providing a few different themes, such as heroism, love, the good versus the evil, and defending justice in society. That is why, this film is multi-dimentional, which

means it can be analyzed using several different dicourses. With many aspects that can be explored, means many results to get more point of views. The writer also finds that this film has many education messages, such as kindness, honesty, and giving respect to each other especially to the parents. This film is very different to the other films with the same theme. In this film the portayal of hero is very ordinary, while Bruce in *Batman* is so rich and muscular, or Tony in *Iron Man* is rich and genious, in *Spider-Man* Peter is only portrayed as an ordinary boy who is still in Senior High School, very young and not rich. In addition, this film, is also the first sequel in the form of live action and the first sequel that went to the box office after the serials in cartoon and serials in live action, and yet the film jumped of the page, even more dazling than the older ones.

*Spider-Man*film, which is going to be analyzed in this research is originally based on comic book *The Amazing Spider-Man* by Stan Lee and Steve Ditko, adapted to the film. Adaptation is not a new phenomenon at all. Intertextual studies show that stories always seem to derive from other stories. Even the ancient Greek playwrights, like Sochoples and Euripides, based their plays in most cases on myth and stories that had already been told (Engelstad, 2011: 1). The British scholar Christopher Brooker recently published a very thorough piece of research in which he shew, and in fact proved, that the most stories of the world-from myths and fairy-tales, novel and plays to Hollywood films and TV soap operas can structurally and thematically be reduced to “seven basic plots” (2011: 1).

In 1962, in Amazing Fantasy #15, *Spider-Man* is known as one of the world's most recognizable heroes (Dickinson, 2012: 1). He quickly sparked his own published series, "The Amazing Spider-Man", the following year and has not been out of print since. His stories have inspired countless comic continuities, a number of animated television series, one live action television series, a trilogy of films and a remake. His symbol appears on mugs, t-shirts, pyjamas, costume bags, notebooks, pencils, and bag sheets. Many people who know Spider-Man film have never read a comic in their life. In a poll of 100 favourite comic book heroes he came third, with Batman in second, and Superman in first (2012: 1).

Then, let us start knowing about the film. Spider-Man(Raimi 2002) is a blockbuster superhero movie which helps set the stage for current cycle of superhero-inspired movies due to its great financial and critical success at the worldwide box office. it grosses US$822 million worldwide, and is rated 90 % at review aggregator site RottenTomatoes.com (Koh, 2009: 1). In this film, nerdy high school student Peter Parker is bitten by a genetically engineered spider. This results in his developing spider-like superpowers. After inadvertently causing the death of Uncle Ben, his father figure , through selfishness, Peter internelizes Uncle Ben's maxim that with great power comes great resposibility. He then fights evil. The evil is personified by the Green Goblin alter-ego of the wealthy industrialist Norman Osborne-as the costumed superhero Spider-Man (2009: 1). It can be said that, those things above, are some of the reasons why the writer chooses *Spider-Man* film, the effects of its popularity.

Theme is sometimes used interchangeably with “motif,” but the term is more usefully applied to a general concept or doctrine, whether implicit or asserted, which an imaginative work is designed to involve and make persuasive to the reader (Abrams, 1970: 205). The next question appears when people ask about why choosing hero as theme, not the other themes. It can be answered since hero is one of good elements in life.

Heroism is a natural identifying feature in every human. According to Webster’s New World Dictionary defines a hero as (1) any person admired for qualities or achievements and regarded as an ideal or model, (2) any person admired for courage, nobility, or exploits, esp. in war, (3) the central figure in any important events or period, honored for outstanding qualities. Another definition of hero or protagonist is, the chief character of a work, on whom our interest centers (Abrams, 1970: 128). A hero is defined by Joseph Campbell as “someone who has given his life to something bigger than himself.” The hero may set off on the adventure intentionally, like Beowulf, or the hero may be thrown into the adventure. However, the hero is always prepared for the journey. The hero’s life lessons have prepared him/her for the trials that will be faced while on the journey. From those definitions, they give more supporting arguments about the hero and by knowing them the writer is more convinced to say once more that people need or want to be a hero in their own life.

On the other hand, as in Abrams’s book, he said that the hero is the chief character of a work, on whom our interest centers (Abrams, 1970: 265). It becomes true phenomenon and it does happen in the real practice. For example,

when people watch a film especially the film with the heroism theme inside, people are focused on the hero himself as a main character. People are focused on what the hero does, what the hero acts, and what is the hero sensation during the film showing. It is not wrong phenomenon and it is wise, but there is another wise thing too besides concerning the main hero as a main character only, they are stages of the hero's journey. All stories consist of common structural elements of stages found universally in myths, fairy tales, dreams, and movies (Vogler, 2007: xxviii). There are some stages compose the hero's journey that will be coming along to analyze in the discussion chapter using Joseph Campbell's patterns.

By putting the stages of the hero's journey in the discussion, the readers are able to get additional perspective and as a result to know more about what the hero exactly is, how it builds, and how it is implemented in the story especially in *Spider-Man*film. Moreover, for general, the readers are expected to know that every single story of heroes is built by using the same unconcious patterns. But, since all of the examples in Joseph Campbell's theory are mythological stories or heroes, it becomes interesting to find out the compatibility of the theory when it is applied in the post-modernism hero story or film such as *Spider-Man* film.

Since this research is using film as a subject, the theory of film is necessary to be applied. The writer uses the theory of photography by David Prakel. This theory is necessary element in analyzing the pictures or images taken from the film since every image needs to be read, interpreted and examined. The theory is intended to provide the way the images presenting the story.

Spider-Man film was analyzed by some scholars since its publish. Some are only focused on the brief characters, and another one on the larger scale, the intrinsic elements. The writer thinks that these discourses are not enough. The writer wants to explore more, and intends to give another point of view in watching a film. That is why the writer concerns to elevate the points in the beginning of the chapter, to enrich the readers' knowledge by presenting the stages of hero's journey behind a film with the heroism theme inside.

1.2 Problem Statements

In case to figure out what the concern points in this research, the writer categorizes a few questions that will be answered in the discussion:

1. How do the stages of hero's journey fit to the story of *Spider-Man* film?
2. How can the stages be explained?

1.3 Objectives of Study

This research is originally goaled to figure out about more maximum overviews that can be explored from the film, especially the film with heroism aspects inside. The stages of hero's journey are the main concerns that will be analyzed using Joseph Campbell's theory, concepts, and patterns.

Based on the writer's statement in the previous chapter, nowadays, people are only focused on the hero as a main character. People focus on what the hero does, what the hero acts, and what is the hero sensation during the film showing. By using this research, the writer hoped that the paradigm will be changed or at

least today's overviews of the people about the hero can be enriched. To answer the questions of the problem statement above, the writer divides basic points in the followings:

1. To explain how the stages of hero's journey fit in *Spider-Man* film.
2. To explain each stages that appears in *Spider-Man* film.

1.4 Significance of Study

This research essentially has a few significances, such as:

1. Theoretically, this research is expected to be good and appropriate reference in term to understand the stages of the hero's journey according to Joseph Campbell. This research is also expected that it can be useful for the students (English Department especially), lectures and mostly people who love films, especially films with the hero themes or the heroic aspects inside.
2. Practically, this research has a few purposes, such as:
   a. For the students, it is expected that this research can give brief, clear, and interesting overview in understanding or studying the hero, especially when it is applied in the film.
   b. For the lecturers, it is expected that this research can be a good reference, supporting element, or alternative choice when they want to look for another source.
   c. For literary world, it is expected to be example when the hero is analyzed. The things inside this research may become the bridges

of integration between the theory itself and the work. Furthermore, this research may helps the analyzing of the hero theme when it is implemented to the work, especially film.

d. For ordinary people, they may understand about what they watch and the essences of it. Afterwards, they may have new overview of hero as a part of their life.

1.5 Literature Review

*Spider-Man*film is interesting to be analyzed since it offers many reasons. Some reasons that may be deserved to analyze are; it is popular film around the world because it contains many different themes at once, one of them is heroism which does exist in human life, while the main character as a hero in this film is portrayed as an orninary young boy, who does not look so special. Besides, it also a film that has required elements in literary work such as characters, plots, settings, etc. Because of those reasons a scholar named Neny Daniaty from University of North Sumaterawrote a research entitled “BRIEF DESCRIPTION ON CHARACTERS IN *SPIDERMAN* MOVIE”. In the writer opinion, the research only gives description of characters in *Spider-Man* film, and it does not mention about detail explanation of the character itself which is necessary to make the readers understand the whole story, and what it is all about.

Another research was written by Suana, from UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta University. The title of her research is “HEROISM AS SEEN IN SEQUEL MOVIE *SPIDERMAN 2*: A SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS”. By looking on

the title only, the writer knows that she uses Semiotic theory to analyze the symbol of Heroism from the film. Furthermore, she describes in the abstract of her research that it is Pierce's theory of Semiotic. Using the icons, indexes, and symbol as parts of analysis. This is what she and the writer do not have in common, the similarity in using the theory. The analysis of the film will completely different since the writer uses the theory of Joseph Campbell of the stages of hero's journey.

Inaddition, the writer also finds a research with the same subject. It is written by Ai Rahmiyati, a scholar from Indonesia University. In her research, she focuses on the dynamic of identity formation through the character Peter Parker in the Spider-Man and Spider-Man 2, directed by the same director, Sam Raimi. Actually, her study applies the psychoanalysis theory by Jacques Lacan and the theory of interpellation by Louis Althusser. These both theory are used to show the dynamic of the main character Peter Parker. The ending of her research is knowing the identity formation of Peter Parker that is influenced by the condition of his subjectivity that is vuinerable to change and this subjectivity can also show Peter's identity relates to the conflicts of his life. By the explanations above, the writer knows that this research does not have any similarity with the writer's mine in the theoretical aspect. Besides, Ai's research uses two films.

And another research, the last one that the writer can find is, a research by Tuta Kesti, she uses Joseph Campbell theory of the monomyth. She uses it to analyze the heroes in *Trilogy: The Lord of The Rings* by J.R.R Tolkiens, a novel,where she picks up some "heroes" whose she believes they are real heroes

in the story. The research gives additional perspective to the writer actually. But, this time, the writer wants to pick a film and only be focused on a main character, a single character that the writer calls as a hero.

Based on the reasons above, the writer is challenged to figure out more about what is the story of Spider-Man filmabout, and how the Joseph Campbell theory of the monomyth can be seen through during the film.

1.6 Theoretical Approach

Theory means a set of concepts used to define and/or explain some phenomenon(Silverman, 2000: 77).In terms of gaining the goals in this research, the writer uses Joseph Campbell's theory about monomyth or the stages of the hero's journey and the theory of photography by David Prakel.

The hero in Campbell theory can be man or woman either, but in this case, Campbell uses the calling as "he", the writer believes that the use of word "he" because of we are living inside the patriarchy world. So, the writer shall follow Campbell's lead on this. Besides, the hero that will be analyzed by the writer is a man.

In his theory, Campbell divides the stages of hero's journey into three sections or phases. The first major phase is *Departure*, which is containing the hero who begins his journey from "world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder" (Campbell, 2004: 28). The second phase is *Initiation*, which is containing the hero has to go through many trials in order to get what he has come to take. The last phase is *Return*, in this phase, the hero completes his

mission and comes home with a “boon” that he has got along his journey to give it “on his fellow man” (2004: 28). Each phase is also divided into several different stages and the writer will explain them in the next chapter.

In using the theory of photograpy, the writer decides to limit in the scope of fundamentals in photography only. It has to be like that since the fundamental things are considered in providing parts of formal elements in the photography itself. Which means, these parts have a function as guiding or essential principles on which something relates to photography is based (Prakel, 2010: 10). In this research the phases and the stages along with the composition and technique of photographyare used to analyze the image found and examine their appearances. Then, the detail explanation of the theories will be presented in the next chapter.

1.7 Methods of Study

According to *Webster third New International Dictionary* (1942), *method* is a procedure or process for attaining an object as a sistematic procedure, technique, or set of rules employed in philosophical inquiry.

1.7.1 Type of Research

This research is included in Qualitative Research. According to Natasha Mack in her book *Qualitative Research Methods: A Data-Collector’s field Guide* (2005: 4), it is typically more flexible-that is, they allow greater spontaneity and adaptation of the interaction between the researcher and the study participant.

Qualitative research has two ways in its completion. The first way is field research which means the researcher goes to the field to get the necessary data. In

the process the research can observe survey the phenomenon of the object. The second way is Library Research which means the researcher can do the research by observing books which are necessary.

Thus, the writer uses library research since the writer only uses literary books and electronic books to get supporting elements and necessary needs in analyzing the issues.

1.7.2 Data Sources

The Qualitative Research has two kinds of data resources, both are primarily data and secondary data. The primary data is the principal data used in the research, while the secondary data is supporting data used to enrich the research.

In doing this research, the writer tries to get both, primary data and secondary data. The primary data are the Spider-Man film itself and the book of Joseph Campbell in PDF form entitled *The Hero With A Thousand Faces,* and the secondary data are the captured images of the film and the script or dialogues. In addition, the list of hero's journey based on Campbell's orders will be used too, along with indicators of each stage.

1.7.3 Data Collection Technique

The writer does the observation by watching the film and capturing images that have clues and representative aspects to support the indicators of the stages. The writer also read the book, some references, and some literature reviews in case to help getting more informations and understandings about Campbell's theory. Besides, the writer also does the documentation by searching important

and necessary information in the book, also getting reference as much as possible in the library and internet.

1.7.4 Data Analysis Technique

After collecting and gathering the data from sources mentioned before, the writer explains how they relate each others or what are the relations that can be bound and found from one to another, until the last data. By doing this kind of technique, the writer believes that it can be produce make-sense and evidently conclusion.

1.8 Paper Organization

This research will consist four chapters and each of them is subdivided in subsequent divisions. The organizing of each chapter is as follows: Chapter one presents the introduction which consists Background of Study,Problem Statements, Objectives of Study, Significancen of Study, Literature Review, Theoretical Approach, Methods of Research and Paper Organization. Chapter two consists of the Joseph Campbell theory about the monomyth or the stages of hero's journey and the theory of photography by David Prakel which will be used to analyze. Chapter three presents the Analysis of*Spider-Man*filmcontents in reference to the conception of the theories. Chapter four provides Conclusion

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

4.1 Conclusion

After finishing analysis of Spider-Man film in Chapter III, the writer concludes that, basically, Spider-Man film follows the Hero's Journey devised by Joseph Campbell. It can be seen through from the phase "initiation" until "return". In initiation phase, all stages occur explicitely and symbolically. Only, the writer has to change the order devised by Campbell at the second order a little bit, the second stage in initiation is supposed to be "Refusal of The Call" but actually the "The Belly of The Whale" replaces it. It has to be like that since the first stage "The Call to The Adventure" leads an effect of the belly of the whale very well. Moreover, it is based on the plot of the story. While the other stages, Refusal of The Call, Supernatural Aid, and The Crossing of The First Threshold are in the same orders after that.

While the second or middle phase "Initiation" along with the stages inside, are very much similar to the orders of Campbell. All stages occur in this phase, and they also follow the orders. By this, the writer can state that Spider-Man film provides the most visible and obvious phase along its stages in the middle part of its story. In contrary, the third or end phase is only filled by stage "Refusal of The Return". The writer believes that this is because Spider-Man film has the second sequel and the third sequel. To sum up, the writer is convinced that there is a

possibility of the third phase along its stages would be found no matter how the way they appear in one of the two sequels or even both.

4.2 Suggestion for Future Researchers

This research is analyzes *Spider-Man* film using the theory of *monomyth* or *hero's journey*. The writer suggests for future researchers to analyze the three sequels of *Spider-Man* film. It is important since the writer only finds one stage on phase of Return. The completed stages and phases may be found in the whole sequels of *Spider-Man* film.

After talking about heorism in this research, the writer completely knows that it has something to do with the concept of heroism in Islam. All qualities about hero in the previous analysis are already existed in the figure of Rasulullah Muhammad SAW. As what all moslems know, Rasulullah Muhammad SAW is known as the greatest hero in Islam, even on the entire world. Rasulullah is the last messenger of ALLAH SWT, God. He was given the most difficult task, it is bringing human kind from the dark period to the brightest era. The most difficult task costs the most difficult obstacles. But, Rasulullah always sacrifices himself for the sake of his followers. He struggles with the best passion, he has no fear in in facing many kafirs, but does not ever hesitate in giving his love to everyone. That what makes he is known as the most noble man. In Surah An-Nisa, ALLAH SWT said that:

"O Mankind, the Messenger has come to you with the truth from your Lord, so believe; it is better for you. But if you disbelieve – then indeed, to Allah

belongs whatever is in the heavens and earth. And ever is Allah Knowing and Wise".

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَاءَكُمُ الرَّسُولُ بِالْحَقِّ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ فَآمِنُوا

خَيْرًا لَكُمْ وَإِنْ تَكْفُرُوا فَإِنَّ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضِ

وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا

(Q.S. An-Nisa, verse 170)

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