Archetypal Hero: Tracing the Presentation of Hero's Journey in 2013 Hollywood Action Movies

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Hollywood has been a center where art, dreams, fantasy, and technological advance are blended into one of the most influential products of popular culture, movies. The popularity of Hollywood movies has been thought as the result of professionally managed entertainment industry, backed up by the use of latest technology and massive advertisement. In fact, those factors play only on "the surface"; there is something more instrumental embedded in the psyche of both film makers and viewers that lead to the world-wide acceptance of Hollywood movies. Psychologist Carl Jung calls this element archetype. It resides in the unconscious layer of human psyche, regardless their cultural and geographical background.

Archetypes are ever-present, mainly through any mode of narratives, though variation and modification occur from time to time. However, the essence of the archetypes are mostly invariable. This paper is aimed to reveal the presentation of hero archetypes in 2013 Hollywood action movies. The genre was selected due to its explicit exploit of heroes and heroic narration. Employing Jung's conception of archetypes, combined with Joseph Campbell's theories of hero's archetypes and myths, the writer traced the occurrence of symbols, images, narration, and any form of presentation of hero's archetypes in seven Hollywood action movies released in 2013.

Keywords: *archetype – hero – hero's journey – action movies*

INTRODUCTION

It is an undeniable fact that the popularity of American movies exceeds that of most forms popular culture in the word. The result is that many non-American films have lost market share to the sophistication of American films and film industry. American movies have replaced almost all shows in movie theaters. Anywhere around the world most cinemas are crowded with movie goers who are eagerly line up to see Hollywood latest movies. This situation has raised concerns, especially among intellectuals in many countries, on the possible cultural impact of American movies on the people.

In Indonesia, and elsewhere in developing countries, American movies have been accused of having caused negative impacts on the psyche of the people. The most frequent targets for this charge are action movies and love story or romance movies. People criticize American action movies their excessive exploit of violence, while love story movies are accused of promoting casual-sexual relationship. However, all these concerns and charges do not stop movie goers from watching American movies. In fact, those two genres are among the top genres that sell well or become box-office. Today, with the rapid development of modern information technology like the internet, people, in fact, have wider and easier access to everything about Hollywood and its movie production, including the list of latest movies.

This leads to the question of why people around the world prefer watching American movies to any other movies. In a classic book of movie analysis entitled *Movie: A Psychological Analysis*, Martha Wolfenstein and Nathan Leites provide the answer for such question. They write, "The American movies do not try to reconcile their audiences to the disappointment and complication of life by dramatizing them" (1950: 22). This may answer the question of why American movies sell well world-wide, including in Indonesia. American moviemakers seem to know exactly what people want to see on the screen. There must be universal themes presented in American movies that bind people from many different cultures together in clusters of common interpretation. Psychologists Carl Jung and Sigmund Freud pioneered the study of the "common memory" that shows the existence of the apparently universal human thought-process shared by people around the world through generations. Jung calls it "collective unconsciousness" that later becomes the basis of his hypothesis on archetypes (Jung, 1958).

In literary analysis, archetypal approach is sometime combined with mythological approach to form a complementary insight in order to discover how certain works of literature reveal the so-called archetypes or archetypal patterns that the writer has drawn forward along the tensed structural wires of his or her masterpiece and that vibrate in such a way that a sympathetic resonance is set off deep within the reader (Guerin (et al.), 2005:182-183). In simpler sentence, this combination of approaches will provide us to seek out the presentation of common symbols and images in various types of narratives that are universally shared by people around the world in their collective unconsciousness. The idea of collective is important here, since archetypes are not bound to personal acquisition, but to collective memories. Jung (1953:67) often used 'myth' or 'mythologem' for narrative expression at the 'ethnological level' of the archetypes.

Archetypes may find their way into narratives in the form of a typical character, story line, plot, imagery or themes and through their interconnectedness provide aplatform for analysis. The study, of how and why these typified narrative elements correspond between different literary works and transcend the limits of time and culture, is known as Archetypal or Myth Criticism. According to Rupprecht (2005:1-5) archetypal critics, the most prominent of these probably being Joseph Campbell (1972), claim that shared themes and images (and by implication, shared character identities) are the main determinants of notable literary works. The aim of Archetypal and Myth Criticism is not merely to view the role of the author and his work in a reductive manner, but rather to propose the idea that the literary text gives imaginative focus to pre-existing social forms of representation and meaning, and that instead of mirroring the world, literature actually mirrors other significant works of literature. Archetypal critics believe that art along with all other modes of human expression, serves only as a duplication or imitation of other cultural-aesthetic products and their constituents. This is exactly why archetypal critics believe that there are always occurrences of patterns, images, symbols bearing certain meaning that tend to be universal.

Hero and hero's journey is one of the archetypes that are almost always present in narratives in every culture. In fact, most narratives are stories about heroes and their journeys. In his two books *The Masks of Gods: Primitive Mythology* (1960) and *The Hero with Thousand Faces* (1968) Joseph Campbell gives evidences for the consistent presentation of heroes and his journeys found in almost any narratives across culture from generation to generation. Because of its universality Campbell calls the myth of hero monomyth (2004: 1-37).

The archetypes of heroes and their journey can be found almost in any narrative, be it ancient or contemporary, classic or popular, religious or secular, in fairy tales or even movies. This recurrent pattern is indeed in line with Jung's thesis of archetypes and the collective unconsciousness by which shared memories, values, and hopes are found almost

in similar forms in any cultures. This is the point of departure for the discussion of the representation of heroes and their journey in American action movies presented in this paper. From this point of view, the world-wide acceptability of American action movies is obviously due to their capability to capture and present the shared values of what so called hero archetypes, which already reside in the "collective unconsciousness" of people, more specifically of the movie goers, around the world.

METHODS

The source of data in this research is seven American action movies released in 2013. Those movies are *Olympus Has Fallen* (Millennium Films), *Pacific Rim* (Warner Bros. Picture), *Parker* (Filmdistrict), *Bullet to the Head* (IM Global), *GI Joe Retaliation* (Paramount Picture), *Oblivion* (Universal Studios), and *After Earth* (Columbia). The data are in the form of images, scenes, narrations, and depictions in the movies that correspond to the questions of the research. Data are collected by watching the movies, taking notes, selecting, and categorizing images, scenes, narrations, and depictions to reveal the patterns of archetypal hero and hero journeys.

Employing descriptive-qualitative technique, the analysis of the research is focused on finding how the movies under observation depict the archetypal heroes and the pattern of hero's journey. This is done by interpreting the acquired data based on the theoretical consideration. The stages of hero's journey in each movie is identified and, then, compared to those in other movies. Similarities and differences found among all movies are noted and then decided their significance in structuring the stories. Deviations from the pattern are also considered as to what extent they affect the overall plot of the hero's journey.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The result of the analysis on seven Hollywood action movies released in 2013 shows that there are apparent recurrences of archetypal heroes and their journeys in the presentation of characters and plot of the stories. Though the settings may vary greatly, both in time and place, the outlines of the story are obviously the same. All movies under observation depict archetypal heroes and their journeys following the patterns theorized by Joseph Campbell in *Hero with Thousand Faces* (1968).

According to Campbell a hero is "any male or female who leaves the world of his or her everyday life to undergo a journey to a special world where challenges and fears are overcome in order to secure a quest, which is then shared with other members of the hero's community" (2004: 263). Etymologically the word "hero" is Greek, from the root that means 'to protect and to serve.' A hero is someone who is willing to sacrifice his own needs on behalf of others. At the root, thus, the idea of Hero is connected with self-sacrifice.

According to Campbell (1968) the standard path of the mythological adventure of the hero is a magnification of the formula represented in the rites of passage: *separation – initiation – return*: which might be named the nuclear unit of the monomyth (p.23). This pattern can almost be found in any narratives from every culture depicting a hero as the central figure upon him the story is evolved. Variation may occur, but the outline of the story will likely remain similar as what Campbell point out, "Whether the hero be ridiculous or sublime, Greek or barbarian, gentile or Jew, his journey varies little in essential plan. Popular tales represent the heroic action as physical; the higher religions show the deed to be moral; nevertheless, there will be found astonishingly little variation in the morphology of the adventure, the character roles involved, the victories gained " (1968:30).

The pattern of hero's journey describes the typical adventure of the archetype known as The Hero, the person who goes out and achieves great deeds on behalf of the group, tribe, or civilization. In his *A Practical Guide to Joseph Campbell's The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1985) Christopher Vogler elaborates the stages of hero's journey into twelve stages which constitute the cycle of hero's journey from ordinary world to a kind of special world (world of quest) and back to ordinary world. The twelve stages of hero's journey are, at certain degree, explicitly applied in all seven action movies analyzed in this paper. Modification and variation that occur in one or two stages do not, in fact, create significant deviation from the fixed pattern.

The Ordinary World.

In this stage the hero, uneasy, uncomfortable or unaware, is introduced sympathetically so the audience can identify with the situation or dilemma. The hero is shown against a background of environment, heredity, and personal history. Some kind of polarity in the hero's life is pulling in different direction and causing stress. This stage also marks the stage of separation where he must face the fact that he is left or excluded from his environment. In *Olympus Has Fallen* the hero, Mike Banning, a former head of Secret Service, is forced to leave his job after his failure to rescue the president's five in a car accident. Since then he has to live an ordinary life and give away his passion as president's guard force. Raleigh Becket, the hero in *Pacific Rim* is banished from his job as pilot of bio-robot called Jeager after the government shut down the project. He has to deal with the fact that he is now an ordinary man working for menial job as a worker in wall construction.

Similar pattern is also employed in the movie *Parker* and *Bullet to the Head,* only in these two movies the heroes are betrayed by their group fellows and have to live solitary life. In the case of *GI Joe Retaliation*, the separation is caused by conspiracy plotted the villains in their goal to diminish the elite force GI Joe. The last two movies depict futuristic world when the earth is already uninhabitable for human being as the result of environmental damages. In *After Earth* the hero live in other planet and separated from his people after a plane crash. Meanwhile, the hero in *Oblivion,* Jack, lives a normal life after he is separated from the rest of human race after a high-tech machine apparatus called The Teth undergoes a memory modification program on him. In all those seven movies, the heroes are presented as either frustrated or uneasy concerning the situations they have to deal with. However, the audience is given clear images of the heroes' potential and special ability to be individuals capable of accomplishing great tasks.

The Call to Adventure.

In this stage something shakes up the situation, either from external pressures or from something rising up from deep within, so the hero must face the beginnings of change. This is the point in the heroes' lives when they are first given notice that everything is going to change, whether they know it or not. In Campbell words, the stage "signifies that destiny has summoned the hero and transferred his spiritual center of gravity from within the pale of his society to a zone unknown. This fateful region of both treasure and danger may be variously represented: as a distant land, a forest, a kingdom underground, beneath the waves, or above the sky, a secret island, lofty mountaintop, or profound dream state; but it is always a place of strangely fluid and polymorphous beings, unimaginable torments, superhuman deeds, and impossible delight (1968: 58).

In the movie *Olympus Has Fallen* this stage is presented through the hero's realization that something is going to happen when the President receives a visit from South Korean Prime Minister since he is aware of the tension and controversy in the Korean peninsula, especially because the US play significant role in the region. The hero in *Pacific*

Rim realizes the call of adventure when the walls the government build as the defense against the monsters Haiju are no longer effective to prevent the creatures from attacking the cities. This situation is worsened by the government decision to dismiss the Jaeger project that so far has proved to be the only effective protection against Haiju's attacks. In two rogue-action movies (the heroes are those who are considered criminals) *Parker* and *Bullet to the Head*, the call for adventure takes place when the villains pose attacks on the people who have close relation to the heroes, the wife and the work partner respectively. Roadblock and his men in GI Je Retaliation detect something is going wrong in the White House and they finally find the evidence that the president has been kidnapped and one of the villain has been replaced his position using his skill in plastic technology to imitate people's face.

The boy Kitai Raige and his father in *After Earth* realize that after the crash and being stranded on uninhabited earth, the communication device which can help them to send message for help from their planet is located 100 miles away from their spot. Given the situation that his father is badly wounded, Kitai has to reach the tail of the wrecked space ship where the communication device can be found. This is exactly where the call for adventure is presented in the movie. Meanwhile, Jack in *Oblivion* realizes his call for adventure when he finds that one of the robot he fix suddenly pose a threat on him. This is an unusual situation since all robots in The Teth are programmed to recognize their technician. Moreover, in one of his routine task to check the robots, he is suddenly trapped in a hole and surrounded by group of figures springing from the darkness that The Teth call "corpse eater". However, he finds that these creatures are not like what The Teth tells him from time to time. He realizes that something has been hidden by The Teth about the earth.

Refusal of the Call.

The hero at this stage feels the fear of the unknown and tries to turn away from the adventure, however briefly. Alternately, another character may express the uncertainty and danger ahead. This may be from a sense of duty or obligation, fear, insecurity, a sense of inadequacy, or any of a range of reasons that work to hold the person in his or her current circumstances. According to Campbell refusal of the summons converts the adventure into its negative as the hero is "walled in boredom, hard work, or 'culture,' the subject loses the power of significant affirmative action and becomes a victim to be saved" (1968: 59).

Although this stage is clearly marked in the movies studied in this research, it is not prolonged and only constitutes minor portion. However, this stage is significant in the hero's psychological response to the situation they are encountering. Releigh Becket in *Pacific Rim* at first refuses Colonel Stacker's invitation to rejoin the Jaeger squad, but after a few words from Stacker he is finally convinced to accept the mission. The heroes in *Olympus Has Fallen, Parker*, and *Bullet to the Head* only show slight hesitation about the mission they are going to undergo. The refusal for the call in *GI Joe Retaliation* is shown by Flint, one of the remaining GI Joe personnel, but not by Roadblock, the main hero of the movie. The same case also occurs in *Oblivion*, although Jack in this movie asks more questions and shows signs of doubt about the truth of the call. It is Vica, Jack's partner, who is more reluctant to accept the mission and prefers to maintain their normal life. The refusal to the call is most obvious in the hero of *After Earth* when Kitai frankly dismisses his father's order to reach the communication device. Fear conquers him, and in fact, his entire journey is bound to how to conquer his fear.

Meeting with the Mentor.

Mentor (or sometimes called wise old man, protective figure or helper) is important element in heroic narrative. He or she plays the the figure who provides the adventurer with amulet against the dragon forces he is about to pass" (Campbell, 2004: 69). At this stage the

hero comes across a seasoned figure who gives him or her training, equipment, or advice that will help on the journey. Or the hero reaches within to a source of courage and wisdom. The old man always appears when the hero is in a hopeless and desperate situation from which only profound reflection or a lucky idea can extricate him. But since, for internal and external reasons, the hero cannot accomplish this himself, the knowledge needed to compensate the deficiency comes in the form of a personified thought, i.e., in the shape of this sagacious and helpful old man" (Jung, 2001: 217ff).

The figure of mentor is present in all movies under observation and in all action movies in general. The role that he or she plays for the hero affirms what Campbell and Jung state above. In *Olympus Has Fallen*, Speaker Trumbull, the acting president, acts as the mentor for Mike Banning in his quest to combat the terrorists. Raleigh in *Pacific Rim* considers Colonel Stacker, a retired Jaeger pilot, his mentor to defeat the Haiju. *Parker* is determined to take an action after talking to Hurley, who happens to be his girlfriend's father. Taylor, the young detective in *Bullet to the Head*, is assisted by Jimmy Bobo, a professional hit man. Roadblock and his men in *GI Joe Retaliation* find their mentor in the figure of General Joe Colton, the former GI Joe commander. In *Oblivion*, Jack meets Beech, the leader of rebellion against The Teth and finally regards him as mentor. Finally, Kitai in *After Earth* makes his father a mentor who guides him in his search for the communication device and provides him with emotional and technical assistance. In all those movies, the mentors play similar role as figures who provide the heroes with guidance, assistance, and insight to undergo the journey.

Crossing the Threshold.

This stage signifies the moment when the hero commits to leaving the Ordinary World and entering a new region or condition with unfamiliar rules and values. The meeting with the mentor who guide and aid him, the hero goes forward in his adventure until he comes to the "threshold guardian" at the entrance to the zone of magnified power (Campbell, 1968: 78). Applied to the world of action movies, this stage marks the beginning of real action carried by the hero. After his contact with Trumbull, Mike in *Olympus Has Fallen*, takes decisive actions to set plans to defeat the terrorists abducting the president. So does Raleigh in *Pacific Rim*, leaving his ordinary life and accept the mission to rejoin the Jaeger squad. Taylor in *Bullet to the Head* and Parker in *Parker* are now firm in their pursuit to catch the boss of the criminals after meeting their mentors.

Roadblock and his men in *GI Joe Retaliation* set a more systematic scheme to save the president and destroy Cobra Commander and his allies after they have General Colton assistance. Jack in *Oblivion* is finally convinced to fight the Teth after Beech gives him insight about what really happens on earth and what the Teth has done to him. In *After Earth*, it needs long time for Kitai to convince himself to leave his father and seek the wrecked ship tail alone. However, his father provides him anything that he needs to undergo the journey. In the end, he stands up and goes to location of the communication device. All the heroes at this stage are ready to leave the save zone of ordinary word and enter the unknown that marks the beginning of the journey.

Test, Allies and Enemies.

This is the stage where the hero is forced to make allies and enemies in the special world, and to pass certain tests and challenges that are part of his/her training. This stage also prompts the audience about the hero's special power that distinguishes him from the rest of the people. Mike Banning (*Olympus Has Fallen*) meets Speaker Trumbull and the members of the National Security Council that not only provide him help and guidance, but also allies. The presence of the terrorists signifies the test that he has to encounter. Becket (*Pacific Rim*)

finds Mako Mori and Chuck Hansen and the rest of the Jaeger squad members as his allies. Soon after that, the test is presented to him in the form of Haiku attacks, and he triumphs over them. The allies in *Parker* is the real estate sales named Leslie Rodgers and the test is presented by a series of attempts of the Melanders to eradicate the hero and people closed to him. *In Bullet to the Head*, Taylor finds the allies in the figures of professional killer Jimmy Bobo. The enemies include Morel's men and Lt. Lebreton, a corrupt cop paid by Morel.

Former GI Joe leader General Colton plays as mentor and the ally for the heroes In *GI Joe Retaliation*. Ally also comes from Storm Shadow, one of Commander Cobra's trusted men that apparently turns against him in the middle of the story. The enemies that pose the test for the hero are Commander Cobra's armies in various forms. Jack (*Oblivion*) makes Beech's men his allies. Other significant ally is Julia, his past wife that has been made sleep for 60 years by the Teth. The enemies come in many different forms, including Vica (Jack's work partner), Sally (a computer programmed character), and the robots. *After Earth* is interesting in the sense that the allies present themselves in the form of character (Kitai's father) and animal (the mother eagle). The ultimate enemy in this movie is a blind beast that can sense fear called Ursa. The test comes from the unknown environment that poses danger and obstacles for the Hero.

Approach to the Inmost Cave.

At this stage the hero comes at last to a dangerous place, often deep underground, where the object of the quest is hidden. The hero and newfound allies prepare for the major challenge in the Special world. In many myths the hero has to descend into hell to retrieve a loved one, or into a cave to fight a dragon and gain a treasure. This stage is also referred as "the belly of the whale" which represents the final separation from the hero's known world and self. It is sometimes described as the person's lowest point, but it is actually the point when the person is between or transitioning between worlds and selves. The separation has been made, or is being made, or being fully recognized between the old world and old self and the potential for a new world/self (Campbell, 1968: 90).

This stage is clearly depicted in all seven action movies employed in this research. Mike (*Olympus Has Fallen*) finally meets Kang, the leader of the terrorists who abducted the president. Raleigh (*Pacific Rim*) arrives at the Haijus' lair deep under the sea, Parker (Parker) finds the location of the Melanders' hide out, Taylor (*Bullet to the Head*) finally has a close encounter with Morel and his strongest man, Roadblock and his men (GI Joe Retaliation) finally meets Commander Cobra in person surrounded by his armies. Like in Pacific Rim, the ultimate villains in *Oblivion* and *After Earth* are not in the form of human characters. However, the heroes' encounter with these dark forces (the center of the Teth in Oblivion and the beast Ursa in After Earth) signifies the crucial stage before the heroes experience the next step, the ordeal.

The Ordeal.

In myths and fairy tales this stage generally takes place near the middle of the story where the hero enters a central space in the Special World and confronts death or faces his or her greatest fear. Out of the moment of death comes a new life. This is the most decisive stage in the hero's journey where he is posed with the ultimate and real fear. In the end he triumphs and is ready to take his reward. Campbell summarizes this stage as, "Dragons have now to be slain and surprising barriers passes - again, again, and again. Meanwhile there will be a multitude of preliminary victories, unretainable ecstasies and momentary glimpses of the wonderful land" (1968: 108-109).

In Hollywood action movies this stage is commonly presented in form of final showdown between the hero and the ultimate villain. The hero's ability is tested in a final,

death-or-alive battle. The villain is commonly stronger and more powerful, but it is the hero's destiny to defeat it and return the peace for the people. Mike (*Olympus Has Fallen*) defeat and kill Kang in a one-on-one fight, Becket succeeds to destroy Haijus' lair by planting an atomic bomb (*Pacific Rim*), Parker (Parker), assisted by Leslie, kills all the members of the Melanders and the criminal boss Dazinger, Taylor and Jimmy Bobo (*Bullet to the Head*) destroy Morel and his men, including Mr. Keegan, the strong hit men hired by Morel, in the final showdown. The Teth is finally destroyed by Jack with the assistance of Beech (Oblivion) and Kitai, after conquering his own fear, slays Ursa in a one-on-one fight with the monster (*After Earth*).

The Reward.

The hero takes possession of the treasure won by facing perils and death. There may be celebration, but there is also danger of losing the treasure again. Campbell calls this reward boon. It is what the hero goes on the journey to achieve. All the previous steps serve to prepare and purify the person for this step, since in many myths the boon is something transcendent like the elixir of life itself, or a plant that supplies immortality, or the Holy Grail (1968:181-182).

All the heroes in the movies get their reward for their heroic deeds. Mike (*Olympus has Fallen*) gets the president's and the people trust once again, Raleigh (*Pacific Rim*) finally gets his revenge for his dead brother killed by Haiju. He also wins Mako's heart and becomes her lover. Revenge is also also the goal for the heroes in *Parker* and *Bullet to the Head*, beside material gains and woman. In *GI Joe Retaliation*, defeating Commander Cobra's scheme results in regaining the GI Joe's pride and people's respect for Roadblock and his men. Jack (*Oblivion*) finally realizes his goal of uncovering the lies propagated by the Teth. He becomes a full human and unites with his wife once again. Kitai (*After Earth*) finally gains his father's trust, and more importantly, the ability to conquer his fear, the most important ability to be an Ursa hunter.

The Road Back.

At this stage the hero is driven to complete the adventure, leaving the Special World to be sure the treasure is brought home. Often a chase scene signals the urgency and danger of the mission. Concerning this stage Campbell states, "When the hero-quest has been accomplished, through penetration to the source, or through the grace of some male or female, human or animal, personification, the adventurer still must return with his life-transmuting trophy" (1968: 192).

In Hollywood action movies, this stage is often combined with the rest two stages, the resurrection and return with elixir. In the resurrection he hero is severely tested once more on the threshold of home. He or she is purified by a last sacrifice, another moment of death and rebirth, but on a higher and more complete level. The return with Elixir the hero returns home or continues the journey, bearing some element of the treasure that has the power to transform the world as the hero has been transformed. The most important notion in these last stages is that after the journey the heroes return as different individuals having accomplished a mission. The journey signifies the heroes' transformation from adolescent to maturity which does not necessarily relate to physical condition by which it provides the heroes a series of tests to transform themselves and achieve certain goals (Hourihan, 1997: 72-76).

All the heroes in the movies analyzed in this paper return to ordinary world once again from their journeys as renewed individuals with the reward they achieve from defeating the villain in the special world. Mike (*Olympus Has Fallen*) returns home to his wife with a renewed sense of affection. Moreover, he is now a more committed official of

the Secret Service. Becket (*Pacific Rim*) transforms himself from an immature young man to a more thoughtful individual realizing the true sense of being responsible and dignified. Taylor (*Bullet to the Head*) now has more understanding of complex human relation after his successful mission to put an end to Morel's criminal conspiracy. More importantly, he now understands that life never has a strict line separating black from white. Parker (*Parker*) becomes more content and mature. He finally realizes the value of love and friendship.

Jack (*Oblivion*) totally transforms from a man with very little knowledge to a man of insight. His return to earth (home) and his union to his wife signify the huge transformation from virtual life full of manipulation to real life enriched with affection. Kitai (*After Earth*) returns home as a very different individual. He is no longer a kid full of doubt and fear, but a mature young man ready for higher tests.

CONCLUSION

A close study on seven Hollywood action movies released in 2013 reveals several conclusions related to the employment of archetypal heroes and their journeys in the action movie's plot structures; (1) All action movies under observation present stages of hero's journey in sequences that are identical with those of any hero's narratives found in any culture as proposed by Jung in his study of archetypes and Campbell theses of hero's journey, (2) All the heroes in the movies are presented as undergoing a transformation from states of immaturity (at the beginning of the journey) to maturity (at the stage of return), (3) Deviation and modification in the stages of hero's journey are minor and generally do not significantly change the archetypal pattern, (4) As in myths and other epic hero narratives, most heroes in action movies are male, while woman are depicted as either assistance or reward for the heroes.

Analysis on seven Hollywood action movies might not be sufficient to draw a decisive conclusion on whether action movies employs archetypal pattern of hero's journey. However, a glance observation on Hollywood action movies will provide us with a glimpse of understanding on how the stories are structured. In fact, Hollywood action movies have not change significantly from their first appearance during the thirties. The only marked change is in the presentation of the figure of heroes. Until the late of eighties, Hollywood action movies depicted white-male heroes in their stories (generally those with muscled body). However, dynamics in film industry and the more varied audience have resulted in the change of the depiction of action heroes. Non-white heroes, African-Americans, Hispanics, and even Asians, are more and more employed as heroes of action movies. This trend, however, does not change the structure of the stories. Hollywood action movies still heavily depict the archetypal heroes and their journeys.

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