

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1. The Background of the Research

Most people believe that a hero is a person with great qualities. It is in line with the definitions we find in dictionary, which are commonly referred to the definitions of hero people traditionally believe. Merriam – Webster (online dictionary) says that hero is “a mythological or legendary figure often of divine descent endowed with great strength or ability”. It obviously suggest that a hero is a figure like Zeus, Hercules, or Xena, who have the divine quality. Other definitions suggest that hero is “a person admired for achievements and noble qualities,” or “the principal male character in a literary or dramatic work”. One simple definition of hero is “the central figure in an event, period, or movement”.

Referring to today’s literature, however we can also have a female character as the central figure, or heroine of the story. Additionally, some of them do not have to have the divine quality or superpower strength. Meanwhile, in children’s literature, the hero or heroine is not the adults but the children themselves. One of the authors of children’s literature who empowers young characters as the central figure in his stories is Roald Dahl.

Roald Dahl is as The World’s No. 1 Storyteller. He has written 20 children’s books and 17 of them are novels. Dahl has won several awards such as Good Book Guide "Best Books of the Past 20 Years" for *The BFG* (1997), and in 2000 Dahl won Blue Peter Book award for *Charlie and The Chocolate Factory*.

As for his writing style, Dahl is widely known by his language that contains a lot of humor. In addition, readers are also amused by his contentment of making fun of grammatical errors in sentence construction and spelling of words (“Roald Dahl’s Writing Style & Themes” par 3).

Most of Dahl’s works have common issues of magical power and children’s struggle against the cruel adults who hate children, or else, his works present young readers the difficulties they might find in life. There are a cruel grandmother, a sadist teacher, dangerous and dreadful creature such as giants and witches. In order to survive in such cruel life, someone needs to be a hero. According to Philip Zimbardo, hero is “people who transform compassion (a personal virtue) into heroic action (a civic virtue)” (1). It means that not only to save themselves, the heroes or heroines can also save others. Dahl’s works have made children the heroes of their own life and other’s life as well. He has given a chance for his children characters, either boy or girls, to become heroes or heroines.

The theme of cruel life in reality especially the cruel adult who hates children also appears in Dahl’s books entitled *The Witches*, *The BFG*, *Danny the Champion of the World* and *Matilda*. *The Witches* is a story about an orphan boy who has strong effort to fight against the wicked witches who hate children. Sophie in *The BFG* does the journey to defeat the cruel giants who like eating human beings. Danny in *Danny the Champion of the World* must enter the dark forest to give the wicked Mr. Hazell punishment, and Matilda in *Matilda* is not

only abandoned by her parents, but she also has to fight against the school's terror headmistress named Miss Trunchbull who detests her students.

I am interested in exploring the journey of the main characters of these four books. While doing the journey, they face many obstacles. I believe that their journey is not a simple journey. They seem to follow a journey which is quite harder for children's journey of life. Their mission is very impossible for other children to do. Can they be the hero or heroine for the people?

I choose the four novels as the objects of the research because the main characters of these novels are different in gender; they are two boys and two girls. Choosing the four children characters as the object of analysis, I would like to explore how Dahl treat and empower them in the plot, especially in relation to the difficult situation which corner and put them in trouble.

However, in this research I analyze the hero's journey in these novels. There are several reasons for choosing this topic. First, I find the similarities between these four novels which talk about the struggle of children in face their cruelty world which is related to hero's journey. Second, I assume that there is an issue of hero's journey in these four novels which reflected from the journey of the main characters. Therefore, I entitle this research "The Hero's Journey of Male and Female Characters in four Roald Dahl's Select Children's Novels."

## 1.2. The Identification of Problems

*The Witches*, *Danny the Champion of the World*, *The BFG* and *Matilda* talks about the struggle of children to face their cruelty world. They deal with cruel adults, and they have to help themselves and others as well. These things

pushed them (the children) to fight against it. In order to fight against the cruel adults, all the main characters in these novels doing a journey and face many obstacles, like the cruel, wicked person and dangerous situation. I assume that the journey that experienced by the main characters contains the issue of hero's journey.

### 1.3. The Scope of the Research

This research focuses on the four main characters' journey (two boys and two girls) in their way of solving the problems and facing the cruel adults. More specifically, I expose how they in the end, turn into a hero or heroine based on the stages of hero's journey that they go through. Additionally, I also explain the differences between male and female characters experience in that journey.

### 1.4. The Research Questions

In order to set a clear limit to analysis, this research is limited to answer these questions:

1. How do the main characters of these novels accomplish the three stages of hero's journey as proposed by Joseph Campbell?
2. How is the male and female characters' journey different one from the others? What do the differences imply about the author's perspective about gender role?

### 1.5. The Objectives of the Research

Firstly, the aim of this research is to enrich the research on Dahl's children's literature. Secondly, this research is aimed to examine how The Boy,

Danny, Sophie and Matilda accomplish the three stages of hero's journey as proposed by Campbell specifically how the male and female characters' journeys different one from the other.

### 1.6. The Review of Related Studies

A novel entitled *Matilda*, has been discussed by James Pope and Julia Round on their article entitled "Children's Response to Heroism in Roald Dahl's *Matilda*" in *Children's Literature in Education* which applies reader response criticism that focuses on children's perspective toward Matilda's status as a hero. Based on the research they conclude that the children understand about heroism and most of them say that Matilda is a hero by looking from the way of Matilda giving Mrs. Trunchbull punishment. Pope and Round's research shows that the way the children respond to the novel is very different with adults. They argue that children's respond more to Dahl's sense of conservatism and justice than the anarchy and naughtiness or the crime and violence that some adult critics fear, because they think that Dahl's work can contaminate the children (vol 46. 257-277). It is quite surprising that children are not overly concerned about the anarchy and naughtiness, but they are more concern about Matilda's sense of justice. It means that in children reader's perspective Matilda is a real heroine who can bring the justice to her friends.

Another research is by Marliza Yeni and Shintia Ariska entitled "Roald Dahl's Children's Literature: Bully Busting and the Shaping of Children's Identity". In this paper they discusses 7 books of Dahl entitled *The Witches*, *Matilda*, *George's Marvelous Medicine*, *The Magic Finger*, *James and*

*the Giant Peach, Danny the Champion of the World, and The BFG* which contain the issue of bully. After analysis the narrative structure by using the theory of narratology that proposed by A.J Greimas (actantial chart), they conclude that the bullies in all stories are all adults, and all the action of bully busting in the stories comes from the hero and heroine of the story which are all young children. This research also discusses the shaping of children's identity. They conclude that behind all the problem of bully faced by the children, Dahl compliments them with good characters such as intelligent, confident, brave, and responsible. With those kind of characters, the hero/ine in the story can mutilate the bullying behavior of the adults (2015). This is a helpful source. From this research I get a lot of information. This research gives me a better understanding about the characteristic and personalities of Dahl's characters. In accordance with my research I can conclude that those personalities are the characteristic needed by the hero/heroine.

The other research is a postgraduate thesis from Nienke Minneboo entitled "A Modern Fairy Tale: Gender and Power in Roald Dahl". This thesis discusses Roald Dahl's most popular children's books: *Matilda*, *The Witches*, *The BFG*, *Charlie and the Chocolate factory*, and *James and the Giant Peach*. Minneboo concludes that all of the books show elements of the notion of gender and power in fairy tales and in the sixties. Additionally, the most common forms of power in both fairy tales and Dahl are oppression and resistance. She states that the female protagonists in Dahl's books cannot be compared to the heroines in fairy tales because they are not helpless, passive, and submissive women. She finds that



Dahl's books can be seen as modern fairy tales with modern gender influences from the sixties' women's movement because his female protagonists are strong young women who have a mind of their own and can achieve anything they want (2012). This research gives me a lot of information about the characteristic of Dahl's female characters. From this research, I can conclude that most of Dahl's female characters are powerful and strong woman. Those characteristics can make Dahl's female characters becomes a heroine.

### 1.7. Theoretical Framework

In this research I apply Archetypal Criticism to elaborate the analysis. Since the main point of this research deals with the Hero's pattern of the story, Thus, most appropriate theory is Monomyth (hero's pattern) proposed by Joseph Campbell.

#### Archetypal Criticism

Archetypal Criticism deals with myth and Archetypes. The term of Archetype was applied by Swiss psychiatrist named Carl Gustav Jung. Archetypes is "similar motifs or themes may be found among many different mythologies, and certain images that recur in the myths of peoples widely separated in time and place tend to have a common meaning or, more accurately, tend to elicit comparable psychological responses and to serve similar cultural functions" (Guerin et al 183). The framework of this theory is based on Carl Jung's idea called **Collective Unconsciousness**. Collective Unconsciousness is "a part of the psyche which can be negatively distinguished from a personal unconscious by the fact that it does not, like the latter, owe its existence to

personal experience and consequently is not a personal acquisition” (McManus 1999).

### Monomyth

Monomyth is a concept introduced by Joseph Campbell in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949:85-221). Monomyth refers to a similar pattern found in many narratives from around the world which follows the ancient pattern. This concept based on Jung’s idea about archetypes. Campbell divides Monomyth into 3 parts: Departure, Initiation, and Return, which are explained as follow.

#### A. Departure

Departure is the first part of hero’s journey. It consists of 5 stages. The first stage is **The Call to Adventure**. In this stage the hero have a normal situation and life and suddenly get some information or task that lead them into the unknown world. After the hero receives the call, he/she will refuse to do it. It happens because the hero feels that the adventure is a dangerous and risky task. It is the second stage of the departure called the **Refusal of the Call**. The third stage is **Supernatural Aid**. In this stage, after the hero has committed to the quest, there will be a person who will guide the hero in adventure. This person is called a mentor. This mentor will give the hero a weapon or magical power that aids the hero later in his/her quest. The fourth is **The Crossing of the First Threshold**. In this stage the hero actually crosses into the field of adventure. The hero leaves his/her own world or place and ventures into an unknown and dangerous place where the rules and limits are not known. The last stage is **The Belly of the Whale**. This stage is the representation of the final separation from the world that



is known by the hero. By entering this stage, the hero shows willingness to undergo a metamorphosis, even the hero will probably face death (45 – 83).

#### B. Initiation

Initiation is the second part of hero's journey. It consists of 6 stages. The first is **The Road of Trials**. This is the stage in which the hero faces a lot of task. It can be mental and physical obstacles. While doing the journey, the hero may meet a powerful female figure with whom he find unity. The goddess may be a mystical or supernatural being or she may be an ordinary woman with whom the hero gains support and synergy, this stage called **The Meeting with the Goddess**. The third stage is **Woman as the Temptress**. In this case the hero will meet the temptation often in female form and it may lead the hero to abandon or stray from the quest and it can make the hero fail to do the quest. The fourth is **Atonement with the Father**. In this stage the hero may fight against a 'father figure' who must be beaten, persuaded or whose approval must be achieved in some way. The fifth is **Apotheosis**, or a point of realization, in which a greater understanding is achieved. Armed with this new knowledge and perception, the hero is resolved and ready for a more difficult part of the adventure. In this stage the hero's highest self or divinity is revealed. The final one is **The Ultimate Boon**, or the achievement of the goal of the quest. It is what the person who goes on the journey wants to get (89 – 159).

#### C. Return

Return is the last part of hero's journey. It consists of 6 stages. The first is **The Refusal of Return**. In this stage the hero may not want to return to the

ordinary world because he/she has found bliss and enlightenment in the other world. The second is **The Magic Flight**. Sometimes in this stage the hero must escape with the boon, and sometimes it makes the hero face an adventurous and dangerous returning from the journey. The third is **Rescue from Without**. In this stage the hero returns to the ordinary life by unexpected assistant because the hero has been weakened by the journey. The fourth is **The Crossing of the Return Threshold**. In the way of return, crossing the threshold may not be an easy task because the hero may face the last challenge. After the journey complete, the hero becomes a master of both worlds: the world in adventure and the world of ordinary life. After that the hero can pass over the threshold between the two without further trial. This stage called **Master of the Two Worlds**. The last is **Freedom to Live**. After doing the journey, the hero has the right to choose the better life which is lead to freedom from the fear of death (179 – 221).

These hero or heroines probably do not go through all the steps in the three stages. From the steps they have followed, I explain how Dahl empowers the four children; is the role between a boy and a girl similar or different.

### 1.8. The Methods of the Research

In conducting this research, there are three steps to follow. The first step is collecting data. There are two kinds of data used in this research: the primary and the secondary data. The primary data is taken from Dahl's four selected novels and the secondary data are taken from literary theory books and article related to this research. The data is collected by using library research methods; reading the

books, articles, journals and browsing the internet which are relevant with this research.

The second step is analyzing data. The analysis starts by analyzing the intrinsic elements of the story, they are character and plot. Then, the analysis continues by discovering the hero's pattern in Dahl's selected novels. After that the analysis continues by explaining the differences between male and female characters experience in that journey to know about the author's perspective about gender role

The last step is presenting the result of analysis. All the result is presented descriptively. According to Fraenkel and Wallen, descriptive method is "a method used to explain, analyze, and classify something through various techniques..." (1993: 23).

