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THE HERO'S JOURNEY STAGES AND CHARACTER ARCHETYPES IN ANTHONY HOROWITZ'S NOVEL ALEX RIDER (STORMBREAKER)

Prades Adven Triman Zebua¹, I Wayan Dirgeyasa²

^{1,2} English Literature Program, Universitas Negeri Medan, Indonesia

Correspondence E-mail: pradeszebua@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This research attempts to find out 1) the hero's journey stages in Anthony Horowitz's novel Alex Rider (Stormbreaker) 2) Character archetypes and their roles in helping or hindering the hero to complete the hero's journey stages in Alex Rider (Strombreaker). The research is conducted using qualitative research methods, the technique of data analysis is descriptive qualitative method, the instrument for collecting the data is documentary sheet. The source of data used for this research is Alex Rider (Stormbreaker) novel. The results of this study showed that the seventeen (17) stages formulated by

Joseph Campbell are found in the novel. Furthermore, this study also showed that the seven (7) different archetypes formulated by Christopher Vogler are found in the novel. This concludes that the hero's journey stages and the character archetypes formulas that the first data collected by Joseph Campbell was from oral tradition stories is found to be applicable to modern novels

Keywords:

Hero, The Hero's Journey, Character Archetypes, Alex Rider (Stormbreaker), Novel

INTRODUCTION

In literature, heroes are portrayed as ordinary people who become extraordinary through a set of stages called "The Hero's Journey," which was introduced by Joseph Campbell. The Hero's Journey consists of Departure, Initiation, and Return, with each stage having sub-stages (Campbell, 1949, p. 35).

Characters play a crucial role in the hero's journey story structure by representing different archetypes or recognizable behaviors that aid in understanding the plot of the story. These archetypes refer to the nature of characterization, including how characters react to events and interact with one another. The term "archetype" comes from the Greek words "arche" and "typos," meaning origin and form/pattern, respectively. Vogler (1992)

identifies seven character archetypes: hero, mentor, threshold guardian, herald, trickster, shape shifter, and shadow, but not all of them are present in every story.

This research is significant because it examines whether a story pattern, found in traditional oral stories, also appears in modern literary works, including stages and character archetypes. The goal is to increase interest in the hero's journey theory, enhance comprehension of the common story pattern in literature, and aid people in recognizing the hero's journey stages in fictional stories that may mirror their own lives.

METHOD

This research used a qualitative research method. According to Creswell (1994), this means understanding a social or human problem by building a complex, holistic picture with words, and getting detailed views from informants in a natural setting. Textual analysis (Frey, Botan, & Kreps, 1999) was used to describe the content, structure, and functions of messages in the novel. The researcher closely studied the text using literary analysis (Kusch, 2016) to interpret its meaning and discover story elements. The focus was on analyzing the hero's journey and character archetypes in Anthony Horowitz's novel, Alex Rider: Stormbreaker.

This research will use linguistic features, like words, phrases, sentences, or paragraphs, to show how the hero's journey and character archetypes are represented in the novel Alex Rider: Stormbreaker, and how they interact with the main character.

The data will be taken from the novel *Alex Rider (Stormbreaker)*. It is a novel book that is 236 pages long and it consists of 17 chapters based on the 2005 paperback edition. This novel is written in English, specifically British English.

DISCUSSIONS

- 1. The Stages of Alex Rider's Hero's Journey
- 1) Departure
- a. Call to Adventure

In Alex Rider, the signs of the Call to Adventure start when a problem arises around the main character, following Campbell's description.

...Alex could try to make sense of what had happened. His uncle – Ian Rider – was dead. Driving home, his car had been hit by a lorry at Old Street roundabout and he had been killed almost instantly. He hadn't been wearing a seatbelt, the police said. Otherwise, he might have had a chance.

"...And it's also true that what you know and what I'm about to tell you must go no further. **But the fact of the matter is, Alex, we need your help.**" (Horowitz, 2005, p. 49).

The book Alex Rider (Stormbreaker) begins with trouble for Alex's family. When Alex's uncle dies in a car crash and Alex finds bullet holes in the car, he becomes suspicious. The next day, he discovers that his uncle was a spy and MI6 asks him to take over his uncle's work due to his investigative abilities. This sets off Alex's hero journey, leading him into the thrilling world of espionage and adventure.

b. Refusal of the Call

Alex Rider initially rejects the call to adventure because he does not want to follow in his late uncle's footsteps as a spy. However, he is told about his uncle's death and how his cover was compromised by the man MI6 is currently investigating. This news makes Alex uncomfortable and scared.

"It's a dumb idea. I don't want to be a spy. I want to be a footballer. Anyway, I have a life of my own" "Why don't you ask this Felix Lester to snoop around for you?"

"He's probably better at computer games" Alex shook his head. "I'm sorry. I'm just not interested. I don't want to get involved." (Horowitz, 2005, p. 59).

Alex is hesitant to become a spy because he knows it is dangerous, but the call to adventure is too strong to ignore. MI6 blackmails Alex into accepting the offer by threatening to take away his home and send his housekeeper back to America.

c. Supernatural Aid

Alex is given spy gadgets by a character named Smithers, who resembles the figure Campbell mentioned, such as a shepherd, or a smith.

"The challenge was to think what a fourteen-year-old might carry with him - and adapt it." He picked the first object off the tray. A yo-yo...

...However, the string is a special sort of nylon. Very advanced. There are thirty metres of it and it can lift weights up to one hundred kilograms. The actual yo-yo is motorised and clips on to your belt. Very useful for climbing." (Horowitz, 2005, pp. 84-85).

Smithers is a gadget engineer at MI6 who creates seemingly ordinary items with extraordinary features to help spies on their missions. These gadgets can range from glasses to bathroom essentials, but they all have hidden capabilities that make them useful for spies.

d. The Crossing of the First Threshold

Alex is physically and mentally prepared for this challenge after military and uncle's training. Alex is ready to enter a world where taking things lightly is not an option.

Mrs. Jones turned to Alex. "You leave tomorrow for Port Tallon," she said. "You'll be going under the name of Felix Lester." (Horowitz, 2005, p. 87).

Alex will go to Port Tallon disguised as Felix Lester to investigate the Stormbreaker computer at Sayle Enterprises, which MI6 suspects is a threat to the nation.

e. Belly of the Whale

Herold Sayle, the owner of the Enterprise, appears and seems to have a kind purpose of giving computers to schools, but Alex is unaware of the misfortune it may bring to the nation.

"We have only three days until the launch," he said. "We'd better get a bliddy move on, as my father used to say. I'll have my man take you to your room and tomorrow morning, first thing, you must get to work. There's a maths program you should try ... also languages..." (Horowitz, 2005, p. 99).

Alex has a limited time of three days to uncover Harold Sayle's true intentions. He cannot simply believe Sayle's kind gestures of giving free computers to British schools. Alex must develop a plan to investigate without raising suspicion.

2) Initiation

a. The Road of Trials

Alex faces a dangerous situation where he is led into a path that could potentially kill him. He finds himself in a field with tall grass, and a tractor is rushing towards him.

The quad (tractor) smashed down the last barrier of grass and leapt on to him (Alex)... except that Alex was no longer there. He had dived to one side and, too late, the driver saw the fence and rocketed on, straight into it. The man screamed as the wire caught him around the neck, almost garroting him. The bike twisted in mid-air, then crashed down. The man fell into the grass and lay still (Horowitz, 2005, p. 142).

Alex finds an electrified fence and uses it to defeat one of the tractors chasing him. He then takes control of the remaining tractor and tricks the other man, causing him and the tractor to fall into the water.

b. The Meeting with the Goddess

In the hero's journey, the hero encounters a powerful figure who aids them on their journey, often depicted as a strong female or a symbol of love and strength. After defeating his attackers, he meets a librarian who knew his late uncle and learns that his uncle used to study viruses and local issues at the library.

The librarian gave Alex information about his late uncle's reading habits, which plays a role in Alex's journey. Though his uncle fits more as the goddess figure, this small bit of information from the librarian helps guide Alex's path.

[&]quot;Do you remember which book?"

[&]quot;Of course, I do. I can't always remember faces, but I never forget a book. He was interested in viruses."
"Viruses?"

[&]quot;Yes. That's what I said. He wanted some information..." (Horowitz, 2005, p. 149).

c. Woman as Temptress

Alex is handcuffed and unable to move or escape, but unexpectedly, Nadia Vole, another one of Sayle's henchmen, arrives and frees him. Nadia claims to have worked with Alex's late uncle Ian Rider and is now on Alex's side.

"Alex, listen to me," Vole said. The words were tumbling quickly and softly out of her yellow-painted lipsticks. "We do not have much time. I am here to help you. I worked with your uncle - Herr Ian Rider" (Horowitz, 2005, p. 193).

Nadia Vole surprises Alex by revealing that she used to work with his uncle. Though Alex is wary, he needs help and follows her out of the building without thinking too much. As they make their way out, Nadia admits her true intentions. Nadia Vole tricks Alex, leading him to a dangerous situation where he is trapped in a tank with a deadly jellyfish that can electrocute him.

Vole had deposited him in the tank with the giant jellyfish: Herod Sayle's Portuguese man-o'-war. (Horowitz, 2005, pp. 194-195).

d. Atonement with the Father

In Stormbreaker, Alex faces this stage when he is trapped in an aquarium with a deadly jellyfish. Despite the jellyfish's greater power, Alex manages to escape and even uses it to help defeat his real enemy.

Where was the jellyfish?

Nadia Vole had been less fortunate. She had been standing in front of the glass when the girders broke and she hadn't been able to get out of the way in time. She was lying on her back, her legs limp and broken. The Portuguese man-o'-war (the jellyfish) was all over her (Horowitz, 2005, p.201).

e. Apotheosis

Alex lands on the roof of the launch site and gets caught on a beam with his parachute. He stops the Prime Minister from launching the deadly computers by shooting his gun. If he fails, every schoolboy in the UK will be killed, and the Prime Minister will be responsible for it. But Alex is ready, and he won't let that happen.

The first bullet went nowhere. The second hit the Prime Minister in the hand, his finger less than a centimetre away from the mouse. The third hit the mouse, blowing it into fragments. The fourth hit an electrical connection, smashing the plug and short-circuiting it. Sayle had dived forward, determined to click on the mouse himself. The fifth and sixth bullets hit him (Horowitz, 2005, p.223).

In the excerpt, Alex shoots at all possible ways to stop the computers to be launched, including shooting the Prime Minister's hand which was near the computer mouse, even though he did not intend to hurt him. His actions were successful in preventing Sayle from launching the computer and causing chaos in the UK.

f. The Ultimate Boon

Throughout his spying mission at Sayle Enterprises, Alex Rider has faced so many obstacles and he even almost dies. But he has accomplished his mission and he will be rewarded for that.

"But all in all, you're to be congratulated, Alex. You not only lived up to our expectations. You far exceeded them."

"You'll continue to live in your uncle's house," Blunt said. "That housekeeper of yours, Jack Whatever, she'll look after you. And that way we'll know where you are if we need you again" (Horowitz, 2005, pp.225,228).

Alex is content with his reward of being able to live with his uncle's house and have Jack stay with him as well, even though it's not a big prize. Without completing his mission, he would have had to move to an institution and Jack would have returned to America. However, Alex's success proves he is a great spy and the MI6 will likely call upon him again in the future, as Blunt tells him at the MI6 headquarters.

3) Return

a. Refusal of the Return

Alex makes a mistake by rejecting MI6's offer to escort him home, leading to his capture by Sayle who poses as a taxi driver. Had Alex accepted the offer, he would have been safe, but he chooses to take a random cab instead, keeping himself in the unknown world. This choice indirectly leads to the appearance of his enemy, Herod Sayle, proving he is still trapped in the unknown world.

"If you move, you bliddy child, I will shoot you," Sayle said. His voice was pure venom, "If you try anything, I will shoot you. Sit still. You're coming with me" (Horowitz, 2005, p.231).

Instead of returning home safely, Alex is now forced to go with Sayle wherever he wants to take him. Alex's poor decision prevents him from returning to his ordinary world. If he had known that Sayle was still alive, he should have taken MI6's offer to drive him home.

b. The Magic Flight

In Horowitz's "Alex Rider - Stormbreaker," in the previous stage, Sayle captures Alex, making his magic flight difficult. Sayle then takes Alex to a building where he plans to have his revenge.

"You and I will walk into the building. If you think about running, remember that this gun is pointing at your spine."

"They'll never find me! And one day I'll be back. Next time, nothing will go wrong. And you won't be here to stop me. This is the end for you! This is where you die!" (Horowitz, 2005, pp.233-234).

Instead of returning home safely, Alex is now in grave danger with Sayle's gun pointed at him. In the excerpt, Alex receives the boon, but the shadow archetype, represented by the guardians, chase and attempt to kill him.

c. Rescue From Without

In Alex Rider, when he is captured by Sayle and about to be killed, he is unexpectedly rescued by someone he thought would join in killing him. This is called Rescue from Without in the hero's journey.

The helicopter landed at the centre of the cross. Yassen Gregorovich got out.

Still holding the gun that had killed Herod Sayle, he walked over and examined the body, prodding it with his shoe. Satisfied, he nodded to himself, tucking the gun away. (Horowitz, 2005, p.234).

Yassen unexpectedly saves Alex from being killed by Sayle. This is surprising because Yassen previously worked for Sayle and killed Alex's uncle, Ian Rider.

d. The Crossing of the Return Threshold

When Yassen, who killed Alex's uncle Ian Rider and works for Sayle, saves Alex from Sayle's attack, it's surprising because Alex didn't expect Yassen to help him. Given Yassen's past actions, Alex thought he would share the same fate as Ian and Sayle.

"What about me?" Alex asked.

The Russian **(Yassen)** ran his eyes over Alex as if weighing him up. "I have no instructions concerning you," he said.

"You're not going to shoot me too?"

"Do I have any need to?" (Horowitz, 2005, p.235).

Alex is initially worried about Yassen, but Yassen assures him that he won't shoot him, and Alex is relieved that he can return home safely.

e. Master of the Two Worlds

In Alex Rider, Blunt as the head of MI6 has told Alex that he would be needed in the future. Now, Alex has become a master of the intelligence world and his world being a schoolboy.

"The Prime Minister himself asked us to pass on his thanks to you. And the fact of the matter is that it could be wonderfully useful to have someone as young as you —"

"As talented as you —" Blunt cut in

"— available to us from time to time." (Horowitz, 2005, p.229).

Alex's success in stopping Sayle from resealing the dangerous Stormbreaker computers has left a good impression on MI6, and they will likely consider working with him on future missions.

f. Freedom to Live

Alex Rider completed his mission and returned to his known world. It's now up to him to decide what he wants to do with his life and consider his options.

"It would be better if we didn't meet again. Go back to school. Go back to your life. And the next time they (MI6) ask you, say no. Killing is for grown-ups and you're still a child" (Horowitz, 2005, p.235).

Alex now has the freedom to choose his path, whether to continue working with MI6 or return to his normal life as a student. He is in control of his life and has discovered his true self.

2. Character Archetypes and Their Roles

1) Hero

The hero is the main character in a story, and his main purpose is to separate from his ordinary to travel to the unknown world or special world where he will face ordeals and sacrifice himself for the sake of others (Vogler, 2007, p.29).

Alex let go of the steering-wheel, grabbed the harpoon gun and fired. The harpoon flashed through the air. The yo-yo attached to Alex's belt spun, trailing out thirty metres of specially designed advanced nylon. The pointed head of the harpoon buried itself in the underbelly of the plane. Alex felt himself almost being torn in half as he was yanked out of the jeep on the of the cord (Horowitz, 2005, p.208).

In the story, Alex has to risk his life by dangling under a plane to stop the Prime Minister from launching deadly computers. As the hero, Alex is not hindered or helped by others but is influenced by them.

2) Mentor

In Alex Rider, there are two mentors who share similar qualities, they are Ian Rider and the Sergeant at the SAS training camp.

a. Ian Rider

Ian could speak three languages fluently and sometimes took Alex on trips abroad where he unknowingly trained Alex to become a spy. They also enjoyed outdoor activities together and Ian enrolled Alex in martial arts classes, as well as teaching him driving and diving.

"You know how careful he was. He always wore his seatbelt. He wouldn't even drive me round the corner without making me put mine on." (Horowitz, 2005, p.11).

He had started learning karate when he was six years old (Horowitz, 2005, p.30).

Alex Rider's uncle, Ian, extensively trained him and even indirectly aided him during his mission in Cornwall. Though Ian has passed away, it feels like he is still with Alex.

b. Sergeant

Alex accepted an offer from MI6 and was sent to a training center where he trained for 11 days with SAS soldiers under the guidance of a sergeant. The training included

unarmed combat, climbing, tunnel and ditch crawling, and rope swinging. The intelligent training included map reading and radio communication, etc.

"Suddenly the sergeant was furious. "You don't speak to me unless I give you permission," he shouted. "And when you speak to me, you address me as sir. "Do you understand?" "Yes, sir." Alex had already decided that the man was even worse than his geography teacher." (Horowitz, 2005, p.65).

The sergeant in the novel taught Alex a valuable lesson that he couldn't have learned anywhere else - how to follow orders and stay calm even when being shouted at. While this may not have a direct impact on Alex's mission, it could help him stay in control in difficult situations and remain calm even when facing a tough enemy.

3) Threshold Guardian

a. Mr Grin

At first, Mr Grin was tasked with taking Alex to his room and didn't harm him. However, when he realized that Alex was suspicious, he made plans to get rid of him. During a walk suggested by Nadia Vole, Mr Grin purposely led Alex astray towards Port Tallon.

Someone had deliberately led him away from the correct path and brought him here. To the killing field.

Whoever had sent these machines (and now he remembered Mr Grin talking on his mobile phone), they couldn't kill him if there were witnesses around (Horowitz, 2005, p.138-140).

Mr Grin ordered some men to kill Alex in an open field, which shows that he was trying to stop Alex's journey and make the story more exciting.

b. Nadia Vole

Nadia Vole is a threshold guardian in Alex Rider. She has a strong and severe appearance, with broad shoulders and a straight posture. She wears a white coat with a name tag and black leather shoes. This matches the description of a fierce threshold guardian according to Vogler.

He turned round and found himself facing Nadia Vole. Alex realised that she had tried to sneak up on him. She had known he was down here.

"What are you doing, Alex?" she asked. Her voice was poisoned honey.

"Nothing," Alex said.

"I asked you to stay in the computer room." (Horowitz, 2005, p.115).

The quote means that Nadia Vole kept an eye on Alex's actions and whenever she suspected him of doing something suspicious, she would prevent him from uncovering the secrets of Sayle Enterprises.

4) Herald

a. Alan Blunt

Alan Blunt explained to Alex that he would meet a man named Herod Sayle, he explained in detail what Alex would expect and what the man he was going to investigate going to look like.

Herod Sayle was born in complete poverty in the back streets of Beirut. His father was a failed hairdresser. His mother took in washing. He had nine brothers and four sisters, all living together in three small rooms along with the family goat. Young Herod never went to school and he should have ended up unemployed, unable to read or write, like the rest of his family (Horowitz, 2005, p.50).

Alan Blunt acts as a herald by giving Alex information about the person they are investigating, which helps Alex piece together Sayle's true intentions with the free computers. This makes Blunt instrumental in helping Alex complete his mission.

b. Mrs Jones

Mrs Jones informs Alex about his next steps after accepting the call to adventure, and MI6 makes sure that he is fully prepared for his mission. Although Alex's uncle had already trained him physically and mentally without his knowledge, Blunt and Mrs Jones ensure that he is even more prepared for the challenges ahead.

"We have enough time to give you some basic training - not that you'll need it, probably - and we can equip you with a few items that may help you with what we have in mind. Then we'll arrange for you to take the place of this other boy. You'll go to Sayle..." (Horowitz, 2005, p.57).

Mrs Jones informs Alex of the basic training he will receive to prepare him physically for his mission as a herald. This helps the hero to understand that he will not be sent into a dangerous situation unprepared.

5) Shapeshifter

Nadia Vole, one of Herod Sayle's henchmen has this archetype. At first, Alex knows she works for Sayle, but later, when Alex is captured, Nadia claims she is on the same side as him and used to work with his late uncle.

"Alex, listen to me," Vole said. The words were tumbling quickly and softly out of her yellow painted lips. "We do not have much time. I am here to help you. I worked with your uncle – Herr Ian Rider." Alex stared at her in surprise. "Yes. I am on the same side as you." (Horowitz, 2005, p.193).

This quote shows that Nadia claims to have worked with Alex's late uncle, which would have been unbelievable if Alex wasn't in a vulnerable position. The hero often believes the shapeshifter, despite doubts.

6) Shadow

In Alex Rider - Stormbreaker, Herod Sayle personifies the shadow figure. MI6 introduced Herod as coming from a poor family and adopted into a British family at the beginning of the story.

"I'd like to watch you die," Sayle said. "Unfortunately, I have a pressing engagement in London." He turned to Mr Grin. "You can walk with me to the helicopter. Then come back her and kill the boy. Make it slow. Make it painful..." (Horowitz, 2005, p.190).

In the quote above, Herod Sayle's intention to kill Alex is clear. If Alex dies, the story ends and he can't achieve his goals. This is an example of how the shadow figure tries to stop the hero from completing their journey.

7) Trickster

Smithers in Alex Rider-Stormbreaker has this archetype. He acts as a comical sidekick. He is enormously fat, bald with a black mustache, and provides gadgets for Alex to use. His appearance also amuses Alex, thus loosens the suspense before Alex goes on his mission.

When he sat down, the metal chair disappeared beneath the spread of his buttocks and Alex was surprised it could even take his weight (Horowitz, 2005, p.84).

CONCLUSIONS

This research has two main findings. The first one is that all 17 stages of the hero's journey, as formulated by Joseph Campbell, are present in the novel Alex Rider (Stormbreaker). This shows how the protagonist, Alex, goes through different stages to become a hero. The second finding is that all seven archetypes formulated by Christopher Vogler are present in the novel, with each character having unique qualities that make them their own archetype. Alex meets all these archetypes in the novel, some of which help him complete his journey while others block his path. Overall, the research highlights the importance of the hero's journey and archetypes in storytelling.

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