

**REVEALING THE DREAM MEANING OF HOODOO IN  
RONALD L. SMITH *HOODOO***

**THESIS**



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interpretation of dreams in the novel is also applied by Joseph Campbell in his theory Hero's Journey. In his book *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1993), Campbell taught us to pay attention to unsubstantial images of reading dreams in literary text.

One of the literary genres that combine myth-adventure and dreams is fantasy. Stableford (2009) stated, "Fantasy is the faculty by which simulacra (entity between reality and illusion) of sensible objects can be reproduced in mind: the process of imagination." The word fantasy itself refers to strange, bizarre notions that deviate from everyday experience. In literature, the fantasy genre mostly appears in children's fiction. The set of construction stories in fantasy literature combine myth, legend, and magic.

Moreover, the set place of fantasy literature often dates back to the medieval ages. It proved from the king's images, villages, black magic, hero, and the myth-adventure. In modern days, fantasy literature deals with the mythical past and the historical and the future (Stableford 2009).

This study discusses the interpretation of dreams based on Hoodoo's journey in Ronald L. Smith's novel, *Hoodoo*. Hoodoo Hatcher, a young boy who lives with a rich folk magic tradition, got terror by a mysterious man who comes to his town. Hoodoo starts dreaming of the dead rising from their graves. The entire town is at risk from the Stranger's black magic, and only Hoodoo can defeat him. Furthermore, Hoodoo starts the journey to save his people and town.

Ronald L. Smith is known as American children's book author who lives in Baltimore, Maryland. At a young age, the author read many books, especially

fantasy and science fiction genres. Smith grew up on air force bases and has lived in many countries, and now he writes fiction full-time. Smith's debut novel entitled *Hoodoo* was published in 2015.

Since this study aims to interpret dreams based on Hoodoo's journey, this study picked articles related to the interpretation of dreams and the hero's journey theory. It has been six years since *Hoodoo* was firstly published in 2015.

Nevertheless, none of the researchers are interested in picking this novel as their study. As the references, the researcher chooses some references that are related to both theories in the novel. For the hero's journey, the researcher found numerous discussions covering various topics. One focuses on the character (Utita, 2019), and the other focuses on intrinsic elements (Olivusti, 2019). Meanwhile, the researcher picks (Azhari, 2020) article that focuses on unfulfilled character's dreams for the interpretation of dreams.

Among those studies above, none of them have interpreted dreams on a hero's journey since the dream issues in the fantasy novel become the interest for the researcher. Therefore, the researcher aims to reveal Hoodoo's dreams based on Hoodoo's journey in the *Hoodoo* novel. To fill this research gap, the researcher examines each experience of Hoodoo's journey with caution, which may relate to Hoodoo's dreams. Another reason why the researcher is interested in this topic is because the dream phenomenon still contains numerous mysteries that haven't been solved. This research is expected to help the reader interpret dreams symbol based on experiences and repressed wishes of the dreamer.



















if “interpretation of dreams is the royal road to a knowledge of the unconscious activities of the mind.” Moreover, Freud argues if the dream form is divided by its content (Van de Castle, 1994; Bulkeley, 1997; Delaney, 1998). There are two dream contents: the first one is manifest content, and the second is latent content.

### **2.1.2.1 Manifest Content**

The manifest Content is the dream as the dreamer remembered. The abstract content of the whole dream can be called the actual dream. Freud (2010) stated, "In the manifest content of the dream, only the indifferent impression was alluded to, which seems to confirm the notion that dreams have a preference for taking up unimportant details of waking life." Manifest content has bizarre associations, quick changes, and fantasy sequences. Moreover, manifest content disguised dream desire to appear in the actual dream. The manifest content of dream characteristics is temporary, usually tiny pieces of a manifest dream that'll be remembered because their characters are too weak (Strumpell, 1877).

### **2.1.2.2 Latent Content**

Latent Content is a dream that involves the dreamer's real repressed wishes trapped in the dream. According to Freud, the latent content is “the underlying ‘dream thoughts’ that make up in the dream” (Freud Museum London, 2018). The latent content is the fulfillment wishes of the dream that can be brought out through free association. The free association method breaks down the censorship that repressed the dreamer wishes on the manifest content by letting the dreamer free to speak. The latent content refers to the symbolic meaning of a dream. The

dream symbols get from the dreamer experience, which is disguised. According to Freud, latent content takes from the dreamer's life experience and childhood experiences. However, to access the fulfillment of wish or desire, it must pass the censorship of dreams using the dream-work through free association method. The dream-work had four aspects, condensation, displacement, symbols, and secondary revision (Freud, 2010).

### **2.1.2.3 Censorship**

According to Freud (2010), something disguised the latent content to enter the manifest content; Freud called it Censorship or distortion of dreams. The motive of censoring dream content is caused by the dreamer's desire to repress the wish. Often the contents which the dreamer represses are like the contents about death, love, and sexual desire. Freud stated, "In all of these 'innocent' dreams, the motive for the censorship is the sexual factor (Freud 2010)".

## **2.2 Review of Related Study**

To widen the knowledge of this research, the researcher seeks some previous studies related to the researcher's study. The first previous study from Fakhri Ali Azhari (2020), entitled *Dreams As Unfulfilled Desires: Interpretation The Symbols of Dream In George R.R. Martin's A Game Of Thrones*. The subject of this study is a novel entitled *A Game of Thrones* by George R.R. Martin. This research aims to find fulfillment desire through a symbol that appears in the three main characters in the novel using Sigmund Freud's Interpretation of Dreams theory. In addition, this study uses a descriptive qualitative method to analyze the



dream. As a result, there are three dreams types, wish fulfillment, sexuality, and the realization of fear which indicates the fulfillment desire of each character.

The second previous study from Ovisuti Lu'Lu' Qurratu'ayny Mappuji (2019), entitled *The Stages Of Mia Thermopolis In The Princess Diaries Novel: Hero's Journey*. The subject of this study is the novel entitled *The Princess Diaries* by Meg Cabot, This research analyses the adventure of the main character Mia Thermopolis. This girl will become a princess, using Joseph Campbell's theory of Hero's journey. The research method that is used is the qualitative method type. This study shows two phases of the hero's journey that Mia passes, departure and initiation phases.

The third previous from Utita Nurrosyada Hilmi (2019), entitled *Kid's Adventure And Bravery Seen Through Hero's Journey in Erich Kastner's Emil And The Detectives*. The subject of this study is a novel entitled *Emil and the Detectives* by Erich Kastner. This research focuses on characters describe and the storyline of the novel. This study uses the qualitative method to determine how Emil and other characters pass through the heroic plot and bring out the bravery. As a result, Emil and his friends, named Professor and Gustav, have different traits but have the same characterization and bravery.

Research analyses the archetypal transformations that Harry undergoes to become a hero and explains how this relates to the psychological significance of developing youth.

## CHAPTER III

### REVEALING THE DREAM MEANING OF HOODOO

#### 3.1 The Hero's Journey

##### 3.1.1 Departure

To give a precise understanding of the issues, the researcher explains the departure of Hoodoo before he starts his hero's journey. Hoodoo Hatcher is a young boy born with a unique birthmark that people tell is a sign. Hoodoo's mark is a red smudge under his left eye, shaped just like a heart (Smith, 2015: 1). The unique birthmark is usually associated with a sign, the cursed or the chosen one in mythology.

Hoodoo lives with his grandmother called Mama Frances. His mother died while he was born, and his father died when he was five years old. Mama Frances tells if his father ran off and came to a bad end. Supposedly Hoodoo's father went and cursed a man in Tuscaloosa County (Smith, 2015: 1-2). Hoodoo's family lives with a rich tradition of practicing folk magic. Nevertheless, Hoodoo can't cast a simple spell (Smith, 2015: 4-5).

One day, a Stranger comes to his town, precisely in Miss Carter's store where Hoodoo's cousin worked. The stranger's saying bizarre words, Mandragore, The One That Did the Deed, Main de Gloire (Smith, 2015: 7). The words that no one even knows. After that event, a strange dream comes to Hoodoo after meeting that stranger and giving him the willies.

On the other day, when Hoodoo went to his Aunt called Jelly, another tragedy happened. Hoodoo heard people scream in the railroad tracks (Smith,

2015: 18). After being calmed down by her aunt, Hoodoo starts dreaming again when he falls asleep. "A dark cloud passed overhead, leaving trails of black vines snaking down to the ground. The vines turned into long skinny fingers. They were trying to reach me - trying to creep along the ground and then come up and strangle me" (Smith, 2015: 20).

A mysterious scream still disrupts Hoodoo's mind. The next day Mama Frances tells Hoodoo to go to the County Fair because of Colored Folks day (Smith, 2015: 23). Hoodoo goes to the County Fair with his friend Bunny Richardson. After playing around, they accidentally found a Fortune Teller tent owned by Mrs. Snuff. Bunny forced Hoodoo to go in. Hoodoo's fate is revealed when Mrs. Snuff finds Hoodoo's birthmark. She tells Hoodoo if their people are in danger and their fate is in Hoodoo's hands. She searches for the black crow and beware the stranger (Smith, 2015: 35-37).

Queer events that come one by one to Hoodoo's peaceful life make burdensome. It's worse when Bunny tells Hoodoo that somebody dug up some bodies at the graveyard. It makes Hoodoo experiencing weird dreams again with more intense Smith, 2015: 38-41). Because of that, Hoodoo shall know the answer to his revealed fate and protect his people.

From the discussion above, the identification of Hoodoo's departure before he started his hero's journey was understandable. It consists of a birthmark, the stranger, dreams, an unidentified scream, and the horoscope. The fortune teller tells Hoodoo's people are in danger. She adds Hoodoo needs to find the black

























The quotation above shows the whole content of the first dream. When Hoodoo falls asleep, he starts dreaming of the stranger he met before. The dream contents manifested the first appearance of the stranger. A stranger comes from nowhere to Miss Carter's store, where Hoodoo's daily work helps his cousin, Zeke. However, the stranger looks a bit different from what Hoodoo sees in the real world. The stranger appeared with a mystique aura and blazed eyes. Inside his cloak, some stuff is shown to Hoodoo. In the dream, the stranger also said the words which were spoken in Miss Carter's store. Hoodoo's dream ended when everything went black. The dream contents show the stranger's appearance, the stuff that he brought, and unknown words.

### **3.2.1.2 Latent Content**

The whole dream contents revealed, Hoodoo's dreaming of the Stranger he met in Miss Carter's store. Hoodoo's dream manifested as a nightmare. The latent content of Hoodoo's dream interprets Hoodoo's infantile fear. Being abused by his inability and self-doubt came from the family and society invested Hoodoo's infantile fear. Hoodoo is afraid of the stranger and people because he feels there's no person he couldn't believe and who can calm his fears through the most childish measures (Freud, 1930). This anxiety manifests in Hoodoo's dream as the stranger cloak, bringing back Hoodoo's trauma of being abused by others. Thus, the stranger's cloak became subject to a kind of Hoodoo's trauma.





































meets a lady in the fair (Smith, 2015: 42). The lady asked if Hoodoo was in danger. She warns Hoodoo to seek the black crow and avoid the stranger.

The memories of the feather told, if every time Hoodoo touched the feathers, he got shivers (Smith, 2015:47). Other than that, there's no more source about how Hoodoo got shivers every time he touched the feathers. From experience, the shiver dragged the anxiety into Hoodoo's dream. However, both fortune-tellers said about the crow, and the feather symbols had relation to each other.

The following content shows if Hoodoo dreamed the crow could talk to him from the otherside (Smith, 2015: 53). The crow introduced himself as a spirit that comes from the other side. This spirit is symbolized in Hoodoo's dream as the doubt about protection. It's known from his experiences if the spirit is either good or evil based on Hoodoo's belief and Mama Frances's advice.

"I didn't remember falling asleep, but when I woke up the next morning, there was a broom lying across my doorway. I knew what that meant. It was a keep-away spell. And people used it to keep evil spirits from coming into their house." (p. 43)

The quotation above tells about the spell that could protect Hoodoo from the evil spirits. As known, Hoodoo was living in a family with a rich tradition of practicing folk magic. This spell is one of the conjure forms which Hoodoo can spell. Hoodoo tells everything to Mama Frances about what happened in the fair; it's represented as if he couldn't protect himself.

Hoodoo didn't believe what he saw. The crow could talk and give the quest to Hoodoo. The crow tells if bad things might happen if Hoodoo didn't stop the stranger (Smith, 2015: 53). The stranger represented Hoodoo's fear about















When Hoodoo visited Mrs. Snuff's residence, he was getting the ritual. The ritual purposed to keep away evil from Hoodoo. Mrs. Snuff told hoodoo about bad Juju. Hoodoo didn't understand it, but it gave him willies quickly.

In the next content, Hoodoo dreamed of Mrs. Snuff. In the dream, Hoodoo met Mrs. Snuff, an old fortune teller who told Hoodoo about the spirit world.

"Mrs. Snuff's voice had gone quiet. Maybe I'd shut it out of my mind, but I wasn't sure. The crow flapped its wings and I followed it, down to where it settled on the wooden slats of the porch. I thought about what Mama Frances said, that the crow could be a trickster. But it helped me the last time I saw the stranger. Maybe it would again." (Smith, 2015: 91-92)

The quotation above shows the struggle of believing in himself if he was right. It shows how he declines Mrs. Snuff's and Mama Frances's advice. Hoodoo instead believes in himself that the crow will help him just like he ever did it (Smith, 2015: 70-71). This dream symbolizes Hoodoo's desire that wants people to notice his ability.

Meanwhile Mama Frances worries if the crow that appears in Hoodoo dreams is a trickster (Smith, 2015, p. 63-64). But, she adds the spirit will come for no reason.

In the next scene, Hoodoo has arrived in the stranger room. He could feel him, like Mrs. Snuff could (Smith, 2015, p. 92). The scene show if Hoodoo was already in the stranger's house. He knows it like he was acting like Mrs. Snuff that could know about the stranger's presence. The imitation of the sage was shown as he acted like he could do what others did.















## CHAPTER IV

### CONCLUSION

The hero's journey and the dreams are common things in fantasy literature. According to Freud, the dream is the royal road to a knowledge of the unconscious activities of the mind. This section discussed the result of the research. This research has two points; the first point is to describe Hoodoo's journey based on the novel. The second point explains Hoodoo's dreams which are behind the reason for Hoodoo to start the journey.

The first point describes Hoodoo's journey based on the novel. After analyzing the storyline of the novel, Hoodoo is categorized as the hero of this story. Hoodoo, a twelve-year-old kid, starts the journey from the stage of departure and initiation. The departure is marked when Hoodoo, for the first time, meets the stranger in the town who was acting weird and uttered strange words; then his dreams become a nightmare that gave him willies. The ending of this departure is marked when Hoodoo agreed to fulfill his fate to defeat the stranger and protect his people. In the departure act, five stages appear in the novel. The second act is the initiation. The initiation acts marked when Hoodoo began to start the road of trials. In the *Hoodoo* novel, three points are indicated as Hoodoo's road trials. The first trial is coming from Mrs. Snuff's quest. The second trial is when Hoodoo starts dreaming and wandering in the spirit world. The third trial is when Hoodoo suddenly releases his power after conjuring. The initiation act ended when the hero completed his task and brought back the piece in his town in the

Ultimate Boon stage. Hoodoo passed all the initiation stages except the meeting with the goddess because Hoodoo never met any goddess based on the novel.

The second point explains Hoodoo's dream. Based on the analysis of Hoodoo's hero journey, the researcher found why Hoodoo starts the journey that came from his dream. The dreams that Hoodoo's dream contains some symbols which disguised Hoodoo's fulfillment wishes. This fulfillment of wishes could be interpreted by using the interpretation of dream theory by Sigmund Freud. Through approaches free association method, the researcher picked up the experiences related to Hoodoo's dreams. As a result, the researcher found numerous symbols and interpretations based on the dream event and the experiences. The first dream interpreted Hoodoo's infantile fear of being afraid of others. These infantile sources come from Hoodoo's childish measures. The second dream revealed Hoodoo's Oedipus complex. The sources of this dream come from the forbidden desire to love his aunt, which is repressed by Hoodoo indirectly. The third dream revealed Hoodoo's infantile fear; his infantile fear comes from his trauma and phobia. The fourth dream reveals Hoodoo's anxiety. This anxiety contains fear, nightmare, and terrible events. The last dreams contain two scenes, the first scene reveals Hoodoo's self-proof, and the second reveals the void. The significance of the main reason behind Hoodoo's dreams is caused by the infantile fear of missing a beloved person. Hoodoo's dream's fulfillment wishes to know why his father died, known as the beloved person.





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