

DRE'S TRANSNATIONAL HEROIC JOURNEY IN HARALD ZWART'S *THE KARATE KID* MOVIE

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Abstrak

Pada setiap naskah cerita akan selalu ada Hero's journey. Menurut Vogler, semua karakter dapat memerankan 'hero' di dalam jalan ceritanya masing-masing. Oleh karena itu, studi ini dilakukan untuk menganalisis teori Hero's Journey yang disampaikan oleh Christopher Vogler di dalam film *The Karate Kid*. Teori Hero's Journey diaplikasikan untuk menganalisis representasi hero pada karakter utama, Dre. Studi ini menggunakan pendekatan kritis pada dampak lintas budaya yang dialami oleh Dre dengan menggunakan teori dimensi nilai budaya yang dikemukakan Hofstede. Pendekatan tersebut diharapkan untuk dapat membedakan perbedaan yang signifikan antara budaya asli Dre yaitu Amerika dan sebagai budaya barunya, Cina. Hasilnya, studi ini menghasilkan dua belas tahap Hero's Journey begitu pula tantangan terhadap pertumbuhan dirinya sendiri. Selain itu, dimensi nilai budaya berperan penting dalam perjalanan menggapai tujuan Dre.

Kata Kunci: lintas budaya, hero's journey, *The Karate Kid*

Abstract

Hero's journey exists in every story. According to Vogler, every character could be a hero in their own journey. Thus, this study is to analyze the Hero's journey in *The Karate Kid* movie. Instead of using Campbell's, this study uses Vogler's stages to reveal the heroic representation of Dre -the main character from the movie. The study also employs a critical approach on Dre's cross-cultural experience by using Hofstede's cultural values dimension theory to identify the discrepancy between his native and Chinese (his new) culture. The result of this study contains twelve stages of Hero's Journey proposed by Vogler as well as Dre's challenge on his personal growth. Moreover, cultural values dimension took major part on supporting his journey to achieve his goals.

Keywords: cross culture, hero's journey, *The Karate Kid* movie

1. INTRODUCTION

Heroism exists almost in every story regardless of the genre. In a story whether it is for an adult or for children, heroism is like a need for the plot to make it worth to be enjoyed and interpreted. Heroism cannot be bounded by ages, gender, races and social status. According to Vogler (2007, p.29), a hero is someone who is willing to sacrifice their needs or even themselves for the sake of others, like a shepherd who is willing to sacrifice to protect and suffice the needs of the livestock. Basically, the concept of a hero is always related to self-sacrifice. In psychology, the hero represents itself with what Freud called as the ego, a personality who considers himself different from his kind. Vogler (2007, p.29) further stated that, ultimately, a hero is one who is able to transcend the bounds and illusions of the ego, but at first,

heroes are all ego, the I, the one, that personal identity which consider themselves different from the rest of the group.

Heroism in Harald Zwart's *The Karate Kid* movie is interestingly contextualized within the cross-border interconnectivity that embraces the cultural and racial notions. This cross-border connectivity possibly elicits.

This study particularly uses Harald Zwart's version of *The Karate Kid* movie as it provides intriguing story plot on the transnational relationship of the black boy moving to China and attempting to adapt to the Chinese environment through his friendship with the Chinese handyman that later becomes his closest Kung-fu trainer. The first version of the movie was released around 1984 was casted by Ralph Macchio. The first version of the movie does not involve the main character's cross border

movements. However, *The Karate Kid* (2010) has no relevancy with the previous series.

On their release, this movie is already a box office hit to begin with which makes it worth discussing. According to *The-Numbers* (2010), the movie was released on June 11, 2010, by Columbia Pictures to 3,663 theatres across the United States. *The Karate Kid* starring Jaden Smith as Dre Parker and Jackie Chan as Mister Han topped the box office on its opening day.

The story begins when a twelve-year-old American Black boy, Dre Parker follows his mother, Sherry Parker, who is transferred from Detroit, United States, to Beijing, China. One day in the park, Dre sees Mei, a Chinese girl who took his interest in playing the violin. However, suddenly comes Cheng, a naughty kung fu boy who bothers them. Cheng hits Dre and warns him not to make contact again with Mei. Dre and Cheng feud continued after Dre attended his first day of school in Beijing which is also the very same school as Cheng. One day, on a school trip, Dre was chased by Cheng and his friends but luckily, Han, a maintenance man and also a martial arts expert stopped the beating. Since that incident, Dre wanted to learn martial arts. From this on the journey of Dre becoming something has begun.

Rather than using Karate like the movie's title, this version is using Kung fu or known as Chinese martial arts. Maybe not as the first, but this movie has successfully showed the Chinese martial arts to the world as a part of Chinese culture. In this case, Kung fu also has taken part on Dre's intercultural journey as a media that introduced by Mr. Han.

Intercultural encounter is inevitable when moving to a new place. Moving to a country that has different cultural values as native culture, can be an obstacle to adapt to the new community. The discrepancy between Dre's native and new culture, as in this movie is American and Chinese, became apparent once he touched down on his new place. Therefore, this study believes that Dre's cultural values take a part in supporting his transnational journey. Every action we do is influenced by culture as well as our decision. According to Samovar (Samovar et al., 2012), the way individuals perceive the world is strongly influenced by cultural values. These cultural values can conflict with those from another culture.

Several studies utilized the hero's journey theory to analyze the process of changing a character from nobody to a person who counts his presence, or often referred to as the phrase 'from zero to hero'. Nevertheless, the hero's journey theory used as a basis for analysis generally comes from Joseph Campbell's theory. Slightly different from Campbell (2004, pp. 45-226) who divides the

process from zero to hero into seventeen stages, Vogler simplifies the stages of his heroic journey and does not consider all stages as something that must exist.

Similar studies on this topic have been conducted; the first literary Drake (2013) found the protagonists from *El Notre* and *Le misma luna* films are confronting familial problems, prejudice and harsh working conditions. In order to remind the audience of mythology, both Latino directors utilize structural features that follow Joseph Campbell's trajectory of the hero and add aspects of magic or dream reality. The directors argue that all immigrants are on their own hero's journey by placing them as a hero on a "road of trials." These films give the people who face these challenges a heroic perspective. In 2019, Leopold's thesis entitled *The Player Character's Journey: The Hero's Journey in Moldvay's Dungeons & Dragons* examines the originals, themes and stages of the Hero's Journey for Joseph Campbell as discovered in Moldvay's correction to the Basic Dungeons & Dragons Guidelines which arises while playing the game using the seven experimental modules issued for these standards. The meaning of the narrative concepts is expanded to embed the tale that emerges by playing imagining games like *Dungeons and Dragons* on the basis of story-based ideas. These are deconstructed using the monomyth of Campbell as an interpretative method in light of the seven experience modules, revealing that comparative stories may be investigated as distinct sorts of history (Leopold, 2019).

Besides those previous studies that utilize Campbell's Hero's Journey, none of them are using Christopher Vogler's. But there is a previous study that explain how the *Karate Kid* movie regarded as transnational literature. This study will use Vogler's Hero's Journey to reveal the heroic representation of Dre, a character from *The Karate Kid* movie written by Harald Zwart. Furthermore, since Dre's journey involves the cross-border movement from Detroit to Beijing, this study will also situate the analysis to comprehend the cross cultural that Dr experiences, this study uses Geert Hofstede's cultural dimension to identify the discrepancy of his native and Chinese culture. It is necessary to analyze Dre's cultural values, as it influences his journey to adapt to the new environment.

Christopher Vogler's Hero's Journey

Simplifying Campbell's, Vogler proposed twelve stages principles, both of their stages are divided into three acts: departure, initiation, return. In Vogler, the definition of hero is gender neutral, and with whatever occupation he/she has; therefore, hero has thousand faces.

Vogler's twelve stages elaborated briefly as follows (2007, pp. 83-227):

1. Ordinary World

Most stories take the hero out of the ordinary, mundane world and into a Special World, new and alien. Ordinary world is the place of origin or initial situation of a hero which becomes the background of his or her life. This stage will be used as a baseline for comparisons with Special World, where the Hero stepped in for the adventure. The importance of Ordinary World is to introduce the hero to the audience, it is also established a bond between people and pointed out common interest so that a dialogue can be started.

2. Call to Adventure

Call to adventure is a stage of selection of a hero through an unstable situation in the environment. At such times, a person can appear and volunteer voluntarily to overcome the instability of the situation or be elected or chosen to be responsible. It is at this stage that a hero must face the beginning of change.

3. Refusal of the Call

Refusal of the call is an attempt to avoid adventure as an initial reaction. This reaction generally arises after the hero knows the risk of the adventure he must face. The rejection of this adventure may only be one or two words that indicate the doubts of the hero.

4. Meeting with the Mentor

Meeting with the mentor is the stage of meeting the hero with someone who protects, provides assistance or certain objects, training, or advice that can help the hero in his adventure. Mentor figures can also be tangible experiences from a character who has not existed, or even the wisdom found in the hero himself.

5. Crossing the First Threshold

Crossing the first threshold is a hero activity of entering a new territory or situation that is different from the previous region or situation and not yet known by the hero. This activity is generally preceded by external pressure that causes the hero to pass through the first gate to enter new territory and start his adventure. The gate has a guardian or threshold guardian that can take the form of living things or inanimate objects, environmental conditions, even the pain or fear in the hero himself.

6. Tests, Allies, Enemies

Test, allies, enemies is a stage to test the hero in preparation before entering the next stage. At this stage too, the hero meets with allies and enemies.

7. Approach to the Inmost Cave

Approach is a stage of preparation for the hero and his allies to face the main challenge.

8. The Order

The order is the ordeal stage in the middle of the story where the hero must face the biggest challenge or the

greatest fear. In this stage, the hero almost or even must

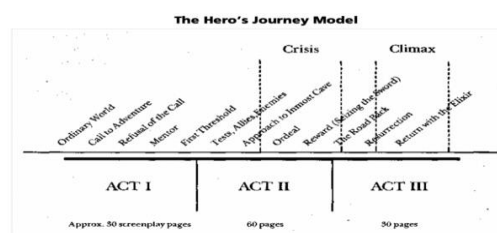


Figure 1.1 The Hero's Journey from Vogler's *The Writer's Journey* (2007)

die and be born again.

9. Reward

It is the stage where the hero gains treasure or something of value, which he gets after facing death. Nevertheless, the risk of losing the property is still possible.

10. The Road Back

Is the last quarter of the story where the stage where the hero is encouraged to complete the adventure. This stage often shows chase scenes that show how important and dangerous the adventure is.

11. The Resurrection

The resurrection is a stage to test the hero once again. Thanks to the action of the brave hero, conflicts that arise at the beginning of the story can be resolved. At this stage, the change in the personality of the hero looks real.

12. Return with the Elixir

This stage is the return of the hero to his place of origin or continuing his adventure, by bringing treasure or something valuable that has the power to change the world, just as the treasure has changed the hero.

Vogler (2007, p.7) stated that the stages of Hero's Journey as mentioned above are not standard, because the author or writer has the freedom to change them to fit what is desired or adapted to the needs of certain cultures. Thus, the twelve stages of the heroic journey in this theory are only a reference, not as something that absolutely exists.

Transnationalism and Transnational Cinema

The term transnationalism is widely associated with other terms such as globalism, internationalism, migration, and others (Tedeschi, 2020), which illustrates; in its narrow sense; a movement by individuals and/or a civil society that transcends nation borders (Peck, 2020). Many have attempted to define transnationalism according to the context given i.e., socio-cultural aspect, which often makes cases about immigrants' process in adapting into a new society such as how they share and maintain some; mainly but not limited to; cultural connection with their birth country after settling in a new one. However, transnationalism remains hard to define

(Tedeschi, 2020) as there are many aspects to which the notion is built upon.

Transnational cinema can be defined as many but one that may fit the most with the current theme of the study is that it's an international joint effort that contributed to the making of a cinema. It's usually carried out by individuals of different nationals through various ways, ranging from fund to casts and production, even to the smallest part such as the message that the movie is trying to convey. Any movies that classify as transnational doesn't necessarily require cultural and national erasure (Berry 2010, p. 112).

Geert Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions

Developed by Geert Hofstede, the classification identifies six value dimensions: individualism/collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, power distance, masculinity/femininity, long-term/short-term orientation, and indulgence/restraint that are influenced and modified by culture. Hofstede's research was one of the earliest attempts to use statistical data to examine cultural values. The six value dimensions will be elaborated briefly in this study.



Figure 1.2 The Comparison between China's and United States' Value Dimension (source: <https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country->

According to a survey conducted by Hofstede, he used statistical data to examine cultural values, the first cultural values that Americans have is individualism. Individualism in the United States is seen in the expectation that employees will change jobs in order to advance their careers. The individual is first, and the organization and co-workers are a secondary consideration.

Second, uncertainty avoidance can be defined as "the extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations (Samovar, 2012)." American citizens have a low uncertainty avoidance culture, or they have a tendency to dislike uncertainty/ambiguity. They prize initiative, dislike structure associated with hierarchy, are willing to take risks, are flexible, think that there should be as few rules as possible, and depend not so much on experts as on themselves.

The United States has high power distance cultural values. People in high power distance countries believe that power and authority are facts of life. Both

consciously and unconsciously, these cultures teach their members that people are not equal in this world and that everybody has a rightful place, which is clearly marked by countless societal hierarchies. In organizations in high power distance cultures, a greater centralization of power is found, more recognition and use of rank and status, and adherence to established lines of authority.

Afterward, a feminine worldview maintains that men need not be assertive and that they can assume nurturing roles. It also promotes sexual equality and holds that people and the environment are important. Interdependence and androgynous behavior are the ideal, and people sympathize with the less fortunate.

Adapted from G. Hofstede and M. Minkov, *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind*, 3rd ed. (2010), last American's value is an indulgent society, people will place a priority on their sense of freedom and personal enjoyment through leisure time and interacting with friends. Consumption and spending would take precedence over fiscal restraint. In contrast, members of a restrained society would feel they had less freedom to enjoy themselves, consider frugality to be important, and that social order and discipline were more important than individual freedoms. In indulgent cultures, individuals are encouraged and expected to smile at everyone, but in a restrained culture, receiving a smile from a stranger would be viewed with suspicion.

METHOD

The data source of this study is taken from the movie *The Karate Kid* (2010) directed by Harald Zwart. The story of this movie is written by Robert Mark Kamen and its screenplay written by Christopher Murphey.

This study bears several steps to analyze the data. First, the movie has been watched several times and close analysis has been conducted on the story plot as well as the script from a website to comprehend the content of the movie. Second, data gathered in the form of pictures from the movie and the conversation within the acts or scenes. In addition, a character's gesture is analyzed to get accurate data on analyzing the movie. After collecting the data, it adjusted with two main problems using a critical approach to get appropriate topics that will be discussed. Fourth, the data is classified based on the theoretical approach used in this study, which are *The Hero's Journey* by Christopher Vogler and Hofstede's Value Dimensions. Besides, this study applies thematic theory developed by Gianetti (2002) regarding the shots, mainly extreme long shot, medium shot, and deep focus shot, along with warm color in the film. Last, the researcher draws the analysis and discussion of problems to reveal the objectives of this study.

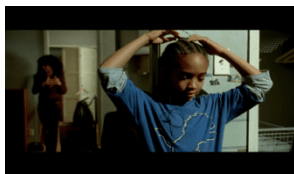
DISCUSSION

A. Dre's Heroic Journey

Dre's transnational hero's journey began right after he and his mom moved to Beijing, China. This journey is specifically centered on Dre's progress from nobody to 'somebody', or within Dre's point of view is mastering the kung-fu in order to prove himself and as a way to accept his new community. To reach this stage, Dre had to undergo numerous limitations and spectacles in which are a common formula within heroic stories. As it is stated by Vogler in *Excepts from Myth and The Movies, Stuart Voytilla* (2003, p.7), that the primary purpose of hero is to separate from the Ordinary World and sacrifice themselves for the service of the Journey at hand-to answer the challenge, complete the quest, and restore the Ordinary World's balance. It basically consists of two fundamentals; to serve and sacrifice. Among those objectives, Vogler also included that the Hero may challenge personal growth; to win a competition, to heal a wound, or to find love, which one of them is reflected in Dre's goal.

1. Ordinary World

In this movie, The Ordinary World is a beginning scene that takes place in Dre's old apartment in Detroit. The apartment has a role as his safe haven and his root; all the memories from his childhood until present occur in this very flat. In this stage, Vogler et al (2003, p.2) stated that it is very important for the audience to relate with the Hero as a part of bonding, since the Journey ahead will be through Hero's eyes. The quality of Ordinary world that appear in the movie can be found in the dialogue between 00:01:36 - 00:01:47, below is the snapshot:



Above are the respective dialogues for the attached snapshot. Dre's mom, Sherry explicitly stated they will be on a quest to start a new life in a magical new land, it is a representation of their life as a continuous adventure that constantly seeks new territory (literally and figuratively) to reach the goal that yet to be seen. Magical new land is a symbol to represent their next uncharted territory; the new home in Beijing, China. Implicitly, Sherry suggests that they will be ready to face new challenges ahead, taking the role as "brave pioneers". To Dre's response, he said, "You could say that," which means he agrees upon his mom's view about how she

sees themselves as heroes on a quest regardless how reluctant he was at that moment. Dre's tone and gesture when he was saying the word, indicating that he is still half-in regarding the idea about moving to China. This is a point that needed to be highlighted since, once again, the audience experiences the Journey through the Hero's eyes. Thus, Dre's responses will make a big impact.

The scene highlighted Dre's worry and uncertainty, with the camera matching his height instead of the adult (his mom) to show his expression. The notable composition of the visual is how his mother stays in the dark, while Dre are not. This and the grim, cold color grading enhance the nuance of sorrow, knowing his mother tried to stay positive despite the unfavorable situation they are in.

Based on the presented evidence along with its explanation, it can be concluded that The Ordinary World stage exists in the movie; that is Dre's attachment that binds him to his home (in Detroit), as Vogler stated that the emotional journey is as important as it is physical (2003, p.1). It acts as Dre's starting point into his journey ahead, whereas may or may not (it is all in Dre's decision) have to be left behind in order to face a challenge that yet to be seen, proving that Dre's is a hero in the making.

2. The Call to Adventure

In Vogler's hero journey arc, The Call to Adventure is a moment where the Hero's Ordinary World is being disrupted, causing the Hero to leave his comfort. This disruption is often delivered by the Herald archetype which can take the form as; a message or announcement, a sudden storm, the arrival of the villain, an abduction, or even death (2003, p.3). In Dre's case The Call to Adventure took place during a moment before take-off, which shows Dre and Sherry having a conversation. Take a look at the dialogue from scene 00:03:57 - 00:04:49 which presented in below snapshot:



Above dialogue shows Sherry's effort in getting Dre to practice some basic Mandarin conversation starters. In one way or another, this symbolizes Sherry asking Dre to leave his attachment (to his old home) behind and prepare himself for the new land ahead. By doing this, Sherry at that moment was wearing the Herald mask, delivering a message to the Hero, "Dre please focus OK... You need to practice... Yeah you need to try it,"

implying that Dre needs to prepare for the challenge during his journey ahead.

The shot of the scene shows a clear close-up of Dre's expression, with his mother a little further. The entirety of the scene, it was focused mostly on Dre's face and discomfort, highlighting further on his 'refusal' to accept the change or the Call.

The fact that they were in a plane to China is being a disruption in Dre's Ordinary World. In fact, the idea of them moving out did throw Dre's little cocoon of his Ordinary World off balance. This can be seen on how Dre's reluctantly said goodbye to his friend in 00:02:45,

The way Dre was reluctantly letting his eyes off of his friends, suggesting the gesture that a rejection toward the Call is being formed. This proved Vogler statement of, "The Call to Adventure sets the story rolling by disrupting the comfort of the Hero's Ordinary World, presenting a challenge or quest that must be undertaken. The Call throws the Ordinary World off balance, and establishes the stakes involved if the challenge is rejected," means this needs to be done to build up a sense of disruption for the audiences to feel through Hero's eyes until the Call of Adventure is officially declared which later occurs in the plane. Dre's hesitancy is also shown in this scene, where he fist-bumped his close friend in his initial home. Dre being in the dark, and showing his friend face who have seem to accept that he will no longer see Dre around.

With the two pieces of evidence presented, it can be concluded that the sign of the Call has been established the moment Sherry proposed the idea of moving to China, which proceed to throw Dre's Ordinary World off balance.

It is then built up a sense of disruption within Dre which is seen from the reluctant gesture he is shown whenever anything about moving out is brought into the frame. It was not until Sherry and Dre were minutes away from taking off, The Call of Adventure that he needed to prepare for the challenge ahead in new land (China) had officially been declared by none other than Sherry herself who wore a mask as the Herald. From Dre's responses, the audience has been hinted for the next stage that brings all the evidence into Refusal of The Call. It is now up to Dre whereas how he will escalate the stake and accept the Call.

3. Refusal of The Call

Continuing the Call of Adventure where the Hero experienced the disruption toward his Ordinary World, this stage will reveal the Hero being vocal regarding his rejection towards the journey. According to Vogler (2003), the rejection can be caused by numerous aspects; fears and insecurities that have surfaced from the

disruption, unwillingness to make change, and preference of the safe haven in Ordinary World over the new adventure in Special World. In Dre's case, the three of them are present. Upon arriving at their new apartment in Beijing, Dre's first response that arises is doubt. Take a look at the 00:07:34 snapshot below,



In this scene, it is shown from Dre's gesture and expression that he is being skeptical upon their first arrival at their new apartment, which ironically called the same as "Beverly Hills", their dream house. The shot shows a big part of introductory shot of his new 'home' or world, considering this is the first time they reached the place. The big zoom out was meant to be an introductory shot as Dre and his new 'foreign world' is shown.



His doubt indicates the unfamiliar and uneasiness as a response to the potential challenge of his journey ahead, hence the feeling of wanting to leave the Special World and back to his safe haven could emerge. In Dre's case, one of those potential challenges is being alienated by the new community he is in due to the cultural gap. This causes fear that grows within himself, which instead of seeking a way to overcome, Dre chooses to back off. The fear that constantly eating him up has led Dre to act on his refusal. Below is one evidence from 00:08:13 on Dre's passive attempt in evading his journey:



Harry: Know any Chinese?

Dre's response to Harry's question explicitly shows his unwillingness to make change for overcoming the risk of his journey, which is learning Chinese. Supposedly, this path could be one of the answers to support Dre's goal as a hero (which is yet to be seen), as it is already

hinted in stage 2 by Sherry, the moment where Dre's fear (of being alienated) started to resurface. Yet, Dre prefers to stay in the same place by once again avoiding the risky call. This could be the results from his attachments towards his home, which subconsciously forces Dre to take zero steps.

Dre and Harry are now seen walking, but toward the darkness. While this could simply be a matter of lightning, but this also insinuates Dre's steps toward what can be called as the 'unknown'. China is a new land, and a lot of the changes happens too sudden. Dre is now stepping into the foreign territorial, far from a place he loves; his hometown in America.

4. Meeting with The Mentor

The main purpose of this stage is to gain confidence, insight, advice, training, or magical gifts to overcome the initial fears and face the threshold of the adventure. A Hero may not wish to rush into a Special World blindly, therefore, seeks the experience and wisdom of someone who has been there before. This Mentor has survived to provide the essential lessons and training needed to better face the Journey's Tests and Ordeals (Vogler, 2007). In Dre's journey, the role of The Mentor is held by Mr. Han the maintenance man. Their first meeting is foreshadowing Mr. Han's role which later will be depicted in the movie. Below are the screen-cap from 00:11:12,



Above scene introduces Mr. Han into Dre's journey. Based on the first line of Dre toward him, it can be seen that Mr. Han's character is depicted as somehow distant and mysterious. The scene focuses mostly on the close-up of his up, to enunciate the new important character that is being introduced. Mr. Han, although closer to the camera, is shown to be blurred or out of focus, which further support his mysterious nuance.

Not much revealed for the Mentor role other than him showing his skilled hand-move (which is a hint for the audiences that he will become a character who brings kung-fu into Dre's journey) while trying to catch a fly, until their second encounter on 00:39:06,



This piece of evidence shows Mr. Han outstanding kung-fu skills and his qualities in becoming the Mentor. The first quality is; the fact that Mr. Han protected Dre from Chen by putting his own self in front indicates his sense of responsibility towards Dre, even though it is only the second time they met. The sense of responsibility is normal to see in an adult, especially those who have a connection with the younger ones, as they feel the need to watch over and take them under their wings, just as Vogler said, the Mentor provides motivation, insights and training to help the Hero overcome his doubts and fears and prepare for the Journey. During this stage, Dre is still bonded with his insecurities (the attachment with his old home, the fear of not being accepted), which is dragging him down from his own path. Thus, it is up to Mr. Han in guiding Dre to overcome them.

Another quality is that he became a figure who deconstructed Dre's perspective towards kung-fu for the better one. Formerly, Dre's mindset towards kung-fu is that of a medium to fight, while Mr. Han very much disagrees with this. "*Kung-Fu is for knowledge, defense. Not to make war, but to create peace*", means the best way to fight is to avoid. Take a look at below scene from 00:44:05,

This reflects Vogler's (2007) statement on The Mentor as someone who has traveled the road before and can provide needed guidance to a Hero who is reluctant to face the unknown. Up to this stage, Dre has yet to know what he wants to become and where he should stand for. This is when Mr. Han comes into the frame, opening up possibilities for the reluctant Dre, and bringing up his principle towards kung-fu (which occurs during Mr. Han and Chen squad brief duel). It can be seen from Dre's look of shock and awe in his face, that he was seeing what he wanted to be in Mr. Han, reflected before his eyes. That is evidence of how Mr. Han is someone who has gone down the similar road, directly guiding Dre into taking his first step into the unknown. Now that they are conversing properly about their journey, which is important to the plotline, the camera pans out to show the environment around Mr. Han. His surrounding is dark, and there are plenty of tools which are understandable considering his role as 'the maintenance guy' in the building. The place is dark and unkept, briefly showing how he had been living prior to meeting Dre; a mentor who loses his way of living and now taking Dre as a new 'mission' in his life.

Upon the meeting with Mr. Han as his Mentor, Dre started to develop his hero sense that is a will to transform into 'somebody'. This event is what sets Dre's journey rolling by opening up his perspective.

5. Crossing The Threshold

In Dre's journey, this stage occurs during their kung-fu lessons, that is a gate he had to go through before reaching the Special World. At their first few days of the lessons, all Mr. Han taught Dre is the routine of taking the jacket off-hang it on-put the jacket on, repeatedly. Takes look at scene 00:55:08,

They did it even in the midst of rain. At first, Dre was question Mr. Han teaching method, but something unexpected happens as their practice goes, by the scene 01:06:42,

One day, Dre attempted to confront Mr. Han regarding their practices, they engage in sparring as Dre's body moves as if it is automatically. As Dre's still in shock, he realized that this is the result of his routine. As if Mr. Han could read Dre's mind, he then proceeded to say, "Kung-Fu lives in everything we do," during 01:08:21 scene,

The training routine which Dre undergoes is the depiction of Vogler (2007) statement that The Crossing may require more than accepting one's fears, a map, or a swift kick in the rear from a Mentor. This process is necessary to re-establish Hero's commitment to their journey, just like Dre in which Mr. Han once again reminds him of the basis and principle of kung-fu. It also gains the purpose to push Dre's determination, therefore action is needed. His goal to master kung-fu is being put at the stake, pushing Dre to go through a seemingly unreasonable training routine at first.

As the movie progress, the color grading slowly becoming warmer and less blue. This provides a change of atmosphere where the world Dre enters was unknown, cold, and blue, now has become slightly warmer as he ventures with Mr. Han. Dre becomes more involved with the culture as well. The scene above, with the sun behind Mr. Han as he speaks, and the close-up shot emphasizes his expression and determination to make Dre understand the world he is venturing in. It also adds a dramatic effect which further accentuates the importance of this scene for their character and plot development.

Another aspect mentioned by Vogler is whether internal or external forces push the Hero ahead. In Dre's case, both of them are taking part, Mr. Han finally decided to teach kung-fu after refusing it for the first time in The Meeting of the Mentor sets this stage rolling, whereas Dre's determination to follow Mr. Han's step is also as significant as the former forces.

6. Tests, Allies, Enemies

The Test Stage is our first look at the Special World and how its conditions and inhabitants' contrast with the Hero's Ordinary World. In Dre's journey, the Test stage is symbolized by the time Mr. Han took Dre to the

mountain to learn Shi Eternal Energy - the essence of life. Take a look at below screen cap from 01:10:09



In this evidence, it is known that this mountain is a place where Mr. Han learned kung-fu. The terms Special World could also be depicted as a spiritual journey which Mr. Han and Dre are currently going through on this mountain, where they learn and revisit everything from its root before entering the next stage that is Approach to The Inmost Cave and the journey gets intense. The director chooses to make salience toward the Chinese character Mr. Han is talking about, panning the shot to blur the two characters behind the dusted window. There are less components on the background, just sky and blurred trees in the train ride, which only possible given the camera angle shooting from lower position. It provides context into their conversation, highlighting what the important subject is; the Chinese character..



Another quality of The Test stage is, "Our first look at the Special World and how its conditions and inhabitants' contrast with the Hero's Ordinary World," (2007). As it is presented along the way to the top of the mountain, there are numerous kung-fu practitioners who have similar style and (possibly) principle to those hold by Mr. Han. These practitioners are the inhabitants of the Special World, with calm and gentle routine, while the kung-fu institution which Chen attends is the contrast belonging to the Ordinary World is rather rough and loud in nature.

The Test which serves as the main event does not have to be harsh in nature and action-packed. For Dre's journey, the test is in the form of seeking the philosophy of life within kung-fu itself. It is more in the way of spiritual rather than physical journey, still, Dre learnt one or two moves in which inspired by the surroundings in their way to the top of mountain, just as portrayed in 1:17:38 scene,



During this scene, Mr. Han told Dre to follow the water principle to mirror its dynamic and effectiveness. Prior to this scene, Dre did some observation around the old castle on the way to the top and took the mental note from each of the subjects/objects he stumbled upon. With this training, Mr. Han expects Dre to learn directly from life and nature, which correspond to their initial goal while coming here.

Aside from the qualities mentioned above, The Test stage is essential to prepare The Hero for the greater Ordeals yet to come. This Initiation into the Special World also Tests the Hero's commitment to the Journey, and questions whether he can succeed (2007).

7. Approach to the Inmost Cave

In Approach to the Inmost Cave, Vogler (2007) said The Hero must make the preparations needed that leads



to the Journey's heart, or central Ordeal before the Hero can face his greatest fear or the supreme danger lurking in the Special World. The confident Hero may bypass these preparations and make a bold Approach to the Inmost Cave. In Dre's journey this stage occurs during the kung-fu competition, particularly from the early to semi-final round. Each round's increasing difficulty builds up Dre's preparation for central Ordeal which occurs later in the final round. See below screen cap from 01:46:34 for the beginning of Approach to the Inmost Cave;

During this stage, Dre's has earned his place in the Special World and been acknowledged by the Rival as the result of the previous Test stage. This scene is one of the highlights to Dre's hard work, and instead of focusing on Dre's expression by inserting a close-up shot, the camera pans out to show the large crowd of spectators who has their eyes on him, showing a sign of approval and acknowledgement to his achievement. His uniform color is also another story, where it could be translated as the yin and yang. The important Chinese symbol which means balance, portraying Dre as someone who have the balance of good and bad to continue his journey.

However, the road down this stage is not getting



easier just because of the former aspect. Originally being a period where Hero and his ally planned a strategy to face the climax, Dre who is a solo player from the start, had to prepare by himself. Thus, it also applies when Vogler (2003) mentioned, "A Hero's Team may have hit setbacks during the Tests, and the Approach is necessary to reorganize the depleted ranks, remember the dead and wounded, and rekindle morale with a Hero's or Mentor's rally cry." The setback which supposedly befall upon the team member, instead had to be borne by Dre himself. This setback however, will be revealed during the process into The Ordeal.

8. The Ordeal

In Dre's case, The Ordeal occurs specifically during the semi-final round of Dre versus Chen's teammate. This became the most suspenseful event so far during Dre's journey which leaves the audiences wondering whether Dre will advance to the final round. The center of this scene is to highlight Dre's struggle that builds up only to be met with a fall. This is where the audience will determine whether Dre is worthy to achieve the greater power in the form of resurrection/reborn. This downturn of event is often cost not only the journey, but also his life. This event is portrayed when Dre's opponent started to attack Dre's leg relentlessly. Take a look at the screen cap below from 01:54:18,



Above scene shows Dre's central life-or-death crisis, which can only have two outcomes, failure and success. This forces Dre's to put everything he has learned so far into a greater stake, and that is his own life. If Dre's can overcome this crisis, he will achieve Reborn as a Hero in which a possession of greater power to reach his goal at the end of the journey.

9. Reward

The Hero has survived death, overcome his greatest fear, and now he shall earn the Reward that he sought. According to Vogler (2007), The Hero's Reward comes in many forms: a magical sword, an elixir, greater

knowledge or insight, every possible thing that pushes the Hero closer to his goal. Whatever the treasure, the Hero has earned the right to celebrate. Celebration not only allows the Hero to replenish his or her energy, but also gives the audience a moment to catch their breath before the Journey resumes to its climax and resolution. For Dre, this reward might be the unfortunate one, but it surely fulfils the purpose of Reward in having a good impact and acts as a breather. Take a look at below screen-cap from 01:54:54,

As result from the previous clash, Dre earned a broken leg. Due to his condition, his chance to advance into the final round is at risk, yet it also gives Dre time to replenish his energy should he choose to continue. This quality is mentioned by Vogler (2007) as a form of celebration upon receiving the Reward. Another positive impact from this unfortunate Reward is, helping Dre to overcome his fear and insecurities, as it fulfils another quality of the Reward mentioned in the beginning of this section. This is explicitly shown in the character's line, where the Doctor said about the result of Dre's fight that brings honor to his family (above screen-cap). The screen cap also showed Dre's limitation as a child, where two grown-ups are talking above him, with the camera panning from the adult's height. It highlights his vulnerability as a child, which the viewer would sometimes lose track of due to the heroism shown through his action.

During this situation, Dre is forced to carefully make a choice, whether to stay and feel satisfied as it is, or proceed to the final round. Dre chose the latter and this once again proves that Dre's Reward does help him overcome his fear regardless of the unfortunate form. Up to this scene, the audience can clearly see his change of will to hold onto his adventure, a 180 degree turn from Dre's state in the beginning of the movie. The development in Dre's character as a Hero can be found in the next Road Back stage.

10. The Road Back

Vogler (2007) mentioned, at this stage The Hero must finally recommit to completing the Journey and accept the Road Back to the Ordinary World. A Hero's success in the Special World may make it difficult to return. Like Crossing the Threshold, The Road Back needs an event that will push the Hero through the Threshold, back into the Ordinary World.

In Dre's journey, The Road Back is directly connected with The Reward. As soon as Dre's acquired his broken leg (Reward) from The Ordeal, he is faced with choices that could change the direction of his journey. Instead, Dre's standing up to the challenge and leads himself back to the road.

This stage started during the situation in the medical room after the Doctor did some check up on Dre's leg injury. Quoting from the previous 01:54:54 screen-cap, "I am sorry, you should not continue. You've brought honor to your family.", in which referring to Dre's previous fight in the Ordeal and his broken leg as a token. Upon this statement being said, Dre began to rethink his goal up to that moment. Take a look at below screenshot from 01:57:14,



Above screen-cap shows how Dre stated that he is willing to overcome his fear and committed to continue his journey. Unlike in the previous scene, now the movie showed a close shot up of his face, where Dre's determination and maturity shines. He talks to Mr. Han, as seen by Mr. Han blurred shoulder, persuading him to allow Dre to continue with the competition despite his injury.



It is his response from the previous question implied as the result from his injury, whether he wants to continue to the final round despite his current condition. Rather than responding with yes or no, Dre restated his initial aim that he wanted to overcome his fear. This event can be considered as Dre's way to re-establish the Central Dramatic Question, that is something in the line of, "What do you want to become?" This single question will lead Dre to pass the second Threshold back into the Ordinary World to achieve what he wants to become. Like any strong turning point, the action initiating the Road Back will push Hero to the action and heighten the stakes each step he took. This action will begin in the next stage.

11. The Resurrection

Vogler (2007) expressed that The Resurrection will be the final Ordeal stage which brings the Hero to use all that he got from the Special World including training and experiences. This Resurrection stage represents the Hero has emerged from his worst point (upon facing death) and acts as cleansing or purification. The Hero now is reborn or transformed with the attributes of his ordinary

self in addition to the lessons and insights from the characters that he has met along the road (Vogler, 2007).

The Resurrection began as soon as Dre left the medical room and decided to continue his fight towards the final round. Take a look at screen-cap below from 01:59:02,

During the above scene, Dre was experiencing the most intense event in his hero journey. Both in terms of the nerve-wracking situation he was in and the weight of his training days maintained in his shoulder. The now-resurrected Dre may not much different from his past self in the beginning of the journey, the stubborn and ever-naive, yet that attribute of his ordinary self is much more complete with now level-headed and calm composure he got even in the face of his final life-and-death moment. Thanks to the days of lessons and training he spent with the Mentor, present Dre could handle the situation wisely (which taken from Mr. Han kung-fu principle) and has grown into someone he aims to be from the beginning of the journey, skillful kung-fu practitioner, which could be seen from the firm gesture and calm yet fiery gaze he wore (see below screen-cap from 01:59:01).

Those are the evidence of his purification of being reborn after the near-death experience he got from the previous stage. With the polished character and skills, Dre was ready to overcome his final fear, which was rather engraved from within himself.

In this final showdown between Hero and Chen Shadow, Dre could finally carry out one of the main principles taught by Mr. Han, "*Kung-Fu is for knowledge, defense. Not to make war, but to create peace,*" proven by the outcome of his fight with Chen that not only bring victory to Dre but also end their aggression towards each other.



12. Return with the Elixir

The Return with the Elixir is the final Reward earned on the Hero's Journey. The Hero has been resurrected, purified and has earned the right to be accepted back into the Ordinary World and share the Elixir of the Journey. The camera is located at the supporter point of view, lower than Dre, showing how now he is on top coming back with the trophy he had rightfully won after enduring tough setbacks. Greeting back with a smile and exhilaration to all his important people that had supported him throughout the entire

journey.

The Elixir can be in a form of great treasure or magic potion, love, wisdom, or simply the experience of surviving the Special World (Vogler, 2013). The Elixir may bring closure to the Journey and restore balance to the Ordinary World. In Dre's journey, the elixir acquired was the accomplishment in overcoming his insecurities.



B. Dre's Cultural Values in Supporting His Journey

During Dre's heroic journey, there is an underlying objective that influences his decisions; to be accepted as a member of his current (culture) community. It is a common issue for newcomers from another culture to experience alienation (especially when the discrepancy between their native and new culture is quite a gap), both internally as oneself to perceive their surroundings through the different cultural pattern, and externally toward the community itself which is part of the cultural pattern.

To dissect Dre's heroic journey, also means to identify the dissimilar cultural values (between Dre's native culture and China culture) and its capability to support him as a hero. These cross-cultural experiences will be apprehended through Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions. In this subchapter, Hofstede's framework will be focused only on dimensions that directly support Dre during his journey.

The first dimension that relatively took major influence in Dre's journey is power distance. This dimension presents the level to which extent the less powerful members in a society accept the fact that power is distributed unequally (Hofstede, 2001); high level of power distance shows society who values hierarchy and authority, whereas low level of power distance exhibited by society in decentralized decision-making responsibility who strive equality. Upon staying at his new place in China, Dre had difficulties to fit in within the community, as two of them have different cultural values.

China is considered a nation with high power distance. That being said, it will pretty much influence each of the individual's values as well. For instance, one that took part in Dre's journey is the hierarchy between Chen and his squad who are considered more powerful among his friends, just because Chen is more skillful in kung-fu (and possibly comes from respected family but the movie did not cover that area). One basis the

community constantly believes is that kung-fu's main purpose is for fighting and asserts dominance, which only cultivates power gap and hatred. Chen's sense of authority certainly affects those around him, especially Dre the newcomers (who also considered 'different' in the perspective of Chinese cultural members), feared toward it. Take a look at below screen-cap from 00:25:24 where Dre hide himself from Chen and his squad to avoid trouble,

In response to his insecurity, Dre wanted to break through by learning kung-fu as well (with more open principle, that kung-fu is to make peace), influenced by; his root-culture that is more to low power distance, Mr. Han with his dynamic cultural background from his parents (compared to other strict Chinese parents). The difference of power distance dimension between Chen and Dre, who has two different root-cultures keep Dre's journey rolling and motivated Dre to overcome his fear.

Second dimension is Masculinity vs. Femininity. The masculinity vs. femininity dimension is the preference of society for achievement, attitude towards sexuality equality, behavior, etc. Masculinity comes with the following characteristics; distinct gender roles, assertive, and concentrated on material achievements and wealth-building. Society at large is more competitive. Femininity comes with the following characteristics; fluid gender roles, modest, nurturing, and concerned with the quality of life. Society at large is more consensus-oriented.

In Dre's journey, he is currently part of Chinese cultural members who are inclined toward masculinity compared to femininity. This could be seen from the way each individual behavior is rotating around rivalry and competitiveness. Dre who only grew up in the hand of a mother figure (nurturing, feminine), had a difficulty to fit in with Chinese culture which inclined towards tough/masculine culture. That is one of the reasons Dre's characters did not suit the strict and power-oriented Kungfu-school (where Chen's in). Dre's seek help to the right person that is Mr. Han, who possessed balanced characteristics of masculinity and femininity. As a mentor, Mr. Han taught the peace-oriented and low-profile principle of kung-fu which fulfils the modest quality in feminine roles. His principle expressed concern toward the harmony within the community and seeing the talent within Dre, Mr. Han wanted to make sure Dre was learning toward the right path. This is the portrayal of other feminine qualities which is nurturing.



Regardless of the feminine-oriented principle, during Dre's practice, Mr. Han is very firm and decisive, he knew how to utilize his assertiveness around Dre who needed guidance, as it is much needed for Dre who lacks a father figure and model.

Mr. Han expresses masculinity in a way that is neither forced nor toxic as the stereotype dictated. The masculine qualities still go side by side to support his principle that inclined toward harmony and well-being of life.



In short, one major aspect that caused Mr. Han and Dre dynamic to work very well and contribute so much is their similarity in cultural values.

CONCLUSION

This study conclude that Harald Zwart's Karate Kid movie contains twelve stages of Hero's Journey has proposed by Cristopher Vogler. This study also shows that Dre challenge personal growth; to win a competition, to heal a wound, or to find a love, which has depicted in Dre's goals. Therefore, Dre is a hero in this movie even though Vogler has stated that every character could be a hero in their own story or journey. In the last stage of hero's journey, return with the Elixir, Dre becomes a champion in a kung-fu battle even though he is merely a stranger in a kung-fu country.

Furthermore, Dre's goal is to be accepted as a member of his current (culture) community and his cultural values supporting his journey on his way to achieve his goals. Cultural values dimensions that have been elaborated by Hofstede took a major part on Dre's journey, especially power distance and femininity.

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