THREE FACES OF CROW: THE ARCHETYPAL FIGURES IN TED HUGHES' POEMS CROW BLACKER THAN EVER, CROW'S FALL, AND CROW'S NERVE FAIL

Bisma Indar Ekalaya¹, Delvi Wahyuni² Program Studi Bahasa Dan Sastra Inggris FBS Universitas Negeri Padang email: bisma_firdaoes@hotmail.com

Abstrak

Karakter merupakan salah satu aspek terpenting dalam pengembangan dan jalannya ide utama pada suatu karya sastra. Tidak terkecuali pada puisi. Makalah ini ingin melihat bagaimana subjek utama dalam ketiga puisi dari Crow Blacker Than Ever, Crow's Fall, dan Crow's Nerve Ted Hughes memperlihatkan pentingnya faktor Fail oleh pengkarakteran secara arketipal. Melalui sudut pandang speakers, dapat diperoleh bahwa ketiga puisi tersebut memiliki satu subjek yang sama, yaitu the Crow. The Crow mempraktekan satu karakter arketipal yang dominan pada satu puisi, selagi subjek yang sama berubah menjadi karakter arketipal lain pada puisi lainnya. Penganalisaan terhadap ketiga puisi ini menggunakan teori arketip yang dikemukakan oleh pakar psikologi analitikal asal Swiss, Carl Gustav Jung. Pendekatan-pedekatan penganalisaan juga mencakup pada teori yang ditelurkan oleh Jung, ketidaksadaran kolektif (*collective unconscious*) dan arketip. Analisis ini dilakukan terhadap teks, dan juga dengan mengaplikasikan pendekatan dengan menginterpretasi imagi-imagi dan simbol-simbol yang dapat ditemui di sepanjang puisi. Pendekatan secara psikologis dan berbau mitologi juga diterapkan demi interpretasi penganalisaan. Penganalisaan terhadap ketiga puisi ini memperlihatkan pentingnya sifat-sifat serta karakteristik karakter arketipal yang ditampilkan subjek terhadap situasi yang ada di dalam karya-karya sastra.

¹The writer, graduated from English Department FBS UNP in September 2013. ²Supervisor, a lecturer at English Department FBS UNP.

The character is one of the most important aspects in the development of the main idea in a literary work. There is no exception on poetry. This paper would like to see how the main subject in the three poems Crow Blacker Than Ever, Crow's Fall, and Crow's Nerve Fail by Ted

Hughes shows the importance of the archetypal figures. Through the the speakers' point of view, it is clear that the three poems have the same subject, namely the Crow. The Crow practice a dominant archetypal figure in one poem, while the same subject evolved into different archetypal figure in another poem. The analysis into these three poems is using the theory pioneered by the Swiss Analytical Psychologist, Carl Gustav Jung. This approach also applies the theory coined by him, the collective unconscious and the archetype. This study is conducted through the text-based analysis, and by applying the images and symbols interpretation that can be found throughout the poems. Psychological approach and some mythological aspects are applied for the interpretation's interest. By analyzing these three poems, the study shows the importance of the archetypal figures that always appear within literary works.

Key words: Archetype, Archetypal Figure, Clown, Collective Unconscious, Crow, Raven, Scapegoat, Trickster.

A. Introduction

In the realm of literary work, the crow has often been featured whether in prose, drama or poetry. The image of the crow also often depicts the dominant aspect of creativity and cleverness. Since a long time ago, This image has endlessly affiliated with many figures possessing such an amount of wisdom. In Norse mythology, their god Odin was accompanied by two ravens: Huginn who represented the power of thought and active search over information. The other raven, Muninn represented the mind, and its ability to intuit meaning rather than hunting for it. The ancient Nordic believes that Odin would send these two ravens out each day to soar across the lands. At the day's end, they would return to Odin and speak to him of all they had spied upon and learned on their journeys. Ferber (2007) states that they are "...faculties of the mind that quickly fly over space and time." (p.169) This statement clearly adds on the understanding of the wisdom and creativity the image of the crow possess.

Despite the positive aspects the image of the crows possesses, Edgar Allan Poe practices the horror of a raven in his poem of The Raven. Ferber firstly implies that "the raven and the crow are not consistently distinguished in biblical or classical literature." (p.169) Thus, Eudy (2009: 2), regarding to Poe's The Raven, states "The Raven' describes the inner turmoil of a man grieving the death of his lover," Furthermore, Chappell (2006) clarify that the crows came to be associated with disease and death as they scavenged the corpses of the victims of the plague or of war, and for that reason, they are a convenient symbol of evil and of death in horror literature and films, even to this day. The crows are proven as an image which possesses both positive and negative aspects. While they are seen as an image that shows wit, wisdom, and creativity, on the other hand the crows also a bird possessing a dark and malicious side.

Ultimately, whether the Crow signify good or bad things, it keeps being calling out and becoming an inspiration of every object of cultivation in recent day's literary works. The good and the bad traits of the Crow, coherently, are being represented in the big title of this study. The uses of 'Faces' is figuratively denotes its variable interpretation into the poems. 'Faces' here mean to show a variation and the Crow's flexible image that can be evolves into three archetypal figures. Whether it is for good or bad ends, the Crow is proven to be impregnate with the idea of roles within the situation and the big picture of the poems. A clear example of this statement is the book of collection of poems entitled *Crow: From the Life and Songs of the Crow* by Ted Hughes that is dedicated to the character of the Crow.

Ted Hughes was born in Mytholmroyd, Yorkshire in 1930. After serving as in the Royal Air Force, Hughes attended Cambridge, where he studied archeology and anthropology, taking a special interest in myths and legends. In 1956 he met and married the American poet Sylvia Plath, who encouraged him to submit his manuscript to a first book contest run by The Poetry Center.

Hughes's interest in animals was generally symbolic. Using figures such as "the Crow" to estimate a mythic everyman, Hughes's work speaks to his concern with poetry's vatic, even shamanic powers. Though Hughes is now unequivocally recognized as one of the greatest poets of the 20th century, his reputation as a poet during his lifetime was perhaps unfairly framed by two events: the suicide of Plath in 1963, and, in 1969, the suicide of the woman he left Plath for, Assia Wevill, who also took the life of their young daughter, Shura. The poems in "Crow" contain some of the harshest, blackest, bleakest images ever put into poems. Life is not always beautiful. "Crow" is dedicated to Assia and Shura.

This study is aiming to discover how the three poems *Crow Blacker than Ever*, *Crow's Fall*, and *Crow's Nerve Fail* by Ted Hughes display the three faces of Crow. Furthermore, this study will analyze the importance of the archetypal figures affecting the whole poems.

In the first poem, The Crow is practicing the archetypal traits of the Trickster. His role is to unify the oppositions of god and human by creating something out of nothing that nobody had ever thought before. He is lone standing; and not supporting man nor god, and in the end his independence and his wisdom breaks the boundary between the oppositions. The revolutionary

thoughts and attitudes of the Crow are the solid example to shows his traits as the Trickster.

The Crow's character is changing to those of the Clown in the second poem. The traits of the clown are directly under the section of the trickster, along with the fool and the court jester. Despite being the radical plotter like in the first poem, here the Crow is showing his struggles in his fighting against the impossibilities. His failing and his ironic intention are depicting him much as the clown who is conflicting within to show the truth in life while maintaining his grin to entertain another.

Lastly, the tragic fate is something that Crow's fights in the last poem. His archetypal images as the crow are being neglected by the man who keeps accusing and throwing prejudice at him. The archetypal figures of the scapegoat are being shows by the Crow while he is keep asking for what he has done for him to experiencing the end.

There are plenty of studies in journal that have become inspirations in analyzing the poems. Some of them are *Ted Hughes and Crow* (1998) by Ann Skea, *Ted Hughes' Animal Poem: An Embodiment of Violence or Vitality?* (2012) by Sheikh Mehedi Hassan, and '*The Horror of Creation': Ted Hughes' Re-Writing of Genesis in* Crow by Danny O'Connor (2010) by Beverley Kane.

Ted Hughes and Crow (1998) by Ann Skea discuss the characteristics of the Crow from the poem collection of Crow: From the Life and Song of Crow by Ted Hughes. To be very clear, the three poems of this study also come from the same aforementioned poem collection, Crow: From the Life and Song of Crow. Skea made some discovery about the theme as well as the characteristics of the protagonist of the poems. In her dissertation of M.Litt degree (1981), she discovered that Hughes applied the trickster figure of North American Indian folk-lore into the character of Crow. Hughes also confess that he is doing just what Jung describes the trickster: "there is something of the trickster in the character of the shaman and medicine-man, for he, too, often plays malicious jokes on people." It is described in the poem of 'A Childish Prank' (Crow, 1970:19; qtd. in Skea's *Ted Hughes and Crow*, par.27) "God went on sleeping / Crow went on laughing" as an example. Later, Hughes confess that Crow is practiced the very modern form of the Trickster Cycle which he is fitting well with surrealist and absurd sentiment.

In *Ted Hughes' Animal Poem: An Embodiment of Violence or Vitality?* (2012) by Sheikh Mehedi Hassan, he employs that Hughes has practices the vitality within animals in contribute to its interpretation. Hassan confess that "…his contemporaries were committed to "the Movement" and kept articulating

angst, anger, negation, narcissism, morbidity, and frustration in their verses, Hughes produced elegant poems of versatile animal world." (p.1) Nevertheless, according to Hassan, "The use of animal symbolism and imagery is an old trend to teach human beings certain lessons of honesty, morality and ethics." (p.4) Hughes' attempts to reach those sides of human are also proven in the three poems of this analysis. The Crow tries to bring harmony in the poem *Crow Blacker Than Ever*. In poem *Crow's Nerve Fail*, the Crow becomes the depiction of human foolishness and how easy for them to accuse and prejudice against the other. While in the poem of *Crow's Fall*, the Crow shows the hard struggle by leaving a message that an effort is important in order to change one self.

In 'The Horror of Creation': Ted Hughes' Re-Writing of Genesis in Crow (2010), O'Connor describes that Hughes reconstruct the Creation of God by delivering it through his character of the Crow. The most notable notion by O'Connor in this poem is by how 'god' in these poems are more of cartoonish and vulnerable than the real god in the Origin of Creation. O'Connor made it clear, as he states, "Hence, in Hughes's *Crow*, we encounter, in part, a cartoon God who routinely fails to prevent Crow from spoiling his plans," (p.2) clearly describes the god in poems of the Crow is not as almighty as that of the real one.

As an image, the crow possess a wide variety of interpretation, whether it bad or good. This contradictory nature of the crows is being shown in Ted Hughes's poems. The crow's image manifests itself as the Crow, the figure of the Trickster, the Clown, and the Scapegoat that depicts the rich imagery and archetypal interpretation. These archetypal figures, thus, arise as the focus of analysis in this study.

The archetypal figures are much alike found in many literary works or mythology. Snider (2009) complies the list of some archetypal figures, they are: the Hero, the Scapegoat, the Devil figure, the Fool, the Trickster, the Child, the Mother, et cetera. C. G. Jung stated that archetypes are limitless in number, and this is also applies to the archetypal figures. Moreover, these archetypal figures are glued to every human being. For instance, Snider clarifes that Hitler and Stalin are the modern examples for the archetypal figures of the Fool. (par.12) Every human possess this archetypal traits and thus play their definite role in society.

The archetypal figures are important in identifying one character. Through Jungian archetypal analysis, one could know the traits that one person possess and what do they bring to the society. In the three poems of Ted Hughes, the subject the Crow possesses three different archetypal figures. When this approach applied to the Crow whom in the first place carries out the rich archetypal image of crows, one could see how importance the archetypal figures analysis into characters are. Here are major archetypal figures that the Crow's shows in Hughes' poems:

a. The Trickster

The Trickster is the first fundamental stage in the development of the hero myth, in which the hero is instinctual, uninhibited, and often childish. Tricksters are almost always male. Jung in his *Man and His Symbols* (1968) describes the trickster as such:

Trickster is a figure whose physical appetites dominate his behavior; he has the mentality of an infant. Lacking any purpose beyond the gratification of his primary needs, he is cruel, cynical, and unfeeling. (103-4)

As their name suggests, tricksters love to play tricks on other gods (and sometimes on humans and animals). But perhaps the best definition of a trickster is the one given by Hyde: "trickster is a boundary-crosser" (1998: 7). By that, he means that the trickster crosses both physical and social boundaries. The trickster is often a traveller, and he often breaks societal rules. Tricksters cross lines, breaking or blurring connections and distinctions between "right and wrong, sacred and profane, clean and dirty, male and female, young and old, living and dead". The trickster often changes shape (turning into an animal, for example) to cross between worlds. In his role as boundary-crosser, the trickster sometimes becomes the messenger of the gods. But there is another side to the trickster. As Leeming notes, "he is sexually over-active, irresponsible, and amoral. But it is that very phallicism that signifies his essential creativity." (1996: 24) Overall, one could say that the trickster is an agent of change to their environment.

b. The Clown

The Clown is directly under the character traits of the trickster, along with the fool and the court jester. The Clown archetype is associated with three major characteristics: making people laugh, cry, and wearing mask that covers one's own real emotions. Myss (2010) describes the Clown "...associates weakness and loss of control with a man who express emotion." (par.94) The emotion and the true feeling are the most notable things which being evoked by the figures of clown. Furthermore, Myss confess, "the clown reflects the emotions of the crowd, making an audience laugh by satirizing something they can relate to collectively or by acting out social absurdities." Because of the mask he wears, the Clown is allowed or expected to cross the boundaries of social acceptance, representing what people would like to do or say themselves.

c. The Scapegoat

Lastly, the Scapegoat is the archetypal figures to denote the sacrificial lamb, one to blame for another sins or fears. Snider (2009) describes "the scapegoat is an animal or more usually a human whose death in a public ceremony or expulsion from the community expiates some taint or sin, the results of which have been visited upon the community." (par.1) Scapegoating can also be intensely personal in the form of persecution by one individual against another. This archetype, as the name suggest, are being projected to the subject.

With everything considered, Archetypal critics need a deeper understanding towards the interpretation of symbol, images, and situation that the text given. Archetypal critic works to see and discover recurrent universal patterns underlying most literary works. Moreover, unlike the more traditional form of criticism that focuses on the history of the author or the piece itself, archetypal focuses on the archetypes and any other symbols and allusions mentions in the piece, anything that strikes human collective unconscious. To conclude, the archetypal interpretation of the text will bring the readers and the analysts to evoke the meaning behind the text, and character doings and motives.

B. Methodology

The analysis into this study be done through the close text-based interpretation by employing the Jungian archetypal approach. Moreover, it is also important to have an understanding of symbolic interpretation. The knowledge over cultural history, anthropological, and psychological aspects surround the subject and situations within the poems also proven useful in the interpretation attempts.

Firstly, the writer applies the understanding of archetypal figures into the subject of the poems. After determining the archetypal figures' the Crow has evolved into, the writer will analyze the importance of the archetypes that the Crow shows into the message or meaning the poems want to convey. Moreover, the interpretations of image and symbol also greatly contribute in analyzing the poems.

C. Analysis

a. Crow Blacker Than Ever

The archetypal analysis into this poem has proven the Crow as the archetypal figure of the Trickster. The most notable notion about the trickster archetype is that he is "a boundary-crosser" (Hyde, 1998: 7). The Trickster also notable for his radical action throughout the story. As Leeming (1996) states, "he (trickster) is sexually over-active, irresponsible, and amoral. But it is that very

phallicism that signifies his essential creativity." (p.24) His role in this poem is to rebels against the oppositions, pokes fun at their overly serious problem, and creates intricate scheme to conjoin them. Departed from these essential ideas about the Trickster, one could see the traits coming from the character Crow. Moreover, from line one to five, it is safe to assume that the Crow is neither on god's side nor is he on man's side. On this ground, it is easy for him to manipulate the dispute between the two discording parties.

The disunity between god and human in this poem are seen as the representation of the distance between heaven and earth that could never get united, in the first place at least. But Crow comes to join them as the "boundary-crosser". This stanza below clarifies it:

But Crow Crow Crow nailed them together, Nailing heaven and earth together-

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The ideas of heaven and earth has been used since a long time ago to symbolize realm of god, the idea of the highest presence, and Adam the first man. Furthermore, Adam was banished to earth accompanied with Eve, and thus creating this boundary. But as the "boundary-crosser", Crow '...nailed them together'. This action of uniting the heaven and earth hence become a representation of the origin of death. Simply states, the truth or presence that connect heaven and earth is the death. By throwing death between man and god, Crow practices the dark humor in his method uniting the both sides. Despite using his creativity as a crow, he '...nailed them together' in a radical way. 'Nailing heaven and earth together-' also a perfect choice of words to patent the creation of Crow who has surpassed the boundary, as the agent of boundary-crossing.

In addition, the trickster known for his insanity beyond man's reaches in order to bring down the limitations. The Trickster always thought one way that contradicts any ordinary man's thoughts. His playfulness and joyous malice are being pictured in line 'Which became gangrenous and stank- / A horror beyond redemption.' As mentioned before, this is the truth of the dead bodies of men, the flesh rotten and '...beyond redemption'. These aspects contradict Crow's intention to conjoin the heaven and earth. But in all better ends, by doing so, Crow really practice the traits of the Trickster. Thus, with that action he fulfilled his intention to tear down the limit between heaven and earth. Only with death, finally the equilibrium between man and god formed.

Finally, Crow show his true color as the Trickster in the last line of poem. He stated as such:

Grinned

Crying: "This is my Creation," Flying the black flag of himself 20

In this line, the Crow shows his pride as the creator of death as seen in '...This is my Creation', someone who holds responsibility for conjoined the heaven and earth, the force of god and the mortal who used to disgusted with each other. He brought down the boundary, which, nobody had ever thought before. His maliciously playful traits as the Trickster also reflected in the line 'grinned.' He is grinning due to his proud self after the creation of death, and brings an end to the dispute between man and god. The Crow shows his power as an individual worker, and how he does proudly announce his color of black. Given the cheeky, interfering, amoral, destructive and sometimes constructive personality, the Crow, laughing and singing, displays his supreme confidence by '...Flying the black flag of himself'.

b. Crow's Fall

In the second poem, this analysis has discovered the Crow as the Clown. The Crow in this poem shows the traits of the archetypal figure of clown by showing a dark comedy in his fail attempt to defeat sun. The poem begins with the oxymoron to describe the Crow's position on the first place:

> When Crow was white he decided the sun was too white. He decided it glared much too whitely. He decided to attack it and defeat it. 3

Based on the description given by the speaker, the Crow in this poem did not start as a crow which is commonly.

Ferber (2007) describes, "The raven and the crow are not consistently distinguished in biblical or classical literature, and in English literature they are both sometimes grouped among such similar birds as the chough, daw (or jackdaw), and rook." (p.167) Therefore, the Crow's color of white, ironically, depicts the ironic situation within himself. "In Greek and Latin "white raven" was proverbial for something extremely rare or unheard-of, like "black swan." (p.167) Commonly, the crows are the best representation of the color of black, to show his stern images of power, domination, and infinite wisdom. Ferber also states, "Raven" has become an adjective meaning "black," with little or no additional connotation." (p.167) Thus in this situation, the Crow are different than his other kind. Therefore, sadly, he is under the domination of white. The line '...The sun was too white / He decided it glared much too whitely' shows the Crow's

projection of his desperation into the very source of white essence in this poem. The dominant power of white in this poem describes the full authority that became the limit for the Crow. This exclamation of the Crow pictures for what exactly the archetypal figures of the clown meant to exist.

Ultimately, in the last stanza of poem, clown's reasons to struggle have lived up.

It brightened, and Crow returned charred black.

"Up there," he managed, "Where white is black and black is white, I won." 15

With all of his conflicts to break out of his default welfare, it shows his intention on the first place. His struggles caused him to '...returned charred black', and he finally achieves his true identity as a black bird. Cameron (2005) describes black birds in general (raven, crow, etc.) as an archetype of living in higher realms, and are symbolic of: higher intelligence, thought, and ideas. (par.4) Her statement amplifies the Crow's Clown's trait as a wise character to begin with, that did not want to let himself stuck in the place where it contradict his natural bringing as a black bird. While his attempt is radical in so many ways, his creativity as an archetypal image of crows lived up and channels his determination into fruitition.

c. Crow's Nerve Fail

In the last poem, the study has found the Crow as the archetypal figure of the Scapegoat. The prejudice against the Crow in this poem is contradictory done by the man. The Crow, in any case, raven, are the archetypal image of wisdom. Furthermore, Harryman (2003) makes it clear, "...Crow and Raven are consistently associated with the dark aspect of the psyche, the shadow." (p.2) Because the crow and raven are black, and because birds are often associated with soul or spirit in mythology, Harryman argues and sees "...archetypal Raven as symbolic of the human shadow." (p.2) More precisely, he continues, "Raven represents the role of the personal shadow as a wisdom figure." (p.2) In this poem, the shadow of human's fear is the death. Due to the fear, and denial to accept their shadow, human are blaming the Crow for what he brings. The Stanza as follow will clarifies the presence of prejudice:

Is he the archive of their accusations? Or their ghostly purpose, their pining vengeance? Or their unforgiven prisoner?

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The Crow as a scapegoat will hold responsibility for every human fear. He is being sacrificed to redeem human sins for causing death or experiencing death. Cameron (2008) states as follows:

"In common understandings, a scapegoat is a person who gets blamed for more things than it seems that they deserve. The term 'scapegoating' refers to this active projection of blame and guilt onto other people, so that the scapegoater - the person doing the projecting - can remain apparently righteous, 'good' and guilt free" (par.1)

As Cameron states, the accuser in this poem feels safe if the blame over the fear of death are pointed towards the Crow. The Crow as an image is seen as the harbinger of ill luck and misfortune as well as death, and from that facts, man has make the Crow practiced the archetypal figures of the Scapegoat.

Furthermore, the man excommunicated the Crow by letting him wandering the earth while 'Clothed in his conviction.' The accuses and prejudice are thrown up at the Crow without any real reason by the use of word "...conviction." Man believes that the Crow only bring misfortune, bad luck and, much worse, the image of death. 'Trying to remember his crime' is the contradictory part from this poem, which over-shadowed his archetypal image of raven that possesses wisdom.

D. Conclusion

In the end, the three poems of Ted Hughes entitled *Crow Blacker Than Ever*, *Crow's Fall*, and *Crow's Nerve Fail* definitely showing the three faces of Crow through the perspective interpretation of archetypal figures. Jungian archetypal analysis is proven to hold the basis of analysis into human characteristics, and how they manifest themselves within the circle of society.

In *Crow Blacker Than Ever*, the Crow as the subject shows his traits as the Trickster. In order to bring down the dispute between man and god, he surpassed the boundary and creates the media where the earth and heaven are finally conjoined. The interpretation might bring one to the point of view where the Crow has actually tricked both man and god into the situation where nobody might not have place to arguing each other anymore. With the emergence of death through the Crow's defiance action, he has shown the archetypal figure traits of the Trickster.

In the second poem, *Crow's Fall*, the archetypal figure of the Clown is being shown by how the Crow keep trying to fights the impossible fight that he almost never win. The Clown sends a sarcastic messages through the eyes of the people who teaching him jokingly attempts to do something. When the Clown has failed to gain or do something out of his attractions, ironically, the man would be remember something that they lack in life. By showing his struggle to be released from the limitation of default enjoyable life, the Crow finally gained his true self, the Clown the tragic hero.

In the last poem, the Crow is depicted as the Scapegoat of man's Shadow. The Crow are blamed for his personal image that might be seen as the harbinger of misfortune and death. The man are neglected to see the positive side of Crow, and thus accuse him and throw their prejudice against him. Due to the duality he possess, the Crow did not understand with everything that happened to him. He is left surrendering, expelled from the community to spare human's fear against the imagery of death.

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