



**DERIVED MYTHICAL RECURRENCE OF THE BIBLICAL GENESIS'
CAIN AND ABEL STORY IN TRASK FAMILY**

IN JOHN STEINBECK'S *EAST OF EDEN*

A THESIS

**In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Bachelor Degree Majoring in Literature
in English Department, Faculty of Humanities
Diponegoro University**

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PRONOUNCEMENT

The writer confirms honestly that this thesis entitled Derived Mythical Recurrence of the Biblical Genesis' Cain and Able Story in Trask Family in John Steinbeck's *East of Eden* is compiled by herself without taking any result from other research in any university, whether from S-1, S-2, S-3, and diploma degree. The writer also ascertains that she does not take any material from other publications or someone else's work except for the sources that are mentioned in references.

Semarang, 11th September 2017

Carla Thurmanita

MOTTO AND DEDICATION

“Age quod agis”

Unknown

“I refuse to accept other people’s idea of happiness for me. As if there’s a ‘one size fits all’ standard for happiness.”

Kanye West

“Pain is inevitable. Suffering is optional.”

Haruki Murakami

“Get rid of any doubt. Every glory comes from a daring beginning.”

Max

“dalam diriku mengalir sungai panjang, darah namanya; dalam diriku menggenang telaga darah ,sukma namanya; dalam diriku meriak gelombang sukma, hidup namanya; dan karena hidup itu indah, aku menangis sepuas-puasnya.”

Sapardi Djoko Damono

*This thesis is dedicated to me
and to those who want to learn and read it
Thank you*

APPROVAL

**DERIVED MYTHICAL RECURRENCE OF THE BIBLICAL GENESIS'
CAIN AND ABEL IN TRASK FAMILY
OF THE NOVEL EAST OF EDEN BY JOHN STEINBECK**

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I realize that this thesis is still far from perfect. Therefore, I will be glad to receive any constructive criticism and suggestion to make this thesis better. I expect that this thesis will be useful for the readers.

Semarang, 11th September 2017

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

TITLE	i
PRONOUNCEMENT	ii
MOTTO AND DEDICATION	iii
APPROVAL	iv
VALIDATION	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS	viii
ABSTRACT	ix
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background of the Study	1
1.2 Scopes of the Study	3
1.3 Research Problems.....	3
1.4 Objectives of the Study.....	4
1.5 Methods of the Study	4
1.6 Organizations of the Thesis	4
CHAPTER II: BIOGRAPHY OF THE AUTHOR JOHN STEINBECK AND THE NOVEL <i>EAST OF EDEN</i>	7
2.1 Biography of John Steinbeck.....	7
2.2 Summary of <i>East of Eden</i>	8
CHAPTER III: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	11
3.1 Characters	11
3.2 Conflicts.....	12
3.3 Settings.....	12
3.4 Symbols.....	13
3.5 Allusion.....	13
3.6 Biblical Myth of Cain and Abel.....	14
3.7 Northrop Frye's Theory of Archetypes.....	14
CHAPTER IV: DISCUSSION	18
4.1 Characters	18
4.2 The Archetypal Recurrences.....	26
4.3 Quest-myth and <i>East of Eden</i> as Frye's Tragic-Autumn/Romance-Summer Mythoi.....	35
CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION	44
BIBLIOGRAPHY	

ABSTRACT

The purposes of this paper are to find the differences between the family relationship that is depicted through Trask Family in the novel *East of Eden* written by John Steinbeck and the original story of mythical bible Cain and Abel, and what causes the differences between both from time to time. This thesis is done by conducting close reading and library research method. The writer uses the theory of characterization, conflict, setting and symbols for the intrinsic elements. And in analyzing the extrinsic elements, the writer uses Northrop Frye's Theory of Archetypes. The sources used for this research also come from not only books, but also other media such as the internet by searching from articles and journals. The result of this paper is that the differences between the origin of the story and the recurrence are caused by the failure experienced in one generation and the will of latter generation to change the destiny.

Keyword: myth, archetype, Cain and Abel, Northrop Frye, failure, will

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Some of the sequences of events and things that human beings do in their lives occur and they are often projected from their own thoughts and desires. But without realizing it, there actually resides a pattern adapted into these occurrences and it may be replicated along until the replica then makes the sequences felt familiar to the subject despite the fact that the event is experienced for the first time and for once in one's lifetime.

This pattern of occurrence is developed further in the novel *East of Eden*. The novel that brought its author, John Steinbeck to be the winner of the 1962's Nobel Prize for Literature is stated as his best and most ambiguous work; *East of Eden* tells a complex story of the two generations of Trask family with a hint of Hamilton's that have few similar conflicts which consist of unfair fatherly love and sibling's rivalry that continually appear in each generation.

I believe that there is one story in the world, and only one that has frightened and inspired us..... Humans are caught—in their lives, in their thoughts, in their hungers and ambitions, in their avarice and cruelty, and in their kindness and generosity too—in a net of good and evil..... I think this is the only story we have and that it occurs on all levels of feeling and intelligence. (Steinbeck, 1952: 413)

From the quotation above that Steinbeck wrote in his novel, it shows that he believes that there is actually one story that underlies stories in reality of this world. Therefore, he writes this one story with familiar resemblances that he

ought to show the readers by using references from biblical stories. This is not a shock for anyone who has acknowledged Steinbeck's works since he often put biblical references in most of his literary works which some of them are *The Grapes of Wrath* and *Of Mice and Men* due to his family background that is close to Christianity values. Steinbeck also once told in his letters to his editor Pascal Covici that is compiled into a book entitled *Journal of A Novel: The East of Eden Letters*, that he wanted to call this novel as a script of history rather than a novel since it was his first intention with writing this book (1969: 17). This is the reason why readers may connect personally and even emotionally to this story because there is a history Steinbeck put into it. He tells a story with similar pattern of life in order to make it related to one's real story.

The themes of aforementioned conflicts that are unfair fatherly love and sibling's rivalry are interesting to further be discussed since they keep repeatedly being told throughout each family generation in this novel as it seems like a kind of their ancestors' inheritance. Along with its biblical references and the pattern that emerges in this story, it is supported by the theory of archetype from Northrop Frye that later will be applied in this analysis.

Frye once stated in his book of collective of essays *Anatomy of Criticism*,

“We begin our study of archetypes, then, with a world of myth, an abstract or purely literary world of fictional and thematic design..... In terms of narrative, myth is the imitation of actions near or at the conceivable limits of desire.” (1971: 136).

The recurrence of each conflict can be analyzed with Frye's theory since it turns out to imitate a mythical story that in this case is the famous myth of biblical

Genesis' Cain and Abel that consists of sibling rivalry element in it. And what makes it more interesting to be analyzed is the struggle of some characters in the novel have in order to fight the mythical inheritance from previous ancestors and give the later generation the choice to change the former pattern and have their own destiny.

1.2 Scope of the study

From many aspects that are available, the writer will only focus on analyzing four internal aspects and several external aspects from the novel. The internal aspects consist of character, conflict, setting, symbol, and allusion. As for the external aspects, the writer chooses to analyze the archetypal recurrence in the story; how the mythical recurrence is implied, and the existence of quest-myth that will change the mythical recurrence.

1.3 Research Problems

In this thesis, the writer will discuss the problems as follows:

1. What is the myth that referenced in *East of Eden*?
2. What are the archetypal patterns that occur in *East of Eden*?
3. How does the quest of two main characters in *East of Eden*, Adam and Caleb Trask cause differences between the mythical origin and its recurrences?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

1. To show that there is a mythical recurrence really occurs in the novel through intrinsic elements
2. To describe how the archetypal pattern is implied in the story
3. To explain how the heroes' quest can cause differences between the mythical origin and its recurrence

1.5 Methods of the Study

This thesis uses library research method to analyze the archetypal patterns in John Steinbeck's *East of Eden*. The sources used for this research come from not only physical books, but also other forms of media such as internet by conducting research from some articles, journals, and electronic books.

Other than that, the writer also uses mythical approach to analyze the research problems. The archetypal patterns that will be focused on this research are analyzed with characters, settings, and symbols analysis for its intrinsic aspects. In the extrinsic elements, the writer uses the theory of archetypes from Northrop Frye.

1.6 Organization of the Thesis

The organization of this thesis comprises five chapters.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

There are six sub-chapters consisted in this chapter
They are namely background of the study, scope of
the study, research problems, objectives of the study,
methods of the study, and organizations of the study.

CHAPTER II

BIOGRAPHY OF JOHN STEINBECK AND THE SUMMARY OF THE NOVEL *EAST OF EDEN*

This chapter gives a short biography of the author of
the novel *East of Eden* that is John Steinbeck and a
brief summary of the novel as the subject of the
study. The summary aims to provide correlation
between the novel and analysis conducted in this
study.

CHAPTER III

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.

In this chapter, the writer mentions all the theories
and its brief explanation which are applied for the
discussion in chapter four.

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

This chapter explains the research problems.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The summary and the result of the previous chapters.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

CHAPTER II

BIOGRAPHY OF JOHN STEINBECK AND THE SUMMARY OF THE NOVEL *EAST OF EDEN*

2.1 Biography of the Author

John Ernst Steinbeck Jr. or widely known as John Steinbeck was born on February 27th, 1902, and was raised by his religious family in Salinas, California. He was an American novelist who was also a Nobel Prize for Literature winner in 1962 for one of his greatest works, *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939) that portrayed the life of migrant workers during the Great Depression era.

Steinbeck who decided to become a writer since his 14th year of life did not get his literacy success instantly. In 1919, Steinbeck enrolled at Stanford University in order to follow his parents' wish. But in result, Steinbeck had a decreasing progress in his study over the next six years that eventually resulted him to dropping out for good, without a degree in 1925.

He continued to publish more books in his later years, including *Cannery Row* (1945), *East of Eden* (1952), *The Winter of Our Discontent* (1961) and *Travels with Charley: In Search of America* (1962) until he won his 1962 Nobel Prize for "his realistic and imaginative writings, combining as they do sympathetic humour and keen social perception" (*Biography of John Steinbeck*. n.d. May 10, 2017, par 1-6).

2.2 The Summary of *East of Eden*

Cyrus Trask had two sons named Adam Trask and Charles Trask. Adam was loved more by his father, while Charles had always been longing for his father's love since he felt that he never got it in the same amount like his brother did. One day when Cyrus celebrated his birthday, Adam gave a gift for Cyrus in a form of a stray pup and Charles gave an expensive Germany knife as a gift. It turned out that Cyrus preferred Adam's gift over Charles' and this unfair act made Charles jealous and later he took his anger out on Adam by beating him almost to death. Years go by and when Charles and Adam were grown up, Cyrus forced Adam to enlist in a military service just like he once had as a profession, while Charles was allowed to stay home and make a business out of the family's farm. Later when Cyrus died, the brothers were left with a will that consisted of money with a suspiciously large amount.

When Adam was back from his military service and returned to live with his brother, both Adam and Charles met Cathy who was seen lying unconsciously outside the Trask's house. Charles sensed such evil and manipulative quality inside Cathy, but Adam ignored Charles' view and opinion, and instead married Cathy and took her to California where she learned later that she was pregnant in their new place. But since Cathy initially did not like to live there and did not want to have any child, then after she gave birth to her two sons that were twins, she left Adam and her sons. Adam, who at first forbade Cathy from leaving, got shot by his wife and left alone with the two boys. Cathy then continued her life as

a prostitute in Salinas. The conflict between him and Cathy clearly crushed Adam's self and it took him quite of time to recover from the pain. In the process of healing from his pain and also when the twin boys were already grown up, Adam took them to move to Salinas.

The twin boys, Caleb and Aron Trask had a really different character compared to each other. Cal grew up with dark appearance and clever quality, while Adam was such delicate person that was easily to be loved by everyone around him. With this difference, Adam favored Aron more than Cal, while on the other hand Cal had always loved his father and wished that he could love him back just as much as Adam felt toward Aron. Later in Salinas, Cal found out the truth about his mother Cathy Trask despite the fact that Adam once made up a white lie for the boys that their mothes' death, but rather than shared the newfound truth to his brother, he decided to keeps the secret to only himself.

One day Adam tried a new business that involved the lettuce and its ice-refrigerated system business, but apparently Adam failed the business and lost most of his money. Cal who knew about his father's failure then decided to replace his father's loss by taking advantage of the World War I event at that time that caused such rising price in selling beans. Cal then gavethe money to his father purely as a gift, but instead of being happy about it, Adam was disappointed and declined what Cal gave to him. Cal who then became angry and disappointed with Adam's response to his gift, he couldn't bear with his jealousy of Aron and took Aron to Cathy's whorehouse to show him the truth about their mother.

Aron who was so naïve and couldn't even handle a dirtiness of anything then ran away from the house and decided to enlist in the army and joined the war. When Adam found out what Aron did, he got sick and had a minor stroke. Then he eventually got more dying on his bed when he knew that Aron was killed in the war.

Seeing how sick his father had become, Cal was hammered with guilt and disappointed with his previous actions. But instead of running away from his guilt just like what his ancestors did, Cal asked for forgiveness from his father, and then Adam gives Cal his fatherly blessing and forgiveness.

CHAPTER III

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The writer finds that it is important to figure out intrinsic elements in the novel in order to help the writer to grasp the meaning of the story and understand the whole element deeper. If the readers do not understand the intrinsic elements that consist of characters, settings, symbols, and allusion, there will be confusion in understanding what the author initially wants to convey in its plot. The writer also chooses three archetypal elements that are retracted by using the help of aforementioned intrinsic elements, and Northrop Frye's Theory of Archetypes since the writer finds out that the novel mainly concerns about mythical recurrence of biblical Cain and Abel, sibling's rivalry and parental favoritism pattern, and the quest-myth of the main characters.

3.1 Characters

Character means the characteristics of a person that is told in a literary narrative. According to Holman in his book *A Handbook to Literature* (1960), the creation of images that come from imaginary persons in a narrative should be really credible that this image creation can exist for the reader as real as what is there within the limits a fiction has (1960:79).

Characters can be divided into two types of characters; they are static and dynamic character. Static character is the character that does not experience some

changes throughout the narrative. On the other hand, a dynamic character is modified by the actions that he passes, and has a goal to reveal the actions' consequences upon him.

3.2 Conflict

It is explained in Perrine's book *Literature: Structure, Sound and Sense*, that conflict is basically a struggle between two opposing forces. Every story has a conflict. Elements of conflict are beginning (describe a conflict), middle (climax or crisis) and end (resolve the conflict) that goes from exposition to rising action to climax to falling action and end in resolution.

Conflict can also be divided into types of conflicts which two of them are internal and external conflict. Internal conflict is a conflict that occurs in a person as a result of the conflict of his own desires; meanwhile external conflict is the type of conflict that happens between a person and other individual environments.

3.3 Setting

In literature, setting is used to help establishing the place (where) and time (when) and the general circumstances the story is taking place (mood of the plot in the story). Warren and Welleck explained in their book *Theory of Literature*, that setting is a kind of an environment which can be viewed as both literal and metaphoric due to the expressions of the character (1962:221).

As for setting of place, it is a "Geographical location where the action of the story is taking place". It leads the view directly to the location of the event that happens in fiction. A setting of place can either be named with a certain names or

probably do not have the exact name. Both conditions can be applied into a narrative as long as the setting reflects the geographical condition of the place ('Five Elements of Fiction', 25th May 2017, par 1).

3.4 Symbols

Symbol is an element that has more pictures behind it than its literal meaning. Symbol generally can stand for both some different meanings and something that is absolutely definite (Kennedy, 1979:182).

Symbol has various types; they are imagery, metaphor, and allegory. Potter said that "...in understanding of symbolism we need to distinguish between it and related concepts..." (Potter, 1967: 179). The symbols form of imagery and metaphor is usually found in poem, and the rest of it, which is Allegory, exists in narrative literature. The allegory is used to analyze the symbols that lie within a story, since it can make the structure and signify the characters and other elements that are organized in a literary work (1967: 181).

3.5 Allusion

Allusion is one form of intertextuality (Montgomery et al. 2007: 161). Montgomery et al. (2007: 156) define an allusion as making an implicit or explicit reference to some other text within one text. Explicit reference means that an actual quotation is made and it is usually signaled by quotation marks, while implicit allusive reference uses no signals to indicate that an allusion is being

made. In an implicit verbal allusion, the original wording is also sometimes changed to suit the new context.

3.6 Biblical Myth of Cain and Abel

The biblical myth of Cain and Abel is taken from the bible New King James Version, book of Genesis chapter 4, verse 1-16. This myth is widely known as it will be the basic pattern for the important events appearing in the novel, as Cain and Abel was mentioned once in the novel and also the author's Christianity background.

The mythical story tells about two brothers named Cain and Abel who were Adam and Eve's first sons. Abel worked as a shepherd while Cain was a tiller of the ground. When they offered their sacrifice to God, He accepted Abel's offering, lambs, but rejected Cain who gave Him fruits and grains. This act caused the rage and jealousy inside Cain's self that he did revenge by killing his brother. Then God confronted Cain for what he had done; he was banished and being told to go from his land. (newworldencyclopedia, n.d., 25th May 2017, par 3)

3.7 Northrop Frye's Theory of Archetypes

The theory of archetypes that will be used in this paper is the one of Northrop Frye. The word "archetypes" that came from Greek words *arch* (beginning) and *typos* (imprint) somehow intertwined with what Steinbeck wrote in the novel *East of Eden*, "I believe that there is one story in the world, and only one, that has

frightened and inspired us...” (Steinbeck, 1957: 413), for each event in the world, and for a big part of literary works, they refer to or are molded by a foregone story in the past.

The term archetype in literary criticism first shows recurrent narrative, patterns of actions, types of characters, themes and images that appear not only in a work of literature but also in myths, dreams, and social rituals. In archetype, there were symbols or images that recur often in a narrative that can be retracted as a whole element of one literary work. When some points in a story are pulled out and if those points are enough to be plotted, then a pattern would start to appear. The drawn line that comes near to the pattern would be the best fit line to an archetype.

Frye theorized the archetypal criticism in purely literary terms. This is different to Jung who heavily related archetype to one’s psychological state. In his book *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957), Frye believed that individual works of literature share conventional pattern and type with social rituals, theology, history, etc.

A myth being a centripetal structure of meaning, it can be made to mean an indefinite number of things, and it is more fruitful to study what in fact myths have been made to mean.

The term myth may have, and obviously does have, different meanings in different subjects. These meanings are doubtless reconcilable in the long run, but the task of reconciling them lies in the future. In literary criticism myth means ultimately mythos, a structural organizing principle of literary form. (Frye, 1957:341)

It can be interpreted that while myths have been the “structural organizing principle” of literary works, they can be drawn into unlimited interpretations that

depend on the subject and purpose. Unlike the other famously known archetype theory founder, Carl Gustav Jung, Frye opposed to see archetypes as “psychic determinants, seeing this as a slide towards subjectivity” (Wright, 1984: 74). Frye believed that the established patterns that occur in texts are what make the texts to be free from subjective values.

Some general basis of recurrence can be fundamental to all works of art, for a recurrence usually acts as “a rhythm when it moves along in time and as pattern when it is spread out in space”(Frye, 1957: 77).

Frye himself also classifies myths into four categories:

1. The Spring myth. These mythoi are the archetype of comedy that usually deals with the birth event of the heroes, revival and resurrection, and the defeat of the darkness.
2. The Summer myth. These mythoi are the archetypes of romance that usually relates to a marriage event and one’s entering into Paradise.
3. The Autumn myth. These mythoi are the archetype of tragedy that heavily correlates to the fall of a hero, violent death, hero’s isolation and sacrifice.
4. The Winter myth. These mythoi are the archetype of satire. It deals with the return of such chaos and the heroes’ defeat events.

The above four-season mythoi are the four categories of myths that Frye identifies as an archetype that can define the genre of one narrative. This mythoi category is based on the cycle of the nature that correlates enough to human’s cycle of life

from his birth to death, and they usually recur in different types of literary works and is written by different writers (Frye, 1967: 163-230).

In addition to the four-season mythoi, Northrop Frye also discusses the quest-myth which has been developed from the aforementioned mythoi. What it means in a quest-myth is there lays a journey that the hero goes through in order to find the truth or something else that he has the desire to have. With the existence of a quest-myth, one can further break down into the derived version of a text in terms of myth. This situation is, also said by Frye, what then makes almost all genres of literary works have been evolved from the quest-myth only.

This is why Frye also believes that while there was an origin of a story, there must be a recurrence appears as it is “fundamental” for any forms of art including literary works. It keeps occurring from time to time while its pattern might be “spread out” and improvised in space and time, again depends on the subject and purpose. This improvised recurrence happens as there is no such story perfectly matches the archetypes. Some stories will diverge from the archetypes more than others. While the motif in the origin will always be the same, there will be some distortions occur in the recurrence for its objective to follow the purpose of the story.

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