

REMYTHOLOGIZING INDIVIDUALISM IN AMERICAN ACTION MOVIES

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ABSTRAK

Individualisme dianggap merupakan inti budaya Amerika. Individualisme dalam arti penekanan terhadap kemampuan diri sendiri di atas kelompok atau negara telah banyak dibahas dan didramatisasikan oleh banyak penulis dari masa awal sejarah negara Amerika dan dalam film laga Amerika individualisme tercermin dalam citra-citra verbal maupun non-verbal dari penggambaran sifat tokoh hero dalam melawan tokoh jahat. Akan tetapi, individualisme dan kepercayaan pada kemampuan sendiri sering memunculkan sikap terlalu percaya diri dan ingin menang sendiri.

Dalam hubungan ini, seorang hero dalam film selalu digambarkan sebagai sosok penyendiri, seorang individu yang berseberangan dengan masyarakat. Hal itu tidak berarti bahwa individu dan masyarakat adalah dua entitas yang benar-benar terpisah karena setiap individu adalah produk kondisi sosial. Konflik antara individu dan masyarakat lebih disebabkan oleh perbedaan karakter dan pola antara keduanya. Individu membutuhkan kebebasan untuk mempertahankan identitasnya, sedangkan masyarakat memerlukan kerelaan individu untuk menyerahkan sebagian kebebasannya demi tegaknya keteraturan bersama.

Dari karakterisasi, narasi, dan tema yang disajikan dalam film laga dapat disimpulkan bahwa penggambaran sosok hero yang soliter dalam film-film laga lebih merupakan romantisme yang hidup dalam kenangan bawah sadar orang Amerika terhadap kehidupan ideal seorang hero yang individualis yang menitiskan kembali individualisme yang tidak lekang oleh waktu.

Kata Kunci: *individualism, hero, myth, movies, democracy*

INTRODUCTION

In American history, there are two fundamental beliefs marking the characteristics of American society. First, society was composed of free and equal individual and that democracy was a way for free individuals to live together in equality; second, society should preserve the value of individualism. These ideals, however, were not handed down from generation to generation uncritically. Rather, these values have reappeared in subsequent periods of American history through collective demythologizing and remythologizing. This is in fact a general truth

applied to other cultures and societies. Demythologizing and remythologizing continue everyday. People develop and along with it is the change in how people look and perceive things. Naturally "everything is not expressed at the same time: some objects become the prey of mythical speech for a while, then they disappear, others take their place and attain the status of myth" (Barthes, 1999:110).

It is also general reality that new experience and new challenges create new form of values. This must be reflected in people's imagination as seen in the representations of popular product

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like popular movies. The new inventions of media of communication may vary their formulas in order to make stories new so that they can be accepted by their audience. This fact can also put the myth of individualism in the changing feature.

The myth of individualism in American culture has therefore been subject to significant changes over American history, and the ways in which this myth has remained stable and has changed reveal much about larger national transformations. Using the myth of individualism as a lens to study broader American social life is compelling particularly as a means of identifying the balance between continuity and change in tropes of American identity.

A common misperception about American culture appears to contradict any kind of traditional myths. With the rise of modern technology, it is general belief that every culture has lost values celebrated in traditional society. In investigating the conventions and inventions operating within movies, however, this article reveals that some characteristics engendered from some traditional American myth still remain. The most noticeable persistence is visible in the myths of individualism and democracy. When the representation of individualism in action films is compared to American social life, these two traits become even more visible and prominent. This persistence perhaps lies in the way they pose a challenge to modern society. As life becomes more difficult, one could argue that self-reliance and individualism might increase because one cannot depend on others but himself or herself. A democratic environment, one that values individual participation and thought, is therefore important in order to create order and maintain the sustainability

MYTH OF INDIVIDUALISM

There are many definitions of myth because one observer defines myth differently from other observers do. Because of the fact that myth today has many different meanings, Cawelti (1971:27) proposes a way in discussing about myth as

follows “..when a critic uses the term myth one must first get clear whether he means to say that the object he is describing is a false belief, or simply a belief, or something still more complicated like an archetypal pattern.” Different as the definitions might be, they confirm the same thing that myths are stories. Whether it involves supernatural beings and religious knowledge (Spradley and McCurdy (1975:443-444), expresses real and sacred thing (Eliade, 1960:23) as it was elaborated in primitive and archaic societies, or not depends on the objects of investigation. Barthes (1999:11), for example, proposed that everything can be a myth as long as it is conveyed by a discourse.

“Myths are stories, drawn from history, that have acquired through cultural functioning of the society that produces them, historical experience is preserved in the form of narrative, and through periodic retellings those narratives become traditionalize” (Slotkin, 1985:16). Frye (1990:28) also puts it: “a myth to me is primarily a mythos, a story, narrative, or plot, with a specific social function.” The important aspects in the making of myths, therefore, are discourse and time. Discourse bears the myth and time enables the myth to function in the society so that it strongly influences the people’s behavior as it gives pattern of how to behave.

Myth grows out of a society and transmit cultural heritage of shared allusion (Frye, 1990:28). Each members of a society in which myth lives, therefore, will share the same perception on it. It is understood and communicated among the people. Myth, therefore, becomes language (Barthes, 1999:11; Slotkin, 1985:16). As a language, myth exists as a system of communication that transmit “coded message from the culture as a whole to its individual members” (Green, 1979:54-55).

Day (1984:3-9) makes the definition become clear by dividing myth into four kinds arising from separate cultural levels. Those are archaic myth, intermediate myth, derivative myth and ideological myth. The first two myths can be regarded as sacral myths. The archaic myth is the myth of

pre-civilized people or myth from religious authorities, while the intermediate myth that is founded on the archaic myth is skillfully shaped by highly conscious writers in a literate era. The third or derivative myth is actually based essentially on intermediate myth but the concern is aesthetics and secular. The artist who creates this myth usually has freedom in creating it. The last one, the ideological myth, serves as mythical references to identify things or concept. Therefore, this myth is variable. By such division of myths, the American myth of individualism is categorized as the ideological myth. This is in accordance what classical interpretation of myth suggests as Lidzka (1989:164) points out that myth embodies the ideology of culture. The question raised then why was individualism so categorized, how did individualism become a myth? What form was it?

Dealing with myth of individualsim means dealing with the distinguishing feature of American traits, ideas or beliefs that mark the Americanness of the Americans. Turner portrays the embodiment of the myth as follows:

The result is that the American intellect owes its striking characteristics to the frontier. That coarseness and strength combined with acuteness and inquisitiveness, that masterful grasp of material things, lacking in the artistic but powerful to effect great ends; that restless, nervous energy; the dominant individualism, working for good and for evil, and withal that buoyancy and exuberance which comes with freedom—these are traits of the frontier, or traits called out elsewhere because of the existence of the frontier (1963:57).

Since the beginning of American civilization, the people had been questioning and theorizing about American culture and society. The frequently occurred ideas, among others, were hope, uniqueness, tradition, experience, innocence, individualism, and freedom. The documents recorded in many anthologies shows this fact. This may give reasons for the assumption on the existence of the American myth of Individualism. Spengemann affirms:

The American myth, in its most general form, describes human history as a pilgrimage from imperfection to perfection; from a dimly remem-

bered union with the Divine to a re-establishment of that union. Within these very broad outlines, Americans have continually reinterpreted the several terms of the myth. For the Puritans, imperfection meant natural depravity of human nature as exemplified by Adam; perfection referred to ultimate salvation through God's grace. For the Rationalist of our eighteenth century, the two terms meant, respectively, intellectual backwardness and worldly happiness through reason. For the Transcendentalists, they meant separation from and union with the spirit that is alive in Nature. For some later nineteenth-century reformers they denoted predatory individualism and collective utopian harmony. For all of these groups, the two terms were absolutely inseparable from the belief in American as a moral idea (1965:503).

Spengemann's description on the overall American myth shows that there are two main sources of the formation of American myths. The first comes from Judeo-Christian tradition and the second American-made tradition.

Durkheim (1957:422) argues: "A society can neither create itself or recreate itself without at the same time creating an ideal." The ideal, ideology, concept, belief, value, or the ideal of individualism underlying the narrative writings that can thus be called the myth of individualism can be seen through how this imaginative projection continuously intermingles with the political and material processes of social existence. The society's words and practices articulated either directly and explicitly or indirectly and implicitly should then be seen in order to see the deployment of the myth and how it became the system of value and meaning by which the Americans live and through which they explain themselves.

The first noticeable factor in the creation of the myth of individualism can be seen from the efforts of the Americans to be independent from European influence. These are put in the form of praising American individual as Whitman, for example, says in his "Song of Myself":

And I know that the hand of God is the promise of my own, And I know the spirit of God is the brother of my own" (Whitman, 1948 v1: 66).

and
Divine am I inside and out,
and I make holy whatever I touch or am touch'd
from,
The scent of these arm-pits aroma finer than
prayer,
This head more than churches, bibles, and all
the creeds.
If I worship one thing more than another it shall
be the spread of my own body, or any part of it
(Whitman, 1948 v1:83).

Whitman celebration of himself even put above the external supreme power of the world strongly assures the importance of the individual. Thoreau's statement in *Walden*: "I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life" also marks American's desire to individualism. Many other writers are recorded to have the same view dramatized in the somewhat the same theme, individualism. "We all need to Americanized; we all need to guard against being continentalized.The men and women who left England were those who wanted liberty, and liberty to Englishmen is a synonym of individualism" (Mathews, 1922:45).

Peacock (1984:96) also in his discussion on American religion and culture confirms that institutionalism individualism and instrumental activism are the keys of Protestants ethics which became the backbone of American culture. This means that individualism was rooted in America as early as American history when the Protestants migrated to America to search for religious freedom. There are three important aspects that is commonly regarded as the myth, with which Americans are identified. Those are freedom, commonly regarded as common people, self-assertion, and individualism. These three can be regarded as a result of American need to be independent from European influence.

Individualism means individual character, or independent action as opposed to co-operation. Individualism is also a theory which opposes interference of the state in the affairs of individuals

as opposed to socialism or collectivism; or the theory that looks to the right of individuals not to the advantage of an abstraction such as the state. The word can also be a doctrine that individual things alone are real, or a doctrine that nothing exists but the individual self. Individualist, therefore, means "one who thinks and acts with independence." Individualism is the core of American culture as Bellah et al (1985:142) point out: "We believe in the dignity, indeed the sacredness, of the individual. Anything that would violate our right to think for ourselves, judge for ourselves, make our own decisions, live our lives as we see fit, is not only morally wrong, it is sacrilegious." Because it is basic to American identity, abandoning individualism means abandoning American deepest identity (Bellah et al, 1985:142).

The need of relying on individual is indeed a natural force that should characterize one's existence in order to survive because there are no other people to rely on. The emergence of competitive individualism as a result of the new democratic environment was then flourished. On the one hand, such individuality creates positive traits in that the Americans were eager to face the future without looking back to the past. On the other hand, it moves Americans from simple individuals. Turner caught the idea and states:

Beginning with competitive individualism, as well as with belief in equality, the farmers of the Mississippi Valley gradually learned that unrestrained competition and combination meant the triumph of the strongest, the seizure in the interest of a dominant class of the strategic points of the nation's life. They learned that between the ideal of individualism, unrestrained by society, and the ideal of democracy, was an innate conflict; that their very ambitious and forcefulness had endangered their democracy (1963:203).

Individualism can thus be said as a characteristic of American myth. Those all show how Americans shape their own characteristics in the American beginning, but how the myth is represented in today's popular works is discussed in the following.

REMYTHOLOGIZING INDIVIDUALISM

Individualism, a concept that individual as valuable and efficacious, has its history moved back to Greek traditions and later Judaic tradition, and then was converged in Christian view. It was in Christian view that over the centuries, the doctrine of salvation through one's own efforts has had a far strong attraction and, later, in American culture that in a variety of ways it affects the religious and non-religious alike (Lowry, 1982:287).

As defined as a theory which put high regard to individual because it opposes interference of the state in the affairs of individuals as opposed to socialism or collectivism, individualism was commented and dramatized in many forms and in all literary genres since the beginning of America. The depiction found is often in the form of a contrast between individual and society, it appears like dramatization of Tocqueville's concept which shifted the context of individualism from the public to the private sphere, that "individualism" set out a man to form a private circle of family and friends to leave society to itself (Tocqueville, 1945:252-236). In Paine's argument:

Society is produced by our wants and government by our wickedness; the former promotes our happiness positively by uniting pure affections, and the latter negatively by restraining our vices. The one encourages intercourse, the other creates distinctions. The first is a patron, the last is punisher. Society in every state is a blessing, but government, even in its best state, is but a necessary evil (1945: 4-5).

Paine's argument above may answer why individualism is always dramatized in the form of confrontation between individual versus society or government, like what is dramatized in most American action movies.

The themes mostly found in action movies usually deal with these two oppositions between individual versus society. These take place because they are from different nature. While government has its governing nature, individual is always reluctant to be governed. It is common sense, therefore, that individualism like dramatized in American action movies, flourished

in America because individualism lives in a democratic environment from the very beginning when they worked by their own opening new land. They started from nothing together so that they are conditioned to individualism, democracy, equality, and utilitarianism (Hacker, 1947:xv). Turner (1963:46) also argues: "The public domain has been a force of profound importance in the nationalization and development of the government." Popular term that man is the sole power to create its own wisdom is therefore reasonable.

It commonly found, therefore, the hero is depicted as a loner, an individual who are not compatible with society. Such picture, however, does not mean to show that the individual and society are separate and distinct entities. Every individual is the product of social conditioning. Therefore, the clash between individual and society is because of their different nature or patterns. Individual needs freedom in order to maintain their identity while society needs individual's willing to give in a part of his or her freedom by obeying the rules operating in the society. In relation to American history of American beginning, he must be associated with the natural landscape from which he seems to emerge. The image of it can be seen mostly in the western "An image in American heroic mythology is the image of the cowboy riding alone" (Robertson, 1980:6). He is "a new Adam, miraculously free of family and race" (Lewis, 1955:41). The loner individual together becomes signifiers, which supersedes another in forming the hero's identity. This behavior turns out to be the signifiers of individualistic behavior. It can thus show that putting male in superiority signified by hero's freedom from domesticity can presumably be the sign of its longing for the traditional life where his individualism or his courage can be tested. The President in *Air Force One*, who cannot live without his family but should perform his courage without their presence, signifies this. Woman's presence, therefore, is only meant to support his individualism.

Beside the basic theme as described above, the persistence of individualism can be seen in

verbal and non-verbal signs drawn from the main character or the hero in fighting the villain. The hero, an embodiment of Individualistic personality, should depend on his or her own capability. This characteristic marks the whole representation of action films as they deal with heroes as a source of value of every individual. This may involve both mental and physical courage. This kind of bravery is depicted almost the same in, for example, *The Matrix* and *Air Force One*, through an opposition between courage and cowardice. In *The Matrix* whose theme is about fighting façade world created by malevolent cyber-intelligence, the brave party choose reality despite the hardship they are facing while the coward ones choose unreal world because it offers dream.

The evil or corrupt world found in most action movies throws the hero relying upon himself to fight the hostile world. This image is equivalent of that of the heroes in American fiction in 18th century even in 19th century who had to survive in the hostile landscape of America. The signs in the form of an advice from an adult to a child like "just be yourself," or "do as you wish," "follow your heart" are often heard in American films. In *The Matrix*, for example, such sign can be seen, for example, in the following dialogues between Neo, the hero, and Morpheus, the mentor:

MORPHEUS: do you believe in fate, Neo?

NEO: No

MORPHEUS: Why not?

NEO: Because I don't like the idea that I'm not in control of my life

(scene 28).

Other character, a representation of virtue in the same movies, also advises the hero: "...You'll remember that you don't believe any of this fate crap. You're in control of your own life, remember?" (scene 80). Such individualism can surely be a reflection of American reality. A child born in America and raised in Indonesia by Indonesians becomes different from those born and raised in America. Ani, six year old Indonesian child, who was brought up in America, once was angry to her mother for forbidding her playing with caterpillar and said: "I just want to be myself."

The question is, can it come out from Indonesian child raised in Indonesia?

Maintaining individualism means depending anything on himself or herself. This is signified in an extreme way by picturing the heroes who are unbound with family ties. They can exist without any family or they can be from family background which one way or another they are separated with the family. An element of a family, however, is not totally absent in the narration. The films' emphasis on a family, that can put him in family situation, is his children. In Indonesian films, however, the ties of the family always go along with the life of the heroes. From where and whom he came from is important in Indonesian films. Like in action film *Darah dan Cinta*, the hero's life is not different from other protagonists in other genres. He has a family, has breakfast, and goes to work every morning with his wife sees him to the car by carrying his bag. Moreover, the hero's mother, father, or even sisters and brothers are also narrated.

The absence of a family is not only in the films discussed above, but also in most movies. Even if the family are involved, the involvement of a family is limited to the hero's nuclear family like in *Air Force One*. The involvement of a brother or sister, however, can be present, but it is only in a limited number. Unlike Indonesian action films, their involvement is important in the narrative. In American action movies of 1990s, for example, there are only three films involving brothers: *Maximum Risk* (1996), *Back Draft* (1991), and *The Game* (1997). Their involvement is active in the story because their presence is important in the narrative structure. The hero in *Maximum Risk* does not know that he has a brother, even a twin brother, until he finds him laying dead on the street. He then begins to reveal the truth about his twin and the reason of his death. *Backdraft* is about two Chicago firefighter brothers, who do not get along well, have to work together, while *The Game* is about a wealthy San Francisco investment banker who received a gift from his younger brother in the occasion of his 48th birthday. It is because of this gift that the banker goes to series of dangerous situation

threatening his life. From this, it can be concluded that American emphasis on the family is on the one that the hero makes, and not the family the hero comes from.

Self confidence engendered from individualism can become over confidence in American movies when America is positioned among other countries as it always occurs when a film deals with international terrorists or when it includes other nation in the narrative. Kallen's (1998:36) comment underlies the idea: "to him [the man on the street] the distinction between 'American' and 'un-American' is the distinction between good and evil." This over confidence may be seen as reflecting binary attitudes of bravery and ignorance. Like a child who lacks of reality principle, acts bravely but his bravery is out of his ignorance of the danger he is facing. Individualism is, therefore, bound up with self-reliance and bravery. Lowry (1982:287) puts it "Most important, it [individualism] has engendered the myth of the superself."

The drive of bravery and self-reliance generated from individualism can be in some forms, such as, greed, ignorance, obligation, survival and belief. The noblest motif is belief and the lowest one is greed. The hero's bravery is certainly out of his noblest character while the villain's is from his greed. In *The Matrix*, Morpheus's motivation in fighting the machines and thus risks his life in finding the redeemer is out of his belief, as he says: "Faith is not a matter of reasonability. I do not believe things with my mind. I believe them with my heart, in my gut" (Scene 78).

Although belief is the prime motivator for bravery, survival is not less important for people in the New World. In order to sustain in the wilderness they have to fight, otherwise they would die. "The violence of the wilderness presupposed persons of energy and strength who were willing to take chances on the unknown" (Filler, 1978:1). The survival motif can be said as archetypal, as Nash (1967:8) argues that the value system of primitive man was structured in terms of survival. The hero in *Air Force One* gains

his bravery because he is put in a position of survival. He has to fight the terrorists in order to save his family and other passengers in his aircraft.

That the hero feels obliged to take action is almost absent in American action films. He does not want to do something because of his job to do it. It is true that he can be a cop, detective, or a soldier but he must have a belief on the truthfulness of his action. Heroes whose background is a thief, ex-prisoners, or non-American deserter, however, can show that he does heroic action because he is obliged to do so. In *The Rock* (1996), for example, an elite SEAL team, with support from an FBI chemical warfare expert and a former Alcatraz escapee (John Mason), is assembled to penetrate the terrorists' who take over Alcatraz with 81 tourists as hostages. John Mason is taken from prisoner to help FBI to save the United States. His heroic action is not because of his belief, but his mere obligation. This kind of story can be also seen, for example, in *Hunt for the Red October* (1990), *Harley Davidson and Marlboro Man* (1991), *Money Talks* (1997), *The Negotiator* (1998), and *Entrapment* (1999).

Since individualistic personality should depend on his own capability, as his independency becomes the indicator whether or not he lives with the code of individualism, two important conditions should be maintained. He should be a free and idealist individual because his freedom and ideal mark the value of the path he takes. These are the elements of the controlling idea of individualism. His conduct, therefore, should be valued not because he is forced to do the courageous acts but because of his own free judgment.

In *Air Force One*, the president, the hero of the film, also has a chance to escape from the aircraft by a capsule provided for him in the case of emergency, but he chooses to stay and fight the terrorists. The above quotation altogether shows that authority is placed in opposition with individual identity. This is actually a common feature of action films.

The other signifiers signifying individualism in the films can be also through non-verbal behavior. The convention in heroic performance in 1990s action films shows the persistence of such symbolic inclination. The action heroes in these years are closer to the embodiment of the myth of individualism. It is shown through the size of their bodies, muscle, and face. It is archetypal that hero with muscle and beard signified a mature, strong, experience individual. The new hero's performance, therefore, becomes a new formula signifying the persistence of an imagination of individualism.

The first and noticeable picture is the inarticulateness and the slow movement of the hero. The extreme form of such depiction in the history of American action movies is in the image of Sylvester Stallone through both the body and the voice. In reality he is middleweight, quick moves and speaks quickly. Tasker (1993:234) says that he "wore glasses, well-tailored, well-barbered and very smooth of face, and that his voice was a little higher pitched than usually heard in his movies." For the purpose of action films, he should renegotiate his performance to be looked heavyweight, inarticulate, bare chest and slow. These kinds of images, however, experience changes in late 1990s and early 2000s. The hero is becoming smaller, clothed body, and higher pitched voice. Although such image is changing, the icon of a loner and inarticulate individual is still the icon of action heroes.

To be silent best befits a man of action and freeing himself from domestic responsibility or commitment gives him a chance to show his individualism. Other signs marking the hero's individualism, bravery, and self-reliance is that the hero is not enthusiastic and dynamic. The image of men unshaved also represents both the absence of woman or a family and masculinity. Individualism is therefore allied with masculinity. In today's development of American films, however, individualism is not encoded by the above masculinity picture since the hero is getting smaller, clothed, and cleaned shaved. The hero, however, should keep the same

bravery and self-reliance. The emergence of star like Keanu Reeves, with an innocent clean-shaved face, and other action heroes in 2000s like Wesley Snipes, Tom Cruise, and Brad Pitt show a shift in masculinity portrayal. This can be seen when Keanu Reeves is compared, for example, with Steve Reeves, the action hero in 1950s with his muscle and beard. The action heroes are getting more androgynous. An argument drawn from this shift is that individualism is shown with different signifiers. Although the nature of action films lies on the physical action in the form of combat or other fighting, the development today needs presentation, which needs brain be engaged in the narration. Physical roughness and strength, symbolized by beard and muscle, therefore, are not everything in the creation of action films. That is why, convention on the new heroic performance in articulating individualism and self-reliance is comprehensible.

Since the hero is the maker of his own condition, he should rely on himself and one thing that can be relied on is his mind and heart. His individualism is therefore built through a harmony between intellect and feeling. Reason provides him power in knowing the path he takes in the world and feeling supplies the soul. A reinforcement of the idea in the form of celebrating the characters' intelligence and reason in accomplishing absolutely anything can be said as characteristically American. Emerson who was a poet, essayist, and philosopher says: "The most genuine human life is characterized by moral sensitivity and spiritual awareness. Intuition, the combined power, feeling and the imagination can lead one beyond appearances of sense experience to discovery of the fundamental unity, beauty and goodness of all existence" (1929:1048). Here Emerson puts a strong idea that Americans to assert and express their individuality. One may argue, however, that it is universal, but it is not. The idea can be universal but how the idea is practiced and seen in the representation of the people's art marks the difference.

A view that human being is not the sole power in the universe in that there is a Creator is theoretically acknowledged by all myths. Judeo-Christian mythology accepts that the creator is the source of power of anything, and an active power of love and compassion, and so does Islamic tradition. Confucianism admits that heaven is the sole reality that has power over anything in the universe. It is active, invisible, but felt and attached to anything.

Human beings, however, are also placed in unlimited spirit. Christians believe that God creates human beings in accordance with His image, while Moslems have faith in man as the best creation in the universe, endowed with the purest and highest impulses. It can be argued, therefore, that when individualism is strongly held in American representations, it must be not as a result of the living universal myths, but rather other cultural aspect. In other words it can be said that such universal myth can be so imbedded in American life that it is felt to be Americans'.

CONCLUSION

Language is a way of communication and so is the myth of individualism as it has the capacity of two opponents understands each other. Individualism, democracy and hope are depicted in action films as mingling and overlapping. Conformity and contradictory in terms of individualism are proved to exist in action films. The test of the validity of whether or not there is remythologizing of the myth of individualism is pragmatic. This means that the American history should be the testimony.

The analysis above shows that courage, self-reliance, non-verbal behavior of the hero as representations of individualism are strong in American action movies. It can thus be said it is strong in American life. This can be seen from the repetition of the theme of individualism. This ideal, however, appeals not only to Americans but also to people of other cultures. This is shown by how the quality of individualism charm and invite people around the world. Although the myth of individualism was first formulated as a cultural myth, its international appeal shows that it bears

universal characteristics. It can, therefore, be said to be archetypal rather than formulaic, because it comments on issues that cluster around basic and universal experiences of life. The myth of individualism is not only compatible with modern society, but also I would argue, is increasingly remythologized and in fact the more it becomes integral to a culture the more modern that society becomes.

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