

“MONAI”: THE CULTURAL HERO OF THE ME’ENIT ETHNIC GROUP IN ETHIOPIA



ETİYOPYA’DAKİ ME’ENİT ETNİK GRUBUNUN KÜLTÜREL KAHRAMANI: “MONAİ”

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ABSTRACT: The Me’enit tribe lives in the southwestern region of Ethiopia. Members of the tribe live primarily in the districts of Me’eni Goldia and Me’eni Shasha, with a few living in Gura Ferda and some neighboring districts. This study focuses on Monai, a teenager who is the cultural and traditional hero of the nation. The main reason for conducting this study is the lack of sufficient research on the myth of the ethnic group. To make the research successful, data was collected from primary and secondary sources. The collected data was analyzed using narrative theory. The research uncovered the different stages that the Me’enit cultural and traditional hero - Monai - went through. These paths are the call to triumph, the rejection of the call, and the victory. This study discussed the existing myth law of the ethnic group, the actions Monai’s father takes to protect the myth law against his daughter, Monai’s efforts to overcome death, and the results of the analysis. Monai’s defeat of the ethnic group myth and the struggle to defend and protect the ethnic group culture are presented in the results of the research. This research focused on the struggle for the cultural hero of the Me’enite ethnic group and shows the actions that the ethnic group should take as a solution to epilepsy, although the ethnic group believes that epilepsy is the wrath of God.

Keywords: Me’enit, Monai, myth, cultural hero, epilepsy.

ÖZ: Me’enit kabilesi, Etiyopya’nın güneybatı bölgesinde yaşamaktadır. Kabilenin üyeleri öncelikle Me’eni Goldia ve Me’eni Shasha semtlerinde, birkaçı da Gura Ferda ve bazı komşu semtlerde yaşamaktadır. Bu çalışma, ulusun kültürel ve geleneksel kahramanı bir genç Monai’ye odaklanmaktadır. Bu çalışmanın yapılmasının temel nedeni, etnik grup mitine ilişkin yeterli araştırma yapılmamasıdır. Araştırmanın başarılı olabilmesi için birincil ve ikincil kaynaklardan veri toplanmıştır. Toplanan veriler anlatı teorisi kullanılarak analiz edildi. Araştırma, Me’enit kültürel ve geleneksel kahramanı Monai’nin geçtiği farklı aşamaları ortaya çıkarmıştır. Bu yollar zafer çağrısı, çağrının reddi ve zaferidir. Bu çalışmada, etnik grubun var olan mit yasası, Monai’nin babasının kızına karşı mit yasasını korumak için aldığı önlemleri, Monai’nin ölümü yenme çabaları ve analiz sonuçları ele alınmıştır. Monai’nin etnik grup mitini yenmesi ve etnik grup kültürünü savunma ve koruma mücadelesi araştırma sonuçlarında sunulmaktadır. Bu araştırma, Me’enite etnik grubunun kültürel kahramanı için verilen mücadeleye odaklanmakta

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ve etnik grup epilepsinin Tanrı'nın gazabı olduğuna inanmasına rağmen, etnik grubun epilepsiye çözüm olarak alması gereken eylemleri göstermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Me'enit, Monia, mit, kültür kahramanı, epilepsi.

Introduction

Numerous conclusions have been drawn concerning myth. Scholars from several academic disciplines have evaluated the myth in accordance with their particular genres. Anthropologists, folklorists, psychologists, and literary scholars have spoken and explained how the word myth derives from the Greek language. According to Phillip, the word myth derives from the Greek mythos, meaning "word" or "story" A myth has different meanings to the believer, the anthropologist, the folklorist, the psychologist, and the literary critic (Philip, 2007: 6). Humans used myths to find answers to the daily circular questions of life, the origin and purpose of life, the creation and end of the world. Bryant says that "most myths tell of gods and men who have great energy and power, different from that of ordinary people" (Bryant, 2009), while Campbell says that "myths describe the sacrifices, chronicles, and miracles performed by individuals or spiritual entities who made significant contributions to solving society's problems" (Campbell, 2004).¹

The Me'enit ethnic group also has its own myths that have been passed down from generation to generation, just as every society has its own myths. The language spoken by the ethnic group is *Me'enitian*. According to Abbink (1991:14), the language belongs to Surmik languages and has similarities with Tirma, Chai, Balesi / Zilmamu / Bodi and Mursi ethnic languages. One of the reasons that prompted me to do this research is the fact that not many studies have been done on mythology at the College of Humanities, Linguistics, Journalism and Communication, Amharic Language, Literature and Folklore at Addis Ababa University and I know that there is a gap here.

My second reason is that I learned a little about the ethnic group's belief in epilepsy, and seeing children exposed to the disease on the street made me want to learn more about the disease while writing my MA thesis on the ethnic group's traditional conflict resolution mechanism. My third reason is the internal pressure I felt after hearing the story of a young girl named Monai who is a cultural hero. The main purpose of this research is to reveal and analyze the struggle of young Monai, who is the cultural hero of Me'enit nation. The research follows a qualitative research methodology as it is conducted in a methodical or non-quantitative manner. In order to make this research successful, primary and secondary data sources were used.

¹ I would like to clarify that the calendars mentioned in this study are those that followed the Latin alphabet, that is, the European calendar, and those that followed the Geez alphabet, that is, the Ethiopian calendar.

The first part of this paper introduces the Me'enit ethnic group, the researcher's reasons for conducting this research, the purpose of the research, and the organization of the research. The second part deals with the concept of myth and a review of related studies. The third part analyzes the cultural Hero-Monai struggle and the last part deals with the conclusion of the study.

Review of Related Literature and Studies

Several judgments have been made about the myth. However, there is no independent, orthodox, and unanimous judgment on it. Leeming explains that the myth is a sacred scripture that was told orally and passed down and preserved from generation to generation. He further explains that its origin lies in one or more deities because "myths are passed down orally from generation to generation and/or preserved in sacred collections or writings often believed to have originated with one or more deities" (Leeming, 2010).

Myth is a long-lived, orally transmitted narrative in which people ask and answer their universal and unceasing questions, such as identity and nature, where they come from, and it is their promotion of faith, thought, and philosophy. According to Bascom, myths are stories told and believed to have occurred in a society's past (Bascom, 1965: 4).

Muller (1907) and Philip (2007: 6) explain that these stories believed to have occurred are a way of understanding and perceiving the world in metaphorical terms, similar to poetry. Myth is the foundation of a society's cultural values and has great power in shaping the nature of an individual in that society. Beyond the individual, it is a way to shape a nation and even a national identity and to create connections and interactions with each other.

Myths are based on cultural values that influence the beliefs and behavior of people in a culture. This means that myths are personal and individual; they can be ethnic and national. Myths serve as a means to connect people to their culture while constructing meaning individually and nationally (Brown, 2004: 276).

Based on the ideas presented above, myth can be defined as follows. It is the belief of man who, over the centuries, has examined who and where he came from, what he looked like, and what he wanted to be like, reflecting the unity and difference between him and the general interplay of life, his understanding and interpretation of the eternal questions, his understanding and conception of his origins, his interpretation, understanding, and belief, and preserving his knowledge, beliefs, hypotheses, and desires for future generations.

Types of Myth

Scholars in the field have divided myth in relation to their own perspective that there are different types of myths. Leeming (2010:1) and Vitalino (1968) have made their own classification. Although it is known that

the classification of myth types has its own problems and influence on the global understanding of the field, Finnegan states that it is better to focus on the contextual narrative and try to classify the types and essence (Finnegan 1970: 126). Finnegan believes that each myth, when told, must be coherent in its own narrative time, narrative place, and narrative sequence, and must be seen in its overall context. It is important to recognize that there is the possibility that myths sometimes meet on a common line and occur side by side. Kittelstad, for his part, has classified the types of myths into four core types. He classifies these four myths as animal myths, creation myths, death or subterranean myths, and hero myths (Kittelstad, 2013). Leeming (2010) also explained many and detailed classifications of myths. He labeled them as “commentary nature myth, myth of reincarnation, hero myth, myth of spirituality, myth of resurrection, myth of change, myth of modern earth, myth of kings and martyrs, myth of messiah, myth of remembering and forgetting, myth of modern society, myth of protection and destiny, myth of time and eternity and geometology”.

Myth of Heroes

“The definition of the word is ‘hero’ (heroes) means who fights, who struggles” (Kidane Wold, 1948: 597 E.C). The myth of heroes tells the story and the brave struggle of these heroes. This myth of heroes can be divided into two types, spiritual heroes and cultural heroes. The myth of spiritual heroes revolves around the creation, teaching, propagation, process and struggle of a religious or ideological system; it is about the elements that play a role in its creation, teaching, propagation and struggle. These organs, in one form or another, perform various miraculous and great deeds and wonders for the religion or faith. They perform the greatness of their miracles and triumphs with the great power and experience they acquire as human beings, or because of the support of the power that gives them special powers and endows them with them, and the other is that they have a share in the superpowers because of their characteristics and are partly human and partly possess great powers and spirits.

Bryant (2009) says, “Most myths tell of deities and humans possessing great energy and power, different from that of ordinary humans”. Bryant (2004) also says, “Myths describe the sacrifices, triumphs, and miracles of individuals or spiritual entities who have made significant contributions to solving society’s problems”. Bryant or Campbell explain that those who, unlike ordinary people, have energy and power and perform miracles to solve society’s problems are called heroes and are remembered as such.

Lemming assigns the founders of great religions, such as Jesus Christ, the Prophet Muhammad and others, to the hero myth. In the legend of heroes, their exploits and miracles and their contribution to the building, strength, and growth of their religion or spiritual entities are broad and deep (Lemming, 1998).

The second type of myth that falls under the category of hero myths is cultural/traditional myth. This type of myth focuses on stories of struggles on cultural issues. This type of myth tells of the work that members of a community have done within a particular culture or place. It tells the story of individuals who have made a special contribution to the creation, continuation, growth, and expansion of the culture of the society in which the work of the heroes and the results of their work are portrayed (Ibid.) Examples of this myth are the stories about Martin Luther King, the famous activist for black rights, and the stories about Osama bin Laden, who was classified as a terrorist by the West and is considered a hero for justice in the Arab world. Lemming mentions the American leader George Washington, who is said to have never lied (Lemming, 2002: 8). On the other hand, Chinese leader Mao Zedong and German Adolf Hitler, who contributed to history in the field of politics and culture, are placed in the same category (Lemming, 2002: 22).

This type of myth, then, focuses on the stories of people who have their own stories of struggle within the cultural and political context in which the culture is embedded. When these heroes live in a community, they can usually stay and become part of the community. They must have a strong will and a reason to show up and manifest themselves. For this reason, these heroes will appear and be recognized. Tewdros Gebre has explained the reason for their identification and appearance, as well as their role based on their deeds, stating that “the heroes of any era are messengers or born judges when their people are troubled, burdened with suffering, and when there is a great crisis” (Tewdros, 2001: 44).

Social groups and communities living in our world with different religions, values and values have their own heroes according to their development, evolution of consciousness and understanding of their eras. Tewodros said, “Each epoch has its own hero where it creates a level of consciousness and places its values - where it preserves and/or buries things, plants and protects new things. The level of consciousness of the era and generation creates a difference between the identity of the heroes and the nature of the heroes, their goals and triumphs” (Tewdros, 2001: 44) Campbell provided a comprehensive analysis of how heroes pass through different life chapters throughout their lives. Campbell (2004) stated that there are three main chapters in life: separation from the life and environment that was the reason for the hero’s calling, ascension to reach the goal for which he was chosen and called and return after reaching the goal for which he was called.

I have been unable to find any direct research on the ethnic myths of Me’nit. I have not found any studies that have analyzed the types, classification, characteristics, and uses of the myths. However, there are studies that deal with the various cultures and histories of the Me’nit people. They are listed below in chronological order of publication.

The study of Hiwot Aberu entitled “The ceremony of the traditional mourning system of the Me’enit nation”, Addis Ababa College, Department of Ethiopian Languages and Literature for the attainment of the master’s degree in 2004 E.C. may be mentioned in connection with this study. The main focus of Hiwot’s research is on the ceremony of mourning system of the Me’enit ethnic group, and she describes the funeral ceremony performed when a person within the ethnic group dies. The study titled “Traditional Conflict Resolution System in Me’enite Ethnicity” that I submitted to Addis Ababa College, Department of Ethiopian Languages and Literature to obtain the Master’s degree in 2004 E.C. is another study on the ethnic group. The main objective of the research was to show the traditional conflict resolution system of the Me’enit people. The research showed the main types of conflict in the ethnic group, the traditional conflict resolution institutions of the ethnic group, the process of the killing reconciliation system, and the interpretation and concept of actions.

Jon Abbink has studied the Me’enit ethnic group extensively and in depth. He studied the ethnic group from the perspective of material culture (1992), from the perspective of traditional religion (1993), from the perspective of the national festival called “Mosit” (1995) in “The Final Rite: Burial among the Me’en of South-West Ethiopia”. He presented most of these research findings at the Institute of Ethiopian Studies. Another research paper on the Me’enit ethnic group is by Zerihun Doda entitled “The Ethno-history Me’enit Ethnic Group, South Ethnic group Nationalities and Peoples, Regional Government” (2008). In this research, Zerihun addressed political, cultural, social, historical, and religious issues in the form of explanations and advertisements for the Me’nenit ethnic group. Comprehensive topics from the ancient origins of the nation to the E.P.R.D.F. period were examined. The study summarizes the political, cultural, social, historical, and religious issues of the ethnic group from the ancient origins of the nation to the era of the E.P.R.D.F.; thus, it is a moderate description.

Another study is “Niguse Belay’s Sociocultural History of Me’nenit, 1898-1991”, published in 2005 and presented at an annual conference organized by Mizan Tepi University. The study examines the socio-cultural aspect of the Me’nenit ethnic group from the invasion by Emperor Menelik II in 1898 to the overthrow of the Derg military government in 1991. The study focuses on the socio-cultural journey of the ethnic group until 1991. After the introduction to the ethnic group, the tribe mainly has a close relationship with animals, which explains that they use cattle mainly for blood compensation, marriage payments/marriages/ and social affairs.

If we look at previous studies, most of them have been conducted with different objectives to the different cultures of the ethnic group. In addition, many say that they have looked at the ethnic group from a historical perspective. The studies are related to the language, religion, marriage, funeral ceremony and other social issues of the ethnic group. Some of them

deal with death and burial ceremony. Some of them are close to my research as they deal with religious issues and the history of the ethnic group, and some of them deal with the issue of killing and the traditional legal system, but my research will be different as it looks deeply and broadly at the cultural hero of the Me'enit ethnic group Monai.

Theoretical Framework

Narrative theory has a long history and is said to have its origins in ancient Greece. Copley (2005) states that it was Aristotle who shaped narrative theory. However, there were no significant conceptual changes as the theory progressed into the twentieth century. Russian folklore scholars laid a better foundation for the twenty-first century. Nevertheless, the role of Russian folklorists was emphasized, especially in their structural-functional works. Copley mentioned that Lévi-Strauss's story of Oedipus the King, based on a myth, was analyzed in terms of form and structure using narrative theory. Richardson explains that there are four main features of narrative used by recent researchers in the field: Temporality, Rationality, Uniqueness, and Connectedness.

He explains all four characteristics as follows. Temporality refers to the fact that the events or incidents are narrated in an order that respects their time. While rationality describes the order of thought and the interplay of cause and effect, singularity explains the ability to travel from beginning to end with a single narrative, each idea being independent and maintaining a chain with the next idea. Of the four characteristics of narrative, however, we use temporality and rationality most often (Richardson, 2000). Therefore, this theory lends itself to this study because myths are primarily conveyed through the narrative of their character. Each myth has its own time, reason, uniqueness, and context, so the study was conducted using this theory.

"Monai": The Cultural Hero of the Me'enite Ethnic Group

Yarta Kebele is one of the rural and lowland kebeles in Me'enit Goldia district. This kebele became part of the district in recent years as a kebele. Before that, there were no reports of many people living in groups in this area. As such, the members of the Me'enit ethnic group who lived in this kebele were members of the community who did not know each other from the rest of the Me'enit ethnic group and lived in their own way in the dense forest.

Mr. Bedlu narrates how the people of Yarta Kebele lived in isolation from the rest and how they were later found as follows: "Yarta Kebele is located in a dense forest. It is a desert area. No one believes that people live in this area. But there were people living. The people are the remnants of the ancient Me'enite tribe, who were cut off as they wandered from place to place. No one could reach them because they lived in a very remote area in a dense forest. But the language they speak, the god they worship, and all their

other customs and rituals belong to the Me'enite. It took me myself over twenty hours on foot to get to this place. I walked through a grass plant taller than an average man. It was too far. However, in 2003 E.C., they joined the rest of the population of Me'enit District, and the village was registered as Kebele/Sub-County" (Bedlu interview, December 2011 E.C., Bachuma).

The Yartana community and surrounding area were recognized as a community and their identity was established and formally considered part of the Me'enit nation in 2003 E.C. Yarta Kebele has been governed by its own tribal leaders for years. After annexation to the district and transformation into a kebele, attempts were made to change the direction of the road leading into the area and to build a health center, but it was not possible to make it available to the local community. The society still lives in its own system. In previous years, a person from the Yarta Kebele could suddenly go out and return home, but the number is counted by the Kebele population. Later it became known that in 2003 there was a large population living according to their own system (Bedlu interview, December 2011 E.C., Bachuma).

It is a natural process for a person to grow up and develop a personality of the place where he lives. Every person from the Yarta area will grow up and die with all the socio-cultural and religious interactions that they developed while living in isolation. The area is a lowland and the great river Sharma serves as the border for the area. Apart from this, the people believe that it also serves as an air conditioner, which is one of their natural gifts. While it is not known why epilepsy is so prevalent in the Me'enite region, it is believed to be a symbol of God's wrath and misfortune. Because they believe it is contagious, it is the fate of a child or youth to be removed from society.

However, Mr. Bedlu Kassa narrates the story of Hero Monai, who tirelessly resisted the bad cultural practices prevalent in society, as follows. "The story is about a girl named Monai and her father. The story was written in Me'enit Goldia district, Yarta Kebele. A son of the man named Mr. Golandabi who lived in this Kebele suffered from epilepsy. In the ethnic group and in our area, a person who suffers from vertigo or epilepsy is called cursed by God. When a sick person is in a house, the things they touch are not used, no one comes to the house and the community isolates them" (Interview, December 2011 E.C, Bachuma).

"The reason why the ethnic group isolates a person with this disease is to keep the trouble and unhappiness away from home and society. It is to save the village from anger by destroying the person who caused the disease. For this reason, in many places there are people who, when such misfortune befalls children, avoid and eliminate the problem. Epilepsy is common in children; there are people who get rid of these children so that the evil spirit that later comes over the patients does not attack others. They remove the dirt by blowing their mouth and nose. The belief of the community is that a

person who does not remove the infected person from the area will suffer a bad fate. The society excludes him. The excluded person protects his culture because he is afraid of the curse and misfortune” (Interview, Ms. Odlu Arkasha, December 2011 E.C, Bachuma).

Such a disease can affect any member of the people and family. When we reflect on the story of the teenage girl Monai, one thing is clear. Monai is not the first indigenous girl to suffer from this disease. It is not difficult to imagine how many people who lived before Monai became outcasts because they were infected with the disease.

It is easy to understand that many accepted the call of death through myth, and whether they were made to or not, they were sent to the grave. Before Monai’s case, many mothers carried nine months in the womb, gave birth to their children and handed them over to death. The story of Monai or her father is a story of struggle connected with the call of death. Mr. Bedlu Kasa relates that Mr. Golandabi, a resident of Yarta Kebele in the Me’nit Goldia district, did the following because of his daughter’s illness.

“Mr. Golandabi’s daughter suffered from epilepsy. When the girl recovered from her illness, her father feared that he would be ostracized by the locals because of his daughter. Then he thought about how to get rid of the girl so that he would not be isolated. After a while, he came to the conclusion that it would be better to throw her into a big river called Sharma in the area. The river is big and is home to many crocodiles. Soon he decided to throw the child into the river and give her to a crocodile. That afternoon they went to the river, his daughter in front and he a step behind her, carrying a big stick so that she and he could not touch each other. When they reached the sea, the father pushed the girl with the stick and threw her into the sea. Then, without turning around, he hurried back to where he had come from. However, when her father threw her into the river and returned to his house, the girl was able to swim for a long time, thanks to God's grace; she swam out of the river before the crocodiles came. The children there know how to swim. Monai swam away and survived. After a while it became evening and Monai had no place to stay, so she had to return home. So, she went back to her house and hid for the night” (Interview, December 2011, Bachuma).



A view of the Sharma River (Photo courtesy of the researcher).

It seems that Monai, the hero, did not survive only because she could swim. I saw that the Sharma River is a big river full of huge and dangerous crocodiles when I was there myself for research purposes. Not to mention that a teenage girl is pushed into a river where there are dangerous creatures that kidnap an animal that bends down to drink water in an area when the water is shallow. It can be seen that Monai is helped by the supernatural, the protection of God. We can see that God helped her to survive her life, to triumph over the unfinished journey of her life when the culture that the blood father had brought upon her mercilessly killed her. On the other hand, we see that Monai's physical world is narrow and limited. That is, the story explains that at her age she had neither the preparation nor the ability to move away from her surroundings. Therefore, she returned to her father, who threw her after crocodile teeth and stomach, to the society that rejected her and condemned her to death. This is one of the links of her story of heroic deeds, her first victory over the disease and her first victory, on the other hand is her sacrificial field where she was called to death again. If we think about her father, Mr. Golandabi, we find that he is the man created by the myth of the ethnic group. In comparison, the call of the myth was also sent to him. He needed the myth's call to drive the child, to keep the disease away from the area, to sacrifice his daughter, to protect his family and the society.

After explaining that myth is based on a culture's values, Brown explains the power that myth creates in a culture: "It has the power to shape individual beliefs and attitudes in a culture. Myth is one way people connect to their culture (Brown 2004). We understand that Mr. Golandabi's fate is connected to the myth of his ethnicity, which is based on the values of the

culture. When we think of Mona's story of heroic deeds, we even suspect that a few before her might have made the same attempt, recalling the fairy tale "What goes around the latch of the door is a stick". But we see Monai, the teenage cultural hero, fighting death in the next chapter of her life.

In the morning her father met her before his eyes. Then he was surprised and said: "We thought you were dead. We thought that a crocodile had eaten you. Why have you come here now?" And she begged her father. She said, "If you do this to me and leave me to a crocodile, people with such diseases live in a town called Bachuma, I heard, and take me there". The father said to her, "I will not do that either. Instead of living in isolation because of you, let us go to the forest so you can hang yourself on a rope". When the girl asked, "Are not you worried about my life?" he said, "It does not matter if you live or not, it's better if you die". The girl said, "If you do this to me, children with such diseases will not be isolated in Bachuma town, so if you take me there, I will live there at that time, her father thought a lot, sold one of his cows to get money, and took her to a town called Chebera (Ibid.)

Needless to say, the sudden dire fate of the teenage Monai transcends her age. When she realized that death was staring her in the face, she fought hard not to die. And once a heroine is called to fight, her struggle to reject the call is her defining characteristic. Monaim's struggle not to accept the call of death is an expression of her courage and heroism. In order for her struggle to bear fruit, she offers her alternative proposal to soften her father's paternal heart and explain the truth that has been revealed to her. In doing so, she engages in a far-reaching confrontation with death and the prevailing, pervasive myth. This was part of her struggle and laid the main foundation for her results.

As we continue to see Monai continue the confrontation and struggle with the existing prevailing bad culture and win her father's heart, we can hear the voice of "will happen" and "succeed" in the story of Monai's struggle. Her young mind matured beyond her age and she was able to challenge and lead the one who gave birth to her and raised her. It was not just her father that Monai challenged, comforted and defeated. It is the custom of the community that has lived and survived for thousands of years. It is a belief that has shaped the lives of many people before and after her.

The girl, Monai, had lived in Chebera for about a month. After that she came to a town called Bachuma. By chance, the women and children of the neighborhood heard about this matter and took the girl to the Bachuma elementary school, where she began to study. While studying, she needed money to support herself, so she took a job as a janitor at the Bachuma District Women and Children's Office and began earning money. When the girl arrived, she could not speak Amharic. When she lived here for a year, there was no one who could speak Amharic better than her. When she came,

she came as a maid, now she wears jeans. Her appearance was very beautiful, and she attracted people. She went to a hotel and started drinking at her own request. Then a man who opened a hotel in a kebele called Khat took her and while she was with him, she got married and now lives in a country called Gesha near Me'enit Shasha. This girl was sentenced to be thrown into the sea because she had epilepsy. She was to be hanged in the forest. But later she came to the city and many people knew her story. Some of them saw her when they learned about her story. When her existence became known, many fathers considered her as an example that it is better to bring their children to the city than to kill them. Monai's story has become a lesson for many: First, she is a girl with indomitable spirit who refuses to die. She escaped death. Second, she convinced her father.

The Office for Women and Children has taught many by having her as a witness. Her story is told at some training. We all talk to each other from time to time. Since she was here in the office, her story and her exploits soon became known. She made history and brought about many changes (Ibid).

Summarizing Monai's account of cultural exploits, we find that one can go through one of the most important journeys that Campbell lists as the chapters through which a struggle must pass. According to Campbell, the origin is the "heroic call" and Monai's first call comes from the existing prevailing custom, from the culture of the ethnic group. It is a law that has been upheld for years and has brought many of them under the yoke and carried out the punishment it decided. Campbell (2004: 14) explains that once the call to battle comes, "the heroes begin to argue against the call". Monai refused to accept the call of death. She expressed her opposition to the call. "I will not accept death", she continues her struggle and argument. Ambel emphasizes that the heroes are able to conclude the struggle they started with a result and the result is summarized in victory or defeat. It can be seen that Monai, the cultural hero of the Me'enite ethnic group, continues her struggle and ends with a victory. Monai broke away from the existing habit, crossed the cup of death that was coming to her, and continued her life in a new spirit and a new world. The result of her struggle aroused emotions in many people and brought her participants, whether in thought or in deed and she became a role model for many of them and could become a cultural hero.

Conclusion

This study examines the struggles of the Monai, the cultural hero of the Me'enit ethnic group. It has analyzed the ups and downs that Monai has gone through. It shows in detail the attitude of the members of the tribe towards epilepsy and the measures taken to keep the disease away.

One of the findings of the study shows the main travel nodes that a cultured hero goes through. Through Monai's epileptic seizures, we see the beginning of her new life and her calling to heroism. Monai received a

reputation through her illness. The research also showed that a hero does not accept the reputation of death. Monai showed her disdain for the myth in an argument at home after her father took her to a river with many crocodiles and she later survived while swimming. She even challenged her father's belief by convincing him that her father's centuries-old belief was not correct and instead of killing her, he begged her to let her live.

The study analyzed that her debate, arguments and efforts were successful and she made her father a partner in her fight against the existing myth. The study explains that Monai not only refused the request, but also proved her persistence against the myth and finally led the struggle to a successful outcome, which can be called cultural hero.

From the research results, the second supernatural help was that the father believed that a person with epilepsy was cursed by God, that he was loyal to his nation, and that these were the repeated steps he took to deliver his daughter to death. The fact that the teenage Monai was not killed immediately like the other children and teenagers in the area when her father pushed her to the river bank and handed her over to a crocodile and condemned her to hang on a rope in the forest showed that she changed her attitude and was able to overcome all odds to die, and that she was supported by a supernatural power besides her own indomitable spirit to be a cultural hero.

Finally, the third finding of the study is the attitude of the society towards the myths. Thus, it was found that the Me'enite community respects and obeys its myths, which constitute the identity of the Me'enite ethnic group, and that it protects, preserves, and passes on its myths to generations. Because the people believe that epilepsy is a curse, they are loyal to their protectors, even going so far as to remove, strangle, or throw away children. Monai's father, Mr. Bigolagn, is also a member of the same ethnic group and a subject of the same tribe. The investigation revealed that when the disease appeared in his daughter, he was cast out of the community, scaring her to death. The investigation explained that Mr. Bigolagn threw his child away from home into a river to a crocodile. When she survived the crocodile, he advised her to hang herself in the forest and kill herself.

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