



HEROIC NARRATIVES OF GREEK MYTHOLOGY IN THE MOVIES CLASH OF THE TITANS AND WRATH OF THE TITANS: A COMPARATIVE LITERATURE APPROACH

NARASI KEPAHLAWANAN MITOLOGI YUNANI DALAM FILM *CLASH OF THE TITANS* DAN *WRATH OF THE TITANS*: PENDEKATAN SASTRA BANDINGAN

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the representation of heroic narratives in two movies adaptations of Greek mythology, *Clash of the Titans* (2010) and *Wrath of the Titans* (2012), through a comparative literature approach and Vladimir Propp's narratology. The main character Perseus is the center of attention in the study of narrative structure because of his role as a mythological hero who faces a series of challenges that are full of values of courage, sacrifice, and determination. Propp's theory is used to identify narrative functions such as dispatch, magical agent, struggle, and transfiguration that appear in both movies. The method used is qualitative with content analysis technique by comparing the stories, characters, and moral messages as well as narrative functions in the two movies with the theme of Greek mythology. The results show that the comparison of the narrative structure of the two movies with the character Perseus has strengths in the dramatic aspects of heroic attitudes in accepting choices and fighting for life so that the integration of heroic material can be adapted to literature learning involving character values. This finding confirms that the narratological approach through comparative literature can be an important pedagogical tool to teach story structures with character values through popular media. This research recommends the utilization of



mythological movies in literature learning and character education at various levels of education as a means of strengthening narrative literacy and understanding moral values.

Keywords: narratology, mythology, comparative literature, movies

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis representasi narasi kepahlawanan dalam dua film adaptasi mitologi Yunani yaitu *Clash of the Titans* (2010) dan *Wrath of the Titans* (2012), melalui pendekatan sastra bandingan dan naratologi Vladimir Propp. Tokoh utama ialah Perseus menjadi pusat perhatian dalam kajian struktur naratif sebab perannya sebagai pahlawan mitologis yang menghadapi serangkaian tantangan yang sarat nilai keberanian, pengorbanan, dan keteguhan hati. Teori Propp digunakan untuk mengidentifikasi fungsi-fungsi naratif seperti pengiriman tugas (*dispatch*), pemberian bantuan magis (*magical agent*), perjuangan melawan penjahat (*struggle*), dan pemuliaan pahlawan (*transfiguration*) yang muncul dalam kedua film. Metode yang digunakan adalah kualitatif dengan teknik analisis isi dengan membandingkan cerita, karakter, dan pesan moral serta fungsi naratif dalam kedua film yang bertema mitologi Yunani. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa perbandingan struktur naratif terhadap kedua film dengan tokoh Perseus memiliki kekuatan dalam aspek dramatik sikap kepahlawanan dalam menerima pilihan dan memperjuangkan kehidupan sehingga integrasi materi kepahlawanan bisa diadaptasi ke dalam pembelajaran sastra yang melibatkan nilai-nilai karakter. Temuan ini menegaskan bahwa pendekatan naratologi melalui sastra bandingan dapat menjadi alat pedagogis penting untuk mengajarkan struktur cerita yang bermuatan nilai-nilai karakter melalui media populer. Penelitian ini merekomendasikan pemanfaatan film mitologis dalam pembelajaran sastra dan pendidikan karakter di berbagai jenjang pendidikan sebagai sarana penguatan literasi naratif serta pemahaman nilai moral.

Kata Kunci: naratologi, mitologi, sastra bandingan, film

1. INTRODUCTION

Character education has become one of the main focuses in today's global education system. In the midst of globalization and digital disruption, values such as courage, honesty, hard work, and responsibility are important foundations in shaping a generation that is not only intellectually smart, but also morally tough. So far, strengthening character values has generally been done through text-based teaching materials such as novels, short stories, and biographical stories. However, in the era of new media, there is a need to expand learning resources, including through movie media that is rich in visual and emotional messages. One of the potential genres is a movie themed on Greek history and mythology, which is full of narratives of heroism, sacrifice, and struggle against fate.

Movies is not only an entertainment tool, but also a reflective medium that can convey ideology, values and culture through audiovisual language. Greek mythology themed movies, such as *Clash of the Titans* (2010) and *Wrath of the Titans* (2012), present heroic figures that symbolically represent universal values. Perseus, for example is portrayed as a figure who is between the world of gods and humans, but chooses to act for the safety of mankind. His choice to reject divine power and live his destiny as a human shows integrity, courage, and humility that should be emulated. In movies, these values are presented not only through dialog, but also through visual expression, dramatic flow, and emotional atmosphere that can strengthen the audience's absorption and involvement.



One of the main advantages of movies media over text is its ability to convey messages in a multisensory manner. Movies combine visual, audio and narrative elements that can accelerate the comprehension process and strengthen the emotions attached to the viewing experience. In the context of character education, emotional experiences are very important because they can deepen students' moral reflection and empathy for the characters and situations presented (Scussel, 2023). For example, Perseus' struggle against mythological monsters can be understood not only as a physical conflict, but also a symbol of man's inner struggle against the temptations of power, fear, and self-doubt.

In addition, movies are able to reach visual-auditory learning styles that are often less accommodated in text-based learning. For students who have difficulty understanding long written narratives or literary symbolism, movies become an effective bridge in transferring character values concretely. The visualization of conflict, tension and resolution in movies creates a more contextual and memorable learning experience. In recent decades, the world of education has experienced a shift in orientation from merely instilling cognitive knowledge to strengthening character values. This is reflected in various global education policies and the Merdeka Curriculum in Indonesia, which emphasizes strengthening the character profile of Pancasila students. Values such as courage, responsibility, and integrity are becoming increasingly important amidst the moral and social crisis plaguing the younger generation (Arthur, 2021). Character education is now a strategic priority to equip students to face social complexity and global cultural changes.

However, there are major challenges in integrating character education into learning practices in a meaningful and contextualized way. Studies show that conventional approaches to teaching moral values are often normative and less relevant to students' life experiences. Therefore, new media and approaches are needed that can convey character values imaginatively, narratively, and contextually (Page, 2020; Schwerhoff, 2023). In this context, movies are one of the potential popular media, especially for the digital generation who have a high interest in visual narratives. One genre that is full of character values and moral narratives is movies adapted from classical mythology. Greek mythology, for example, not only holds dramatic heroic stories, but is also rich in symbols, conflicts, and character transformations that reflect human moral dynamics (Dobrowolski, 2023). Figures such as Perseus, Hercules, and Odysseus have been a source of inspiration across the ages in depicting the human struggle to overcome challenges, temptations, and suffering. The cinematic adaptation of these characters opens up a vast space for interdisciplinary research, especially in literature, character education, and media studies.

Greek mythology is one of the richest classical literary treasures in depicting heroic values. Characters such as Perseus, Odysseus and Hercules face challenges that illustrate the universal conflicts between strength and vulnerability, free will and fate, and virtue and ambition. These narratives have a distinctive and symbolic structure, and have become the basis for the formation of heroic archetypes in western and global culture. By utilizing movies adaptations of these mythologies, learning character values can be done in a more engaging and contextualized context, while opening up discussion across cultures and time. This research will specifically examine two modern movies adaptations of Greek mythology, namely *Clash of the Titans* (2010) and *Wrath of the Titans* (2012), which elevate the narrative of Perseus. These two movies not only re-present the mythological story, but also enrich the interpretation of the meaning of heroism in the context of popular culture.



Several previous studies have discussed the use of Propp's narratology in the context of fairy tales and some have adapted it to movies studies (Meniel, 2023). However, there are still very limited studies that specifically apply this model to the analysis of modern Greek mythological movies. In addition, the comparative literature approach is rarely used to examine the relationship between mythological and cinematic versions of mythical figures, especially in the context of moral messages and character dynamics (Barbier, 2023). In fact, this approach has the potential to examine changes in moral discourse and representations of character values between mediums and between eras. This research gap lies in the lack of exploration that combines structural narratology theory and comparative literature approaches in analyzing the heroic narratives of Greek mythological movies (Hansen, 2023; Hanie, 2024). Most studies only focus on visual aspects, cinematography, or storylines in general, without systematically unpacking the narrative structure and shifting moral values contained therein. A deeper understanding of narrative structure and values can make a significant contribution to critical literacy and character education.

Therefore, this research is important and urgent as an effort to fill the gap. By using Vladimir Propp's narratology theory and a comparative literature approach, this research seeks to present an analysis that is not only textual, but also contextual, by exploring how the narrative transformation of Perseus reflects the dynamics of heroic values that can be relevant to character learning today (Woo, 2022; Wang, 2023). This research contributes to developing a pedagogical approach based on popular media in the context of primary and secondary education. The novelty of this research lies in the integration of Vladimir Propp's narratology theory with a comparative literature approach to examine heroic narratives in two Greek mythology-themed movies, *Clash of the Titans* (2010) and *Wrath of the Titans* (2012). Unlike previous studies that tend to focus on character values in novels or only review the representation of heroes in general, this study offers a systematic structural analysis of narrative functions such as dispatch, magical agent, struggle, and transfiguration and compares how these elements are represented and modified in each movie. By combining structural and comparative analysis, this research broadens the scope of heroism studies in the context of mythological adaptation into modern visual media.

Research on the movies *Clash of the Titans* (2010) and *Wrath of the Titans* (2012), which highlight the mythological figure of Perseus, a hero descended from the god Zeus and humans, has strong potential as a reflection of character values. Although set in the world of mythology, the narrative of Perseus' struggle contains universal themes that are relevant to contemporary life, such as courage in the face of uncertainty, self-control over power, loyalty to family and people, and humility despite having extraordinary strength. Perseus is not portrayed as an arrogant god, but as a demigod who chooses the path of humanity, accepts suffering, and rejects absolute power in order to maintain the balance of the world. These values are in line with the principles of character education such as integrity, responsibility, and moral resilience (Doniger, 2022; Calame, 2023). Therefore, structural analysis of Perseus' heroic narrative is not only theoretically important in understanding the mythological structure and its adaptation in popular media, but also has practical value as a medium for reflection and strengthening character in the context of contemporary education.

The scientific contribution of this research is the expansion of the application of classical narrative theory to the medium of modern mythological movies, while highlighting the dynamics of changes in story structure and moral values in the context of popular culture (Ruta,



2020). These findings enrich the discourse of narrative literacy in popular literature studies and cross-media intertextuality. Thus, this research can contribute to enriching the study of popular literature, especially in the realm of movies narratology and mythology, which is still limited in the Indonesian academic context. The interdisciplinary approach used allows in-depth mapping of narrative structure as well as analysis of moral values in cross-media and cross-culture. Practically, the findings of this research have the potential to be applied in the development of teaching materials for literature and character education based on popular media so as to support visual and narrative literacy efforts in education, especially at the primary and secondary levels.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive-analytical research type that focuses on narrative studies in cinematic works. This approach was chosen because the research aims to explore the meaning, structure, and function of narratives that shape the representation of heroism in Greek mythology movies adaptations, as well as to make comparisons between the two visual texts in terms of story, characters, and moral messages (Taskin, 2021; Kholodniak, 2023). The main objects of this research are two Greek mythology themed movies, namely *Clash of the Titans* (2010) and *Wrath of the Titans* (2012), both of which feature the main character Perseus as a mythological hero. Both movies are analyzed as cultural texts that contain narrative structures and heroic values that can be revealed through critical reading.

The data in this study were collected through documentation and textual observation of the movies, which included dialog, plot, character portrayal, and visual elements that support the narrative (Weyant, 2022). The researcher watched both movies repeatedly to identify important parts relevant to the narrative functions as formulated by Vladimir Propp, namely dispatch, magical agent, struggle, and transfiguration. In addition, the story aspects, characterization, and moral messages of each movie were documented as the main data in the comparative literature approach. The data were analyzed using content analysis techniques, focusing on the narrative structure and representation of heroism in the two movies analyzed. The analysis was carried out in two stages: first, identification and categorization of narrative functions in each movie based on Vladimir Propp's theory; second, comparison between the two movies in terms of story development, character changes of Perseus, and moral values carried by Perseus.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

This section presents the results of the analysis of two Greek mythology movies adaptations, *Clash of the Titans* (2010) and *Wrath of the Titans* (2012), which focus on the heroic narrative of Perseus. The analysis is conducted using Vladimir Propp's narratology theory, especially on the four main narrative functions: *dispatch*, *magical agent*, *struggle*, and *transfiguration*. In addition, a comparative literature approach was used to identify similarities and differences in story structure, characterization, and moral messages between the two movies.

The results of this research are divided into several subsections. First, the mapping of Propp's narrative functions in each movie. Second, the comparison of Perseus' character



representation and the dynamics of his heroic values. Third, the interpretation of the moral message contained in the narrative and how it is represented differently in the two movie versions. The discussion is done critically by considering the context of movies production, narrative visualization style, and its relevance to character education in the contemporary context.

Table 1 Narrative Function Mapping in Clash of the Titans and Wrath of the Titans Movies

No	Narrative Function	Clash of the Titans (2010)	Wrath of the Titans (2012)
1	Dispatch (Task dispatch)	Perseus received the task to conquer Medusa and stop the Kraken in order to save the city of Argos.	Perseus is called back to save the world from destruction due to the rise of Kronos.
2	Magical Agent (magical aid)	Perseus received a sword from the gods and the help of Pegasus to penetrate Medusa's lair.	Perseus obtained Poseidon's trident and was again assisted by Pegasus in the final battle.
3	Struggle (The struggle against the villain)	Perseus faced Medusa and then defeated the Kraken that threatened the destruction of Argos.	Perseus fought creatures from Tartarus and eventually battled Kronos.
4	Transfiguration (Hero breeding)	Perseus refused to become a god and chose a human life, yet was hailed as the savior of mankind.	Perseus went back to choosing an ordinary life with his son, but is remembered as the savior of the world.

The analysis shows that both movies, *Clash of the Titans* (2010) and *Wrath of the Titans* (2012), represent a heroic narrative structure that is in line with Vladimir Propp's four main functions, namely *dispatch*, *magical agent*, *struggle*, and *transfiguration*. Perseus experiences the process of being dispatched, receiving magical assistance, facing a great enemy, and finally being glorified not for being a god, but for rejecting power and choosing to live as a human. Despite being based on the same mythology, each movie features a different emphasis. *Clash* depicts the beginning of the journey and self-discovery, while *Wrath* highlights maturity and moral responsibility as a hero. This approach shows character development and reinforces values such as courage, humility and sacrifice. Thus, the heroic narratives in these movies serve not only as entertainment, but also as a means of instilling character values that can be utilized in an educational context.

Table 2 Comparison of Clash of the Titans and Wrath of the Titans Movies

No	Aspects	Clash of the Titans (2010)	Wrath of the Titans (2012)	Comparison & Findings
1	Story	Focuses on Perseus' early journey as a human son of the god Zeus who has yet to	Focusing on a world that is beginning to crumble due to the destruction of	<i>Clash</i> tells the story of the hero's identity



		accept his destiny; the mission of saving Argos from the Kraken.	Tartarus and the rise of Kronos; Perseus returns to duty after a life as a father and farmer.	formation; <i>Wrath</i> emphasizes the continued conflict and emotional maturity of the characters.
2	Character	Perseus is portrayed as a young hero who rejects the power of the gods, is impulsive, and struggles with self-discovery.	Perseus appeared more mature, wise, and accepted responsibility although he still refused to become a god.	Character development from a budding hero to a stable and reflective true heroic figure.
3	Moral Message	The value of courage, self-control, rejection of pride, and faith in human destiny.	The value of sacrifice, responsibility as a father and savior, and the importance of humility despite having power.	Both movies emphasize humanity, responsibility, and the rejection of absolute power as forms of true heroism.

The table above shows that although the two movies share the same characters and mythology, there are significant differences in terms of story, characters, and moral messages. *Clash of the Titans* focuses on the hero's self-discovery and identity building process, while *Wrath of the Titans* depicts the continuation of the hero's emotionally and spiritually mature journey.

Perseus' character undergoes a clear development from an impulsive young man to a responsible father figure and leader. This shows the continuity of character in a complex and layered heroic narrative. The moral message also transforms: from the courage to reject divine destiny in the first movies, to the affirmation of the values of responsibility and humility in the second. This comparison shows that Greek mythological movies adaptations can be a reflective medium for universal character values that are relevant to contemporary education, while enriching our understanding of the dynamics of heroic narratives across time.

Table 3 Important Research Findings Based on Narrative Function and Comparative Literature Approach

No	Aspect Analysis	Key Findings	Implications
1	Dispatch	Both movies present the delivery of the task to Perseus as the beginning of the narrative transformation.	Heroic narratives begin with external challenges that test the protagonist's moral choices.
2	Magical Agent	Perseus received help from magical entities	Magical assistance represents moral strength and



		(sword, Pegasus, trident) in two movies.	legitimizes the character's struggle, not just physical strength.
3	Struggle	Perseus faced a foe of increasing scale: from Medusa/Kraken to Kronos.	The scale of the conflict reflects the development of the character's internal complexity and the escalation of the values at stake.
4	Transfiguration	Perseus is hailed as a savior but refuses to become a god; glorification through humility.	The glorification of characters is achieved not through power, but through the rejection of them.
5	Story	<i>Clash</i> is about self-discovery; <i>Wrath</i> emphasizes the continuity and maturation of heroism.	There is structural continuity in the narrative of the hero in two phases of life: initiation and maturity.
6	Character	Character development from impulsive and indecisive to stable and wise.	Heroism in movies is not static, but progressive and contextual.
7	Moral Message	The values of courage, sacrifice, and responsibility are the common threads of both movies.	The character values in mythological narratives remain relevant for today's learning.

Table 3 summarizes the key findings showing that Propp's narrative structure and the comparative literature approach complement each other in analyzing Perseus' heroic narrative. Narrative functions such as *dispatch*, *magical agent*, *struggle*, and *transfiguration* appear consistently in both movies, but show a deeper evolution of meaning. Perseus not only faces external challenges, but also experiences significant moral and emotional growth. From a comparative literature approach, it can be seen that the story and character development is not linear, but progressive. The first movie highlights the search for identity, while the second emphasizes the character's maturity and responsibility. The moral message also deepens, from courage and rejection of pride to the value of sacrifice and humility. Overall, these results show that Greek mythological narratives in movies not only provide visual entertainment, but also hold great potential for strengthening character values through rich story structures that are relevant to the current educational context.

Discussion

Based on the results of the study, it can be seen that the four main narrative functions proposed by Vladimir Propp are *dispatch*, *magical agent*, *struggle*, and *transfiguration*. The



functions are the main framework for analysis in this study. Based on Table 1, it can be concluded that both films follow Propp's typical narrative flow, where Perseus gets a mission (dispatch), receives help (magical agent), faces great challenges (struggle), and obtains glorification (transfiguration). This shows that the narrative construction of the film adaptation of Greek mythology still maintains the archetypal hero structure that applies universally. Furthermore, the comparative literature approach provides another dimension in reading the dynamics of the story and character (Delgado, 2020). Comparative literature not only compares two works textually, but also assesses how they reflect different or evolving cultural, moral and ideological values (Zha, 2022). In Table 2, the comparison of the aspects of story, character, and moral message shows the narrative continuity and internal development of Perseus. If in *Clash of the Titans* Perseus is portrayed as a figure who struggles with identity and rejects his divine destiny, then in *Wrath of the Titans* he appears more mature, emotionally stable, and accepts his responsibility as the savior of mankind.

The relationship between narrative structure and character development is important in understanding the construction of Perseus' heroism. In classical heroic literature, as formulated by Joseph Campbell in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949), the hero undergoes a "monomyth" or "hero's journey" consisting of call, test, favor, crisis, and finally transformation. Perseus' narrative in the two films follows a similar pattern, with certain modifications to suit the context of modern visual culture. This confirms that mythological narratives are still relevant and can be adapted to convey moral messages to today's generation (Sulprizio, 2024). Table 3 summarizes the key findings from the synthesis of the two approaches. In the context of narratology, the structure of the narrative function explains the character's journey chronologically and systematically. In the context of comparative literature, differences in delivery style, thematic emphasis, and value shifts are important to understand as a form of cultural interpretation of classical mythology. Film as a medium of adaptation not only re-represents the story, but also forms new meanings rooted in contemporary values such as humility, human life choices, and rejection of absolute power.

The study of the two films through two approaches opens up space for a more complex understanding of the heroic narrative. Perseus is not just a heroic figure in the physical sense, but a moral hero who undergoes a process of inner growth. Character values such as courage, sacrifice, and responsibility are not only conveyed through dialog or plot, but through story structure and symbolic character development (Papayianni, 2023). This is where the power of film as a visual literacy medium lies, namely its ability to convey values through vivid narratives, strong visuals, and compelling emotions. Thus, the relationship between narrative function, Perseus' character portrayal, and the comparative literature approach shows that Greek mythological films are not only cinematic entertainment, but also narrative works that have structural depth and educational value (Guerrero, 2022). This analysis confirms that an interdisciplinary approach in literature and film studies can enrich our understanding of heroic narratives and open up possibilities for their utilization in the context of character education and cultural literacy.

This reading of the narrative indicates that the structure of classical fairy tales is still relevant in shaping modern heroic narratives. Propp's narrative pattern, originally developed from Russian folklore, has proven to be flexible and applicable to the analysis of modern mythological films (Sansom, 2022; Nogueira, 2024). This approach opens up space for the interpretation of character values through narrative aspects rather than simply through verbal



messages. In the context of education, Perseus' narrative that is visually packaged in the movie becomes a powerful tool to instill values such as responsibility, courage and sacrifice in a contextual and imaginative manner. Thus, reading the film based on Propp's narratology not only provides a mapping of the narrative structure but also strengthens the educational function of the film as a mirror of character values. The comparison between the two films shows that although the mythological source is the same, the interpretation of the narrative and moral message can develop according to the context of production and the target audience. This also reinforces the importance of a comparative literature approach in analyzing the dynamics of representation and value functions in mythological-themed cinematic works.

4. CONCLUSION

Movie media especially those with Greek mythological themes, offer great potential as a source of meaningful, imaginative and contextual character values. While it does not replace the depth of analysis that can be achieved through text, movies are able to touch on emotional and visual dimensions that strengthen students' engagement in understanding moral messages. Therefore, an integrative character learning approach between text and film is highly recommended, not only to foster multimodal literacy, but also to build the moral sensitivity of the younger generation in facing the challenges of the times. Nonetheless, movies also have limitations in conveying the depth of meaning that can often be found in literary texts. Text media allows readers to explore narratives more slowly and reflectively. Novels, for example, provide space for psychological descriptions of characters, internal narratives, and philosophical dialog that cannot always be shown in films due to duration limitations or cinematic demands. In texts, readers are also more active in shaping imagination and meaning, while in films, visualization has been constructed by the filmmaker, so the potential for interpretation is more limited.

The results of this study have several important implications, both in the academic realm and educational practice. Theoretically, the findings enrich the literature and film studies by showing that Vladimir Propp's classical narrative structure remains relevant in reading modern mythology-themed films. Narrative functions such as dispatch, magical agent, struggle, and transfiguration prove not only to form a cohesive story framework, but also a means to construct character development and complex moral values. Practically, this research contributes to the development of contextualized and engaging character learning media. The films *Clash of the Titans* and *Wrath of the Titans* can be used as alternative learning resources in character education and visual literacy, especially at the primary and secondary education levels. The use of movies as narrative texts allows students to understand values such as courage, responsibility, sacrifice, and humility through a visual and emotional approach that is easier to understand than written text. This is in line with the spirit of Merdeka Curriculum which encourages project-based, cross-media, and personally meaningful learning. In addition, the integration of narratology and comparative literature approaches can be used as an analysis model for other literary works, both classic and contemporary texts. Teachers, lecturers, and educational practitioners can utilize this model to encourage students to think critically, compare cultural contexts, and build personal reflections on moral messages in narratives. Thus, this research opens space for the use of cinematic works as part of strengthening narrative literacy, character literacy, and multicultural education that is more responsive to the times.



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