



Structure Analysis and Morality in the Fables “The Wind and the Sun” by Aesop

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Abstract

This research aims to analyze one classic fables by Aesop, namely “The Wind and The Sun” The main focus of this study is to understand the narrative functions of these fables and to identify the characters within them. The approach used in this analysis is Vladimir Propp's (1928) structuralism theory, which has proven effective in analyzing the narrative structure of folktales and fables. Propp (1928) suggests that narratives can be broken down into several basic functions that help understand how stories are constructed. Data for this study is sourced from the English language textbook, The Roberts English Series: A Linguistics Program, book 3, which contains various fables used as teaching materials. The study delves deeply into these fables, meticulously following the theoretical framework mention while “The Wind and The Sun” illustrates the power of persuasion compared to force. This study provides profound insights into how fables are used as pedagogical tools to teach moral and ethical values to young readers.

Keywords: *fables, narrative function, fable characters, structuralism, Aesop*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis salah satu fabel klasik karya Aesop, yaitu “The Wind and The Sun”. Fokus utama penelitian ini adalah untuk memahami fungsi naratif dari fabel-fabel tersebut dan mengidentifikasi karakter-karakter di dalamnya. Pendekatan yang digunakan dalam analisis ini adalah teori strukturalisme Vladimir Propp (1928), yang terbukti efektif dalam menganalisis struktur naratif cerita rakyat dan fabel. Propp (1928) mengemukakan bahwa narasi dapat dipecah menjadi beberapa fungsi dasar yang membantu memahami bagaimana cerita dibangun. Data untuk penelitian ini bersumber dari buku teks bahasa Inggris, The Roberts English Series: A Linguistics Program, buku 3, yang berisi berbagai fabel yang digunakan sebagai bahan ajar. Penelitian ini menyelidiki secara mendalam fabel-fabel ini, dengan cermat mengikuti kerangka teori yang disebutkan sementara “The Wind and The Sun” menggambarkan kekuatan persuasi dibandingkan dengan kekerasan. Penelitian ini memberikan wawasan mendalam tentang bagaimana fabel digunakan sebagai alat pedagogis untuk mengajarkan nilai-nilai moral dan etika kepada pembaca muda.

Kata kunci: *fabel, fungsi naratif, tokoh fabel, strukturalisme, Aesop*

Introduction

Fables are a fundamental genre in literature, renowned for their simplicity, didactic nature, and timeless appeal. Among the myriads of fables that had been passed down through generations, those penned by Aesop, such as “The Wind and The Sun,” stood out for their enduring moral lessons and narrative craftsmanship. These fables, sourced from “The Roberts English Series; A Linguistics Program; Book 3,” provided rich literature for scholarly analysis in terms of structure, function, and character.

Analyzing the structure of fables involved examining the narrative framework that gave shape to these stories. Fables typically adhered to a concise and straightforward structure, which was instrumental in conveying their moral messages. By dissecting elements such as exposition, conflict, climax, and resolution within Aesop’s fables, we could gain insights into how simplicity and brevity were employed to enhance the story’s impact. “The Wind and The Sun,” for instance, followed a clear progression from the protagonist's repetitive deceit to the ultimate consequence of his actions, illustrating the narrative arc effectively. Similarly, “The Wind and The Sun” used a sequential structure to juxtapose the differing approaches and outcomes of its titular characters.

The function of fables extended beyond mere storytelling; they served as vehicles for moral instruction and cultural transmission. In “The Wind and The Sun,” the narrative functioned as a cautionary tale about the consequences of dishonesty, emphasizing the importance of trust and credibility. “The Wind and The Sun,” on the other hand, illustrated the value of gentle persuasion over force, promoting a philosophical and ethical lesson. Analyzing these functions revealed the pedagogical roles these fables played in inculcating societal values and norms.

Characters in fables were often anthropomorphized animals or personified elements, which allowed for the exploration of human traits and behaviors in a simplified and symbolic manner. The shepherd in “The Wind and The Sun” were emblematic of various human virtues and vices. By analyzing these characters, we could understand how Aesop utilized characterization to embody moral lessons and engage readers, particularly young audiences, in reflective thinking about their actions and decisions.

This study was significant for several reasons. Firstly, it contributed to the understanding of how traditional narratives like fables remained relevant in contemporary education and moral discourse. By analyzing the structural elements, functions, and characters of these fables, educators and scholars could better appreciate the mechanics of effective storytelling and its impact on moral and ethical education. Secondly, this research highlighted the timeless nature of Aesop’s fables, illustrating how these ancient stories continued to resonate with modern audiences and retain their pedagogical value.

Furthermore, this study was relevant in the context of linguistic and literary education. By incorporating fables into the curriculum, educators could utilize these narratives to enhance students’ comprehension, critical thinking, and interpretative skills. The analysis also provided a framework for comparative studies with other literary genres, enriching the broader field of literary studies.

Three relevant studies were also added to support the perspective of this article. The first study is titled “Guilt and Madness in Edgar Alan Poe’s “The Tell-

Tale Heart”: Psychoanalysis Study” by Rista Nur Kholifah, Aulia Sahda Rahima, Nurhabibah Qurrotul ‘Aini, Hidayatul Nurjanah (2024). The study explores various human emotions such as sadness, happiness, upset, and guilt, focusing on how uncontrolled guilt can lead to madness, negatively impacting both the individual and others. Madness stemming from guilt is particularly evident in Edgar Allan Poe’s “The Tell-Tale Heart,” a Gothic fiction classic narrated by an unnamed character who, driven by guilt and madness, commits murder. This study aims to examine the representation of guilt and madness in Poe’s story using qualitative methods and Sigmund Freud’s 1923 psychoanalytic theory. The findings reveal a dominance of the “Ego” over guilt and madness, providing a new perspective on these emotions in the context of the story, and offering insights for future research and practice.

The second study is titled “Interactive Learning via Digital Storytelling in ELT at Elementary School: Systematic Review” by Vita Rahayu Setyawati (2024). The study analyzed interactive learning via Digital Storytelling (DS) in English Language Teaching (ELT) at the elementary school level during the 4.0 era, where digitalization presents a complex learning tool. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has facilitated and expanded access to education, with DS being one of the media utilizing ICT in ELT. DS involves storytelling using digital multimedia such as videos and images. The study utilized a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) to understand the various research studies related to DS, sourcing data from Google Scholar, Semantic Scholar, PubMed, and Crossref from 2020 to 2023. Six research articles from both national and international journals were analyzed. The findings indicated that qualitative research methods were the most popular design. The study revealed several advantages of using DS in ELT at the elementary level, including improvements in speaking, writing, reading, and listening skills; increased student motivation and engagement; enhanced interaction and collaboration among students; and the development of creativity and critical thinking skills. The study emphasizes the need for innovation to help teachers improve the quality of learning in elementary schools, promoting a better understanding of content and curricula for educators.

The third study is titled “Intra-sentential code-switching in novel *Cinta di Dalam Gelas* by Andrea Hirata” by Luh Ade Wulan Cahaya Dwipayanti, Putu Devi Maharani (2024). This study analyzed the use of intra-sentential code-switching in the novel *Cinta di Dalam Gelas* by Andrea Hirata. The objectives were to identify the different levels of intra-sentential switching and to examine the reasons motivating it. Data was gathered from the novel and analyzed using a qualitative method, guided by theories from Halliday (2004), Romaine (1989), and Hoffman (1991). The analysis identified three types of words used in intra-sentential switching: nouns, adjectives, and verbs, as well as noun phrases. Nouns and noun phrases were the most common types of intra-sentential code-switching, and the primary reason for code-switching was discussing particular topics.

In conclusion, the analysis of fables through their structure, function, and character offered profound insights into the enduring appeal and instructional potential of these narratives. This study not only underscored the importance of Aesop's fables in the literary canon but also reaffirmed their role in shaping moral and ethical understanding across generations.

Method

The primary source of data was the specific fables written by Aesop, particularly "The Wind and The Sun." These texts were analyzed for their narrative structure, characterization, and moral lessons. The fables were sourced from *The Roberts English Series; A Linguistics Program; Book 3*, which contained English translations and adaptations of Aesop's fables. This ensured consistency and reliability in the versions being studied.

In addition to the previously mentioned data sources, this research utilized the structuralist theory of Vladimir Propp (1928) as a key analytical framework. Vladimir Propp's work on narrative structure provided a robust methodology for examining the structural components of fables. The primary source of Propp's theory was his work *Morphology of the Folktale* (1928), which categorized narrative structures into a series of recurring functions and character types.

Data Collection and Analysis

The methods for data collection in this research included:

- Collecting the fable "The Wind and The Sun" from *The Roberts English Series; A Linguistics Program; Book 3*. This served as the primary data for analysis.
- Gathering theoretical texts, particularly Vladimir Propp's (1928) *Morphology of the Folktale*, to establish a structural framework for analyzing the fables.
- Reviewing scholarly articles, books, and academic papers on Aesop's fables, narrative theory, and educational theory. This provided context and support for the analysis.

The analysis of the fable was conducted using Vladimir Propp's structuralist approach. Propp's theory identifies a fixed sequence of narrative functions that commonly appear in folktales. These functions include events such as the introduction of a hero, the presence of a villain or a challenge, and the resolution of the conflict. Applying Propp's methodology, the fable *The Wind and The Sun* was deconstructed to identify these narrative elements and determine how they contribute to the moral lesson conveyed in the story.

Additionally, this research examined Propp's character typology such as the hero, the helper, and the antagonist to analyze the roles of the Wind and the Sun within the fable. By mapping the fable's structure onto Propp's framework, this study

provided a systematic breakdown of its narrative components. This approach allowed for a deeper understanding of how Aesop’s fables function as structured moral teachings and how they align with traditional folktale narratives.

Furthermore, the study integrated insights from narrative theory to explore the role of repetition, contrast, and causality in shaping the moral message of the fable. By combining Propp’s structuralist analysis with broader narrative theory perspectives, the research provided a comprehensive examination of *The Wind and The Sun* as an educational text.

Result and Discussion

The data analysis methods in this research included analyzing each fable by identifying Propp’s (1928) 31 narrative functions within the text. Mapped out these functions to understand how they structured the narrative and looked for patterns in the sequence of functions to determine if and how they aligned with Propp’s model. This helped in identifying the common structural elements of the fables.

The Fable

The Wind and The Sun

The wind and the sun had an argument about which was the stronger. They agreed to decide the question in this way. They would see which could make a man take off his clothing. They found a man on a road, and the wind began. It blew violently. But the harder it blew, the more tightly the man held his clothing to him. When the wind blew still harder, the man put on another wrap. The wind gave up and let the sun take its turn. First, the sun shone moderately, and the man remove the extra wrap. Then it shone so fiercely that the man took off all his clothing and cooled himself in a river near the road.

Persuasion is usually better than force.

Expanded Analysis of Narrative Structure

By applying Vladimir Propp's structuralist theory to *The Wind and The Sun*, this research identified key functions within the fable that align with Propp's (1928) **31 narrative functions**. While Aesop's fables are shorter than traditional folktales, they still follow a structured pattern of exposition, conflict, climax, and resolution.

1. Exposition (Initial Situation)

- The story begins by introducing the two main characters, the Wind and the Sun. Both claim to be stronger than the other, establishing the initial situation where a competition is proposed.
- In Propp's framework, this aligns with the "Absentation" function (1) in which an initial situation is set up, often introducing a challenge or test that the protagonist must face.

2. Conflict (The Challenge and the First Attempt)

- The Wind attempts to remove the traveler's cloak by using sheer force. This approach fails because the traveler, rather than complying, resists by wrapping his cloak tighter.
- This stage corresponds to Propp's "Struggle" function (16), where one character (the Wind) encounters resistance in achieving their goal.

3. Climax (The Second Attempt and Success)

- The Sun takes a different approach by gradually increasing its warmth. Unlike the Wind's forceful attempt, the Sun's strategy works, as the traveler willingly removes his cloak due to rising heat.
- This reflects Propp's "Victory" function (19), as the Sun achieves the goal where the Wind failed.

4. Resolution and Moral Statement

- The fable concludes with the clear realization that gentleness and persuasion are more effective than force. The Sun emerges as the winner of the challenge, proving its strength in a different way.

- This conclusion aligns with Propp’s “Recognition” function (29), where the superior character (the Sun) is acknowledged as victorious.

Through this structural breakdown, it becomes evident that even short moral tales like Aesop’s fables share fundamental narrative functions seen in longer folktales. The pattern of challenge, struggle, and resolution emphasizes a cause-and-effect relationship that strengthens the fable’s moral impact.

Expanded Analysis of Moral Values

The moral lesson of *The Wind and The Sun* emphasizes that gentleness, kindness, and persuasion are often more effective than aggression or coercion. This theme is highly relevant across various aspects of human interaction, including:

1. Personal and Social Relationships

- The fable reflects the importance of understanding and empathy in personal interactions.
- In friendships, family relationships, or romantic partnerships, individuals respond better to kindness and patience rather than forceful demands.
- For example, a friend who offers emotional support during a conflict is more likely to maintain a strong bond than one who resorts to harsh criticism.

2. Leadership and Influence

- The Sun’s approach demonstrates how soft power the ability to influence others through positive means can be more impactful than hard power, which relies on force.
- Effective leaders often motivate and inspire rather than impose authority.
- Historical examples include leaders like Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr., who achieved change through peaceful resistance rather than forceful aggression.

3. Conflict Resolution and Negotiation

- The fable suggests that aggressive tactics often provoke resistance, whereas diplomacy and persuasion lead to cooperation.
- In business, negotiations, or international relations, a calm and strategic approach often results in more favorable outcomes than hostility.
- For instance, a company trying to retain an unhappy employee may have better success through understanding their concerns rather than enforcing strict policies.

4. Parenting and Education

- The fable teaches the importance of positive reinforcement in raising children.
- Studies in child psychology show that children respond better to encouragement rather than punishment.
- A teacher who guides students patiently rather than scolding them aggressively is more likely to foster a love for learning.

By examining *The Wind and The Sun* through Propp's structuralist approach, this research highlights how Aesop's fables follow a universal narrative structure similar to traditional folktales. The study also reinforces how fables serve as timeless moral guides, offering insights into personal behavior, leadership, conflict resolution, and education. The contrast between the Wind's brute force and the Sun's gentle warmth provides a simple yet powerful metaphor for human interaction: Persuasion and kindness often achieve what force and coercion cannot.

Conclusion

The analysis of Aesop's fables, specifically "The Wind and The Sun," underscores the enduring appeal and instructional value of these narratives. Through a detailed examination of their structure, function, and characters, we gain insights into the timeless relevance of fables in literature and education. These fables, characterized by their simplicity and brevity, effectively convey moral lessons that remain pertinent across generations.

Follows a clear narrative progression from deceit to consequence, emphasizing the importance of honesty and the repercussions of dishonesty. On the other hand, “The Wind and The Sun” illustrates the effectiveness of gentle persuasion over force, promoting a philosophical and ethical lesson. Both fables use anthropomorphized characters to symbolize human traits and behaviors, making the moral lessons accessible and engaging, particularly for young audiences.

The significance of this study lies in its contribution to understanding how traditional narratives continue to be relevant in modern moral and ethical discourse. By analyzing these fables through the lens of structuralist theory, specifically Vladimir Propp’s (1928) narrative functions, we can appreciate the mechanics of effective storytelling and its impact on moral education. Additionally, incorporating these fables into educational curricula can enhance students’ comprehension, critical thinking, and interpretative skills, enriching the broader field of literary studies.

Ultimately, the analysis reaffirms the role of Aesop’s fables in shaping moral and ethical understanding, demonstrating their lasting pedagogical value and resonance with contemporary audiences.

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