

The Myths in the Adventure Formula of *Finding 'Ohana* (2021)

Alika Nadyarani Az-Zahra^{a,1,*}, Abd. Hannan EF^{b,2}, Lili Awaludin^{c,3}

^{a,b,c}UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, Jl. A.H. Nasution No. 105, Cipadung, Cibiru,, Kota Bandung 40614, Indonesia

¹ alikaazzahra33@gmail.com; ² misjatahe.936570@gmail.com, ³ liliawaludin@uinsgd.ac.id

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received : 08/04/2026

Revised : 22/06/2026

Accepted : 27/06/2026

Keywords:

Adventure Formula

Ancestral Guardian

Finding 'Ohana (2021)

Myth

Sacred

ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the myths depicted in the film *Finding 'Ohana* (2021) and their contribution to enriching the adventure formula. This study employs a qualitative descriptive design with a descriptive-interpretive approach through film analysis. Research data were obtained from selected scenes, dialogues, and visual elements in *Finding 'Ohana* (2021), then analyzed using John G. Cawelti's adventure formula theory and Clyde Kluckhohn's concept of cultural universal, which focuses on knowledge and religious systems. The analysis was conducted by identifying, categorizing, and interpreting the myth representations. The film depicts two interrelated forms of myth: the sacred place and the ancestral guardian. These myths reflect Hawaiian systems of knowledge and religion, which view nature and ancestors as interconnected with the spiritual world. Within the adventure formula, myths contribute by creating obstacles, generating spiritual consequences, and influencing the characters' transformation toward symbolic triumph. Supported by narrative and visual elements, the myth depicted in the film enriches the meaning of adventure and positions the journey not only as physical exploration but also as a process of understanding identity, heritage, and the meaning of *ohana* as belonging and family connection.

I. Introduction

The adventure film is widely recognized as a genre that portrays the character's journey through an unfamiliar world, pursuing a specific goal through a series of conflicts and obstacles. In many of the popular adventure films, such as *Jumanji* (2017), *Tomb Raider* (2018), and *Uncharted* (2022), narratives are often centered on exploration, treasure hunting, and puzzle-solving. The cultural or historical elements that underlie the films often serve merely as supporting background or clues to be solved to drive the storyline forward. The setting is treated simply as a physical location, where the characters can freely explore with various challenges and traps that must be overcome to reach their goals.

Beyond physical exploration and action, adventure films may also draw upon cultural elements to enrich the character's journey and shape the meaning of their experiences. One of the cultural elements that may play a role in this process is myth, which functions as a background element but also influences the understanding of place, decision-making, and the interpretation of the consequences within the story. As in *Finding 'Ohana* (2021), a film directed by Jude Weng and produced by Netflix, it tells about siblings of Hawaiian descent who were raised in Brooklyn and then embark on an adventure to find their ancestors' treasure while on summer vacation in O'ahu, Hawaii, their grandfather's countryside. This film presents an adventure that is not merely focused on physical achievements but is also integrated with myth, represented through beliefs of sacred places, ancestors, and cultural values; it influences how the characters understand their identity, relate to their ancestral heritage, and the cultural values they encounter along the journey.

In this context, examining myth in adventure film becomes academically important because it demonstrates that film not only represents culture but also constructs and conveys cultural meaning through its narrative structure. Therefore, the analysis of myth may provide understanding into how myth contributes to shaping adventure narratives and enriches the meaning of adventure beyond the general pattern of exploration and material achievement.

Several previous studies have discussed adventure films from different formulas and perspectives. For example, a study by Miftahujanah and Saraswati [2] analyzed *Finding 'Ohana* (2021) but focused on moral values through the characterization. Meanwhile, studies by Azizah, Maryani, and Afriani [3], Putra [4], and Andriyani [5] discussed the adventure with a focus on heroic characters and the protagonist's journey. Other studies have explored cultural elements in films. Studies by Abidin, Rizky, and Barry [6] as well as Dwiyanti and Suherman [7] found that cultural contexts influence narrative construction and the representation of meaning in films. Additionally, studies by Monix [8] and Nirwana [9] discussed myths in film, but primarily focused on identifying or interpreting myths as cultural phenomena.

Nevertheless, previous studies have generally discussed either the adventure formula or the cultural elements separately, but they have not discussed the cultural element of myth within the adventure formula. Therefore, this study fills that gap by analyzing the myths depicted in *Finding 'Ohana* (2021) and their contribution to enriching the adventure formula in the film.

To address the research objectives, this study employs several complementary theoretical approaches. *Finding 'Ohana* (2021) features various myths, according to Azizah et al [8, p. 2] myths understood as cultural narratives that have evolved into beliefs held by society, both in the real world and within the fictional setting. In this context, myths are not merely presented as narrative elements but also convey cultural values and understandings that influence characters' actions and the way they interpret the adventure setting. To interpret the cultural meanings embedded in these myths, this study employs Clyde Kluckhohn's concept of cultural universal, which focuses on systems of religion and knowledge. Both aspects are used to understand how cultural knowledge and beliefs are represented through myths in film.

Furthermore, Cawelti's adventure formula theory is also employed to analyze how the finding myths can shape and enrich the meaning of adventure in film. As Cawelti said [10, p. 6] the adventure formula is an embodiment of universal narrative patterns combined with specific cultural themes and symbols, thereby forming the story's structure. Since films convey meaning through audiovisual elements, this study also considers visual elements, particularly lighting and color, as supporting cinematic elements in the analysis. As Boogs and Petrie explain [11] lighting and color adjustment play an important role in shaping the viewer's emotional response and reinforcing the message or theme in the film. Therefore, these visual elements are used to support the interpretation of the myths and their role in shaping adventure meaning.

II. Method

This research employed a qualitative descriptive design with a descriptive-interpretive approach in obtaining the inquiry data that was taken from the film *Finding 'Ohana* (2021). As stated by Creswell [12, p. 18] a qualitative method based on a constructivist view holds that the meanings are shaped by social, experiential, and cultural contexts, allowing phenomena to be interpreted in different ways by each individual. This design was selected because the study aims not only to describe the myths depicted in the film but also to interpret their cultural meanings and their contribution to enriching the adventure formula.

The primary data source was *Finding 'Ohana* (2021), accessed through the Netflix platform. The unit of analysis data consisted of selected scenes, dialogues, and visual elements that depict mythological aspects and support the development of the adventure formula. Data selection was conducted using purposive sampling, with the scene criteria: (1) contained representations of myths, (2) reflected cultural elements of knowledge and religious system myths, and/or (3) contributed to the development of the adventure formula. Supporting data were also used by the researcher from previous studies, relevant journal articles, e-books, and online sources.

To collect data, the film was watched repeatedly to identify relevant scenes and dialogue, during the viewing process, note-taking and screenshots as visual evidence were conducted to support the analysis process. Lastly, the collected data were then organized into thematic categories based on the myths depicted in a film and their contributions to the adventure formula.

Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis through several stages. First, the researcher identified data that depict the appearance of myth within the narrative of *Finding 'Ohana* (2021). Myths were identified through an interpretation of dialogue, character actions, visual settings, and cultural symbols that reflect systems of knowledge and religion. Next, the findings were classified

based on the patterns of mythical representation that emerged in the films and grouped into relevant themes for further analysis. The data findings were then analyzed using a descriptive-interpretive approach, supported by contextual explanations and selected visual evidence to understand the forms and meanings of the myths depicted in the film. Furthermore, Clyde Kluckhohn's concept of cultural universals, particularly in terms of knowledge and religious systems, was used to interpret the cultural meaning behind the emergence of these myths. After analysing their cultural significance, John G. Cawelti's adventure formula theory was applied to analyse how these myths enrich the adventure formula of *Finding 'Ohana* (2021). The final stage involved concluding the analysis to summarize the research findings and answer the research objectives regarding the forms of myth and their contribution to enriching the adventure formula in the film *Finding 'Ohana* (2021).

III. Results and Discussion

This section presents and discusses the findings related to the myths depicted in the film *Finding 'Ohana* (2021) and their contribution in enriching the adventure formula. The analysis focused on identifying forms of mythical representation and interpreting their cultural meanings using Clyde Kluckhohn's concept of universal culture, specifically the systems of knowledge and religion. Additionally, John G. Cawelti's adventure formula theory was employed to examine the contribution of mythical forms in shaping the film's adventure formula. Supported by visual data in the form of scenes with dialogue that were chosen based on their relevance to myth representation and their role in shaping the narrative development of the adventure. The discussion is organized into two main sections, as presented below :

3.1 The Myths Depicted in *Finding 'Ohana* (2021)

The analysis identified two main interrelated forms: sacred place and ancestral guardians. These forms reflect belief and cultural knowledge embedded within the narrative and become important components in shaping the characters' understanding of their adventure experience.

3.1.1 Myth of the sacred place

One of the myths depicted in *Finding 'Ohana* (2021) is the myth of sacred place, represented through the appearance of a cave during the treasure journey, which is portrayed not merely as a physical setting but as a protected and meaningful cultural space. It is shown in the figure below :



Fig. 1 Hana and E Discovering the Cave that belief as sacred place, at (00: 47: 05 – 00: 47: 20)

Hana: "We cannot go in there. E: Why not?"

Hana: "Caves are *Kapu*, Sacred, and Hawaiian, sometimes used to store the remains of dead bodies in a cave. So if that's a tomb, it's forbidden."

In Fig. 1, Hana and E characters discover the cave while they are searching for their two younger siblings, who have run away on a journey to find treasure. Hana's hesitation to enter the cave from her belief in a myth as a local Hawaiian, regarding the cave as *kapu*, which translates as "sacred" or "forbidden." The discovery of this cave introduces the setting, where the characters are still in their ordinary world, marked by bright lighting and natural colors. It serves as a transition from the ordinary place to the sacred space, suggesting that the cave will eventually become the setting for their upcoming adventure.

Based on Boggs and Petrie's theory, changes in color palette are often used as transitions in setting from the real world to the symbolic world [11, p. 204] because color has often been used to signal important changes. This transition effect is further reinforced by Hana's gesture, who appears hesitant and pauses for a moment before entering the cave. Her hesitation is not only narrative but is also shaped by the visuals. Bright sunlight illuminates the characters and the area around the cave's entrance, using a bright color palette (green trees and blue sky), symbolizing a safe, familiar, and realistic zone, emphasizing that the characters are still in a real-world setting.

Furthermore, the dialogue in Fig. 1 emphasizes the mysterious characteristics of their adventure setting. The cave is considered a sacred place for storing the bodies of deceased ancestors. Hana's belief regarding the cave was derived from a myth about a sacred place that had been passed down from her previous generations. In line with the explanation of Humaeni [13, p. 172] myths relate to sacred elements and ancestral culture stories that are believed by a community or have occurred and were considered true in the past.

The cave's sacredness led to a prohibition on entering it without proper permission. Rooted in the previous Hawaiian knowledge system about the connection between humans and spirituality. According to Kluckhohn, a knowledge system can function as a way for a society to understand its natural environment, living beings, and human behavior. In this context, the assumption that the caves are ancestral tombs that must be preserved and respected is understood from human interaction with the environment and nature in previous generations, which resulted in cultural interpretations by Hawaiian society that were then passed down from generation to generation and became guidelines for them.

Based on cultural knowledge, a sense of spirituality emerges that makes humans interpret a place as something "more" than what physically appears. It then gives religious meaning through religious emotions such as respect, fear, or taboo towards something, which, according to Zulaihah [14, p. 58] can lead to the assumption that a certain place or object has sacred value. Eventually, it formed a belief in the supernatural and led to forbidden actions that became part of the community's myths. It is illustrated in Fig. 2 below :



Fig. 2 The Presence of Night Marcher in the Cave, at (01: 30:11 – 01 : 30: 40)

Pili: "What's that mean?"

Pili: "What's That?"

Hana: "That's Weird (*muffled whispered voice*).. (*Hana gasp*) God, I knew it! This cave is *Kapu*!"

In Fig. 2, the appearance of a mysterious figure emphasizes that the cave is not merely an inanimate object but a space with sacred value. Where spirits appear indirectly through signs, as a reminder to anyone who visits the site, they must behave respectfully. Through Hana's continued dialogue, "It's sacred, I was worried this cave would be a tomb, and it is. We used to believe that when a person died, their bones held all their mana, their power" [1, 01:30:17]. It becomes increasingly clear that one of them believes in sacred myth, specifically the belief that the cave is guarded by ancestral spirits. Besides that, the use of low-key lighting in Fig. 2, where the cave room appears very dark, using only a little light from a flashlight, produces a warm color (golden yellow) on the cave walls, encouraging the audience to notice that there is something significant at that point. As Boogs and Petrie emphasize, when advancing colors (yellow, red, orange) appear with high intensity in the midst of darkness, it will make the object seem to be the main focus, because it looks bigger and closer to the camera [11, p. 201].

In this context, the warm color of the flashlight guides the viewer's attention to the "mysterious figure" inside the cave, as the figure becomes a contrasting bright spot against the dark

environment. As explained by Boggs and Petrie [11, p. 117] the strategic use of lighting and color serves as a tool to direct the audience's gaze. By applying high-contrast lighting or placing bright objects in a dim setting, specific objects in a scene are effectively highlighted. Since warm colors provide a sense of closeness, the yellow lighting on the figure brings out an intimate-sacred atmosphere, as if the figure captured by the camera brings the characters closer to spiritual or supernatural entities and further emphasizes the sacredness of the cave, directing the audience's interpretation towards a deeper meaning related to guidance, protection, or signs from the cave.

Relevant to the explanation [11, p. 96] lighting variations in films serve to build mood and emotional atmosphere in a scene. In this context, the audience does not just see objects but also feels 'close' to the mystery and spiritual power in the film. Reinforced by the following dialogue, "their bones held all their mana." [1, 01 : 30 : 54] confirms that the bones of ancestors are regarded as a source of sacred power; the place must be respected and not violated. Hence, entering or violating its sanctity is considered a taboo that can bring danger or a curse. This belief shows a manifestation of a religious system, because the community views it not only as an ordinary physical space but as something that has sacred value and becomes a center of spiritual activity or prohibition. It originates from the human need to understand and connect with supernatural powers or ancestral spirits that are considered influential in their lives, because basically, the system of religion begins with the question of why humans believe in and seek to connect with supernatural powers that are considered superior [15, p. 376].

In this context, the visual and narrative representations of the sacred place suggest that the cave is understood as more than a physical setting in an adventure film; instead, it becomes a place integrated with cultural values and spiritual beliefs that influence how characters relate to and interact with it. Consequently, the characters begin to reconsider their relationship with the place and the values attached to it, recognizing that it should not be explored freely but with respect to the ancestral presence believed to inhabit it, as well as preserving the surrounding environment. This finding demonstrates that myths are not merely cultural elements within the narrative but also influence how characters understand the place and interpret their adventure experiences. Thus, the sacred place in the film is not merely positioned as a physical setting but as part of a belief system that shapes the characters' actions and shifts their perspectives throughout their journey. It shows the role of myth itself, which is used to control the morals and behavior of society [13, p. 1338].

3.1.2 Myth of Ancestral Guardian

Another myth depicted in *Finding 'Ohana* (2021) is the myth of the ancestral guardian, it is represented through scenes that portray the presence of ancestral figures in an adventure journey, as shown in Fig. 3 below :



Fig 3. The brief reunion with the Spirit of Pili and E's Father, at (01:44:00 – 01:45:26)

Fig 3 illustrates Pili and E having a brief reunion with the spirit of their father when they try to escape and hide from the ancestral Night Marchers after attempting to enter the sacred cave without permission. At first, the disturbance from supernatural beings after they successfully found the treasure was intended to warn them about sacred places that needed to be protected and respected. It means that the appearance of ancestral spirits in the film *Finding 'Ohana* (2021) not

only gives a sense of fantasy to the film's adventure but also attempts to visualize the direct relationship between humans and the supernatural realm.

Zulaihah [14, p. 28] explained that human belief in supernatural powers often arises in response to uncontrollable events, such as death or natural disasters, which gives awareness of their existence. Then it developed into structured religious systems that were passed down from generation to generation, governing rituals, moral values, and society's understanding of the supernatural world. Hence, the scene in Fig. 3 is a manifestation of the belief in the existence of ancestral spirits. Based on humans' feeling of helplessness in the face of death, an event that is uncontrollable and difficult to explain rationally. Eventually, the belief emerges that ancestral spirits remain present to protect their descendants in the human world, even though from a different dimension.

Koentjodiningrat said [15, p. 377] belief in the concept of the relationship between supernatural beings, such as good or evil spirits, and humans is one element of a religious system. According to Kluckhohn [13, pp. 1331–1332] the religious system itself is sometimes expressed through myths. Myths are considered a bridge between the limited human world and the invisible supernatural world. Begins from a supernatural belief, and it was then passed down in the form of narratives from generation to generation until it became a myth. Therefore, myths are often related to stories of gods or supernatural beings [17, p. 13].

A brief encounter that brings back a deceased figure in a supernatural form and interacts directly with their descendants in Fig. 3 is one manifestation of a religious system. Visually, the use of low-key lighting marks the transition from the real world to the supernatural realm. Combined with a dominant blue background. According to Boogs and Petrie [11, p. 202] cool colors (blue, green) convey a sense of distance, detachment, or isolation and are often associated with water or trees, which also suggest a sense of calm. The use of soft lighting and gentle blue tones creates a serene atmosphere. The use of subtle lighting variations plays a vital role in establishing the mood and atmosphere for the forthcoming narrative event [11, p. 96].

Thus, the father's spirit does not appear as a frightening figure, but rather as a spiritual figure who brings a sense of peace. Unlike the dark, mysterious tone seen in Fig. 2, the lighting in this scene serves to reduce tension and create space for emotional expression. A cool blue color with dim lighting is used to show spiritual realism, marking the sense of distance between the human world and the ancestral world, indicating that although their father is not actually physically present, he remains spiritually present as a guardian spirit.

The interaction shown in Fig. 3 is not meant to frighten, but rather to give a comforting message through his gentle gaze as he reached out to hold E's necklace, as if expressing his pride and a transfer of responsibility for his living family, signifying that, even though their father is in another realm, his teachings and love remain alive within them. The silent connection is deepened as he tenderly touches each family member's cheeks, one by one. Pili's words reinforced this individual blessing: "I promise, Dad." [1, 01:44:35] symbolizing her commitment to living a virtuous life and carrying her father's values into the future. This interaction, concluded by the family's brief hug, shows that by embracing this responsibility, they are not only preserving their personal memories but also safeguarding the cultural heritage of their Hawaiian ancestors that defines their root identity, ultimately building a complete 'Ohana bond. Even without any dialogue, the visual choice harmonizes with the father's gestures, which collectively signify a spiritual connection rather than a threat.

Therefore, despite the setting being typically associated with horror, the combination of gentle lighting, spiritual blue colors, and loving expressions transforms the scene into an emotional, sacred moment. It means that the visuals also articulate the myth of the ancestral guardian as part of a system of religion, where the presence of ancestral spirits in the film is a tangible form of human belief in supernatural powers, which shows that the characters recognize the spirit's authority as they have a belief system that places ancestors as guardians of the natural order. It shows that in the film *Finding 'Ohana* (2021), the story is told through myths and beliefs as an emotional drive that makes the characters obey existing behavioral guidelines. It changes the atmosphere of fear and possible dishonesty into respect. Through spiritual values, sacred rules, concepts about the supernatural world, and views about human-ancestor relationships that are conveyed in the film.

Although myths generally cannot be scientifically verified and often understood beyond logical reasoning [13, pp. 1334–1335]. They continue to remain meaningful in cultural context because they reveal the origins and beliefs considered important within society and contribute to

conveying sacred narrative or cultural values shared among its members. In this film, these supernatural beliefs are visualized into tangible experiences through the use of lighting and color. The film portrayal of myth demonstrates that the religious system is not only a cultural concept within the character's mind but also a presence that influences their experience throughout their journey.

The analysis suggests that the presence of myth in *Finding 'Ohana* (2021) is represented through the existence of a sacred place and the belief in an ancestral guardian that influences the character's understanding of place and cultural values throughout their journey. These findings suggest that myth is not merely a cultural representation or a form of belief but also functions as part of a system of knowledge and religion that shapes the characters' relationships with their environment. This differs from previous studies that mainly focus on identifying types of myths [8], representations of cultural elements [7], narrative strategies [6], or the interpretation of myth meanings in a film [9], which is analyzed as separate aspects. In contrast, this study interprets myth as an integrated system of meaning embedded within the film's narrative structure. This interpretation further provides the foundation for examining the role of myth in shaping the adventure formula in the following section.

3.2 The Contribution of Myth to Enriching Adventure Formula in the Film

The myths about sacred caves and ancestral guardians found in *Finding 'Ohana* (2021) are not merely a cultural background, but serve as a key part of the story that shapes the development of adventure. These myths influence the characters' journey in facing the important stages of their adventure. For a deeper analysis, the concept of adventure formula proposed by John G. Cawelti [10] used as a way to understand the relation between narrative structure and its cultural background. The following subsections further discuss the contribution of myths to the adventure formula in *Finding 'Ohana* (2021) through two main aspects :

3.2.1 Myth as an Adventure Setting that is filled with Obstacles and Dangers

Guided by the old pirate journal that Pili discovered in his grandfather's house, her desire to help his grandfather pay off his debts so that they can keep their apartment in New York. It encourages Pili and Casper's adventure to find hidden treasure that begins when they enter the mysterious cave. The scene shown in Fig. 1, with the use of bright natural colors and high-key lighting, which is dominated by brighter light with minimal shadow, appears as a marker of the character's ordinary world; it acquires a new narrative function in the context of the adventure formula. As Hana and E stand out at the cave's entrance, the daylight and bright natural colors act as visual cues, preparing the viewer to enter a space with a completely different atmosphere.

Once they cross that boundary and begin to enter the cave as depicted in Fig. 2, the lighting drastically changes to low-key lighting, creating a dominant darkness that makes the cave seem unfamiliar, dangerous, and unpredictable. This is where the role of visual change as a setting transition occurs; it shows how the myth of the cave as a sacred place works not only on a meaning level, but also on the structure of adventure. Therefore, the discovered cave serves as the setting of the unfamiliar world of their journey, which is sacred and filled with obstacles.

As explained by Cawelti [10, p. 38], the unfamiliar world that is filled with dangers and obstacles becomes the general setting that is found in the adventure formula, where characters leave their ordinary place and enter an unfamiliar place far from the world they are familiar with. Unlike Casper's older sister, who worries about the consequences before entering the cave, as illustrated in Fig. 1, Pili and Casper entered the cave without hesitation, which led them to face physical obstacles related to the myth of sacred places and ancestral spirits. Because they entered the cave with the intention of finding treasure, unaware that it was actually a sacred place and should not be visited carelessly or have its sanctity violated.

Therefore, the obstacles that the characters faced were considered spiritual consequences of violating taboos and the sacredness of the space, which, within the cultural context, indicated the ancestors' anger or response. The presence of these spiritual threats creates tension and adds complexity to obstacles within the story, enriching the adventure formula beyond the physical danger. From Cawelti's perspective, obstacles and dangers are essential elements in the adventure formula that serve to test the courage of the main character. However, in *Finding 'Ohana* (2021), the challenges encountered not only test characters' physical abilities but also reshape their understanding of space and the cultural values they encounter. Thus, the myth in the film expands the function of obstacles within the adventure formula by including spiritual consequences that add a deeper layer of meaning to the adventure journey.

3.2.2 Myth-driven triumph and moral resolution

After overcoming several obstacles, the characters finally succeed in finding the treasure they have been looking for. As Cawelti said [10, p. 24] triumph is one of the formulas in adventure stories, portraying a character facing intense dangers and ultimately achieving a meaningful victory, although its form may vary depending on the cultural setting of the story. However, their euphoria over gaining material wealth quickly turns into deep concern and warning as they realize their violation of a sacred place. It is visualized in Fig. 2 when Pili sees a mysterious figure captured in their photo.

The scene further answers Hana's doubts when she discovers the cave at the beginning of the journey. Through Hana's continued dialogue in Fig. 2, "It's sacred, I was worried this cave would be a tomb, and it is. We used to believe that when a person died, their bones held all their *mana*, their power. To protect the *mana*, bones were hidden after death, so that their location would stay secret forever." [1, 01:30:40 - 01:30:58] . She reveals the local Hawaiian myth about a sacred place, and the discovery that the site was sacred drastically changed their perspective. Finally, Hana urges them to return all valuable items they had planned to take home, showing respect for their ancestors as shown in the following scene :

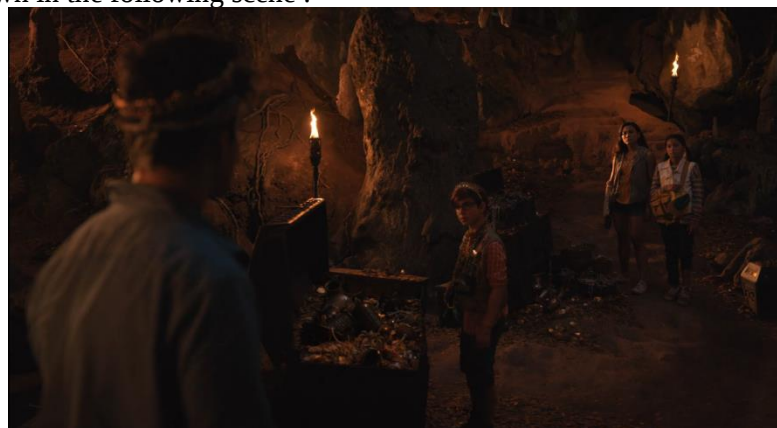


Fig 4. Leaving the Treasure to Honor the Ancestors, at (01 : 31: 06 - 01: 32:00)

E: "Okay, let's just grab what you can, and we'll figure out a way out."

Hana: "No! We can't take any of this with us."

E: "You can't expect us to leave all this."

Hana: "I said the remains need to stay hidden."

Visually, Fig. 4 reinforces the narrative meaning as the climax of the adventure in the film, when the characters get signs of the appearance of the ancestral spirit. Continuing from Fig. 2, low-key lighting is still used, with the only bright light originating from the torches, which then highlights warm-colored objects (yellow) such as treasure, gold, and characters. Warm colors are naturally associated with fire, the sun, or sunset. Perceptually, they are considered advanced colors, making them feel 'closer' and more intense to the viewer. Then, by controlling the lighting and color choices, the director can dramatize or accent the illusion of solidity and form by contrasting darkness against lightness, and contrasting warm colors against cool colors [11, pp. 201–202].

In this context, the contrast is shown through the warm colors of an object dominating in the darkness, which not only becomes the main visual focus, but also implies a dramatic message of adventure that the characters are at a crucial moment, requiring important decisions, choosing between materialistic desire and respecting the values they believe in. The warm colors in this film give the impression of closeness or spiritual warmth from the ancestors, while the darkness implies a sense of threat and uncertainty. The combination of low-key lighting and warm colors eventually reinforces the mythological meaning present in the scene, particularly about ancestors' beliefs and inherited spiritual values. It helps convey the climax as a moral test rooted in myths and ancestral traditions honored throughout the story.

In the dialogue of Fig. 4, even though E refuses and insists on taking part of the treasure, arguing that they worked hard to find it, Hana's maturity is demonstrated when she insists on asking them to leave the cave without taking anything, because removing objects from a sacred site would

disrespect the ancestors. This led Pili and Casper to gradually agree, realizing the cultural meaning behind Hana's warning. The decision highlights the characteristics of the adventure formula, especially for an individual or a group of heroes. Cawelti [10, p. 40] explains that heroes become the center of attention in adventure stories because the audience or readers usually build emotional identification with their actions.

At the beginning of the story, Pili, Hana, E, and Casper were just ordinary humans who were curious to prove their ancestors' stories about treasure. This characterization aligns with Cawelti's concept of the adventure hero as a "one of us" figure, a character who is not portrayed as possessing extraordinary abilities but rather has limitations and experiences that resonate with the audience [10, p. 40]. Throughout their journey, they are placed in unfamiliar situations and face various obstacles that reshape their understanding of the adventure itself. It is shown when the success of an adventure is not measured by the treasures brought home but by the character's decision to leave them behind. It shows the contribution of myths to shaping the deeper meaning of adventure.

Choosing to honor the ancestors over material gain represents a symbolic triumph that provides moral value at the end of the adventure story in the film *Finding 'Ohana* (2021). It is related to the concept of triumph in the hero's journey, that is not only in the form of physical victories such as obtaining treasure or defeating enemies, but it could also be represented by symbolic forms such as reunion with the goddess-mother of the world, acceptance and reconciliation with a father figure, gaining spiritual enlightenment, or even successfully obtaining benefits even though the world of adventure is still dangerous [18, pp. 227–228]. It means that even though they failed to bring all of their physical treasures, their decision to keep them in the rightful place to honor traditions reflects a shift that emphasizes the role of myths that enrich the meaning of triumph as an adventure formula in *Finding 'Ohana* (2021).

Overall, the discussion indicates that the contribution of myth in *Finding 'Ohana* (2021) extends beyond the presence of cultural elements within the narrative but also contributes to giving meaning to the adventure formula itself. Through sacred place and ancestral beliefs, myth creates obstacles and dangers that influence the progression of the character's journey while also reshaping the form of triumph achieved at the end of the journey. This is different from previous studies, which generally focused on analyzing the adventure formula through heroic actions or the hero's journey structure [4], [5]. Meanwhile, this study demonstrates the involvement of mythical elements that enrich the meaning of adventure from merely achieving goals toward a process of understanding the identity, heritage, and values gained along the way. Finally, the experience leads the characters toward a deeper understanding of the meaning of ohana, not as an achievement discovered at the end of the adventure, but as a sense of connection, belonging, and family bonds that they have always possessed all along.

IV. Conclusion

This study examines the types of myths depicted in the film *Finding 'Ohana* (2021) and their contribution to the adventure formula. Based on the results of the analysis, it was found that the film presents two interrelated forms of myth: the sacred place and the ancestral guardians. These myths are rooted in the knowledge systems and religious traditions of Hawaiian culture. Based on Kluckhohn's concept of cultural universals, these two myths not only reflect spiritual beliefs but also demonstrate how cultural knowledge is transmitted and used to shape the characters' understanding of space, make decisions, and interpret their experiences throughout their journey.

Furthermore, the existence of these myths greatly contributes to enriching the adventure formula. The myth of the sacred cave serves as an unfamiliar setting commonly found in adventure stories, presenting an unpredictable environment filled with obstacles, dangers, and spiritual consequences of taboo rules that the characters must overcome. Along the journey, myths not only serve as a source of danger but also contribute to a triumph that provides moral and spiritual value. Their victory is more than physical success, but a connection with family and honoring their heritage. Thus, myths function not only as a cultural element within the narrative but also serve as a moral compass that gives deeper meaning to their adventure and guides the resolution of the story toward a physical, spiritual, and emotional experience.

Supported by visual elements, particularly lighting and color—which help create an atmosphere of mystery, danger, and sacredness throughout the adventure. Thus, the mythical meaning in the film is not only conveyed through dialogue and narration but also through a visual experience that deepens

the audience's emotional engagement. The integration of these mythical and cinematic elements provides depth of meaning that turns the adventure into an intimate spiritual journey, where the discovery of treasure becomes a way to rediscover their cultural identity, heritage, and connection to their ancestors.

However, this study has limitations because it only reviews a few key scenes and focuses on myth analysis through narrative and specific visual support. Furthermore, the interpretation in this study is limited to textual and specific cinematic analysis supported by literature reviews and academic validation. It does not involve direct perspectives from the local Hawaiian community or cultural practitioners. Therefore, future research is encouraged to expand the scope of analysis, either by examining other cinematographic elements or by involving audience reception studies. Engaging with local cultural experts could enrich the interpretation and improve the accuracy of understanding local myths.

Acknowledgment

The author declares that this research received no specific grant from any funding agency.

References

- [1] J. Weng, *Finding 'Ohana* (2021). [Online]. Available: <https://www.netflix.com/watch/81023618?source=35>
- [2] Z. Miftahuljanah and L. A. Saraswati, "Framing Morals : A Study of Moral Values in Netflix Teen Movie *Finding 'Ohana* (2021)," *I-CALLED Int. Conf. Cult. Arts, Lang. Lit. Educ.*, vol. 2024, pp. 145–166, 2024, doi: 10.18502/kss.v9i9.15666.
- [3] Z. N. Azizah, S. A. Maryani, and S. H. Afriani, "Action of Adventure Formula in *Mulan* 2020," *Saks. J. Sastra*, vol. 1, no. 2, pp. 177–185, 2022.
- [4] J. R. Putra, "Adventure Formula in Roar Uthaug's *Tomb Raider* (2018) Movie," Undergraduate Thesis, UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://digilib.uinsgd.ac.id/id/eprint/97649>
- [5] Y. Andriyani, "The Construction of Adventure Formula Through Heroes in Rick Riordan's *The Red Pyramid*," Undergraduate Thesis, UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, 2019. [Online]. Available: <https://digilib.uinsgd.ac.id/24007/>
- [6] Z. Abidin, W. Nova, and S. Barry, "Narrative structure, symbolic meaning, and cultural expression in contemporary Indonesian horror cinema," *Int J. Vis. Perform. Arts*, vol. 7, no. 1, pp. 59–67, 2025.
- [7] R. Dwiyantri and A. Suherman, "Cultural Elements in the Film *Cakra Buana* by Director Massimo Burhanuddin [Unsur Budaya Dalam Cerita Film *Cakra Buana* Karya Sutradara Massimo Burhanuddin]," *Lokabasa*, vol. 10, no. 2, pp. 204–213, 2019, doi: 10.17509/jlb.v10i2.21361.
- [8] A. Monix, "Analysis of Myths in the Film 'Luca' by Enrico Casarosa," 2023.
- [9] A. Nirwana, "Analysis of Myth in Stuart Beattie's Movie 'I Frankenstein,'" Undergraduate Thesis, UIN Alauddin Makassar, 2016.
- [10] J. G. Cawelti, *Adventure, Mystery, and Romance : Formula Stories as Art and Popular Culture*, vol. 1, no. 1. The University of Chicago Press, 2024.
- [11] J. M. Boggs and D. W. Petrie, *The Art of Watching Films 9th*, 9th ed. New York: McGraw-Hill Education, 2018.
- [12] Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications, 2003. doi: 10.7591/9781501721144-016.
- [13] A. Humaeni, "The Role and Position of Religious Myths of Bantenese Society among the Rising Genres of Popular Culture," *Annu. Int. Conf. Islam. Stud. (AICIS XII)*, pp. 1330–1347, 2012.
- [14] S. Zulaihah, *Buku Ajar Pengantar Ilmu Antropologi*. Jember: UIN KHAS Press, 2021. [Online]. Available: https://digilib.uinkhas.ac.id/3005/1/BUKU_AJAR.pdf

-
- [15] Koentjaraningrat, *Pengantar Ilmu Antropologi*. Aksara Baru, Jakarta, 1985.
- [17] H. Afriani, "The myths between 'Dewi Sri' By Ki Umbara and 'Ostara' by Edain McCoy," Undergraduate Thesis, UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, 2019.
- [18] J. Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, 3rd ed. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004. doi: 10.2307 /j.ctvqr1bhz.37.