

## REPRESENTATION OF SUPERHEROES IN THE CHARACTER OF ALANA IN THE SRI ASIH FILM

Dedy Arpan

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**Abstract:** *Sri Asih, the first superhero character in Indonesia created in 1954 by R.A Kosasih in comic media, has undergone several adaptations in comics and films with different character variations and story backgrounds. In 2022, Jagat Sinema Bumilangit re-adapted the Sri Asih film using a different approach. The film introduces a new main character named Alana and presents a storyline adapted to the current context. This research purpose is to analyze the representation of superheroes manifested in Alana's character in the Sri Asih film 2022. The study employs a descriptive qualitative approach and refers to Roland Barthes' theory to uncover the meanings of denotation, connotation, and myth within the Sri Asih film. The research findings reveal 10 scenes that represent superheroes through the character of Alana. The results provide insights into how superheroes are portrayed through the character of Alana in the Sri Asih film. Additionally, the study uncovers the presence of heroic myths in the visual narrative structures of the film. These findings contribute to understanding the adaptation of superhero characters and how they remain relevant to popular cultural trends, attracting fans from generation to generation.*

**Keywords:** *representation; superhero; sri asih; film; barthes; myth*

### Introduction

Superheroes have become idolized characters in popular culture and are a beloved film genre by many people. In film narratives, the concept of superhero characters is often visualized as figures who rescue humanity from evil and challenging times. Superhero movies provide the ideas of peace, safety, and freedom (Ellis, 2023). According to Scott Bukatman (2003), superhero characters not only become part of popular culture but also represent symbols and ideologies of power, freedom, and morality.

In Indonesia, the first created superhe-

ro character was Sri Asih. It was created by R.A Kosasih in 1954. Sri Asih was first published through comic books (Bonneff 2008). The Sri Asih comic gained many fans, and in the same year, Sri Asih was adapted into a feature film directed by Turino Djunaidy and Tan Sing Hwat. Then, in 2022, it was adapted into another film with the same title and directed by Upi Avianto.

Sri Asih is a female superhero who possesses extraordinary powers and abilities inherited from Dewi Asih. In each era, there will be an incarnation of Dewi Asih, bearing the title of Sri Asih. As Sri Asih, she is connected to her ancestors

and can manifest their powers within her (Bumilangit, 2023). In the 2022 film version of Sri Asih, there is a new character named Alana who becomes Sri Asih, with the storyline adapted to the current era. These elements make it an interesting subject for analysis in the context of superhero representation in films.

According to Danesi (2010), film can be defined as a text that involves photographic images that create the illusion of action and motion. Piliang (2004) explains that text, in a broader sense, refers to messages in the form of visual and verbal signs, which produce visual and verbal texts such as advertising images, comics, television, films, fashion, dance, theater, sculpture, architecture, and urban planning. Films are intentionally made to provide special effects to the audience through the messages contained within creatively presented storylines (Pratista, 2017).

The previous study conducted by Atmaja (2022) examined the representation of superheroes in the film Gundala using Roland Barthes semiotic analysis approach. Through Roland Barthes semiotic theory, this research aims to provide a deeper understanding of how the representation of superheroes can be manifested in the character of Alana in the film Sri Asih. This study will analyze the signs that represent superheroes in the introduction of the character Alana.

The analysis of signs will encompass the visual aspect of *mise en scène*, as well as the narrative aspect of the character Alana. In the context of *mise en scène*, it includes everything that is in front of the camera and captured in the film production (Pratista, 2017). Meanwhile, in the narrative aspect, this research will examine how Alana's journey as a superhero is developed through the plot, conflicts, and character development. Therefore, it is

hoped that the representation of Alana as the superhero Sri Asih can be identified. The aim is for the results of this study to contribute to the development of research on superhero characters in the film genre, especially in Indonesia.

## Methodology

The methodology used in this study is descriptive qualitative research with a semiotic analysis approach based on Roland Barthes' theory. Descriptive qualitative research generates descriptive data through direct observation of the researched object. Its purpose is to explain and interpret the object based on its actual conditions (Sugiyono, 2011).

Data collection is carried out through observation and literature review. Observation is done by directly observing the Sri Asih film. Meanwhile, the literature review is conducted by searching for data from sources such as journals, books, and websites that can support this research.

The research begins by conducting direct observations of the Sri Asih film (2022). Then, a selection of scenes is made to be the units of analysis. The units of analysis are chosen based on their characteristics, namely scenes in the Sri Asih film that contain signs representing a superhero. Data analysis uses the techniques of Miles and Huberman, with stages of data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusions (Sugiyono, 2011).

Visual analysis employs the semiotic approach of Roland Barthes to identify the meanings of signs in the Sri Asih film (2022), particularly in the representation of superheroes. Roland Barthes' semiotic approach is employed to conduct this analysis. His theory of signs explains a

language system that consists of signifiers and signified. The semiotic approach is divided into two levels of understanding; denotation and connotation. Denotation refers to the literal meaning while connotation refers to the implicit meanings associated with culture and beliefs embedded in the signs.

Moreover, he also developed a theory of myths, which is defined as social and cultural representations that embody an ideology or a perceived universal truth. Through his semiotic analysis, this research purpose is to uncover the meanings of signs used in the representation of superheroes in the character of Alana in the Sri Asih film and how these signs contribute to formation of myths about superheroes in Indonesian culture (Sobur, 2017).

Table 1. Roland Barthes Semiotic (source : Budiman, 2011)

1. Signifier (Pensanda)	2. Signified (petanda)
3. Denotative Sign (Tanda Denotatif)	
4. CONNOTATIVE SIGNIFIER (PENANDA KONOTATIF)	5. CONNOTATIVE SIGNIFIED (PETANDA KONOTATIF)
6. CONNOTATIVE SIGN (TANDA KONOTATIF)	

According to Barthes, language can become a myth under certain conditions marked by the presence of a second order signification system, known as the second order semiological system as can be seen in Table 1. This system includes rhetoric or connotation that emerges from the signs of the first system. Barthes stated that in this second level of semiotics, everything that is written or represented verbally and visually has the potential to become a myth (Budiman, 2011).

## Result

### Sri Asih Film (2022) Overview

Sri Asih (2022) is a film directed by Upi Avianto and written by Upi Avianto and Joko Anwar. The film is produced by Screenplay Bumilangit, a company that produces superhero films based on characters from Bumilangit, a company with a heritage of over 60 years in creating Indonesian superhero characters. The story in the Sri Asih film (2022), as can be seen in Figure 1, presents differences from previous comic book and film versions, providing a new interpretation of the superhero character Sri Asih. This film is part of Bumilangit's efforts to expand and develop the Indonesian superhero universe on the big screen.



Figure 1. Sri Asih Film Poster. (Source: [instagram.com/sriasihmovie.official/](https://www.instagram.com/sriasihmovie.official/))

In this film version, Alana takes on the role of the main character, who is a descendant of Sri Asih. Alana was born as an orphan and grew up in an orphanage. Her parents died during the eruption of Mount Merapi, which occurred on the day of Alana's birth.

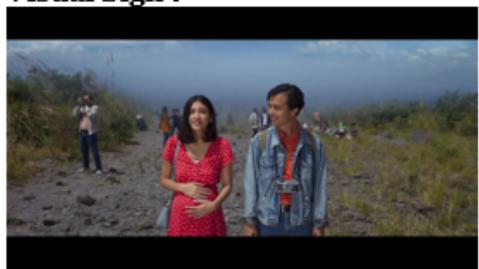
As Alana enters her childhood, she is adopted by a wealthy entrepreneur named Sarita Hamzah (Jenny Chang). Under Sarita's guidance, Alana grows up to become a talented fighter. Sarita raises Alana wholeheartedly, and Alana considers her as her own mother, creating a strong bond between the two of them.

Alana's journey as an emanation of Sri Asih began, with the inner strength and kindness that she inherits. Alana grows into a brave and caring person. Along the way, Alana learns to control the anger that comes from the evil forces that plagued her as a child. She learns to understand the values of life, sacrifice, and love that change her world and bring new hope to many.

### Semiotic Analysis

The following analysis applies Roland Barthes' theory to analyze each unit of data in order to uncover the denotative, connotative, and mythical meanings that represent the superhero in the selected scenes used as the units of analysis.

#### 1. Analysis Unit 01

<b>Visual Sign :</b> 
00:01:16 - 00:01:25
<b>Audio Sign :</b> Dialogue between Alana's biological father and mother (Sri Asih)  Mother : <i>"Iya, aku juga bingung. Setiap hari aku mimpiin gunung merapi. Rasanya kaya aku kepanggil kesini"</i> .  Mother : <i>"Yes, I'm confused too. Every day I dream of volcanoes. It feels like I was called here."</i>

**Denotation:** A couple visiting Mount Merapi. They do this because the wife frequently dreams about Mount Merapi and wishes to go there.

**Connotation:** Alana's biological parents feel that visiting Mount Merapi can help them understand and uncover the hidden messages or meanings behind the wife's dreams. Additionally, there is a connotation related to the spiritual and certain beliefs that consider Mount Merapi as a sacred place with special significance. Another connotation is that the dream of going to the mountain is an instigation from evil forces to harm Alana's well-being.

2. Analysis Unit 02

**Visual Sign :**



00:02:52 - 00:03:10

**Audio Sign :**  
The sound of the volcanic eruption roared like a terrifying screaming monster. Then Alana's biological mother screamed.

Mother : *"Cepetan pergi dari sini!. Cepetan pergi, cepetan!!!"*

Mother : *"Hurry up and get out of here! Hurry up, hurry up!!!"*

**Denotation:** There is a dangerous pyroclastic cloud from the eruption of Mount Merapi moving rapidly towards Alana's parents, who are frightened. The pyroclastic cloud sweeps and destroys everything in its path, including visitors and residents around the mountain who are running to save themselves. Then transforms into a face-like shape with a wide open red mouth, chasing Alana's parents as they try to escape in a car.

**Connotation:** The atmosphere is filled with tension and fear as Alana's parents face imminent danger. The transformation of the pyroclastic cloud into an angry face signifies the presence of evil forces that do not want Alana to be born and seek to harm them. This scene also has connotations that there is an entity associated with Mount Merapi.

3. Analysis Unit 03

**Visual Sign :**



00:03:18 - 00:03:30

**Audio Sign :**  
Dialogue Alana Parents in car.

Mother : *"Yang, air ketubanku pecah".*  
Father : *"Ga mungkin sayang, ga mungkin. Kamu baru lima bulan!"* (panicking while driving the car quickly)  
Mother : *"Aku mau melahirkan sekarang"*

Mother : *"Honey, my water broke".*  
Father : *"It's impossible dear, it's impossible. You're only five months old!"* (panicking while driving the car quickly)  
Mother : *"I want to give birth now"*

**Denotation:** Alana's mother panics and experiences premature rupture of membranes when Alana is only five months old in the womb. This is not a normal condition as a fetus at five months of gestation is generally not fully developed and not ready to be born.

**Connotation:** A life-threatening situation for both the mother and the five-month-old fetus in the womb. Creating a tense atmosphere, showcasing the struggle between good and evil forces in their quest to ensure the safety of Alana and her mother.

4. Analysis Unit 04

<p><b>Visual Sign :</b></p>  <p>00:04:25 - 00:05:21</p>
<p><b>Audio Sign :</b>                  Dialogue between the mysterious grandmother figure and Alana's mother with a gripping musical background</p> <p>Grandmother : "Adik...".                  Mother : "Bayi saya mau lahir, ughhh"                  Grandmother : "Geletak Jeng, geletak"                  Grandmother : "Ambegan ngih, Ngeden"                  Mother : "ugg aaaa"</p> <p>Grandmother : "Sister ...".                  Mother : "My baby is about to be born, ughh" (in pain)                  Grandmother : "Jeng Lay, Lay down"                  Grandmother : "Breathe please, Push"                  Mother : "ugg aaaa" (painfully straining with all her might)</p> <p>Then there was the sound of a newborn baby crying</p>

**Denotation:** With the setting inside a crash car. Narrow, dark and with scary red atmosphere. Accompanied by the background music pounding with a fast tempo, Alana's mother endures the pain of labor. A grandmother suddenly arrives to assist in Alana's birth inside a car that has crashed into the tree.

**Connotation:** The red aura symbolizes the presence of an entity that threatens the lives of Alana and her mother. Suddenly, a mysterious grandmother fig-

ure appears to help Alana's mother, who is experiencing a ruptured amniotic sac and about to give birth. The mysterious grandmother can be interpreted as a supernatural entity who comes to protect and aid in Alana's birth, thwarting evil plans that do not want Alana to be born. The sound of the baby's cry indicates that Alana is born prematurely at only five months gestation. This signifies that Alana is not like a typical human, but possesses a special gift or power that has yet to be fully revealed.

5. Analysis Unit 05

<p><b>Visual Sign:</b></p>  <p>00:05:56 - 00:06:02</p>
<p><b>Audio Sign:</b>                  Dialogue between little Alana and her friends in the orphanage.</p> <p>Tanggung: "Nanti sobek komikku".                  Alana: "Hei! Kembalikan komiknya Tangguh!"</p> <p>Tanggung: "This can tear my comic".                  Alana: "Hey! Bring back the comic Tangguh!"</p>

**Denotation:** In the orphanage, a group of big boys is seen taking Tangguh's comic book and playing with it. Tangguh tries to take it back but struggles because he is smaller in size. Then Alana arrives, and despite being smaller, she bravely approaches them and helps Tangguh by

reprimanding them and asking them to return Tangguh’s comic book.

**Connotation:** Alana displays extraordinary courage in confronting a group of big boys. This courage shows that Alana has a helping spirit from a young age and dislikes oppression. Alana demonstrates good social behavior through her tangible actions to help Tangguh regain his comic book. The connotation of this story can illustrate values such as bravery, friendship, and compassion for others.

6. Analysis Unit 06

<p><b>Visual Sign:</b></p> 
<p>00:07:17 - 00:07:42</p> <p><b>Audio Sign:</b> Alana's dialog with fellow orphanage children.</p> <p>Alana: <i>"Hei! Kembalikan komiknya Tangguh!"</i> Orphanage Child 1: <i>"Eit, Ayo ayo ambil ayo, eit.. aaa ga bisa, hahaha pendek!"</i> Alana : <i>"Hei!"</i></p> <p>Alana: <i>"Hey! Bring back the comic Tangguh!"</i> Orphanage Child 1: <i>"Eit, Come on, come on, come on, come on... aaa can't, hahaha, short!"</i> Alana : <i>"Hey!"</i></p>

**Denotation:** Alana asks the misbehaving orphanage kids to return Tang-

guh’s comic book, but her request is ignored, and they start teasing her. Alana becomes angry and stomps her foot on the ground, causing a wooden stick to fly up. She catches the stick and strikes one of the orphanage kids, sending them flying far away.

**Connotation:** This scene depicts Alana as extremely courageous and strongly opposed to oppression. However, her emotions are triggered when her opponents do not listen and tease her. Alana’s emotions become uncontrollable, causing her to stomp her foot and make the wooden stick fly forward. She hits her opponent with the stick, sending them flying far away. This would not be possible with ordinary human strength. The story connotes that Alana possesses hidden superpowers, but she has not yet learned to control her emotions and strength.

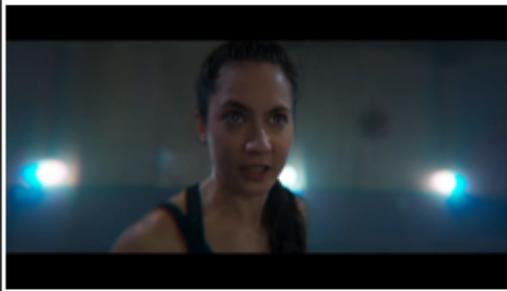
7. Analysis Unit 07

<p><b>Visual Sign:</b></p> 
<p>00:12:20 - 00:13:09</p> <p><b>Audio Sign:</b> Dewi Api summons Alana while she is asleep.</p> <p>Dewi Api : <i>"Alana"</i> Alana wakes up and hears a sound resembling flames coming from outside the room Dewi Api : <i>"Alanaaaa! aaa"</i> (Dewi Api calls out and then screams.)</p>

**Denotation:** In the dream, Alana is seen sleeping and then wakes up upon hearing someone calling her name. Alana approaches the source of the voice outside her window. There seems to be a mysterious entity in the form of a glowing mass of flames that transforms into the figure of the Fire Goddess, calling Alana as she screams. Alana feels frightened and eventually wakes up from her dream. The dream that she has been experiencing since childhood.

**Connotation:** Entity of Dewi Api is portrayed as an antagonist or villain with malicious intentions towards Alana. She appears in Alana's dreams as a frightening figure. The presence of Dewi Api in the dream creates a menacing atmosphere, symbolizing the evil forces that seek to influence Alana and bend her to their will.

8. Analysis Unit 08

<p><b>Visual Sign:</b></p>  <p>00:13:34 - 00:15:39</p>
<p><b>Audio Sign :</b> Dialogue between Sarita, Alana and Dewi Api in Alana's mind.</p> <p>Sarita : <i>"Taklukan diri kamu Al, jangan biarkan kemarahan menguasai diri kamu. Jika kamu membiarkan kemarahan menguasai diri kamu, maka suatu hari dia akan menghancurkan diri kamu "</i></p>

<p>Sarita: <i>"Conquer yourself Al, don't let anger control you. If you let anger rule you, one day it will destroy you."</i></p> <p>Then there was a ringing sound and Alana heard Dewi Api's voice.</p> <p>Sarita : <i>"Kendalikan diri kamu"</i> Dewi Api : <i>"Keluarkan amarahmu, keluarkan amarahmu"</i> Sarita : <i>"Kendalikan Alana"</i> Dewi Api : <i>"Keluarkan, keluarkan amarahmu, keluarkan amarahmu!!"</i> Sarita : <i>"Taklukan dia Al, hanya kamu yang pegang kendali atas diri kamu sendiri. Alana... Al..."</i> Sarita : <i>"Untuk sementara kamu jangan ikut bertarung dulu ya, bahaya"</i> Alana : <i>"Tapi aku ga mau dia kendalitin hidup aku lagi bu"</i> Sarita : <i>"Kita akan kalahkan dia, ya?!"</i></p> <p>Sarita : <i>"control yourself"</i> Goddess of Fire: <i>"Take out your anger, take out your anger"</i> Sarita : <i>"Control Alana"</i> Fire Goddess: <i>"Get out, get out your anger, get out your anger!!"</i> Sarita : <i>"Conquer him Al, only you are in control of yourself. Alana... Al..."</i> Sarita : <i>"For a while you don't join the fight, okay, it's dangerous"</i> Alana : <i>"But I don't want him to control my life anymore ma'am"</i> Sarita says <i>we will beat him, shall we?</i></p>
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**Denotation:** During a training session, Alana practices with Arita, her adoptive mother. Alana appears to struggle with controlling her emotions. Arita attempts to calm Alana's emotions and help her overcome them. However, a vision of Dewi Api appears in Alana's mind, urging her to unleash her anger. This almost causes Alana to lose control, but Ar-

ita continues to try to calm her. In the end, Alana and Arita manage to restrain the emotions within Alana.

**Connotation:** Within Alana, there is an anger that emerges and is difficult for her to control. Dewi Api symbolizes this negative force that seeks to exploit Alana's emotions. Arita plays a crucial role in helping Alana control her emotions. The story depicts Alana's internal struggle between emotional power and the will to control those emotions. It emphasizes the importance of support, guidance, and calmness in managing negative emotions that shape Alana's character growth.

Mateo : "You have to learn to respect men!"

Suddenly, a buzzing sound appeared along with Dewi Api's voice inside Alana.

Fire Goddess : "Alana" (whisper)

Goddess of Fire : "take it out! Get your anger out, get your anger out, get your anger out. Get Out Your Anger. Get Out Your Anger!!!"

Arita : "Alana!"

9. Analysis Unit 09

**Visual Sign:**



00:34:43 - 00:36:20

**Audio Sign :**

Alana's dialogue against Mateo.

Mateo : "Lo harus belajar buat ngehormati laki-laki!"

Dewi Api : "Alana"

Dewi Api : "Keluarkan! Keluarkan amarahmu, keluarkan, keluarkan amarahmu. Keluarkan Amarahmu. Keluarkan Amarahmu!!!"

Arita : "Alana!"

**Denotation:** While Alana is in a helpless and defeated state, Mateo insults and belittles her, stating that she should respect men. Suddenly, a buzzing sound related to Dewi Api resonates within Alana, inciting her to unleash her anger. Alana rises with full strength and fights back against Mateo. Her punch sends Mateo flying far away. In the distance, Arita witnesses this and immediately calls out to Alana, making her realize her inability to control her emotions.

**Connotation:** This scene depicts a drastic transformation of power for Alana, from a weak position to regaining her strength. She defeats Mateo with a punch that sends him unconscious, which is unusual for a normal human. The voice of Dewi Api within Alana carries connotations of a call or evil power trying to control her. Dewi Api appears to influence Alana to use her power for malicious and dangerous purposes. Arita's voice calling from a distance signifies emotional closeness between them and indicates Alana's remorse for her actions and her desire to regain control over her emotions.

10. Analysis Unit 10

<b>Visual Sign:</b> 
00:45:45 - 00:46:53
<b>Audio Sign :</b>  Dialogue as Alana fights off the enemy attack that harmed Arita.  <i>Kala : "Kita pergi dari sini sekarang!" Alana : "Apa yang gua lakuin?" Kala : "Nanti kamu akan tau semuanya"</i>  <i>Kala : "We go from here now!"</i>  <i>Then Alana screams loudly, and her voice overpowers the enemy.</i>  <i>Alana : "What am I doing?" Kala: "Later you will know everything"</i>

**Denotation:** Alana is being dragged by two of Prayogo's henchmen, but she effortlessly throws them off. She stomps her foot on the ground, causing a piece of iron to be catapulted upwards, which she catches. Alana uses the iron bar to swiftly fight against four of Prayogo's henchmen. Then, Alana lets out a loud scream, causing her six enemies to be lifted into the air and then fall down. Alana is confused about what is happening to her, but Kala calms her down and says that Alana will understand later.

**Connotation:** Alana possesses dormant powers that, when unleashed, make her strong and capable of fighting her en-

emies. The displayed superpowers in this scene include stomping the ground with her foot, causing the iron bar nearby to be launched without direct contact. Additionally, Alana's superpower is shown when she easily frees herself from the two people who were dragging her. Furthermore, Alana's superpower involves a scream that can control her enemies, causing them to float in the air. This connotation creates an epic atmosphere, strengthening Alana's role as a character with unique and superhuman abilities.

### Myth

After analyzing the researched units, it was found that the scenes in the Sri Asih film (2022) contain a myth that depicts the journey of the hero.

The representation of a superhero character in the form of Alana in the Sri Asih film begins with a scene where Alana's parents go to Mount Merapi in response to a dream. Then, a volcanic eruption occurs that claims the lives of Alana's parents, coinciding with Alana's birth. This scene carries a myth that implies that evil forces do not desire the birth or emergence of good powers. Alana, as a baby who will inherit the good powers of Sri Asih, becomes the target of evil forces that seek to control her.

Alana is born safe and healthy despite being only five months in the womb. A mysterious grandmother comes to assist in Alana's birth. The myth contained in this is that Alana is not an ordinary human; she has been chosen to be a superhero since before birth. There is a supernatural entity that protects Alana to ensure her safety and survival, even though there are evil forces that do not desire her birth.

Several scenes where Alana helps her

friend Tangguh represent Alana's superhero values. She is a character with great courage, concern for others, and a dislike for injustice, which is closely related to popular culture in Indonesia. However, Alana also has a flaw, which is difficulty in controlling her anger.

Alana possesses hidden superpowers. In several scenes, Alana easily defeats her enemies. She can manipulate wooden and iron objects with a kick without directly touching them. Her screams render her enemies helpless and floating in the air. Alana also possesses extraordinary strength that allows her to easily fight against her enemies, unlike typical human strength.

## Discussion

This section describes the analysis and findings of the research data and explains the limitations of the study. It can also describe what the result of the study implies, why it matters, and the perspective for future research. The findings of this research focus on how the superhero character is represented in the character of Alana in the Sri Asih film 2022. The data analysis reveals at least 10 scenes in the film that depict the characteristics of a superhero through the character of Alana. These include special powers, extraordinary fighting abilities, heroic traits displayed in various situations, and the presence of evil characters seeking to harm Alana's life. This demonstrates that the portrayal of a superhero in the Sri Asih film strives to remain relevant and engage fans.

However, this research has limitations. Firstly, it only analyzes one adaptation of the Sri Asih character, specifically the 2022 film version. Future research could involve other media, such as Sri Asih in comic form. Additionally, different research approaches, such as quantitative

methods involving respondent data, can be employed to deepen the understanding of superhero portrayals. Research can also be expanded to incorporate the cultural and historical aspects of Indonesia. This is important, especially in Indonesian popular culture, to provide interesting perspectives for the entertainment industry in adapting relevant and captivating superheroes that appeal to fans across generations.

## Conclusion

This research reveals that the superhero character Sri Asih has been successfully represented through the character of Alana. The analysis conducted on the research sample shows that there are at least 10 scenes that depict superpowers, extraordinary fighting abilities, and the heroic nature of the character Alana.

This conclusion answers the research question about how the representation of a superhero is presented in the character of Alana in the Sri Asih film, and it also uncovers the presence of myths that work within the narrative structure of the film.

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