

Peer Review

Review of: "The Arc of Dramatic Catharsis: When Push Comes to Shove, Purge and Release, and How to Measure Them"

Olivier Toubia¹

1. Columbia University, United States

This article presents a thorough and pertinent review of the literature on narrative structure and the hero's journey, focusing on the role of catharsis. Then it presents some empirical analysis based on case studies with school-age children.

I found the manuscript very well-written. I appreciated Sections 1-3, which I thought did a great job synthesizing the literature on narrative structure and the hero's journey in particular.

I was less enthusiastic about the empirical analysis (Section 4).

First, I wonder if the term "meta-analysis" is completely appropriate here, given that the analysis relies on a relatively small set of studies, which were all conducted in similar settings and perhaps by the same researchers. When I think of meta-analyses, I typically think of integrating a large number of studies in different contexts published across multiple sources by different groups of researchers.

Second, I found that providing additional detail would be helpful, for example, about the sample size and population, the set of instruments and interventions, and the specific analyses that were conducted and results that were obtained.

Third, the topic of catharsis, while quite central in Sections 1-3, seemed a bit less central in Section 4.

In sum, I found a bit of a disconnect between the title of the paper, Sections 1-3, and Section 4.

Moving forward, some options might include:

- turning this into a completely conceptual piece
- focusing on the empirical analysis, but perhaps with a different framing and positioning (e.g., the use of the hero's journey as a pedagogical tool)
- turning this into a larger-scale meta-analysis.

Declarations

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.