

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with four components, the background of the research, the statement of the problem, the research objective, and the research significance. The background of research describes the background before the research was conducted. Statement of problem stated about the problem in the object. The research objective stated the purpose of the studies. Research significance explains how this study could contribute to the literature world, especially popular literature.

1.1 Background of Research

In this era, literature has developed numerous genres, whether in the form of fiction or non-fiction. Both have generated various subgenres. For example, non-fiction has expanded from memoirs, biographies, and histories to broader topics such as self-help and cookbooks. On the other hand, fiction has expanded from older genres like folklore and mythology to wide range of topics and recent subgenres such as romance and fantasy. Although the development of the literature is extent, for a long time, literature have been used by the people as source of information or entertainment.

Literature that used as a form of entertainment could be categorized as a popular literature. According to Nurgiyantoro (1998:17) "Popular literature is a literature categorized as an entertaining and commercial literature" meaning that a literature that used as form of entertainment or made intentionally to get as much people to consumed the literature categorized as popular literature. Being popular as literature works means that the works could be considered as popular literature, which defined by Gelder (2004:19) "the difference between popular and literature is that popular is simple and literature is complex because popular literature meant to reach broader audience so it has to be simple and understandable by everyone" meaning that the success of popular literature does not considered by how complex the content of the literature but rather how many people could understand and enjoy the content of the popular literature.

Popular literature has been around for a long time and encompasses various genres. For example, the fantasy book by J.K. Rowling titled *Harry Potter* was published in 1997, the detective book by Conan Doyle titled *Sherlock Holmes: A Study in Scarlet* was published in 1887, and the adventure book titled *The Alchemist* was released in 1988. Popular literature has gained the attention of people for quite a while, becoming a significant part of cultural and social life.

Another reason popular literature is called popular literature is because of the repeated pattern of the story within the same genre but under different titles. This is what Cawelti refers to as a formula. According to Cawelti (1976:5) “literary formula is a structure of narrative or dramatic conventions employed in a great number of individual works” meaning that a lot of narrative in literature used over and over again using the same pattern. Citing from Cawelti (1976:5) “The reason why formulas are constructed in this way is, I think, fairly straightforward. Certain story archetypes particularly fulfill man's needs for enjoyment and escape.” which understandable if all popular literature product using conventional formula because they were proven to be working to attract broad audience.

John G. Cawelti in his book *Adventure, Mystery, and Romance* mentioned how authors using same pattern in certain genre whether it is the characters, plot, or settings, certain genres in numbers of literature works has certain pattern to follow. For example, John G. Cawelti wrote about the formula of certain Edgar Allan Poe's detective fiction works and how the formula applied by different authors strictly in detective fiction works. There are two types of formula in the detective genre, the first formula is classical detective formula and the second formula is hard-boiled detective formula. Classical detective formula, according to Cawelti (1976:80) “The formula of the classical detective story can be described as a conventional way of defining and developing a particular kind of situation or situations, a pattern of action or development of this situation, a certain group of characters and the relations between them, and a setting or type of setting appropriate to the characters and action.” which could be concluded that detective fiction genre have patterns that he called the formula of the classical detective story.

Detective fiction has been one of the popular fiction genre from decades ago, since the era of the Conan Doyle with his very world-wide popular detective fiction literature *Sherlock Holmes* started in 1892 to the era of Agatha Christie in 1930s to 1940s. Detective fiction is a genre of literature that revolves around the investigation of a crime, typically a murder, by a detective or investigator who uses their skills, intelligence, and often a logical or deductive approach to solve the mystery. Detective fiction is a sub-genre of mystery because according to Rzepka (2005) "Mystery detective story usually contains a detective of some kind, an unsolved mystery, and an investigation by which the mystery is eventually solved" which means that a detective fiction always have mystery in it. According to Cawelti (1976:80) "The classical or ratiocinative detective story was first clearly articulated by Edgar Allan Poe in the 1840s, but it did not become a widely popular genre until the end of the nineteenth century" which mean that this genre has been exist for more than 100 years although it only flourished when Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories initiated detective fiction popularity.

In the context of detective fiction genre, researcher have found types of detective fiction works such as novel, short story and films. According to Hulseberg (1978) "between the percept of the visual image and the concept of the mental image lies the root difference between the two media." This statement implies that films are primarily viewed or perceived, while novels are read or conceived. In essence, they represent fundamentally distinct methods of conveying a story or narrating a tale. Subjectively, researcher leaning towards vieweing visual image rather than conceiving mental image when it comes to telling a story, spesifically detective fiction story. With that note, researcher have stumble upon several detective fiction film but from many popular detective fiction film, *Death on The Nile (2022)* which directed by Kenneth Branagh is an adaptation film from the famous detective fiction writer Agatha Christie from her book titled *Death on The Nile* released in 1937, this makes researcher interested in researching *Death on The Nile (2022)* film using John G. Cawelti's classical detective formula.

In the contemporary era, detective fiction has undergone a notable transformation through its adaptation into the cinematic medium, a phenomenon that has substantially enhanced its popularity and far-reaching impact. This evolution has not only facilitated the integration of the detective genre into the Hollywood film industry but has also engendered substantial financial gains as articulated by Strinati (2004:216) “Postmodern theory clearly holds what it considers important arguments about visual phenomena, and the most obvious films in which to look for signs of postmodernism are those which emphasise style, spectacle, special effects and images, at the expense of content, character, substance, narrative and social comment. Examples include films such as Dick Tracey (1990) or 9½ Weeks (1986).” It means that owing to cinema's pervasive influence as a pivotal constituent of popular culture. Citing from Radner (2010) “from the beginning the business of cinema was to produce entertainment for a popular audience, at a price.” meaning that film or cinema was made to reach large amount of audience in another word it was purposely made to be a popular culture. Somehow this genre is still relevant to this day, even become more popular when this genre adapted film as its new medium.

Film is a another way of telling stories because according to Petrie & Boggs (2018:3) “Film employs the compositional elements of the visual arts: line, form, mass, volume, and texture. Like the drama, film communicates visually and verbally: visually, through action and gesture; verbally, through dialogue” This implies that a film is essentially a visual representation of a written story. Unlike the traditional act of reading and mentally picturing the narrative, a film takes on the role of bringing the reader's imagination to life by incorporating various elements of the visual arts. These elements include dynamic action sequences, expressive gestures, and impactful dialogue. Through the medium of film, the audience is afforded the opportunity to witness the narrative unfold in a tangible and sensory manner, engaging with the story on a visual and auditory level. This dynamic interplay of visual and auditory stimuli not only enhances the overall storytelling experience but also provides a vivid and immersive portrayal of the

narrative, inviting the audience to connect with the story on a deeper, more sensory level.

Films have similar aspect to written literature such as novel and short story, it is the reason why film counts as a part of literature. According to Klarer (2004:56) “Film is predetermined by literary techniques; conversely, literary practice developed particular features under the impact of film” which mean that film considered as part of literature, although there are still debate between literature expert whether film is a part of literature or not, it is hard to neglect film as a literature while all seems to agree that drama is a part of literature although both drama and film share similar aspect such as both form of literature often categorized as performace art because rather than left the imagination to the reader like novel or short story, both visualize the imagination using actors as their major means of expression and brings the imagination come to life.

The film *Death on The Nile* (2022) is directed by Kenneth Branagh; this film is an adaptation of Agatha Christie's novel, which has the same title as the film. This film is also a sequel to the previous film *Murder On The Orient Express* (2007), which has the same director and adapted from the same novel author with the same title. The film *Death on The Nile* (2022) story revolves around Hercule Poirot, a famous detective, who is on a holiday in Egypt and becomes embroiled in a murder case while on a cruise along The Nile River. The film *Death on The Nile* (2022) is a very popular film, grossing over 100 million dollars worldwide according to (IMDbPro, 2023) which arguably is one of the most popular films in the detective genre. This film has won an award and several nominations such as a nominee for Academy of Science Fiction, Fantasy & Horror Films, USA, and won top box office films in ASCAP Film and Television Music Awards (*Death on The Nile* (2022) - IMDb, 2023). Similar to many other widely popular films, *Death on The Nile* (2022) generated a significant amount of response from the movie audience. Cited from a reputable film review website, IMDb, one of the critics stated that the film was beautifully filmed with stunning images and a great cast who were all wonderful in

their roles. Another critic mentioned that it was exciting to see one of the popular novel adapted into film (*Death on The Nile (2022)* - IMDb, 2023).

As mentioned earlier, there are two types of detective fiction: classical detective fiction and hard-boiled detective fiction. The distinct difference between the two genres lies in the setting where the mystery occurs. According to Cawelti (1976:140), "One of the most important aspects of the hard-boiled formula is the special role of the modern city as background." This suggests that the hard-boiled formula often features the modern city as the setting. On the other hand, classical detective fiction often portrays isolated places that separate the setting where the crime occurred from the rest of the world. Cawelti provides examples from Edgar Allan Poe's "Rue Morgue" and "The Purloined Letter." According to Cawelti (1976:96), "Both Rue Morgue and The Purloined Letter take place in two isolated settings clearly marked off from the rest of the world: Dupin's apartment and the room in which the crime takes place." This implies that, among hard-boiled detective fiction and classical detective fiction, setting is one of the most distinct factors that could determine whether a detective fiction leans towards the classical or hard-boiled style. The setting of the film *Death on The Nile (2022)* occurs on a cruise ship, as reported by IMDb (2022): "To escape Jackie, the group boards the cruise ship S.S. Karnak." This means that most parts of the film take place on a cruise ship, which is isolated from the world, similar to Poe's Rue Morgue, whose setting is Dupin's apartment which can be concluded that the film *Death on The Nile (2022)* is leaning towards classical detective rather than hard-boiled detective genre.

The purpose of this research is to examine how the film *Death on The Nile (2022)* effectively applied the classical detective formula outlined by John G. Cawelti, which was inspired by the pioneering work of Edgar Allan Poe in detective fiction and assess how the film aligns with the established conventions and patterns of action inherent to the classical detective genre. To achieve this goal, the study dives into the aspects of the classical detective formula, as explained by Cawelti, which include the situational setup, the pattern of action, the characters and their

relationships, and the specific setting. Analyzing the film scene and dialogue is an important step to show how *Death on The Nile (2022)* applied the classical detective formula formulated by John G. Cawelti. This study has one statement of the problem, which is how the film applied the classical detective formula, meaning that this study has covered all of the classical detective formula aspects available in the object of the research. Finally, this research offers insights into the popular literature formula, particularly the classical detective formula.

To support this study, researchers have found 13 previous studies relating to the classical detective formula research and *Death on The Nile (2022)* film. The first research conducted in 2021 at UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung by Nurazni, titled *The Classical Detective Formula in Agatha Christie's Murder on The Orient Express*, which the objective of this study is finding Edgar Allan Poe's classical detective formula in Agatha Christie's novel murder on the orient express, the result shows that classical detective theory presents in Agatha Christie's Murder On The Orient Express (Nurazni, 2021). This study is crucial for literary studies, especially in the detective fiction genre. It demonstrates the lasting impact of Poe's work on subsequent authors and how the formula still applied in 2017 film. The differences between Nurazni's research and the research conducted by the researcher is mainly the object; although the theory is the same, the object is from 2017, titled Murder On The Orient Express, which five years older than the object researcher conducted a study on which *Death on The Nile (2022)*.

The second study conducted in 2004 at Unika Soegijapranata by Hidayat, titled *The Classical Detective Formula of Agatha Christie's The A. B. C. Murders*, which the objective of the research focuses on finding the classical detective formula by Edgar Allan Poe in The A.B.C Murders novel by Agatha Christie. study concludes that through a detailed discussion of the situation, pattern of actions, characters relationships, and setting, which Cawelti formulates, this thesis proves that The A.B.C. Murders has a unified pattern of the classical detective story (Hidayat, 2004). The study makes important academic contributions, improves the study of literature, and is a useful resource for education and further research, especially in

the detective fiction genre. The difference between Hidayat's research and the research conducted by the researcher is mainly the object, which is a book released in 1936 by Agatha Christie. The object of Hidayat's study is a written book, which is a different form of literary work than a film, the form of works that the researcher conducted the study on.

The third study conducted in 2023 at UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung by Hamdani, titled *Classical Detective Formula in Agatha Christie's Lord Edgware Dies*, which the objective of the study is to analyze the classical detective formula theory by Cawelti which are elements of situation, pattern of action, character and setting, as well as the scheme built by a detective in solving mysteries based on detection analysis by Kayalvizhi. The result of this study concluded that the novel *Lord Edgware Dies* by Agatha Christie is categorized as a classical detective that is arranged sequentially in the faithfulness of its chapters in terms of situations or conditions, patterns of action that build the story, and settings that support each atmosphere and Detection characteristics of the problem-solving process and mystery disclosure are designed by the detective based on each character and their relationships (Hamdani, 2023). The study is important for academic literature, particularly popular literature, and it can be used for further research into popular literature. The difference between the research and the researcher's research is that this research uses Agatha Christie's novel *Lord Edgware Dies*, which was released in 1933, rather than the researcher's object, which is a film that is much more recent, which was released in 2022.

The fourth study was conducted in 2024 at Universitas Khairun by Albar, titled *The Detective Formula In "Crooked House" By Agatha Christie (Viewed From Literary Formula Theory)*. The study aims to reveal Cawelti's classical detective formula in the novel *Crooked House* and how the clue discovery phases are constructed in the novel *Crooked House* by Agatha Christie. The result of this study is that The entire story of *Crooked House* provides further understanding of the classical detective formula, and there are two phases of finding clues in this novel (ALBAR, 2024). The study is helping better understand the appliances of the

classical detective formula. The difference between the research and the research of the researcher is that this research object uses Agatha Christie's novel *Crooked House*, which was released in 1949, compared to the researcher object, which is a much more recent film released in 2022.

The fifth study, conducted in 2015 at the Universitas Gadjah Mada by Wicaksono, is titled *The Formula of the Classical Detective Story in Five Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes Stories*. The study aims to seek the formula of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's classic detective stories, which are *Silver Blaze*, *The Musgrave Ritual*, *The Adventure of Yellow Face*, *The Crooked Man*, and *The Stock-Broker's Clerk*. The result of this research study uses Cawelti's theory (Wicaksono, 2015). This study's contribution is important for further research of popular formulas, particularly John G. Cawelti's classical detective formula. The difference between this study and the researcher's study is the object. Wicaksono uses five objects from Conan Doyle's short stories, while the researcher uses more recent Kenneth Branagh's film.

The sixth study, published in 2024 at *Saksama: Jurnal Sastra*, by Sulastri and Ruminda, is titled *Crime and Clues Detective Formula In Enola Holmes 2022 Film Script*. This study aims to analyze patterns of action and the contribution of crime elements and clues as part of the pattern of action in *Enola Holmes* (2022). The study concludes that the 2022 *Enola Holmes* film uses the detective genre's typical action pattern to convey an engaging story. In order to develop the story's framework, create tension, and advance the plot, crimes and clues are crucial (Sulastri & Ruminda, 2024). This study contributed important value to the study of popular literature formulas, particularly John G. Cawelti's classical detective formula, for further studies of the popular genre. The difference between the study and the study of the researcher is the mentioned study only analyzes the crime and clues, which is one of the aspects of the classical detective formula in the recent 2022 film *Enola Holmes*, while the researcher study analyzes all of the aspects of the classical detective formula in *the Death on The Nile* (2022).

The seventh study, published in 2022 at LINGUA LITERA : Journal of English Linguistics and Literature, by Sartika, is titled *The Formula Of Agatha Christie's Detective Story, The Third-Floor Flat*. This research explains the detective formula in Agatha Christie's *The Third-Floor Flat* short story and the techniques employed to maintain the story's suspense using Cawelti's formula theory. The result of the study shows that the formulas of detective stories exist in *The Third-Floor Flat* (Sartika, 2022). The study contributes to the insight of the popular literature formula, particularly the classical detective formula, for future research. The difference between the study and the researcher's study is the object of the study. The study uses a short-story object titled *Third Floor Flat* by Agatha Christie, released in 1989, while the researcher study uses a more recent object, which is a 2022 film titled *Death on The Nile* by Kenneth Branagh.

The eighth study, conducted in 2024 at UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung by Aryani, is titled *Red Herring of Classical Detective Formula in A Haunting in Venice a movie by Kenneth Branagh*. This research aims to analyze the use of red herrings in the movie to support the classical detective formula and the effect of red herrings on the character development. The result shows that how red herring can add complexity to the film's plot, which is marked by an inquiry, suspicion of other characters, and a focus on the paranormal. Red herrings can also cause the main characters to alter, accuse one another, and become more reliant on myths (Aryani, 2024). The study contributes to the study of popular literature, mainly the classical detective formula in film works. The difference between the study and the researcher's study is the object and the focus of the study. The study uses the 2023 film by Kenneth Branagh and focuses on the red herring of the classical detective formula, while the researcher study uses the 2022 film by Kenneth Branagh and focuses on the overall aspect of the classical detective formula.

The ninth study, published at JoTELL : Journal of Teaching English, Linguistics, and Literature by Lontaan, Mametu, and Sabudu, is titled *The Detective Formula In Agatha Christie's Sleeping Murder: Miss Marple In The Last Case*. This study aims to reveal the detective formula in Agatha Christie's *Sleeping Murder: Miss*

Marple in the Last Case. The study's findings indicate that there is a detective formula that must be followed in order to organize the structure and describe the circumstances and action sequence in a detective story (Lontaan, Mamentu, & Sabudu, 2022). The study contributes to enriching the insight of classical detective formula, which is a popular literature study, and helps future research to understand the appliances of classical detective formula in classical stories. The difference between the study and the researcher's study is the object of the study. The study uses Agatha Christie's novel, released in 1976, titled *Sleeping Murder: Miss Marple In The Last Case*, while the researcher's study uses more recent works, which is a film released in 2022 by Kenneth Branagh titled *Death on The Nile*.

The tenth study, published in 2022 at Semantic Scholar by Juliani, is titled *Woman Characters In Detective Formula in Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Seven Stories of The Adventure of Sherlock Holmes*. This study aims to identify the traditional detective formula patterns seen throughout Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's seven The Adventure of Sherlock Holmes novels. The study's findings demonstrate how the formula can be used to construct the detective story and organize the seventh story in The Adventure of Sherlock Holmes. Situation, action pattern, people and relationships, and setting all contribute to the detective narrative formula. A female character in a detective narrative helps Holmes solve the case, provides information and hints, and explains what happened (Juliani, 2017). The study helps improve a better understanding of popular formula studies, particularly classical detective formulas in appliances on classical detective stories. The difference between the study and the study of the researcher is the object and the focus of the study. The study uses Conan Doyle's stories and focuses on the character aspect of the formula. In contrast, the researcher's study focuses on the overall aspect of the classical detective formula and uses more recent works, such as *Death on The Nile* (2022) by Kenneth Branagh.

The eleventh study, published in 2024 at Wanastra : Jurnal Bahasa Dan Sastra by Sabani and Istiani, is titled *The Infidelity of Using Detective Story Formula in Enola Holmes Film Adaptation*. This study compares Harry Bradbeer's 2020 film compared to

Nancy Springer's 2006 novel on Enola Holmes. The purpose of this comparison is to determine if the Enola Holmes movie's use of the detective narrative format is faithful or not, taking into account the director's inventiveness and the technical difficulties encountered throughout the adaptation process. The result of the study indicates that Enola Holmes's book fits into the traditional detective fiction model. In addition, the film adaptation falls under the category of hard-boiled detective stories. This theory is put into practice by contrasting the story's focus, the setting, and the role of women. When the novel's plot is turned into a film that appeals to commercial interests and audience satisfaction, these discrepancies result in infidelity when employing detective formulas that are meant to expand and clarify the plot and make certain things seem more realistic (Sabani & Istiani, 2024). The study contributed to a better understanding of the popular literature study and classical detective formula study by comparing the *Enola Holmes* novel and the adaptation of the *Enola Holmes* film. The difference between the study and the researcher's study is the object of the study and the focus of the study. The study uses both Nancy Springer's *Enola Holmes* novel and Harry Bradbeer's film adaptation and focuses on the comparative of the detective formula. In contrast, the study of the researcher focuses on the overall aspects of the classical detective formula and uses the 2022 film by Kenneth Branagh titled *Death on The Nile*.

The twelfth study, conducted in 2022 at the Universitas Negeri Jakarta by Ruslianti, titled *Classical Detective Story Pattern In Rick Riordan's Percy Jackson And The Olympians: The Lightning Thief*. The study aims to reveal the classical detective story pattern portrayed in a novel written by Rick Riordan, *Percy Jackson, and The Olympians; The Lightning Thief*, through the texts that are centered on Percy Jackson, the main character. The result of the study is *Percy Jackson and The Olympians; The Lightning Thief* has the classical detective story pattern proposed by John G. Cawelti, which centered on pattern action mainly introduction of detective and crime and clue (YANWAR ABIDIN, 2011). The study contributed to enriching knowledge about the application of classical detective formulas, which fall under popular literature studies. The difference between the study and the researcher's study is the object of the study. The study uses a 2005 novel by Rick Riordan titled *Percy Jackson and The Olympians; The Lightning Thief*, while the

researcher's study uses much more recent works released in 2022, a film by Kenneth Branagh titled *Death on The Nile*.

The thirteenth study conducted in 2023 at Arabian Gulf University by Sahar Hamzah, titled *Symmetry and Centrality as Power: The Use of Mise-en-scène to Create Power in Sir Kenneth Branagh's Murder on the Orient Express and Death on The Nile* which the objective of the research is to find elements of mise-en-scène to convey the sense of power or powerlessness of his characters and their control in a given situation in two of the Kenneth Branagh's film which is *Murder On The Orient Express (2017)* and *Death on The Nile (2022)*. The result of this study could be concluded that Branagh uses mise-en-scène to convey this to his audiences (Hamzah, 2023). Hamzah's study makes a significant contribution to the field of film studies by focusing on how mise-en-scène elements are used to convey power dynamics. This analysis enriches the academic discussion on visual storytelling techniques. The difference between Hamzah's research and the research conducted by the researcher is the theory used in the study, but the object is the same. Hamzah's study conducted in 2023 used a film theory, particularly the mise-en-scène theory, to explain the subliminal meaning that was not directly conveyed in the film.

1.2 Statement of Problem

The title of this research is "*Classical Detective Formula Kenneth Branagh's Death on The Nile (2022)*" which researcher analyze the elements in the film that relevant to the classical detective formula pioneered by Edgar Allan Poe and formulated by Cawelti. Based on the background of research above, the following question were formulated:

1. How are the aspects of the classical detective formula applied to the Kenneth Branagh's film *Death on The Nile (2022)*?

1.3 Research Objective

This study of the research is intended to explore students enhancement regarding to the research, as follows:

1. To find out and understand the formula of classical detective fiction works in *Death on The Nile* film

1.4 Research Significance

Based on the research background, this research is expected to provide insight and scientific contribution to literary studies, especially genre formula studies. Theoretically and practically, there are benefits that can be obtained from the results of this research. Theoretically, with this research, researchers gained experience in analyzing the classical detective genre formula. This research is expected to enrich the study of popular films, especially in analyzing the formula in the detective fiction genre. Practically, the benefit of this research is to provide knowledge about the detective genre formula used in *Death on The Nile (2023)* according to Cawelti theory.

1.5 Definition of Key Terms

To avoid any misunderstandings about their usage, some key terms used in this research are listed below.

1. Formula: In literature, the term "formula" refers to a recurring pattern or conventional structure used in creating literary works. This includes elements like plot, character types, themes, and stylistic features that are often repeated across various works within a specific genre or tradition.
2. Detective fiction: Detective fiction is a genre of literature that centers around the investigation of a crime, usually a murder, by a detective. This genre often involves the process of solving a mystery by gathering clues, interviewing suspects, and piecing together evidence to identify the perpetrator and understand the motive behind the crime. The narrative typically follows a structure where the detective works through a series of challenges to uncover the truth.
3. Film: Film can be defined as a narrative medium that tells stories through a combination of visual images and sounds. This form of

storytelling is distinct from written literature, which relies solely on text.

