

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses six components as the introduction to this research. The components are background of research, statement of the problems, research purpose, research significance, and organization of writing.

1.1. Background of research

Spirituality is an essential aspect of human life. Spirituality is understood as something transcendent and directed toward the research for meaning and understanding of life (Wahyuni&Barriyah, 2019)¹. it is not only related to belief in God pr religious practices, but also to inner awareness, human values, and meaningful relationship with others, including between children and their parents. Within the context family, spirituality serves as the foundation for love, sacrifice, and hope. A parent-child relationship based on spiritual values fosters empathy, understanding, and inner strength in facing life's various challenges. In everyday life, spirituality can become a moral and emotional force that helps individuals cope with suffering, loss, and major changes. In the context of family relationship, spirituality plays a vital role in building a strong bond between children and parents.² The relational spirituality framework developed by Annette Mahoney views spirituality not only as related to formal religious practices, but more importantly as manifested through relationships among family members and in everyday life.³ This relationship is not merely biological, it also involves the exchanges of values, teachings, and examples the shape a child's character and

¹ Wahyuni, E. N., & Barriyah, K. (2019). Apakah Spiritualitas berkontribusi terhadap kesehatan mental mahasiswa? Jurnal EDUCATIO, 5 (1), 46–53.

² Hasanah, M., Ahmad Iwan Zunaih Iwan Zunaih, & Nasihin Nasihin. (2025). The Role of Spirituality Among PKH Mothers in Strengthening Family Psychological Resilience Amidst Local Socio-Cultural Pressure. *AL-MURABBI: Jurnal Studi Kependidikan Dan Keislaman*, 12, 52.

³ Mahoney, A. (2011, November 17). *Religion in families 1999 to 2009: A relational spirituality framework*. J Marriage Fam .

personality. Values such as love, sacrifice, and hope form part of the spiritual learning process within the family. When these values weaken, emotional distance may arise between parents and children, affecting the child's personality and moral development. Therefore, the relationship between parents and children can be seen as the most tangible reflection of spiritual practice in human life. In the modern era, many families face great challenges in maintaining harmony and emotional closeness between parents and children. Busyness, social pressure, and the dominance of technology often reduce communication and emotional interaction within the family. As a result, spiritual values such as empathy, patience, and trust become increasingly difficult to preserve. In light of this condition, mass media, especially films, play an important role in reintroducing and conveying the fading values of humanity and spirituality.⁴

As time progresses, various forms of media have become means to express spiritual values, one of which is film. A film is not merely a form of entertainment, but also a medium for representing culture and the moral values that exist within society.⁵ Through its narrative, dialogue, character expressions, color choices, and cinematographic technique, a film can convey spiritual messages that touch the audience's emotions and awareness. The representation of spirituality in film is often portrayed through inner conflict, sacrifice, and a character's struggle to understand the meaning of love, forgiveness, and faith. Therefore, analyzing films from a spiritual perspective can provide a deeper understanding of how they depict and internalize human values. (S. Swenson, 2007). Animated films interpret spiritual values because their visual and narrative medium is able to convey moral messages, emotions, and inner meanings through symbolic expressions that are

⁴ Suryani, I., Fatiha, P. A., Salsa, N. H., Rizqiah, N., Rahmadani, S., Sari, V., & Hakiki, M. (2025). Dampak Teknologi Komunikasi Terhadap Komunikasi Keluarga. *AL-MIKRAJ Jurnal Studi Islam Dan Humaniora*, 5, 900–913.

⁵ Khaerani, L. (2025). Pesan Moral Dari Film Miracle In Cell No 7 Versi Indonesia: Analisis Semiotika. *Socius: Jurnal Penelitian Ilmu-Ilmu Sosial*, 2, 161–170.

easy to understand. In addition, animation can present magical and metaphorical elements that effectively represent the spiritual journey of human beings.

One of the films to be analyzed is *Raya and the Last Dragon* (2021) by Walt Disney Animation, which powerful spiritual values. This film not only depicts a fantasy adventure story but also explores the emotional and spiritual relationship between children and parents. At the beginning of the film, audiences are shown how Chief Benja instills spiritual values in Raya, emphasizing the importance of trusting others, remaining loyal to one's family, and making sacrifices for the greater good. After the tragic event that turns her father into stone, Raya embarks on a long and arduous journey to restore unity in her broken land while also rebuilding her faith in humanity. Raya fights strongly for her father because she has a deeply emotional bond and a sense of responsibility to fulfill his hope of restoring harmony to the world. Throughout this journey, spiritual values such as love, sacrifice, and hope serve as the foundation for Raya's character development and inner growth. The relationship between Raya and Chief Benja becomes the core of spirituality in this film. Through their bond, audiences can see how spiritual values are passed down from parents to child and then tested through life's experiences.

A powerful message is delivered technically through cinematic elements, emotional, and intense dramatic moments that reinforce meaning. In addition, the use of color, character expressions, and escalating conflict help the audience feel the depth of the message being conveyed. The spiritual values in this film are conveyed not only through dialogue but also through powerful of cinematic elements. For instance, the use of warm lighting when Chief Benja embraces Raya signifies the warmth of parental love. The recurring presence of blue hues during scenes featuring the water dragon Sisu symbolizes calmness and hope. Meanwhile, the moment when white light surrounds Raya as the forgiveness Namaari represents enlightenment and purity of heart. All these visual serve as a cinematic elements that represents spirituality within the parent-child relationship. In addition, changes in facial express, camera movements, and the gentle blending of music also function as visual tolls the reinforce the film's spiritual messages.

Several previous studies have explored themes of education or moral values in the film *Raya and the Last Dragon*, yet there remains a research gap that has not been addressed. Luka Isabillah's (2022) study focused on character education values for elementary school students but did not discuss the spiritual relationship between a child and a father, nor how it is visualized in the film. Meanwhile, Nurul Anjani Fiena's (2024) examined the value of tolerance in *Raya and the Last Dragon* for early childhood audiences, but her research did not specify the techniques used to visualize those values. Anak Agung Sagung Sonia Sarwindah and Lambok Hermanto Sihombing's (2022), their research focused on the representation of iconic in Southeast Asia in the movie *Raya and the Last Dragon*. But their did not discuss about representation spirituality relationship between parents and child. Muflikhah Ulya and Muhammad Altaf Rezaian's (2022), their research discuss about multicultural education in film *Raya and the Last Dragon*, but in their paper did not discuss about spirituality in parent-child relationship. Lupi Nuryani, Adip Arifin, and Ratri Harida's (2023), their research focused on moral message in *Raya and the Last Dragon*, but their research did not focused on spiritual relationship between parents and child.

Based on these findings, this research differs fundamentally and aims to fill the gap left by previous studies. This study is substantially distinct because it focuses on the dimension of spirituality woven into the relationship between a parent and a child. The aspect of spirituality in *Raya and the Last Dragon* is not only expressed through the inner experiences and emotional journey of the main character, Raya, as she strives to understand the teachings of her father. Furthermore, this study highlights how the film's cinematic elements, such as the use of color, lighting, camera movement, camera angle, and framing play a crucial role in constructing and strengthening the spiritual meaning behind each scene. By combining an analysis of spiritual relationship with a visual analysis, this research aims to provide a deeper understanding of how the film conveys spiritual values through cinematic language, thereby broadening the scope of animated film studies

not merely as entertainment, but also as a medium for spiritual reflection and character education.

The urgency of this research lies in the important of understanding how films can portray and instill spiritual values within family relationship. In modern society, often characterized by individualism and busyness, the emotional closeness and spiritual meaning between parents and children are frequently diminished. Through the study of the film *Raya and the Last Dragon*, the researcher aims to reveal how spirituality is represented through the relationship between Raya and Chief Benja, and how the film's visualization techniques reinforce these messages. Moreover, the urgency this research also stems from the fact that film, as a popular medium, holds great power in shaping the perceptions and values of its viewer, especially the younger generation. Through its visual, narrative, and emotional elements, film can provide an indirect spiritual experience that resonates deeply with audience's inner awareness. *Raya and the Last Dragon* serves as an intriguing example of how spiritual messages such as trust, sacrifice, and acceptance can be subtly yet profoundly expressed through the interactions between Raya and her father Chief Benja. By understanding these representations, this study is expected to broaden the perspective that film is not merely a form of entertainment, but also a reflective medium that imparts moral and spiritual values particularly about love, trust, and the mutually strengthening relationship between parents and children.

Thus, this research is expected to provide a deeper understanding of the representation of spirituality in film, particularly in the context of the parents-child relationship, while also demonstrating how popular media such as film can serve as a medium for reflecting universal human values. In addition, this study contributes to film research within the fields film studies, specifically by examining how visualization techniques can serve as a means of conveying profound spiritual meaning.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

This study examines the representation of spiritual values in the relationship between parent and child as depicted in the film *Raya and the Last Dragon*. This research focuses on how attention to the emotional and spiritual dynamics between the characters Raya and Chief Benja becomes the foundation that shapes the journey of the main character and the life values conveyed through the storyline.

The main issue in this research lies in understanding how spiritual values are represented in the parent-child relationship within the film, particularly through actions, dialogue, and conflicts that emerge throughout the storyline. In addition, this study seeks to answer how the film's cinematic elements including lighting, color symbolism, framing, and other cinematic elements contribute to reinforcing the delivery of the spiritual values portrayed.

Based on the research background described above, the statement of problem the following research questions:

1. How are the spiritual values represented in the parent-child relationship of *Raya and the Last Dragon*?
2. How do the cinematic elements of *Raya and the Last Dragon* strengthen the meaning of spirituality in the parent-child relationship?

1.3. Research Purpose

In relation to the statement of problem above, this study aims to describe and explain the following:

1. To describe and analyze the spiritual values represented in the relationship between parent-child of the film *Raya and the Last Dragon* through cinematic elements.
2. To explain how the cinematic elements of *Raya and the Last Dragon* reinforce the spiritual meaning in the parent-child relationship.

1.4. Research Significances

The results of this study are expected to provide both theoretical and practical contributions to the development of film studies, the study of spiritual values, and research on parent-child relationships. Through an analysis of the film *Raya and the Last Dragon*, this research seeks to offer a deeper understanding of how popular media such as film can represent spiritual and emotional values that are relevant to everyday life. Theoretically, this research is expected to provide scientific insight in the fields of film and communication studies, particularly in understanding how aspects of spirituality can be represented through visual and narrative elements. This study also broadens the perspective on how the parent-child relationship in film can serve as a reflection of universal humanistic and moral values.

In addition, this research can serve as a supplementary reference for future researchers who wish to study film from spiritual, emotional, or aesthetic perspective, particularly within the context of family and interpersonal relationship. Thus, the results of this study are expected to strengthen the understanding that film is not merely of learning and reflecting upon the inner values of humanity

Practically, the findings of this research are expected to foster a deeper public and audience understanding that animated films like *Raya and the Last Dragon* embed spiritual values suitable for meaningful reflection and life lessons. Moreover, this study aims to guide educators, parents, and educational institutions in leveraging films as tools for character development and enhancing family emotional connections. Additionally, the results are anticipated to motivate filmmakers and directors to more thoughtfully integrate spiritual values through compelling and emotionally resonant cinematic elements.

This research provides a valuable experience in deepening the understanding of spiritual values within the parent-child relationship as portrayed visually in the film *Raya and the Last Dragon*, while also serving as a meaningful

contribution to the development of English Literature studies, particularly in the field of film analysis.

1.5. Organization of Writing

In compiling this research, the researcher made a systematic description of the writing that would describe the contents of each chapter in this research. There are five chapters in the research, including introduction, theoretical framework, research design, findings and discussions, and the last is conclusions and suggestions. The introduction is in the first chapter and discusses six components as the introduction to this research. The components are research background, statement of the problem, research purpose, research significance, and definition of key terms. Next, chapter two, with the subtitle of theoretical frameworks, this chapter provides some main discussion of theoretical frameworks. This chapter contains the components that will be the main discussion in this study, namely film studies, representation, spirituality in parent-child relationship, and cinematic elements.

Chapter three, with subtitle research design discusses the method of the present research. Research methodology provides the research design, the source of data, the sample of data, the technique of collecting data, and the technique of analyzing data. Chapter four, findings and discussions contains responses to the research questions presents in chapter one. This section presents an analysis that is segmented into two sessions. The first is about the spiritual values represented in the relationship between parent-child of the film *Raya and the Last Dragon* through cinematic elements and explain how the cinematic elements of *Raya and the Last Dragon* reinforce the spiritual meaning in the parent-child relationship.

The last chapter, Chapter five, conclusions and suggestions, provides the research's important points, including the conclusion of the result of the analysis of spiritual values represented in the relationship between parent-child of the film *Raya and the Last Dragon* through cinematic elements and explain how the cinematic elements of *Raya and the Last Dragon* reinforce the spiritual meaning in the parent-child relationship. The conclusion section reports an integrated

understanding of the entire result of the research. Suggestions are directed to anyone who considers this study essential for them to analyze spiritual values represented in the relationship between parent-child of the film *Raya and the Last Dragon* through cinematic elements.

