

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with introduction that consist of background of the study, problems of study, objectives of study, and significance of study.

1.1 Research Background

Literature according to Sarangi (2021) is the expression of human personality in the form of experiences, thoughts, feelings, ideas, enthusiasm, and beliefs in the form of concrete images that evoke charm with language tools. One example that we can see as a form of experience, thoughts, feelings, ideas, passion, and beliefs from the literary form is the movie *Laskar Pelangi* by Andrea Hirata. Where the work is the author's own experience who tries to pour his thoughts about the importance of education, which is filled with a variety of emotions ranging from joy, hope, and sadness, to disappointment. He also carries the main idea that education is the key to changing one's fate and every child deserves the same opportunity, where the unyielding spirit of the children is shown. This is what gives the author's confidence to change his life and dreams with all efforts and perseverance. *Laskar Pelangi* is one example of the variety of literary works, which shows that literature produced by every human being will have differences in experiences, thoughts, ideas, and others which then produce diverse literary works. This diversity is what causes literature to have a variety of themes. The theme itself is the main discussion told in a literary work. There are various themes in literary works, one of which will be discussed in this study, namely literary works with themes about how the social life of society.

As most people know, literature is a work that is closely related to society because it can be used as a means of entertainment in life. Widyastira (2021: 46) says the film is one of the most popular literary works today. Maybe not only the researcher agrees with this opinion but the public. This is because films have many fans because films have broad communication appeal by displaying visuals that are

pleasing to the eye. Films themselves can be said to be literary works because films are a new generation of text. Sudarisman (2016: 243) films have a dynamic nature which automatically makes them a cultural agent like other literary genres which convey symbolic messages but use visual language. From that statement, researcher understand that film has the same characteristics as other literary genres, namely that it is dynamic, meaning that it continues to develop and can change over time. Films are not only used as entertainment but as a means to convey the messages or meanings contained therein, using visual language, such as images, colors, and others. This is what can prove that film is a form of literary work.

The films currently available are a form of literary work that emerged along with the development of an increasingly modern society which has many functions. According to Wulandari (2019: 82), the presence of films in society can be seen as an effective communication medium for spreading ideas and concepts, as a medium for artistic expression in expressing creativity, and as a cultural medium that depicts human life and the personality of a nation. Agreeing with this, the researcher also feels that the presence of films in society functions as a communication medium, where films channel ideas and concepts that can become a new forum for us to witness cultural diversity which then gives us a broader understanding of many things, such as the image or reflection of human life.

Films can not only be used as a medium to pamper the eyes with their visuals, but in fact, they also provide information that can educate the audience. According to Nur (2013: 2) films are an actualization of the development of society during its time. From this opinion, researcher can understand that films are a reflection of the social reality of society at the time the film was made. Apart from that, there is another opinion that supports it, namely that based on Hamdane (2022: 2) films are a depiction of historical and cultural processes in a society. From these two opinions, researcher can understand that films are a reflection of the social reality of a society at a certain time, where films record historical events or important events, show the development of society at a certain time, and reflect the portrait of society's life from time to time.

From this opinion, it can be seen that films provide various information that can educate the audience, one of which is showing how people live through portraits of their diverse lives. One example of a film that attracts researcher which presents the portrait of life is the film *Raya and The Last Dragon*. The portrait of life in *Raya and The Last Dragon* is the portrait of life inspired by life in Southeast Asian countries. *Raya and The Last Dragon* is a film produced by Walt Disney Animation Studios. This film was directed by Don Hall and Carlos Lopes Estrada and the screenplay was written by Qui Nguyen and Adele Lim. This film was produced by Walt Disney Animation Studios and was the first Disney animated film to portrait of life with a Southeast Asian background as its inspiration.

This 1 hour 47 minute long film has been in development since 2018 until it was finally officially released in 2021. In the making of the film *Raya and The Last Dragon*, the author carried out research in several countries in the Southeast Asia region including Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, Singapore, Laos and Myanmar. Apart from that, some Asian people are part of the voice acting in this film, as said by Fathanah (2022: 55) where the main role of Raya is played by Kelly Marie Tran who is of Vietnamese descent, and Awkwafina as the voice of Sisu who is of Singaporean citizenship. The researcher understands that the film *Raya and The Last Dragon* not only presents the portrait of life that uses Southeast Asia as its inspiration, but it also includes actresses who are Southeast Asian citizens.

The film *Raya and The Last Dragon* is an animated adventure genre film wrapped in fantasy, where the film *Raya and The Last Dragon* tells the life of a female warrior named Raya in a fantasy land called *Kumandra*. According to Nugroho (2005: 7) the name Raya itself is interpreted as "big, strong, enduring, glorious, or majestic. Based on this meaning, according to researcher, the meaning of Raya itself reflects the character of Raya in the film where Raya is depicted as a strong and tough woman who goes on an adventure to find the last dragon and save her country called *Kumandra*.

In the film *Raya and The Last Dragon*, *Kumandra* is a combination of several lands that lived peacefully side by side with dragons until they were finally divided after the arrival of a dangerous plague in the form of purplish black which could turn everything in its path into stone. *Kumandra* is divided into five parts, namely fang, heart, spine, tail, and talon. They became hostile and wanted to seize a gem which was the aid of the last dragon in the hands of the heart country. The last dragon jewel kept in the land of heart is always the center of attention in other countries because it is considered to bring blessings. Until finally the gem broke as a result of the struggle between these countries and caused it to break into several pieces. The breaking of the last dragon jewel known as the Sisu spirit caused Chief Benja, who is Raya's father, to become a rock in this incident. This is what inspired Raya to return her father and *Kumandra* to their original state. Raya is always accompanied by her pet a giant pill insect named *Tuktuk*. *Tuktuk* accompanies Raya on a journey to find the last dragon named Sisu to overcome a dangerous plague caused by clouds of purplish black smoke called *Druun*. With the help of a dragon named Sisu, Raya can complete her mission to eradicate the *Druun* plague in the land she loves and return her father.

The film *Raya and The Last Dragon* presents the portrait of the lives of Southeast Asian people who were the inspiration for its making. This is in line with the opinion of Mr. Agoes Koecing, an Indonesian arts and culture activist as well as a visual communication design expert and teacher who stated in Sutanto (2022: 90) that the film *Raya and The Last Dragon* uses the spirit of Southeast Asian culture to create a new culture as the basis for the film. The researcher also has the same opinion as Mr. Agoes Koecing, this is because the visual appearance of this film contains the portrait of life in Southeast Asia, both in terms of lifestyle and efforts to preserve culture.

Apart from that, the film *Raya and The Last Dragon* was nominated for various awards such as the Academy Award for Best Animated Feature, Best Edited Animated Feature Film, Best Motion Picture, Outstanding Animated Motion Picture, and many more. So, seeing the many awards for which the film *Raya and The Last Dragon* was nominated was one of the reasons I chose this film as a

research object to open the door and explore more of the advantages that made it enter the various nominations.

Apart from getting various achievements, the film *Raya and The Last Dragon* also received various positive comments or reviews which the author listed on a website called IMDB (Internet Movie Database) which is related to the film *Raya and The Last Dragon*, including from *Saya_Ailurophile* on December 15 2022 which states "One of the best advances Disney ever adopted was moving from making its daughters damsels in distress (Aurora, Snow White, Cinderella) to proactive heroes who determine their own fates (Merida, Moana, Mulan) now that is Girl Power. Despite the caveats above, an equally important bold effort is to provide a glimpse of a particular culture to a wide audience (even if that culture is generalized to the point of not being immediately identifiable). This may be a happening piece of food, but these media giants are making progress toward betterment, and becoming Something More for everyone who might watch their content. With this in mind, 'Raya' is a broad overview of where we are: highlighting landscapes, cultures and societies that reflect (in one way or another) Southeast Asia, and featuring actors of Asian heritage". Then a review from *Madanmarwah* on March 7 2022 which said "Another brilliant animated film that is truly engaging and can please audiences of all age groups. The film is set in Asia and the antagonist is Raya, a warrior princess whose mission is to bring back the dragon jewel which will then help revive her father who had been turned into a stone statue by an evil spirit", as well as from the *Burung Nyanyian Kecil* on February 23, 2023 who opined "We also really appreciate how Disney has become more diverse over the years, with more exploration of different cultures (as 'Raya and the Last Dragon' did in Southeast Asia) which has broadened their horizons". From these reviews, it can be seen that there is a connection between the portrait of life in a society through the films *Raya and The Last Dragon*, which shows the portrait of life in Southeast Asian society.

Apart from the film *Raya and The Last Dragon*, there is also a film that equally depicts the lives of Southeast Asian people, especially in Indonesia, namely the film *Ngeri Ngeri Sedap*. The film *Ngeri Ngeri Sedap* can be used as a comparison with

the films *Raya and The Last Dragon* because the two films both have related backgrounds. The film *Ngeri Ngeri Sedap* is a family film wrapped in comedy which will be released in 2022, directed by Bene Dion Rajagukguk. This film presents a very rich portrait of life with a *Batak* cultural background which was successfully included in various nominations such as Favorite Film, Best Film, Best Long Story Film, and succeeded in becoming the film chosen to represent Indonesia at the 2023 Oscars. *Ngeri Ngeri Sedap* tells the story of Pak Domu's family which consists of Pak Domu, Mak Domu, and four children, namely Domu Purba as the first child, Sarma E. Purba as the only daughter in the family, Gabe Purba, Sahat Purba where their family is very uphold *Batak* customs and culture. This film tells the story of various conflicts that occur in the family, starting from the conflict where Mak Domu was ordered to pretend that she was going to divorce Pak Domu so that their children were left abroad and immediately returned to their village so they could carry out traditional events for Pak Domu's parents. Apart from that, another conflict also occurred between Mr. Domu and his children, where it was seen that Mr. Domu, who was a stubborn father who could not accept other people's opinions, was very dominant in determining decisions in his family. So that their children do not have the freedom to determine their own life goals. This also happens because several reasons such as the opinion of Nurholis (2023: 194) who believes that social and cultural norms influence the role of the family and also influences the characters in facing conflicts and making decisions. These conditions influence the opinion of the head of the family to be respected and obeyed.

These conflicts between Mr Domu and his children are seen in the first child, namely Domu Purba, where Mr Domu thinks that as the first child, he must understand *Batak* culture, and he must marry a woman who is also of *Batak* descent because Mr Domu assumes that if the women are not from *Batak* descent, the woman doesn't know *Batak* customs. Meanwhile, at that time Domu wanted to marry a woman of Sundanese descent. Furthermore, the second child, Sarma as the only daughter, couldn't do much because of Mr. Domu's high power as a father and man, making Sarma have to bury her dream of attending a cooking school in *Bali* even though she had actually been accepted there but she had to obey her father to

work with a clear job. Apart from that, she was forced to break up with her boyfriend when her father found out that her boyfriend was Javanese. The next conflict is with the third child, namely Gabe. Gabe is a law graduate who should have become a prosecutor or judge but he chose to become a comedian in the capital. Even though Gabe is a successful comedian, Mr Domu is still against this because he doesn't agree with this profession which he considers unclear. Lastly, Sahat, in *Batak* culture, the last child has to stay at home and look after his parents, but Sahat instead chose to live in Yogyakarta with Pak Pomo, an old man who was Sahat's place of residence while carrying out real-work study.

Behind these conflicts, the film *Ngeri Ngeri Sedap* presents a picture of traditional life and culture inspired by the strong *Batak* cultural background. So the two films *Raya and The Last Dragon* and *Ngeri Ngeri Sedap* are suitable for comparison because they both present the portrait of life inspired by related backgrounds.

The film *Ngeri Ngeri Sedap* also received various good reviews from the audience, including from *Ytharumta* on 2 June 2022 which stated "Every detail and storyline made for this film is based on the true story of most Indonesian families, especially *Batak* families. In this film, Bene Dion turns several comedians into actors and turns actors into comedians. As a film connoisseur, this film proves that Bene Dion is a genius director and writer." Then there is from *Canisthya* on 8 October 2022 which says "There's a lot of hype about this film on social media so I give it a go once it's on Netflix. I am not a Bataknese but I can understand the jokes and even learn a lot about *Batak* culture. I really enjoyed and felt immersed with the culture and watched as the story unfolds around it. The director did a very good job telling the story while showing the beautiful scenery around the characters' hometown and the family customs. It surely is a homage to Indonesia's rich nature and culture", as well as from *Nottfreyja* on 13 June 2022 which said "Story about *Batak* Culture intertwined with modern timeline. It's absolutely astonishing, Bene Dion is really able to direct the whole film from laugh, to serious, then laugh again, with heartwarming feelings about family. Perfect movie flow, amazing panoramic view of Toba, combined with *Batak's* art, seasoned with some light jokes. I don't

expect a lot from Indonesian Movies, but this one is really above my expectations, hats off to "Ngeri - Ngeri Sedap". These reviews provide support for the connection between the portrait of life through the film depicted in the film *Ngeri Ngeri Sedap*.

From the descriptions of the two films, it can be seen that there are similarities in the films *Raya and The Last Dragon* and *Ngeri Ngeri Sedap* so these two literary works can be researched using comparative literature to find similarities between each other. Comparative Literature according to Supriadin (2015: 265) is a comparative study of two or more literary works from two different countries or two different regions with the aim of understanding the process of creation or development of a country's literature by studying fields of science such as philosophy, history, social sciences, religion, and other art forms. Supriadin's opinion can be understood by researcher that comparative literature is a study by comparing two literary works or better in different countries or regions where this comparative literature can even go beyond national boundaries to gain an understanding of the literary work so that the object of study in this comparative literature become wider. This opinion is also in line with the opinion according to Damono in Mardhatillah (2023: 3) which states that comparative literature is an approach in literary science that does not produce its own theory. This approach focuses on comparisons of literary works in various countries and studies of the relationship between literature and other fields of science and belief such as art, philosophy, history, social science, religion, etc. From these two opinions, researcher can understand that comparative literature is an approach in literary science by comparing two or more literary works from various regions to countries and has a broad object of study.

There are several provisions in comparing literature with comparative literature, for example, according to Damono through Murtadho (2022: 3), comparative literature contains two important elements, firstly, literature must be compared with literature, and secondly, literature can be compared with art, and can even be compared with other scientific disciplines. Comparative literature does not only cover one field of study but is a comprehensive view of literature, culture as a whole, etc. Not much different from Damono's statement, Hosilos in Khudori

(2018: 7) also states that the concept of studying comparative literature also refers to two things, the first is studying comparisons between the literary works of one author and another authors who live in two different countries and the second is comparative literature which studies comparisons between literary works and other works of art, such as painting, music and other arts, can even be compared with other fields of science and belief or outside the field of literature. From these two theories, researcher understand that literary comparisons can be made between two or more literary works and these literary works can come from different countries and the scope of the study is broad and not limited. Based on these two understandings, it is proven that researcher is allowed to compare the films *Raya and The Last Dragon* and *Ngeri Ngeri Sedap* even though they come from different countries, where *Raya and The Last Dragon* comes from the United States while *Ngeri Ngeri Sedap* comes from Indonesia.

The two films are similar, namely in the portrait of life contained in the two films *Raya and The Last Dragon* and *Ngeri Ngeri Sedap*. Given the similarities between each other, the researcher is interested in researching the two films using literary studies, namely comparative literary studies.

Apart from that, these two films have significant differences namely in terms of genre, where the film *Raya and The Last Dragon* is a fantasy film genre while the film *Ngeri Ngeri Sedap* is a drama genre. However, in comparative literature, even though these two films have different genres, they can still be compared. This is based on the theory of Francois Jost (1974) in his book named *Introduction To Comparative Literature* who classifies comparative literature investigations in the book *Introduction to Comparative Literature*, namely (1) relations: analogies and influences, (2) movements and trends, (3) genres and forms, (4) motifs, types, themes. In this opinion, it is argued that comparing literary works with different genres and forms is not a problem in comparative literature and this is permissible. This is appropriate when applied to the two films that are the focus of the researcher, both of which have different genres. This is also supported by Dryden's opinion in the book *Introduction to Comparative Literature* in Wubbels (2012: 9) states his work includes essays on genres such as satire, drama, and philosophical and epic

poetry as well as essays on parallels between poetry and painting. From this opinion, the author understands that literary works with different genres can also be compared, as written in the final sentence where Dryden states the parallels between poetry and painting.

There are several previous studies that are related to the research that is the focus of the researchers in this proposal. The first previous research was research from Isma Fathanah entitled *Raya and The Last Dragon: Representation of Southeast Asian Culture in Film*. This research uses a descriptive qualitative method that represents Southeast Asian culture which is depicted through physical characters, clothing, food, environment, architectural buildings, weapons, and cultural products that characterize cultures in Southeast Asian regions such as Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, Philippines, Myanmar, and Laos.

The second previous research was research from Jessica Laurent entitled *Representation of Batak Culture in the Film Ngeri Ngeri Sedap*. This research uses a qualitative method with John Fiske's semiotic analysis which succeeded in identifying the existence of *Batak* culture that appears in the film *Ngeri Ngeri Sedap*, including the culture of *Batak* people who encourage their children to marry fellow *Batak*'s, the culture of youngest children or the smallest children who are required to marry each other taking care of his parents in his hometown and not being allowed to go abroad because he will be the heir to the inheritance from his parents, next is the *Sulang Sulang Pahompu* event which is a traditional party held on wedding days, then the appearance of one of the cultural products The famous *Batak* specialty is a typical *Batak* cloth called *Ulos*, so there is a custom of picking up your partner (wife) when she returns to her parents house. If the husband wants to ask his wife to return, the husband must come with his entire family to discuss this matter amicably.

The latest previous research was research from Shienny Megawati Sutanto entitled *Southeast Asian Visual Culture In The Animated Film "Raya And The Last Dragon*. This research uses a qualitative approach with semiotic analysis methods and is supported by the results of interviews with cultural experts. The results of

this research show that there are visual signs of Southeast Asian culture which can be seen from characterization, and character visualization, to posters which are used as promotional media for the film *Raya and The Last Dragon*.

The focus of the previous research is similar to this research, namely regarding the representation of Southeast Asia as depicted in the film *Raya and The Last Dragon* or the film *Ngeri Ngeri Sedap*. However, in this study, researcher tried to compare the two films, not just analyze one film. Where researcher tries to relate the similarities between the two films *Raya and The Last Dragon* and *Ngeri Ngeri Sedap* which represent the typical characteristics of the portrait of Southeast Asia in the two films. So this research can increase insight and knowledge regarding the characteristics of Southeast Asia so that other people can better appreciate or understand what is characteristic of Southeast Asia through these two films from different countries.

These two films will be analyzed by categorizing them into several parts based on Kluckhohn (1953: 508) who states that there are seven elements depicted in the portrait of life in society, namely language, knowledge system, social organization system, living equipment system and technology, economic systems and livelihoods, religion, and arts.

1.2 Research Questions

Based on the background above, the problems to be studied in this research can be formulated as follows to be studied in this study as follows.

- a. What is the theme raised in the films *Raya and The Last Dragon* and *Ngeri Ngeri Sedap*?
- b. How is the portrait of life in the films *Raya and The Last Dragon* and *Ngeri Ngeri Sedap*?

1.3 Research Objectives

Based on the research question above, the objectives to be achieved in this study are as follows.

- a. To analyze what is the theme raised in the films *Raya and The Last Dragon* and *Ngeri Ngeri Sedap*.
- b. To find out how the portrait of life in the films *Raya and The Last Dragon* and *Ngeri Ngeri Sedap*.

1.4 Research Significance

Regarding the significance of this research, it is divided into two types, namely theoretically and practically significance.

1. Theoretically, it is hoped that the results of this research can provide intercultural understanding. Through this film analysis, this research can provide more understanding of how the characteristics of portrait of life in a country or region. Where through the portrait of life can provide an understanding of a country or region through the diversity of its life images.

2. Practically, this research results can be used as a reference for further research related to life images. Researcher also hope that this research can be a reference to be able to develop further research related to life images through movies.

1.5 Definition of Key Terms

To avoid any misunderstandings in this research, in this section the author will display several key terms contained in this research. The following is a brief explanation to emphasize the meaning of the terms in this research.

- **Portrait of life in film** : films are a reflection of the social reality of a society at a certain time, where films record historical events or important events, show the development of society at a certain time, and reflect the portrait of society's life from time to time (Nur, 2013: 2)
- **Comparative literature** : Damono in Mardhatillah (2023: 3) states that comparative literature is an approach in literary science that does not

produce its own theory. This approach focuses on comparisons of literary works in various countries and studies of the relationship between literature and other fields of science and belief such as art, philosophy, history, social science, religion, etc.

- **Kluckhohn theory** : Kluckhohn (1953: 508) states that there are seven elements of culture that depicted in the portrait of life in society, namely language, knowledge system, social organization system, living equipment system and technology, economic systems and livelihoods, religion, and arts.

