FROM WARRIORS TO UNITY: ANALYSING FANTASY FORMULA IN *RAYA AND THE LAST DRAGON (2011)*

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Abstract

This research aims to analyze the conflict formula in *Raya and The Last Dragon*, directed by Carlos López Estrada and Don Hall. The film portrays the story of Raya, a female warrior in a country abundant with animals and a unique mode of transportation called Tuktuk, before it turns dystopian. The scenes from the film represent the cultural diversity of Southeast Asia. The research method employs a descriptive quantitative approach, analysing data and sources through the intrinsic elements of the film. Data collection techniques include documentation techniques, such as films and literary observations, and interactive techniques, such as data reduction, data presentation, and data collection. The researchers applies literary theory to comprehend the literary systematics in films. The findings of this study reveal that *Raya and The Last Dragon* presents Kumandra as a country that exemplifies Southeast Asian civilization, aiming to demonstrate tolerance, resilience, acceptance, and unity.
Keywords: *Raya and The Last Dragon*, Fantasy, Animation

INTRODUCTION

Since it is well recognized that literature represents society as a whole, literature is seen as a reflection of the culture of its time. Literature is seen as a written product with artistic merit and enduring significance. The two most crucial components of the term popular literature are the words "popular literature" and "literature" itself. The Greek word "*populus*," which meaning "people," is where the term "popular" originates. Popular literature is hence literature influenced by folk culture. Literature is the creative work that depicts human existence in a society in a way that society may appreciate, comprehend, and employ.

Literature is a vehicle for social expression, a window into reality, and an aid to understanding how people express themselves. Fiction and non-fiction are the two main subcategories of literature. Literature that is not based on a genuine story is referred to as fiction. While non-fiction refers to literary works that are inspired by genuine events. Fictional literary works include novels, short stories, poems, plays, movies, etc. Personal essays, histories, biographies, and autobiographies are a few genres of nonfiction literature. According to Hornby, a A movie is a story that

has been captured as a collection of moving images for display on television or in a theater. Each distinct literature expert has contributed to the definition of the literary work.

Films can be considered works of literature as well as poetry, prose, and novels. Through the medium of fairy tales, film is a vehicle for communicating various messages to audiences (Luthfiah et al., 2023). For creative and humane expression of ideas and narrative concepts, film is another medium. The literary method influenced film; nonetheless, literary practice developed some qualities under the influence of film. Film is often referred to as a performing art because actors are generally used as the main means of expression. Films often incorporate general book characteristics, such as different storytelling strategies, creative plot settings, shadowing and flashbacks, changing settings, and temporal structure (Klarer, 2004)

According to Cawelti (1976: 1) general formulas are narrative structures or dramatic conventions that appear in many different works. In a context of structure, plot will always be connected to time and space (Nurrachman, 2016). In terms of specific cultural content, these general story patterns represent an underlying story structure. The formulation is a synthesis or combination of certain cultural customs with a more universal structure or fairy tale motif. In other words, a predictable narrative structure clearly defines the formula. Because it embodies an archetypal story structure that has been tailored to particular cultural components like pictures, symbols, themes, and myths, it can be found at various times and in various civilizations. Mimetic literature (which depicts the reality of human experience) and formulaic literature (which deals with an idealized world) are the two literary forms that Cawelti distinguishes. According to him, a formula is a pattern that can be found in the broadest variety of literature and other forms of media. The very predictable forms of formula stories "guarantee the satisfaction of conventional expectations." (Cawelti, 1976).

Popular is a word that refers to contemporary culture. In whatever situation, it will continue to reflect popular tastes and meet the demands of contemporary society, with literature being no exception. Popular literature is a type of literary work that appeals to a large number of readers because it puts the reader's

preferences before the aesthetic merit of the work. Popular literature is characterized as being both commercial and entertaining (Nurgiyantoro, 2009). The reader can connect with both amusing and commercial content. The tale in popular literature will amuse the reader, and the selling of the literary work will include a commercial component. Authors and publishers of literary works will profit commercially to a greater extent if more readers enjoy and purchase a popular literary work. Popular literature is a cultural object that is created as a product as one of the activities of the contemporary industry (Escarpit, 2005). As a result, popular literature serves as both a literary production and a literary industry.

Due to the fantasy genre's recent surge in popularity, both works' literary merits—both in terms of form and content—are frequently analysed. They fall under the category of novels based on the structural elements of the works. The formulaic storyline, shallow characters, and unoriginal motifs, however, make them represent a low brow branch in the novelistic tradition. The divide between literary fiction and genre fiction is equally pertinent here in light of high-brow and low-brow literature.

The most general definitions refer to fantasy as an ability to create images in the mind or as a mental image. The Latin word "*phantasticus*" means "to make visible." Fantasy is characterized as "imaginative fiction dependent on effect on strangeness of setting (such as other worlds or times) and characters (such as supernatural beings)" in terms of literature.

The film *Raya and The Last Dragon* was made by Walt Disney Animation Studios. Qui Nguyen and Adele Lim are the researchers of this film, which is directed by Don Hall and Calos Lopes Estrada. The first Disney animated film set in Southeast Asian culture was this film, made by Walt Disney Animation Studios. Southeast Asian culture forms the basis of this film, which has recently received attention from international film critics and audiences. Apart from that, the existence of this film indirectly has the potential to become a medium that helps solve the identity problems of each nation, especially in the Southeast Asian region.

This 1 hour 47 minute film was made in 2018 and was released in theaters in 2021. The researchers studied a number of Southeast Asian countries when making them, including Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia,

Singapore, Laos, and Myanmar. Many Asian people were used as voice actors in the film. The main cast in the film are Gemma Chan as Namaari, Awkwafina as Sisu, who is Singaporean, and Kelly Marie Tran as Raya, who is of Vietnamese descent and voices Raya. The film's early run drew in 1.08 billion minutes in its opening weekend. The film has, sofar, been able to generate a profit of 130 million dollars. On the other hand, the film received 10 nominations for the 49th annual Annie Awards, making it the most nominated film (10), overall.

The story of a female warrior named Raya is told in the film *Raya and The Last Dragon*. Raya originally lived in a wealthy society with companion animals and a Tuktuk that served as her mode of transportation before the world turned dystopian. This can be seen from Raya's statement, who played the main character in the first part of the film. Before the deadly virus called Druun, a purplish-black mist capable of turning humans and animals around them into stone, arrived, their fantasy worlds which they collectively referred to as "Kumandra" were originally united. The jewel made of water was made with the help of Sisudatu, the world's last dragon, and is known as the "spirit of Sisi" or "the magic heart of the last dragon". After this incident, everyone disagreed, and Kumandra was divided into 5 regions, each of which was named a part of the dragon: Fang, Heart, Bone, Claw and Tail. Those who are evil intend to take the gems of the day because they believe they will bring prosperity and they except the Heart Country continue to compete to get them. Raya is determined to find the last dragon to save Kumandra and her father who was turned to stone due to an outburst of anger caused by human conflict known as Druun after 500 years.

Researchers intend to analyse the fantasy formula in the animated film *Raya and The Last Dragon,* because this film offers a fantasy story of Raya's adventure journey which is full of obstacles in collecting dragon gem shards. The setting of this film itself is also said to be inspired by countries in Southeast Asia.

Sociology of literature is a science that can stand alone. In the book The Sociology of Art and Literature: A Reader, compiled by Milton C. Albrecht, James H. Barnett, and Mason Griff, sociology explains that compared to other fields such as educational sociology, religious sociology, educational sociology, sociology ideology, and political sociology, then the sociology of literature was too late to emerge. The

sociology of literature is also known as socio-literary criticism because it takes social factors into account. There are various views about the person who is truly considered the founder of sociology of literature (Endraswara, 2003). In The Sociology of Literature (1972), Swingewood outlines the differences and parallels between sociology and literature after first defining the boundaries of sociology as a science and boundaries of literature. Sociology is the objective scientific study of how people interact with each other and with the institutions and practices of society. How society is created, how it functions, and why it lasts are all problems sociology seeks to address. Literature functions as a direct reflection of various facets of social structure, including family relations, class struggles, and so on. In this case, the goal of the sociology of literature is to relate the experiences of fictional characters and the fictional world of the researchers to events that seem to have a historical origin (Swingewood, 1972). Therefore, the most widely used approach to the sociology of literature is literary documentary. The method literary approach that pays attention to some of the characteristics of the researchers in calling the work of society is also known as sociology of literature. The meaning of this phrase is essentially the same as socio-literature, literary sociology, or cultural sociology. In this sense, there are many different approaches to the sociology of literature, each based on different theoretical attitudes and viewpoints (Damono, 1979). Various characteristics of the sociology of literature which view literary works as socio-cultural documents. First, regardless of how it relates to other elements, the elements (content/story) in the work are considered. Because the work only communicates the socio-cultural elements that exist within him, these elements are directly tied to one. Second, this method can examine the representation of something in a literary work or a number of literary works that can be seen from a developmental perspective, such as representations of women, men, foreigners, traditions, the modern world, and so on. etc. Third, by associating literary themes or motifs with actualities outside of literature, this approach might be used (Junus, 1984).

Classifying briefly, sociology writers who write about social status, social ideology, and other topics that affect writers as literary writers take precedence. The second is the sociology of literature, which is problematic for actual literary

endeavours; What is implied in a literary work and what is its purpose becomes the subject of research. Third, the sociology of literature raises issues about readers and the impact of literary culture. The sociology of literature is seen by these writers as an external approach — in a somewhat pejorative sense. The sociology of the researchers, according to Wellek and Warren, is related to social status, social ideology, and other issues related to the researchers as the creator of literature. The literary work itself is the focus of the sociology of literature. Examining the implications and intentions of literary works. The study of readers who are socially influenced by literary works is known as the sociology of readers. Meanwhile, according to Ian Watt, he emphasized that the social context of the researchers also sees the researchers's place in society and his relationship with the reader. The extent to which literature can be seen as a reflection of the status of society is examined by the sociology of literature, which views literature as a mirror of society. The social role of literature investigates the extent of the literary work.

Based on the opinions above, the researchers will use the theory of sociology of literature by examining moral values or moral phenomena in *Raya and The Last Dragon* which will be summarized as one of the values of life as one of the positive literary values by analyzing the intrinsic elements first to analyze the formula contained in *Raya and The Last Dragon* .

Qualitative descriptive method is a method that discusses the construction of reality and meaning related to culture. Based on W. Lawrence Neuman, Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches, the researchers will focus on interactive story processes and events, the authenticity of the characters, and the presence of explicit values in story content. Qualitative methods treat data as something that is intrinsically meaningful with research data referring to empirical research that records various events, every expression, gesture, and behavior specific to the topic of study, also including written papers and various visual depictions of social phenomena (Neuman, 2014). Qualitative research methods are described by Creswell (2008) as a strategy or quest to discover and understand central phenomena (Creswell, 2008). Qualitative methods also assume that social reality is multifaceted, holistic, complex, dynamic, full of meaning and has interactive relationships (Conny R. Semiawan, 2010)). Based on the opinions of

several experts above, the researcherss use a qualitative descriptive method to facilitate understanding of the phenomena or aspects that are being studied in depth. Based on the background of this research, the researchers formulate a research problem, what fantasy formula is contained in the film *Raya and The Last Dragon* (2021).

Several writers have conducted research on formula analysis in a film. Elvira R. Mangantar (Sam Ratulangi University, 2019). He conducted a research entitled "Fantasy Formula That Is Reflected In The Film Harry Potter And The Goblet Of Fire (2005)" The Problem Of This Research Is To Focus On What The fantasy formula is and how the reflection of the fantasy formula is reflected in the film Harry Potter And The Goblet Of Fire (2005). The researchers uses the theory from Cawelti (1976) and Snyder (2011) to analyze the fantasy formula. The results of this study indicate that the Fantasy Formula is Reflected in Harry Potter And The Goblet Of Fire (2005). Then I Made Astika (Ganesh Education University, 2014) conducted a study entitled "ANALYSIS FORMULA "DIARI JANTAN KARYA DIKA" analyzed the formula in the film to determine that Kambing Jantan is one of the popular fiction genre comedies, by including studies of genre theory and formulas through several excerpts of dialogue between characters. Tania Intan (Padjadjaran University, 2020) conducted a study entitled "FORMULA ROMANCE IN PERFECT ROMANCE BY INDAH HANACO: CRITICAL SASTRA FEMINIS" with the aim of verifying the romance formula in Indah Hanaco's Perfect Romance. Meanwhile, the method used is descriptive qualitative with a structural analysis approach and feminist literary criticism. Data in the form of words, phrases, and sentences were collected using literature study techniques and studied with relevant theoretical foundations from Cawelti, Radway, and Modleski. The results of the study show that overall, the constructive elements of narrative text, namely the plot, characters, and setting in the novel Perfect Romance meet the criteria for romance formula.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

There have been numerous attempts to define fantasy as a literary form as well as a genre. Fantasy is referred to be "the literature of unreality" or "literature

that does not prioritize realistic representation" due to the way it is depicted. It is considered to be "a literature of desire, which seeks that which is experienced as absence and loss" because of its potent escapist and wish-fulfilment elements. Fantasy literature embodies readers' individual needs as well as the universal search for ultimate truth and underlying reality. Fantasy allows readers to investigate important life mysteries without being constrained by size, time, or place. Daydreaming and reverie, two types of relatively harmless, fleeting fantasies that many individuals engage in to relieve boredom or pass the time, may also be found in this genre of fiction (Gates, 2003).

Magic and other supernatural occurrences serve as the primary story, theme, and setting components of the fantasy genre. The magic began to develop into one of the elements that build literary works (Nur Widiananta et al., 2023, p. 44). Fantasy is a type of imaginative creativity. It could also resemble an invention, which is a work of fiction. There is a common belief that fantasy novels and movies increase the possibility that readers would mistake fantasy for reality. Some people become resistant to seeing fantasy literature as legitimate literature as a result. Delusions are stories that fantasy typically shows that cannot occur in reality. These tales feature magic, a quest, or a struggle between good and evil. The fact that fantasy can experiment with diverse worldviews is one of its most evident advantages.

Fantasy characters are divided into two categories by Deborah Chester (2016): major characters and subsidiary characters. The protagonist and antagonist qualities of the lead character make him or her a significant main character in the fantasy genre. Close friends, mentors, confidants, and family members make up these secondary characters, who may exhibit protagonist or antagonist traits (Deborah, 2016).

There are several components in the fantasy genre. 1). Magic, the origin of the word magic, which means "one of the members of the learned and priestly class," explains why the word is frequently used in the fantasy genre to refer to learning, challenging texts, and elaborate ceremonies. Magic is a concept used to describe the power that comes from supernatural powers to make impossible things happen, make people disappear or even control natural events (Nur Widiananta et al., 2023). The idea of secret information that common people cannot access lies at the heart

of magic. The capability to influence events through enigmatic or otherworldly powers is another definition of magic. 2). The fantasy genre's setting comprises of time and place, with the place being either a fantasy realm or another universe. While there is either no time or any time. 3). the battle for mastery, the learning process, and the unpredictability of "wild" magic. In the growth of characters, this process of struggle and mastery is frequently demonstrated. In Rowling's fantasy series, a character tries to sabotage a magical game of the flying sport Quidditch as an example of how characters might abuse their positions of power. 4). Adventure, adventure in fantasy frequently includes a second definition of magic, is novel and thrilling, or involves online encounters, as well as thrills related to peril or taking chances. 5). Theme of good vs evil and the brave pursuit of knowledge or power.

1. Imaginary World

According to Eagleton (1991) The concreteness of the imagined visuals is meant to increase readers' engagement and help them comprehend the presented fantastical world from a distance as well as rationally and scientifically (Eagleton, 1991). The fantasy novel's transcendence into an imagined world, a place not all humans may enter, is one of its recurring elements (Scholes, 1977). Fantasy exhibits some conflict between its primary and secondary worlds, with one hidden behind the first and the other existing in the real world.

2. Imaginary Beings

Imaginary creatures are mythological creatures that are fantasy in nature where these creatures have their own abilities.
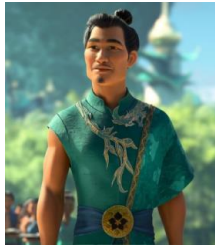
2.1 Protagonist Character

Raya   Sisu

Benja

a. Fantasy Hero

The hero character in a story will have good qualities in terms of courage, insight, endurance as a physical form of courage and insight, as well as good behavior. In *Raya and The Last Dragon* Raya has the insight and courage to carrying out the mandate given by his father, namely Benja, to collect the Dragon Gems and reunite Kumandra. Heroes also usually have supporting characters, namely their friends, such as Tuk-tuk, who have accompanied Raya since childhood until Raya grew up. Tuk-tuk is not just any animal, Tuk-tuk and Raya are mentally bound, so that on Raya's journey to unite the pieces of dragon jewels, Tuk-tuk helps Raya through his instincts. Campbell (2005) Show that heroes typically follow the same pattern: they embark on an adventure and then come back. Because of this, fantasy is a genre that most readers enjoy. Readers enjoy how they begin with issues, become involved in society, go through hardships as a result of their adventures, and finally, after the adversary is vanquished, the heroes return to society.

b. Protector

Every fantasy movie has different types of protectors. What makes a fantasy character a good protector is not their biological prowess but rather their willingness to aid the hero and behave as a friend or parent to them and other characters. Apart from being a hero, Raya is also a protector for Sisu when Sisu transforms into a human. Raya accompanies and guides Sisu about how the human world works and introduces a new life for Sisu. Of course, what Raya does for Sisu will have a good impact on both of them. Raya's protective nature was instilled by none other than her own father, Benja.

c. Wise Parents

From the beginning of the film, Raya lives only with her father, Benja. In this film, Benja is single parents that really represents a wise parent about how a parent

can educate and protect their children. As guardian of the dragon jewel, Benja teaches Raya martial arts to prepare Raya as his successor. Benja also instils a sense of responsibility towards Raya, as seen in scene 01.30.49 where Raya tries to guard the dragon jewel alone, before Benja arrives.

2.2 Antagonist Character

The antagonist character is of course a criminal who has a cunning nature. this presence makes the story and plot develop until the end. In Raya and The Last Dragon, Namaari is appointed as the antagonist where he is the one who triggers the dragon jewel to shatter into pieces. Not only that, Namaari also becomes one of the obstacles for Raya in her quest to unite the dragon gems. However, it is undeniable that an antagonist can also develop into a protagonist and this is reflected in Namaari when he helps Raya to piece together dragon gems.

Namaari

3. Imaginary Journey/Adventure

They must overcome a number of challenges in the journey, which typically concludes with a battle between heroes and villains, with the heroes coming out on top.

Here, the heroes typically experience adversities like sickness, famine, the loss of friends or cherished family members, and occasionally the heroes find themselves in a situation where they are about to die (Howard, 2007). Adventure is a journey with a discovery as its endpoint, in which paranormal protagonists uncover the fundamental truth about themselves, their society, and the nature of human life (Howard, 2007).

4. Imaginary Property

Sometimes a trip's objective is a literal treasure, such as a princess, diamond, or treasure hidden, or it may be something more ethereal, such gaining wisdom or power or finding inner peace (Howard 2007: 9). Imaginary properties in *Raya and The Last Dragon* are dragon jewels which are believed to give strength and wealth. The escalation of the conflict started when the dragon jewel broke and invited the Druun back, spreading the evil plague again. Not only that, the fragments of dragon jewels that still had magic were fought over by the alliance of other countries, as a result the Heart Country died because everyone in it except Raya was turned to stone.

5. Imaginary Action Motive

Although fantasy authors have the freedom to create things that go against natural law, readers also have the right to insist that what has been imagined or created must be defined and operated in accordance with some law or principle, even if it is one that is arbitrary. This is something that (Gates, 2003) mentions as a requirement for successful fantasy. This dragon jewel is also the motive for the character's action as a whole where Kumandra is divided into 4 regions and the Kumandra people are divided. Namaari also develops into an antagonist because his mother instigates him.

CONCLUSION

Apart from representing the country of Kumandra which characterizes the cultures in Southeast Asia, Film *Raya and The Last Dragon* also represents the attitudes of people in Southeast Asia. *Raya and The Last Dragon* tells how Kumandra was divided and finally reunited. This seems to represent the reality of human life that still happens frequently. The five components of a fantasy formula are an imaginary environment, an imaginary creature, a fictitious voyage or adventure, fictitious possessions, and fictitious action motives. One fictional creature fantasy formula, for instance, describes the protagonist as a fantasy hero with the qualities of bravery, insight, and perseverance tied to the characters. In addition, the lead character is defined as a protector who can give the heroic actions of the 'hero' a

fresh life and is not only a biological part of the story. To help them reach their potential, this action is also referred to as a surrogate parent. Meanwhile, the antagonist is portrayed as a villain who plots numerous ways to hurt or eliminate their opponents. In this fairy tale, the true antagonist is a hero.

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