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Semiotic Analysis of Women's Representation in the Animated Disney Film *Raya and The Last Dragon*

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ABSTRACT

The stereotype inherent in society is that women are vulnerable, inferior, and frequently depend on men. Similar to what is shown by the media, including films, the plot often discredits women in the public sphere, only focuses on domestic work, and does not highlight their competent side. As the largest entertainment industry company globally, Disney is trying to change the image of the traditional gender concept that has been formed previously. One of the films that represent that statement is *Raya and The Last Dragon*, which tells the story of a woman warrior and a formidable leader. This study aims to examine the representation of women in the animated films Disney Raya and The Last Dragon. This research was descriptive qualitative research with a documentation technique in screen capture as data collection. The sample of this research was scenes that represented women and used the analysis method of Semiotic Theory by Roland Barthes. There are four categorizations, including: (1) Trust in women as leaders; (2) Emphasizing friendship, not romance; (3) the appearance of a formidable Kingdom; and (4) brave women warriors. The study results show that women are represented as strong, dominant, and independent figures in this film, and the element of feminism is moderately presented. Women are no longer shown as inferiors oppressed by patriarchal culture. The traditional gender concept is gradually being forgotten.

Keywords: Gender, Media, Semiotics, Women.

1. BACKGROUND

Women are frequently considered by society as vulnerable and always live dependent on men. The patriarchal culture inherent in people's lives makes these assumptions still exist nowadays. The injustice experienced by women occurs because society considers women to be lower than men. Patriarchal culture illustrates the lack of social power that causes subordination and oppression of women [1]. The community shaped and developed the concept of gender long ago by instilling stereotypes on each gender. Men are often considered rational and have strong mental and physical strength, while women are considered to have characters that prioritize feelings, are gentle, and irrational. The assumption that women do not act based on reason or tend to be irrational makes women often discredited in the public sphere and considered unable to become leaders. Women are placed in the second position after men. It results in obvious gender inequality in society [2].

Mass media is an effective means of delivering information to the public. The mass media is a means of shaping the woman image. Women and female characters are often shown only as companions or complement men in the mass media. One form of mass media is film. Films can indirectly influence the audience in various aspects. Audience perceptions can be easily formed due to the influence of the films they watch; even children can think that what is conveyed in the film is the reality that is happening in society [3]. Representations made by the mass media can shape the mindset of the audience. Representation is a concept of meaning through language in social processes obtained from sign systems, such as dialogue, film, video, text, photography, and others [4]. According to Stuart Hall, representation has two definitions: mental representation and language representation. Mental representation is a conceptual map in a person's mind that will form something abstract. Furthermore, language representation serves to construct the meaning of abstract concepts in one's mind. For these abstract concepts to be associated with certain ideas,

signs, and symbols, they must first be translated into a common and understandable language [5].

Women in the mass media are viewed as someone who glorifies their physical appearance, not their intelligence or thoughts, so women are often made objects of rulers who are looked down upon [6]. It is in line with the previous statement, quoted from unwomen.org data from a study conducted by the Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media (GDIGM), UN Women, and The Rockerfeller Foundation on popular films in the United States, South Korea, Australia, Brazil, China, France, Germany, India, Japan, Russia, and the UK and the Anglo-US collaboration. One of the findings showed that women are more exposed to women's sensual side, and they are shown with open clothes twice as often as men. This study also found that only 30.9% of the total speaking characters were female. Especially in the action and adventure films, only 23% of female characters speak, the rest is dominated by males [7].

Animated films are films that consist of a series of illustrations. One of the most prominent animated film producers globally is Walt Disney Studios, better known as Disney. Until the first half of 2021, Disney has produced 59 animated films. The first film is Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, produced in 1937. Reported from lokadata.id, according to data from Box Office Mojo by IMDbPro, Disney is one of the prevalent Hollywood studios. If you refer to the US global market in 2017, Disney managed to reap a total revenue of US $ 5.77 billion with eight films released at that time. Its domestic market share is also considerable, around 21.8 percent [8]. With such a significant market share, it is not surprising that Disney can shape or change the perspective of its audience, also in shaping the audience's perspective and understanding of gender.

Most Disney animated films often feature women with vulnerable characters, relying on men and physical beauty. If there is a female character, she will usually struggle with romance and physical appearance. As for the male character being told, he has to pursue his dreams and socialize in the public sphere [9]. The first three Disney princess films were produced between the 1930s and 1950s, with female characters portrayed as fearful, tentative, empathetic, helpful, and physically attractive [10]. Examples of animated Disney films that represent women, as stated above, include Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs (1937), Cinderella (1950), and Sleeping Beauty (1959). From the three old Disney films, the outline of the storyline is not far from a princess waiting for a sturdy-shouldered prince to save her from distress. These three films enter Disney's pre-transition period because they still glorify traditional gender concepts [11].

However, the criticism from feminists triggers Disney to change the female protagonist in its animated films. Disney has grown over the past 75 years. The storylines presented by Disney minimize sexism and strengthen female characters who can be imitated by audiences, especially children and young women [12]. The development of this female character began to be seen in Disney animated films released in the 90s, namely Pocahontas (1995) and Mulan (1998). Pocahontas and Mulan were involved in masculine activities such as war and diplomacy [10]. Along with the development of Disney's idea about gender, which is increasingly advanced and complex, its latest films, such as Brave (2012), Frozen (2013), and Moana (2016), have begun to raise the concept of feminism and gender equality and highlight female characters who are strong, brave, and become a leader. The changes contained in each Disney princess character also represent the development of the reality of women at that time. Each main character has a character shift in the story. It coincided with the development of the concept of feminism from the first to the third wave [13]. A film can be called carrying feminist elements according to Press and Liebes-Plesner, namely women are present as a central role, and there are variations in the age range, size, sexuality, race, and appearance of women. Women have power status, and there are variations in the heteronormative depiction of the family [14].

In this study, previous research is used as a reference to enrich theories and references. Several previous studies that examined women and feminism in films produced by Walt Disney Pictures showed that women in this modern era have begun to be described differently by breaking existing stereotypes. Women are depicted as being more courageous, mentally and physically strong, and starting to escape from the domination of patriarchy. An article related to this research is a research by Garabedian in 2014 entitled Animating Gender Roles: How Disney is Redefining the Modern Princess. This study explained that in this modern era, Disney began to show a princess or female main character as someone who is independent, intelligent, heroic, strong, and equal to men. Especially in the films Brave (2012) and Frozen (2013), which show that Disney has shifted to a period of change, where Disney begins to destroy traditional gender roles, such as the pattern that a princess definitely needs a prince by her side [11]. Another study entitled "*Representasi Perempuan dan Alam dalam Film Moana Karya Sutradara Ron Climents dan John Musker (Kajian Semiotik Roland Barthes)*" by Bintariana in 2019 was also a reference of this research. This study examined the representation of women and nature in the Moana film [15]. There are similarities between this research and other research, namely, both using the semiotic theory by Roland Barthes.

This research focused on Disney's latest animated film, Raya and The Last Dragon, released in 2021. This film deserves to be investigated because while the previous Disney Princess animated films were more focused on romanticizing love stories and highlighting physical beauty, but this film tells the story of a female

warrior who is said to be the toughest so far compared to the previous main Disney characters. Raya and The Last Dragon tells the story of a princess' struggle to reunite her country, namely Kumandra. The film, which has a cultural background in Southeast Asia, including Indonesia, also describes the relationship between women who support each other without the influence of patriarchy to achieve their goals. The message of feminism implied in this film is quite strong because the main female character is rational, free, has courage, and lacks the dominance and influence of male characters in the film's plot. It is interesting to study because, in the end, Disney no longer produces films with vulnerable female main characters. Therefore, the researchers conducted "Analysis of Semiotics of Women's Representation in the animated film Disney Raya and The Last Dragon". With the semiotic theory by Roland Barthes, signs will be analyzed and studied more deeply with denotative, connotative, and mythical meanings. This study aims to examine the representation of women in the animated films Disney Raya and The Last Dragon.

Based on the background that has been presented above, the formulation of the problem to be researched is how is the representation of women in the animated films Disney Raya and The Last Dragon?"

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Semiotic Theory

Disney films represent women through the signs in the film. Therefore, in this study, the Semiotic Theory by Roland Barthes was used. According to Barthes, semiotics can not only be utilized to analyze texts but can also be used for verbal texts. Semiotics is used to describe the relationship between signs or the science of signs in an essential systematic way, the characteristics of the sign form, and the process of its significance [16]. There are two levels of meaning by Barthes, namely denotation and connotation. Denotation is a meaning that can be seen directly from the object; no in-depth analysis is needed. Furthermore, the connotative meaning is the development of the denotative meaning, which is seen implicitly and is connected with the culture and experience of the researcher. The connotation developed into a myth. Myths are issues that have been agreed upon by society to neutralize ideology. According to Barthes, a connotative sign is not only an additional meaning but also contains two parts of a denotative sign as a basis [16].

2.2 Representation Theory

According to Stuart Hall, representation theory has two meanings: mental representations related to abstract concepts in each person's thinking and language representations to construct meaning from abstract ideas

[5]. Representation is a process that connects three interrelated elements, namely 'something', 'conceptual map', and 'symbol and language. These three elements are the core of the production of meaning through language. In the first process, mental representation allows one to interpret something by constructing a relationship between something and one's 'conceptual map' system. In the second process related to language, a relationship will be constructed between a 'conceptual map' and language and symbols that are useful for representing various concepts [4].

Three representation theories are divided by Stuart Hall, namely the reflective approach, the intentional approach, and the construction approach. First, the reflective approach is analogous to a mirror that reflects the original meaning of something that happens, meaning depends on an object, person, idea, or event that occurs. Second, the intentional approach that uses language to communicate something depends on our point of view. Language is used to express the meaning of a speaker, writer, or anyone to explain the meaning constructed by itself. Third, the construction approach, namely meaning, is constructed through the language used. It includes sound, images, light, graffiti that can be called a type of work that uses material objects [5].

2.3. Film as a Mass Communication Media

Currently, there are various types of mass communication media such as television, newspapers, magazines, radio, and films. The film has become one of the most popular means of entertainment for the audience because of its easy accessibility and open nature. The existence of new media and new content that emerges makes mass communication more extensive and interactive. The film is a medium of communication that the public enjoys because of its audio-visual nature, making it easier for the audience to digest its meaning. Therefore, it is not surprising that experts think that films are likely to influence audiences [16]. Film as a mass medium can reflect to form a reality through the plot that is presented [17]. The media influences people's daily lives and how often time is used to consume mass media. Gradually, international media companies will grow and develop and affect all aspects of life [18]. The emergence of the film industry began in 1880 and started to develop rapidly in the 20th century, and the film became the most superior medium of public entertainment. At first, there were only silent films with a duration of ten minutes, but in the late 1920s and early 1930s, films developed into sound films that could last up to two hours [18]. Currently, there are various kinds of film genres, some of which are drama, action, comedy, fantasy, animation, and thriller. Reporting from medium.datadriveninvestor.com, research conducted by Chen shows that animated films are the most popular films and get the highest ratings [19]. Animation is an image that is assembled and then

produces static motion. The advantage of animation is how this media can explain the changes that occur with sequential and static time, making it easier to display the sequence of events [20].

In addition to its main role as an entertainment medium, films also play an essential role in portraying the reality that exists in society on the screen. Film as a form of reflection of truth is not the same as film representing reality. If it is just a reflection of the film, it only copies reality onto the screen; but if it is called a representation of reality, then the film constructs and then displays reality based on various existing codes, conventions, ideologies, and cultures [21]. Films also play an essential role in constructing reality regarding gender because gender is currently still a controversial topic. According to research by Kagan et al., entitled Using Data Science to Understand Film Industry's Gender Gap, which analyzed a data set of 15,540 films, gender gaps exist in almost all genres in the film industry. This study shows that gender inequality is still highly significant in the film industry. In films released in 2018, on average, women only occupied 33% of the central roles in movies. This study also resulted in the fact that the role of men was more dominant and central than women. The data illustrate the subordinate role of women that only 3.57% of interactions exist in three women, while there are 40.74% interactions in three male characters [22]. However, there is still an increase in equality and an increase in the role of women in films every year.

2.4. Woman in Movie

The representation made by the media towards women is one of the main focuses highlighted by feminists. It happens because how the media represents a gender will also affect the public's view of that gender. Women often appear in films to favor physical beauty and show sexual content. Although the media reflects the reality that grows in society, this reality is not entirely true [6]. Similar to films, apart from being a reflection of reality, movies are also present as a form of social reality related to how the film represents something, including whether films still have the assumption that women are not superior to men. The image of women in films is often shown as someone who can only contribute in the domestic sphere, such as taking care of the house and husband. The representation of women in the film affects the perspective and mindset of the community, which results in cultural actions [23]. The limited role of women and patriarchy is still the dominant ideology for the media; the media often carry this ideology and show it to an audience who does not really care about the message they get through films and television shows with the theme of entertainment [24]. Until now, some media, especially films, have not built a respectable image of

women because they frequently show that women do not have the same abilities as men.

2.5. Feminism

Feminism emerged when women realized that their people were often mistreated, especially in public. From a feminist perspective, adherents of feminism recognize differences in the levels of men and women [1]. In short, feminism is an understanding and effort to realize gender equality. Talking about feminism is not far from discussing patriarchy. Patriarchy is an understanding that men are considered superior and can have power over women. Therefore, feminism is also present to destroy patriarchal understanding so that gender equality can be realized. The first wave of feminism began with the writing of The Vindication of the Rights of Woman in 1792 by Mary Wollstonecraft, until the early twentieth century when women began to have the right to vote. The first wave of the movement focused on achieving women's rights. One of them is the right to vote. The next wave of feminism, which is also applied as a point of view in examining this research, is the second wave of feminism. The second wave of feminism began in the 1960s. It was marked by the publication of The Feminine Mystique and the establishment of the National Organization for Women (NOW) in 1966. This wave of feminism is predicted to be the most compact movement. In this second wave, the feminist movement has a big theme, namely "women's liberation", related to discrimination received by women. The second wave also focuses more on issues related to women directly, namely freedom, cultural equality, equal rights and obligations with men, sexual violence, domesticity, and sexuality. Next, the third wave of feminism or post-feminism emerged, which was controversial, the term post-feminism had previously appeared in a 1920 article; post-feminism was used to state that "pro-women but not anti-men." There are many different views, streams, and movements in this wave. Third-wave feminism is a feminism that developed in 1990 due to the influence of previous feminist waves. Up to now, feminists are still struggling for women's rights, women's opportunities to appear in public spaces, and women's freedom to be whatever they want without doctrine from other parties [25].

3. METHODOLOGY

This research used a descriptive qualitative method with a semiotic theory analysis approach by Roland Barthes. The object of this research is Film Raya and The Last Dragon (2021). The population in this study was all the scenes in the film Raya and The Last Dragon (2021). The sampling method used the purposive sampling method because only those who fit the criteria would be

used as samples. The sample of this research is scenes representing women and containing elements of feminism. The researcher focused the research analysis unit on the scenes in the film Raya and The Last Dragon to reveal the representation of women in the film. The primary data in this study were Raya and The Last Dragon (2021) movie, while the secondary data were a literature study in scientific journals, articles, and books that are both physical and electronic. The data collection that will be applied in this research is the documentation of the scenes that represent women by doing screen captures. In this study, data triangulation techniques were used to test the validity of the data found. This research utilized various sources, such as previous research, journals, and books. The data analysis technique was completed using the semiotic data analysis technique by Roland Barthes. Before data analysis, the entire film has been watched from beginning to end, and it is determined which samples or scenes will be studied in the study. Furthermore, the semiotic signs in Film Raya and The Last Dragon (2021) are examined using a signifier, and a signified to find denotative markers, which are connotative markers. Furthermore, the myth is studied, which is a story in culture to describe reality.

4. RESULTS

4.1. Trust in Women as Leaders

Figure 1.a. The Chief Benja scene talking to Raya about Kumandra

Figure 1.b. The Chief Benja scene talking to Raya about Kumandra keris, hat, and shoes

Figure 2.a. The Chief Benja scene asking Raya not to give up

Denotation: In the scene in Figure 1.a. and 1.b., Raya and Chief Benja (Raya's father) are sitting relaxed and talking about whether Kumandra, a country that has been divided into four countries, namely Heart, Fang, Spine, Talon, and Tail, can be reunited. Raya felt doubtful because it was impossible at this time, but Chief Benja was adamant that he believed that Kumandra would be reunited and peaceful one day. Next, in the scene in figure 2.a. when the druun plague that arose due to human conflict approached the Land of Heart. Everyone ran to turn to stone; Chief Benja fell and decided to ask Raya not to give up facing the druun plague and the divided Kumandra people**.**

Connotation: In Figure 1.a. Chief Benja said, "I believe we can be Kumandra again", then continued to picture 1.b. "But someone has to take the first step." Chief Benja spoke while looking at Raya expectantly. The dialogue indicated that the one who had to take the first step was Raya. In addition, it can be seen in Figure 2.a. Chief Benja, who was starting to give up, said, "Raya. Do not give up on them", he put his hope and trust in Raya so that she could lead the people of Kumandra to unite to find a way out so that she and everyone could return safely from the druun plague. From the three images, in essence, Chief Benja expected that Raya would become a leader to unite countries that have been separated and hate each other to reunite into a peaceful country like before. It is a sign that patriarchal domination is no longer applied so that women can also be trusted to be leaders and heroes for the common good. Women are shown as someone who can be relied on in solving problems.

Myth: So far, women are shown as someone who is less reliable as a leader, passive, and not equal to men. Therefore, in the end, people think that men are more worthy of ruling and becoming leaders. In addition, women are considered unfit to be leaders because women's natures only do domestic work and follow all the rules imposed by men [26]. Although women's social status and legal rights are growing every year, the leadership position is still dominated by men [27]. If you look closely, the media barely highlight essential issues related to women such as leadership, women's movements, and the social contributions made to society

because, in the mass media, women are still often shown as people who do not dare make their own decisions [6]. If a woman decides to become a leader, she must make others believe that women also have the same abilities as men. The words of Chief Benja symbolize it in Figure 1.a., 1.b., and 2.b. who believed in Raya, his daughter can lead divided countries so that they can reunite in harmony. It helps break the stigma that only men deserve to be given power as community leaders.

4.2. Emphasizing Friendship not Romance

Figure 3.a. Raya and Namaari scene getting to know each other

Figure 4.a. Raya scene persuading other friends to believe in Namaari again

Figure 4.b. Raya scene persuading the other friends to believe in Namaari again

Denotation: In Figure 3.a. the setting is in the Heart country, and everyone from other countries is gathering. The atmosphere heated up because Chief Benja, the Hati kingdom king, failed to make the other countries united

and peaceful. Next, Namaari approached Raya, and they became acquainted and decided to become friends. Since that scene, their friendship has been very complex. In Figures 4.a. and 4.b., they became enemies after a long time since Raya and Namaari met. Finally, in this scene, Raya decided to trust Namaari again to save and unite Kumandra. Raya insisted on persuading her other friends, namely Boun from Tail Country, Tong from Spine Country, Little Noi, and Ongis from Talon Country. Even though they had distrust and hostility to each other, in the end, Raya and Namaari decided to unite to fight together to unite gemstones and make people live again so that the land of Kumandra could be reunited.

Connotation: In this film, one of the main focuses is the complex friendship between women, and from the beginning to the end, nothing is shown about the main character's love interest with men. It can be seen in Figure 3.a., 4a.a, and 4.b. The story focuses on the friendship and trust relationships that are built between Raya, Namaari, and other friends from different countries. The absence of a romance sub-plot in this film indicates that women do not always seek and need a man who is usually manifested as a lover to help them solve problems. In addition, the role of men in this film is minimal. They are only presented as supporting actors who do not contribute much in making decisions, such as Raya's friend, Tong, from the Spine country. It indicates that patriarchal domination is no longer applied in this film.

Myth: The close bond between women and traditional gender roles is caused by the romance aspect, in which men will feel more powerful than women. The myth that exists in society is that women always need a male figure to solve problems or decide something. Romantic relationships are often the cause of the traditional domination of men over women. Scenarios of romantic relationships that exist in the structure of society lead to women's attachment to men, such as the emergence of psychological dependence [28]. Girls would be better shown as someone who can control their destiny, rather than always needing a male figure in their adventures [11]. As in this film, the absence of a male role that is dominant or involved in romantic relationships shows that not all women need a man who is always beside them. Raya is the embodiment of a woman who does not always expect a sturdy-shouldered prince on a horse who is ready to save her at any time. It represents that women can protect themselves, be autonomous, and support other women to realize their dreams without being influenced by patriarchy.

4.3. Raya's Strong Appearance

Figure 5.a. Little Raya Appearance

Figure 5.b. Adult Raya Appearance

Denotation: As seen in Figure 5.a., as a little princess of the Heart Kingdom, she does not wear a dress but wears a blue top and bottom that looks masculine. Her hair was tied up, and he also wore socks, a leg tie and carried a wooden stick weapon. Except for that, it can be seen in Figure 5.b. when Raya was an adult, Raya still wore clothes like a knight, which is inspired by the cultures that exist in Southeast Asia. Raya appeared with her hair loose, wearing a typical Cambodian brown *sampot* suit made of square cloth, red and yellow robes, a hat, and a dagger as weapons. Raya's clothes were entirely different from the clothes that most Disney princesses wear. It was not a beautiful long dress typical of a princess like Belle and Aurora, but the clothes that Raya wore were pretty simple and made her able to move freely as a fighter.

Connotation: Raya's clothes in pictures 5.a. and 5.b. show that even a princess does not always have to look feminine and elegant. Unlike the existing stereotype that every woman must wear elegant clothes, women can also wear clothes with a masculine impression. In this case, the blue suit, socks, and leg tie that Raya wore as a child are shown in picture 5.a. signify that her character is a brave and tough little woman who is ready to fight. The blue color she wore means wisdom, intelligence, harmony, and idealism [29].

Except that, her clothes as an adult in picture 5.b. it can be seen from the *sampot* suit with the pants that Raya wore made it easier for her to perform masculine activities such as self-defense and fighting. Furthermore,

the red color of the robe symbolizes courage, while yellow symbolizes optimism. Raya also brought a weapon, namely a keris (a dagger) from Indonesia, especially Java. Keris itself in Java is considered a symbol of heroism, strength, and courage. Moreover, the keris also has another philosophy: teachings about the harmony of life with nature and humans [30]. The hat used by Raya was used as a shield when Raya explored Kumandra and fought against her enemies. Raya's overall outfit showed that Raya was indeed present as a strong and courageous warrior woman who was ready to fight for the harmony of life between nature and humans by reuniting Kumandra.

Myth: Women are often set always to wear elegant and feminine clothes and sometimes do not have the opportunity to choose a style of dress that suits their character. However, the clothes used by Raya showed that women have the right to select any appearance that is not bound by certain standards of femininity. Raya wore an androgynous style, which contains elements of masculinity and femininity in one outfit. An androgynous style is a form of women's liberation from gender constraints and a concept that enforces natural differences between men and women [31]. By wearing certain clothes, women also represent the character that is embedded in them. The clothing wore not only serves as a cover and body armor but also as a means of conveying personal identity and character [32]. Raya, who wore an androgynous style with clothes like a knight, is in line with her character, which is a strong and brave woman.

4.4. Brave Warrior Woman

Figure 6.a. The f Sisu scene talking to Raya about her plan to recover the world

Figure 6.b. The Sisu scene talking to Raya about her plan to recover the world

Figure 7.a. Raya scene preparing for war against Namaari and the Fang Land army

Figure 7.b. Raya scene preparing for war against Namaari and the Fang Land army

Denotation: In Figure 6.a. and 6.b. Raya and Sisu, the last dragon, are talking on the ship and continue their adventure to the lands of Fang, Spine, Talon, and Tail to retrieve the dragon gem shards and unite them. Raya did that to restore her Chief Benja and the people who were turned to stone due to the Druun plague. As for Figures 7.a. and 7.b., Raya is brave to fight with Namaari and the troops of the Spine Country to conduct her mission, which is to collect Dragon gems.

Connotation: In Figure 6.a. Sisu the dragon said, "Raya and I will fix the world," continued in figure 6.b. "return everyone", what Sisu meant was that Sisu would help Raya fight so that people could come back alive and Kumandra is reunited. Furthermore, Raya's courage and determination are also seen in picture 7.a., Raya holds a weapon and prepares to open the gates of the Spine Country while saying, "A note to myself..." continued in picture 7.b. "Do not die". The words in picture 7.a. and 7.b. show that Raya finally dared to fight against her enemy even though she was afraid. Raya, who failed many times, but was able to get back up, showed an unyielding and brave attitude even though so many enemies confronted her. Furthermore, Raya was proficient in martial arts fights and easily defeated her enemies, showing that she occupied a superior position to other male characters. Even the position of men in this film is minor, women hold a significant role in making decisions and leading.

Myth: The hegemonic concept of gender, which views women as less competent than men, creates expectations about how women and men should act [33]. Society has an inappropriate belief that women are naturally not as bright and strong as men, so that women are marginalized from the public sphere, and women's potential cannot fully develop [34]. Women in society must only play a role in domestic life, tend to be unreliable, and are often seen as objects. In this case, what is meant by the object is a sexual object [35]. However, Raya is presented in a different way in this film; precisely, the figure of Raya depicted the concept of second-wave feminism, namely freedom and equality of rights and obligations with men. Finally, Disney no longer features a princess character who depends on men and always needs help, but Raya is here as a brave, strong, and never-give-up warrior woman.

5. DISCUSSION

Disney represented women well and positively in the Raya and The Last Dragon movie. Although the plot did not tell the story of a woman's rebellion to be free from traditional gender concepts like in Mulan (1998) and Brave (2012) movies, this film manages to represent a world full of strong women. As stated in the first categorization, the meaning of the connotations in this scene is that Chief Benja trusted Raya to lead and reunite Kumandra. Not only Raya, other female characters were also very prominent in leadership. Some of them were Namaari, her mother, General Atitaya, who led the Fang country, and the old grandmother-head of Dang Hu, who ruled the Talon country. It shows that Disney is starting to normalize the idea of female leadership, that a leader does not have to be male. A woman can be accepted as a leader if she has masculine characteristics in her leadership [36]. The female character in this film has succeeded in breaking the stigma in society that men are considered superior and wise in leading compared to women.

Most of the old Disney princess characters needed a male hero to save them. It actually contributed to the traditional gender stereotypes and did not encourage women to be equal to men [11]. Commonly, the male hero appears as the lover of the Disney princess. However, unlike Raya, as described in the second categorization, the focus in this film is not love-interest but the friendship between women. The connotative meaning of the scene shows that women do not always have to lean on men's shoulders. There are times when women choose to live a friendly relationship rather than love. Even the male characters in this film tend not to be highlighted and present as the main character. The main characters are women, namely Raya, Namaari, and Sisu, who are also told as female dragons. Male characters such as Chief Benja or Raya's father, Boun the little captain, and Tong the Chief of Spine country are shown only as

supporting roles and have relatively low screen time. Even in this film, a baby girl named Little Noi, who stood out for having superpowers, also indicated that female characters dominated in this film.

Bright and luxurious dresses are synonymous with Disney princess outfits, but Raya is the opposite. Instead of wearing elegant clothes and beautiful jewelry, Raya, a princess as a child, actually wore simple clothes, namely a blue top and bottom suit that seemed masculine. When Raya grew up, the clothes she wore were also simple, in the form of a typical Cambodian *sampot* with pants and a robe. Raya used keris, hat, and shoes for self-defense, fighting, and other masculine activities. Clothing is a person's identity. A person uses clothes not only as body protection but also related to things that represent her [37]. In the connotation meaning of the third categorization, it is explained that Raya's clothes as a whole represent the character of a strong and independent woman. Freedom of dress also needs to be highlighted in women's studies; women are always required to look elegant even though it is not in line with their character.

Modern Disney princesses are independent, brave, and heroic, and contemporary audiences should see a strong female lead who can stand on equal footing with the boys [11]. Raya's character has represented these things well as a modern Disney princess. As has been explained in the denotation meaning of the fourth categorization, Raya appears as a hero for Chief Benja and all the citizens of Kumandra. Finally, women are no longer depicted as irrational, emotional, and vulnerable. With the presence of strong characters like Raya, it is expected that many women will be inspired to be strong, and stereotypes about vulnerable women will slowly fade.

6. CONCLUSION

This study attempted to comprehend how the depiction or representation of women in the animated film Disney Raya and The Last Dragon. The results show that there is a development in how women are shown in Disney films. With many Disney animated films released since 1937, Raya and The Last Dragon emerged as a film telling a formidable warrior woman. It is a positive transformation from Disney's films, which often featured susceptible female characters who needed to be saved by men. From this film, four categorizations have been found that describe female characters, namely, (1) Trust in women as leaders; (2) Emphasizing friendship, not romance; (3) the appearance of a formidable Kingdom; and (4) brave women warriors. The trust given to women to become leaders can form an independent and strong character. Apart from that, the absence of a romantic relationship in this film shows that women can also stand alone without domination or help from men. The clothes that Raya wore showed her unyielding character in

achieving her goals, and in the end, she can realize the harmony between humans and nature. By wearing these clothes, it means that there is no certain standard of femininity that every Disney princess must meet. The last categorization is that Raya appeared as a woman warrior who dared to indicate that men cannot always contribute as heroes. In a more detailed analysis, the film Raya and the Last Dragon has fulfilled the categorization of a film that can be called carrying elements of feminism according to Press and Liebes-Plesner, namely women are present as a central role, there are variations in age range, size, sexuality, race, and appearance of women, women have power and status, and there are variations in the heteronormative depiction of the family [14]. The second wave of feminism is seen in this film, namely the aspect of freedom and equality of rights and obligations with men. Raya managed to represent a strong and competent female warrior. She did not need to be saved, but she could protect those around her. The changes contained in each Disney princess character also represent the development of the reality of women at that time. In the end, women are no longer shown as inferiors who are oppressed by patriarchal culture. This traditional gender perception is slowly being forgotten. The film Raya and The Last Dragon provides a good depiction of equality for women.

AUTHOR'S CONTRIBUTION

The first author comprehended and developed the research topic and the second author participated in providing input related to the topic under study. The first author designed and wrote research, collected the data, processed data, and drew conclusions. The second author provided input related to writing, the theory used, findings, and others. All authors have contributed and approved the entire study.

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