

A POLITICIZATION OF IBN SINA IN THE PHYSICIAN (2013):  
A STRUCTURAL COMPARATIVE STUDY

A GRADUATING PAPER

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the Bachelor Degree in English Literature



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I certify that this thesis is definitely my own work. I am completely responsible for the content of the thesis. Other writer's opinions or findings included in the thesis are quoted or cited in accordance with ethical standards.

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## ABSTRACT

In this study, the writer analyzes the portrayal of Ibn Sina in *The Physician* (2013) and to figure out the comparative study to *The Life of Ibn Sina* (1974). The writer is interested in revealing the Ibn Sina in the film. The character of Ibn Sina in *The Life of Ibn Sina* (1974) has been mixed into the character of Rob Cole and Ibn Sina in *The Physician* (2013). This research uses a Structural Comparative approach that focuses on plot, character & characterization and setting variables. The writer uses qualitative research and makes a database of similarities and differences between *The Life of Ibn Sina* (1974) and *The Physician* (2013) to compares the objects. After comparing the two works, the writer finds many changes that occur in *The Physician* (2013). From these results, the writer assumes that Ibn Sina and Islam have been described as inferior, whereas Rob Cole, western country, and Judaism have been described as superior.

**Keywords:** *Ibn Sina, Politicization, Degradation, Autobiography, Film*



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## ABSTRAK

Dalam penelitian ini, peneliti menganalisa penggambaran Ibn Sina dalam *The Physician* (2013) serta mencari tahu tentang studi perbandingan dalam film tersebut. Peneliti tertarik untuk mengungkap karakter Ibn Sina dalam film tersebut. Karakter Ibn Sina pada *The Life of Ibn Sina* (1974) telah padukan pada karakter Rob Cole dan Ibn Sina pada film *The Physician* (2013). Penelitian ini akan menggunakan teori Comparative Literature yang berfokus pada variabel berupa plot, karakter & karakterisasi, dan latar. Peneliti menggunakan penelitian kualitatif dan membuat basis data untuk perbedaan dan persamaan antara *The Life of Ibn Sina* (1974) dan *The Physician* (2013) untuk mencari persamaan dan perbedaan antara kedua objek. Setelah membandingkan kedua karya tersebut, peneliti menemukan banyak perubahan yang terjadi pada film *The Physician* (2013). Dari hasil tersebut, peneliti berasumsi bahwa Ibn Sina dan agama Islam digambarkan lebih rendah, sedangkan Rob Cole, negara barat, dan agama Yahudi digambarkan lebih tinggi.

**Kata kunci :** *Ibn Sina, Politisasi, Penurunan status, Autobiografi, Film*

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## MOTTO

A Journey of Thousands Miles Begins with a Single Step.

“When do you think people die? When they are shot through the heart by the bullet of a pistol? No. When they are ravaged by an incurable disease? No... It’s when they’re forgotten!” –*Eichiro Oda (as Dr. Hiluluk in One Piece)*





## **DEDICATION**

I dedicated this paper for my parents, who always supports me.





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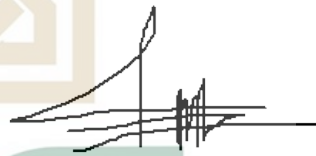
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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of Study

Commonly film is a moving picture that functioned as entertainment, whereas according to its genre, a film also has another function. A film can be entertainment, documenter or education. In every film, there must be some information delivered that has its own meaning and purpose. The meaning of the film can be open or sometimes hidden.

“Films not only about entertainment, but films also become another language that delivers the messages through frame by frame. There are some ways to deliver films such as poetic, narrative, show transparency, or use profundity” (Villarejo, 2007:25).

These varieties of films make the writer interested to study more about film through the way the film is delivered which could talk to any aspects of life.

Like what Villarejo said in *Film Studies: The Basics*:

“The study of cinema, in other words, is emphatically not an attempt to arrest its dynamism, to still it in order to subject it to scrutiny. It is rather the pursuit of cinema as a historical hydra, with tentacles reaching into all aspects of our individual and collective lives” (Villarejo, 2007:19).

*The Physician* (2013) is one of the popular films in this era. This film is produced in 2013. The setting of this film is Muslim civilization in the 9<sup>th</sup> century when Muslims are more advanced than other cultures. *The Physician* (2013) with Philipp Stölzl as the director is released by UFA Cinema in German and then

distributed by Universal Pictures. The Stars in this film are from Hollywood and British actors such as Ben Kingsley, Tom Payne, Emma Rigby, and the others. *The Physician* got the rate 7.2 in IMDb and was awarded five nominations in the German film award.

This film tells about a Christian boy named Rob Cole who lives in England. He had lost his mother at a young age because of side sickness. The illness of his mother makes him interested to know more about medical knowledge. After that, he lives with a barber (a doctor like) who comes to his village. He moves out when he got information about a man in Isfahan who can heal any illness. The man's name is Ibn Sina, who is based on a real person. He studies with Ibn Sina long enough, but even Ibn Sina cannot cure side sickness. It is because in Isfahan everyone is forbidden to research the human dead body. One day, there is a person who suffers from side sickness then dies because of that. Rob Cole takes the risk and practices by himself to study side sickness. From his action, he is sentenced to death. Luckily, he can go out from the cell in order to cure the Shah of Isfahan (king of Isfahan) who also suffers side sickness. At last, he comes back home to England and spreads his knowledge.

From the film, the writer finds that the main character in the film who is Rob Cole has similarities to Ibn Sina in the real-life (from his young age until the arrive in Isfahan, after that the similarities continue, the character of Rob Cole blends with the character of Ibn Sina in *The Physician* (2013) and similar to the character of Ibn Sina in the autobiography). The most significant similarities are in the life events of the character, and the others are from the characterization of



the life events or the settings. These similarities put Ibn Sina from real life into the character of Rob Cole and put Ibn Sina as the man behind Rob Cole's success. To study more about this, the writer studies more about *The Physician* (2013) by comparing it to an autobiography of Ibn Sina with the title *The Life of Ibn Sina* (1974).

According to Gohlman in *The Life of Ibn Sina* (1974) copyright page, it is an autobiography that Ibn Sina himself told, but the rest of the chapters were finished by his students, Al-Juzjani. Instead of the original version written by Al-Juzjani, the writer chooses the annotated translation into English by William E. Gohlman. This work was translated in 1974. There are two parts in *The Life of Ibn Sina* (1974), the chapter of Ibn Sina's works and the autobiography of Ibn Sina. The autobiography of Ibn Sina tells about Ibn Sina from his birth in Bukhara until his death on his way to Hamadan.

Ibn Sina was a Muslim philosopher and scientist. Ibn Sina had memorized the entire Quran at the age of ten. Then, He learned about mathematics, metaphysics, philosophy, and medicine. He has been described as the father of early modern medicine. His famous work is *The Book of Healing* and *The Canon of Medicine*.

Ibn Sina as the character in *The Physician* (2013) is a famous physician from Isfahan that is much honored. He teaches medicine in his school named Madrassa and also becomes the counselor of the Shah (The king of Isfahan). Rob Cole is one of his disciples; he guides him until Rob Cole surpasses his knowledge. Ibn Sina dies in Madrassa when The Seljuk tribe attacks Isfahan.

The writer is interested in comparing this film because the Ibn Sina character in *The Physician* (2013) has been blended with Rob Cole and diverges from Ibn Sina from *The Life of Ibn Sina* (1974). Of course, this has no problem with the diverge character from fictional creation, but why the author made it so. The character divergence in *The Physician* (2013) has made a politicization that benefits the West.

Politicization thus refers initially to a process whereby the controversiality of joint decision-making goes up. This, in turn, is likely to lead to a widening of the audience or clientele interested and active in integration. Somewhere along the line, a manifest redefinition of mutual objectives will probably occur. (Schmitter, 1969: 166)

There are some examples of this politicization; Like Ibn Sina's parent who dies because of illness that has the same event with Rob Cole's mother who dies because of illness and they start to roam after their parent died. There is also the Journey of Rob Cole through a desert and a sandstorm attack. This event has the same plot when Ibn Sina was serving in the Al-Sayyida government then Syams Al-Dawla attacks, so he had to move away. The desert represents the Al-Sayyida government because there is a trial for him to treat mental illness and a sandstorm represents Shams Al-Dawla attacks.

From the signs above, this research tries to know the similarities and differences of *The Physician* (2013) and *The Life of Ibn Sina* (1974) by compares and contrasts Ibn Sina in the autobiography through Rob Cole and Ibn Sina from the film by Comparative Literature theory.

## 1.2 Research Question

In this study, the writer attempts to propose the study as stated below:

How Ibn Sina is portrayed in *The Physician* (2013) and what is the motive that made Ibn Sina represented that way?

## 1.3 Objectives of the Study

The purpose of this research is to analyze the portrayal of Ibn Sina in *The Physician* (2013) and to figure out the motive that made Ibn Sina represented that way.

## 1.4 Significances of Study

The significance of this research is to show the portrayal of Ibn Sina through comparative studies between film and autobiography. This research may be useful for the reader and the writer to understand more about the application of comparative literature theory.

## 1.5 Literature Review

Before the writer does research about *The Physician* (2013), there had been three different types of research about this object. The first research was written in 2016 as a thesis by Muhammad Aulia Rahman with the title *Orientalism in Film (A Narrative Analysis of Middle Eastern Civilizations in The Physician Film)*. In this thesis, Rahman said about Islam people who were being

racist and intolerant towards Christians and Jews. This research used the theory of Orientalism by Edward Said.

The second research was from Harlianto Tumanggor who chose Deconstruction from Derrida to research *The Physician (2013)* film. This research focused on the deconstruction and reconstruction of the character, like Rob Cole and Ibnu Sina. As a result, this research has the binary opposition between Rob Cole and Ibnu Sina's character that Rob Cole is only a fictional character and Ibnu Sina is a great physician.

The third thesis was authored by Martiya Nurni Khairita about the representation of Muslims in *The Physician (2013)* film. This research focused on the Muslim as generally represented in the film. As a result, this research has represented Islam as a liberal Islam and fanatic Islam in the film.

As seen from those theses there is still something less. To enrich the study of this film, the writer adds more research about *The Physician (2013)* by comparing it to his autobiography. The research is about the comparative study between film and autobiography. The writer hopes that this research could add more references for someone who wants to study more about The Physician film.

## **1.6 Theoretical Approach**

### **1.6.1 Comparative Literature**

Comparative literature is a study of two or more works of literature that have different languages (Wellek & Warren, 1949: 40). Comparative literature can be the study of linguistic, literary, or cultural boundaries. According to de

Zepetnek, comparative literature has an ideology of inclusion of the other literature (1998: 13). In the study of Comparative literature or comparative study, the writer has to compare two or more works of literature from different nations or languages, traditions or cultures (Sahin, 2015). When comparing two different languages, there is also the study of culture. The benefits of comparative literature study provide numerous benefits to not only comparatist but also national, general and world literature. The comparison of different nations gets a chance to recognize both their values closely.

“Comparisons between literature, if isolated from concern with the total national literature, tend to restrict themselves to external problems of sources and influence, reputation and fame. Such studies do not permit us to analyze and judge and individual work of art, or even to consider the complicated whole of its genesis; instead, they are mainly devoted either to such echoes of a masterpiece as translation or imitation, frequently by second-rate authors, or to the prehistory of a masterpiece, the migration and the spread of its theme and forms” (Wellek & Warren, 1949:40).

### **1.6.2 Structuralism**

According to Ferdinand de Saussure, “Structuralism is a system of language of Signs and Signification that understand and relate each other”. One of structuralist is Claude Levi-Strauss, he is a French anthropologist. Strauss relates structuralism to the study of kinship, myth, and cultural traditions. Here, the writer uses the Myth structuralism by Claude Levi-Strauss. According to Strauss, “The function of Myth is providing an outlet for repressed feeling (1955: 429)”.



Strauss said that Myth also comes from a play, “Myth is widely interpreted in conflicting ways: collective dreams, the outcome of a kind of aesthetic play, the foundation ritual... (Strauss: 1955:428)”. Here, Film is a modern kind of play, which brought the writer to choose the theory of Myth Structuralism. Strauss has mentioned that myth is a language, but myth cannot simply be treated as language. The one who wants to recognize it as a language should put themselves in a position to show it is as a language, and also different from it.

“Language can be analyzed into things which are at the same time similar and different . . . . It is the same with Saussure’s distinctions between *langue* and *parole*. *Langue* belongs to revertible time, whereas *parole* is non-revertible. If those two levels already exist in the language, then a third one can conceivably be isolated. (Strauss, 1955:430)”.

Strauss Myth structure uses the third referent that combines between the similarity and difference. He uses time as the third reference, “Myth always refers to events alleged to have taken place in time (1955: 430)”. The time in myth starts before the world was created, it describes that myth is everlasting. Strauss stated that Myth in modern societies can also be called as *politics* (1955:430).

According to Strauss “the true constituent units of a myth are not the isolated relations but *bundles of such relations* and it is only as bundles that these relations can be put to use and combined so as to produce meaning (1955:431)”. Without relations, myths cannot produce meaning. Saussure treats the study of myth with the partiture of an orchestra score, as presented with nonlinear series of numbers with the diachronic (top-bottom) and synchronic which integrate the characteristic of *parole* and *langue*. Strauss give the explanation of this with the

example of number sequence of the type: 1, 2, 4, 7, 8, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 1, 2, 5, 7, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8 ..., then he put all the same number together and the result is a chart:

1	2		4		7	8
	2	3	4		6	8
1			4	5	7	8
1	2			5	7	
		3	4	5		
					6	8

*Table 1. 1The Structural study of Myth*

The chart makes the sequence number look readable. There is some same number in eight vertical columns. The same number means that there are similar things between the rows of those columns.

“Were we to tell the myth, we would disregard the columns and read the rows from left to right and from top to bottom. But if we want to understand the myth, then we will have to disregard one half of the diachronic dimension (top to bottom) and read from left to right, column after column, each one being considered as a unit. (Strauss, 1955: 433)”

Levi-Strauss makes an example of the operation of the Oedipus myth. All relations in the same columns exhibit one common feature.

“There are four columns, the first columns have its common feature with *overrated bloodline*; the second columns are the inverted version of the first; the third columns refer to the monster being slain; the fourth columns are the remarkable surname connotation of Oedipus. (Strauss, 1955: 433)”



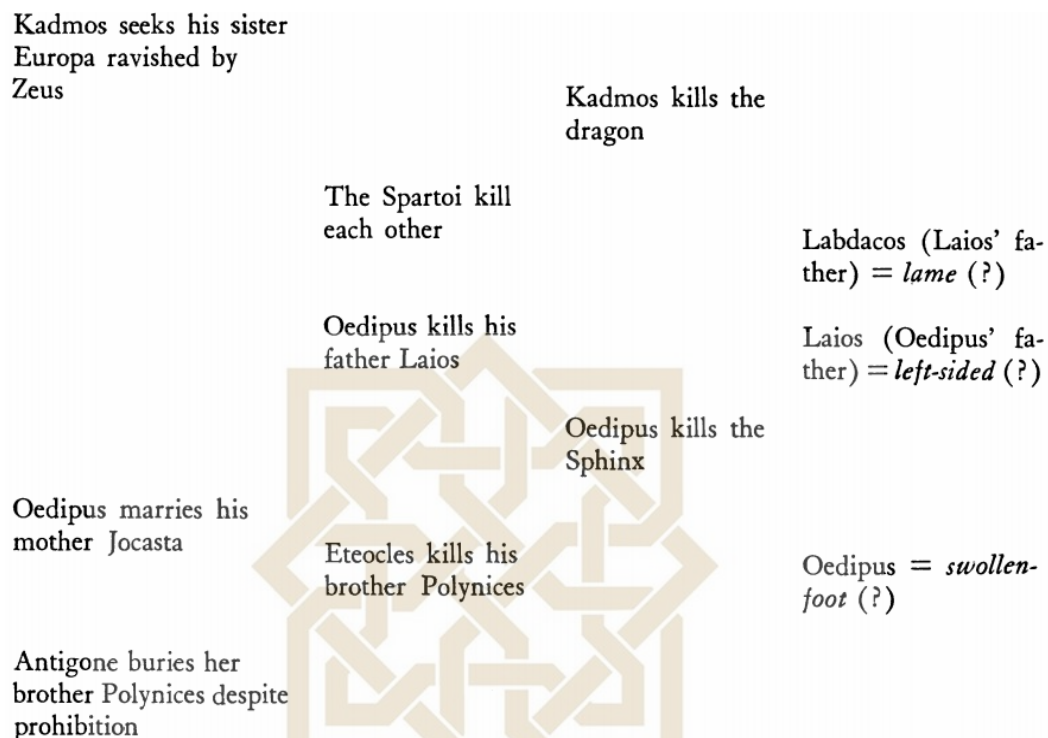


Table 1. 2 Oedipus myth

## 1.7 Method of Research

### 1.7.1 Type of Research

In this research, the writer uses a descriptive qualitative method. As stated by Semi that Qualitative research has five main features:

- (1) "Natural setting is the main source and a researcher is the main instrument;
- (2) Priority process, not the result;
- (3) Inductive data analysis;
- (4) Qualitative research is a descriptive research; and
- (5) Meaning is the essential element in qualitative research" (Semi, 2012:28-32).

The writer uses the descriptive qualitative method because this research analyzes the characters in *The Physician* (2013) compared to *The Life of Ibn Sina* (1974). In analyzing the film, the writer uses to compare and contrast techniques.

Compare and contrast are examining two or more topics, compares their similarities and contrasts their differences. This compare and contrast focus on Ibn Sina and Rob Cole as the fictional character in the film and Ibn Sina in real life. Moreover, the writer watches the film a couple of times, then takes notes and collects the data from the film to make a research database. At last, the writer analyzes the autobiography and the film by looks for some evidence from the database to supports the argument.

### **1.7.2 Data Sources**

The writer takes the data from *The Physician* (2013) and *The Life of Ibn Sina* (1974).

### **1.7.3 Data Collections Technique**

The writer collects the data from *The Physician* (2013) and *The Life of Ibn Sina* (1974) from the intrinsic elements of the text. The main elements that the writer chooses are plot, character & characterization, and setting. When collecting the data, the writer makes a database that contains intrinsic elements from the autobiography and the film. In this database, the writer includes some variables to support the writer's arguments. The variables are based on the intrinsic elements' data from the database. The variables of the film and autobiography stated orderly from the front are the plot, setting, and character and characterization. The chosen variables become the main compare and contrast between the two sources.

#### **1.7.4 Data Analysis Technique**

The analysis technique of this study uses descriptive analysis. In this analysis, the writer uses the concepts of comparative literature by comparing and contrasting the works based on the variables of plots, settings, and character and characterization. From the three variables, the writer uses the similarities and differences based on the plot of *The Life of Ibn Sina (1974)* as the work was published earlier than the film. From the comparison of the plot, the writer advances to compare and contrast the setting as well as character and characterization that contain similarities and differences of the plot.

#### **1.8 Paper Organization**

This paper is divided into three chapters. The first chapter is the Introduction that consists of Background of Study, Research question, Objective of Study, Significance of Study, Literary Review, Theoretical Approach, Method of Research, and Paper Organization. The second chapter is the analysis of the research which contains Plot, Settings, and Character and Characterization. Then, the last chapter is the conclusion, where the writer states the result of the analysis and answers the research question of this paper.

### CHAPTER III

#### CONCLUSION

The object which the writer chooses to compare and contrast are Plot, Setting, and Character and Characterization. From 30 plots, the researcher finds 22 plots that have similarities to the film and make some differences that the characters or events are changed. The plot in the film is mixed and the climax is different from the autobiography. From the character and characterization, there are 6 similarities, but the character and characterization are changed. The changes in the character and characterization make Ibn Sina look inferior compared to the autobiography version of Ibn Sina. From the setting, there are 6 similarities but there are also changes in the setting of place or the setting of the social environment. These changes make England look more superior from the past and degrade Islamic status in its own country.

Based on the analyses and the proofs, the writer concludes that the film is an imitation of *The Life of Ibn Sina* (1974). The film has the same main point, which is the journey of someone to become a great man, but some parts of the point are altered. The writer assumes that the film is politicized, so it degrades the portrayal of Ibn Sina and Islam in the film compared to those in the autobiography. Additionally, it dignifies western countries and Jews. In other words, *The Physician* (2013) characters who is Rob Cole and Ibn Sina are blended into Ibn Sina in *The Life of Ibn Sina* (1974) that is seen from the myth structural comparison of both texts.

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## CURRICULUM VITAE

### A. BIODATA PRIBADI

Nama Lengkap : Rona Farij Falahi  
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 Alamat Asal : Pawuhan, Karangtengah, Batur,  
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### B. LATAR BELAKANG PENDIDIKAN FORMAL

Jenjang	Nama Sekolah	Tahun Lulus
SD	SDN 2 Karangtengah	2008
MTs	MTs Ma'arif Kejajar	2011
SMK	SMK NU Kejajar	2014

### C. LATAR BELAKANG PENDIDIKAN NON FORMAL

- Pondok Pesantren Al-Barokah Yogyakarta (2015 – 202x)

### D. PENGALAMAN ORGANISASI

- Studi dan Pengembangan Bahasa Asing (2015 – 2018)
- Sanggar Nuun (2017 -2018)

### E. PENGALAMAN PEKERJAAN

- Laboran Komputer SMK NU Kejajar (2014 – 2015)
- Warung Geprek Starback (2016)
- Ojek Online (2018-2019)

**F. KEAHLIAN**

- Komputer
  - Aplikasi Kantor (Ms. Office/ WPS/ Libre Office)
  - Desain (Adobe Photoshop, Lightroom, Corel Draw)
- Bahasa
  - Bahasa Inggris
  - Bahasa Jawa
  - Bahasa Indonesia

