CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

People might be familiar with the phrase '*don't judge a book by its cover,*' which metaphorically means that people should never judge the value of anything by the look of its appearance. However, it could not be denied that a cover is the 'face' of the novel itself. Ned Drew and Paul Sternberger (2005) stated in their book on modern American cover design, "The cover is a book's first communication to its reader, a graphic representation not simply of its content, but of its point in history" (p.8). Therefore, the cover is the exclusive representation of the novel itself, which uses visual images to portray the story. It is relevant according to the survey conducted by www.thebooksmugglers.com in 2010, out of 613 people, 79% of them said that covers did play a decisive role in the decision to purchase a novel.

Alan Powers explains that the design of book covers helps to make a book something more than mere "information," something that, even though it may have many thousands of identical siblings, still demands a relationship, something that, when given, defines the values of the giver and recipient (p.11). Therefore, it is not strange if people decide to buy a novel because of its cover. The human brain reacts more effectively and automatically engages to pictures rather than words (Grady, Mcintosh, Rajah, & Craik, 1998).

Multiple research studies have also proved that people are more interested in novels with an appealing cover. In 2012, Hinze, McKay, Vanderschantz, Timpany, and Cunningham analyzed what causes people to select one particular book from academic library shelves. The result shows that the participants used age, cover, and images for decision-making. This result corroborates several previous studies that said that book age, size and dustiness, cover image, and popular cultural associations in book decision-making (p. 311-312).

Another experiment has also done in 2006 by Alain d'Astous, Francois Colbert, and Imene Mbarek regarding factors that influencing people to buy a new book. The research suggests five variables regarding people's interest in a new book: (1) the reputation of the author, (2) the reputation of the publisher, (3) the attractiveness of the book cover, (4) the degree to which the cover represents the content of the book, and (5) the type of book (a novel or a technical book). As a result, it turns out that the first three variables have a significant impact on people's interests. However, the author's reputation only affects people's interest in technical content books.

Kathleen C. O'Connell has also done an analysis regarding novel covers, specifically, young adult novel covers. She analyzed 70 young adult novels considered the best between 2003 and 2009 based on the Young Adult Library Association and then conducted a visual rhetoric analysis. The result shows that cover novels that have the fragmentation of the human body tend to be preferred by teenagers but might also promote violence against the human body itself. She also cites what Wysocki had stated that said if people treat the image of the human body as an "object" that can be cut apart, they can also accept if it happens to the

real people. According to these data, it indicates that there is some preference for a novel that each age group has. Moreover, there are some other cases when novels were published with different cover designs in various countries, and this research aimed to see the purpose of those differences.
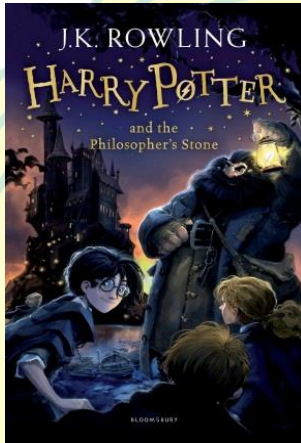
One of the novels which had different cover designs in various countries is the Harry Potter novel series. Even though the content of the novels is the same, the covers were different from the original ones, which Bloomsbury published. This research used the 2014 Harry Potter cover sets as the comparison to the other covers in various countries and will be focused on the cover of the first book, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*. Two other countries have been selected to be compared for this study.
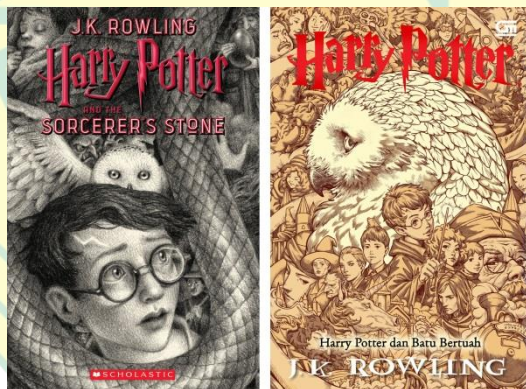
The other two countries are representative of the the major continents besides Europe, which are America and Asia, namely the United States for America, and Indonesia for Asia. For the American continents, the United States 20th Anniversary Edition cover design by Brian Selznick was chosen because it lacks colors if we compared it with the 2014 U.K. edition. the Indonesian 2017 Celebration Paperback Edition will be compared as well because it contains very detailed illustrations. Moreover, all chosen cover designs have their own characteristics that could be compared with one another. This study

would also try to see whether the cultural background of the countries affects the design of the covers themselves.

This study differs from the previous one because the present study analyzes three different cover designs of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* from various countries using cultural semiotics by Yuri Lotman, which focuses on cultural perspectives rather than social ones. The difference between Lotman's cultural semiotics than Haliday's social semiotic is, rather than analyses the semiotic representation within the social relations on its own, Lotman sees semiotic representation in social relations as a part of a symbolic-organized system, which is built upon a system of signs that regulates communication and behavior. He believes the concept of culture "*is interpreted in a limited sense as systems for the preservation, transmission, and creation of new varieties of information*" (Lotman 2013: 53, as cited in Zolyan, 2020). Therefore, based on Lotman's concept, it is a complex system in which social semiotics are only a part of it, and Lotman calls this system a Semiosphere.

1.2. Research Questions

This study will analyze the differences between three cover designs of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* from three countries published in the range of 2017 to 2018. The questions that arise within the study are:

1. To what extent the cover designs of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* represent each country's culture?

2. How do each represented culture influences *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* elements in the cover designs?

1.3. Objective of the Study

The objective of the study is to find out how each culture is represented through the *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* cover designs individually. Furthermore, the study will analyze how the already existed cultures from each country intervene and modify *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* elements and form a new system of relationships. Finally, the establishment of the newly developed relationships between each culture and the Harry Potter elements will be analyzed to see how differentiation between each culture gives negotiations to each other so they could unify with the Harry Potter novel as a whole.

1.4. Significance of the Study

This study is expected to give a better understanding of cultural semiotic, especially in the scope of cultural study, and provide more information regarding analyzing cover designs because, even though the novel cover is the representation of the novel, the analysis about it is far less than the analysis of the novel itself. Moreover, the study wanted to present that, within a cover design, certain aspects, in this case, a culture, might unite with the plot of the story and form something different from the original.