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## THE PORTRAIT OF INDONESIAN CULTURE THROUGH AN ANIMATED FILM “SI ENTONG”

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### ABSTRACT

Being nationalist by preserving Indonesian culture is highly important for all Indonesian citizens especially the students nowadays. The students who are the youngest generation must preserve Indonesian cultural heritage. Thus, education has an important role in shaping the sense of nationalism among them. Teaching is the key solution. Teachers can apply a creative and interesting teaching strategy by providing watching animated movie sessions. One of the recommended movies is “Si Entong”. This research focuses on findings of the scene that portrays Indonesian cultural heritage that needs to be preserved. In this study, the researchers applied the qualitative method. To analyze the data, the researchers selected an episode in “Si Entong” titled “Nyak, Entong Merosot! Panjat Pinang Entong Dilawan Memet”. We applied *Mise En Scene* approach from Manon de Reeper to see the elements of the movie and Theory of Representation from Stuart Hall to see what the scenes attempt to represent. Therefore, the result of this study shows the representation of Indonesian culture that needs to be preserved. This study also indicates that by watching this animated movie, Indonesian students can increase their nationalism and understanding about the importance of preserving the culture.

**Keywords:** *Culture, Nationalism, Representation, Scene, Teaching*

### INTRODUCTION

A film is a form of audiovisual mass communication that transmits messages to viewers to facilitate message exchange. Mass communication allows for the simultaneous communication of numerous individuals (Febriyanti et al., 2020). A film is a form of storytelling that may convey a range of ideas to the audience (Gunawan & Junaidi, 2020). The researchers view that through film, people can acquire knowledge or ideas from the film they watch. In film, it has a storyline that movie directors attempt to portray. Thus, it cannot be avoided that film can convey the messages.

According to Reeper (2016), cinematic language is the medium through which a film "speaks" to its audience. The persons who create films (the massive collaboration of directors, producers, editors, etc.) want to tell a particular story or communicate a particular concept. Even if they intend to entertain, their film will likely have meaning since the audience can manufacture meaning even while they are absent. The term decoding is used to describe this procedure. The meaning of a narrative is "decoded" in the same way as a spoken or written language. In our point of view, Reeper attempts to tell that the persons who create films do not intend to entertain only, but also there are decoded messages that audience can interpret.

A film consists of numerous physical components (Cahyani, 2018). The term "shot" refers to taking a single snapshot utilizing specific camera techniques. One shot is one camera shot of an object from the time the camera begins rolling (recording) until the director instructs the camera to stop (cut). A scene is a brief video segment that illustrates an action, movement, or activity. A scene may consist of multiple shots or a single extended shot. Scenes depict images (movements, gestures, character expressions) and text (words, sentences spoken by characters). A sequence is a lengthy portion of a film that presents a complete sequence of events. A sequence consists of numerous interwoven shots or sequences. The unit of measurement for the series is the setting of the place. A sequence could occur in single or multiple locations (Cahyani, 2018). From the above argument, the researchers can interpret that a film consists of many elements. One of them is scene. Scene is a brief video segment that can illustrates certain messages from certain context. Thus, the researchers view that film can influence many aspects in society. One of them is education. We see that film can build cultural awareness to the students at it uniquely allows students to look at situations far beyond their classrooms. Film can provide great values in giving students a chance to see the importance of preserving the culture or even know other culture.

Film is created in many forms such as cartoons, animation, documentary etc. In this study, the researchers are interested in analyzing the animated film namely "Si Entong". However, before we get deeper on its film, we would like to provide some definition of animated film. The word "animation" is derived from the verb "to animate," which signifies "to live and move." In addition, "animation" derives from the Latin word "anima," which means "soul, life, or spirit." Many people think of animation as "animating" an inanimate or motionless item so that it can move or give the idea of movement (Alfatra et

al., 2019). According to Abrori, as stated by Yasa and Santosa (2018), animation media is one of the most effective means of communicating a message. Furthermore, animated films can be used to preserve cultural heritage. One of them may capitalize on this substantial commercial potential by utilizing media intermediates. It can be used to distribute information in the highly advanced technical era of the present day. Likewise, media technologies may contribute to the circulation of animated films. The media can impact behavior, mentality, perception, and even dictate. Hence, the researchers view that films can impact the education field. By applying watching movie session in the class, the students will not only feel motivated and excited but also will get impacts especially in behavior, mentality, perception or even the construction of nationalism among them.

As discussed above, in this study, the researchers are interested in analyzing “Si Entong” animated film especially in the episode entitled “Nyak, Entong Merosot! Panjat Pinang Entong Dilawan Memet”. This episode tells about the main character named Entong participated in Indonesian Independence Day competition called greasy pole game. It refers to a tall pole that has been smeared in grease or other lubricants, making it difficult to grip. Specifically, it is the name of numerous events involving staying on, climbing up, walking over, or otherwise traversing a pole. This episode does not only portray how Indonesian people usually celebrate Indonesian Independence Day but also portrays Indonesian landscape in the suburban area. Besides that, the portrait of Betawinese and Javanese people can also be seen in this episode. That portrait is essential as they can represent their tribe or identity through the traditional dress they wear. As a result, this film can give impacts on students’ understanding towards Indonesian culture. By watching that film in the class, it is expected that the students can be more aware about their culture. They are expected to have a sense of preserving Indonesian cultural heritage such as the tradition, traditional games, traditional cloth, and many more. By watching that film, they are also expected to be more nationalist and open-minded. Thus, the researchers believe that film can give implication to education field.

To support the analysis, the researchers used *Mise en Scene* approach from Manon de Reeper to see how the camera works and Representation theory from Stuart Hall to analyze how Indonesian culture is represented there.

According to Manon de Reeper (2016), every aspect of a film or television show is planned to fit on the screen. The scene's creators carefully analyze every piece; nothing is random. *Mise en scène* refers to the filmmaker's vision for the scene and the film. By

determining what is displayed within the confines of that screen, the author shapes the audience's cognition. *Mise en scène* can convey meaning to the audience almost as effectively as conversation and narration. It is essential to media and film studies analysis because it explains how to identify significant visual codes and how some may have used them to create meaning (The Media Insider, 2020). Moreover, Reeper (2016) emphasized analyzing and understanding the scene. We must analyze who and what is present and their relative places; we must also consider makeup, expressions, wardrobe, setting, look, props, sounds, and lighting. Numerous components can be included in a study of the film. They are the editing, camera, and lighting.

First, editing. Time and space are condensed into a logical sequence of photos through the editing process. It is seamless in general. It entails segmenting and reassembling recorded film segments (shots) to maintain a sense of continuity and coherence. Typically, photographs are edited to give the impression of a natural progression of events (Reeper, 2016).

Second, the camera. When examining a film, the camera is among the most important factors to evaluate. It includes details on shot types and camera angles. One take constitutes a shot. It can be utilized to create a scene or atmosphere and immerse the spectator in it. Moreover, the camera position has a substantial effect on the film's mood and almost always conveys meaning.

Lastly, lighting. Lighting is essential for defining a film's setting. Unexpectedly, even lighting can contribute to a film's production of meaning. Full-face lighting draws attention to a person's face and might lend an air of openness and veracity. Shadow and low contrast are often associated with unpleasant emotions, such as fear, anger, and mistrust (Reeper, 2016). These factors may assist the author in his or her analysis. In addition, The Media Insider (2017) stated that there are further techniques for decoding cinematography. One of them is to provide significance for the shot.

A lot of elements shape culture, one of which is representation. In representation, identity, cultural control, communication, and production are constants. The exact meaning of the term "representation" is "to represent" something that has already occurred, to mediate it, and to reproduce it (Anwar et al., 2018). This concept is widely used to define the relationship between media texts and reality because representation is one of the most essential practices in the construction of meaning. Identity, cultural dominance, communication, and production are unchanging aspects of representation. Representation

is the act of mediating and reproducing something that has occurred (Anwar et al., 2018). Stuart Hall views representation as "the process of establishing meaning by incorporating language." Thus, discourse analysis, the study of ideology, and representation are intertwined. In other words, the depiction of a particular thing has meaning due to the ideology underlying that meaning. Hall argues that ideas are built and created through representations, with verbal and visual events occurring. In the representation system, there are not only individual concepts but also methods for organizing, adding, and grouping ideas or concepts and differing degrees of relationship complexity. As stated by Stuart Hall (Hall, 1997) in (Supandi, 2017) the representative and the represented to become the main focus of representation study.

Previously, there are some studies that analyzed education and film. One of the the studies was conducted by Hasti Nuansari and Widi Sriyanto (2021) entitled The Effectiveness of Using Animation Movie in Improving Speaking Skills of Elementary Students. Their study aims to demonstrate the effectiveness of animated films in improving elementary pupils' speaking skills. The research was conducted in a single fourth-grade classroom with 29 pupils, and random sampling was used to pick the samples. It can be stated that employing animated films to teach speaking to elementary pupils was effective. Through animation movies, students could speak with others with greater confidence due to the engaging content, which piqued their interest in retelling the animation in their own words. Therefore, it may be easier for them to create visualizations using the films they have viewed. However, a language teacher should provide several opportunities for classroom practice alongside engaging media (Nuansari & Sriyanto, 2021). Meanwhile, our study focused on how animated film influenced the students' perception about Indonesia. The students are expected to be more aware and love Indonesian culture after watching "Si Entong". Thus, it can be concluded that the scenes in "Si Entong" attempt to portray the importance of preserving Indonesian cultural heritage such as tradition, traditional game, traditional cloth, etc. Those portrayals can be good sources for the students in shaping their nationalism towards Indonesia.

## **METHOD**

This research analyzed the representation of Indonesian culture through an animated film "Si Entong". *Mise En Scene* approach from Manon de Reeper and theory

of representation were used for this study. In order to help the researchers in doing the analysis, the researchers applied qualitative approach by selecting the relevant episode in “Si Entong” and collecting data from any supporting articles. To figure out how this animated film represents the portrait of Indonesian culture, the researchers did several steps in this study. First, the author analyzed “Si Entong” animated film by applying the film elements, *Mise En Scene*. The researchers analyzed the scenes, angles, and editing on the movie. The researchers selected scenes that symbolize Indonesian cultural values. Second, the authors connected the movie elements with the interpretation supported by the Representation theory from Stuart Hall. The last, the researchers concluded the whole observation and connected it to education field.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In order to fully understand the result of this research, firstly, the authors observed the elements of this animated film “Si Entong” in its episode entitled “Nyak, Entong Merosot! Panjat Pinang Entong Dilawan Memet”.

First, to see how this animated film represents Indonesian culture, I started my observation from scene on minutes 00:09 (Figure 1).



In this scene, we can see a big yard, many people with different traditional dresses, greasy pole game (*panjat pinang*), and Indonesian flags. This scene attempts to show how Indonesian citizens who live in the suburban area celebrate Indonesian Independence Day. Indonesian Independence Day is held on August 17th. People usually hold some competition. One of them is a greasy pole game. It is usually conducted in the yard. People usually gather watching this competition to celebrate Independence Day. Besides that, this scene also attempts to show the traditional dress oftenly worn by Indonesian citizen.

In a closer context, the researchers view that greasy pole game (*panjat pinang*) that

is usually held every Independence Day has several meanings. According to Setya (2022), he said that *Panjat Pinang* is one of the events held to celebrate Queen's Day or Koninginnedag. This moment of celebration is conducted annually on August 31 to commemorate the birthday of Queen Wilhelmina Helena Pauline Marie van Orange-Nassau. At this time, all social groups in the Dutch East Indies (Indonesia) were encouraged to participate in festivals, carnivals, entertainment, shock markets, and areca climbing competitions. The Dutch refer to greasy pole competition as *de Klimmast*, which means pole climbing (Setya, 2022).

*Panjat Pinang* is a simple game, but reaching the top of the areca tree requires effort, teamwork, and a unique technique. Participants in the areca nut climbing competition are separated into numerous teams. Each team took turns climbing the oil-greased areca nut, which reached heights between 5 and 9 meters. To reach the prize placed at the summit of the areca tree, it is necessary to climb the betel nut. Typically, *Panjat pinang* will earn prizes consisting of food or clothing. The rewards for climbing areca nuts are rice, flour, bread, cheese, sugar, and clothing. The gift is still regarded as a luxury among indigenous peoples (Setya, 2022).

According to Fandy Hutari's 2017 book 'Hiburan Masa Lalu dan Tradisi Lokal,' before Indonesia's independence in the 1930s, the Dutch frequently played this game at weddings, promotions, and birthday parties. The book also mentions that climbing an areca nut has its philosophical significance, relating to pursuing autonomy independent of its history. Climbing areca palms cultivates collaboration, resourcefulness, and mutual aid. This tradition also teaches the importance of attaining independence, with the following benefits of freedom being distributed equally in society. To gain independence, one must be prepared to set aside their ego (Wenzen, 2021). From above discussion, the researchers view that the scene attempts to show celebrating Indonesian Independence Day especially having a greasy pole game is highly important as it is part of Indonesian tradition that needs to be preserve. A good family roles which is illustrated in film add some more good identities for language learners (Hartono & Nguyen , 2022). Hence, by watching this animated film, the students are expected to be more aware about preserving Indonesian tradition.

The next observation is taken from scene on minutes 00:32 (Figure 2).



In this scene, we can see two little girls walking in a road going to the yard. They went there as they wanted to watch the greasy pole game. Before they got there, we could see the gate was decorated using Indonesian flags. The flags are hung on the bamboo, called *Umbul-umbul*. The researchers view that *umbul-umbul* symbolizes the joy as Indonesia has been independent until now. Thus, it can be concluded that *umbul-umbul* represents the nasionalism of Indonesian people. To get deeper understanding, we could also see that mostly, the color of *umbul-umbul* is red and white which represents the flag of Indonesia.

In a closer observation, the flag of Indonesia was approved formally on August 17, 1945, three days after the end of World War II. In 1949, when Indonesia gained acknowledgment of its independence from the Netherlands, this flag remained in use. The flag has a lengthy history with a basic pattern of red and white stripes. It was initially connected with the Majapahit Empire, which flourished in eastern Java during the 13th and 16th centuries, and it contains traditional color symbolism: red for bravery and white for integrity. The Indonesian Union, a nationalist group of Indonesian students studying in the Netherlands, adopted it in 1922. 1928 also saw the Indonesian Nationalist Party adopt the flag. The flag of Monaco and the flag of Indonesia are identical, save for their dimensions (Smith, 2019).

Smith's statement is in accordance with MacDonald (2016). He stated that the Indonesian national flag is known as "Sang Saka Merah Putih" and, according to Article 35 of the 1945 Constitution, is comprised of two colors: red on top of white. Two meters by three meters, its width is two-thirds of its length. It is flown in front of the presidential palace, government buildings, and foreign embassies of Indonesia. The first flag was courageously raised amid Japanese occupation forces on the day Indonesian independence was declared. Since then, it has been flown in front of the presidential palace in the capital city of Jakarta during Independence Day ceremonies. On August 17, 1968, this historical flag, or "bendera pusaka," was flown for the final time. Since then, it has been conserved



and replaced with a replica of genuine Indonesian silk. As a result, the researchers view that Indonesian flag and *umbul-umbul* always become the identity of Indonesia. We also see that the message of this scene is shaping the nationalism towards all Indonesian citizens especially Indonesian students.

The next observation goes to the scene on minutes 1:00 (Figure 3).



In this scene, we can see one of the characters in “*Si Entong*” named Memet is on the top of the areca tree. He was trying to reach the prizes such as a bicycle, a t-shirt, a radio, a kid’s car etc. This competition looks frightening but also fun. The character needs to climb the highest areca tree until reaching the top. It looks fun as all team needs to work each other to get the prizes. In a closer observation, the researchers view that even though the character looked scared, he kept trying. Thus, it can be concluded that the brave spirit must always be kept in all Indonesian society particularly Indonesian students.

The next supporting analysis is taken from the scene on minutes 01:33 (Figure 4).



In this scene, we can see a lot of people supported the team that was climbing the areca tree. They looked excited and hoped the team that was on their turn could reach the top. If we see closer, we can see two characters wearing traditional dress. The first woman was wearing a blue kebaya with a toska skirt. She was also wearing a pink *ciput hijab*, an inner hijab that can prevent hair from falling out, covering hair when the hijab is removed, keeping the *hijab* in position, and shaping the face. Similarly, the second woman was wearing a rown kebaya with *batik* skirt design and a brown inner hijab. They both have the

same dress, which is *kebaya* with different design.

According to Suciati (2019), as a part of national fashion, the *kebaya* plays a significant role in physical/material design and has a significant impact on the souls of Indonesian women. The function of the national costume (*Kebaya*) in accordance with the etiquette of the National and International Associations, namely:

a. The purpose of social expression National Clothing, as a product of national culture, can serve as a social glue throughout Indonesia. *Kemben*, *Bodo* clothing, *parenthesis*, and *kebaya* have existed since the beginning and have reached the pinnacle of their development, so that the essence of the Indonesian people is inextricably linked to the clothing social-fashion.

b. The function of expressions of group solidarity. National Clothing as a result of culture, used by Indonesian women figures from the establishment of 1908-1920 (the growing period of the nation of Indonesia) until the time after independence displayed evidence of solidarity as a fellow nation; therefore, National solidarity can be awakened not only from the verbal language, but also from the material.

c. The purpose of mental calmness. National apparel is imbued with its own life-affirming attitude. All types of national fashion have a simple form, and bias is considered a form of Indonesian society's simplicity.

d. The symbolic functions of language. As a distinguishing characteristic of Indonesian cultural objects, the language of the International Association is displayed on national attire (Suciati, 2019).

From above discussion, the researchers view that the scene attempts to show the importance of preserving traditional cloth of Indonesia. Not all people always wear traditional cloth from their tribe as their identity. However, this scene shows the characters that consistently wear their traditional cloth. It means they see that their identity, their tribe, their cloth are integrated and vital as they symbolize the nationalism and identity as Indonesian people. As a result, the students are more interested to wear traditional cloth instead of their casual ones. Traditional cloth is a symbol of nationalism and identity.

The last observation is the scene on minutes 2:58 (Figure 5).



In this scene, we can see a man traditional cloth and *blangkon*, a traditional Javanese headgear made of batik fabric was reaching out the bicycle. The researchers view that this scene attempts to show the nationalism through the character in this animated film “Si Entong”. He showed even though he showed his strong nationalism for Indonesia by wearing a traditional cloth in Independence Day ceremonies. To get deeper analysis, Toekio (2016) stated that *blangkon* is a type of *iket* or *udeng*-shaped hat derived from the word 'blangko,' which means printing blank. It refers to printed tags. Likewise, a *blangkon* contains the worth of ordinary life. The worth of life represents tenacity, thoroughness, perseverance, and patience (Sasanti, 2020). Hence, the researchers view that to show our spirit of nationalism, we can use our own traditional cloth or accessories such as *blangkon* or *iket*. It seems uncommon if we or the youth wear those kinds of traditional accessories. However, in this scene, we can learn that preserving Indonesian culture is needed to make this heritage preserved. The students are the agents of change that can influence society or community to be more aware in preserving our Indonesian heritage. Thus, the researchers view that the scene attempts to persuade the audience especially students to keep Indonesia exist and shape the youth more nationalist.

## CONCLUSIONS

Some scenes in *Si Entong* represent Indonesian culture. The setting for celebrating Independence Day is portrayed vividly. Besides that, this TV series also attempts to introduce Indonesian cultural heritage which is *batik*, *kebaya*, and *blangkon*. Thus, this animated film strives to combine cultural features to introduce Indonesian culture to the entire globe. The scenes also attempt to persuade the audience especially Indonesian students to collaborate and cooperate in preserving Indonesian culture. They are the young generation that will preserve Indonesia with its cultural wealth. Thus, being nationalist is one of the issues that this film attempts to convey.

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