

The Reality of Betawi Culture in the Film "Si Doel the Movie" (Semiotic Analysis of Roland Barthes)

Tofa

Master of Communication Sciences, Sahid University, Jakarta 12870, Indonesia

Abstract

This study aims to interpret and describe the reality of Betawi Sarong culture in the film "Si Doel the Movie" and to find out the meaning of denotation, connotation, and myth in this film. This research uses qualitative and descriptive methods and semiotic analysis of Roland Barthes. In this case, Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis begins with the denotation meaning, which is the real meaning, then the connotative meaning, which has a double meaning. The connotation meanings attached and believed by the public will eventually become myths. The results obtained from this research from scenes related to the reality of Betawi culture in society in everyday life produce several concepts, namely that there is a shift in stigma and stereotypes towards Betawi people who are trying to be overturned by Doel's character who shows a calmer attitude in acting and speaking, like the character of non-Betawi people. Stigma and stereotypes that make Betawi people seem to be marginalized, through the character of Doel's figures, are shifted to become educated Betawi people. Meanwhile, from the scenes related to the concept of representing the identity and existence of the Betawi sarong, the concept is that the role and function of the sarong, in this case, is ultimately determined by the owner or user related to emotional ties and other elements of the culture, where the sarong can change its function according to changes, which underlies its initial function.

Keywords: Cultural Reality, Film, Betawi Sarong Culture, Si Doel the Movie, Roland Barthes Semiotics.

1. Introduction

As a form of mass communication, film has succeeded in becoming a commodity. It is complex, starting from producers and performers to various other supportive arts, such as music, fine arts, theater, and sound arts (Sarasjati 2016). Text is a piece of media that consists of a collection of signs that are never considered to carry a single meaning. Media texts always have ideologies and cultural messages formed through these signs (Badara 2014).

Film as a means of communication (Bordwell, Thompson, and Smith 2004). An "audiovisual film" is increasingly important in people's lives because it can simultaneously cause cognitive and affective effects. The film's effects, equipment, and setting succeed in making the images closer to reality so that the audience watching it feels like a real story unfolding before their eyes (Boggs 1992; Irwanto and Film 1999). Films also evoke certain emotions: happiness, pride, sadness, hatred, fear, anger, and others (Effendy 2003).

In the film *Si Doel Anak Sekolahan*, Doel talks about a young Betawi who dreams of going to college and becoming an engineer and can raise the status of his parents because of the Betawi national connotation of being 'lazy.' In the film's story, the character Doel changes the pattern of the Betawi tribe. Betawi must be smart. The film "Si Doel the Movie" became the subject of initial problems for the writer to research the film. In the short story section, Doel's film continues with the social genre with a family theme but leans more towards intimacy or romance, where Doel chooses to travel to the Netherlands with Mandra to apply for a job for his young cousin, Hans. Over time and by chance, Doel met Sarah where she was a woman who loved Doel but chose to leave because of Zaenab's love triangle. Doel had children after marrying Sarah. The peak was when Doel's son met his father, who looked stiff and did not have closeness between father and son until Sarah filed for divorce from Doel because Sarah loved Mak Nyak and Zaenab.

* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: tofasujarwoo@gmail.com

Regarding the topic that will be discussed in this issue, researchers found a scene where Mandra's character in the film "Si Doel the Movie" shows Mandra wearing a sarong and peci when he goes to Hans' house because the Amsterdam climate is freezing. The question is how the director wants to build a sense of reality for a character, Mandra, using the characteristics of sarong and peci as Betawi cultural identity.

This research studies the reality of sarong culture in the Betawi ethnic group, where the symbols or signs given by the film are constructed through the meaning of the message in the scene in Si Doel the Movie. This research focuses on how meaning is constructed in film messages that attempt to describe the reality of Betawi sarongs, both in the form of text/verbal messages (in dialogue and words) and non-verbal aspects, which include the technical code Mise-en-scene.

This research also tries to analyze how the audiovisuals created in this film are related to the values and culture contained in the film. In other words, this research assesses that the content of discourse messages is related to the socio-cultural conditions in which the discourse is produced.

The purpose of this research is to know and understand the reality of Betawi sarong culture, which is formed in the film Si Doel the Movie, and to gain knowledge from the director regarding the meaning of denotation, connotation, and myth through Roland Barthes' semiotics in the film si Doel the Movie

2. Literature Review

2.1. Film as Mass Media

The film gives birth to a work of cultural art that is transformed into mass media through the concept of cinema, which is recorded on celluloid tape or digital archives. Cinema as a mass media cannot be separated from the ideology that shapes it, which ultimately influences the language (style, phrases, and signs) used and the creation of knowledge, truth, and facts.

In mass communication theory (Severin 2011), Laswell stated the main functions of mass communication, including monitoring, correlation, and transmission of cultural heritage. This means monitoring, connecting, and transmitting cultural heritage. The film Si Doel provides insight into preserving one's culture, connecting with the broader community, and building Betawi culture through this film. Contrary to this view, McQuail argues that mass communication includes information, correlation, continuity, entertainment, and mobilization (McQuail 1996). At the continuum point, the film "si Doel the Movie" provides continuity in the reality of Betawi life based on the development of modernization. In terms of entertainment, the film "Si Doel the Movie" not only entertains the public but also integrates education into the positive culture of the Betawi people.

2.2. Film in Semiotics

Semiotics is very close to film because it can be used to dissect every research problem, one of which is suitable for studying the world of cinema. Films with visual characteristics contain much meaning regarding both verbal and nonverbal messages. These words are not implicit messages that cannot be seen in reality but are felt subconsciously and consciously by the filmmaker. This gives rise to the intention or objective behind the director trying to convey it through constructing the theme in the film "Si Doel the Movie."

Films are, of course, suitable when studied semiotically. In this study, semiotician Roland Barthes proposed an idea known as the "sequence of meaning," which consists of indicative meaning (dictionary and actual meaning) and inclusive, functional meaning (many meanings emerge from life). This differentiates Barthes' theory from Saussure's theory; in this case, Barthes wants to show the interaction between the text and its users' personal and cultural experiences, the interaction between conventions in the text, the text, and the conventions experienced and expected by the User.

Films are often made with many signs. The signage consists of many sign systems that work together to achieve the desired effect. The most essential things in cinema are image and sound: dialogue (and other sounds accompanying the image) and film music. The most crucial symbology in films is using symbolic signs that describe something.

2.3. *Sarong as Betawi Identity*

Betawi is a tribe that emerged from their culture from Malay, Chinese, and Arab immigrants. The entire Betawi culture was born from the same process. The history of the Betawi tribe experienced a period of political decline. Home to Betawi culture is a mixture of local and foreign ethnic groups such as Arab, Chinese, and Portuguese. Betawi characters have become a representation of Betawi society in all their cultural activities. This is due to the powerful influence of Arab and Chinese culture at the time of the birth of Betawi culture. The sarong became a Betawi symbol because Islamization influenced it from the 13th to 16th centuries when kiai and Sunan brought Islam to Indonesia by bringing cloth, which was used for worship activities so that in everyday life, the sarong is very attached to the Betawi people.

2.4. *Roland Barthes' Concept of Semiotic Analysis*

Meaning means that the object conveys information. In this case, the object wants to communicate and forms a measurable sign system (Kurniawan 2019). Barthes saw meaning as a holistic process with a structured structure. Meaning is not limited to language, but there are also non-language things. For example, we can see how semiotics generally treats films, television and radio programs, posters, and other forms of text as linguistic, language, syntax, and complex text meanings (Kurniawan 2001).

As an analysis that looks at sign systems, semiotics studies how people (humanity) interpret (meaning) things. Barthes in Alex (2003) said that signs mean that these objects not only carry the information that the object wants to convey but are also the structure of a structured sign system. Charles Sanders Pierce said a sign is "something that represents someone in some aspect or capacity" (Alex 2003).

3. **Research Methods**

This research is part of an interpretive research perspective. This type of research provides an excellent opportunity to offer alternative explanations (Denzin and Lincoln 2009; Stephen and Foss 2009). The method that is suitable for this research problem is the traditional semiotic method. The approach considered appropriate in this research is a qualitative approach. A qualitative approach is appropriate to provide a complete picture of existing reality. Reality is considered multiple, complex, pseudo, dynamic, and constructed, and truth is relative (Mulyana 2004; Salim 2006).

The Constructivist Research Model is a knowledge model that holds that knowledge and objective truth are the result of opinion (Ronda 2018). The unit of analysis in this research is the scenes that form a comprehensive dissection of the *mise-en-scene*, which produces the dramatization process of the film. The meanings of denotation and connotation in the scenes of the film *Doel the Movie* are explained through each scene, which is examined through *mise-en-scene*. The duration of the film is 85 minutes 34 seconds. Researchers select scenes in each scene using cinematic *mise-en-scene* code by selecting settings, costumes/makeup cameras, lights, and editing.

There are two types of sources for this research: primary and secondary. Primary data is data obtained directly from the content of the film shown. This primary data comes from documentation containing recordings of the film. Meanwhile, secondary data is data from other sources that can support this research, such as a literature study of relevant theories and information.

The data in this research are all facts and information that can be used as research instruments. The primary data in this research is selecting scenes for each scene in the film. Meanwhile, secondary data was obtained through interviews and other writings related to the research problem. The validity of the data in this research is based on theoretical triangulation techniques. The theoretical triangulation technique is carried out to test the validity of the data using more than one perspective in discussing the problems being studied so that more complete and comprehensive conclusions can be analyzed and drawn. Data analysis, according to Patton in Moleong (2021), is the process of arranging the sequence of data, organizing it into a pattern, category, and basic sequence unit. In qualitative research, data analysis is carried out throughout the research. This is done through research data descriptions, examination of existing themes, and highlighting specific themes (Creswell and Plano Clark 2018).

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Reality Scenes of Betawi Culture in The Film "Si Doel The Movie"



Figure 1. Scene 6 (20th minute 01st second)

4.1.1. First Level Marking System (Denotational Meaning)

The shooting in this scene was carried out using the medium shot technique, a medium-distance shot that shows the waist up. This scene shows each character's waist up, all wearing clothing with matching or dark colors. In this scene, it is shown that Mandra talks to Hans to ask Hans to take a photo of himself at the train door far from where they are sitting, and not long after, they rush to the train door.

4.1.2. Second Level Marking System (Connotation Meaning)

The Medium Shot technique was used in this scene to take the picture. The medium shot, which shows the bodies of the three male characters down to the hips, aims to show a firm way of walking, which shows the confidence and courage that is trying to be conveyed in this scene. The movement of Mandra's right hand, which patted Hans' thigh and pointed towards the train door with a smiling and excited expression, showed Mandra's impatient attitude to be photographed by Hans at the train door.

4.1.3. Myth

In the social construction that has occurred so far, Mandra's attitude in this film perpetuates the stigma that has been developing that the Betawi people have a very innocent character, are noisy when they speak and have never seen or had references to cultures other than Betawi itself, so it seems that will be uneducated. This increasingly places the image of the Betawi people in a marginal or marginalized position. However, the visualization of Mandra shown in this scene also tries to be turned upside down by the character Doel, who shows a calmer attitude in acting and speaking, like the characters of non-Betawi people.



Figure 2. Scene 3 (19th minute 28th second)

4.1.4. First Level Marking System (Denotational Meaning)

In this scene, the shooting was done using a Medium Long Shot, which shows three men standing on a platform in the train station area where there are trains on the tracks in front of them passing by accompanied by several people. Who was also waiting for the train?

4.1.5. Second Level Marking System (Connotation Meaning)

This scene shows a picture taken using the medium long shot method, which shows Doel, Mandra, and Hans from head to below the knees standing in the platform area where trains pass by and several people are waiting for them to arrive. Train. The position of the body, movements, and position of the hands, and Mandra's sharp gaze at Hans, who is his interlocutor in the scene, confirms that the conversation being held is a severe but relaxed conversation related to the process of traveling to Hans' residence, which will be taken by train.

4.1.6. Myth

In the social construction that has occurred so far, the attitude of Mandra, who in this film represents a genuine Betawi person, is firmly labeled that the Betawi people have been labeled with stereotypes as traditional people such as lacking insight/knowledge and being uneducated.

The Mandra visualization shown in this scene is trying to be broken by Doel, who in this scene shows a calmer and more orderly attitude where Doel tries to shift the concept and stereotype that the Betawi people have been labeled as traditional people.

4.2. Scene Representation Of Identity And Existence Of Betawi Sarung Culture In The Film "Si Doel The Movie"



Figure 3. Scene 1 (17th minute 56th second)

4.2.1. First Level Marking System (Denotational Meaning)

In this scene, the shooting was done using a Long Shot (LS) by showing the two characters, Mandra and Doel. The conversation was held in an outdoor area before Amsterdam Schiphol Airport. The outdoor light during the day looks bright, and instrumental music is in the background of this scene.

4.2.2. Second Level Marking System (Connotation Meaning)

The Long Shot (TS) shooting technique in this scene shows Mandra's body gesture slightly bent and slightly shaking while starting to wear a sarong, giving the connotation that he is showing and wanting to convey to Doel that his body is not strong enough to withstand the cold weather in Amsterdam.

4.2.3. Myth

Mandra's sentences, gestures, and expressions visualized in this scene show that the sarong is no longer only seen and considered in the context of its function, namely as a complement to clothing and body covering/protection. However, other functions that develop or follow behind it become equally important. The sarong that Mandra suddenly uses becomes a status and identity related to a symbol of trust.



Figure 4. Scene 5 (19th minute 50th minute)

4.2.4. First Level Marking System (Denotational Meaning)

This scene has no dialogue, and the Medium Shot (MS) technique in this scene is done by focusing on Mandra's facial expression, who is smiling and laughing to herself, as well as her gesture of tilting her head to the left with her left hand holding the camera for selfies.

4.2.5. Second Level Marking System (Connotation Meaning)

The Medium Close Up (MCU) technique in this scene shows 3 (three) male characters (Mandra, Doel, and Hans) sitting together on a bench in the training room. Hans and Doel looked out the train window as if they were unwinding by looking at the view. Mandra's facial expression, smiling and laughing to herself, as well as her gesture of tilting her head to the left with her left hand holding the smartphone camera, shows her joy because she is in Amsterdam and wants to take a selfie.

4.2.6. Myth

Of course, in this case, the sarong worn on Mandra's body no longer only functions as a body covering. However, it is also part of society's social and cultural development. The changing function of the sarong also causes a reaction to the internal situation of the culture or ethnicity concerned. Suppose the sarong is symbolically associated with a position and situation that is considered essential to the owner's or user's values. In that case, it will be difficult for the sarong to be modified.

5. Conclusion

In scenes related to the reality of Betawi culture in society in everyday life, several concepts are found that represent this, which are represented through second-level markings and also myths, namely that the social construction that has occurred so far, the attitude of Mandra, who in this film represents a genuine Betawi person, is closely labeled as Betawi people have been labeled with stereotypes as traditional people, such as lacking insight/knowledge and being uneducated. This increasingly places the image of the Betawi people in a marginal or marginalized position. Apart from that, there is a shift in stigma and stereotypes towards Betawi people, which are trying to be overturned by the character Doel, who shows a calmer attitude in acting and speaking, like the characters of non-Betawi people. Through the character of Doel, the stigma and stereotypes that make Betawi people seem marginalized are shifted to become educated Betawi people (scenes 6 and 7).

Meanwhile, in the scenes related to the Concept of Identity Representation and the Existence of Betawi Sarong Culture, several concepts are found that represent this, which are represented through second-level markings and also myths, namely that facts are obtained that show a phenomenon that sarongs are no longer just looked at. Furthermore, it is considered in the context of its function as a complement to clothing and body covering/protection. However, other functions that develop or follow behind it become equally important. Then, the role and function of the sarong, in this case, is ultimately determined by the owner or user, related to emotional ties and other elements of their culture, where the sarong can change function according to changes that are behind its initial function (scenes 1 and 2).

References

- Alex, Sobur. 2003. "Semiotika Komunikasi." *Bandung: PT. Remaja Rosdakarya*.
- Badara, Aris. 2014. *Analisis Wacana: Teori, Metode, Dan Penerapannya Pada Wacana Media*. Prenada Media.
- Boggs, Joseph M. 1992. *Cara Menilai Sebuah Film (The Art of Watching Film)*. Jakarta Indonesia.
- Bordwell, David, Kristin Thompson, and Jeff Smith. 2004. *Film Art: An Introduction*. Vol. 7. McGraw-Hill New York.
- Creswell, John W., and Vicky L. Plano Clark. 2018. "Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Design." *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research Approach* 849.
- Denzin, Norman K., and Yvonna S. Lincoln. 2009. "Handbook of Qualitative Research, Terjemahan Dariyatno, at. Al." *Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar*.
- Effendy, Onong Uchjana. 2003. "Ilmu, Teori Dan Filsafat Komunikasi." *Bandung: Citra Aditya Bakti* 200.
- Irwanto, Budi, and Ideologi Film. 1999. "Militer: Hegemoni Militer Dalam Sinema Indonesia." *Yogyakarta: Media Pressindo*.
- Kurniawan, A. 2001. *Semiologi Roland Barthes*. Magelang: Yayasan Indonesia Tera.
- Kurniawan, Adhadya Alif. 2019. "Analisis Semiotika Roland Barthes Dalam Film Dokumenter Sexy Killer."
- McQuail, Denis. 1996. "Teori Komunikasi Massa: Suatu Pengantar."
- Moleong, Lexy J. 2021. *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif*. PT Remaja Rosdakarya.
- Mulyana, Deddy. 2004. *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif: Paradigma Baru Ilmu Komunikasi Dan Ilmu Sosial Lainnya*. PT. Remaja Rosdakarya.
- Ronda, Andi Mirza. 2018. *Tafsir Kontemporer Ilmu Komunikasi: Tinjauan Teoretis, Epistemologi, Aksiologi*. Indigo Media.
- Salim, Agus. 2006. "Teori Dan Paradigma Penelitian Sosial: Buku Sumber Untuk Penelitian Kualitatif."
- Sarasjati, Gadang Mulyatama. 2016. "Representasi Nilai-Nilai Feminisme Liberal Dalam Film (Analisis Semiotik Film Merry Riana: Mimpi Sejuta Dollar)."
- Severin, Werner J. 2011. "Teori Komunikasi: Sejarah, Metode, Dan Terapan Di Dalam Media Massa."
- Stephen, Littlejohn W., and Karen A. Foss. 2009. "Teori Komunikasi." *Jakarta: Salemba Humanika*.