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CULTURE-BASED ANIMATION:
COMMODIFICATION PRACTICES AND CULTURE PRESERVATION

Gede Pasek Putra Adnyana Yasa

Sekolah Tinggi Desain Bali
pasekputra@std-bali.ac.id

ABSTRACT

Industrial growth in the animation sector triggers the practice of commodification of culture. Culture of a place used as an idea or as an idea in the creation of animation. The practice of cultural commodification in animation produces cultural-based animation products. Culture-based animation was initially only an implementation of cultural preservation. But as its development becomes a commodity product. Some of the world's animations created as a result of the commodification of culture include animated films "Mulan" about Chinese legends, "Kung Fu Panda" about kungfu culture, "Upin Ipin" about Malaysian culture, "Adit and Sopo Jarwo" and "Knight Kriss" about Indonesian culture, and "Si Uma" about Balinese culture. This study aims to analyze the animation that results from the commodification of culture. Data were taken from visual analysis and in-depth interviews. This study uses qualitative methods with interpretive qualitative approaches. The theory used is the theory of commodification from Vincent Mosco. The results of the study show that some animated films that carry cultural themes are used as exchange rates for the benefit of capital. Before becoming a commodity, the animation that elevated culture as an idea of creation was limited to the preservation and introduction of culture to the public. As culture-based animation receives positively to the public, it ultimately becomes a product and business area as well as an effort to preserve culture.

Keywords: animation, culture, commodification, cultural preservation.

INTRODUCTION

Industrial growth in the field of animation provides opportunities for the practice of commodification of culture. Culture of a place used as ideas / ideas in the creation of animation. Commodification occurs because producers and animators know the number of different cultures in each country in the world. Cultural values as the idea of creating animation provides quite promising opportunities. The cultural value that is embodied into animation is not only an effort to preserve culture, but ultimately it becomes a business opportunity. This assumption is evident from several animated films that are created with cultural ideas that sell well in the market and attract the audience. Even some of them are able to penetrate the world's top 10 incomes. One example is the Kung Fu Panda animated film. Although not specifically displaying the culture of a particular region, but the source of the idea of the animated Kung Fu Panda film was taken from the culture of Kung Fu in China.

Besides Kung Fu Panda, there is also an animated film called "Mulan" that tells the story of a Chinese legend. Another animated film that takes the idea of cultural values is Upin Ipin's animation. Upin Ipin which is produced in Malaysia is quite popular among Indonesian children. As is well known that the animated film Upin Ipin displays Malaysian culture through the Malay language and environmental background in the Malaysian village. While in Indonesia also has developed local animations that take cultural themes. One of the animated film production in the country that takes a cultural theme titled "Knight Kris". Knight Kris animation is taken from the puppet story. Besides Knight Kris, there is also a local animated film produced in Bali called Si Uma with the theme of Balinese culture.

This study aims to analyze animated films based on culture as an effort to preserve culture and the practice of commodification. The theory used in this research is the commodification theory from Fairclough. The research data was taken from visual analysis, observation and in-depth interviews. Visual analysis was carried out on several culture-based animated films, including: Kung Fu Panda, Mulan, Upin Ipin, Adit & Sopo Jarwo, Knight Kris, and Si Uma. Furthermore, observations and interviews were conducted with people who were

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interested in watching animated films based on culture. The data obtained were then analyzed using an interpretive qualitative approach.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Some culture based animations

First, the animation entitled "Kung Fu Panda". Kung Fu Panda animation takes story ideas from Kung Fu culture. Kung Fu is a martial art that is considered the most ancient of China and is famous in the world. Animated Kung Fu Panda made stories in ancient Chinese fictional land inhabited by anthropomorphic animals. The anthropomorphic animals include Po, Shifu, Oogway, Tai Lung, Tigress, Monkey, Mantis, Viper, and Crane. In the story, it is said that Po is the name of a panda who is a martial arts maniac. Po really idolizes the Kung Fu master group called Furious Five. Kung Fu master group is trained by a teacher named Master Shifu. Shifu and Oogway (Shifu's teacher) held a martial arts tournament to identify the Legendary Dragon Warrior in the Furious Five. When Master Oogway appoints a Dragon Warrior, Master Oogway chooses Po by accident. Po studied Kung Fu tenaciously, trained by Master Shifu. Po was trained hard to be prepared to fight and defeat Tai Lung, a disciple from Shifu who was thought to have escaped from prison. The assumption is true, Tai Lung met with Po and fought with their martial arts skills. As a result with his perseverance in training, Po finally able to defeat Tai Lung.

Second, the animation titled "Mulan" is one of the animations produced by Walt Disney. The story from the animated film Mulan was taken from a Chinese legend named Hua Mulan. Hua Mulan is an ordinary woman, not a princess and not very beautiful. Mulan has a strong and decisive female character. All characters involved in the Mulan animated film are visualized according to Chinese art characters. This animation tells the story of the attack of a dynasty in the People's Republic of China by the Huns. The attack required the emperor to establish compulsory military service for all his people. The emperor ordered every family to send a man to fight. A heavy burden was experienced by the Fa family, because the only male member of the Fa family was Mulan's father. Mulan's father is a war veteran but he has aged. Mulan who cared about her father's condition then disguised herself as a man. Mulan joined the war as his father's successor. Mulan's presence and assisted by her friends finally succeeded in hindering the enemy. After a long war, finally Mulan's true identity was known to the enemy. The enemy rose again to attack the palace and almost killed the emperor. But thanks to the hard work and struggle of Mulan with her friends, finally managed to save the emperor and the entire dynasty from enemy attacks.

Figure 1. Animated Kung Fu Panda and Mulan
Source: https://google.com

Third, Upin Ipin's animation draws the story of children's culture and society in Malaysia. Upin Ipin's animation is at the same time promoting Malaysian culture. Upin Ipin's animated story ideas are lifted from the daily lives of children in Malaysia that illustrate excellent multiculturalism and tolerance. Multi-ethnic is represented through Upin Ipin's friends. Examples are; Mei-mei is a small ethnic Chinese girl, Rajoo from Indian ethnicity, Susanti from Indonesia, as well as Fizi and others. Animated films based on Indonesian culture have also been produced. The Indonesian culture-based animations include: Knight Kris, Sopo Jarwo, Si Uma. When viewed from its development, Indonesian animation began to be produced in 1955

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(Prakosa, 2010: 70). Since 1955, Indonesian animation production has shown positive developments.

Fourth, the animation of domestic production entitled "Knight Kris" is a 3-dimensional animation that elevates Indonesian puppet culture. The characters involved in the Knight Kris animation are made to resemble puppets. The atmosphere in the wayang story is strengthened by the background of the temples. Knight Kris animation is adopted from wayang stories, so that it can be used as one of the smart and inspiring entertainment choices. Knight Kris animation can provide education about Indonesian culture. Furthermore, there is an animation that elevates Balinese culture titled Si Uma. The Uma is the name of the main character with ignorant and witty characters. Si Uma's figure is likened to the ghosts of children who like to disturb others. The Uma is visualized using udeng (Balinese headband for men), not wearing clothes, and only using kamen (cloth wrapped as a substitute for pants) colored poleng (black and white) from the waist down. The Uma is also visualized as a genie (ghost) with no legs so that it is like the one in the fairy tale Aladdin. In Balinese culture, the term "Uma" is a nickname for a bird repellent doll in a rice field. In this animation, the character Si Uma is assisted by another character named Ketut and Ayu. Ketut figure plays an employee in the general office, and Ayu acts as an office secretary.

Figure 2. Animated Upin Ipin and Knight Kris
Source: https://google.com

Finally, the animation titled "Adit & Sopo Jarwo" is an animation of domestic production with the theme of Indonesian culture, especially Javanese culture. Cultural elements are displayed through the characters, as well as their environment (background). Betawi culture (Javanese) is represented through the character of Haji Udin, Sundanese culture (Javanese) is played by Kang Ujang as a chicken noodle trader, and Javanese culture is generally represented through Sopo and Jarwo figures. Javanese typical dialect that looks most prominent from Sopo and Jarwo figures. Besides being visualized through characters, Javanese culture is also displayed through typical Indonesian background settings. One of them is the environment with chicken noodle carts and a grocery shop. Such environments can only be found in Indonesia.

Figure 3. Animated Adit & Sopo Jarwo and Si Uma
Source: https://google.com

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Animation Adit and Sopo Jarwo convey exemplary messages in social life. As ideally an animation, which not only shows visual quality, but is also able to convey a message well to the audience. As stated by Abrori (2009: 1), that animation is one of the great ways to convey a message. The same thing also stated by Gjalle (20017: 27), that animation which includes audio visual, is quite instrumental in conveying messages and ideas to be conveyed to the audience. The effectiveness of a message to reach the target or audience through animation cannot be separated from technical quality. One important technical aspect is the elements that make up cinema or better known as cinematic elements. According to Pratista (2008: 2), cinematic elements include both the style and the way to process the material and the animation material.

The practice of cultural commodification in animation

Animation that takes a cultural theme can be said as a practice of commodification. This assumption can be seen from his opinion Piliang (2003: 34) which states that commodification does not only occur in consumer goods, but also affects the arts and culture in general. The practice of cultural commodification in animation can be done through three aspects, namely production, distribution, and consumption. As expressed by Fairclough (1995: 207), that commodification is a fairly broad concept, not only concerning the problem of production, but also how the goods are organized and conceptualized in terms of commodity production, distribution, and consumption.

The practice of cultural commodification begins with the process of production by constructing culture in a particular place into an interesting story. The story that has been constructed is then translated into animation media. As some examples of animation that have been described above, that culture that is packaged into animation media can be quite successful. One indicator of its success can be seen from its ability to reap the world's top 10 incomes. In addition, some animations are also able to exist on television. All of that indicates that animation has power as the medium of choice in the practice of cultural commodification. Animation has its own charm and is quite capable of conveying cultural information. It cannot be denied, indirectly animation is enough to play a role in promoting the culture of a place or region.

The results of the widespread distribution of animation indirectly have an impact on increasing public consumption of animation works. The consumers are targeted ranging from children to adults. Animation "Kung Fu Panda" and also "Mulan" has been circulating widely and become the consumption of the world community. While the Upin Ipin animation is the consumption of children and adults in the Asian region. While the animation of Adit & Sopo Jarwo, and Knight Kris are consumed by local Indonesian people, even Si Uma is only consumed by local Balinese people. The wider spread of animated animation of cultural commodities can have a positive impact. One positive impact is that it can provide knowledge about the culture of a place to the wider community. The public can know the cultures that exist outside of their place of residence, as well as outside their country.

Animation as a means of cultural preservation

Animation that promotes culture is a means of cultural preservation. The choice of animation as a means of cultural preservation is triggered by traditional media that are less relevant and less in demand these days. Advances in technology and information greatly affect and spoil everyone, not least in terms of listening to a culture. Nearly some people are less enthusiastic about going out to listen to the attractions of a culture that is traditionally performed. The presence of animation media becomes one of the choices to introduce the culture of a place or a wider area. The public becomes aware of many cultures through animation, and without having to leave the house to witness traditional attractions. Because animation can spread a culture widely throughout the world.

The many animations that are circulating and consumed as public entertainment have gradually become a culture. As expressed by Prakosa (2010: 70-77), that in its development, animation is recognized as culture, as a product and cultural attitude. Animation is able to become a culture, not apart from the media which is very instrumental as a means of distribution. Piliang (2018: 78) states, the media can shape behavior, thought patterns,

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perceptions and even dictate. Regarding animation, the media that play a role and are easily accessible to most people around the world are television. According to Danesi (2010: 187), television can be a powerful medium in stimulating radical social, moral and political changes in various cultures around the world. Whatever is broadcast on television will be received by the audience, and in the end it will be able to change the mindset. Culture-based animation can be a source of knowledge and education. The knowledge gained includes everything related to culture displayed in the animation. The audience will automatically get an information according to the message delivered.

CONCLUSION

The animation that is produced uplifts culture not purely as a means of cultural preservation, but also becomes a commodity. Culture-based animation has a broad market potential and has considerable business opportunities. Everyone must always want to know and learn a culture. Both the culture of the region and the culture that exists in a place or outside the area of residence. In addition, the culture that is raised through animation media and can spread widely throughout the world will be a pride for those who feel part of the culture. Such potentials can be utilized by animators or animation producers. The practice of cultural commodification in the form of animation occurs through the processes of production, distribution, and consumption. Animation that elevates culture is not only distributed to people in a place, but also distributed to the wider community or the world community. Through the use of current technological and information developments, it can be believed that the distribution of animation will be more widespread. Distribution can be done through cinema, television, VCD or DVD movies, or Youtube. Besides that, it is also possible for distribution to be carried out through other media following the development of technology and information. Culture-based animation eventually became a practice of commodification as well as a means of cultural preservation.

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