



# Memetics and Filmmaker Habitus in the Indonesian Film Industry

Joko Utomo Hadibroto<sup>1</sup>, Dian Nurdiansyah<sup>2\*</sup>

## ABSTRACT

Typically, film companies produce films that are ready for distribution to cinemas. Film work is the result of collective work. Starting from the involvement of producers, directors, screenwriters, cameramen, and editors, to artistic stylists (production team) through pre-production, production, and post-production processes. Although it is not uncommon to find that film works are not single and sterile works of replication or imitation, which refer to patterns and systems - including film production management and its entities - that have been previously established as a cultural industry. For this reason, the author uses the concept of Meme initiated by Richard Dawkins and synthesized with Pierre Bourdieu's sociological concept, namely: (Habitus x Capital) + Domain = Practice, as well as the cultural industry. The cause of film workers imitating previous works is the rationale for researching the film industry, especially in Indonesia. This research aims to prove that the phenomenon of memetics and habitus seneas occurs in the film industry in various countries, both developed and developing countries. To achieve this goal, the method applied in this research is the descriptive qualitative method. Data is obtained from documentation in the form of film works, especially the film Gundala, which involves the production team. The results of the analysis show that there are memetics and habitus of filmmakers in the film industry. This can be found in a number of production houses that carry out the practice, including Jagad BumiLangit, Falcon Pictures, and Screenplay. Almost every film work is imitative. The implications of this imitation can also be found in several cases of imitation of film works: in Hong Kong, Taiwan, Thailand, India, Japan, Europe, and America.

## Keywords

Sineas, film industry, memetics, habitus, qualitative descriptive

---

To cite this article (7<sup>th</sup> APA style):

Hadibroto, J. U. & Nurdiansyah, D. (2023). Memetics and filmmaker habitus in the Indonesian film industry. *Journal Communication Spectrum: Capturing New Perspectives in Communication* 13(1), 30-41. <https://dx.doi.org/https://doi.org/10.36782/jcs.v13i1.2385>

## INTRODUCTION

In essence, the film industry in producing films in various countries can refer to two things: (1) film production that seeks to create a market; and (2) film production that is based on meeting established market tastes. In the context of film production that relies on creating new markets, it can be categorized as a production that prioritizes creativity and innovation. Meanwhile, a production that relies on the demands of established market tastes is principally profit-oriented. The result of production from both sides is a film work which in the process goes through the stages of Pre-Production, Production, and Post-Production. And film work is the result of collective

---

<sup>1, 2</sup> Faculty of Communication, Universitas Pancasila, Jakarta, Indonesia

\* **Corresponding author:** diannurdiansyah@univpancasila.ac.id

work, in which there are all functions, responsibilities, and positions; executive producer, producer, director, screenwriter/screenplay writer, editor, camera stylist, artistic stylist, lighting stylist, sound stylist, and so on. The series of processes are inseparable from the role of filmmakers or film workers in the company or institution and its production management system.

In terms of its purpose, film production can also be categorized as a cultural product as well as a communication product. As a cultural product, film content tends to contain aesthetic elements that usually meet quality standards, which are then seen as works of art. It is not surprising, then, if the film work often gets an appreciative response from parties who have competence in the field of film through festivals, for example. However, it is not uncommon for the work to also receive a positive response from audiences who can appreciate it.

As a communication product, the film is seen as a medium for conveying messages that involve audiences. In this context, it does not matter whether the audience responds appreciatively or simply as entertainment. In conclusion, the most important thing is that the film is a communication product because the film work aims to be watched by involving many people (audience), which is adjusted to the target market or target audience. In terms of a target audience, film content is adjusted to demographic, geographic, and psychographic factors. Typically, film content refers to the format (live-action, animation), genre, theme, screenplay, setting, actor or actress profiles, as well as historical traces and cultural elements prevailing in the country of origin.

The description of the two objectives of film work that have been mentioned above, at least reflects that each film work has a diverse response when it is shown in the cinema. However, the two objectives of film production, which seem to tend to be contradictory, do not mean that they ignore the quality side. Many film productions that prioritize profit are also loaded with elements of quality. Both in terms of acting, screenplay, cinematography, editing, and directing. This can be seen in the genres of superheroes, comedy, action, and horror films, which increasingly rely on the sophistication of digital technology.

This paper, irrespective of profit or non-profit orientation, explores the issue of imitation and replication in the film industry, particularly in Indonesia. This phenomenon is evident in both film production companies and institutions, as well as in the final film products themselves. While no creative work is entirely original, there is a tendency among filmmakers to imitate or replicate existing themes, scenarios, scenes, and even film elements or entities such as posters, company logos, star systems, and website designs. Recognizing that similar practices exist in other film industries worldwide, this paper aims to investigate the prevalence of imitation and replication practices within the Indonesian film industry. According to Wijayanto (2013), "When we imitate someone's behavior, something is transferred which can then continually be transferred from one person to another. This "something" is what Dawkins refers to as a meme" (p. 17). Richard Dawkins (as cited in Mahzar, 2006), a neo-Darwinian biologist, states that a meme is a replicator, an entity that reproduces itself (p. 57). Memes are derived through the process of cultural learning, primarily through imitation. The philosopher Daniel Dennett (as cited in Mahzar, 2006), describes meme as a type of virus, specifically the virus of thought (p. 61). Dawkins (as cited in Wijayanto, 2013, p. 47) further compares memes that reside in the human mind becomes parasites within the human brain that transform humans into instruments for their reproduction, much like a virus parasitizes the genetic machinery of its host cell. To support the concept of memes as "mind viruses," this study incorporates a mathematical concept or generative formula proposed by Pierre Bourdieu (as cited in Harker, Mahar, & Wilkes, 2005, p. 9):  $(\text{Habitus} \times \text{Capital}) + \text{Domain} = \text{Practice}$ , which describes human behavioral patterns in carrying out their activities.

Cultural characters are transferred from one person to another, just like genes and viruses, therefore cultural evolution can be understood through the same basic mechanisms of reproduction, dispersal, variation, and natural selection that underlie biological evolution (Heylighen & Chielens, 2009, p.2). This presupposes the existence of a cultural unit of information that can be compared to the biological unit of information, the gene. This cultural unit of information is then called a meme, which can be interpreted as a pattern of information that resides in an individual's memory. Memes work in similar ways to genes in the biological world, but the different places they develop in are fundamental differences between the two and have led to the specialized study of memes by a new science called memetics.

"Memetics can then be defined as the theoretical and empirical science that studies the replication, spread, and evolution of memes. Memes differ in their degree of fitness, i.e. adaptedness to the sociocultural environment in which they propagate. Fitter memes will be more successful in being communicated, "infecting" more individuals and thus spreading over a larger population. This biological analogy allows us to apply Darwinian concepts and theories to model cultural evolution" (Heylighen & Chielens, 2009).

Referring to the above statement, memetics can be defined as the theoretical and empirical science that studies the multiplication, propagation, and evolution of memes. Memes differ in their degree of appropriateness, i.e., adaptability in the socio-cultural environment in which they evolve. Memes that are more suitable will be more successfully communicated, "infecting" more individuals and hence spreading over a larger population. This biological analogy allows us to apply Darwinian concepts and theories to cultural evolution models).

## **METHODS**

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach, with a theoretical paradigm of cultural studies. According to Hall (1997), a cultural study is a discursive formation, a cluster (or formation) of ideas, images, and practices that provide ways of expressing forms of knowledge, and behavior associated with a particular topic, social activity, or institutional action in society.

Cultural studies research is based on three dimensions (Ida, 2014), level of experience (real daily experience), text or discourse (media text or social discourse of society), and social context (social context in which the phenomenon occurs/creates). In this cultural studies research, the author uses the social context dimension or the social context of the phenomenon that occurs.

The data source in this research is the film *Gundala*, which was obtained from the Jagad Bumi Langit website. The website contains all the information and a fully documented description of the film *Gundala*.

In this research, the author uses documentation sources obtained from the Jagad Bumi Langit website regarding the film *Gundala*. According to Sugiyono (2008: p.82), document research is a record of events that have passed. Documents can take the form of writings, pictures, or monumental works of a person. Documents in writing include diaries, life histories, stories, biographies, regulations, and policies. Documents include images such as photographs, life drawings, sketches, and others.

The data analysis method used in this research is qualitative data analysis. According to Sugiyono (2008: 89), data analysis is the process of systematically searching and arranging data obtained from interviews, field notes, and documentation, by organizing data into categories, breaking it down into units, synthesizing, arranging it into patterns, choosing which ones are important and which ones will be studied, and providing conclusions so that they are easily understood by oneself and others.

According to Davies and Mosdell (2006), a topic in communication and media studies in cultural studies is media. One of the issues is; What are the factors that determine the industrial production and distribution of commercial media products? To answer the research question, the author uses Pierre Bourdieu's sociological mathematical concept, namely,  $(\text{habitus} \times \text{capital}) + \text{domain} = \text{practice}$ , and the concept of memes initiated by Richard Dawkins.

Industrial production can include the film industry. And the film is an industrial medium, capable of distributing commercial products from a producer-distributor - cinema/cinema. This sequential process in its production is mediated by the habitus, capital, domain, and practices of the filmmakers or film workers as agents.

Memetics was born out of the notion that the worlds of biology and culture are parallel in terms of the spread of their elements. The elements that makeup culture are transmitted from one person to another as a virus spreads. One person's ideas, attitudes, and behaviors influence others who may imitate them, who then become agents of transmission to more people. In this way, cultural elements can be compared to a "mind virus", which is reproduced from one mind to another through communication or imitation. Brodie then uses memetics as a perspective on various issues concerning human reason. He argues that human thought is not always one's own idea. He uses the term mind virus to name the memes that enter the human mind. They are contagious cultural

elements that spread quickly to all levels of society and change people's thinking and lives (Brodie, 2005: 3). The mind virus is a cultural institution that contains elements of penetration, perfect multiplication, and dissemination, an institution designed for the specific purpose of preserving and spreading viruses, referred to as designer viruses.

Before the emergence of this institution, the virus of reason had already developed itself into a powerful cultural tool. Brodie calls institutions that develop by their own power to perpetuate themselves cultural viruses.

About the phenomenon of imitation in film works or all its elements, the concepts of Dawkins and Bourdieu are very relevant to be used as an analytical knife. In addition, film work as a cultural industry certainly cannot be separated from the concepts offered by Mark Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno (2002) because, in principle, it is undeniable that the film industry is also part of the cultural industry as well as the media industry.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

At its core, the film industry is both a cultural industry and a mass communication industry. This means that, in terms of its purpose, film production can be categorized as a cultural product as well as a communication product. As a cultural product, film content tends to contain aesthetic elements, which usually meet quality standards that are then seen as works of art. It is not surprising, then, if the film work often gets an appreciative response from parties who have competence in the field of film through festivals, for example. However, it is not uncommon for the work to also receive a positive response from audiences who can appreciate it. In a free and concise sense, the commodities that are the result of the culture industry are constructed in such a way as to realize their value in the marketplace. Both conditions and profit motives determine the nature of various cultural forms. Industrially, cultural production is a process of standardization whereby products take the same form as commodities. Indonesian horror films, for example, often feature ugly and scary creatures, which are often physically manifested as *gendruwo*, *kuntilanak*, *pocong*, ghosts, and others. Horkheimer and Adorno (2002) criticize the media; film, radio, and magazines for making up a system that is uniform as a whole and in every part.

In detail, in many kinds of literature related to mass culture or pop culture, it is explained that the term culture industry is a free and resistant term, and has a role to absorb something related to the fate of culture in society, which has been highly instrumented rationally and bureaucratically in late capitalism.

In the context of popular culture, the cultural industry is understood to be similar to the standard factory that produces cultural goods - through magazines, films, radio, and television - to manipulate the passive masses; offering pleasure through the consumption of popular culture, thus making people accept it, no matter how difficult the economic situation is. And also, ignores the quality work of his films, which tend to be repetitive or imitative.

Finally, according to Horkheimer and Adorno (as cited in Jay, 2005, p. 56), culture industries may cultivate false needs; that is, needs created and satisfied by capitalism. Cultural industries create mass culture. The modern perspective, states, is that mass culture is the existence of a single market where goods are produced. Then the media also plays a role in controlling production and distribution.

Talking film production cannot be separated from the medium that conveys its message to the audience, namely, cinema. In Indonesia, the cinema network is controlled and dominated by the XXI or 21, CGV, and Cinemaxx (Cinapolis) groups that show a number of films from film producers and distributors who produce uniform genres; horror/mystic, action, superhero, and sci-fi. Both XXI, CGV, and Cinemaxx are multiplex cinemas that show films based on their respective channels and distributors.

The XXI cinema chain was founded by entrepreneur Sudwikatmono in 1987. This form of cineplex or multiplex cinema, in the late 1980s and 1990s, was dominated by American and European (Hollywood) films. However, in the mid-1990s, criminal, kung fu, and wuxia genre films from Hong Kong productions - before Hong Kong was united with China - also graced its cinema screens.

However, in the mid-2000s, South Korean company CGV Cinemas joined the Indonesian market through its network cinema. CGV was originally named Blitz Megaplex and CGV Blitz, which was first built in Bandung and then Jakarta. CGV was founded in 1996 in Seoul, South Korea, in collaboration with Golden Harvest and Village Roadshow. The films shown are somewhat different. In addition to South Korean films, festival-grade films or some films outside the XXI network are also screened.

Cinepolis, originally named Cinemaxx, is a Mexican film company, which has many cinemas in various cities in Indonesia. Cinepolis was founded in 1947 by Enrique Ramirez Villalon in Morelia, Mexico. Similar to CGV, in addition to screening Hollywood films, it also shows Mexican films and festival classes.

The three cinema chains also screen Indonesian films - although Indonesian films tend to be dominated by the horror/mystical genre - and Hollywood blockbusters and box office films. The fact that these films are screened in dominant cinemas indicates that the films produced tend to be stereotypical.

Horror genre films are produced by subscription film companies. Likewise, the action and superhero genres are produced by the same company. This is not a matter of product specialization for differential purposes. It is more about targeting an audience that has an established market taste. The formula is that tastes basically never change, but repeat. If horror, action, or superhero genres are popular, it is because they have been popular in the past.

The production process of producer-distributor - cinema gives rise to a profile of film companies in Indonesia that are quite productive. This can be used as a significant indication of the number of film productions that these film companies have produced to be screened in cinemas.

The "meme virus" that has infected Indonesian filmmakers as a cultural industry can be described as follows:

The film company Falcon Pictures, established in 2010, has also been active in the music industry and feature film industry, taking over film distribution and buying copyrights, as well as restoring old films. Currently, more than 300 films belonging to Falcon Pictures, which includes a number of films of Benyamin S, Warkop, Rhoma Irama, and some quite legendary films. Falcon Pictures' films that have been released in cinemas are dominated by the comedy genre (Comic 8, My Stupid Boss, Warkop DKI Reborn: Jangkrik Boss, Benyamin Biang Kerok, Gile Lu Ndro, Pancaran Sinar Petromak: Gaya Mahasiswa, and others). Falcon has also remade films that were successful in their time (Warkop DKI Reborn, Arini, Si Doel The Movie, Pancaran Sinar Petromak: Gaya Mahasiswa).

Then Maxima Pictures, founded in 2004 - now merged with Falcon Pictures - often produces horror films, including Tali Pocong Perawan, Sumpah Pocong di Sekolah, Tiren: Die Yesterday, Satan Budeg, Mati Suri, Susuk Pocong, Paku Kuntilanak, Hantu Tanah Kusir, Nenek Gayung, Grandpa Cangkul, Jaga Pocong, Reva: Guna-Guna, and so on).

Screenplay Productions (2010) - a production house under Surya Citra Media Indonesia within the Entertainment Group - tends to produce teen romance genres. This genre specialization parallels SCTV (Surya Citra Televisi), which often airs teen romance soap operas. This is because Screenplay Productions is a form of business diversification from SCTV.

Soraya Intercine Films (SIF), one of the largest film companies established in 1982, often produces horror/mystical and comedy films, including Telaga Angker, Ratu Sakti Calon Arang, Atas Boleh Bawah Boleh, Bangunnya Nyi Roro Kidul, The Love Adventure of Nyi Blorong, Depan Bisa Belakang Bisa, Malam Jumat Kliwon, Ranjang Setan, Santet, Malam Satu Suro, Saya Suka Kamu Punya, Pembalasan Ratu Pantai Selatan, Ratu Buaya Putih, Si Manis Jembatan Ancol, Mana Bisa Tahan, Rumah Kentang, The Doll, Sabrina, Suzzana: Breathing in the Grave, Rumah Kentang: The Beginning, and many more). Meanwhile, Rapi Film, founded in 1968, is a film company that has spent 50 years in the domestic and international markets. Various collaborations with foreign parties have been carried out by Rapi Film through the film *Lady Dragon* (1991) directed by David Worth - who had directed the film *Kickboxer* starring Jean Claude Van Damme - which included Cynthia Rothrock, Richard Norton, and Robert Ginty, which later also penetrated the American market. Then followed the film *Angel of Fury* also directed by David Worth and starring Cynthia Rothrock and Billy Drago.

Then in late 1992, Rapi Films produced another film entitled *Blood Warriors*, directed by Sam Firstenberg and starring David Bradley and Frank Zagarino. In 1994, Rapi Films produced *Outraged Fugitive* starring Frank Zagarino and Martin Kove. For the record, all films produced have entered the markets of North America, Europe, Asia, Africa, Latin America, and Eastern Europe. Based on the filmography that has been produced, Rapi Films also tends to work on action/drama genre films. However, Rapi Films also produced horror/mystical, drama, and comedy genre films, including *Ateng the Godfather* (1976), *Akibat Perga Bebas* (1977), *Ateng Bikin Pusing* (1977), *Ateng Sok Aksi* (1977), *Rahasia Perkawinan* (1978), *Pengabdian Setan* (1980), *Sundel Bolong* (1981), *Nyi Blorong* (1982), *Golok Setan* (1983), *Bajing Ireng dan Jaka Sembung* (1983), *Si Buta Lawan Jaka Sembung* (1983), *Si Buta dari Gua Hantu* (*Hell in the Belly of the Earth*/1985), *Dendam Membara* (1987), *Pembalasan Setan Karang Bolong* (1989), *Cinta Nyi Blorong* (1989), *Lebih Asyik Sama Kamu* (1989), *Susuk Nyi Roro Kidul* (1993), *The Legend of Sundel Bolong* (2007), *Tri Mas Getir* (2008), *Mupeng* (2008), *40 Days of the Rise of Pocong* (2008), *Manggarai Ghost Train* (2008), *Kuntilanak Kamar Mayat* (2009), *Hantu Rumah Ampera* (2009), *Kain Kafan Perawan* (2010), *Tarung: City of The Darkness* (2011), *Keranda Kuntilanak* (2011), *Wewe* (2015), *Epen Cupen the Movie* (2015), *Pengabdian Setan* (2017), *Perempuan Tanah Jahanam* (2019), *Ratu Ilmu Hitam* (2019), and others.

Film company Bumi Langit Studios, in collaboration with Legacy Pictures and distributor Screenplay Films, has managed a character library of 500 Indonesian comics. Bumi Langit was established in 2003 in Jakarta. The company has circulated the character Gundala through a film titled *Gundala* (2019) as its first production. The plan for 2020 is to film other characters that are well-known to Indonesian comic readers.

As a business entity in the superhero genre film industry - although Bumi Langit uses the term *Adisatria* or hero rather than superhero - Bumi Langit's web interface and character classification and star system inevitably refer to DC Comic and Marvel's interface. In addition, the philosophical basis of the history of the origin of DC Comics and Marvel superhero characters with some Indonesian comic characters is different.

The emergence of the DC Comic and Marvel versions of superhero characters was triggered by regulations at that time in the United States regarding various restrictions on comic content, as well as public saturation with the detective and horror characters they presented to readers. For this reason, DC and Marvel tried to find new efforts by creating superhero characters in the late 1930s and 1940s; Superman, Batman, Wonder Woman, Aquaman (DC Comics) and Captain America, Spider-Man, Hulk, The Fantastic Four, X-Man (Marvel). Meanwhile, Indonesian comics simply embody the practice of personality by creating characters that resemble DC and Marvel superheroes such as Gundala, Godam, Laba-Laba Merah, Sri Asih, Aquanus, Captain Melar, and others. Although there are also comic characters that are uniquely Indonesian that should be appreciated, namely, *Si Buta dari Goa Hantu*, *Mandala*, *Panji Tengkorak*, and others.

Realizing comic characters in film media certainly requires adequate mastery of technology. This is because comic characters are increasingly being shown in cinemas thanks to digital technology in the world of film. Take a look before entering 2000, live-action Hollywood film production was only able to feature Superman and Batman characters. Meanwhile, the new Spider-Man character appeared in 2002, followed by other characters in the following year, namely, Iron Man, Wonder Woman, Captain Marvel, Ant-Man, and others.

So it's no surprise that in the production of its first film, Indonesian comics brought out the character Gundala, who has the power of lightning. The effect of lightning and rain in the digital era is not something complicated to realize. Moreover, the villain character featured in *Gundala* (2019) is not a figure who has superpowers and has an anomalous body, such as Electro or one of the characters in the *Fantastic Four* film, Reed Richards, whose limbs can stretch and lengthen.





**Figure 1.** Justice League DC Extended Universe (top left) and Avengers Marvel Cinematic Universe (top right). Bumi Langit Superheroes (bottom left) and Jagat Bumi Langit superhero logo (Source: Research doc.).

Therefore, Bumi Langit created a special platform called Jagat Bumi Langit (Bumi Langit Cinematic Universe), similar to DC Comic (DC Extended Universe) and Marvel (Marvel Cinematic Universe). Jagat Bumi Langit is a collection of characters that are classified as Gundala, Godam, Herbintang, Merpati, Tira (Patriot/Adisatria), Si Buta dari Gua Hantu, Mandala, Bidadari Mata Elang, Selendang Biru, Selendang Mayang (Jawara/Warrior), Sri Asih, Nusantara, Aquanus, Captain Halilintar, Maza, Siti Gahara (Satria Nusantara).

Specifically for this research, the character of Gundala is very similar to the character of The Flash. Likewise, the character of Aquanus is similar to Aquaman, Godam to Superman.



**Figure 2.** Gundala Putra Petir and The Flash (Source: Research doc.).



Figure 3. Aquaman and Aquanus (Source: Research doc.).



Figure 4. Superman and Godam (Source: Research doc.).

As mentioned earlier, other film companies produce films in the horror/mystical, action, and comedy genres. Looking at all the film titles described above, it is obvious that repetitive practice of imitation or replication is taking place among filmmakers, based more on established market tastes.

And of course, specifically for the horror genre, the figures of pocong, kuntilanak, ghosts, Nyi Roro Kidul, Nyi Blorong will be similar in every film whose real purpose is to scare the audience. In addition, urban legends that are brought to the big screen are still limited to rumors among the public that do not necessarily actually happen. The trend of urban legends appearing on cinema screens was originally the story of the headless man in Jeruk Purut and Rumah Angker Pondok Indah, as well as Rumah Kentang, whose stories have been circulating by word of mouth for decades.

Usually, from long ago until now, the title of a film that once became a hit and famous is often used as the title of a film that is adapted or parodied. For example, the films *The Godfather* (1972) and *The Godfather Part II* (1974) were so popular that the film *Ateng the Godfather* was made in 1976. Likewise, the film *Annabelle*, which is a spin-off from *The Conjuring*, was filmed as *The Doll and Sabrina*. Such is the cultural industry in a number of films.

According to the Frankfurt School (as cited in Strinati, 2004, p. 69), the culture industry reflects the consolidation of commodity fetishism, the dominance of the principle of exchange, and the rise of state monopoly capitalism. The culture industry molds the tastes and inclinations of the masses, thereby molding their consciousness by instilling in them a desire for false necessities.

In essence, the culture industry seeks to ignore real needs, alternative and radical concepts or theories, and politically oppositional ways of thinking and acting. The culture industry is so effective at doing this that people don't realize what is happening.

Like kung fu films that are well known and loved by the audience for their stars and story themes, which contain elements of revenge, cunning and betrayal, animal moves that are in vogue, unrivalled kung fu knowledge, heroes defeating villains, and others, in fact it is still an elixir in Mandarin action films. Similarly, Indonesian horror films are merely cloned from previous films.



Therefore, the exploitation of supernatural creatures; ghosts, pocong, kuntilanak, is often repeated as the central theme and main title in the Indonesian horror genre. This is also the case in the Hollywood film industry, when producing themes of the Vietnam war, Alien creatures, and superheroes.

Chinese action cinema (Hong Kong and Taiwan) has been a giant industry since the 1960s to 1990s. This is indicated by the quantity and frequency of distribution in a number of cinemas in Southeast Asia, especially Indonesia. Thus, the American magazine *Variety* gave the nickname chopsocky to the production of kung fu films. A term with negative connotations in the 1970s. That is, films made not with quality standards, but quantity standards.

While the film industry is viewed from the aspect of mass communication industry, film can be used as a propaganda tool. Eros Djarot (as cited in Prakosa, 2004), a filmmaker, musician, and politician, stated, "Film as a propaganda tool is very effectively used by the Authoritarian Regime (dictatorial government) to brainwash the people and build community values so that every political policy of the ruler gets justified and then forced to become a general truth..."

The above statement about propaganda, however, does not have to be absurd. In the modern era, propaganda is interpreted differently. Although there are many definitions that can be found about propaganda. But in the modern era, Barnays argues, modern propaganda is a consistent and continuous effort to create or shape events in order to influence public relations towards a business or group (Nurudin, 2002, p.10).

Referring to the above definition, at least, the message content of film media can possibly contain propaganda statements. The American film industry often uses film media as a propaganda tool, including China through its film production in the past 10 years. Recorded through its film production works, America carried out propaganda activities in the films *Rambo*, *Missing in Action*, *Midway*, and others. Meanwhile, China can be seen in the films *Fearless* and *Ip Man* (tetralogy).

Apart from the issue of cultural industry or mass communication, all film products are certainly not sterile from the issue of taste. Taste shapes and becomes the basis of all manifestations of work, including aesthetic taste. According to Bourdieu in *Distinction: a Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (2002, p.231), taste is defined as, These tastes actually realised depend on the state of the system of goods offered; every change in the system of goods induces a change in tastes.

In an ideal world, every film sometimes falls short of what the audience wants. Every individual has their own taste. There is an old Latin term, *de gustibus est non disputandum*, there is nothing to be discussed regarding taste. There is someone who likes to watch football or motogp matches on television. But, there are also people who fall into the movie freak category. Thus, taste is basically individualised.

Although tastes are individualised, they can be uniformed into community tastes. This can also happen in film production. For example, horror, action, and superhero film genres. If you look closely, these genres have similarities with each other so that individual tastes can become homogeneous.

Similarities can be found in the elements of the poster, story, plot, setting, characters, and so on. The tendency of similarity or imitation can be triggered due to the similarity of tastes and the existence of instant profit orientation. This means that films are produced on the basis of public taste. The filmmakers concerned are reluctant to create new trends for the public. Although undeniably, in principle, the film industry is always oriented towards business aspects and financial benefits that rely on public tastes. No wonder, then, that the superhero, horror/mystic, and action/adventures genres are often produced in the form of sequels, prequels, spin-offs, and cross-overs.

Bourdieu's (2002) influential sociological concept, expressed as the formula ( $\text{habitus} \times \text{capital}$ ) + field = practice, posits that individuals occupying dominant positions within the dominant class face a contradictory situation, which inclines them to maintain an ambivalent relationship with cultural goods and their producers (p. 316). In principle, Bourdieu asserts that while engaging in activities such as fighting, interpreting, and perceiving, humans operate within a social arena where they require various forms of capital mediated by their habitus. Habitus, according to Bourdieu (as cited in Badriati, 2005, p. 36), is a system consisting of steady tendencies that persist throughout an

individual's life (durable), encouraging practice across different fields (transposable). The habitus functions as a structured and objectively unified practice-forming base.

As mentioned about capital in Bourdieu's concept, these capitals include: cultural, symbolic, economic, and social capital. Each capital determines its class and capacity as an embodiment of social practice towards the agent. In Bourdieu's concept, an agent is a term for an actor or perpetrator in a social practice, as initiated by Giddens (1984). In the context of this research, agents are filmmakers or film workers.

To be able to enjoy the latest Hollywood movies at The Premiere studio class cinema, of course, one needs economic capital (money), associations that support his class (social capital), and adequate cultural capital. The habitus inherent in a person is the forging that underlies his life journey. Take, for example, the habitus of someone who constantly presses the keypad of a mobile phone, never happened in the 1990s. Another example, someone who makes web media in this millennium decade, could not have been found in the 1980s or early 1990s.

In the 1970s, many people ate meatball noodles and boiled dumplings with a spoon. But from the 1980s onwards, many started using chopsticks. In the film *Oshin* shown on TVRI, *Oshin* eats rice using a bowl and chopsticks. Soon after, in the late 1980s, everyone began to get used to eating rice using a bowl and chopsticks, when dining at Japanese restaurants that have mushroomed since the 2000s. Likewise, eating spaghetti was processed through American-Italian films. That is habitus. People's taste preferences can differ from one another. But sometimes, because of the environment, people like to mask their true tastes in order to be perceived as classy. For example, when a person starts to have sufficient economic capital, he starts collecting or buying things that can increase his status. In the past, one never talked about the greatness of DC Comics or Marvel superheroes, but when the economy became more established, one started collecting dolls of DC Comics, Marvel, or Star Wars heroes.

Likewise, when enjoying a meal, the initial love for *tempe bacem* turns to steak. He used to like *dar-der-dor* or *bak-buk* films and melodious pop songs, but now he likes festival- grade films or Mile Davis-style jazz music. Therefore, to strengthen his existence and competence, he likes to follow the development of Cannes, Golden Globe, or Oscar films and follow the prestigious Grammy Award ceremony on television, for example.

Regardless of whether it's a matter of class and following the crowd or not, watching a film should ideally be something that makes you feel good, according to your taste. It doesn't matter what people say, whether their taste is low or not. A film is still a cultural product that is also related to one's taste. Taste belongs to individual rights.

To like *sinetron*, *dangdut* music, Malay music, Indian films, French films, Korean films, Mandarin films, is not something wrong. To have different tastes from other people is also not a mistake. It is an expression of one's honesty, when the tastes one chooses can actually provide pleasure, comfort, and happiness. Instead of liking something that is considered classy because of following the crowd, it ends up just torturing yourself. The question is, why are there low tastes and high tastes? In Eaton's (2010, p.47) taste is the same human mental faculty as the senses of sight and hearing so that judgements of taste have the same empirical foundation as judgements of what we see or hear.

More clearly, Hume argues beauty is not an objective quality that lies within objects but resides in the mind. Humans are attracted to certain forms and structures and call them beautiful.

Related to the mind, the human brain contains a "meme virus", which allows humans to become imitators. Referring to the concept of neo-Darwinism in the theory of Evolution, imitation occurs due to the existence of memes. According to Dawkins (as cited in Mahzar, 2006,p.57), a meme is a replicator, a self-replicating creature. If genes are passed down through biological reproduction, memes are passed down through the cultural learning process of imitation. Memes as cultural transmission units, like genes, which are physical transmission units, undergo mutation, combination, and selection by the natural environment.

In this context, Dawkins gives examples related to memes, including songs, ideas, popular sayings, fashion, ways of making ceramics and architectural buildings, and film works. All these cultural elements, according to Dawkins, are located in the human brain, just like genes in the cells of an organism. Furthermore, according to Dawkins, it is said that memes jump from one human brain to another through the process of imitation.

## CONCLUSION

A film is a collective work. The production process includes pre-production, production, and post-production stages. And the process is carried out through film companies whose products involve distributors and cinema owners. Film production, as a rule, is made towards the interests of established market tastes so that film production experiences homogeneity and the practice of imitation of previous films. Imitation, according to Richard Dawkins, is possible because of the "meme virus" in the human brain. As a communication product, film is seen as a medium for conveying messages that involve audiences. In this context, it does not matter whether the audience responds appreciatively or simply as entertainment. In conclusion, the most important thing is that the film is a communication product because the film work aims to be watched by involving many people (audience), which is adjusted to the target market or target audience.

In terms of target audience, film content is adjusted to demographic, geographic, and psychographic factors. Typically, film content refers to the format (live-action, animation), genre, theme, screenplay, setting, actor/actress profiles, as well as historical traces and cultural elements prevailing in the country of origin. Meanwhile, Pierre Bourdieu's concept of habitus, capital, realm, and practice can prove that habitus accompanied by capital in a realm, is then practiced which manifests in the production process of a film. The films produced are not sterile from the tastes and practices of imitation. The indicator is that many films that have been circulating have epigones. Specifically, it can be observed through horror, action, superhero, and sci-fi genre films.

Film technology continues to develop in Indonesia, and there are more and more films with special effects and high-quality production. Indonesian films have a strong fan base within the country. Some Indonesian films have become very popular domestically, creating a cultural phenomenon of their own. The remake of Gundala is one of the signs of the revival of domestic cinema and that we are actually capable of creating works that are not inferior to foreign quality. Good human resources are the key that must be maintained consistently, and support from the community is important.

## References

- Badriati, M. (2005). *Dominasi pemilik modal dan resistensi pekerja media: Studi kasus majalah berita mingguan Gatra pada pasca orde baru* [Bachelor's thesis]. Universitas Indonesia.
- Barker, C. (2005). *Cultural studies: Teori dan praktik* (Nurhadi, Trans.). Bentang Pustaka. (Original work published 2000)
- Bourdieu, P. (2002). *Distinction: A social critique of the judgement of taste* (R. Nice, Trans.). Harvard University Press. (Original work published 1979)
- Brodie, R. (2005). *Virus Akal Budi*. Kepustakaan Populer Gramedia.
- Davies, M. M., & Mosdell, N. (2006). *Practical research methods for media and cultural studies: Making people count*. Edinburgh University Press.
- Eaton, M. M. (2010). *Persoalan-persoalan dasar estetika* (E. K. Ekosiwi, Trans.). Salemba Humanika. (Original work published 1987)
- Giddens, A. (1984). *The constitution of society: Outline of the theory of structuration*. Polity Press.
- Hall, S. (1997). The Work of Representation. In S. Hall (Ed.), *Representation: Cultural representations and signifying practices* (pp. 13–58). SAGE Publications.
- Harker, R., Mahar, C., & Wilkes, C. (Eds.). (2009). *(Habitus x modal) + ranah = praktik: Pengantar paling komprehensif kepada pemikiran Pierre Bordieu* (P. Maizier, Trans.). Jalasutra. (Original work published 1990)
- Heylighen, F., & Chielens, K. (2009). Evolution of Culture, Memetics. In R. A. Meyers (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Complexity and Systems Science* (pp. 3205–3220). Springer New York. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-0-387-30440-3\\_189](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-0-387-30440-3_189)
- Horkheimer, M., & Adorno, T. W. (2002). *Dialectic of enlightenment: Philosophical fragments* (G. S. Noeri, Ed.; E. Jephcott, Trans.). Stanford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9780804788090> (Original work published 1944)
- Hume, D. (1965). *Of the standard of taste and other essays* (J. W. Lenz, Ed.). Macmillan Publishing. (Original work published 1757)

- Ida, R. (2014). *Metode penelitian: Studi media dan kajian budaya*. Kencana.
- Jay, M. (2005). *Sejarah mazhab Frankfurt: Imajinasi dialektis dalam perkembangan teori kritis* (I. R. Muzir, Trans.). Kreasi Wacana. (Original work published 1973)
- Keller, K. L. (2013). *Strategic brand management* (4th ed.). Pearson Education.
- Mahzar, A. (2006). Melacak Mutasi-Mutasi Meme. In A. Adlin (Ed.), *Resistensi gaya hidup: Teori dan realitas*. Jelasutra.
- Nurudin. (2001). *Komunikasi propaganda*. Remaja Rosdakarya.
- Prakosa, G. (2004). *Film dan kekuasaan*. Yayasan Seni Visual Indonesia.
- Salim, A. (2006). *Teori dan paradigma penelitian sosial: Buku sumber untuk penelitian kualitatif* (2nd ed.). Tiara Wacana.
- Strinati, D. (2004). *Popular culture: Pengantar menuju teori budaya populer* (A. Mukhid, Trans.; 2nd ed.). Bentang. (Original work published 1995)
- Thomas, B. (2019, August 22). *Brand behaviour vs. brand value*. Nalla. <https://nalla.co.uk/brand-behaviour-vs-brand-value>
- Wijaya, B. S. (2015). Midnight culture: Ketika kaum muda urban memperlakukan malam sebagai siang. In Budiawan (Ed.), *Media [baru], tubuh, dan ruang publik: Esei-esai kajian budaya dan media* (pp. 165–200). Jelasutra.
- Wijaya, B. S. (2019). *Relasi konsumen dan merek di Indonesia: Disposisi individual dan refleksi sosio-kultural* [Doctoral dissertation]. Universitas Gadjah Mada.
- Wijayanto, E. (2013). *Memetics: Perspektif evolusionis membaca kebudayaan*. Kepik.