



The Role of Language in Promoting Equality in Multicultural Classrooms

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Abstract. *This research departs from academic panic about the erosion of representational representations of local identities amid the strong influence of global animation aesthetics. The panji tengkorak animated film emerged as an interesting anomaly because it tried to bring the narrative of Indonesia's legendary comics to life with a modern visual model, but still rooted in cultural values and traditions. This research aims to dissect how elements of archipelago culture, both material and philosophical values, are represented in the visual frame and narrative of the film to explore in depth, this study uses a qualitative content analysis method with a semiotic approach of Roland Barthes to see the denotations, connotations, and myths contained in cultural representations. Through data collection techniques in the form of observation and textual documentation, the results of the study show that the skull banner film successfully represents Indonesian culture not only as a visual decoration, but also through the ethics of approach, eastern spirituality, and the analytical analysis of good and falsehood typical of Javanese cosmology. With the conclusion that the film is not just a spectacle, but a space of cultural negotiation in which local identities are reconstructed to be relevant to today's masai audience without losing their identity. This film proves that animation can be an effective and reflective medium of cultural preservation for Indonesian people.*

Keywords: Cultural representation, Indonesian animation, qualitative content analysis, Panji Tengkorak.

INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, the global animation world has experienced tremendous growth, both in terms of production quantity and the ever-growing number of viewers. However, this dynamic also poses serious challenges to the representation of local identity in visual media, especially animation. The global animation industry often dominates the tastes of audiences with uniform visual aesthetics, universal narratives that are seen as more commercially "safe," and very strong popular culture consumption patterns. This dominance has the potential to erode the diversity of local cultures that should have survived and developed through contemporary visual storytelling media, including animation that increasingly replaces the role of traditional media in shaping cultural imagery. This phenomenon creates academic concerns about how local identities are performed, marginalized, or even perhaps lost in homogeneous global aesthetic currents.

In the midst of these dynamics, the animated film *Panji Tengkorak* emerged as an interesting and significant case in the study of cultural representation. This film is not only an attempt to adapt the visuals of Indonesia's legendary comics, but also a narrative effort to "revive" the cultural values of the archipelago through modern animation media. The film is seen as an anomaly that bridges a global aesthetic with strong local roots, showing how cultural identities can be presented, negotiated, and even reconstructed in animated frames that are relevant to today's generation. *Panji Tengkorak* is a space where local stories are not just decorative elements, but deep narrative elements that interact with philosophical values, ethics of approach, spirituality, and Javanese cosmology.

Academic studies of cultural representation in animated films themselves are developing, although they are still relatively new and have not been explored much, especially in the context of contemporary Indonesia. Several studies have shown how global and local animated films contain specific cultural values that are then represented through visual and narrative cues. For example, research

The semiotics of various local films show that cultural elements are not only present as a visual background, but also contain philosophical and social values that are rich in meaning if interpreted in depth. Research on Balinese cultural representation in film *São Paulo* asserts that elements such as spirituality, traditional clothing, and everyday rituals are not only present as visual aesthetics, but also reinforce the myths of local cultures when analyzed through denotative and connotative meanings based on Roland Barthes' semiotic theory (Gayatri Dewi et al., 2025).

This kind of approach is important because animation, as an audiovisual medium that blends visuals, sound, and narrative, presents layered cultural signs. Roland Barthes in *Elements of Semiology* explains that signs carry not only a literal meaning (denotation) but also a deeper implicit meaning (connotation), as well as myths that encompass certain ideological values in popular culture (Barthes, 1977). Barthes's semiotic analysis then became a relevant theoretical framework in understanding how cultural elements in *Skull Banner*. Not only does it appear as a visual form, but it also produces an ideological meaning that forms a local identity in the narrative presented by this film.

In addition, the study of representation in animation can also be seen from how this medium functions as a space for cultural negotiation where local symbols, values, and stories meet the demands of global aesthetics. Books like *Identity in Animation: A Journey to the Self, Differences, Culture and Body* by Jane Batkin explains that animation can be an arena where cultural identities, stereotypes, and personal narratives are explored and reproduced in the context

of the wider world. This shows that animation is not only an entertainment medium, but also a vehicle for complex and multi-layered cultural reflections(Jane Batkin, 2017).

In addition, other semiotic studies of animated films and culture show that the analysis of layers of meaning through decoration, connotation, and myth helps to understand how cultural signs work in audiovisual texts. For example, research on the representation of struggle and cultural values in cross-cultural animated films, as well as studies of Japanese and Arabic animation semiotics that show a complex mix of cultural symbols(Kara & Hafidz, 2025). The study emphasizes that any visual element or cultural symbol in animation needs to be examined not only as a "visual ornament", but as an integral part of an integrated cultural narrative.

In the context of the Panji Tengkorak film, elements of archipelago culture appear mainly in three aspects: the representation of cultural materials, cultural philosophical values, and the cosmological dialectic between the good and the false typical of Javanese culture. The representation of cultural materials includes things like traditional clothing, local architecture, traditional weapons, and other visual symbols that are instantly recognizable as part of Indonesia's cultural heritage. Meanwhile, representations of cultural philosophical values work on a deeper level: for example, ethics of approach, eastern spirituality, and cosmological concepts that reflect a typical archipelago worldview that differs from the global popular animated narrative. The transformation of these symbols into meaningful visual signs in film is part of an important process of cultural construction in contemporary media studies.

Barthes' selection of semiotic approaches that encompass three levels of meaning, denotation, connotation, and myth is well-suited for dissecting how local cultures are represented in animation because Barthes allows researchers to look further beyond the visual surface and draw the ideological relationships behind them. This approach has been used in a variety of studies of film representation, both local and global, which suggests that Barthes's semiotics can reveal how cultural values are embedded in the signs and symbols present in film(Barthes, 1977).

The use of qualitative methodologies with semiotic analysis is also not only oriented to visual description, but opens up a rich interpretive space for the context of the cultural values represented. Data collection techniques such as textual observation of scenes and narrative documentation allow researchers to capture the complex structure of meaning within panji tengkorak. This analysis through this semiotic approach then leads to the understanding that Panji Tengkorak has succeeded in blending elements of Indonesian culture with contemporary animation aesthetics, creating a narrative space that is not only visually appealing but also rich in cultural meanings relevant to the diversity of today's audiences.

More broadly, this research contributes to the discourse on cultural preservation through contemporary media. In an era of globalization that often suppresses local diversity in favor of a

global consumerist aesthetic, animations such as Panji Tengkorak show that the representation of local culture is not only possible, but also capable of reinforcing local identity when it is responded to as a reflective and dialectical medium. This film proves that animation can serve as a medium of cultural preservation as well as a place for cultural negotiation where local identities are reproduced to remain relevant to the dynamics of global audiences without losing the diversity of their identity.

RESEARCH METHOD

Types and Approaches to Research

This study uses Descriptive Qualitative Approach with the aim of understanding in depth how the cultural representation of the archipelago is constructed in animated films panji tengkorak. The qualitative approach was chosen because this research is not oriented to numerical measurement, but rather to the interpretation of meanings, symbols, and cultural values contained in the audiovisual text of the film. According to Creswell, qualitative research allows researchers to explore meanings constructed through symbols, language, and representations in specific social and cultural contexts (John W. Creswell, 2014).

This study specifically uses the Qualitative Content Analysis Method. Qualitative content analysis allows researchers to examine the messages, symbols, and meanings that appear in media texts in a systematic but still interpretive manner. This method is considered relevant for examining film as a cultural text loaded with visual and narrative markings (Krippendorff, 2018).

1. Roland Barthes' Semiotic Analysis Approach

As the main analytical knife, this study uses Roland Barthes's Semiotic Approach, which emphasizes three layers of meaning, namely Denotation, connotation, and Myth. Denotation refers to a literal meaning that appears directly, connotation refers to the cultural and emotional meanings that accompany it, whereas myth deals with an ideology or value system that is legitimized through such representation (Barthes, 1977).

This approach was chosen because it was able to reveal how cultural elements in films are not only present as visual ornaments, but also work as a system of signs that form a certain perspective on local cultural identity. In the context of the panji tengkorak, Barthes' semiotics help researchers re-read the cultural symbols of the archipelago such as the ethics of approach, Eastern spirituality, and Javanese cosmology as a construction of meaning that is relevant to today's audience.

2. Objects and Units of Analysis

The object of this research is the animated film *Panji Tengkorak* as a complete audiovisual text. The units of analysis in this study include:

1. The main narrative scenes contain conflicts, moral values, and relationships between characters.
2. Dialogue and verbal narratives that contain philosophical, ethical, and worldview values.
3. Non-visual symbolic representations, such as the concept of heroism, the battle between good and falsehood, and the spiritual dimension presented through storylines.

This study did not use images, screenshots, or visual documentation as data. All analyses were conducted based on textual observations of the storyline, dialogue, and overall narrative structure of the film.

3. Data Collection Techniques

The data collection technique was carried out through intensive textual observation of the film. Textual observation was carried out by watching the film repeatedly and recording narrative and symbolic elements related to the cultural representation of the archipelago. The focus of observation is directed at how stories are constructed, how characters interact, and how cultural values are conveyed through conflict and story resolution.

This approach is in line with the view that films can be treated as "readable" cultural texts like literary texts or other symbolic narratives (Barker, 2003). Thus, the researcher acts as the main instrument that reflectively interprets the meaning based on the theoretical framework used.

4. Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis is carried out through the following stages:

1. Data Reduction

The researcher screens and selects parts of the story that are relevant to the focus of the research, especially those that contain elements of material culture and philosophical values.

2. Brand Categorization

The data that has been selected is then categorized into sign elements based on Barthes' semiotic concept, namely denotative, connotative, and mythological signs.

3. Interpretation of Meaning

Each category of signs is analyzed in depth to see how cultural meanings are shaped and conveyed through film narratives.

4. Conclusion

The results of the interpretation were then collected to answer the purpose of the research, which was to understand how panji tengkorak represented the culture of the archipelago as a negotiated local identity in the context of modern animation.

This stage is flexible and reflective, in accordance with the qualitative research character that allows researchers to return to the data if new findings are found during the analysis process.

5. Data Validity

To maintain the validity of the data, this study uses perseverance (prolonged engagement) and theoretical consistency. The researcher conducts repeated observations of the film and ensures that the interpretation of meaning always refers to the framework of Barthes's semiotic theory consistently. In addition, the use of credible and relevant theoretical sources helps to strengthen the validity of the analysis (Moleong, 2018).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on repeated textual observations of the animated film Panji Tengkorak, it was found that the representation of the archipelago culture in this film is not present singularly or superficially as visual decoration, but is closely related to the narrative structure, character development, and main conflicts of the story. From the beginning to the end of the film, elements of the local culture are not positioned as passive backgrounds, but rather as foundations that shape the direction of the story, the motivations of the characters, and the resolution of conflicts. The main data of the study in the form of narrative scene cuts, important dialogues, and descriptions of cinematographic techniques show that there is a consistent pattern in the way this film articulates the cultural values of the archipelago. This pattern does not appear sporadically, but rather is repetitive and structured, so it can be understood as a deliberate representation strategy.

In general, the data findings in this study can be grouped into three main domains, namely the representation of material culture, the representation of philosophical values and ethical approaches, and the representation of Javanese cosmology through the dialectic of good and false. These three domains are interrelated and form a unity of meaning, in which culture emerges not only as a visual identity, but also as a framework of values that directs the entire narrative of the film.

In the realm of material cultural representation, the Panji Tengkorak film presents various visual elements that refer directly to the culture of the archipelago. These elements are seen in the character's clothing, the shape of the weapon, the architecture of the space, and the natural landscape that is the background of the story. The clothes worn by the main characters and supporting characters do not follow the generic style of global animation, but rather show silhouettes and details reminiscent of traditional Javanese and archipelago clothing in general. The clothes are not made excessive, but rather simple and functional, in line with the character of the character who is portrayed living in the values of simplicity and discipline.

The weapons used in the film are also an important part of the discovery data. Weapons are not visualized as futuristic or fantastical tools that are detached from the cultural context, but rather as traditional weapons that have symbolic value. The way the characters treat weapons—cleaning them, storing them, and using them with great care—suggests that they are positioned as symbols of moral responsibility, not just tools for defeating opponents. This depiction is repeated in several important scenes, thus forming a consistent pattern of representation.

In-movie settings panji tengkorak also reinforcing the representation of material culture. Spaces such as padepokan, quiet forests, and traditional settlements not only serve as story locations, but also as symbolic spaces. Padepokan, for example, is often shown as a place of learning and contemplation, not just a headquarters or residence. The forest is described as a transitional space full of exams, as well as spiritual spaces that demands inner vigilance. These landscapes repeatedly appear in the main character's journeys, suggesting that physical space in the film has a strong narrative and symbolic function.

On a narrative level, the Panji Tengkorak film consciously builds a storyline that is not entirely subservient to the logic of Western realism. The storyline moves with a rhythm that is more like classic Indonesian folklore and comics, where the main character's journey is not only understood as a physical mission, but also as an inner journey. Conflicts are not always resolved through direct combat, but rather through a process of reflection, self-control, and careful decision-making. This pattern is evident in some key scenes when the main character is faced with a difficult choice between strength and wisdom.

Many scenes in the film show narrative pauses in the form of contemplation and reflective dialogue. These pauses are visually characterized by the slow pace of the story, the lack of dialogue, and the use of quiet space. Instead of weakening the tension of the story, this pause actually deepens the emotional and cultural dimensions of the film. The audience is invited to not only follow the action, but also understand the inner struggles of the characters. This pattern shows that the Panji Tengkorak film places the value of reflection as an important part of the narrative structure.

In terms of dialogue, the film features a relatively simple but meaningful language. Dialogue between characters is often brief advice, moral warnings, or philosophical expressions. These sentences are not always explained explicitly through additional narratives, but rather are left open to interpretation by the audience. This strategy is seen as consistent in various important conversations, especially those involving figures who play the role of teachers or moral guides.

This dialogue is rarely confrontational or provocative. Instead, dialogue tends to be delivered in a calm and thoughtful tone, reflecting an Eastern view of life that prioritizes harmony and emotional control. In some conflict scenes, characters choose to speak first before acting, even when the situation allows for violence. This pattern is an important finding because it shows that language in film serves as a means of conveying cultural values, not just a tool to move the plot.

In addition, it is found that dialogue often serves to affirm the hierarchical and moral relationships between characters. Older or wiser characters usually use more reflective and symbolic language, while more impulsive characters use more straightforward and emotional language. This difference in language style is consistent throughout the film and reinforces the characterization of the characters culturally.

In terms of cinematography, the film *Panji Tengkorak* shows the use of visual techniques that support a sacred, heroic, and reflective atmosphere. Lighting is often dim or soft, especially in contemplative and spiritual scenes. Light is not used to bring out visual splendor alone, but to create a certain atmosphere that supports the meaning of the scene. In some important scenes, natural light such as sunlight or fire is used as the main lighting source, providing a sense of intimacy and closeness to nature.

The visual composition in this film also shows attention to the balance of space. The main character is often placed in the center of the frame or in a symmetrical composition when in a stable state of mind. Instead, the composition becomes more dynamic and unbalanced when the character experiences an inner conflict or is in a precarious situation. This pattern is repeated in several scenes, suggesting that visual composition is used consciously as part of the sign system.

The fight scenes in *panji tengkorak* movie are not depicted in a hyper-realistic or brutal way. Combat moves tend to be choreographed and measured, resembling traditional martial arts performances. Each movement seems to have a certain intention and rhythm, not just a blast of action. In some scenes, the fight is even stopped before reaching a violent climax, replaced by dialogue or moral decisions. This pattern reinforces the impression that the fight is positioned as a means of character testing, rather than the main goal of the story.

The use of camera angles is also an important part of the data findings. The camera is often placed at a low angle when showing antagonists who are portrayed as arrogant or dominated by ambition, creating a sense of excessive dominance. In contrast, the protagonist is often shown with camera angles that are aligned or slightly higher in certain contexts, reflecting calmness and authority. These differences in viewpoints appear consistently and serve as visual markers of the moral hierarchy between the characters.

In addition, the tempo of camera movement in this film is relatively stable and not aggressive. Smooth camera movements and minimal shakes reinforce the reflective narrative feel. Even in action scenes, the camera doesn't move too fast, so the audience can still capture the details of the characters' movements and expressions. These findings suggest that the cinematography of *Panji Tengkorak* film is designed to support meaning, not just visual sensation.

The three domains of material cultural discovery, philosophical and ethical values of approach, and Javanese cosmology do not stand alone, but complement each other. The representation of material culture reinforces the credibility of the story's world, the philosophical values and ethical approaches that shape the characters and conflicts, while Javanese cosmology provides a broader framework of meaning for the battle between good and falsehood. The relationship between these three domains seems consistent throughout the film and forms a complete structure of cultural representation.

All of these data findings then became the basis for further analysis using Roland Barthes' semiotic framework, especially in uncovering the layers of denotative, connotative, and mythological meanings contained in the cultural representation of the *Panji Tengkorak* film. Thus, the results of this study show that the *Panji Tengkorak* film presents a structured, deep, and integrated representation of the archipelago culture in all aspects of the narrative and visual of the film

At the level of denotation, the *Panji Tengkorak* film presents cultural signs that are relatively easily recognizable by Indonesian audiences as part of the visual identity of the archipelago. The character's costumes feature silhouettes and ornaments that are reminiscent of traditional Javanese clothing and other local cultures, the weapons used refer to traditional weapons such as machetes and swords with designs that are inseparable from their historical forms, and story settings that bring cultural spaces such as *padepokan*, sacred forests, and traditional villages to life. In Barthes's semiotic framework, this stage of denotation serves as the first layer of meaning that is literal, that is, what is directly visible and identifiable to the viewer's senses (Barthes, 1977). At this stage, the film serves as a medium of cultural introduction,

confirming that the story presented is rooted in the local context of Indonesia, not an imaginary world that is detached from specific cultural references.

However, the power of cultural representation in *panji tengkorak* doesn't stop at visual recognition alone. At the level of connotation, these signs begin to intertwine with deeper emotional, cultural, and ideological meanings. The main character's clothing, for example, not only marks the origins of the culture, but also records the values of simplicity, self-control, and closeness to tradition. The simplicity of fashion contrasts with the representation of heroes in global animation that is often displayed through magnificent costumes and symbols of physical strength. In this context, the film *Panji Tengkorak* connotatively builds the idea that authority does not have to be displayed excessively, but is born from the attitudes and life practices of the characters.

Similar things can be seen in the representation of weapons. Denotatively, weapons function as a tool of fighting, but connotatively weapons in this film are interpreted as an extension of the honor and moral responsibility of a fighter. The way the characters treat guns with care, respect, and ethical awareness hints that violence is not an end, but rather a consequence that can only be justified under certain conditions. This meaning is in line with the ethical concept of the archipelago approach which places self-control as the core of true strength. In Barthes' perspective, this kind of connotation arises from the relationship between signs and cultural value systems that live in society.

The connotations of Eastern culture in this film are also seen in the pattern of conflict resolution. The protagonist does not always choose the path of direct confrontation, but rather considers the social and spiritual impact of his actions. Decisions are often preceded by reflective dialogue or moments of contemplation. Semiotically, this narrative pause serves as a sign that leads the viewer to understand that the ideal action is not the fastest or the hardest, but rather the wisest. This pattern distinguishes the individualistic logic of Western heroism from the concept of archipelago heroism which is more collectively oriented and harmonious.

On a mythical level, the film *panji tengkorak* build a broader and ideological system of meaning regarding Indonesian cultural identity. Barthes interpreted myth as a way for cultures to naturalize certain values so that they seem natural and unquestionable (Barthes, 1977). In the context of this film, the myth built is the idea that the culture of the archipelago upholds a balance between the power of birth and mind, between the individual and society, and between humans and nature. These myths are not conveyed verbally or dogmatically, but rather through a series of events, character choices, and the moral consequences they receive.

The battle between good and wrong in the film *Panji Tengkorak* is not described as an absolute black-and-white conflict. Instead, conflict is presented as a complex dialectic, in which falsehood is often born of an inner imbalance, greed, or a failure to understand one's own boundaries. The antagonist is not fully positioned as an evil figure without a human dimension, but rather as an individual who is lost in certain ambitions or traumas. This representation reinforces the myth of Javanese cosmology that views the world as a space of balance, rather than an absolute battle arena between two separate poles.

This analysis suggests that the film *panji tengkorak* implicitly criticizes the simple moral narrative prevalent in global popular animation, where crime is often personified to the extreme and solved through physical victory. By offering a more reflective narrative, this film invites the audience to understand conflict as part of the moral learning process. In this context, animation serves not only as entertainment, but as a cultural educational medium that symbolically conveys values.

From the perspective of social and cultural reality, the message conveyed by the film *Panji Tengkorak* has a strong relevance to the conditions of contemporary Indonesian society. In the midst of modernization and globalization that often place tradition as something obsolete, this film offers an alternative narrative that traditional values remain relevant to answer current problems. The representation of figures that prioritize wisdom, self-control, and social harmony can be read as a response to social phenomena such as increasing conflict, individualism, and moral crises in modern society.

In addition, this film can also be read as an implicit criticism of modernity that separates humans from the spiritual dimension. Ambition and lust for power in movies are often portrayed as a source of destruction when not balanced with ethical awareness. This message is relevant to the social reality where technological and economic progress is not always accompanied by moral maturity. Thus, the *panji tengkorak* not only represents the culture of the past, but also reflects the unrest of today's culture.

In the context of animation and cultural studies, the findings of this study strengthen Jane Batkin's argument that animation is a flexible and potential medium in representing cultural identity due to its nature that is not tied to physical realism (Batkin, 2017). However, compared to some previous studies that have highlighted local animation as a nostalgic medium or visual preservation of cultural symbols, the *panji tengkorak* shows a more progressive step. The film not only presents cultural symbols, but integrates them into the narrative structure and value system of the story. Thus, culture is not reduced to ornaments, but rather internal logic that drives the story.

The researcher's argument in this context is that Panji tengkorak main strength lies in its success in negotiating between the aesthetics of modern animation and local cultural values. In contrast to some local animations that tend to mimic the overall global style or, instead, get caught up in the romanticization of tradition, the film takes the middle ground by adapting contemporary animation technologies and techniques without sacrificing cultural substance. This approach suggests that cultural representations do not have to be conservative or anti-modern, but can be dialogical and adaptive in nature.

When compared to the study of cultural representation in other animated films, Panji Tengkorak displays a relatively strong level of depth of meaning. Culture not only emerges at the denotative and connotative levels, but is also mythized as a value system that is relevant to the collective identity. This enriches academic discourse on Indonesian animation, particularly in the context of how popular media can play a role in the construction and negotiation of cultural identity.

Thus, the answer to the formulation of this research problem becomes clear and comprehensive. Representation of archipelago culture in animated films panji tengkorak built through a system of signs that work on different layers of meaning as described in Roland Barthes' semiotics. Culture is represented not only as a visual identity, but as a philosophical and ideological value that shapes the way characters think, act, and resolve conflicts. The film shows that animation can be a reflective space of cultural articulation, where local identities are not only preserved, but also reinterpreted to be relevant to today's social and cultural contexts.

Overall, this discussion emphasizes that Panji Tengkorak is not just an entertainment product or adaptation of a legendary comic, but a cultural text that is rich in meaning. Within the framework of Barthes' semiotics, the film produces myths about balance, spirituality, and ethics as the foundation of the archipelago's identity. Therefore, Panji Tengkorak can be understood as a medium of cultural negotiation that contributes significantly to efforts to preserve and reinterpret Indonesia's local identity in the modern animation landscape

CONCLUSION

Based on the entire series of research that has been conducted, it can be concluded that the Panji Tengkorak animated film represents the culture of the archipelago in a deep, structured, and meaningful way, beyond the function of culture as a mere visual decorative element. From the narrative design stage to the visual presentation and cinematography, the film consistently places local culture as the main foundation in building stories, characters, and conflicts. This confirms that Panji Tengkorak not only functions as an entertainment product, but also as a cultural text

that is active in building and negotiating local identity in the midst of the current of animation globalization.

Through a qualitative content analysis approach with Roland Barthes' semiotic framework, this study shows that cultural representation in the film *Panji Tengkorak* works on three layers of meaning, namely denotation, connotation, and myth. At the level of denotation, this film presents signs of Indonesian culture that are easily recognizable, such as traditional clothing, local weapons, and the setting of a typical Javanese cultural space. At the level of connotation, these elements are interpreted as symbols of the values of simplicity, ethics of approach, self-control, and moral responsibility. Meanwhile, on a mythical level, the film builds a cultural ideology that affirms the importance of cosmic balance, spirituality, and harmony between individuals, society, and nature.

The results of this study also show that the conflict in the film *Panji Tengkorak* is not presented in a simple black-and-white framework, but as a dialectic between good and false that is rooted in the failure or success of the characters in maintaining mental balance. This pattern reflects Javanese cosmology which views life as a process of seeking harmony, not absolute victory. Thus, the film offers a model of the heroism of the archipelago that is different from the archetype of global animated heroes who tend to be individualistic and oriented towards physical domination.

From a broader perspective, this study confirms that local animations such as *Panji Tengkorak* have great potential as a medium for cultural preservation as well as reinterpretation. The film manages to negotiate between modern animation technology and traditional values without getting caught up in the imitation of global aesthetics or the romanticization of the cultures of the past. In this way, *Panji Tengkorak* proves that local cultural identities can remain relevant and communicative to current audiences when presented through a narrative and reflective visual approach.

Thus, the formulation of this research problem is answered completely. The representation of archipelago culture in the animated film *Panji Tengkorak* is not cosmetic, but ideological and structural. Culture is represented as a value system that shapes the way characters think, act, and interpret conflicts, so this film can be understood as an important cultural negotiation space in the contemporary Indonesian animation landscape.

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