

The Aesthetics of Historical Visual Storytelling in The "Cadet 1947" Film

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ABSTRACT

The movie "Cadet 1947" is about the struggle for Indonesian independence in the early days of the Republic, with a background of battles between the Dutch and Indonesian armies. In this movie, visual aesthetics are used to portray emotions and atmosphere relevant to Indonesian history. This research aims to analyze how the elements of visual aesthetics or *mise en scene* in the film "Cadet 1947". This research thoroughly explores the visual storytelling aesthetics in the film *Cadet 1947* from a film studies perspective. The main focus of this research is the analysis of visual elements or *Mise en scene* such as settings, costumes, lighting, and actors, to convey the historical narrative of the AURI cadet struggle in 1947. This research uses a qualitative approach with literature study and filmography analysis. By exploring various cinematic and visual aspects, this article finds that *Cadet 1947* effectively integrates aesthetic elements to strengthen the emotional and historical experience of the audience.

Keywords: *Visual Aesthetics, Storytelling, Historical Film, Cadet 1947, Cinematography*

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INTRODUCTION

Film is one of the media in conveying information. Bordwell and Thomson noted that film is a complex medium, combining visual, narrative, and emotional elements to create a deep experience for the audience (Bordwell & Thompson, 2019). Basically, movies shape and present existing reality. A movie consists of a series of images that move from one scene to another, from one emotion to another, from one event to another. Film is a very influential media, more than any other media. said that movies shape and present a reflection of reality. Generally reality is built with many signs. describes the signs including as a system that works well in an effort to achieve the expected effect.

Fiction / drama films as stated by are related to themes, stories, settings, characters and atmosphere that portray real life. Conflicts can be triggered by the environment, oneself, or nature. Sengkali's story is emotionally evocative, dramatic, and drains the audience's tears. (Anisti, 2017) states that movie themes usually adjust to the genre of the film. The theme of the movie is very important to determine from the

beginning. The theme can be found through the process of finding inspiration about movie ideas.

Every time a performer is placed, it will create a composition with a household appliance or a piece of property. The placement and movement of the performers in the set must be planned to get the appropriate audience reactions. (Muhammad Yaumul Rizky, 2019). Explaining that an emotional experience, the way how the scene is composed, presented, lit, photographed and edited is in accordance with what the screenplay wants. The audience has a background in choosing media based on preferences, motives and interests that arise within themselves. This background is the main foundation or starting line for individuals in choosing media.

Filmmaking is not easy, and not as short as when we watch it, it takes time and a long process such as the thinking process and the production process. (Rony Oktari Hidayat, 2018). Describes several concepts such as ideas, ideas, and storytelling that will be worked on. Meanwhile, the production process is the realization of ideas and concepts in the form of artistic skills into films that can be watched at any time. said that the function of film is one form of mass media, in general mass media has informative, educational and entertainment functions. Like other communication media, movies contain a message that is conveyed to the audience. National films such as *Cadet 1947* can be used as educational media for fostering the younger generation in the framework of *nation and character building*.

In the context of historical films, visual aesthetics play an important role in reviving past events. The 1947 *Cadet* movie is one example of how cinema can combine historical and visual elements to convey stories of national struggle.

The movie *Cadet 1947* tells the story of air force cadets in Maguwo, Jogjakarta, named Sigit (Bisma Karisma), Mul (Kevin Julio) Adji (Marthino Lio) and Har (Omara Esteghlal). In it is explained that they wanted to try to participate in defending the Proclamation of Indonesian independence from the Dutch military aggression that wanted to re-colonize Indonesia in 1947. The cadets actually could not participate in the war because their status was still cadets. They only helped their seniors. They also could not fly an airplane.

Sigit, who knew that a Japanese plane had crashed in his village, tried to get his friend to take the engine of the plane. This patriotic story of the cadets was inspired by the first air raid of the Indonesian Air Force carried out by cadets (prospective Air Force pilots) against Dutch defense bases in Semarang, Salatiga and Ambarawa on July 29, 1947.

Aesthetics according to is one of the branches of philosophy. Simply put, aesthetics is the science that discusses beauty, how it appears, and how a person feels.

Aesthetics is a branch of philosophy that studies sensory value, sometimes considered a judgment of mood and taste. says aesthetics is a branch that is very close to the philosophy of art. When aesthetics is related to beauty, there must be a value. The value and meaning of this understanding of beauty becomes very grand and broad. (Yangni, 2012), defining beauty in the Greek intellectual tradition is not focused on the problem of

not only visual observation, but thoughts and behavior require. Even beauty is seen to be understood and dimensional.

Film aesthetics, as an analytical approach which in practice film theory is often equated with the approach of film aesthetics. according to , the two have different areas of approach, where film theory shows approaches that are sometimes contextual, such as; linguistics, psychoanalysis, political economy, ideological theories, iconology studies to gender studies. This is also emphasized by who said that film aesthetics has one main approach which considers that the most appropriate way to understand film is through the film itself. Although this seems to suggest that film aesthetics makes "*cinema culture*" provoke the birth of a chauvinistic attitude at the heart of its theory, by making a postulate where film theory can only be born from the film itself or analyze the film as a text. According to (Meidelin Pasolang, 2016), theories that come from outside or are exterior are only able to be a second-tier explanation and explain non-essential aspects of the film.

This research aims to examine how visual elements, such as lighting, composition, and visual effects, are used to build the historical narrative in this film. As well as making an in-depth study of the visual aesthetics of the 1947 Cadet film, which is still limited.

METHOD

Research Design

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach. This approach was chosen because it aims to describe the observed phenomena in depth and systematically. According to Moleong (2017), qualitative research is a research process that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from individuals and observed behavior.

This research aims to analyze the influence of visual elements in the film Cadet 1947 on the emotions of the audience, especially artistic elements such as wardrobe, makeup, and storyline. Descriptive research is conducted to provide a factual, accurate, and structured description of how these elements form a visual aesthetic that depicts the journey of independence in 1947.

In addition, Kirk and Miller (1986) state that qualitative research relies heavily on direct observation and data collection based on natural contexts. Therefore, this approach is used to understand the meaning contained in the movie through narrative and visual analysis.

Types and Sources of Data

The type of data used in this research is descriptive data sourced from direct observation and narrative analysis of the 1947 Cadet film. According to Moleong (2017), descriptive data in the form of words, behavior, or observed phenomena provide an in-depth understanding of the context under study. The main data in this research is primary data, which is obtained from in-depth observations of visual elements in the film, such as wardrobe, makeup, storyline, lighting, and setting. The movie was screened repeatedly to record significant visual elements, so that dominant patterns could be identified in supporting the narrative of the 1947 independence struggle.

In addition, this research also uses secondary data, which includes supporting literature such as reference books related to cinematography, the history of the independence struggle, as well as journal articles and film reviews. Kirk and Miller (1986) emphasize that qualitative research should utilize various sources to enrich the understanding of the phenomenon being studied, so these additional sources are used to strengthen the analysis and provide a broader historical context.

Data Collection Techniques

Data collection techniques in this study were carried out through direct observation of the 1947 Cadet film and the study of supporting literature. Sugiyono (2015) states that data collection techniques are a strategic step in research, because the success of research depends on how well the data is collected. Observations were conducted in depth and repeatedly by playing the movie to note significant visual elements, such as setting, costumes, lighting, and interactions between characters. This process aims to understand how the artistic elements build a visual aesthetic that is able to evoke the audience's emotions.

In addition to observation, a literature study was also conducted to provide a more in-depth analytical framework. Supporting literature, such as books by Moleong (2017) and Kirk & Miller (1986), was used to understand qualitative approaches in narrative and visual analysis. Data obtained from observation and literature were then compared through triangulation, as suggested by Sugiyono (2015), to ensure the accuracy and validity of the research findings.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis in this study was conducted using a narrative and visual approach to understand the meaning of artistic elements in the film Cadet 1947 in depth. Moleong (2017) states that data analysis in qualitative research is a continuous process involving data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Therefore, this research follows systematic steps to evaluate the data obtained from observation and literature.

The analysis process begins with the mapping of significant visual elements through detailed observation of each scene in the movie. The film was analyzed on a scene-by-scene basis, noting dominant visual patterns, such as the use of wardrobe, makeup, lighting, and set design. A semiotic approach is used to identify visual symbols and how these elements build the historical narrative of the 1947 independence struggle. For example, costumes and makeup were analyzed to understand how they reflect the 1947 era and influence the audience's emotions.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

RESEARCH RESULT

Mise En Scene

Mise-en-scene according to (Surya Farid Sathotho, et al, 2020) is a term in cinema that refers to all visual elements contained in a movie scene, including set design, lighting, costumes, makeup, and actor arrangement. According to Prastita (2008), mise-en-scène includes all things located in front of the camera that will be shot in a movie production.

1. Setting

Setting is the entire setting with all its properties. Properties in this case are immovable objects such as furniture, doors, windows, chairs, lamps, trees and so on. The setting used in a movie is generally made as real as possible with the context of the story. Setting in a movie has an important role to create a natural effect in the movie (Reo Putra Sagita, 2018). The perfect setting in principle is an authentic setting. The setting must be able to convince the audience that the movie seems to really happen at the location and time according to the context of the movie story.

The setting in the movie is set in 1947 during the Dutch military aggression. The airfield location in Yogyakarta was recreated in detail, including the sleeping quarters of the cadets and soldiers, as well as replicas of airplanes from the period. These elements provide an authentic visual effect and support the film's storytelling.



Figure 4.1
Cadet Movie Set 1947



Figure 4.2
Airplane in the movie Cadet 1947

2. Costume and Makeup

A costume is anything that a performer wears along with all the accessories. Costume accessories include hats, jewelry, watches, glasses, shoes, canes and so on. The clothes (costumes) are taken as a sign for certain people in carrying out certain roles so that they are expected to behave in certain ways (Agustina Kusuma Dewi, 2019). In a movie, clothing is not only a body covering but also has several functions according to the narrative context. Production design that includes costumes, props, and locations effectively creates a historical atmosphere. Cadet uniforms, replicas of 1940s-era airplanes, and other details reinforce visual authenticity. This visual symbolism also strengthens the emotional connection with the audience, reflecting the aesthetics of the narrative (Cahya, 2022).



Figure 4.3

Costume and Makeup for Cadet Movie 1947

3. Lighting

Lighting also functions to shape the atmosphere in a movie, because the lighting created can describe an atmosphere in a scene (Ari Musnandar, 2021). All images in a movie can be said to be the result of light manipulation. Light shapes an object and the dimensions of space. Lighting in film can generally be grouped into four elements, namely the quality, direction, source and color of light. These four elements greatly affect the lighting in shaping the atmosphere and mood of a movie.



Figure 4.4
Cadet Movie Lighting 1947

4. Players and their



Figure 4.5
Players enter the village with guns in the movie Cadet 1947

As we already know, characters are story actors who motivate the narrative and are always in motion performing an action. What we need to note is that story actors can have various physical forms and are not always human. Story actors can also be grouped into several types of demands and functions in a movie. And finally, one of the main keys to determining the success of a movie is the performance of a player (acting). Apart from *acting*, the selection of characters in this film greatly supports the story in this film. Movement, gesture, facial expression, foot skills, script interpretation, improvisation, business, sensitivity, perception, imagination and others are means to support acting (Sri Wastiwi Setiowati, 2019).

DISCUSSION

Setting

The meticulous set design reinforces the narrative of the movie, creating an immersive experience for the audience. The presence of replica airplanes and lifelike airfield designs not only demonstrates an in-depth level of research, but also reinforces the historical context of the story. This authenticity makes an important contribution in building a convincing atmosphere that is relevant to the time setting of the movie.

The field with the cadet and army sleeping *camps of* that year was also built meticulously and in detail. This atmosphere really illustrates how visuals build *storytelling* in this cadet story and the audience can feel how the visuals were in 1947.

Costume and Makeup

Costumes and makeup in this film function not only as visual elements, but also as symbols of character identity. The utilization of costumes to distinguish the roles of cadets and soldiers clarifies the narrative and makes it easier for the audience to understand the hierarchy in the story. The makeup that depicts the rundown physical conditions reinforces the historical and emotional nuances, adding depth to the story.

Costumes were also used based on research in 1947 because this movie is based on a true story and of course a definite form is needed. From hats, clothes, shoes to the color of the costumes used, it is very clear who is a cadet and a soldier who can already fly a plane. Accessories such as the weapons used are also very considered and seem to be original even though they are just *mockups*. The makeup on the players is also shabby and also illustrates how the condition of Indonesia after independence.

Lighting

The effective use of lighting is key in building the atmosphere of the story. The dimensionality of light created through details such as dust and sun reflections helps to reinforce the emotions conveyed in the movie. The combination of lighting with other visual elements creates an immersive cinematic experience.

The lighting in this movie is presented very well. Although the scene is outdoors, the dimensions presented are very pronounced and greatly help the *color grading* in the film. The scorching heat and dust help shape the dimensions of light in this movie.

Players and Their Movements

The selection of actors relevant to the context of the story plays a major role in enhancing the authenticity of the narrative. Specialized training gives depth to the acting performance, which is visible through facial expressions, body movements, and military gestures. These elements support the overall narrative, making the story feel more real and memorable to the audience.

From the main cast to the supporting cast is very well considered. Because this movie is about history, the faces in the frame are mostly Javanese faces and the Dutch soldiers presented are also not Indonesian people with blaster faces or made over. The acting of the players in this movie really helped the story in the movie. They were also given training by soldiers on how to hold a gun or how a soldier behaves. So that the players in this movie are indeed like soldiers and they also play their respective roles well.

CONCLUSION

From the discussion that has been presented, it can be concluded that the film "Cadet 1947" is a work that succeeds in presenting a historical story by using various artistic elements effectively. The film successfully combines aesthetic concepts in setting, costume, lighting, and movement to create an immersive visual experience for the audience. This helps in building an atmosphere and emotion that fits the context of the historical story. From the discussion, it can be seen that the production has done extensive research and paid attention to small details to create an immersive experience for the audience. This includes set building, costume design, and training the actors to portray their characters. By using strong artistic elements, the movie is able to influence the audience's emotions and perception of the story. The patriotic story of the cadets and their struggle to defend Indonesia's independence becomes a heartfelt narrative.

Overall, "Cadet 1947" can be considered a successful historical film in conveying the story of the past by utilizing the power of the film medium to the fullest. It not only provides entertainment for the audience, but also provides education about the struggles and sacrifices of Indonesian heroes in fighting for the country's independence. Thus, "Cadet 1947" is a good example of how movies can be an effective tool in conveying historical values with a light-hearted story and inspiring the audience with a moving story of struggle.

From this research, several suggestions are proposed for future historical film production. First, reduce the parts that feel long-winded and improve the transitions between scenes. For example, after a suspenseful scene, provide a longer moment of reflection for the audience, so that they can feel the impact of the event. Secondly, reduce the reliance on excessive background music in scenes that are already highly emotional or suspenseful, as this can reduce the impact of the scene itself. Lastly, minimize the *romance* element of the storyline, which is a bit overdone in a historical film.

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