



THE MEANING OF FRIENDSHIP: THE STORY OF A HUMAN AND DOG IN THE BUL ANIMATION

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: Bul animation is full of meaning and moral messages. The meaning implied in it is the friendship between dogs and humans that occurs as a result of the gap in the social life of people in urban environments. The gap is interpreted through the interaction between the character of a scavenger and a dog. The purpose of this study is to analyze the interaction of the characters of a scavenger and a dog to form a story of friendship.

Research methods: This study uses an interpretive qualitative semiotic analysis method.

Findings: The research is centered on studying animation from the area of art studies, which specifically studies the meaning in every scene in the Bul animation. The meaning of friendship is created in the animated film Bul through a sign system in the form of icons, indexes, and symbols. The formation of the meaning of friendship can be observed in scenes 4 to scene 9. Friendship or friendship is a term that describes the behavior of cooperation and mutual support between two or more social entities. The meaning of friendship is created in a storyline and interaction between the characters in the animated film Bul, namely the scavengers and the dog. Through friendship, loyalty arises through the character of a dog who does not want to part with his friend (a scavenger). It signifies deep loyalty.

Implication: The research results are helpful as a reference in creating animated works that can imply meaning or moral messages.

Keywords: friendship, humans, dogs, animation

INTRODUCTION

Bul animation is an animation produced by one of Bali's animation studios, Timeline Studio. Bul Animation is one of the winners of the Animation Film Competition held by MNCTV. Bul animation became the best animation in the category of 2D animated film (best 2D) based on the assessment; of artistic, cinematographic, story structure, characterization, modeling, animation, and editing [1]. Bul animation is an essential concern for animators because, in addition to implementing and optimizing the film-forming elements to achieve aesthetic value, the meanings implied in it are also applied. This condition is inseparable from the hopes and mission of the MNCTV Animafest organizers, which is none other than that Indonesian children's animated works will be unable to compete internationally.

Regarding Bul animation, the only research result is in the writing of the proceedings of an artistic creation and study seminar entitled Analysis of Visual



Unity in the "Bul" Animated Film conducted by Yasa [2]. This research briefly discusses the unitary analysis order visually only for the animation of the Bul, which is formed through line, color, space, and motion. These elements are interrelated and support each other to achieve one goal: visual unity in an animation. This research needs to optimally and comprehensively discuss the unity in an animation that is formed through film elements. These elements also play a role in forming the aesthetics of an animation.

From a technical aspect, Bul's animation tends to adopt the Japanese animation style. The Japanese style can be seen in the characters/characters, the animation motion, and the background used. This style becomes an aesthetic concept as the basis for creation, which is then composed and arranged with the elements that make up the film. The concept underlying the creation forms a work structure to achieve goals or functions contextually.

Contextually, Bul animation is full of meaning and moral messages. One of them is the meaning of friendship. A friendship between dogs and humans occurs due to the gap in people's social life in urban environments. This social gap is represented through the interaction between the character/character of a scavenger and a dog. Interaction is built because the two characters are told to have the same destiny. A unique friendship story is formed through the interaction of the two. The friendship that was closely intertwined fostered loyalty and affection between the two of them until the end of their lives.

According to Sudarsana (interview, 3 March 2022), in urban areas, there has been a shift regarding caring for others and being more concerned with oneself and their group. This phenomenon is represented through a scavenger character/character and a dog who establish friendship and care for each other. The characters/figures of scavengers and dogs are represented as creatures that are both ostracized/thrown out of the life of the surrounding community. However, both have a deep sense of loyalty and affection.

Conveying meaning is built scene by scene or per each scene. The meaning conveyed through animation media is expected to influence the audience's mindset according to the message conveyed. As stated by Abrori [3], that film is a means/tool to convey messages (message) to the audience. Animation media is also one of the media or a great way to convey a message. At the same time, Prakosa [4] argues that animation is very compact in order to be able to convey messages to the audience through characters that are often used in animation.

This Bul animation was created by an animator, Agung Oka Sudarsana, who is full of the meaning of friendship. In this animation, friendship is focused on human characters (scavengers) and animals (bulls). The story of friendship is unique because it involves a dog and human characters. Therefore, the meaning of friendship implied in the animation of Bul, which in this case is focused on the level of signs, is interesting to study. The research results are helpful as a reference in creating animated works that can imply meaning or moral messages.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research is qualitative interpretive research, so to get the meaning of the object under study, interpretive qualitative semiotic analysis methods are used. According to Piliang [5], this method focuses on signs and text as the object of study, as well as how researchers interpret and understand the code (decoding) behind the signs and text. Through this method, there will be a process of interpreting action (semiosis) for the object under study, namely the scenes in the Bul animation. This research will focus on examining animation from the area of art studies, which specifically examines the meaning in every scene in the Bul animation. For the time being, it can be said that no one has researched the animation entitled Bul specifically from the point of view of meaning related to art studies. The approach used is analytic, the primary approach in assessing a film. This approach helps analyze the scene-by-scene of the Bull animation. MacCann [6] argues that analysis is separating a whole into parts and then examining these parts' properties, proportions, functions, and interrelationships.

FINDINGS

Meaning is the result of stimuli in the form of messages from sign readers, where the meaning is more or less related to the meaning created by the sign maker [7]. Meanwhile, according to Berger [8], meaning is relational. He analogizes that emptiness means anything in its emptiness itself, and everything has new meaning because of a relationship that it attaches (interprets to it). Fiske further concluded that meaning results from dynamic interactions between signs, mental concepts (results of interpretation), and objects: they appear in specific historical contexts and may change over time.

What Fiske concluded refers to a model from Peirce to study meaning. The model is a triangular relationship between signs, users, and external reality (signs, interpretants, and objects). According to Peirce [9], a sign or representamen is something that, for someone, represents something else in some way or capacity. Something else is called the interpretant (interpretant) of the first sign, which refers to the object (object). The object referred to by the sign is "reality" or anything that is (assumed) to exist. According to Noth [9], this explanation means that the object does not have to be concrete; it does not have to be observable or exist as an empirical reality, but can also be other abstract, even imaginary entities fictitious.

The animated film Bul is one of the animated films produced by Timeline Studio, which a senior animator directs at the studio. Through the experience of animators in creating animated films, of course, in their creation, they always consider specific messages to be conveyed to the audience. The messages to be communicated are formed through a sign system which can later create meaning in each viewer from the results of their interpretation of the sign created. The meaning created from the results of the interpretation is expected to change the audience's mindset from appreciation to the meaning obtained.

If the animated film Bul is examined as a whole / in its entirety, Sudarsana (animator of the animated film Bul) applies a sign system to his animated film to communicate messages to the audience. Signs that can be interpreted are

created by the animators through body gestures, eye movements, and other limb movements of each character, as well as visual signs in each scene of the entire film. In Budiman's opinion [9], the movements of the eyes, hands, or fingers (e.g., eyes blinking, waving hands, or thumbs up) are symbols. A symbol is one type of sign divided by Peirce.

Peirce divided signs into three types: icons, indexes, and symbols. According to Fiske [7], icons have something in common with objects, indexes are signs with a real direct relationship with the objects they represent, and symbols are signs related to objects and are a matter of convention, agreement, or rule. While Budiman [9] argues that an icon is a sign that contains a similarity of "look" as identifiable by the wearer, an index is a sign with a phenomenal or existential attachment between its representamen and its object. A symbol is a type of sign that is arbitrary and conventional.

Analysis of the meaning as a whole/whole of the animated film *Bul*, is examined and analyzed on the signs that can create meaning, namely signs in the form of icons, signs in the form of indexes, and signs in the form of symbols (through body gestures, eye movements, and other body movements). of each character and visual cues) shot by shot in each scene of the entire film.

All shots in the animated film *Bul* include the icon. It can happen because all shots have the same or similar "look" to the object they are referring to. The similarity or similarity of "looks" in question is that in each of the shots above, there is a similarity of "likeness" in an urban environment (background); the atmosphere of the morning, afternoon, and evening; the atmosphere of a scavenger's house/hut; depiction of scavenger figures, and dog figures.

Furthermore, the sign in the form of an index from shot by shot is found in scene 1, namely the rising sun signifies morning; in scene 4, the sign of sunlight overhead/buildings indicating that it is already noon, sacks/packages moving in a landfill (TPA) indicating the presence of living things in it; in scene 6, the reddish sky indicates that night will come, then the sky is dark, the presence of moonlight, stars, lights, and light from inside the scavenger's house indicates night, scavengers turn on the candle light to indicate night, puppies are given food indicating hungry puppies; in scene 8, the sun rises and birds chirping signifies morning, the sun's rays enter the scavengers' house (above their heads) indicating noon, the scavengers take the tools, and the sacks indicate the scavengers are going to scavenge; in scene 9, the scavengers cannot get up and move, indicating that the scavengers have died, the arrival of dark clouds in the sky indicates that it will rain, the dark sky mixed with clouds and the presence of lightning indicates that it will soon rain.

While the signs in the form of symbols are primarily present in every shot of the *Bul* animation, these symbols include body gestures, eye movements, other limb movements of each character, and other visual symbols. So the meaning generated from the sign system in the animated film *Bul* can be interpreted or interpreted more through existing symbols. Therefore, and referring to the table above and the observations made on the animated film *Bul* as a whole or the

whole film, three meanings are evoked through these signs, including friendship.

The meaning of friendship in the animated film *Bul* is created through a system of signs in the form of icons, indexes, and symbols. The formation of friendship's meaning can be observed in scenes 4 to scene 9. Friendship or friendship is a term that describes the behavior of cooperation and mutual support between two or more social entities. The word friendship is a word that comes from the word friend.

"Friendship" describes a relationship involving knowledge, respect, and affection. Friends will welcome each other's company and show loyalty to one another, their tastes are usually similar and may cross one another, and they enjoy activities that they enjoy. They will also engage in helpful behavior, such as exchanging advice and helping each other in trouble. Friends are people who display reciprocal and reflective behavior. However, for many, friendship is often nothing more than believing that someone or something will not harm or hurt them.

Friendship is a relationship of love between people that is so sincere. Sincerity arises because of a sense of familiarity and a sense of helping each other. Friendship is usually formed quickly because mutual respect grows little by little to form a bond with a friend, even though they may not have blood relations. However, because of the close friendship, sometimes a person believes more in friends than family. Therefore, the term true friendship appears in a friendship, which is considered a treasure of life. Life seems flat without friends or friends because their presence makes everything colorful and full of meaning in living life in this world. Everyone needs a true friend, but only some succeed in getting one. This situation is because many people have enjoyed the beauty of friendship, but some have been destroyed because of being betrayed by their best friend.

A friendship is not established automatically but requires a long process, like sharpening an iron. Usually, a friendship is characterized by various experiences of asylum and sorrow, sometimes comforted or hurt, feelings of being cared for or disappointed, heard or ignored, helped or rejected. Nevertheless, all these things were never done intentionally for hatred. Usually, a friend will not hide mistakes to avoid a dispute, and it is precise because of the love of a friend that someone dares to reprimand them as they are. The process from friend to a friend requires the maintenance of loyalty. Not just when we need help, then motivation appears to seek attention, help, and expressions of love from others. However, it is precisely the initiative to provide and realize what his best friend needs.

Friendship becomes a meaning to be conveyed to the audience in the animated film *Bul* through signs. The meaning is trying to be created a storyline and interaction between the characters in the animated film *Bul*, namely the scavengers and the dog. The friendship that is created goes through a long process, which begins with the story of a scavenger and a small dog meeting in a garbage dump. Furthermore, the familiarity occurred from the first time they

met until their daily lives (scavengers and dogs) were always together. They are always there and always go through the ups and downs together. The deep affection between the two makes their friendship a relationship until the end of the verse. This affection can be seen through the symbols in the shots in several scenes of the animated film *Bul*. Movements of the eyes, hands, or fingers (e.g., eyes blinking, waving a hand, or thumbs up) are symbols [8]. Apart from the symbols that Budiman can convey meaning, other symbols such as body gestures, eye movements, and other limb movements of each character, and other visual symbols can also be interpreted or give rise to meaning. The symbols that can give rise to the meaning of friendship in the animated film *Bul* are shot in several scenes of the animated film *Bul* below.



Figure 1. The depiction of the meaning of friendship in the animated film *Bul*
[Source: Timeline Studio (print screen video of the animated film *Bul*)]

Even though it is visualized through a dog and a scavenger, this makes something unusual. All of that is a way for the animator to be able to touch the hearts of the audience/viewers more. One of the theories used to study how works of art (in general and specifically) interact with the subconscious mind of the connoisseur or, in this case, the audience, is the theory of psychoanalysis [10]. One related to film art is animation, so it is precisely dissected using the psychoanalytic theory of film. The psychoanalytic theory of film emphasizes the idea of production in the description, i.e., focusing on how the viewer is positioned through a series of hallucinations created by the director. According to this idea, when watching a film, the audience can dream as the creators of the film dream [11].

In unconscious production activities, they (filmmakers and audience) combine to transform the raw material from dreams (bodily stimuli, things that happen during dream-dreams) into hallucination "visual stories," which are dreams themselves [12]. Each layer moves smoothly (slowly but without errors and consistently) to be applied in the *Bull* animation. Movement is consistent with the number of images, as much as six images/second. It can draw attention from the lack of incomplete character images but emphasizes impressions and images so that they still influence the audience with good intensity [4].

Friendship in *Bul's* animation is carried out by creatures considered to have no mind, like humans. This friendship provides an education in which humans who have minds, of course, should be able to maintain friendships and make good

friendships. However, in reality, sometimes humans are destroyed because of their friends. This reality is what the animator of the animated film *Bul* wants to convey. All of that can be observed from the good signs in the form of body gestures, eye movements, and other movements in the film's storytelling.

CONCLUSION

The meaning contained in the animated film *Bul* begins with several elements forming the animated film *Bul*, namely lines and colors. Lines are meaningful according to their character, and colors are meaningful according to the nature of the color itself to build an atmosphere (mood) and influence the audience. However, as a whole, the animated film *Bul* contains three meanings, namely the meaning of friendship, the meaning of loyalty, and the meaning of social criticism. The meaning of friendship is created in a storyline and interaction between the characters in the animated film *Bul*, namely the scavengers and the dog. Through friendship then arises the meaning of loyalty which is represented through the character of a dog not wanting to part with his best friend (a scavenger); this indicates a deep loyalty. Dogs are always loyal to accompany scavengers in carrying out their daily routine and want to always be together in joy and sorrow. Until the end of his life, the scavenger picks up, and the dog remains loyal to his best friend. This story also gives a message that the loyalty of a dog in maintaining friendship is unquestionable.

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