

The Myth of Maghrib Prohibition in "Sandekala" Film: Reception Analysis Toward Indonesian Audiences



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ABSTRACT: This study aims to find out the meaning of student audiences in Jakarta and Tangerang on the mythical message of prohibiting going out at sunset (Maghrib) in the film "Sandekala". The research approach used the qualitative approach with the reception analysis method by Stuart Hall. Stuart Hall's Reception Analysis Theory (Encoding-Decoding) has a model with three categories: Dominant Position, Negotiated Position, and Oppositional Position. The data collection technique in this research used in-depth interviews with ten informants. The research results show the shared meaning of the mythical messages about the Maghrib exit ban in the film Sandekala is different. It happens because the decoding that informants produce varies according to factors of gender, age, religion, ethnicity and culture. There are other factors, such as the level of individual beliefs in myths in society, especially the Maghrib exit ban. The study concludes that ten informants and eight questions in this research obtained thirty-six shared meanings of Dominant Position, seventeen of Negotiated Position and twenty-seven of Oppositional position to the mythical messages of the Maghrib exit ban in the film Sandekala. In this study, as a whole, the most shared meaning is found in the dominant position. In other words, Jakarta and Tangerang students, as active audiences, can interpret the content and messages of the myth about the Maghrib exit ban in the Film Sandekala following what the text producer gave in the film.

KEYWORDS: Reception Analysis, Myth of Going out Avoidance during Maghrib time, Film Sandekala, Creatures.

I. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia has many stories and beliefs passed down from generation to generation, and some Indonesians believe the stories and faiths. Their faiths about prohibitions and taboos have developed since the time of their ancestors. These faiths relate to the unseen, spirits, and taboos. Each region and ethnic group in Indonesia has a unique diversity of beliefs and myths. So it reflects the richness of culture and spiritual diversity in Indonesia.

A myth is a story in which a culture explains or understands some aspects of reality or nature. Barthes states that myth is a culture's way of thinking about something and how to conceptualize or understand it. For Barthes, the most crucial way myth works is to naturalize history. It points to the fact that myths are the product of a social class that has gained a specific historical dominance: the meanings they disseminate through myths inevitably carry history with them, but their implementation as myths leads them to deny and present them as natural rather than historical or social (Fiske, 2012, pp. 143–145).

Indonesian ancestors passed down and developed various myths until now, and some Indonesian people believe in them. One of them is the myth about going out avoidance during Maghrib time. Some Indonesians believe going out of the house and getting involved in activities during Maghrib time is forbidden (pamali). If they violate it, a spirit named Sandekala will come, disturb and kidnap anyone who plays outside the house when Maghrib arrives. Sundanese people usually call the spirit creature the Ghost of Dusk.

The word Sandekala comes from the Sundanese language Sande or Sanes. The word sande or sanes means not, and kala is another word of time that means time. In other words, the word sandekala means "not the time". According to the myth, dusk is the change of day to night. Some Indonesians believe that when dusk comes, many jinns and demons will roam. (Anggara, Wibowo, and Rusmana 2021).

The belief of the myth about going out avoidance during Maghrib time in the culture and traditions of Indonesian society becomes a short-film theme entitled "Sandekala". Directed by Amry Ramadhan, Sandekala is a horror genre film, and the film duration is 09:04 (nine minutes four seconds). The film producer is Snap Films. This film tells the story of mamala (negative

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consequences in Sundanese) due to violating pamali or prohibition because this violates the ban of going out during Maghrib time. Rizka Dwi Septiana and Kesyia Safalina Karindra act as a mother and a daughter, respectively.

In the depiction of the film "Sandekala," when getting home, a mother and her daughter were walking briskly down small, quiet and dark alleys. When walking, the mother and daughter encountered an unreasonable disturbance. An invisible creature kept lurking and followed every step of them. Until reaching their home's doorstep, they felt the senseless interference persistently. Then, when they were just at the house's doorstep, the invisible creature appeared. Feeling the spirit creature come at them from behind, they immediately went into the house to seek shelter. But regrettably, it was just a matter of how they felt. The mother and daughter did not go inside their home. They continued to remain in the alley where they had recently passed. Sandekala was the creature in such an alley.

The depiction of locations, atmosphere, music, scenes in the film and a Sandekala creature makes the audience feel the tension experienced by the mother and her daughter during Maghrib time. Moreover, the director portrays the creature Sandekala as a female figure who wears white clothes and long hair in the film. Also, the audience heard Sinden's voice (female singers singing Javanese songs) accompanied by gamelan music (Javanese music). This depiction is very closely related to elements of Javanese culture. It makes the audience feel the events in the film are close to everyday life. So it makes the audience's hair stand up when watching it.

The film "Sandekala" has received several national and international awards. These include (1). Winner People's Choices (Audience's Favorite Short Film) in the XXI Short Film Festival 2016, (2). The 4th Winner (Regional 1) The West Java Film Festival 2015, (3). The Finalist of the 2015 French Cinema Festival, (4). The Official Selection Los Angeles Indonesian Film Festival 2015, (5). The Official Selection PPI Paris 2015, (6). The Official Selection Ganesha Film Festival (Banding Nu Aink!) 2016, and (7). The Official Selection (Non-Competition) Vidsee Juree 2016.

Researchers are interested in studying the myth about going out avoidance during Maghrib time in the film "Sandekala" because this film brings up the myth as a component of Indonesian beliefs. It is still expanding right now. Some Indonesians have this belief.

Based on the research background, the formulation of this research problem is how the audience's acceptance, views and meanings towards the myth about going out avoidance during Maghrib time in the film "Sandekala". It aims to describe active audiences' acceptance and shared meanings of the myth about going out avoidance during Maghrib time in "Sandekala" using Reception analysis. It is because reception analysis conceptually speaks to a comparison between opinions and audiences' interpretations. This analysis focuses on media texts by analyzing the reception and meanings of messages among audiences. This analysis also examines the message role that audiences are exposed to in daily life through media.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Film As Mass Media.

Film as mass media is an art form to be enjoyed or watched, and it is effective media to sensitize the audience. The power and ability of films to reach many social segments make experts agree that films have the potential to influence their audiences (Brahmantio and Vera, 2017).

The film is part of mass media communication and audio-visual mass media communication. It aims to convey a specific social or moral message to its audience. With the reality that grows and develops in society, we can create film themes almost the same as what the audiences feel. So, when watching and finished watching, the audience can feel the sensation of closeness to the scene in the movie. Not only the scenes in the films but also the meaning, purpose and message of the films we watch. (Asri 2020).

Films' artistic skill and technological complexity successfully entertain, inform, and educate audiences. Thus, like literary works, films invite audiences to obtain cultural education without being coercive, patronizing or indulgent (Al-Ma'ruf 2003).

The film industry makes films to watch and hear as it should be. One media that may provide entertainment and offer a different way to reflect thoughts and be used to educate is the movie. The film's messages may teach audiences valuable lessons. (Sitompul and Simaremar, 2017).

The 2016 film Sandekala, which has a running time of nine minutes and forty seconds, was uploaded on Youtube social media under the account name Vidsee so that anybody can watch it without charge. More than 6,000 users have watched the film Sandekala on YouTube so far. The film idea developed by the film's director, Sandekala, comes from the reality that certain Indonesian people hold about not leaving their houses during Maghrib time.

B. Active Audience.

Audiences are crucial to reception analysis because they actively take in communications and, if they can grasp them, can interpret verbal and nonverbal messages or symbols. The acceptability of each audience might vary from that of others because they come

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from varied social and cultural backgrounds. As a result, audiences with various traits will read texts in many ways (Milatishofa, Kusrin, and Weni Adityasning Arindawati 2021).

Active audiences are individuals in public who may produce or interpret the meaning of the show they are watching. According to O'Sullivan (1994), the main focus of this theory is the decoding, analysing, and understanding process of the text content or media messages (Purnamasari and Tutiasri 2021).

Active audiences are individuals in public who select which media to consume based on informational demands that have enriched their knowledge and productive activities (Wahid, 2016, p. 107).

Active audiences are spectators, readers, or listeners in the process of communication and reception of messages. They are essential in understanding how individuals respond, interpret, and give meaning to messages conveyed through the intended media. It means that the active audience makes the text in a film rich with meaning. It is because active audiences produce shared meaning on the basis of background, experience and daily life.

C. Shared Meaning.

Shared meaning is the process by which media messages are received and then interpreted by the audiences. (Febriani, S., & Wahid, 2018).

An individual's shared meaning has a different context. Humans are makers of shared meanings that are unable to separate from the references they have, which is why these occur. It means an individual has diverse frames of reference, often known as references, from one person to another. In addition, there is a field of experience or a range of experiences which cannot be generalized from one individual to the next (Pawaka and Choiriyati, 2020).

The process through which audiences assign interpretation or meaning to something is known as shared meanings. These occur when the audiences understand and interpret the messages or content. The influencing factors to audiences' share meanings include knowledge, experience, culture, social life, and background. As a result of being driven by many factors, the shared meanings they convey also differ. Therefore, communicators or message makers must understand the audiences' shared meaning because it determines whether or not the audiences will grasp the messages they are trying to convey.

D. Reception Analysis.

A different approach for learning about audiences is reception analysis. It is how a mass media audience interprets a message.

A research method that examines audiences is reception analysis. This approach positions audiences as a subject who actively generates meaning. In other words, reception analysis emphasizes audiences and the content of media messages (Dhamayanti 2015).

The best approach to interpreting and responding to television programmes is through reception with broad knowledge. Reception theory focuses on how readers or audiences receive the messages rather than the message senders. The message's shared meaning is determined by the audience's cultural background and life experience (Ghassani and Nugroho 2019).

Theoretically, media texts gain meaning only at the point of receipt (reception), i.e. when they are read, watched, or listened to. In other words, we consider audiences as meaning makers rather than simply consumers of media content. In this situation, audiences perceive the media texts based on their cultural background and subjective life experiences. As a result, one media text might result in several interpretations of a similar text. Every text, in essence, contains an ideology, which makes reception studies important (Pertiwi, Ri'aeni, and Yusron, 2020).

A media text that audiences absorb has a purpose in shaping their values and beliefs. At the same time, each audience's interpretation of the shared meanings might allow for multiple alternate meanings in the media itself. In other words, reception analysis considers the text to have polysemy. It means audiences might perceive the media text differently depending on their diverse histories and situations. (Schrder, 2016, published in Inriyanti et al., 2022).

E. Encoding/Decoding.

The media (encoder) will create a message based on their ideals and perspectives. Later, the message encoded by media organisations will undergo decoding from decoders (audiences) depending on their ideas and perspectives (Dwiputra, 2021).

Audiences can interpret and analyse media messages in ways relevant to their social circumstances. It occurs because the code used to encode and the decoded code is not always the same. Encoding is a message created by the producer or creator of media texts. Meanwhile, decoding refers to the audience's interpretation of the media texts that have been viewed (Purnamasari and Tutiasri, 2021).

According to Stuart Hall, audiences decode media messages from three perspectives: dominant hegemony, negotiation, and Morisan opposition (2013:550-551):

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- 1) Dominant hegemonic position. According to Hall, dominant hegemony occurs when "the media produce the message; the masses consume it, and the audience's reading coincides with the preferred reading." It is a situation in which the media transmits its messages utilizing society's dominant cultural codes. In other words, audiences and the media reflect the dominant culture of the time. The media must ensure the messages it produces adhere to the prevailing culture in society.
- 2) Negotiated position. The position in which the audience generally accepts the dominant ideology but rejects its application in specific cases (as Hall argues: the audience assimilated the leading ideology in general but opposes its application in some cases). In this instance, several exclusions to its applicability are consistent with the existing cultural norms.
- 3) Oppositional position. The "opposition" is the final option audiences might use to decode media messages. It happens when critical audience substitutes or modifies the messages or codes that the media can communicate with different messages or codes. The intended messages or media preferences get rejection by audiences, who substitute their ideas with their way of thinking about the topics the media conveys.

III. RESEARCH METHODS

This study takes a qualitative approach because researchers want to understand and analyze meaning or opinion about a phenomenon that occurs in society in systematical, factual and accurate way, namely how audiences interpret the myth of going out avoidance during Maghrib time in the film Sandekala.

This study employs Stuart Hall's reception analysis research methods which recognize the process used by the audiences to interpret a media show.

Reception analysis is one of the audience studies in mass communication that looks at how audiences receive and understand messages and how they function in daily life. Reception analysis is a discussion subject and a basis for the audiences' activities in response to the themes discussed (Pawaka and Choiriyati, 2020).

With the reception analysis approach, this study seeks to discover how informants perceive, respond to, and accept the film Sandekala which promotes the myth of the Maghrib exit ban. Researchers gathered information through interviews.

A. Research Object/Subject.

The object of this study is the film Sandekala which raises the myth of going out avoidance during Maghrib time. Then, the subjects of this study were active informants selected based on audiences who had watched the film Sandekala. (Haryono, 2020, p. 118) "Interpretation and meaning are returned to the understanding and perspective of the research subject, not from the viewpoint of the researchers". The audience in this study is students of some universities in Jakarta and Tangerang with various ages, genders, religions, and ethnicities. Following these criteria, researchers found ten active informants who had watched Sandekala's film.

B. Data Collection Techniques.

The primary data collection approach used by the researchers was in-depth interviews with ten informants who were students in Jakarta and Tangerang. While concerning secondary data collecting procedures, researchers look for references from books, literature, and the Internet (Websites) to back up their findings.

IV. RESEARCH RESULTS

According to the findings of this study, the dominant positions have 36 shared meanings. It is the most when compared to the negotiated and optional ones. The negotiating positions have 17, and the opposing positions have 27 consecutively.

Table 1 illustrates the results of this study with the problem formulation "How the Audience Interprets the Myth of going out avoidance during Maghrib time in the film Sandekala" using Stuart Hall's reception analysis. In this case, the audience as an audience interprets the content of mass media texts using their experience, knowledge, and social context. In interpreting media texts, several social factors influence the audience, such as race, culture, gender, and each individual's belief in myths.

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Table 1.

	Inf 1	Inf 2	Inf 3	Inf 4	Inf 5	Inf 6	Inf 7	Inf 8	Inf 9	Inf 10
Dominant	6	1	7	1	2	8	2	1	7	1
Negotiation	2	4	1	-	2	-	3	3	-	2
Opposition	-	3	-	7	4	-	3	4	1	5
Dominant = 36										
Negotiation = 17										
Opposition = 27										
Total = 80										

Dominant Position

The shared meanings from the dominant position come from the informant 6 and 9 as the students at several universities located in Tangerang regarding the meaning of the word "myth". Both informants interpreted myth as a rule or prohibition that the ancestors had passed down, and later generations had to believe it.

The shared meanings from the dominant position also generate from informants' belief in myths, which originate from students in Jakarta and Tangerang, namely informants 3, 6, and 9. Because the myths are true, the three informants believed we should not discount them.

The interpretation of the myth about going out avoidance during Maghrib time resulted in the shared meanings of the dominant position. They were Jakarta and Tangerang students: informants 1, 2, 3, 6 and 9. The five informants' opinion is similar to interpreting the myth of going out avoidance during Maghrib time. The going-out prohibition during Maghrib time appears because spirits begin to arrive.

The shared meaning of the dominant position derives from the shared meanings of belief in the myth of going out avoidance during Maghrib time among students living in Jakarta and Tangerang, namely the informants 1, 3, 6, and 9. The three informants felt the myth of going out avoidance during Maghrib time is true. If we violate it, the spirits will cause trouble and even abduct us.

The informant's interpretation of the film Sandekala, which appeared in the current era and raised the myth of going out avoidance during Maghrib time, also contributes to the shared meaning from the dominant position. Informants 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 have shared meanings of the dominant position among students who lived in Jakarta and Tangerang. The seven informants understood it as a reminder not to go out or plan activities during Maghrib time. It is still applicable today. It also informs the audience that there is still a belief in the myth of not going out during Maghrib time.

In the modern day, the informant's interpretation of the myth of going out avoidance during Maghrib time resulted in the shared meanings of the dominant position from informants 1, 3, and 6, students from Jakarta and Tangerang. The three informants understood the current era's myth of not going out during Maghrib time as a prohibition (pamali). They think that if we violate it a spirit known as Sandekala will cause difficulty or take us.

The dominant position's shared meanings derive from the informant's reception of the messages in the film Sandekala, notably informants 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, and 10. They are university students from Jakarta and Tangerang. The eight informants took it as a reminder that a group of individuals believed in the myth of not going out during Maghrib time and as a reminder not to go out at that time.

The informants' interpretations in reaction to viewing the film Sandekala relate to what gives rise to the shared meanings of the dominant position. They are university students residing in Jakarta and Tangerang, namely informants 1, 3, 6, and 9. The four informants felt inspired by the film Sandekala and were more aware of the myths.

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Negotiation Position

The shared meaning of negotiation comes from informants 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8 and 10, university students who reside in Jakarta and Tangerang and interpret the word "myth". The seven informants interpret myth as a story passed down from generation to generation. It is not all true in real life. In reality, not everything is accurate. So we may or may not accept it.

The shared meanings of the negotiated positions from informants 1, 2, 5, 7, 8, and 10 were likewise a product of the audiences' interpretation of their belief in myths. There were university students from Tangerang and Jakarta. All of the myths were not accepted by the six informants. They accept the myths if they have plausible origins and outcomes.

The informants' interpretation of Jakarta students' belief in the myth of going out avoidance during Maghrib time, namely informant 2, also contributes to the shared meanings of the negotiated position. Because having not personally encountered the myths, Informant 2 did not believe them.

The current interpretation of the myth of going out avoidance during Maghrib time, provided by a Jakarta student named Informant 7, also contributes to the shared meanings of the negotiated position. For Informant 7, it is no problem if we do not go out during Maghrib time as long as you do not break your trust or neglect your Islamic obligations. We must complete numerous activities in the modern area during or close to Maghrib time.

According to informants 2 and 8, university students from Tangerang and Jakarta, the mythical messages in the film Sandekala that forbids going out during Maghrib time relate to what led to the interpretation of the negotiated position. They interpret that the message in the myth of prohibiting going out during Maghrib time in the film Sandekala does not necessarily happen. There are positive and negative sides to this myth. On the positive side, the night is dangerous for children. On the negative side, young children can be afraid to perform the Maghrib prayer at the mosque.

Oppositional Position

Regarding the interpretation of the word "myth," the shared meaning of the opposition position comes from informant 4, a university student in Jakarta. Informant 4 interprets myth as a rule or prohibition. If we violate it, the consequences do not make sense. So, he did not believe the myth.

Moreover, the shared meanings of the oppositional position relate to the reception of the myth of going out avoidance during Maghrib time, university students living in Jakarta, namely informants 4, 5, 7, 8 and 10. The five informants interpreted that going out during Maghrib is dangerous. There are many criminal acts at night, and it does not relate to the interference of spirits. So the five informants did not believe the myth of going out avoidance during Maghrib time.

The shared meanings of the oppositional position also come from the informant's interpretation of the film Sandekala which raised the myth of going out avoidance during Maghrib time and aired it in the current era. The shared meanings of the oppositional position come from Jakarta students, namely informants 2, 4 and 10. The three informants interpreted the film Sandekala which raised the myth of going out avoidance during Maghrib time and aired in the current era, as irrelevant to activities currently.

The interpretation of informants regarding the myth of the Maghrib exit ban in the current era resulted in the shared meanings of the oppositional position from informants 2, 4, 5, 8, 9 and 10, university students in Jakarta and Tangerang. The six informants interpreted the myth of the Maghrib exit ban in today's era, spirits are disappearing. In addition, because the world is all digital and not many people discuss the myth of the Maghreb exit ban. So the myth is not too crucial, and many people have ruled out the Maghrib exit myth.

The shared meanings of the oppositional position come from the informant's interpretation when responding after watching the film Sandekala. It came from informants 2, 4, 5, 7, 8 and 10, university students in Jakarta and Tangerang. The five informants did not feel influenced by the film Sandekala which raised the myth theme. They have also encountered the Maghrib exit ban, and nothing happened because we must carry out activities during Maghrib time. The five informants thought their feelings wouldn't be changed by what they hadn't experienced personally.

V. DISCUSSION

Students from the Javanese, Betawi, and Sundanese tribes who practice Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism are primarily responsible for the shared meanings of the dominant position. According to the texts the film's producer provided, the audiences may effectively grasp the fictitious meaning of the Maghrib exit ban in the film Sandekala. In addition, in producing the shared meanings, audiences relate to backgrounds of culture, religion and family believing the myths, especially the myth of the maghrib exit ban.

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Furthermore, the audiences of Padang and Malay ethnicity and Muslims and Christians are the key sources of the shared meanings of the negotiated position. The audiences do not fully believe in myths, especially the myth of going out avoidance during Maghrib time. The audiences interpret those in the film Sandekala based on the myth's viewpoints, beliefs and truth.

Lastly, the shared meaning of the oppositional position mainly comes from the women audiences studying in Jakarta. The informants rejected almost all the mythical messages about the Maghrib exit ban in the film Sandekala. In interpreting the myth of going out avoidance during Maghrib time in the Sandekala film, the informants have a culture and attitude that are indifferent to the development of myths trusted typically by the public. The informants also relate their activities and personal experience in interpreting the myths about going out avoidance during Maghrib time in the film Sandekala.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

Finally, researchers can conclude that the audiences who consume horror genre short films are the film Sandekala in this study. They have varied shared meanings and responses to the myth of going out avoidance during Maghrib time in the film Sandekala. The social position, beliefs, religion, culture and the experiences and faiths of each individual towards matters related to myths influence this issue.

Overall, from the questions the researcher asked the audiences, we find the most shared meanings in the dominant position. It means that as active audiences, Jakarta and Tangerang students can interpret the content and message of the myth of the Maghrib exit ban in the Sandekala film in accordance with what the producer's texts in the film have given.

However, several informants refused or held a different viewpoint. They made several exceptions or adjusted the content and message of the Maghrib exit ban myth in the Sandekala film based on religion, ethnic-cultural beliefs and other factors such as the level of belief to the myth, especially the Maghrib exit ban myth and individual experience of the activities they perform during Maghrib time. Because of that, audiences make the shared meanings of the negotiated and the opposition position.

The audiences can wisely respond to the film Sandekala because its impact depends on how the audiences interpret and react to it. Do not take pamali (prohibition) and the rules that develop in society for granted. It is because negative consequences can happen to anyone, anywhere and anytime. Mutual respect for fellow creatures because humans are not the only ones that live on our planet. Invisible creatures are not always absent.

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