

# “Setan Jawa” Film: Revival Cinematic-Orchestra as Cultural Communication in Digitizing Era

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**Abstract.** The film has the potential to change the style of Indonesian social interaction through the presentation of real images which is offering deeper knowledge and understanding of culture. With a reviving cinematic-orchestra approach, Setan Jawa Film by Garin Nugroho brings up local narratives, a myth about the Pesugihan Kandang Bubrah in the early 20th century in Java as its background. Using a case study approach and documentation analysis, this research aims to identify the extent where cinematic orchestra film combines art and technology collaboratively, creating visual multiliteracies that have the potential as a medium of cultural communication. From this study, it was concluded that the understanding of visual language supports verbal language in conveying self-concepts and the concept of cultural value systems to identify a person’s identity in certain ethnic groups in a variety of global relations in the digitizing era. As a medium of cultural communication, in the cognitive setting, Setan Jawa Film reviving cinematic-orchestra film as artistic innovations in moving image production—also offering potentiality to bring up conceptual understanding as well as analytic understanding related to cultural identity.

**Keywords.** cinematic-orchestra, setan jawa film, digitizing, cultural communication, multiliteracies

## 1. Introduction

Digitization (or digitizing) is a term used to describe the process of transferring media from printed, audio, or video to digital forms. Digitization is carried out to create digital document archives, for photocopying functions, and to create digital library collections. Digitization requires equipment such as computers, scanners, media source operators, and supporting software. Video documents can be converted into digital form with the help of a video processing program. Currently, several areas of life are experiencing a process of migration to digital technology, intending to obtain efficiency and optimization. Technological developments led to a shift in the meaning of texts that were originally only interpreted as printed words, but now are multimodal forms. Literacy became a basic form of character development that aims to achieve high literacy levels, also in Indonesia. In the Revolution 4.0 era and 5.0, literacy competence was very important. Literacy began to be defined as the ability to understand various texts in various forms more than reading and writing, including the way text is shaped, graphic, electronic images, including kinesthetic. [1]

Wilbur Schramm revealed that in the communication process, the message is a statement that is backed by a symbol, a mixture of thoughts and feelings (of ideas, information, calls, commands, prohibitions, complaints, etc.), by oral and/or nonverbal (visual, cues, gestures, expressions). [2] In this regard, the Industrial Revolution 4.0/5.0 enables commercially meaningful and/or information in the form of visuals, with the potential for being persuasive and informative. The ambiguity of the various signs that emerged in the era of multiliteracies occurred as a result of the ease of technology in packaging messages that could potentially build a trans-aesthetic code system; where ideas presented can be communicated in the form of an image or symbol that is meaningful not only through one channel of communication but also can use mixed code. The combination of art and technology as a medium of communication that carries ideas, information, cultural narratives, and/or imaging of certain icons is raised one of them through film.

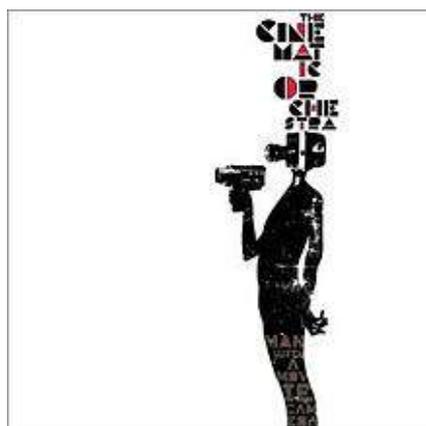
In the film, the image becomes an important part that cannot be separated. [3] The film, then, related to social discourse media has unique characteristics that spread to various places, and the perspective of the psychoanalysis of the film has the potential to play in the subconscious mind so that it can be a force of mass cultural hypnosis, influencing the way of thinking related to the perception and suitability of values where the information they communicated.

Cinematic is related to the suggestion of film or in other words, it has film quality. The silent film, The Silent Era (the 1890s - 1929), provides film music by each theater, either by a phonograph or as done directly by musicians. Pianists improvise for films or a small group of musicians perform classical works, in the background, when the film is playing, as is done on silent film screenings with star Mary Pickford. After the ability to synchronize music and sound to celluloid became possible in 1929, music quickly became an integral aspect of the storytelling process. Composers began being commissioned by Hollywood to write new compositions, especially for films.[4]

The silent film era began after a large studio agreed to work with Western Electric in 1928 to create a sound system. Silent films are produced after the film is silent, but less and less. Charlie Chaplin made two silent films in the 1930s and reduced the production of his films after mute films became commonplace. The silent film media was used by Charlie Chaplin until 1936 with the release of *Modern Times*. After that, silent films have become an art form left by people for practical purposes. Cinematic-orchestra is a term used by a music ensemble founded and directed by Jason Swinscoe in the late 1990s who reworked the musical accompaniment for the legendary silent documentary from 1929 by Dziga Vertov, “*Man with a Movie Camera*”.



**Figure 1.** “*Man with a Movie Camera*” Dziga Vertov (1929) (Source: Retrieve from <https://unaffiliatedcritic.com/2016/02/man-with-a-movie-camera-1929/> May 18, 2021)



**Figure 2.** “Man with a Movie Camera” Jason Swinscoe (the 1990s) (Source: Retrieve from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Man\\_with\\_a\\_Movie\\_Camera\\_\(The\\_Cinematic\\_Orchestra\\_album\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Man_with_a_Movie_Camera_(The_Cinematic_Orchestra_album)) May 18, 2021)

Film cine-orchestra is one form of graphic communication that is still rarely performed in Indonesia. *Setan Jawa* Film which is documentation is shown in Figure 3 raises the story of Javanese mythology which is part of Indonesia’s rich culture. The stories of regional mythology in Indonesia stored noble values and moral teachings rooted in the history and traditions of the people. Mythology contains local wisdom that can shape people’s behavior patterns to respect and do better about something that is considered valuable, sacred—one cultural narrative that needs to be preserved and communicated from one generation to the next.

Often considered non-communicative and not following conventional film theory, *high culture* -based film, such as the film *Opera Jawa* and several other Garin films that play a lot in the area of signs of semiotic, the film *Setan Jawa* by Garin Nugroho (2016) is more concerned with the mission (the idea) becoming medium to educate the audience about Indonesian’ culture—aside show the expression of filmmakers.



**Figure 3.** *Setan Jawa* Film by Garin Nugroho  
(Source: Retrieve from [www.facebook.com/setanjawamovie](http://www.facebook.com/setanjawamovie), May 29, 2019)

Music scoring is composed by Rahayu Supanggah in collaboration with many various composers in the various country that this film has been performed. Cinematic-orchestra being one of artistic innovation in produce moving images—it’s defined as the music (the gamelan and the orchestra) playing live along the moving image has to perform. Cinematic-orchestra is not something new though unfamiliar in Indonesian, but Garin Nugroho through *Setan Jawa* Film reviving it becomes one artistic innovation in moving-image production.

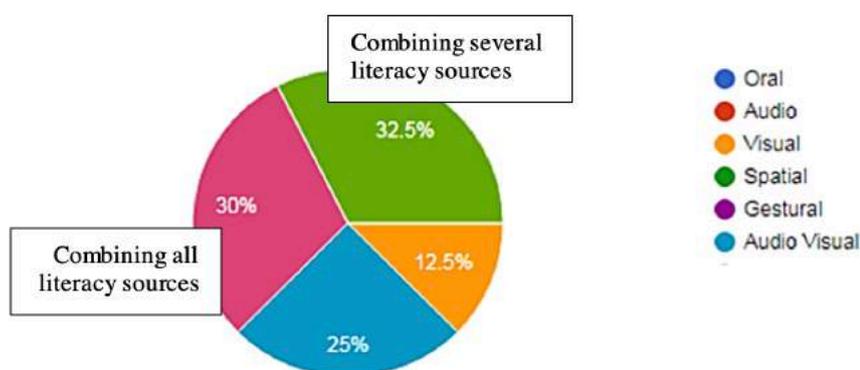
By their very nature, cinematic-orchestra brings possibilities for *Setan Jawa* Film into a cultural discourse—cultural medium—that provides enlarger space for growth in the circulation of meanings, objects, and cultural identity; that is developed in space and time which is diffusive as a result of the development of digital technology. The growth of this circulation of meaning is visualized through multimodal literacy which is assumed to be interpreted the same even though it is communicated to audiences from diverse cultural backgrounds.

## 2. Method

The methodology used in this paper is the qualitative analysis method; conducted by case study approach, documentation analysis, and literature study. The data collected is the data associated with *Setan Jawa* Film, as well as additional data that were obtained from supporting literature, related history of cinematic-orchestra, including the visual multiliteracies. The data also includes reference data and visual data. Reference data are various studies that intersect with the object of research, visual data obtained from the documentation of *Setan Jawa*.

## 3. Results and Discussions

Refers to preliminary research that has been developed in 2019, which is results of the research identified that the most effective literacy source for visual multi-literation support is a combination of multiple literacy sources, which can include multimodal sources of oral, audio, visual, spatial, gestural and/or audio-visual sources as indicated in Figure 4.

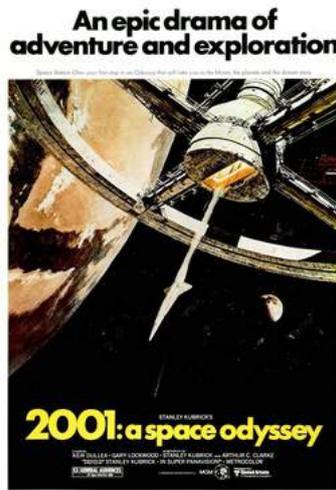


**Figure 4.** Multimodal Literacy that needed on Digitizing Era (Source: Dewi, A., 2019 Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.52265/jdi.v1i1.3> May 2021)

This finding reinforces analysis on this paper, that multimodal literacy in the form of images (visual literacy), basic literacy, media literacy, and technology can support communication channels to be able to integrate various sources of information; which are then disseminated to the public, including in defining cultural narratives as a stimulus to show cultural identity. [4] This will also relate to the context that each symbol between one culture and another will have a different meaning when used in the communication process. [2] Multiliteracies visual in the era of the Revolution 4.0 also on 5.0—becoming the complex framework and process, so that almost all medium of cultural communication in digitizing era requiring the ability to interpret the sign as part of the system of signs structured [6] This means, film as a form of visual culture product must have the power to build the audience’s conceptual understanding.

In early 2001, on many occasions, cinema uses classical music to reinforce a particular

narrative content or to create a specific event, such as *A Space Odyssey*, with the sound of the first bar Zarathustra by Richard Strauss.



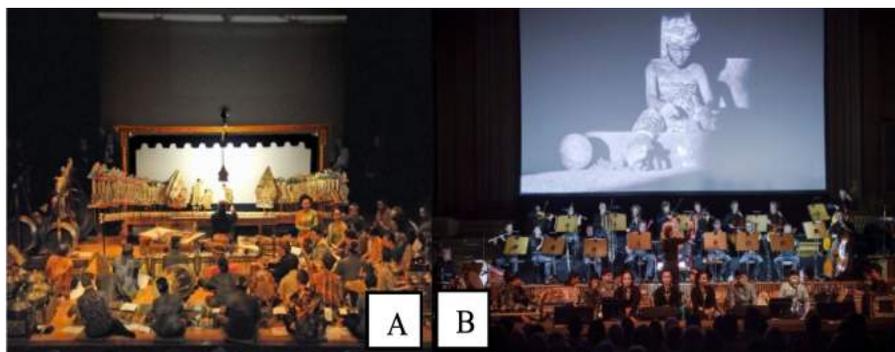
**Figure 5.** A Space Odyssey Poster Film (2001) (Source: Retrieve from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2001:\\_A\\_Space\\_Odyssey\\_\(film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2001:_A_Space_Odyssey_(film)) May 18, 2021)

Sometimes the composer appeared in the film as an object biopic, as in the case of a very famous Amadeus Mozart. Among the ranks of classical composers who have written music specifically for cinema is Sergei Prokofiev, who composed music for no less than six films. The history of Prokofiev as a composer of film music is also interesting because of his relationship, which in the period before the Second World War, with other important characters: Sergei Eisenstein and Josef Stalin. When Stalin came to power in Russia, Prokofiev handed down artistic creations in the political regime, with which artists were asked to elevate their leaders and people, which showed the greatness of the working class and the country itself. [5] All artists under the iron fist made to produce works in languages that can be accessed by the masses. In this order, the foreign influence of avant-garde Soviet art was banned and isolated from international trends. To ensure the success of this company, the authorities use terror, censorship, prohibitions, criticism, and the occasional execution of anyone who is not under the demands of their situation. [5] Cinematic-orchestra film became one form of graphic communication that is transmitted to support the deployment of media-political or political values and culture that is built in the image of the current government.



**Figure 6.** Setan Jawa: A Silent Film with Gamelan Orchestra (Source: Documentation of Garin Workshop)

Cinematic-orchestra as a medium of cultural education is also happening in the *Setan Jawa* Film—which reviving variety Dialectica of narrative culture including myth, primitive theology which was visualized beyond conventionality film—where does *Setan Jawa* Film become intermedia moving-image production, which is separating sound (music-film played outside of the film (along the film is being played).



**Figure 7 A-B:** A Traditional Javanese Puppet-Show (Source: Retrieve in <https://asiasociety.org/new-york/wayang-kulit-part-1> Sept 21, 2019); B In collaboration Javanese Puppet-show with Silent Film and Cinematic-Orchestra in *Setan Jawa* Film (Source: Documentation of Stiftung Humboldt Forum im Berliner Schloss/David von Becker Retrieve in <https://www.katrinfigge.com/art-culture/2018/10/12/setan-jawa-a-celebration-of-image-and-sound>, May 2, 2020)

The artistic that role by Cinematic-orchestra also adapted from the production of Javanese Puppet Shadow. (Figure 7 A-B)



**Figure 8.** Collaboration between Garasi Seni Benawa (Gamelan) with *Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra* in developing cinematic-orchestra *Setan Jawa* Film. (Source: Fourtesy Stiftung Humboldt Forum im Berliner Schloss/David von Becker Retrieve in <https://www.thejakartapost.com/life/2018/10/12/setan-jawa-a-celebration-of-image-and-sound.html> April 04, 2019)

In this movie, there are signs in the connotative meaning of Javanese culture that is visualized through the motions, both in gestural behavior in film and music in motion indexical by graphics scores were then undergoing transposition into the vehicle-mark syntax. Gamelan Orchestra structured by Pathetan, dramatic/plot on Javanese Puppet-Show.

Through a cinematic-orchestral approach, *Setan Jawa* Film (Figure 8) which is shown on a tour around several countries is assumed to be able to bring the mission of cultural education, especially Javanese culture to audiences outside Indonesia. Related to this, the film *Setan Jawa* has visual

multiliteracies competence, as one of the solutions to language barriers in facing the era of digitizing by referring to specific competencies of the 21st century according to Binkley, et al, in Abidin (2015), i.e.: (1) creativity and innovation, (2) metacognition, (3) communication, (4) working together, (5) information literacy, (6) information and communication technology literacy, (7) citizens’ attitudes, (8) personal responsibility and social, including awareness and cultural competencies.

With a cinematic-orchestra approach that combines various signs ranging from motion, sound, visual word-and-image construction systems in *Setan Jawa* Film, even though it is a silent film, but it contains a literacy approach with multimodal literacy learning dimensions; to combine literacy in both oral, audio, visual, spatial, gestural and/or audio-visual sources in their application to films as visual communication channels. *Setan Jawa* Film has the potential to become a new aesthetic bid, to achieve the necessary competence in facing Indonesia 4.0/5.0 ie conceptual comprehension’ competency that associated with a person’s ability to have an understanding of the various sciences; as well as the competence of critical thinking that is the ability to think critically and appreciative—in this case; is associated with a particular ethnic cultural identity that contains the values of the noble philosophy of life that should be in until right continuity across generations.

#### 4. Conclusions

The impact of technological developments taking place in society is certainly not always able to give visual effect to *strengthen the characters* of cultural identity. But, digital technology in moving images allows the production of a sign in the message communication—like happens in the film cinematic-orchestra *Setan Jawa* by Garin Nugroho—which possible to combines a variety of literary texts, which when distributed in a public space. It also allowing multiliteracies visual positioned as a means of new expression in cultural education media. However, relating to film as a product of the visual culture that has the potential to carry out mass-hypnosis in the audience’s unconscious within the framework of the concept of establishing the same conceptual understanding of the ideas being communicated; that is recommendations relating to ethics and morals and responsibility for packaging communication messages based on cultural narratives, so that information content remains focused on the right content so that cultural knowledge as cultural capital can be conveyed effectively and efficiently, becoming an effort to maintain cultural identity in digitizing era.

#### 5. References

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