



A DOCUMENTARY FILM “RINDU SANG BARA API” THROUGH A THEMATIC NARRATIVE STRUCTURE

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ABSTRACT

A documentary film is a creative process of presenting the reality of events. The final project of “Rindu Sang Bara Api” applies a documentary concept through a comparative and contradictory style with a thematic narrative structure. Comparative and contradictory styles are ways of conveying information in films by comparing events and using more critical interviews to gain public opinion. The explanations are usually delivered in the form of a narrative, a statement from a source, or given by voice. Documentary narrative structure, as we discussed, is a method of showing how the sequence of events is presented to the audience. The thematic narrative structure divides the film into sections to show how events occurred. The documentary film “Rindu Sang Bara Api” raises a community culture called the Torch War (*Perang Obor*) during the Covid-19 pandemic. This activity is a form of Earth Alms to be a means of giving thanks and praying to God to avoid harm, including the dangers of the Covid-19 virus. The implementation of the Torch War raises pros and cons between government policies and the ongoing Torch War.

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is an archipelagic country that gives Indonesia a geographically diverse culture. This kind of cultural diversity has the characteristics of each region, which is caused by the different mindsets of the cultural building groups. In accordance with human nature, they always use their intelligence to create happiness (Widagdho 2001: 24).

One of the elements of culture is belief, which is a product of humans as homo religious. This means that humans have the intelligence of thoughts and sublime feelings, realizing that above their strength, there is a great power that governs their lives. In order to persuade this great power to comply with human will, efforts are made to manifest it in a religious system and certain ceremonies (Mustopo 1988: 79).

According to Suseno (2001:15), every region in Indonesia has various kinds of religious rituals. One of the religious rituals in Indonesian culture is Earth Alms (*Sedekah Bumi*). In its philosophy, Earth Alms contains various noble values, such as mutual cooperation and the spirit of unity. The procedure for implementing the Earth Alms varies from one region to another, both in terms of time, tools, and media used. According to some opinions, this is influenced by the way the nine guardians spread Islam in Java. The nine guardians spread Islam by combining community animism with Sharia law. Alms Earth is a unique culture that aims to be a medium to get closer to God Almighty. One of the Earth Alms in Indonesia is in the Jepara region. Jepara is one of the areas in the north of Central Java Province. In the Jepara region, there are many diverse cultures scattered in the countryside, one of them is the Torch War (*Perang Obor*).

However, currently, the Torch War is hampered by the Covid-19 pandemic that enters Indonesia so its implementation is dif-

ferent from the conditions before the Covid-19 virus. During this Covid-19 pandemic, there is doubt in the community because the implementation will continue, be postponed, or even canceled. Therefore, the creation will include a documentary film. This documentary film will be produced in a style and form of comparison and contradiction with the thematic narrative structure. This shows a comparison of the implementation of the Torch War in the pre-pandemic and post-pandemic periods with stories broken down into several groups of themes, ranging from the Covid-19 event that has an impact on torch war activities, cheering on Torch War activities before the pandemic, Torch War activities, as well as the innovations and solutions for the implementation of the Torch War during the pandemic.

The creation of this documentary film is based on considerations that have been made by the researcher through studies of previous similar creations. This creation is a form of renewal from the creation carried out by Na'am Afiul Hudha in the Journal of the Bachelor's Degree in Arts of Recording Media, the Indonesian Institute of the Arts Yogyakarta, the creation of the Documentary Program of "*Api Penolak Bala*" through an Expository Style with a Chronological Narrative Structure. A documentary filmmaker is an active process in presenting the reality of events. The creative process of a documentary film is reflected in the concepts applied during the production process. The final project of *Api Penolak Bala* applies the concept of a documentary filmmaker through an expository style with a chronological narrative structure. The documentary film "*Api Penolak Bala*" proposes a societal culture called the Torch War. This activity is a form of Earth Alms as a means of eliminating danger, or the Javanese call it *Bala*. Judging from the media used in this earth-giving event, it has its own uniqueness. This is because the median used is fire, which according to some Javanese is a picture of the plague itself.

The creation of documentary films aims to find out the urgency of the community to continue to carry out the Torch War and to know how the process of making Torch War documentary films during the Covid-19 period. Thus, it can contribute knowledge to the world of education regarding documentary films, especially on community traditions. In addition, to be a reference for students of Fine Arts, especially Visual Communication Design, which focuses on Audio Visual. Moreover, the community can clearly understand the culture owned by the people of Jepara, especially the younger generation so that this Torch War festival is maintained, continues to the next generation, and can document the tradition of Torch War alms in audiovisual form. It also indirectly protects, preserves, and promotes the Torch War festival in Tegalsambi Village, Jepara.

RESEARCH METHODS

The data collection was carried out qualitatively with sources related to the problems raised in the design with the data analysis stage in the creation of the documentary film "*Rindu Sang Bara Api*" using several stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and verification or conclusions. The strategy used for the design in this creation was an adaptive strategy. In this adaptive strategy, initially, only the first stage concept targets were set. The target of the next stage concept was determined based on the decision of the previous stage, and so on until the final design decision was reached.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The documentary work of this "*Rindu Sang Bara Api*" uses a comparative and contradictory style through the thematic narrative structure as a major concept in making a documentary film. The selection of this concept aims to explore the comparison of the Torch War festival in the pre-pandemic to the new normal. In addition to bringing up comparisons in the Torch War festival, the director also presents the contradiction between government policies during the Covid-19 pandemic and the implementation of the Earth Alms tradition of Torch War festival at the Tegalsambi Village, thematically by dividing several events.

In this documentary film, two types of speakers are used, the speaker and the narrator, the narrative way of speaking, and the use of the chosen structure to convey the content of the documentary. Narrative choices are made to convey what the documentary is about. These things are also used in the documentary film "*Rindu Sang Bara Api*", but in the two-speaker application, the voice of the dual speaker or narrator, often referred to as the voice of God, does not come from outside the story, but a sound element is part of a real event. This sound element is often classified as a dramatic sound. The use of narrative sound elements is intended to reduce interruptions to the storyline by documentary filmmakers. In this way, the real value of the documentary produced is more preserved, and the documentary filmmaker is used as an intermediary.

The purpose of this documentary film entitled "*Rindu Sang Bara Api*" is to strengthen the impression of curiosity, and hope that the audience will watch this documentary program out of curiosity. This documentary film entitled "*Rindu Sang Bara Api*" tells of an incident where there was a village traditional event that could not be carried out as usual due to the Covid-19 pandemic that occurred in early 2020. Thus, many people miss the traditional event, both spectators and actors.

Activity will be considered successful if it is in accordance with the target audience to be achieved. In this case, the audience of documentary films is intended for the general public, because the content and packaging can be enjoyed by all people, and are especially aimed at the age group of 15 to adults. This culture is a legacy left by the ancestors of the Indonesian nation so all levels of society have the right to know about the culture that was passed on to them. Although I feel the local content of this event, overall, the target audience for this documentary film is not only the people of Jepara but the entire audience in Indonesia.

The pictures or visuals in the documentary film "*Rindu Sang Bara Api*" are facts and realities of events in the lives of people who carry out the tradition of the Torch War of Earth Alms. The image processing from additional footage is designed to add information in the form of visual data. Of course, the quality of the footage is very different from the quality of the images made by the director during production, so an alignment process is needed, both in terms of color and image size. The resulting image shadow will accentuate the red, yellow, and green-brown color gradations. The red, yellow, and greenish-brown tones or characters are chosen to display a more natural color, consistent with the original state, in addition to aiming to create different color characteristics between the indoor atmosphere, outdoor atmosphere, night atmosphere, and daytime atmosphere.

The artistic arrangement of the documentary film "*Rindu Sang Bara Api*" is not so complicated and the shooting location settings are not changed. This aims to present facts and reality according to the essence of the documentary film, and give a natural impression. Set On Location is mainly implemented by taking advantage of the properties and conditions that exist in that location. Interviews are conducted in different locations depending on the occupation of the interviewee. It is designed to better show the situation, actual information from each source, and the employment or social status of the person per source.

Music illustration is one of the important elements of a documentary film. Music can create the atmosphere and mood of the audience in watching a documentary film. Without music illustrations, documentary works seem boring. The music illustration in the documentary film "*Rindu Sang Bara Api*" is adapted to the atmosphere in this film so that the director chooses two types of music to be displayed, namely traditional music as the background for the intro, and fantasy-themed music as the background for the film's content. The music illustrations are not made by me but searched from internet sources by taking into account the copyright of each music creator. This is done using music illustrations shared by music composers for free and purchase copyrights from music composers. Using music illustrations from internet sources aims to more easily provide music and video illustrations that are arranged according to the storyline.

The thematic narrative structure in this film is seen in the breakdown of segments in the storyline which are divided into three segments, namely the first segment discussing the Torch War in 2019 or in general, and the second segment discussing the years 2020-2021. Meanwhile, the Covid-19 pandemic has forced all activities to change. The last segment is about the new normal that will occur in 2022. The opening in the documentary film "*Rindu Sang Bara Api*" uses an intro that creates a village atmosphere by showing someone enjoying coffee and watching television which contains news about Covid-19 and then suddenly moves to the Torch War festival video.



Figure 5. Footage of the intro to the documentary film "*Rindu Sang Bara Api*"

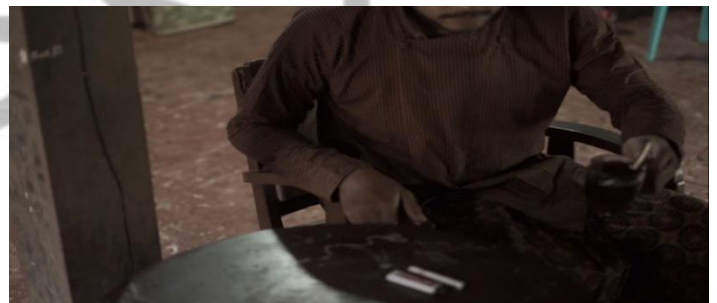


Figure 6. Footage of the intro to the documentary film "*Rindu Sang Bara Api*"



Figure 7. Footage of the intro to the documentary film '*Rindu Sang Bara Api*'



Figure 8. Footage of the intro to the documentary film '*Rindu Sang Bara Api*'



Figure 9. Footage of the intro to the documentary film 'Rindu Sang Bara Api'

The first segment is opened by showing footage of the flames at the Torch War festival in 2019, then continued with some footage of the 2019 Torch War activities.



Figure 9. Footage at the beginning of the first segment



Figure 10. Footage in the first segment



Figure 11. Interview scene with Mbah Zaenal Arifin as a village elder in the first segment

Regarding the statements from the source person used in this section, it is more descriptive about the Torch War. Part of the speaker's statement is given a subtitle, which is to pay attention to the dialogue given by the speaker so that the audience can better understand the information given in this documentary because of the use of the Javanese language with the local accent of the local community.



Figure 12. Footage in the first segment

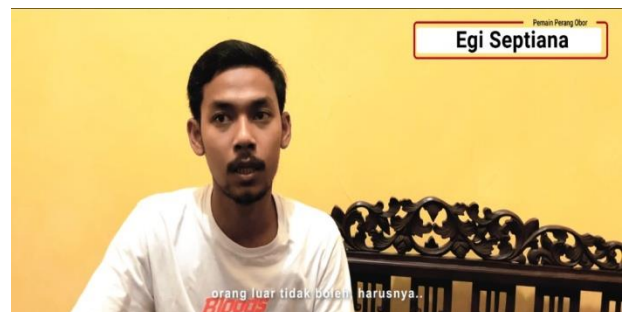


Figure 13. Interview scene with Egi Septiana as a Torch War player in the first segment



Figure 14. Footage in the first segment

The second segment is not much different from the previous segment. However, this second segment has the theme of the Torch War during the Covid-19 pandemic conditions in 2020-2021, and the views of the Head of the Department of Tourism and Culture of Japan Regency, Mr. Zamroni Lestiaza, regarding the Community Activities Restrictions Enforcement (CARE) policy and the limits that may be carried out. To strengthen his statement, the director also publishes an article on the internet that contains the same thing and brought up the monologue of the Village Head during the Torch War during the pandemic.



Figure 15. Footage at the beginning of the second segment



Figure 16. Footage of the mask installation on the Kartini statue in the second segment



Figure 17. Interview scene with Mr. Zamroni Lestiaza as Head of the Department of Tourism and Culture of Japan Regency in the second segment

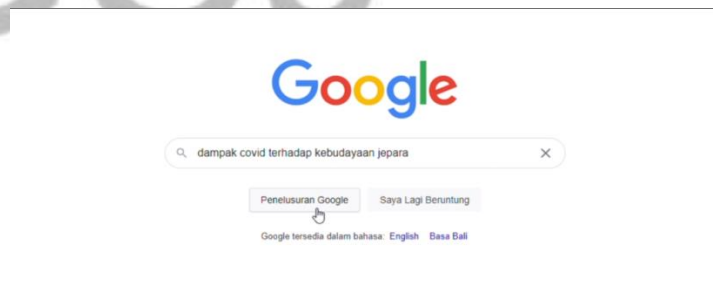


Figure 18. Search for articles on Google at the beginning of the second segment



Figure 17. The monologue scene of Mr. Agus Santoso as the Head of Tegalsambi Village in the second segment



Figure 18. The scene of the first ignition of the fire by Mr. Agus Santoso as the Head of Tegalsambi Village in the second segment

The third segment discusses the Torch War in the New Normal period in 2022 and also as the last segment by bringing up the Torch War crowd and the enthusiasm of the players, reinforced by interviews with Torch War players and the Head of Tegalsambi Village.



Figure 19. Footage at the beginning of the third segment



Figure 20. Footage of the Torch War festival in the third segment



Figure 21. Interview scene with Egi Septiana as a Torch War player in the third segment

Source person statement:

"Egi Septiana: I, as a player, have definitely not had a Torch War for 2 years during the Corona pandemic, the players are only representatives and now I can play again, I'm definitely happy, it's easy to miss, like wanting to know the torches are still the same as before or not."



Figure 22. Footage of the Torch War festival in the third segment



Figure 23. The interview scene of Mr. Agus Santoso as the Head of Tegalsambi Village in the third segment

Source person statement:

"Mr. Agus Santoso: Torch War activity or event tonight is the highlight of the Earth Alms event. I feel very impressed because when we have not been in a pandemic for 2 years. There should be no crowd events, including Torch War events. On this night, the community feels paid for by their wishes. Thus, people have longed for a Torch War like tonight, which, Alhamdulillah, is able to go according to our expectations, and the entire committee."



Figure 24. Footage of the Torch War festival in the third segment

Of course, there are technical and non-technical hurdles to overcome in the production of a film. In the process of making the documentary film "*Rindu Sang Bara Api*", even though they have made preparations before filming, there are some unexpected obstacles. Initially, this documentary film is shown in a show style and aims to dramatize the events during the Torch War festival. However, with the ongoing production process, this style is considered unsuitable for the documentary film production process to be produced. This is due to field limitations that complicate the filmmaking process, such as limited space, limited equipment, and limited time to create a style of performance. Therefore, the style of the documentary film is adjusted to choose from. However, these obstacles must remain in order to bring out the creativity that everyone has, and let the process of realizing the documentary film "*Rindu Sang Bara Api*" continue as usual.

Conclusion

The documentary film "*Rindu Sang Bara Api*" has gone through several stages from research activities to the realization of this documentary program. The production phase of idea search, idea development, research, and concept creation in the form of aesthetic and technical concepts to the creation process, namely the production process to the post-production process is carried out with preparations that have been made previously. The documentary film "*Rindu Sang Bara Api*" tells the events that took place in the Torch War for four years, starting from 2019 to 2022, where in 2020 and 2021 the Covid-19 pandemic occurred. This film uses a comparative and contradictory style through the thematic narrative structure as a medium of the direct delivery of information to make this documentary more informative. In addition to the pros and cons of holding the Torch War tradition during the Covid-19 pandemic, it is hoped that it will attract the attention of the audience to create a sense of wanting to preserve the culture of the Indonesian nation. The choice of comparative and contradictory styles in the documentary film "*Rindu Sang Bara Api*" is one of the subjectivities of the documentary director in presenting the existing reality. This is part of the creativity of the director and the production team in packaging information for a documentary program, with the hope that this creative process can be useful for the creators and audiences of the resulting documentary films. Hopefully, this documentary program can spread to all levels of society and make the culture of the Torch War more widely known.

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