



Filmic education of borderland texts in *Jogho* and *Bunohan*

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ABSTRACT

Our study proposes that a film can be cinematically persuasive in presenting a cultural argument and as such, the mass medium should be deployed to promote awareness towards appreciation and preservation of arts and cultural practices. It is concerned with exploring the creative and intellectual capability of a 'regional' film that engages with local tradition, practices and cultural identities in canvassing promotion of awareness and preservation of arts and cultural heritage with a special focus on the representation of Malay society and culture in the Kelantan-Pattani borderland as constructed in U-Wei Haji Saari's *Jogho* (1997) and Dain Said's *Bunohan* (2012). The study is informed by Linda Tuhiwai-Smith's 'decolonizing methodologies' (1999) as a set of ideological practices in favour of the disenfranchised and mapped against both films. As such, the parameter of textual analysis for both texts is cinematic and discursive within naturally conflated contextual discussion of contemporary sociology, history and politics of arts and cultural practices of the borderland, undermined or otherwise. The findings of the mapping suggest that both narratives demonstrated their critical qualities as exemplary 'regional films' for purpose of promotion and education of borderland arts and cultural heritage. In conclusion, this study regards astute filmmaker as a public intellectual whose vision and direction are needed to help promote institutionalisation and advocacy via filmic education in the cinematic public sphere.

Keywords: *arts and cultural heritage, borderland culture, decolonizing methodologies, filmic education, cultural heritage*

INTRODUCTION

A 'longing' for the benevolent past should not necessarily be construed as an act of romanticising the arts and cultural heritage that once graced the lifeworlds of our ancestors. Rather, it is deemed worthwhile for the sake of posterity to sustain our interest and to be knowledgeable about the manifestation of arts and cultural heritage, whether tangible or otherwise. Granted, the promotion of awareness and restoration of pride, be they indigenous, ethnic or national 'cultural heritage', through various forms of cultural discourses and exposures, are perhaps trite and trivial issues for some. In general, the prevalence of cultural globalisation in developing societies across the world, in our opinion, has made it increasingly intangible and untenable for local cultural traditions to maintain their relevance today. In fact, this has often been regarded as one of the ramifications of cultural globalisation. Indeed, the State, the market and the promoters of art and cultural heritage should bear the responsibilities of ensuring that it can be accessed by everyone in the nation.

In light of this, film can be seen as an important medium towards promoting and preserving arts and cultural heritage in the creative (via fiction film) or narrative (via documentary film) format. Whether consciously or subconsciously, filmmaking is quite easily one of the means to document, reflect and preserve the cultural heritage of a particular country or people. China, for example, has been promoting its cultural heritage and history through selected exhibitions of Chinese films because without cultural exchange, it realises that it may not enjoy greater economic leverage from its globalised Belt and Road Initiative in developing nations as far as Africa, where cultural heritage assumes its general importance as symbolism of African identities.

Our study is concerned with exploring the creative and intellectual capability of a 'regional' film that engages with local tradition, practices and cultural identities in canvassing for promotion of awareness and preservation of arts and cultural heritage. Understandably, the preference for the visual form of any filmic construction and representation of cultural heritage, as our study indicates, means that most of our arguments will hinge on the visuality of 'intangible' cultural heritage in the selected films, in textual and discursive contexts.

ARTS AND CULTURE AS HERITAGE

The notion of 'heritage' comprises three main categories, namely, natural heritage, built heritage and cultural heritage. As heritage denotes something that is owned, inherited and handed down from previous owners, the concept of cultural heritage is associated with intangible elements that bond people together as a community through shared values, traditions, history and glory. Although it is generally categorised as an intangible heritage as compared to tangible heritage, the concept of cultural heritage now includes all evidence of human creativity and expression.

Perhaps as a general rule, it may be said that the heritage conservation discourse is informed by an ethos or overlapping framework that is constructed and shared mainly by specialists like archaeologists, architects, surveyors, painters, photographers, sculptors, artists and of course, art historians. Research in the field of heritage conservation has also taken a specific vine as in exploring visitor mindfulness and communication factors at the heritage sites themselves (Tan, 2019). This ethos is underlined by a universally recognised mission of the preservation of the arts and cultural artefacts and promoting collaborative restoration efforts with

all stakeholders. This is nowhere more clearly expressed than by the United Nations itself, who started the global awareness campaign especially on the preservation and restoration of tangible cultural assets and heritage sites the world over. As a ratifying member state, Malaysia's Ministry of Tourism and Culture was given the authority under the 2005 National Heritage Act, to develop policies that safeguard and promote national heritage items such as sites, objects including "Eminent Living Persons" (Marjali, 2015:5) as tangible and intangible arts and cultural artefacts. More importantly, the State realises the need to educate and disseminate information about national arts and cultural heritage preservation initiatives to the society especially to rally the involvement of the younger generation in appreciating and sustaining the life-span of arts and cultural heritage for posterity.

At the level of everyday Malaysian social reality, the discourse on heritage conservation at large is diversified and often motivated by shared but unlimited interests of diverse private individuals or collectors, (digital) communities, non-governmental organisations and societies. The establishment of the popular Malaysian Heritage and History Club (MHHC) on *Facebook* for instance, demonstrates that the practice of cultural heritage preservation can be assumed and supported by progressive participation of non-State actors, which may support the nurturing of similar digital or online 'imagined communities' of interest, to borrow Anderson's term. The active public engagement in forums, seminars and workshops is increasingly seen as a somewhat 'vernacular' responses to understand, reclaim, protect, sustain, share the knowledge and practices especially of intangible arts and cultural heritage in Malaysia for its multiethnic and multicultural society, and of course, future generation.

MALAYSIAN CINEMA AS A PUBLIC SPHERE/ CULTURAL ARGUMENT

Most notably, due to the capital investment involved, some filmmakers have decidedly to come to the frontline to take up the challenge of constructing their nation's imaginary as a reflection on its histories, the peoples and their stories. The dominance of Malay films which is supported by the National Cultural Policy 1970 have long established and promoted Malay-Islamic cultural identity as the foundation of national arts and cultural heritage. The Malays have been the main supporters of ethnocentric Malay films before the onset of the 'new' Malaysian Cinema drew multiethnic audiences to watch urban, cosmopolitan films by astute auteurs like Yasmin Ahmad.

In this manner too, conceptually speaking, the Malaysia cinema assumes its central and most important role as the convenor of Malaysian public sphere. The critical role of cinema in sponsoring and promoting public discussions was first informed by Alexander Kluge, a German socialist filmmaker and founding member of 'new' German Cinema in the 1960s who studied the social dimension and implication of silent movies. According to Miriam Hansen (2012), Kluge argued that silent movies were critical in nurturing a socially engaging public sphere because the spectators would find a natural desire to be interactive and communicative with their fellow spectators about the filmic content. In the case of modern Malaysian film industry, Kluge's notion of cinematic public sphere is relevant although perhaps it might not have been as animated or engaged as during the era of the silent movies.

The Malaysian cinematic public sphere has been critically engaged by film and cultural scholars who have filled in critical scholarship on Malaysian cinema. William van der Heide (2002) noted that Malay and Malaysian films will continue to be shaped by cultural influences from both the East and West, thus, he preferred the term 'Malaysian film culture'. Van der Heide

argued that adaptability and hybridity have characterised Malay films due to the proximity and porosity of the cultural borders, rather than national borders. He claimed that this has resulted in intertextual footprints or ‘line of connectedness’ (van der Heide, 2002:22) in Malay filmmaking - P. Ramlee’s film, *Labu dan Labi* (1963) evidently contains traces of influences from Hollywood, Japanese, Hong Kong and Indian films. His ‘lines of connectedness’ are the underlying force that have intermingled, shaped and changed Malaysian cinema.

Another influential film critic in recent years is Khoo Gaik Cheng, whose work *Reclaiming Adat* (2006) examines the impact of the revival of Islam awareness in the early 1990s which apparently stifled filmmakers, writers and intellectuals some of whom are “keener to test the blurry boundaries between *adat* and Islam” (Khoo, 2006:109). The state-endorsed resurgence threatened the freedom of expression by imposing bans, self-censoring and restricting access to the arts and cultural public spheres. According to Khoo, Malay filmmakers of this era were in search of an identity that “was a fine balance between Islam, *adat* and modernity”. Their pursuit had taken them closer to the traditional roots of the Malay culture and to fashion an Islamic identity that is “localized within the Malay hybrid context”. However, it has to be said that against the homogenising and increasingly hegemonic Islamisation if Arabisation, Khoo’s article of reclaiming *adat* seems ambivalent. This is because the gesture rendered Zaleha, Uwei Haji Saari’s heroine in *Perempuan, Isteri dan Jalang* (199) not only had manic and uncontrollable sexual desires, but also evoked ‘fear’ among male characters and in the “collective imagination of male writers and filmmakers” (21). Once reclaimed, a Malay *adat* may be recuperated and this second gesture is facilitated by a portrayal of Zaleha in a chest-high sarong “to counter resurgent Islam” (21). Khoo’s counter-discursive strategy of contesting Islam (and Malayness, to an extent) with an emphasis on sexuality signifying the force of cultural globalization that shapes modernity for cultural argument in Malaysian cinema scholarship.

Scholarship aside, Malay filmmakers have engaged in the global project of ‘reclaiming’ arts and cultural heritage as a response to the daily onslaught of cultural globalisation. Renowned director like Shuhaimi Baba, for example, showcased Minangkabau dialect, mythology and mysticism in *Waris Jari Hantu* (The Ghastly Heir, 2007) whilst the lesser known Shahrul Azli Mohd Shukor made the only short film on the social meaning of Johor’s Zapin dance in *Zaleha Ayam Patah* (2004). Indeed, a film can embed both tangible and intangible arts and cultural heritage into its generic structure as a sumptuous visual feast of realism. Furthermore, Malaysian audiences can actually learn, recognize, understand and appreciate as embedded *knowledge* the history, process and aesthetics of a specific cultural heritage.

TWO BORDERLAND TEXTS

Bunohan

Bunohan (Return to Murder) is a Malaysian thriller film, written and directed by Dain Iskandar Said who is popularly known as Dain Said and released in Malaysia on 8 March 2012. The film features actors Faizal Hussein, Zahiril Adzim and Pekin Ibrahim in leading roles. *Bunohan* was the second film directed by Dain Said and had its world premiere at the Toronto International Film Festival 2011 where it was praised for its solid, visceral storytelling and arresting photography.

The film primarily takes place in the rural Malaysian town of *Bunohan*, which is located close to the Thai border. Adil (Zahiril Adzim) is a young kick-boxer who has fallen deeply into debt, with little hope of paying his creditors. In desperation, Adil agrees to an illegal high-stakes death match at a boxing club on the other side of the border, but in the midst of the fight, with Adil losing badly, his best friend Muski played by Amerul Affendi bursts into the ring and breaks up the match, dragging Adil away. This upsets the promoters of the fight as they have lost a lot of money in terms of bets. Adil and Muski return to *Bunohan*, where Adil was born and raised. The promoter of the fight sends a hired killer, Ilham played by Faizal Hussein, to find and execute Adil.

Ilham reluctantly goes to *Bunohan*. It is then revealed that he was born and raised in *Bunohan* too, but left many years ago. Upon returning, memories of loneliness and abandonment flood his mind, and he experiences waves of resentment and regret. As Ilham narrows his focus on his target, he learns that he and the fugitive boxer are actually half-brothers. He then finds his mother's grave on a piece of land near the beach and starts digging for her remains to give her a proper burial. However, it was never mentioned in the story how his mother died or why she did not have an appropriate interment and buried at the beach instead. He later finds out that his estranged family is planning to sell the land to a large corporation from the city for a huge amount of money. He goes all out to prevent this from happening.

Meanwhile, after making his way back to his father's home in *Bunohan*, Adil discovers his long-lost elder brother Bakar (Pekin Ibrahim) has returned to look after their ailing father. Bakar, a successful young school teacher from the city has left his comfortable home in urban Kuala Lumpur to come home. Ostensibly a highly educated and respectable young man, he is in reality a greedy and ruthless person but his motives are not benevolent. Bakar is determined to claim ownership of his father's land, and has plans that will bring disrespect to his family and community. He is determined to convince his father to sell the burial ground to the construction company no matter what the consequences.

Jogho

Set in the bull-fighting Pattani Malay community of Southern Thailand. *Jogho* tells the story of Mamat played by Khalid Salleh a native of Kelantan, who had left Malaysia many years earlier to join his brother, Lazim in South Thailand to continue making his living as a trainer of fighting bulls (a *Jogho*). A practice that had been outlawed in Malaysia but continued in Thailand. Mamat lives with his wife and three daughters, two divorcees and one who has not yet married. His only son was sent to boarding school in Kelantan.

Mamat and Lazim are the leaders in a small village that depend mostly on the money won from gambling in bullfights for their sustenance. The story begins when Lazim is killed by Isa, an ungracious loser in the bullfighting arena. Mamat vows to get even. His wife Minah played by Normah Damanhuri fails to stop this cycle of vengeance, which will also affect the younger generation. By tradition, this leaves Mamat and the young men, the responsibility of taking revenge to preserving the honor of the village. Mamat visits Kelantan and arranges for his friend Jaafar to find and kill the perpetrators. On returning home, Mamat is gored by his new bull and is bedridden for several days. At the same time, Lazim's two sons and a friend have gone into the town and managed to kill Isa's son, Hamdan and his assistant Dollah Munduk. After the killing, the young men go into hiding while Mamat is arrested by the Thai police, leaving the women alone to manage not only the village affairs but also to care for the bull, Aral.

From jail, Mamat pleads with his wife to pay the bail so that he will be able to fight the new bull. He is at last freed on the morning of the bullfight. At the arena, Isa comes to avenge the death of his son. Isa shoots Mamat but miraculously misses his first shot while the second shot only manages to wound Mamat in the shoulder. Mamat wrestles the gun from Isa and knocks him to the ground. Now Mamat has the chance to kill Isa and avenge Lazim's death but Mamat refuses as he has become tired of Malays killing Malays. He lowers the pistol but Lazim's son, Sani grabs the gun and shoots Isa instead. The police come and Mamat surrenders himself to them, taking the responsibility for the murder.

METHODOLOGY - DECOLONIZING METHODOLOGIES

As a public intellectual, a filmmaker's task is to generate public's sociopolitical interest and shape the all-important discursive space among members of the audiences. According to Tuhiwai-Smith (1999), the decolonizing methodologies become the means and procedures through which the central problems of the indigenous project are addressed. As each project is generally concerned with the broader politics of identity of the disenfranchised, the social scientist or public intellectual should clarify his or her intention and justify the strategic aims of the project.

Tuhiwai-Smith's work on decolonizing methodologies is a set of critical practices, policies and actions which can be deployed by the so-called indigenous subject towards achieving certain targets or strategic perspectives. The decolonizing practices suggested by Tuhiwai-Smith are essentially part of her repertoire in assuming her intellectual engagement in politics of identity involving disadvantaged indigenous as minorities. As such, she has identified 25 elements of practices, policy and actions that are critical in the decolonizing methodologies, which may be deployed as strategically as necessary depending on the social, cultural, historical and political circumstances of the disenfranchised. Some of these methodologies are existing critical research practices on various oppressed groups within the social science and humanities.

This study employs the decolonizing methodologies as a set of ideological practices in favour of the disenfranchised and mapped against both films. As such, the parameter of textual analysis for both texts is cinematic and discursive within naturally conflated contextual discussion of contemporary sociology, history and politics of arts and cultural practices of the borderland, undermined or otherwise.

Analysis

In order to understand the filmic education done subconsciously in the storytelling of the selected films, our analysis use the decolonizing methodologies as prescribed by Tuhiwai-Smith's framework.

From the extensive framework of 25 elements of practices, policy and action, namely - claiming, testimonies, story-telling, celebrating survival, remembering, indigenizing, intervening, revitalising, connecting, reading, writing, representing, gendering, envisioning, reframing, restoring, returning, democratizing, networking, naming, protecting, creating, negotiating, discovering and sharing.

From the descriptions and explanations provided by Tuhiwai-Smith's framework, we have dissected in both films the 'embedded' elements such as claiming, returning, storytelling,

celebrating survival, revitalising, protecting and sharing. Some of these elements are independent while a few overlaps.

Claiming

According to Tuhiwai-Smith, ‘claiming’ and ‘reclaiming’ has gone through a dynamic process. For some indigenous groups, the formal claim process demanded tribunal and courts while the government required them to conduct intensive research projects resulting in the writing of nation, tribe and family histories. All these histories have similar focus and purpose, that is, to establish the legitimacy of their claims once and for all. Because they have been written to support claims to territories and resources or about past injustices, they have been constructed around selected stories. These claiming histories have also been written for different audiences. First, is the formal court or tribunal audience, who are generally non-indigenous; second, is the general, non-indigenous population and the third, the people themselves. For this last audience the histories are also important teaching histories. They teach both the non-indigenous audience and the new generations of indigenous peoples an official account of their collective story. But, importantly, it is a history which has no ending because it assumes that once justice has been done the people will continue their journey.

Both *Bunohan* and *Jogho* tell of histories of people living at the Kelantan-Pattani borderland and the way of life and cultures of the regional Malays. Both films also display cinematic construction of parochialism in the families of Pok Eng and Pak Mamat. These are the heads of the families that make the important decisions. Things do not move or happen without their approval or their consent no matter how ridiculous and unjustified the actions are. A look at *Bunohan*, sees Pok Eng’s reluctance to sell his land which is part of a burial ground by the beach. This makes it difficult for his ruthless son, Bakar to proceed with his schemes that might bring catastrophe consequences to the village. Ilham, Pok Eng’s estranged son and Bakar’s half brother is adamant to stop the sale of the land and the impending plans. The other question that arises from this is, the land that Pok Eng refuses to sell, is it because of the term “*Disini bumi ku pijak, disitu langit ku junjung*”? or because the Malays believed that their makeup includes tanah, air, angin, api and that to sell the land (tanah) may appear as selling ‘oneself’? This element is also an overlap with the next category of returning in (ii).

While in *Jogho*, an example that can be cited is the scene between Pak Mamat and his wife, Minah. Mamat’s brother, Lazim is killed by Isa, an ungracious loser in the bullfighting arena. When Mamat vows to get even, Minah fails to stop this cycle of vengeance. By tradition, Mamat and the young men in the family take on the responsibility of taking revenge to preserve the honor of the village. Therefore it is clear that claiming can be situated within the language that is used, the land in question, honor for the village and the borderland cultures of *wayang kulit* and bullfighting.

Returning

The *returning* theme intersects with that of claiming where it involves the returning of lands, rivers and mountains to their indigenous owners. It involves the repatriation of artefacts, remains and other cultural materials stolen or removed and taken overseas. Returning also involves the living wherein some of the strategies of returning involve going back to their roots to ensure their membership in the official tribal registers or by physically reclaiming them. Adopted children, for example, are encouraged to seek their birth families and return to their original communities.

In these two films, *returning* has always been to the roots of culture and the land. This is clear in the case of *Bunohan* when there is the question of the ancestral land that belongs to Pok Eng. He has no intention of selling the land and wants to split it equally between his sons, Ilham, Bakar and Adil. Nevertheless, Bakar has ulterior motives when he left Kuala Lumpur under the pretext of wanting to take care of his ailing father. His intention was to force his father to either sell the land or hand over the rights of the land to him. After much coaxing and failing, he takes matters into his own hands and kills the old man while he is performing the *wayang kulit* or shadow puppets.

Wayang kulit is a rich tradition that has been banned by the Kelantan government and because of the ban this unique culture is slowly dying. The younger generation does not know what *wayang kulit* is, what more to understand the essence of the play that mostly talks about history and more tradition. In the film, Dain Said takes a strong stand by including a banned culture and implies that it needs to be revived for the sake of the people and the younger generation. And to do this, the ban must first be lifted for *wayang kulit* to thrive again like in the olden days. There is also another scene that talks about the land; a poem recited by Pok Eng's late wife that comes to visit him when he is sick. His wife Mek Yah was a medicine woman and has 'stayed' with him even after her demise. A translation of the poem reads:

*We cannot throw away the land
as it symbolizes throwing away our stories.
– Mek Yah, Bunohan*

This is clear as day that the land and their stories are intertwined, Mek Yah's grave on the land near the beach, Ilham coming home to give his mother a proper burial and the same land in question that Bakar wants to sell to a development company for a building of a resort. The beach is also where Pok Eng was murdered by Bakar while practicing the *wayang kulit*.

For *Jogho* the plot is a bit different in terms of storyline, while Mamat and his brother enjoy the easy life of bull fighting, his wife Minah laments of returning to her life in Kelantan. The conversation between Mamat and his wife at the lapidated kitchen hints that Mamat's wife is in disagreement on blames Mamat's decision to leave Kelantan and move to the Pattani border, which has caused her family misery. It is also the borderland histories that have made this family what it is today. Although there is no mention of land ownership where they live as they are barely surviving on the winnings from the bull fights to pull them through life. Nevertheless, there is always the yearning to go back to their roots in Malaysia.

Storytelling

Storytelling, oral histories and the perspectives of elders and of women have become an integral part of all indigenous research. Each individual story is powerful. But the point about the stories is not that they simply tell a story. These new stories contribute to a collective story in which every indigenous person has a place. For many indigenous writers, stories are ways of passing down the beliefs and values of a culture in the hope that the new generations will treasure them and pass the story down. The story and the storyteller both serve to connect the past with the future, one generation with the other, the land with the people and the people with the story.

For Tuihawai-Smith, intrinsic in story telling is a focus on dialogue and conversations amongst indigenous peoples, to ourselves and for ourselves. Such approaches fit well with the oral traditions which are still a reality in day-to-day indigenous lives. Importantly, storytelling is

also about humour, gossip and creativity. They also tell of love and sexual encounters, of war and revenge. Their themes tell us about our cultures with stories that employ familiar characters and motifs which can reassure as well as challenge. Familiar characters can be invested with the qualities of an individual or can be used to invoke a set of shared understandings and histories.

Bunohan at first glance looks like an action film but in fact it is more of a dark drama where each of the brothers have chosen a different path that is filled with murder, corruption and betrayal although all of them come from the same family. However, their background is completely different as each grew up in different conditions. This will eventually form the characteristic of each brother and the overall plot. The brothers, Adil, a young kick-boxer who has fallen deeply into debt, with little hope of paying his creditors honestly. Ilham, a hired killer sent to find and execute Adil and Bakar the successful school teacher from the city that has come home to take care of his ailing father but with ulterior motives.

Jogho's storyline is simpler with the story of two brothers from Kelantan, Mamat and Lazim that are leaders in a small village in South Thailand where they are trainers of fighting bulls, a practice that has been outlawed in Malaysia. They survive mostly on the gamblings from the bullfights and they also make enemies the same way. Lazim is killed by Isa, a sore loser in one of the competitions and Mamat swears vengeance. Against his wife's pleadings, he is adamant to make Isa pay for the murder. Minah, his wife is thinking of their family as they are responsible for their three daughters, two divorcees and one who has not yet married. What will become of them if this circle of vengeance cannot be stopped.

Celebrating survival

Tuhiwai-Smith argues that while non-indigenous research has been intent on documenting the demise and cultural assimilation of indigenous peoples, celebrating survival is an approach that accentuates the degree to which indigenous peoples and communities have successfully retained cultural and spiritual values and authenticity. The approach is reflected sometimes in story form, sometimes in popular music and sometimes as an event in which artists and story tellers come together to celebrate collectively a sense of life and diversity and connectedness. Events and accounts which focus on the positive are important not just because they speak to our survival, but because they celebrate our resistances at an ordinary human level and they affirm our identities as indigenous women and men.

Celebrating survival as an approach is also a theme running through the collection of elders' stories. The elders speak openly of their personal struggles to stay on the path against impossible odds. Their stories of what they have lost and what they have fought to save are both tragic and heroic. Celebrating is also a natural outcome of spiritual sharing and it too can take a diversity of forms. It is an individual and communal process that celebrates the mystery of life and the journey that each of us take and a way of spreading the light around.

Survival comes in many different forms in our borderland texts. In *Bunohan*, we see this in a few aspects – Adil's survival to keep alive despite his injuries sustained in a kick-boxing match. He is rescued by his best friend Muski, but Muski betrays him when he ends up fighting the not top form Adil in another kick-boxing match where the stakes are high. Unfortunately, Adil dies when he is injured again and poison is administered to his open wounds. The Muay-Thai culture that is proudly practiced is now tarnished forever with corruption and murder. *Bunohan* highlights the ability for survival in different ways, for Adil its kick-boxing, for older brother Bakar its deceit and for wayward brother Ilham, killing, a very dark ominous path to take.

Jogho on the other spectrum is all about survival in the world of bull-fighting, for Mamat. He cannot quit because bull-fighting is all he knows and the winning prize money of 400,000 *baht* (equivalent to RM 47,764) is more than enough to sustain his family's needs. Mamat keeps repeating in several scenes in the film, '*Aku Jogho*' (I am the bullfighter) to accentuate that he is in charge of the bull-fighting business, his family and his future.

Revitalising

According to Tuhiwai-Smith, indigenous languages, their arts and their cultural practices are in various states of crisis since indigenous languages is often regarded as being subversive to national interests and national literacy campaigns. Many indigenous languages are officially 'dead' with fewer than a hundred speakers. Others are in the last stages before what is described by linguists as 'language death'. The revitalization of these initiatives in languages encompasses education, broadcasting, publishing, community-based programmes as well as in film. Literacy campaigns tend to frame language survival programmes and designed around either official languages or one or two dominant languages.

The same can be said for both films where the use of the Kelantanese accent or *Kecek Kelate* is a Malay language spoken in the state of Kelantan and the neighbouring southernmost provinces of Thailand. It is the primary spoken language of Thai Malays but is also a *lingua franca* by ethnic Southern Thai in rural areas by both Muslim, non-Muslims and the *samsam*, a mostly Thai-speaking population of mixed Malay and Thai ancestry. The language is a highly divergent dialect of Malay because of the geographical isolation of the dialect from the rest of the Malay world by high mountains, deep rainforest and the South China Sea. In Thailand, it is influenced by the Thai language with several varieties that exist but they are mutually comprehensible to the extent that native speakers of Pattani and Kelantanese often cannot differentiate each other.

The actors chosen for both these films are not Kelantan natives but are required to speak the language inclusive of the accents for the stories to ring true. Because of this, some of the pronunciation of the dialogue seem awkward at times. This is obvious during the tense scene in *Bunohan* between Ilham and *Cina Burung* where Ilham is trying to get information from the Chinese man that sells birds. An argument ensues and Ilham is quite merciless as he kills the Chinese man even though he has acquire information regarding his target. *Jogho* on the other hand has managed to portray the language with much more ease. It's easier to listen to eventhough you are not a native speaker yourself. This helps much in the storytelling and the overall plot. Minah played by Normah Damanhuri and Khalid Ahmad as Mamat gave commendable portrayals of their characters. The language was delivered effortlessly and this contributed greatly to the storytelling.

Protecting

Every indigenous community attempts to protect several different things simultaneously. In some areas alliances with non-indigenous organizations have been beneficial in terms of rallying international support. In other areas a community would try to protect itself by just staying alive. Some countries have identified sacred sites and have designated protected areas. Many of these, unfortunately, become tourist spots. Issues about the protection of indigenous knowledge have been discussed at various indigenous conferences which have produced charters and conventions aimed at signalling to the world at large that indigenous knowledges ought to be protected.

History seems to suggest that many of these calls for international adherence to such charters will be at best, highly selective. The need to protect a way of life, a language and the right to make our own history is a deep need linked to the survival of indigenous peoples.

This is true for both films. In lieu of *Bunohan* the scene that best portrays this is when Pok Eng's late wife, Mek Yah a medicine woman, despite her demise has 'stayed' with him. There is a scene of the sickly Pok Eng 'seeing' his wife come back to him with advice and encouragement as Mek Yah's invocation is heard:

*I will give you strength until we can meet again
We speak full of meaning
Our works will mark like footprints on the earth
Our breath will stir the leaves, move the waters
And hold up the birds in flight
Our love will set the world ablaze
We cannot throw away the land
As it symbolizes throwing away our stories.
– Mek Yah, Bunohan*

There is also the scene where Ilham finds his mother's unkempt grave and does a proper burial on the beach where the burial grounds are sacred. This is also the land that Bakar wants to sell off for a chalet project that would make him rich. His only obstacle is that his father is adamant not to sell the land and to give it to his sons equally. Although the spiritual beliefs are not very dominant in *Jogho*, it is still told in some of the dialogue of the spirits of the land and bull-fighting. They believe that with the spirit or the *semangat* of the land that they would be blessed with fortune or *rezeki* to provide for their families.

Sharing

For Tuhiwai-Smith, the project of sharing knowledge between indigenous peoples around networks and across the world of indigenous peoples is very important. Sharing contains views that knowledge can be a collective benefit and a form of resistance. Like networking, sharing is a process which is responsive to the marginalized context in which indigenous communities exist. Sharing for these communities can be during gatherings like weddings or funerals but they are also used as opportunities to keep the community informed about a wide range of things. The face to face nature of sharing is supplemented with local newspapers which focuses on indigenous issues and local radio stations which specializes in indigenous news and music. Sharing is also related to the failure of education systems to educate indigenous people adequately or appropriately. It is important for keeping people informed about issues and events which will have an impact on them. It is a form of oral literacy, which connects with the story telling and formal occasions that is a feature in indigenous life.

Bunohan and *Jogho* both have their strong points when it comes to the sharing of knowledge and history of its culture and people. Both films depict the Kelantanese accent as both are set at the Kelantan-Thai border. *Bunohan* demonstrates that shadow puppets are still being practice and people tend to dress in a more traditional way in this remote village where culture and religion still play a large part of the people's life. However, religion is never brought up anywhere in the movie given the fact that it deals with issues that go against religion for example killing people for a living. Given the fact that Kelantan is an Islamic state, the call of prayers is

somewhat strangely absent which indicates that Said's non-interest on this matter. Touching on religion is always a sensitive issue and the specified background of the storyline would prove to be another challenge.

However, one could notice the change the state undergoes as development and modernisation are slowly influencing the place. Hence, making the locals push a side their beliefs and culture. This is been shown in the movie when, Bakar ignores any moral value and murders his father for the sake of acquiring the land for development. In a way, this shows that even the most remote area of the country will eventually undergo changes and modernisation and this is inescapable. Mamat's parochial imaginary is strong in *Jogho*. His decisions determine the direction and livelihood of his family. Mamat, a leader in the small village where the story is told, depends mostly on the money won from gambling in bullfights for his sustenance. When Mamat vows to get even after his brother is murdered, his wife Minah fails to stop this cycle of vengeance. By tradition, this leaves Mamat and the young men responsible to take revenge to preserve the honor of the village. Mamat has the chance to kill Isa and avenge his brother but he refuses as he has become tired of Malays killing Malays. He lowers the pistol but Lazim's son, Sani grabs the gun and shoots Isa instead. The Thai police come and Mamat surrenders himself to them, taking the responsibility for the murder.

All these features and traits are strongly stressed in both films, the medium has the capacity to mould the imagination of the society in an educational context such that it begins to understand and appreciate its borderland culture. It is of utmost importance that this inculcation sustains the awareness in a changing nation to preserve traditions which were considered important throughout the years. Filmmakers U-Wei Hj Saari and Dain Said have boldly taken up this intellectual and community educational challenge in *Jogho* and *Bunohan*. This sharing is also embedded in the claiming element in (i) as it deals with border socioculturality in social mores, dialect, rituals and myths, to name a few.

CONCLUSION

We recall the importance of Andre Wajda's remark that film must be socially useful to its culture and society because he believes that the basic notion in filmmaking is "to tell the [film] audience something, to make people think, to initiate a dialogue" especially when "something is not correct, and therefore needs to be redressed" (in Khan, 1997:15). The operationalization of Tuhiwai-Smith's 'decolonizing' methodologies can provide concern citizens as well as public intellectuals the critical ideas of what are the issues and plausible reactions and negotiations that he or she should enter into, so that, he or she can reach out to the nation's imagined communities through an informed sociocultural imaginary about the Kelantan-Pattani borderland arts and cultural heritage. By implication, undertaking a film project is an enduring prospect and as such, it unfolds the central importance of education as part of a long-term awareness campaign and advocacy work for the society. In particular, the edification of the younger generation of Malaysians on the significance of arts and cultural heritage knowledge and preservation is seen as potentially a vital component of such projects. *Bunohan* and *Jogho* have aptly brought forward an attempt to do both, as an important substance of arts and cultural heritage and preservation through knowledge.

Ownership of cultural heritage may sometimes lead to open unprecedented cultural contestation beyond the cinematic public sphere. The peoples of Malay-speaking nations were

disputing each other not so long ago over what clearly are ‘shared’ arts and cultural heritage. Momentary manifestation rather eruption, of ‘cultural nationalism’ say between Malaysia and Indonesia may perhaps recur from time to time unless some effort to emphasise, expose and educate, in this case, the masses and eventually people of the Nusantara about Malaysia’s natural history of ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity. Perhaps to clarify this idea further, there should be greater emphasis and effort placed on institutionalising the ‘aesthetics’ (Dickie, 1974) and hence, improve their visibility as art and cultural heritage in our everyday lifeworlds (Griswold, 2008).

This may be achieved perhaps via filmic edification project where local audience and society at large converge and engage with the aesthetics in the reflexive public sphere - a space for entertainment, negotiation and recognition. Going to the movies is like going to a place where everyone has the opportunity to watch say a local film, and be ‘transplanted’ into the film’s community, its landscapes, cultures, religion and philosophy; before they are ‘removed’ at the end of it and perhaps make way for a reflexive filmic edification on what they have just watched or never thought about or knew before. According to Simon Thurley (2005), human appreciation of arts and cultural heritage is cyclical. It matters not, whether a person belongs to a specific community of arts and cultural practice, the first step he or she should do is to learn about the cultural heritage in order to gain better understanding and appreciation. When the value of the heritage to the community or nation is recognized, it will then received the preservation or restoration that it deserves from the society. This in turn will promote a strong sense of enjoyment and gratitude in the society and ultimately, according to Thurley, the people will be motivated to seek more knowledge and understanding as a way of edifying themselves.

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