




# The use of formalist techniques and semiotic analysis in depicting social media realities in 'budi pekerti': a study of cinematic composition and social commentary



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## ABSTRACT

The film "Budi Pekerti" has garnered critical acclaim, earning multiple awards and nominations at prominent festivals, including the Toronto International Film Festival 2023 and Jakarta Film Week 2023. This study examines how cinematic techniques are utilized to depict social realities. Anchored in Sergei Eisenstein's formalist theory and Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis, the research adopts a qualitative methodology involving scene observations, in-depth interviews with the director, and document analysis. The findings reveal that montage techniques and visual compositions effectively construct narratives that highlight moral and ethical issues. Additionally, the use of symbols within the film uncovers culturally relevant messages, providing deeper insights into contemporary social dynamics. Through an integrative approach combining formalist and semiotic perspectives, the study underscores the critical role of cinematic aesthetics in conveying complex social commentaries. This research makes a significant contribution to the fields of visual arts, communication, and linguistics by offering a comprehensive framework that links visual storytelling with cultural critique and societal reflection, emphasizing the power of film as a medium for understanding and shaping cultural narratives.

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## 1. Introduction

Films are often regarded as a medium through which filmmakers convey their ideas and perspectives. In this context, films serve as a form of expression, reflecting the characteristics of culture, society, and reality within a given time. Through carefully constructed narratives, filmmakers communicate events and messages that resonate with their audience. In the domain of film production management, two significant concepts emerge: "major label" and "indie label." Major labels focus on industrial aspects, balancing profit and risk while aiming to produce mainstream films designed to generate substantial financial returns. These productions require considerable investment, with potential outcomes meticulously calculated to ensure profitability [1]. Commercial films are primarily produced with the aim of maximizing financial profit. In this classification, film is considered an industrial commodity that is produced taking into account its selling value. Therefore, these films are specifically designed to attract interest from different walks of life. Commercial films tend to have elements that are lighter, attractive, and easy to understand in order to attract the attention and interest of a wider audience [1], [2]. In addition to commercial films that air in theaters, there is also a forum for filmmakers to conduct alternative and competitive exhibitions to get awards, namely film festivals. Film festivals are vital platforms that promote creativity, foster industry connections, and encourage

cultural exchange, offering filmmakers opportunities for exposure, networking, and recognition while highlighting diverse genres and important social issues. The interaction between them takes place through film screenings, discussions, exhibitions, and the awarding of production grants. Film festivals facilitate interaction, negotiation, and cooperation among the various parties involved [3], [4].

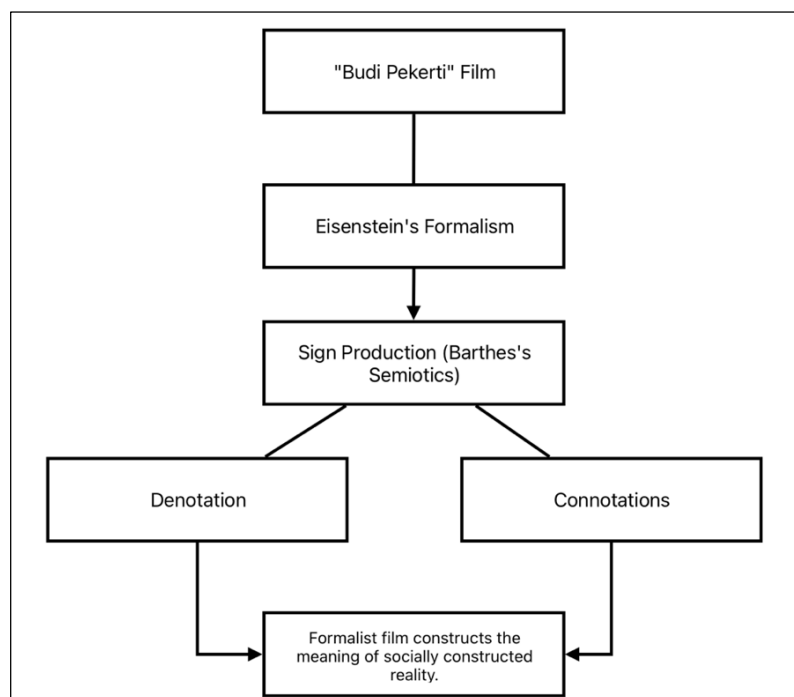
The film "Budi Pekerti" has won 2 awards and received 15 nominations at various film festivals, underscoring its artistic merit and resonance with audiences. These achievements reflect the film's compelling exploration of contemporary social issues and its innovative use of cinematic techniques, further validating its thematic depth and cultural significance. Its premiere at the Toronto International Film Festival on September 9, 2023, and its selection as the opening film at Jakarta Film Week (JFW) 2023 underscore its critical acclaim and cultural significance. The film Budi Pekerti tells about an incident that went viral. Viral is caused by the habit of sharing content on social media not only about creating your own content, but also about resharing content created by others on the platform. This habit can develop because every social media platform has features that make it easy for users to share content uploaded by others. This sharing feature is generally available on every post across social media platforms (Agustina, 2020). Budi Pekerti tells the story of Mrs. Prani, a school counselor who faces criticism that threatens her career and family. The film's success and popularity highlight the narrative structure, ensuring its message resonates with the audience. This film employs formalist techniques, particularly montage and visual composition, to construct a social reality that mirrors the ongoing dynamics in society. Formalist film theory, as applied in this research, focuses on analyzing the film's form—its use of editing, camera work, and visual composition—rather than its content alone, to explore how these elements shape the depiction of social issues and reinforce the constructed reality presented in the narrative.

Several studies that are sources of literacy from researchers regarding the function of film as a messenger have been carried out by researchers, one of which is the result of research conducted by Muttafaqur Rohmah, this research significantly contributes to the discussion about the role of film in conveying messages, particularly in the context of social media's influence on society. Her study emphasizes how Budi Pekerti explores the ethical and moral implications of social media use, highlighting how the rapid sharing and resharing of content without verification can distort the truth and impact individuals' lives. Rohmah identifies the film's core message of promoting good manners and wisdom in the digital age, where the virtual world often dominates reality, and truth is shaped not by facts but by the volume of posts and online engagement. The research underscores the importance of ethical media usage and its power to influence public perception. This relates to my current study by offering a complementary perspective on the film's critique of social realities. While Rohmah's research focuses on the moral lessons conveyed through the narrative, my study delves into how formalist techniques, such as montage and visual composition, are employed to construct and communicate [5], [6]. In contemporary cinema, the interplay between form and content is crucial in conveying social realities [7]. This study aims to explore how "Budi Pekerti" employs formalist techniques and semiotic meanings to construct and communicate social realities. Drawing on Sergei Eisenstein's formalist theory, which emphasizes the power of montage and visual composition. Formalist theory examines film by emphasizing the structure and arrangement of films. A deep relationship between elements of cinematography, editing (Montage & Kuleshov effect) [8] and the deep dialectic of meaning of images [9]. Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis, which focuses on decoding symbols and signs, this research provides a comprehensive analysis of the film's artistic and narrative strategies [10]. The motivation behind this study is to understand the artistic choices in "Budi Pekerti" and their role in reflecting and shaping societal norms and values. By integrating formalist and semiotic approaches, the research aims to uncover the deeper cultural messages embedded within the film, offering valuable insights into the relationship between visual arts and social constructs.

## 2. Method

This research employs descriptive qualitative methods through formalist theory, which greatly influences the research process, particularly in how the film is analyzed. Formalist

theory focuses on the structure and form of the film, emphasizing the visual and narrative techniques used to convey meaning. In this study, qualitative observation is applied in the context of natural events, following the organic flow of the film as it presents real-life social constructs, rather than being limited to predefined categories or quantitative measurements [11]. Triangulation is employed by gathering data from various sources, such as interviews, observations, and document analysis, using multiple analysis methods to ensure comprehensive insights. In this research, specific scenes from Budi Pekerti were selected for observation, and still images were extracted to analyze the formalist elements present in the film. The procedure involved first capturing still frames from key scenes using screenshots or official promotional images provided by the film studio [12]. These images were then categorized and analyzed according to formalist principles, focusing on key visual techniques such as montage, composition, and the arrangement of cinematic elements. Formalist theory guided the process by evaluating how these techniques were used to build a visual narrative that reflects the constructed reality of social issues depicted in the film. Each image was analyzed for its contribution to the film's social commentary, with particular attention paid to how montage and visual composition shaped the audience's perception of the moral and social dimensions presented. This method aligns with established practices in film analysis, where the visual structure is paramount in decoding the filmmaker's intent and the socio-cultural messages conveyed through the work. Fig 1 is a Research Flow Diagram.



**Fig 1.** Flow Chart of Research

With this method the researcher can discuss the context of the film story "Budi Pekerti" and describe it with reflections and realities of current social construction, while the formalist approach allows the researcher to explore the formal elements in the film and how it affects the aesthetic experience of the audience and the audience's closeness to the life of society lived in the reality of social construction. A formalist approach by Eisenstein, Eisenstein's formalist aesthetics emphasize the importance of visual and narrative elements in film. The emphasis should be placed on the artistic and technical dimensions of filmmaking rather than solely on the emotional and psychological aspects. Montage, serving as more than mere image editing, stands as a technique capable of generating fresh meanings and enhancing the emotional resonance of films.. Kuleshov Effect is a concept introduced by Soviet filmmaker Lev Kuleshov. Kuleshov Effect creates a psychological effect on the viewer through editing images and scenes. This concept is used to demonstrate the power of the audience's interpretation and the way in

which editing can influence their perception. The dialectical approach to film form is part of his broader concept of cinematic dialectics.

The dialectic aspect refers to the use of contrast, conflict, and gradual change as tools to create dramatic tension in films. The principles of dialectics are used to govern visual composition, storyline, and visual narrative in films [12], [13]. Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis offers a thorough framework for comprehending the artistic and narrative techniques employed in films, unraveling symbols and signs, scrutinizing denotation, connotation, and myth, and investigating the structural and semiotic methodologies utilized in the film. By applying Roland Barthes' approach, the author interprets the symbols constructed by the formalist techniques in the film "Budi Pekerti" to elucidate meanings of socially constructed reality [10], [12], [14]. This research data was obtained through several informants and sources who had been determined by the researcher. Table 1 shows the informants who had a significant influence on the Budi Pekerti film.

**Tabel 1.** Informant Table

| <b>Informant</b>         |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| <b>Informant</b>         | <b>Description</b>                       |
| M. Bisri Mustova         | As Head of Creative Kaninga Pictures     |
| Haruka Fauzia Primandita | As Graphic Design of Kaninga Pictures    |
| Annisa Berliana          | As Production Assistant of Rekata Studio |

Further data were also obtained through interviews conducted in a semi-structured manner, along with the speakers selected in this study, see Table 2

**Tabel 2.** Resourcer Table

| <b>Resourcer</b>     |                                  |
|----------------------|----------------------------------|
| <b>Resourcer</b>     | <b>Description</b>               |
| Wregas Bhanutedja    | As Director of Budi Pekerti Film |
| Gorivana Ageza       | As Film Curator                  |
| Reksa Anggia Pramita | As Film Analyst                  |

In addition to informants and resource persons, researchers also obtain data through documentation studies and literature studies

### 3. Results and Discussion

#### 3.1. Social Construction of Reality in Budi Pekerti Film

Budi Pekerti tells the story of Mrs. Prani, a School counselor who gets into a dispute with visitors at the market. In addition to losing family harmony, Mrs. Prani is threatened with losing her job. Because Mrs. Prani's attitude is considered not to reflect that of a teacher, she received criticism and negative comments from netizens. Netizens, or often referred to as digital citizens, are individuals who feel happy using the internet or other virtual platforms as a means of entertainment. In the digital media space, they are free to express themselves. A netizen always strives to display his unique identity and affirm his existence in cyberspace through various media, both oral and written [15]. Not only Mrs. Prani is exposed to bullying, an attitude expressed through a form of aggression with the intention to threaten subjects who are considered vulnerable. His family was also condemned by the community. All actions and treatment of each family member are also judged by the guilt found. So their lives become uneasy and whatever they do will be seen as wrong. In addition to losing family harmony, Mrs. Prani is threatened with losing her job [16].

Budi Pekerti films mostly tell about today's social reality, especially social media. Social media is an online platform where users can easily utilize it to meet their communication needs. Another concept describes social media as an online platform that supports social interaction. In practice, social media uses web-based technologies that transform communication into interactive dialogue [17]. Table 3 is information on the most social media users. Based on the in Table 3 we can see that Indonesian people are ranked 9th with the longest average duration of

social media access based on January 2024 data. In addition, based on these data, the average Indonesian population uses social media for 191 minutes (3 hours 11 minutes) per day [18].

**Tabel 3.** Countries with the Longest Social Media Access

| Countries with the Longest Social Media Access |       |
|--|-------|
| Country Name                                   | Value |
| Kenya  | 223   |
| Afrika Selatan                                 | 221   |
| Brasil   | 217   |
| Filipina                                       | 214   |
| Nigeria  | 205   |
| Kolombia                                       | 203   |
| Chili  | 202   |
| Meksiko  | 194   |
| Indonesia                                      | 191   |
| Arab Saudi                                     | 186   |

Furthermore, data on social media application users in Indonesia will also be obtained in January 2024. Table 4 is data on social media platform users in Indonesia.

**Tabel 4.** Countries with the Longest Social Media Access

| Countries with the Longest Social Media Access |       |
|--|-------|
| Country Name                                   | Value |
| WhatsApp                                       | 90,9  |
| Instagram                                      | 85,3  |
| Facebook                                       | 81,6  |
| TikTok   | 73,5  |
| Instagram                                      | 61,3  |
| X (Twitter)                                    | 57,5  |
| Facebook Messenger                             | 47,9  |
| Pinterest                                      | 34,2  |
| Kuaishou                                       | 32,4  |
| LinkedIn                                       | 25    |

Table 4 becomes a phenomenon where information is easily accessed and disseminated through social media which often results in wide and rapid dissemination, known as viral. The impact of this is the ability to get attention and support from various parties in dealing with various problems. The reality of social construction is the context of the main story in the film Budi Pekerti. As the results of an interview that has been conducted by researchers to the Director of the film Budi Pekerti, Wregas Bhanutedja.

*"I'm concerned about mothers going viral on social media for tantrums, swearing, or bad behavior. In one video, a mother raged at an online courier who delivered the wrong item. The courier recorded it and uploaded it, leading to backlash and memes parodying the situation."*, (WB, Personal Interview, March 21, 2024).

Wregas as the director of the film Budi Pekerti created the character of Mrs. Prani, a School counselor who experienced a "viral" social phenomenon because she was involved in a dispute with visitors at the market when Mrs. Prani queued to buy putu whose queue was so long that she used a queue number. However, Mrs. Prani noticed a man who hijacked the queue. He reprimanded the man who stole it, but the man who was reprimanded evaded, so there was a commotion at the place where he was selling putu and many people recorded the incident and uploaded it on social media. In the context of the reality of social construction that occurs today, the character of Mrs. Prani in the film "Budi Pekerti", directed by Wregas, is a representation of a social phenomenon that can quickly go viral through social media. In the story, Mrs. Prani's dispute with market visitors shows how a local incident can quickly spread and get widespread attention through social media. It reflects how the social realities we experience today are not

only shaped by direct interactions between individuals, but also by how information is conveyed, disseminated, and perceived through social media.

*"Now that's why I'm really concerned, because from the 15-second video, netizens only have a tendency to immediately label him as having no manners, no manners and others. Even though we never know, maybe the angry mother is thinking a lot of times at home or she is financially struggling, we never know. Most netizens care about beating or throwing stones at the person," (WB, Personal Interview, March 21, 2024).*

The behavior described reflects the complexities of social construction in today's digital age, where individuals' perceptions are often shaped by fragmented and incomplete information. According to social construction theory, reality is not an inherent truth but rather a collective product of societal interpretations, influenced by cultural, social, and historical contexts. Netizens, in this case, tend to make quick judgments based on limited information, such as the short video referenced. This rapid formation of social perceptions illustrates how reality is socially constructed, as individuals are often labeled or categorized based on incomplete pieces of information [6]. However, underlying factors such as psychological distress or financial struggles, which could provide a deeper understanding of the individual's behavior, are frequently overlooked. Social media comments tend to prioritize judgment over understanding, reinforcing a simplified narrative. This tendency aligns with social construction theory, which posits that reality is often shaped by the need to make quick, surface-level judgments rather than exploring the complexities of human experience. In this sense, the reality constructed on social media tends to reduce multifaceted situations to simplified, often distorted portrayals, reflecting society's preference for immediate responses over deeper, more empathetic understanding [15].

*"Then there were a lot of memes, remix videos kept appearing, comedy parodies, so finally this mother was forced to give an apology. Yes, he finally did, but it turned out that after that his life was no longer calm at home. Sometimes he feels that he gets ridicule from his neighbors, can be labeled as a grumpy man in his office. Even he had to move house. Now this incident is not just one or two", (WB, March 21, 2024).*

The reality of social construction that is sometimes unaware of the impact of actions carried out in cyberspace on a person's real life. In the age of social media, information and content are spreading rapidly and creating unpredictable consequences for the individuals who are its subjects [19]. In the film Budi Pekerti, Mrs. Prani is forced to create and upload an apology video for her actions that is documented online, the negative impact of which continues in everyday life. He experiences stress and psychological distress due to being subjected to ridicule and negative judgments from neighbors and co-workers. In fact, the situation forced Mrs. Prani to be expelled from her job as a School counselor. These events reflect how the reality of social construction can affect a person's real life significantly, even after an apology has been given.

### **3.2. Formalist Ethical Film in Shaping Semiotics the Reality of Social Construction**

The formalist meaning of the film "Budi Pekerti" is analyzed to construct the reality of social construction. The structure of the story is reduced into the visual form of several film scenes as still images. The data are further refined and grouped based on the relevance of scenes that exhibit formalist film techniques in relation to the reality of social construction depicted in the film "Budi Pekerti." The formalist aspects present in these scenes are discussed, including the use of film montage, the Kuleshov effect, and the dialectics employed in the film. Here are one of the many formalist aspects of montage cinematography which is emphasized in the film Budi Pekerti. Fig. 2 one of the scenes of the film Budi Pekerti which uses the form of a montage concept frame within frame. The "frame within frame" technique in cinematography is used to create a sense of depth and dimension in a scene. This technique involves placing a frame or frame-like structure within another frame, which can be used to convey various narrative elements such as time, space, or point of view [19]. The visual denotation depicts Mrs. Prani

amidst windows, doors, and hallway walls, where the windows or doors form frames around Mrs. Prani.



**Fig 2.** Frame within Frame Scene in an Budi Pekerti Film

The concept of shot in the Budi Pekerti film with a frame within frame composition to form a ratio of 9:16 emphasizes the use of visual elements to create the impression that the main subject as shown in Fig. 3 has a connotation. Mrs. Prani, is trapped in a "frame" that represents the digital world or social media. By using a vertically oriented moving frame with a 9:16 aspect ratio, the cinematographer mirrors the experience of viewing content on social media platforms like Instagram, TikTok, or Snapchat. This composition highlights how social media narrows users' perspectives, focusing attention on specific content within a defined "frame" while obscuring other information. This approach reflects modern society's growing reliance on social media for information and worldviews. This scene in the film frame within frame is often used in camera compositions when showing images of Mrs. Prani's character. Mrs. Prani's character is the main character in the film.

*"I took these characters from the people closest to me, both friends and neighbors. I once had a family member who suffered from bipolar. When in a depressive phase, the person's greatest desire is only to sleep, so he cannot move. However, when he is in the manic phase, he actually becomes very active, such as cooking or painting, even cleaning the house and doing various activities. I chose to feature this character to show Ms. Prani's role as a caregiver. At school, Mrs. Prani has to take care of the students, but at home, she also has to take care of her husband who is very sensitive to various responses. I want to show that the struggle or character quality of a caregiver like Ms. Prani is very strong" (Wregas, Bhanutedja, 21 March 2024).*

Highlights the complex social role of a caregiver. A caregiver is an individual who provides care and support to others, often in professional or informal settings. This can involve family members, friends, or trained professionals who help with activities of daily living, emotional support, and other needs. Caregivers play an important role in improving the well-being and quality of life for the individuals they care for, especially in situations where the person may not be able to care for themselves due to age, disability, or illness [20]. In this case it is represented by the character Mrs. Prani in the story. In the reality of social construction, the role of a caregiver is often considered a very important and often invisible responsibility. Mrs. Prani is not only responsible for looking after her students at school, but also has to provide attention and support to her husband at home who has high emotional sensitivity. Through this character, the director highlights the intense struggle caregivers face amid various demands. This reflects the social reality where certain roles are valued but often underrecognized, as shown by the

negative viral video of Ms. Prani. The character's strength underscores the importance of valuing caregivers' contributions and struggles in society.



Fig 3. Prani and Didit Characters of Budi Pekerti Film

The cinematographic elements used in the composition of the film Budi Pekerti in one of the scenes adapt the painting by British painter Sir John Everett Millais entitled "Ophelia" as shown in Fig. 4. Ophelia is a character in William Shakespeare's play "Hamlet." She goes insane when her father, Polonius, is killed by her lover, Hamlet. He died while still very young, suffering from grief and madness. The events shown in Millais's "Ophelia" are not actually visible on stage. Instead, the event is referenced in a conversation between Queen Gertrude and Ophelia's sister Laertes. Gertrude described how Ophelia fell into the river while picking flowers and sank slowly, while singing all the time [21]. The cinematographic elements used in the composition of the film Budi Pekerti in one of the scenes adapt the painting by British painter Sir John Everett Millais entitled "Ophelia" as shown in Fig. 4. Ophelia is a character in William Shakespeare's play "Hamlet." She goes insane when her father, Polonius, is killed by her lover, Hamlet. He died while still very young, suffering from grief and madness. The events shown in Millais's "Ophelia" are not actually visible on stage. Instead, the event is referenced in a conversation between Queen Gertrude and Ophelia's sister Laertes. Gertrude described how Ophelia fell into the river while picking flowers and sank slowly, while singing all the time [21].

In the film Budi Pekerti, Ophelia's painting was adapted to the scene where Gora and Mrs. Prani are cornered by the principal of a junior high school to make a clarification video. Gora refuses the principal's request and hides in the fish pond near the school bathroom, because Gora is afraid that netizens will dig deeper about her and her future will be taken away. As a result of this, Mrs. Prani finally resigned from her job as a School counselor at the junior high school. Gora feels guilty, Mrs. Prani feels that her decision is already the best. They reflected together in a small fish pond near the school bathroom by drowning themselves in the pond. The concept of Ophelia's painting in film Budi Pekerti interpreted by the Director is explained in the interview as follows.

*"I initially wanted to adapt the concept of the womb, so the shape from above resembles a baby in the womb. When Mrs. Prani was with Gora, Gora's head was positioned in an indentation at the end of the pool, making it look like a baby in the placenta. This was shot from above to emphasize the effect. Gora is in a state of fear and panic, needing to make clarifications. According to the French psychologist Jacques Lacan, humans subconsciously desire to return to the mother's womb, where they are free from pain, work, school, or problems and are completely protected and nourished by the mother." (WB, March 21, 2024).*

In this scene, the adaptation of Ophelia's painting becomes a strong conotative to describe the psychological condition of Gora's character in the film "Budi Pekerti". The connection with



Sergei Eisenstein's formalist theory can be seen in the use of strong visual elements to effectively convey messages and emotions to the audience.



**Fig 4.** Millais Ophelia Painting Compare to Adaptation of Millais Ophelia's Painting in Budi Pekerti Film scene

The framing arrangement and visual composition of the fish pond reminiscent of the mother's womb give it a strong artistic and dramatic dimension. Through the use of these visual elements, the director is able to reinforce the meaning of the scene and convey the psychological conflict of the characters more deeply to the audience. In addition, the relationship of the scene with the reality of social construction is also interesting to note. Gora's rejection of the principal's request to make a clarification video and her fear of public exposure highlight the negative impact of online social and cultural pressures in contemporary society. The conflicts Gora and Mrs. Prani face reflect how social constructs can affect individuals and force them to face moral and psychological dilemmas. Thus, the adaptation of Ophelia's paintings in the scene not only creates a strong visual connection with the concept of the mother's womb, but also effectively depicts the complexity of the psychological state of the characters in the context of modern social and cultural pressures. It shows cinematic sophistication in conveying deeper messages about human conflict and the reality of social construction. The scene of Tita throwing catfish feed into the pond as an conotative to netizens. The next shot is Muklas and Mrs. Prani feeding the koi happily. Then back to the montage, Tita throws catfish feed. This shows two different contrasts as shown in Fig. 5. In the story of the film in Fig. 5, previously Mrs. Prani was being praised by netizens. Meanwhile, what happened to Tita before, she was getting a lot of bad comments from netizens for uploading videos of putu sellers without her family's permission. This editing function emphasizes that the audience has the ability to fill in meaning and feel emotions based on the relationship between the two images between the images of Mrs. Prani and Tita with contrasting scenes of different emotions and interconnected to form a richer and deeper narrative. The characters of Tita and Muklas who are brothers and sisters in a family are made opposites. As Wregas said as a director.



**Fig 5.** Kuleshov Effect scene in an Budi Pekerti Film

*"I also took YouTuber characters from friends who became content creators. Usually what they think about is engagement, number of subscribers, and number of followers are the top priorities", (Wregas Bhanutedja, Personal Interview March 21, 2024).*

Next Wregas said about character of Muklas.

*"They use their uniqueness to gain fame. YouTubers and influencers often make mistakes and quickly issue clarifications. I want to reflect this culture through the character of Muklas, a student and family member of Mrs. Prani. Even if someone is a psychologist, a school counselor, or involved in character development, it doesn't guarantee their family will be perfect or morally superior ", (Wregas Bhanutedja, Personal Interview March 21, 2024).*

Muklas is represented as a contemporary cultural phenomenon where being a YouTuber or content creator has become one of the professions that are in demand by many people, especially among the younger generation. Fig 6 is the Muklas Character in the Budi Pekerti Film. The contemporary phenomenon of social media influencers (SMI) refers to the significant impact that individuals with large numbers of social media followers have on consumer behavior and attitudes. These influencers, often referred to as opinion leaders, have become important channels for companies to reach specific target audiences and promote their brand or products [22]. In addition, during the COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in people being required to self-quarantine and brought significant changes in various aspects of people's lives, with psychological aspects being of concern in the perspective of social psychology. In the reality of social construction, popularity and fame are often top priorities, measured by factors such as the number of subscribers and followers, as well as the level of engagement with the content produced. This phenomenon shows how values and norms in society have changed, where uniqueness and strangeness are often critical factors for success in the digital world [23], [24]. Through Muklas, the director shows how cultural influences impact a school counselor's family. Despite Mrs. Prani's work in psychology and education, her family is not immune to mistakes or moral flaws. Individuals and their families are shaped by cultural influences, highlighting the evolving nature of societal values and norms.

*"Muklas is the opposite of Tita's character, who is a child who cares deeply about social issues and opposes the establishment and capitalism. I have many friends whose band comments are independent and their songs are against government policies or capitalism. Muklas and Tita both have to deal with problems when they make blunders or mistakes that go against the values they stand for." (Wregas Bhanutedja, Personal Interview March 21, 2024)*



Fig 6. Muklas Character of Budi Pekerti Film

Tita is portrayed as an individual who cares about social issues and opposes the establishment and capitalism. Fig 7 is the character of Tita in the film Budi Pekerti. In contrast, Muklas represents a side that may be more passive or less passionate in voicing social or political views through the songs of his independent band with friends. Despite this, both characters have to face consequences when they make blunders or mistakes that go against the values they stand for. In the realities of social construction, individuals often fight for certain values or principles they believe in, such as social or political issues [25]–[27]. However, the reality is that every individual, including those who are committed to a particular social or political struggle, is also prone to mistakes or blunders. The consequences of actions contrary to the values promoted can be very significant, regardless of how strong the individual's beliefs are. It reflects how the reality of social construction involves individual complexity and social interaction, of which value conflicts, conflicts, and changes are part and parcel [27]. Montage using the formalist concept of the kuleshov effect built from Figure 7 illustrates the contrast not only of emotion and context of storytelling. However, the characters Muklas and Tita shown in the picture also show different contrasts and emotions. In the context of formalist theory, the artistic properties present in image composition are often seen as one of the formal elements that contribute to the overall structure and aesthetics of an Budi Pekerti Film.



Fig 7. Character Tita Film Budi Pekerti

Fig. 8. is scene in film that Tita came to the Gaung Tinta office. Gaung Tinta in Budi Pekerti film is portrayed as a community of news media. Tita sue for the viral video of the putu seller not being authorized by the putu seller's family, causing Tita to be unilaterally expelled from her band. Employees of the Gaung Tinta fight back by filming Tita who is suing for her tainted good rights. This scene shows the conotation shape of the frame within the frame so that it seems to form a 9:16 ratio where Tita is between two doors, which shows Tita is already in the

netizen's frame. Furthermore, when Tita fought back by raising the glass on the table and was about to throw it at the employees, Gaung Tinta immediately raised their cellphones and recorded Tita's action with a cellphone flash that was on. The connotative meaning of the mobile phone camera aligns with that of a weapon of netizens that occurs in the reality of social construction today. The recording results, uploaded to social media, then went viral, tarnishing someone's reputation. Recording and sharing content about others without their consent can lead to misinterpretations, privacy violations, legal repercussions, and ethical breaches, ultimately damaging reputations and eroding trust. It is crucial to approach the use of mobile phone cameras with a heightened sense of responsibility and respect for others' privacy and dignity, ensuring that technology enhances, rather than harms, our social interactions [28].

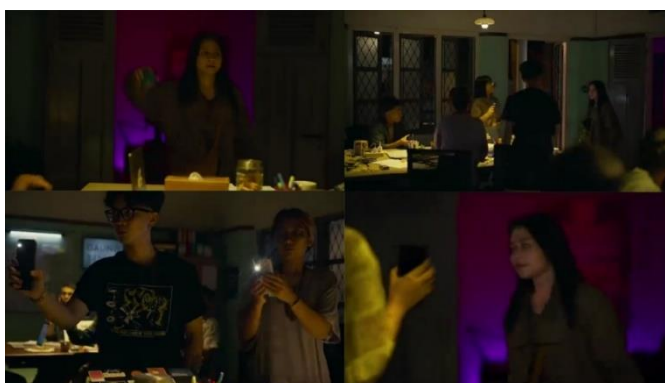


Fig 8. Filming scene, camera phone as a representation of Netizen's weapon

#### 4. Conclusion

The analysis of Budi Pekerti highlights the powerful role of formalist techniques in illustrating the impact of social media on the construction of reality. The use of frame-within-frame compositions and the 9:16 aspect ratio effectively mirrors the visual experience of consuming social media content, emphasizing how the narrowing of focus can distort perceptions of reality. Additionally, the montage techniques, contrasting emotions, and symbolic use of props deepen the emotional resonance of the narrative, underscoring the consequences of online judgments and the complexity of social media interactions. Through semiotic analysis, the film's symbols—such as the portrayal of netizens' reactions—reveal the larger societal critique embedded in the narrative. The film illustrates how digital media shapes and manipulates societal constructs, where truth is often dictated not by facts, but by the volume of shared content. This study demonstrates how Budi Pekerti employs cinematic techniques not only to critique social media but also to challenge the simplicity with which society often reduces complex human experiences to viral moments. The integration of formalist and semiotic analysis enhances our understanding of how the film's form contributes to its social commentary, offering valuable insights into the digital age's influence on cultural dynamics and reality construction.

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