

Ethnography in Malaysia Animation Study: A Case Study on Kampung Boy

Iezyan Musfirah Mohd Zahferee^{1*}, Mohd Khairul Azahari Abdul Rani¹,
Maziah Ab Rashid²

¹ Universiti Teknologi MARA Shah Alam, MALAYSIA

² Universiti Teknologi MARA Seri Iskandar, MALAYSIA

*Corresponding Author: zahfereemusfirah@gmail.com

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30880/ahcs.2023.04.02.017>

Article Info

Received: 23 July 2023

Accepted: 18 November 2023

Available online: 30 December 2023

Keywords

Ethnography, culture, animated film, kampung boy, Datuk Lat

Abstract

Ethnography is a form of qualitative research to analyze and interpret a certain culture within an ethnic group. Ethnographic learning is important to understand 'culture-sharing'. Ethnography provides a detailed understanding of culture, language, arts, and more aspects. In Malaysia, the existence of various ethnic groups allows us to learn the ethnography of other ethnic. However, the understanding of different ethnic is still lacking. Moreover, a lack of understanding and respect for others could cause destruction and harmony in the country. This problem can be controlled by the existence of various media or platforms by applying ethnographic learning, such as animated media. Thus, this study examines how ethnographic learning can be applied in animated media. This paper will study the ethnography of The Kampung Boy animated film by Datuk Lat. In addition, this paper will also discuss the aspect of ethnography, such as the aspect of culture, language, beliefs, arts, and environment, using semiotic theory as a medium to provide an understanding and knowledge of certain ethnic groups. Kampung Boy is one of the animated films about various races and cultures. This film revolves around the adventures of a village boy named Mat and his life in a village.

1. Introduction

Ethnography should be closely related to research methods used in social sciences and anthropology to study and understand a particular group or society's culture, customs, values, norms, and social practices. This research aims to understand better the social world and people's perspectives on Malaysian culture. This study was conducted because the relationship between ethnic groups was declining. According to Datuk Dr Hussamuddin Yaacob suggests unifying the government to resolve the inter-racial riots issue [25]. Otherwise, it would have a big impact and damage relations between the people of Malaysia. However, it is a responsibility that all Malaysians must bear to maintain the welfare and harmony of the country. Wan Norhasniah (2012), stated that the misunderstanding of values and culture by other ethnic groups would trigger conflicts, including wars and killings. For example, this includes riots, such as the *Peristiwa 13 Mei* incident and *Kampung Medan*, involving the three largest ethnic groups, namely Malays, Chinese, and Indians.

Culture is the link between people and their values. This is because cultures represent their identity through cultural values. Therefore, customs and traditions, celebrations, clothing, food, and especially cultural values followed by the community become the bond that unites people as a community [16]. One way to deal with this

cultural issue is to study ethnography in Malaysia. In this digital era, animation is an interesting platform to share and promote local culture and heritage. Mohd Hanafi and Zulfazlan (2021), explained that animated films convey information and education and can also be a tool of influence or a medium for sparking propaganda. According to research by Elizabeth Mathews (2013), animation is an effective medium for implementing cultural values, which is easier to understand than just reading text. It also combines creative visuals and audio to convey messages interestingly and is easy for all ages to learn.

Those born in the 90s certainly know about Kampung Boy animation, which is very popular in Malaysia, by Datuk Mohammad Nor Khalid. Better known as Lat. His animated film tells about the daily life of a village dweller who grew up in Perak named Mat with his family, friends, and villagers. This animated film, which has won various awards, contains elements of culture and traditions in Malaysia. Apart from that, he also emphasizes important life values such as family love, friendship, hard work, and sincerity. This study will examine how ethnographic investigations are applied in the Kampung Boy animation film using a semiotic theoretical approach to identify culture and traditions, arts, language, and local settings in the three largest ethnic groups in Kampung Boy animation, namely Malays, Chinese, and India. Apart from that, this study utilizes qualitative methods using textual analysis and several scenes in this film. The researcher will focus on several aspects of ethnography, namely culture and traditions, art, language, and the setting of the place. They are seen as aspects in ethnographic investigations to determine the identity of a people. Additionally, the researcher also looks at how the animation medium plays a role as an agent of unification between peoples through the application of ethnic culture as well as the pure values presented in animation.

2. Research Objective

This study examines and analyzes the problems stated in the problem statement. In addition, this paper covers several objectives that must be achieved, as stated below:

1. Identify an ethnographic study on the three major ethnic groups in Malaysia.
2. Examine the effectiveness of animation as a tool for conveying ethnographic understanding in Malaysia.
3. Analyze the ethnographic elements applied in the animated film Kampung Boy, by Datuk Lat, through Semiotic Theory.

3. Methodology Research

Ethnography is a study that examines and writes about human beings, society, and their culture [7]. This explains that ethnography is a research method involving social and cultural anthropology and requires detailed observation and writing about the life and culture of a particular group or ethnic group. Ethnography also refers to the results of studies and research using qualitative methods. Note that qualitative methods involve interviews, observations, or document analysis. However, this research paper utilized the content analysis method of four episodes and the analysis of ethnographic details based on semiotic theory in The Kampung Boy animation films. Observation and analysis involved the episodes of *Ragam Wanita*, *Si Mat Main Wayang*, *Rahsia Puan Hew*, and *Projek Sains Bo*.

The analysis in this ethnographic study will focus on several aspects, culture and beliefs, arts, the language used between characters, and the background or environment that reflects the ethnic culture in Malaysia. These four cultural aspects are selected based on several cultural categories stated by Newmark (1998): material culture, social culture, and customary culture of an ethnic group. The method in this study is also classified as a primary source.

As for secondary sources, researchers will utilize books, journals, academic articles, reports, and digital sources such as trustworthy websites. Secondary sources refer to information that has already been processed. Here, researchers employed this method to develop or support theories and hypotheses in this study. All methods in this study are used together to support more comprehensive analyses.

4. Literature Review

The book by Giampietro Gobo (2008), explains that ethnographic study aims to understand, describe and explain the symbolic world beneath social action in groups, organizations, and communities or society. In other words, ethnography is a method of inquiry that involves collecting data through observation and field studies of a particular group of people and then studying and analyzing the data collected. The purpose of this study is

to understand a culture and social life of a particular group of people in detail. In addition, in this ethnographic investigation, the researcher does not only analyze and pay attention to how a group of people carries out a social action, but the researcher must also identify the symbolic or implied, or explicit meaning behind the social action through field studies. The symbolism mentioned is the semiotic theory, which studies symbols and meanings. Thus, the researcher can have a deeper understanding of this group of people's culture and way of life and can also help strengthen relationships and promote understanding between the cultures of different groups of people. This book also explains that ethnographic studies involve methods of inquiry design, access to the field, data collection, organization and analysis of data, and communication of research results. Overall, the book "Doing Ethnography" is a useful guide because it explains the various methods, phases, examples, and how to overcome some of the challenges in ethnographic research as well as suggestions for the ethnographer "for the novice ethnographer". However, this book focuses more on a community's symbolic life or social actions.

Ethnography comes from the Greek, which means "Ethno", which refers to 'the people/society' while "Grapho" means 'to write'. This text defines ethnography as writing about people or society and their culture [7]. In this journal, the author refers to ethnography as identifying a community group's way of life through observation and analysis. Similarly, Gobo stated that ethnographic studies are practised to describe the life of a community or community in detail and understand worldviews, values, and thoughts. For him, to understand ethnography in a group, we need to understand the people's way of life, as well as their values and desires. This article also discusses the importance of studying ethnography in the context of disciplines, anthropology, sociology, and cultural studies. Other than that, this learning can help students understand the culture and patterns of human interaction in greater detail and respect one another. Nevertheless, Dr. Carole McGranahan (2014), opines that ethnography does not only involve field studies, as stated by Gabo but also involves learning sensibility. This sensibility learning can be achieved by introducing students to ethnographic texts, such as books, journals, and articles, as well as videos and audio, such as animation.

Meanwhile, from Mohammad Siddiq and Hartini Salama's (2019), point of view, ethnography is a task that studies people and describes culture. If a researcher examines ethnic diversity in depth involving aspects of cultural heritage, nation, beliefs, language, and art, there is an ethnographic study of a community group. Among the aspects of cultural heritage and the nation's in terms of traditional clothing and belief, it also involves religion adhered to by an ethnic group. Note that language involves the medium used to communicate with each other when art indulges games, offerings, or the nation's artistic heritage. This study also explains how ethnographic theory has developed over time and how it is applied to express and understand ethnicity and its culture. However, this journal is more on Islamic scientific traditions.

In a study conducted by Suraya (2014), she stated the concern expressed by Prof Dr. Khoo Kay Kim that the situation of racial harmony in Malaysia is worrying and fragile. Malaysia has various ethnicities with different cultures, customs, religions, and traditions. Therefore, we must study ethnic culture to respect, understand and respect other ethnic cultures. However, today's society has no interest in studying and knowing ethnic cultures that are different from theirs. Instead, they only focus on their own culture. This practiced attitude has had a big bad impact on society and has even given birth to a self-serving society. Among the examples of events listed by Suraya are 13 May 1969, *Kampung Rawa*, and *Kampung Medan*. Riots involving ethnic groups in Malaysia have challenged relations between communities of cultural backgrounds, religious customs, religions, and beliefs. The study in this thesis aims to help the National Unity and National Integration Service (JPNIN) identify conflicts and issues of inter-ethnic disputes that prevail in Malaysian society. With this, the reviewer can also help JPNIN choose methods and ways to handle disputes and avoid the emergence of the same issue. The reviewer also employed the Conflict Development Stages Framework approach introduced by Judith R. Gordon (1961), to help choose methods and strategies for managing conflicts that are more appropriate and can avoid more serious conflicts.

Mansor Mohd. Noor's emphasis on recognizing and acknowledging the diverse ethnicities, languages, cultures, religions, and traditions within a country is important to promoting unity and understanding among its people. By recognizing and respecting the existing differences, individuals can work towards building a more inclusive and accepting society. Apart from that, according to Mansor, our society must continue to strengthen attitudes and tolerance, and acceptance between ethnic groups in society which consists of Malays, Kadazan-Dusun, Bidayuh, Iban, and more than 200 other ethnic groups. Differences in language, culture, religion, and traditions must be recognized, accepted, and respected to create a tolerant society that accepts other ethnic cultures. Lack of exposure to other ethnic cultures increases the possibility that they do not understand or have misunderstandings of other ethnic actions or feelings, tensions, ethnic stereotypes, ethnocentrism, prejudice, and acts of discrimination [17]. Hence, clashes between ethnic groups, such as the Hartal Case in Pulau Pinang and 13 May, were caused by a lack of understanding between each other. According to Mansor, people's perceptions of inter-ethnic relations in Malaysia have been somewhat negative

recently. This has been proven through newspaper reports, social media, and discussions on ethnic and religious issues that have been raised lately without considering the root causes of the problem and its impact on various social, ethnic, and religious groups. Therefore, it is important to learn and respect, and appreciate other ethnic cultures with the aim that people's understanding, appreciation, and security can be maintained. Through this exposure, too, we can cultivate closer social relations and foster understanding and trust among the various ethnicities in Malaysia. Among the approaches that are often utilized to apply to learn about other ethnic cultures are the media of animation.

Malaysia has many races and ethnicities, with three main groups, namely Malays, Chinese, and Indians, as well as other ethnicities such as Orang Asli, Kadazan-Dusun, and others. Each ethnic group's culture and traditions contribute to Malaysia's cultural diversity. The journal they wrote discussed issues related to translating aspects of Malaysian culture in the cartoon "Kampung Boy" by a well-known cartoonist in Malaysia, Datuk Lat. They also discussed the translation strategy used to ensure the authenticity of the cultural aspects applied in Kampung Boy were preserved in Japanese translation. Through detailed analysis, they also identified the categories of cultural elements based on Newmark's approach in Kampung Boy. According to Newmark (1988) in the journal Sarinah Sharif & Saliza Ismail (2021), Newmark has divided culture into several categories, namely Ecology, which refers to the structure and function of the natural world around them, and humans as part of the natural environment. Onwards Material Culture is closely related to objects or items such as food, clothing, and buildings. Social Culture is culture related to work and entertainment. Meanwhile, Resam Indigenous Culture or Ideology focuses more on politics, administration, religion, and art. The last cultural category is treatment and behavior related to the movement of the human body or physical movement and daily habits. With that, the reviewer will employ several cultural elements listed by Newmark, namely the categories of material culture, social, and Indigenous Resam. Correspondingly, the animated film The Kampung Boy will analyze these three cultural elements.

Muhamad Ridhwan Sarifin and Mohd Fauzi Suhaimi (2021), discuss the cultural identity of an ethnic group using a theoretical approach to forming cultural identity. This article explores the use of media platforms and media impressions on the perpetuation of cultural identity. Preserving identity includes several aspects, namely ethnicity, culture, language, religion, gender, food, culture, environment, and localism. According to them, the existence of media that spreads information about individual identity, group, or ethnicity is known to be crowded. This is due to the widespread use of media and the existence of pictures, paintings, and videos that can attract people's interest in learning about other cultural identities. The example presented regarding disseminating information on an ethnic identity through books, newspapers, and magazines is an eternal material or source of knowledge that is hard to find. Whereas media such as radio, film, or broadcasting are easier, faster, and attract people to learn about other ethnic cultures. However, this study only involved the Bawean people, a small ethnic group, part of the Malay community from Bawean Island in the Java Sea.

Shaliza, Liza, Nurkhasilah, and Hasliza (2014), conducted a study investigating the use of cartoon art to shape and strengthen national awareness and culture in Malaysia. This study also begins by providing the historical context of cartoons and animation, as well as several well-known cartoonists such as Peng, Rahim, Nan, Datuk Lat, and many others. Other than that, the reviewer analyzes how well-known figures use cartoon art to convey messages about Malaysia's national culture and identity. Among the cartoons analyzed is the Si Mat family cartoon by Datuk Lat. Most of them describe socio-cultural aspects that lead to the life of Malaysian society, whether in Bandar or Kampung. They stated that Datuk Lat often depicts scenes from traditional Malaysian villages, such as communal farming, fishing, and village festivities. He also frequently highlights the diversity of Malaysia's ethnic groups, including Malays, Chinese, Indians, and indigenous peoples. Overall, this journal provides a useful perspective on how cartoon art is applied to convey important messages in society. However, this journal only focuses on the use of cartoon art as a tool to strengthen national and cultural awareness in Malaysia.

Research by Syahman, Yusmilayati, and Yuszaidy (2019), is an academic article discussing Malay cultural identity in Upin and Ipin animation. This analysis focuses on the visuals in the episode "**Dugaan dan Nikmat**", which describes Malay culture and customs in depth. In the episode, the reviewer also discussed Malay elements such as traditional food, inherited culture, language, clothes, and customs. This analysis indicates that animation media can contribute to producing a Malay identity concept in local animation stories. In addition, it has also exposed culture to other ethnic communities. This proves that using visual media is a step toward learning about other ethnic cultures. The study conducted in this journal is limited to Malay culture's scope in the animated film Upin dan Ipin. This study differs from a few of these studies, but the goal is the same: examining the use of animation media as a tool for studying ethnic culture (ethnographic education).

5. Finding

5.1 The Aspect of Culture and Belief

The culture and beliefs practiced by Malaysian society are unique, with various ethnicities preserving their respective cultural identities. From an ethnographic perspective, culture includes knowledge, beliefs, morals, arts, laws, customs, manners, and other ways of life humans acquire as members of society (EB Taylor, 1958). Note that traditional clothing is an element in the aspect of culture and beliefs, and it also represents an important symbol of a society's cultural identity. According to Hamzah (2018), traditional clothing manifests ethnic and cultural diversity in Malaysia. Traditional clothing suggests modesty and cultural values inherited from previous generations. In addition, the researcher also symbolizes pride and patriotism for the country's cultural heritage. Apart from that, clothing can also reflect adherence to religious beliefs, identity, and inherited culture and increase self-confidence, social position, and pure values [13]. Traditional Malaysian clothing has various styles and forms depending on the culture and beliefs of the ethnic group, contributing to the cultural heritage of clothing. The following are the three types of traditional clothing that the Malay, Chinese, and Indian communities have inherited.

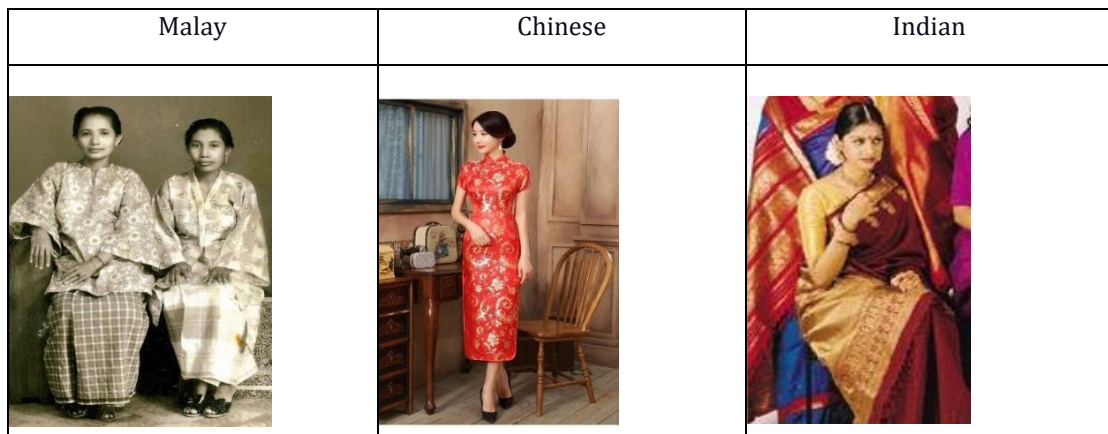


Figure 1: Traditional wear in Malaysia, sources by *Kementerian Pelancongan dan Kebudayaan Malaysia* (2012).

The Malays are famous for their Malay clothes and *Kurung* clothes, the Chinese with Cheongsams, and the Indians with Saree (Ministry of Tourism and Culture Malaysia, 2012). Considering that clothing is also a part of cultural characteristics, this study will examine cultural influences and semiotic theory in the aspect of traditional clothing painted on the animated character Kampung Boy by Datuk Lat. The semiotic theory is applied to help researchers understand how these traditional clothes contain important cultural signs and meanings. All of these traditional clothes have been depicted in the animated film *Kampung Boy*, in the scene of *Ragam Wanita*, by Datuk Lat, as follows:

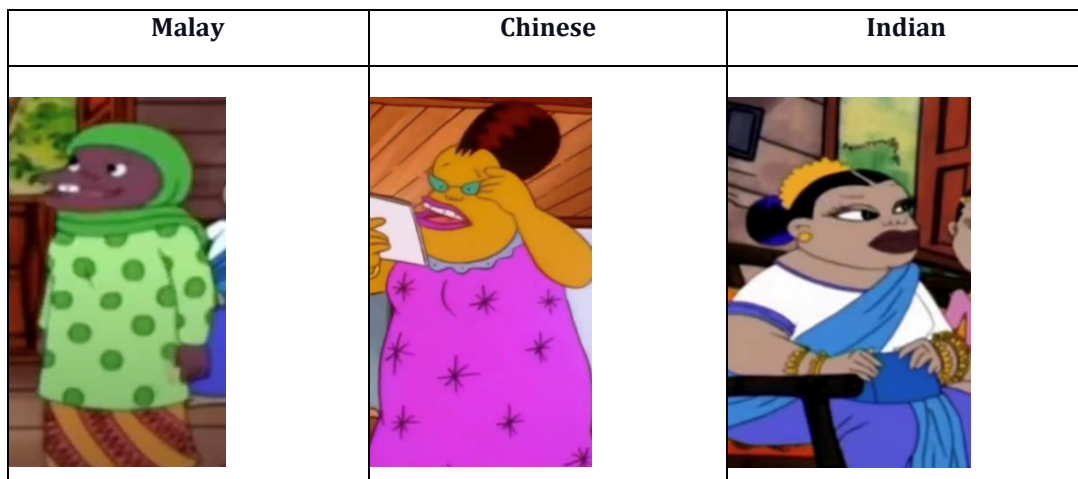


Figure 2: In the scene of *Ragam Wanita* by Datuk Lat, the character from the *Kampung Boy* animation film wearing traditional cloth can be seen.

The clothes on the characters that Datuk Lat painted symbolize traditional clothing and identity for the three largest ethnic groups in Malaysia. Among the traditional clothes shown in *The Kampung Boy* animation are Malay clothes, *Kurung* clothes, *Kopiah*, and *Tudung* [5]. For traditional Malay clothing, which is known as the *Kurung* cloth, Opah wears it. According to Tenas Effendy, '*Kurung*' is intended to confine or protect the wearer from shame and embarrassment. Indeed, the traditional *Kurung* clothes often worn by Malays represent Malay cultural heritage and follow the guidelines for Islamic clothing for women. Scarf or shawl that is worn by Islamic women and can vary in form depending on personal preference and cultural traditions. It typically covers the hair, neck and in certain cases, the chest. *Baju Kurung* is one of the Islamic clothes. In Islamic clothing, clothing should cover the body, private areas and not be too tight or revealing. Although the method of covering the head using a scarf or shawl is not perfect or worn modestly, it is still part of the structure of the Malay Islamic clothing tradition [3]. This behavior can be seen through Opah's character, who wears a green scarf, loose green polka-dot patterned clothes that extend from the shirt to the knees, and a *sarong* that covers the waist to the spine. Elements or patterns in *sarong* cloth are symbols of *batik* cloth. *Batik* motifs or patterns have become symbolic of national pride and a form of clothing for all ethnic groups and are part of the culture in Malaysia.

Cheongsam clothing is also known as the Qipao or Mandarin Dress worn by Chinese women. The cheongsam in Figures 1 and 2 have somewhat the same shape and pattern. Figure 1 shows a Chinese girl in a long, red Cheongsam. The shape of the dress follows the shape of the body and has short sleeves and a neck collar. In addition, some of the motifs or symbols on the cheongsam, such as flowers. Women in China styled this traditional dress in the 17th century. Nevertheless, in the 20th century, it became known worldwide as a symbol of femininity and dedicated to the elegance of a woman, usually made of silk with bright colors and has a design that follows the body and is elegant (Lai, WY, 1998). Figure 2 illustrates the same style of Cheongsam dress worn by Mrs. Hew, a teacher to Mat. The clothes worn by Mrs. Hew are symbolic of a Chinese woman.

Indian women are also famous for the beauty of the traditional saree, which consists of a long piece of cloth wrapped around the body. Saree is used as a way to express the cultural identity of the Indians. Figure 1 displays a woman of India wearing her traditional saree, with many bracelets or bangles, ear piercings, and hair neatly groomed and decorated with jasmine flowers. Indian women not only wear this traditional dress at special events but it is also used as daily clothing. Figure 2 demonstrates the character of an Indian dressed in their traditional cultural dress, "Saree", which is blue, wrapped around the body, and slung over the shoulder. This saree is paired with a white blouse on top or Choli. This Indian character is also represented by floral accessories on the head and jewelry, such as bracelets full of hands and gold earrings on the ears. Flowers for Indians are a symbol of purity, cleanliness, and immortality for Indians. Note that it is also used for ceremonies involving religion, marriage, personal or home adornment, and death.

5.2 Aspect of Arts

Art grows and develops with human civilization, is universal, and can connect with other cultures and people (Harry Sulastianti et al., 2006). Art in culture refers to the visual arts and includes performances, theatre, dance, craft art, carving, and traditional music such as gamelan and tambourines. Art in Malaysia is growing and must be maintained and inherited by the next generation [23]. The book "Art and Malay Culture" by Abdul Latif explains art in Malay culture which includes painting, khat, shadow puppets, traditional theatre, martial arts, and others. Whereas in SU Yingying's journal, examples of traditional Chinese art and culture were spread and promoted in Malaysia, namely painting, calligraphy, traditional music, Dragon dance, and even Kungfu. Apart from that, the Indians also have a rich and diverse artistic tradition that spans thousands of years and encompasses various art forms such as painting, dance, music, and more. This cultural heritage is thriving today and is essential to India's identity and global reputation [26]. Other than that painting the 'pool', traditional Indian dances reflect more on various historical centers and traditions featuring various forms and styles. This music and dance symbolize religious and spiritual aspects and perpetuate the cultural identity of Indian art in Malaysia, such as the Bharatanatyam, Kathakali, and Odissi dances.

Datuk Lat also exhibited aspects of this artistic tradition in *The Kampung Boy* episode "*Ragam Wanita*". Malaysia has various traditional arts rich with artistic values from various ethnic groups and cultures. The following is an image of artistic traditions based on ethnic groups that are featured in *The Kampung Boy* animation;

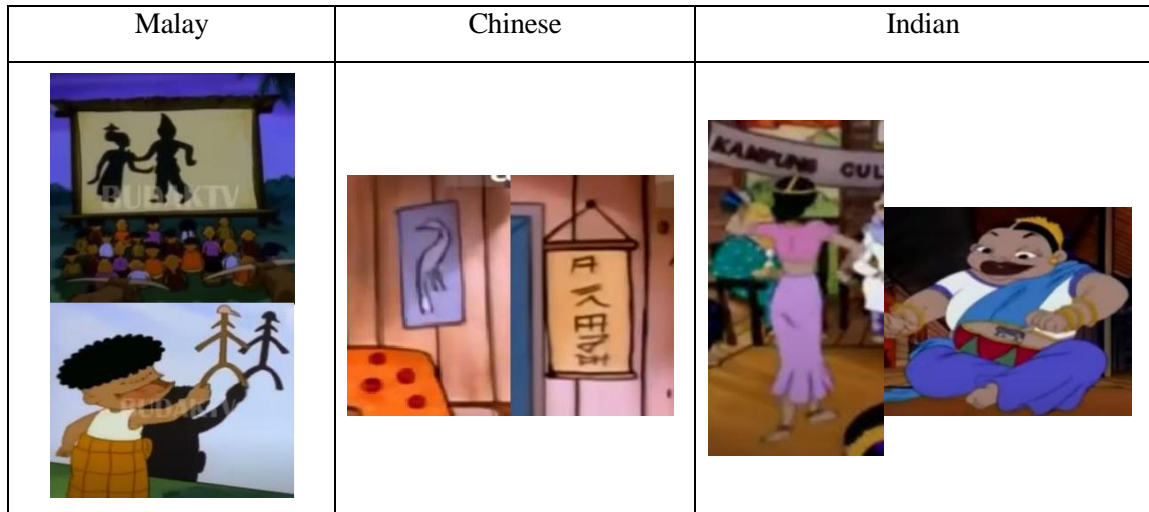


Figure 3: Several artistic traditions in The Kampung Boy.

"*Wayang Kulit*" symbolizes traditional arts within the Malay community, especially in Kelantan. It is a traditional form of shadow puppetry widely practiced in Southeast Asia, including among ethnic Malays. In the graphic novel "The Kampung Boy" by Lat, *Wayang Kulit* is depicted as a cultural symbol of the Malay community. The main character, Mat, is shown performing *Wayang Kulit* with Tok Dalang in the "Kampung Boy Si Mat Main Wayang" episode, highlighting the importance of this art form in Malay culture and its transmission from one generation to the next. *Wayang Kulit* performances are the main entertainment medium in traditional Malay society. Every aspect of the performance holds an interpretation of the community's beliefs and cultural values. Note that the design aspect of a *Wayang Kulit* performance consists of the stage and its equipment, including lighting, colors, statues, puppeteers, and music [6].

For the Chinese ethnic group, art is highlighted through calligraphy paintings in the episode "*Rahsia Puan Hew*," which are hung as accessories in Mrs. Hew's living room. Chinese calligraphy is an important part of Chinese culture. It involves transforming writing into various patterns and shapes using materials such as paper, manuscripts, metals, and other materials to become a medium of artistic expression and aesthetic decoration. According to Makmur and Bukhari (2014), it is also a symbol of life in the form of art that brings color to the civilization of individuals or Chinese society. Therefore, Chinese calligraphy should be practiced and appreciated in Chinese society and throughout the world.

The Indian dance featured in the animated Kampung Boy episode "*Ragam Wanita*" symbolizes traditional ethnic Indian dance art. Two Indian characters were shown presenting traditional Indian music and dance. The dancers perform each dance closely related to the three most famous Hindu gods, *Shiva*, *Kali*, and *Krishna* (Siti Supeni, Setyasih Harini, and Inggis Mialiwati, 2021). Most traditional Indian dances rely heavily on Hindu religious elements and stories from ancient Sanskrit *Natyashastra* texts. Dancers and musicians wear traditional costumes and head and hand jewelry during their performances. This Indian dance is often performed during cultural and social events, such as weddings, Deepavali Day, and other Indian cultural celebrations.

5.3 Aspect of Language

Culture, beliefs, and art not only present the identity of an ethnic group in terms of conversation and communication. They are also symbolic of that ethnic culture. Subsequently, each ethnic group has a different language. For example, the Malays use Malay, the Chinese use Mandarin and the Indians use Tamil. Although Malaysia has various languages, Malay is generally practiced as the intermediary or official language, as it is the national language of Malaysia. It is also a symbol or identity for the sovereign people and state [21]. According to the researchers, the Malay language is not only applied as a tool for communication but also indicates the nation, and language is the nation's soul. According to case 152 of the Malaysian Federal Federation, "The National Language is Malay", as used in The Kampung Boy animation film.



Figure 4: Malay, Chinese and Indian ethnic talking with each other using the Malay language.

The "*Projek Sains Bo*" episode demonstrates that despite having diverse ethnic groups, they use the Malay language as their communication medium. This highlights the widespread use of Malay in Malaysia, despite the country's diverse range of ethnicities. Datuk Lat not only uses Malay but also uses the Perak village dialect. This is since The Kampung Boy has a background in a village in the state of Perak, also the birthplace of Datuk Lat himself. Among the Perak dialects used is Yeob, a male or eldest son title. The character of Abah Mat in the animated film *Kampung Boy* is called Yeob by his family and villagers there. Perak accent and the Malay language used in *Kampung Boy* symbolize *kampung* culture in Negeri Perak.

5.4 The Aspect of Setting, Environment, and Background

This animated film tells the life of a slave boy named Mat in a traditional Malay village. This promotes the place and time when it was in a *Kampung* area. The elements and characteristics of the Malay house applied in *Kampung Boy* are symbolic of the Malay cultural tradition in Malaysia. Apart from that, the house settings for the Chinese and Indians also use wood as it depicts village areas.



Figure 5: Setting and background in "*Rahsia Puan Hew*" episode.

The traditional house in *The Kampung Boy* depicts the criteria of village people. *Kampung*, or village, is very closely related to the Malay community in Malaysia. It is a place the Malays adapt to their real-life [1]. According to Husni (Rumiawati, 2013), Malaysian people build tall houses to rescue them against the dangers of floods. Besides that, the set locations in this animated film also illustrate the natural beauty of Malaysia with serene scenes of paddy fields, forests, and rivers. In addition, it also presents the life of the family Mat and the activities carried out by the villagers, such as planting rice, trading, and gardening. This animated film by Datuk Lat is a beautiful work of art and has a high value as a cultural heritage in Malaysia. *The Kampung Boy* invites the audience to reflect on and appreciate the simple life in the *kampung* and reminds us of the importance of preserving our cultural heritage. Through the characters and ethnographic elements in *The Kampung Boy*, the reader can appreciate the diversity of Malaysian culture and the importance of preserving traditional arts and customs.

6. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the study of ethnography is crucial in understanding and appreciating different cultures and ways of life. Datuk Lat's "Kampung Boy" provides a valuable example of how ethnographic research can be used to document and preserve a community's cultural practices and beliefs. Through his humorous and insightful illustrations and animation, Datuk Lat helps the audience gain a deeper appreciation of rural Malaysian life's unique traditions and values.

Similarly, animation can be a powerful tool for conveying the importance of studying other cultures. Exercising visual storytelling techniques, animators can help audiences understand and appreciate the complexities of different cultural practices and perspectives. Whether utilized for educational purposes or entertainment, animation can serve as a bridge between different cultures and help promote cross-cultural understanding and empathy.

Overall, by implementing ethnographic elements in the animation, we could enrich society to understand other cultures around us and promote greater cultural awareness and understanding. Besides, we could also learn to appreciate and celebrate the diversity of human experience while fostering greater respect and tolerance for those whose lives and traditions may differ from ours.

Acknowledgement

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to Datuk Lat, the renowned Kampung Boy animator, for his invaluable contributions to this project. His creative vision, artistic talent, and deep knowledge of Malaysian culture and traditions have been instrumental in shaping and enriching our work. We are also grateful to the individuals or organizations who have provided us with assistance or advice, such as colleagues, advisors, and consultants, for their invaluable contributions to this work. We would also like to thank the participants who generously gave their time to participate in this study. Finally, we would like to acknowledge the contributions of our families, who provided us with unwavering support and encouragement throughout this journal.

References

- [1] Ahmad Zamlil Zakaria, Hazreena Hussein & Melasutra Md Dali. (2021). The Relationship of Perak Malay 'Kampung' elements to the Malaysian Garden Concept (MGC): Impact on National Identity. *Malaysian Journal of Sustainable Environment*, 8(3), 1-18. <https://doi.org/10.24191/myse.v8i3.15886>
- [2] Aidil Haris & Asrinda Amalia. (2018). Makna dan Simbol dalam proses interaksi sosial (Sebuah tinjauan komunikasi). *Jurnal Risalah*, 29(1), 16-19.
- [3] Asliza Bt. Aris, Norwani Bt. Md. Nawawi & Saemah Bt. Yusof. (2015). Refleksi Islam dalam Pakaian Traditional Melayu: Baju Kurung. *Proceedings of the 16-17 Disember 2015, Century Helang Hotel, Pulau Langkawi, UiTM Cawangan Kedah-INSPIN*, <https://ir.uitm.edu.my/id/eprint/35689/1/35689.pdf>
- [4] Asnah Rumiawati & Yuri Hermawan Prasetyo (2013). Identification Typology of Architecture Traditional Malay Houses in Langkat District and Its Changes. *Jurnal Perbukitan*, 8(2), 78-88
- [5] Azmi Khalid. (2016). *Kampung Boy: Animasi Budaya Melayu*. Dewan Sastera.
- [6] Azrul Azizi Amirul, Aiziz Bahauddin & A.S Hardy Shafii. (2016). Aspek Rekabentuk Fizikal dan Simbolik Panggung Persembahan Wayang Kulit Kelantan. http://eprints.usm.my/39455/1/PAPER_37.pdf
- [7] Carole McGanahan (2014). What is Ethnography? Teaching Ethnographic Sensibilities without Fieldwork. *Teaching Anthropology*, 4(1), 23-36. <https://doi.org/10.22582/ta.v4i1.421>
- [8] Edward B. Taylor. (1958). *Primitive Culture*. Harper, New York.
- [9] Faryna Mohd Khalis, Normah Mustaffa, Mohd Nor Shahizan Ali & Neesa Ameera Mohamed Salim. (2020). The Evolution of Malaysian Cartoon Animation. *Academic Series of Universiti Teknologi MARA Kedah*, 16(2), 68-82.
- [10] Giampietro Gobo. (2008). *Doing Ethnography*, SAGE Publications.
- [11] Hanafi Jumrah & Zulfazlan Jumrah (2021, October). Upin & Ipin Keria Siamang Tunggal: Agen didaktik pada layar budaya. Paper presented at the *Persidangan Antarabangsa Bahasa, Sastera dan Budaya Melayu (RENTAS 2021)*, UUM, Sintok, Kedah.
- [12] Hanisa Hassan. (2016). A Study on the Development of Baju Kurung design in the Context of Cultural changes in modern Malaysia. *Wacana Seni Journal of Arts Discourse*, 15(1), 63-94. <http://dx.doi.org/10.21315/ws2016.15.3>

- [13] Hanisa Hassan, Binarul Anas Zaman, Imam Santosa. (2015). Tolerance of Islam: A Study on Fashion among Modern and Professional Malay Women in Malaysia. *International Journal of Social Science and Humanity*, Vol. 5, No. 5, 454-460.
- [14] Harry Sulastianti. (2006). *Seni Budaya*. Grafindo Media Pratama.
- [15] Lai, W.Y. (1998). The Qipao and Chinese women's fashion in the twentieth century, 1911-1976. *Journal of Women's History*, 9(2), 77-101.
- [16] Lee Siew Chin, T'NG Cheah Kiu Choon, Noraza Ahmad Zabidi & Badrul Redzuan Abu Hassan (2017). Lat's Comics and the Articulation of the Malaysian Cultural Landscape. *The Southeast Asian Journal of English Language Studies*, 23(3), 160-172. <http://doi.org/10.17576/3L-2017-2303-12>
- [17] Mansor Mohd. Noor. (2023). Hubungan Melayu dan Cina di Malaysia Masa Kini: Buta dengan Perubahan Realiti Sosial Negara. *Jurnal Demokrasi*, 9(2) 185-207. <https://ejournal.unp.ac.id/index.php/jd/article/view/1424>
- [18] Makmur & Muhammad Bukhari Lubis. (2014). Corak Seni Khat Ukir Nusantara: Kajian
- [19] Perbandingan Karya Ukiran Kayu Terengganu (Malaysia) dan Jepara (Indonedia). *Jurnal Seni dan Pendidikan Seni*, 2(1), 31-49. <https://ojs.upsi.edu.my/index.php/JSPS/article/view/2225/1548>
- [20] Mohammad Siddiq & Hartini Salama (2019). Etnografi sebagai Teori dan Metode. *Jurnal Komunikasi Antar Perguruan Tinggi Agama Islam*, 18(1), 23-48.
- [21] Mohd. Yusof Hj. Abdullah. (2006). *Seni Budaya Malaysia*. Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka. Mohd. Sohaimi Esa, Romzi Ationg, Irna Wani Othman, & Herlina Jupiter. (2021). Issues and challenges of the Malay language as a National language on the verge of Malayan independence. *International Journal of Education, Psychology and Counseling*, 6(41), 111-125.
- [22] Muhamamd Ridhwan Sarifin, Mohamad Fauzi Sukimi & Mohd Nor Shahizan Ali. (2021). Penggunaan Media dalam Pengekalan Identiti Etnik Generasi Kedua Bawean di Malaysia. *Malaysian Journal of Communication*, 37(1), 347-362. <https://doi.org/10.17576/JKMJC-2021-3701-20>
- [23] Muhamad Syahman Mahdi, Yusmilayati Yunos & Mohd Yuszaidy Mohd Yusoff (2019). The Discourse of Malay identity through Upin & Ipin animation series episode: Dugaan dan Nikmat. *Jurnal Melayu*, 18(2), 164-178.
- [24] Norhasniah Wan Husin (Wan.). (2012). Peradaban dan perkauman di Malaysia: Hubungan etnik Melayu-Cina. Universiti Malaya.
- [25] Ridaudin Daud (2020, January 11). Cara menangani isu perkauman. *Sinar Harian*. Retrieved from <https://www.sinarharian.com.my/article/65449/cara-menangani-isu-perkauman>
- [26] Santhi A/P Letchumanan, Lee Hoi Yeh, Prof. Madya Dr. Abdul Halim Hussain. (2016). Budaya Visual 'Seni Kolam' dalam sistem sosial masyarakat India. Faculty of Art & Design, UiTM Melaka.
- [27] Sarinah Sharif & Saliza Ismail (2021). Translation Strategy of Cultural Aspects in Lat Cartoons: The Kampung Boy. *International Journal of Modern Languages and Applied Linguistics*, 5(2), 20-35. <https://doi.org/10.24191/ijmal.v5i2.13204>
- [28] Shaliza Dasuki, Liza Marziana, Nurkhazilah Idris & Nur Hasliza Abdulah (2014, October). Budaya Kebangsaan dalam karya-karya Seni Kartun Editorial Pra dan Pasca Merdeka. Paper presented at the Seminar Penyelidikan Kelestarian 2014, Pusat Penyelidikan Lestari, Kampus Tuanku Abdl Halim Mu'adzam Shah, UKM, Langkawi Kedah.
- [29] Suraya Binti Wen. (2014). Kajian mengenalpasti isu dan punca konflik yang mempengaruhi tahap keharmonian masyarakat di Malaysia bagi tahun 2011 dan 2012. *Core.ac.uk*. Retrieved April 29, 2023, from https://core.ac.uk/display/268139993?utm_source=pdf&utm_medium=banner&utm_campaign=pdf-decoration-v1
- [30] SU Yingying (2015). Permulaan dan Pembangunan Kebudayaan Tradisional China di Tanah Melayu Sepanjang Abad ke-20: Kajian tentang Bidang serta Kesannya. In *Journal of Chinese Literature and Culture*, 85-97. <https://ejournal.um.edu.my/index.php/JCLC/article/download/11297/7690/22197>
- [31] Tenas Effendy. (2005). *Ungkapan Tradisional Melayu Riau*. Kuala Lumpur, Dewan Bahasa & Pustaka.