

Cultural Diplomacy in Films by Garin Nugroho

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ABSTRACT

This article conducts an in-depth examination of Indonesian cultural elements in Garin Nugroho's films, using Joseph Nye's theory of cultural diplomacy as a conceptual framework. Through the analysis of films such as "Daun Di Atas Bantal" and "Opera Jawa," the article aims to identify and explore the local cultural elements that Nugroho integrates into his film narratives. This research focuses on how Garin Nugroho presents traditional Indonesian cultural elements and how this contributes to international understanding of Indonesia's cultural richness. By applying the theory of cultural diplomacy, the article highlights the importance of cultural representation in films as a form of soft power capable of building a positive image of Indonesia on the global stage. The study also discusses how Garin Nugroho's films play a role in cultural diplomacy, serving not only as a medium of entertainment but also as an educational tool and cultural promotion. The article supports the hypothesis that cultural diplomacy plays a crucial role in building understanding and appreciation of a nation's cultural wealth, as well as strengthening international relations through cultural exchange. Thus, this article functions not only as a critical analysis of Garin Nugroho's films but also as a case study demonstrating how cultural diplomacy can be effectively used to promote and introduce Indonesian culture to international audiences. The findings of this research are expected to contribute to film studies, cultural diplomacy, and the development of future strategies for promoting Indonesian culture.

Keywords: Diplomacy, Culture, Film.

INTRODUCTION

A. Background

Cultural diplomacy is a part of public diplomacy that introduces one country's culture to other countries with the aim of building mutual trust and mutual recognition. This is as stated by Tulus Warsito and Wahyuni K (2007:29-30) who state that diplomacy has an important goal for a country to seek recognition, adjustment, persuasion, threats and hegemony in order to fulfill national

interests. This concept involves the exchange of ideas, information, values, traditions, and other cultural aspects.

The importance of cultural diplomacy lies in its ability to strengthen understanding between nations, build better relations, develop economic and tourism potential, encourage cooperation in research and education (Warsito, Tulus. Wahyuni K, 2007: 5).

Cultural diplomacy can also take the form of communication through film as a product that serves as an intermediary for

knowledge about culture, with the aim of understanding the narratives of ethnic and cultural diversity in Indonesia (Rozi, 2019:46). This aligns with what was stated by Herlinawati (2020:25), regarding the function of film from a cultural perspective, which is to represent ethnic cultures that depict the traditions of ethnic groups in Indonesia.

Cultural diplomacy also plays a role in expanding the reach of a country's influence without using military force or political pressure. Cultural diplomacy as soft power originates from a country's culture and image, which are important factors in international relations, influencing other countries through attraction and persuasion, rather than coercion or military force (Haneş & Andrei, 2015:33). Through cultural exchange, countries can introduce the richness and diversity of their culture to the world, thereby creating a positive image that has an impact on various sectors. For example, holding cultural festivals, art exhibitions and traditional music performances can attract the attention of the international community and increase interest in the culture.

Cultural diplomacy does not only refer to the arts or characteristics of a region, but also includes certain social situations and conditions with the aim of expressing justice and attracting sympathy from society so that these conditions can be overcome. One example is raising the issue of street children. An article written by Herlina Astri (2014: 145) states that the phenomenon of street children is a fairly complex social problem for big cities in Indonesia. Street children are very easy to find in big cities, such as at red light intersections, train stations, terminals, markets, shops and even malls, where they carry out their daily activities.

Furthermore, Astri revealed that street children are often coordinated by neat and professional groups, which are often referred to as the street child mafia. Each member of this group has their own duties, such as mapping every road intersection, arranging pick-up and drop-offs, and so on. This exploitation of children makes them a profitable business field for the group. Sadly, this condition occurs with the approval of their own parents, who often also act as part of the street child mafia.

By raising issues such as street children through cultural diplomacy, a country or community can voice justice, attract attention and sympathy from the international community. The goal is to find a solution to solve the problem. Through film, art, literature and other media, cultural diplomacy can be a powerful tool to reveal often hidden social realities and encourage concrete action to address these problems.

Cultural diplomacy that focuses on these social issues not only raises awareness, but also mobilizes support for positive change. Through virtual platforms, cultural diplomacy can mobilize support and facilitate sustained international communication, support economic recovery, and build global stability, aligning with the idea that cultural diplomacy can drive support for positive change (Nurisnaeny, 2022:15-16). In this case, cultural diplomacy functions as a medium for promoting human values, encouraging global solidarity, and working towards social justice. Therefore, it is important for countries and communities to broaden the scope of their cultural diplomacy, not only to showcase the beauty and richness of culture, but also to highlight critical issues that require immediate attention and solutions.

Garin Nugroho, an Indonesian film director, often uses cultural elements and

societal situations in his work. Some of his famous works highlight stories about culture and nature, depict the cultural identity of society, and express the diversity of the world around us. This is in line with the ideology held by Garin in art, including highlighting human, religious and nationalist values with a cultural focus on Javanism and Sundanism. (Toni, 2017:21).

One of his films that stands out is "Under The Tree", which highlights the cultural identity of the Balinese people. In this film, Garin Nugroho explores the complexity of Balinese identity through cultural symbols, language and racial differences. Symbols in films are very commonly used in packaging film stories to express what the director's goals are (Robby, 2021:117).

Garin's films also often depict religious and socio-religious life in Indonesia, and show how culture can be a bridge of friendship between nations.

Garin Nugroho's film that called "Under The Tree" has also produced other works that raise Indonesian cultural issues. For example, "Opera Jawa", a film that combines the shadow puppet tradition with a modern narrative. This film explores Javanese mythology and presents a tragic love story. Apart from that, "Daun Di Atas Bantal" is a film that raises social and humanitarian issues, with the background of the life of a woman selling batik in Yogyakarta. Garin Nugroho's works are not only entertaining, but also provide a perspective on cultural diplomacy between nations to understand the values of Indonesian culture (Suryanto, Hari.Mariani Amri, 2018:49).

This article aims to conduct an in-depth analysis of the elements of Indonesian culture contained in Garin Nugroho's films. This analysis will be carried out by utilizing the cultural diplomacy theory

proposed by Joseph Nye as a conceptual framework. The main aim of this research is to explain the meaning of the findings revealed through Garin's work and to strengthen the validity of the hypothesis regarding the role of cultural diplomacy as a strong point in building understanding of cultural richness in Indonesia.

B. Literature review

This article refers to previous research conducted by Nur Arina Syanjaya and Muh. Novan Prasetya with the article title "Japanese Cultural Diplomacy in Improving the Tourism Industry in Japan Through Anime" which was released in 2022. This research is a relevant reference point in the context of this article because it discusses cultural diplomacy with a focus on the culture of the tourism sector in Japan through the medium of anime . The article analyzes how Japan uses anime as a tool of cultural diplomacy to promote their cultural identity to audiences from other countries. In every anime, Japan always displays interesting locations as well as the food, clothing and habits of its people in an effort to introduce their culture to people. People want to come to visit their country (Syanjaya, Nur Arina, 2022:150).

This article will be used as a comparison to explore whether cultural diplomacy has similar elements in other countries, including how Garin Nugroho uses elements of Indonesian culture in his work to introduce and strengthen cultural identity to audiences from various parts of the world.

In Sanjaya and Prasetya's research, they explained that anime is not just entertainment, but is also an effective tool in building a positive image of Japan in the eyes of the international world. For example, the anime entitled Oshin which was broadcast in 1984 through a

unique narrative and interesting visual images, this anime was able to highlight various aspects of Japanese culture such as traditions, values and natural beauty, giving rise to the term Cool Japan which is Japan's attempt to utilize culture. Modern Japan to attract tourists to want to travel to Japan (Syanjaya, Nur Arina, 2022:153). The analysis conducted by Sanjaya and Prasetya (2022:154) provides in-depth insight into how a medium such as anime can be a major force in carrying out cultural diplomacy and strengthening a country's tourism industry.

In this modern era, cultural experiences can be easily accessed through other media such as the internet. Sudarsri Lestari (2018:97) explains that the internet has a significant impact on learning, which becomes more flexible in terms of time, place and age.

In the context of cultural diplomacy, the internet and modern technology enable the dissemination of cultural information quickly and widely. Cultural content, such as films, music, art and literature, can be accessed by a global audience through various digital platforms. This opens up opportunities for countries to promote their culture effectively and efficiently, attracting international interest and sympathy.

For example, films depicting social life in Indonesia can be uploaded to streaming platforms, so that viewers from various parts of the world can understand the conditions and challenges faced by Indonesian society. Social media also plays an important role in disseminating cultural information, enabling direct interaction between cultural creators and global audiences. Digital platforms enable cultural creators to reach a global audience and spread their cultural narratives. This interaction creates a participatory culture and can strengthen

the cultural messages they convey to a global audience (Cunningham, 2022:54).

Thus, the use of the internet and modern technology not only facilitates access to culture but also strengthens cultural diplomacy. Digital technology has created new opportunities for cultural diplomacy by directly reaching a global audience, allowing for more effective delivery of cultural messages (Molema, 2015:4-5). Countries can use this technology to highlight important social issues, promote justice, and build better relationships with the international community. In this way, cultural diplomacy can reach a wider audience and create a greater impact in introducing and championing culture and human values.

C. METHOD

The author uses qualitative methods in collecting and analyzing data. This method involves collecting information from various sources relevant to the theme of cultural diplomacy, especially in the context of Garin Nugroho's film works. Data was collected through journal articles discussing aspects of culture and art, books about Indonesian art and culture, as well as other information sources such as official websites and related documents.

The qualitative approach allows researchers to gain an in-depth understanding of how local cultural elements are integrated in the Nugroho film narrative. Through content analysis of journal articles and books, researchers can identify theoretical concepts about cultural diplomacy that are relevant to Nugroho's work. In addition, information sources such as official websites and other documentation provide insight into the practices and strategies used in promoting Indonesian culture internationally through the medium of film.

Qualitative analysis also allows researchers to capture nuances and complexities of interpretation that may not be directly measurable, but can be explained through in-depth research and theoretical reflection.

The theoretical basis used in this article is the concept of cultural diplomacy put forward by Joseph Nye in his book entitled "The Future of Power" published in 2011. Nye developed the concept of "soft power" which highlights the importance of non-military and non-economic influence in international relations, including through art, culture, and the values promoted by a country.

Another article states (Islamiyah, 2020:260) that soft power is defined as the ability to influence other parties through methods that do not use violence, such as culture, values and ideas. In this case, cultural diplomacy acts as a tool to spread one country's influence to other countries in a more subtle and persuasive way.

Joseph Nye's theory is a relevant conceptual framework in the analysis of cultural diplomacy in Nugroho's film works, allowing researchers to understand how these films strengthen Indonesia's cultural image and influence international perceptions of this country. Soft power, as stated by Nye, refers to a country's ability to influence other parties through the appeal of culture, values and policies that are considered positive.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Joseph Nye stated that an important element in diplomacy as soft power is culture (2011:68). Cultural diplomacy helps countries to introduce their culture to the international world. It includes arts, traditions, values, and cultural innovations that can enrich the experiences of people in different parts of the world. As mentioned

by Iva Rachmawati (2019:20), various cultural products that can be felt in real life, such as dance, music, films, and others, are used as cultural diplomacy tools to get positive opinions and responses from the public in other countries.

Cultural diplomacy involves the use of cultural elements that can be seen, heard, and felt directly by people from other cultures. Traditional dance, for example, can show beautiful movements and deep stories, while music can convey the emotions and history of a nation. Film, as a powerful medium, can combine various cultural aspects and present them in the form of interesting and accessible stories.

By using these cultural products, countries can create a positive image in the eyes of the international community. Unique and mesmerizing dance and music can captivate foreign audiences, while films can educate them about life, values and traditions of their home countries. Positive opinions and responses generated through cultural diplomacy can improve international relations, strengthen cooperation between countries, and pave the way for more constructive dialogue.

For example, traditional Indonesian dance performances abroad can attract the attention and admiration of audiences, thereby introducing them to the richness of Indonesian culture. The function of the music is no less important, namely that it is presented at international concerts to arouse curiosity and interest in traditional Indonesian music.

Dimas Phetorant's article (2020:91) highlights the function of music in life, including as entertainment, art, economy and industry. Music not only plays a role in fulfilling daily entertainment needs, but also has a significant impact in the tourism, advertising, television and film music

industries. Music not only enhances artistic experiences in forms of art and culture, but also becomes the main supporting element that enriches and enlivens various creative expressions, including in the world of cinema.

As entertainment, music has the unique ability to change the mood and emotions of the audience, creating immersive experiences in works of art such as films. In the film music industry, music not only accompanies visuals, but also deepens narrative meaning, creates a certain nuance, and builds an atmosphere that supports the story told by the film. Music in films can be an important element that connects the audience with the characters, atmosphere and themes raised.

Additionally, music also serves as a powerful educational tool, aiding in teaching and learning through artistic and creative expression. In education, music is used to facilitate understanding of complex concepts, motivate learning, and develop artistic skills and cultural understanding.

Indonesian films screened at international festivals can provide insight into social and cultural life in Indonesia, creating a sense of closeness and better understanding.

Thus, tangible cultural products such as dance, music and films not only function as entertainment, but also as effective diplomatic tools. Through this approach, countries can build better relations with other countries, promote their culture, and improve their image and influence on the international stage.

This agrees with what was stated by Josep Nye that culture is important in diplomacy because it allows a particular group or ethnicity to introduce knowledge and values (customs such as art, food, clothing, language and so on) to individuals

outside their group (2011:57).

Garin Nugroho often includes elements of Indonesian culture in each of his works. Several films by Garin that contain Indonesian cultural values include "Letter for Angels," "Bulan Tertusuk Ilalang," "Opera Jawa," and "Anak Seribu Pulau." This film is considered to have great potential to be used as a diplomatic tool in introducing Indonesian culture to the international community (Suryanto, 2018:54). This is due to the unique cultural content in these films, which has its own appeal for other nations outside Indonesia.

A. Analysis of Garin Nugroho's Films

This analysis will discuss elements such as visuals, cultural symbolism, and character development that appear in several films by Garin Nugroho.

1. Daun Di Atas Bantal

The film "Daun Di Atas Bantal" by Garin Nugroho is a work that combines cinematic and cultural elements to reveal social realities in Indonesia. The reality here is as stated by Ahmad Toni (2016:10) that this film reveals another side of social reality and the lives of people who are marginalized by the power system. In the midst of the reality of security and comfort created by the development system under Suharto's rule, this film also highlights the repressive actions carried out by state officials.

Through a humanist storyline, this film shows the complexity of daily life in Yogyakarta, such as the lives of street children, then the bustling atmosphere in traditional markets and several sad incidents experienced by street children such as peeping at people bathing, smoking, sulking and doing sexual activity by inserting a tube into their genitals, which in essence is something that is not normal for young children and teenagers to do.

The use of cultural elements, such as local traditions, architecture and the lives of lowerclass people, shows social realities that are rarely exposed on the international stage. The cultural symbolism in this film is enhanced by in-depth characterization and the use of local language, creating a bridge of understanding between Indonesian culture and global audiences. The following is an analysis of the elements of Indonesian culture highlighted in the film:

- **Street Children's Life:** This movie highlighting the lives of street children in Yogyakarta, which is a representation of socio-cultural conditions in many cities in Indonesia. Their harsh lives, filled with struggles for survival, reflect the broader social dynamics of the country. Garin Nugroho highlights their daily lives which are full of challenges, from sleeping in shop windows to earning a living by busking and begging. These street children, even though they are at an age that should be full of joy and education, are forced to struggle to survive amidst the harshness of city life. This film shows a harsh but real reality, where the warmth of friendship and solidarity between them becomes the only solace in the midst of social isolation and oppression.

The depiction of the lives of street children in the film "Daun Di Atas Bantal" is increasingly sad with scenes that highlight their downfall. Nugroho doesn't shy away from harsh realities, showing young children trapped in the habit of inhaling glue to relieve hunger and uncertainty. Not only that, scenes showing children drinking and smoking easily add to the bitterness of the story, illustrating how far they have been dragged from a childhood that

should have been free and full of hope. By presenting a picture that is so real and without embellishment, this film forces the audience to face the harsh realities faced by street children, arousing feelings of empathy and concern for the fate of those marginalized by society.



Figure 1. A street child who is glued (source :<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QkAjQFiz1YU>)



Figure 2. A street child drinking mixed alcohol (source :<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QkAjQFiz1YU>)



Figure 3.
A street child smoking
(source :<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QkAjQFiz1YU>)

- **Mother's Role:** In the film, the 'mother' character played by Christine Hakim is a symbol of strength and resilience. He represents the motherland which is a source of hope and strength for street children. This shows the importance of the role of mothers in Indonesian culture as pillars of the family and society. In the film "Daun Di Atas Bantal," the figure of Ibu Asih appears as a loving surrogate mother for street children who live without parents. Ibu Asih is a light amidst the harsh life on the streets of Yogyakarta. Even though she lives with limitations, she persistently and lovingly cares for children who have no shelter. Her role as a mother figure who is full of empathy and understanding becomes an emotional support for these children, giving them a sense of security and hope in the midst of difficulties. Ibu Asih, with her warmth and care, has become a symbol of the strength and sacrifice of a mother, who, even though she is not a biological mother, is still able to provide unconditional love to children who really need it.



Figure 4.
Ibu Asih who is working as a debt collector
(source :<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QkAjQFiz1YU>)



Figure 5. Ibu Asih with street children
(source :<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QkAjQFiz1YU>)



Figure 6.
Mrs. Asih is offering clothes
to be credited later
(source :<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QkAjQFiz1YU>)

- **Language and Dialect:** The use of Indonesian and local dialects in the film shows linguistic diversity in Indonesia. It also emphasizes the importance of language as part of cultural and social identity. In this film, Garin Nugroho combines the use of Javanese and Indonesian dialects as an integral part of the depiction of culture and characters in the story. Through authentic dialogue, the characters in this film often use Javanese in various dialects that reflect their social and geographical background. This provides depth and nuance in the interactions between characters, as well as adding authenticity to the depiction of daily life in Javanese society. By using Javanese and various dialects, this film is not only entertaining, but also provides a deeper view of the diversity of local cultures and identities in Indonesia.

2. **Opera Jawa**

The film “Opera Jawa” by Garin Nugroho is a unique and innovative work of art, which combines various elements of Indonesian culture. Most of the settings and attributes are presented through installation art, while the costumes and make-up depict daily life in the cultural context of Javanese society, especially in contemporary Yogyakarta and Solo. The cast in this film expresses most of their roles through theatrical movement dramatizations and dance choreography, with some parts featuring more natural movements. The dance choreography used includes traditional and contemporary Javanese dance, as well as a small number of Balinese dance elements (Belasunda, 2014: 112).

In the film “Opera Jawa,” there are many elements of Indonesian culture that are represented beautifully. Hari Suryanto (2021:114) in his article states that the film

“Opera Jawa” re-presents local cultural identification such as dance, fine arts, music, literary arts, clothing, and rituals in the context of Javanese society. This film work is very unique and interesting because it succeeds in re-narrating local culture through film art, creating a film that has a strong Indonesian appeal and can be used as a means of cultural diplomacy.

The traditional rituals featured in “Opera Jawa” provide insight into the cultural practices and beliefs of Javanese society, introducing audiences to the values and traditions that underlie their lives. All these elements together create a film that not only entertains but also educates, connecting viewers with the richness of Javanese culture.

Not only traditional rituals, but the use of traditional arts such as wayang orang and gamelan is the main highlight which reflects the richness of Indonesian cultural arts. Wayang orang is used as a medium to convey stories rich in mythology and philosophy, while gamelan provides a deep and atmospheric musical background. Apart from that, the costumes used in this film refer to Indonesian cultural heritage, especially in terms of their distinctive designs and motifs. Through the use of authentic local language, expressions and customs, “Opera Jawa” succeeds in delving deeply into and celebrating the richness of Indonesian culture, making it not only a work of cinematic art, but also a proud presentation of the nation’s cultural heritage.

The following is an analysis of the elements of Indonesian culture highlighted in the film:

- **Dramatic Arts and Dance:** “Opera Jawa” combines traditional Indonesian drama and dance arts, which not only displays story narratives but also communicates emotions and messag-

es through symbolic and meaningful movements. In this film, Garin Nugroho combines drama and dance in an innovative way. Dramatic art in this film does not only rely on verbal dialogue, but is also expressed through dramatic body movements and facial expressions, creating a strong theatrical feel. The actors use theatrical acting techniques to convey emotions and internal conflicts, which are enhanced by complex and meaningful dance choreography. The dance art in "Opera Jawa" embraces various styles, from traditional Javanese dance to contemporary dance, and includes Balinese dance elements that enrich the film's visuals and narrative. This dance choreography not only functions as an aesthetic element, but also as a narrative tool that helps express the story and themes of the film symbolically. This combination of drama and dance makes "Opera Jawa" a work that revives tradition with a modern twist, creating an immersive and unforgettable cinematic experience.



Figure 7.
Javanese dance shown in the film Opera Jawa
(source :<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fBmsqK4Y8a0&t=113s>)



Figure 8.
Dramatic Arts in the Javanese Opera film
(source :<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fBmsqK4Y8a0&t=113s>)



- **Traditional Clothing:** The use of traditional clothing in this film reflects the richness and diversity of Indonesian culture. Each costume is designed with details that show the cultural identity of a particular region. The use of traditional clothing is one of the elements that strengthens the character and nuances of the culture being promoted. Garin Nugroho carefully chose the beskap in

the form of a typical Yogyakarta black jacket worn by the male characters, giving an elegant and formal impression that reflects status and honor in Javanese society. In addition, the surjan clothes with floral motifs worn by several characters add a touch of beauty and joy, while showing their attachment to tradition and nature. The use of traditional clothing not only functions as costume, but also as a symbol of identity and cultural values that are highly respected in Javanese society. Through this choice of clothing, "Opera Jawa" succeeded in presenting visuals that are authentic and rich in meaning, strengthening the film's narrative with a touch of deep cultural aesthetics.



Figure 9. Javanese clothes in the form of black beskap, bendo and surjan with floral motifs (source :<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fBmsqK4Y8a0&t=113s>)

- **Music and Songs:** The illustrations of Javanese music and songs used in this film give a deep nuance to the story, while highlighting the beauty of traditional Indonesian music. Not only that, music and songs play a central role in enlivening the atmosphere and depicting the characters' emotions. Garin Nugroho in collaboration with maestro Rahayu Supanggah utilizes the richness of traditional Javanese music, especially gamelan, to create an atmospheric and immersive sound background. The gamelan's stomping rhythms and soft melodies accompany each scene, adding an emotional and spiritual dimension to the film's narrative. Apart from that, Javanese songs sung with feeling by the characters add beauty and depth to the story, conveying moral messages and unspoken inner reflections through dialogue. With a harmonious integration of music and songs, "Opera Jawa" not only enriches the viewing experience but also shows the richness of traditional Javanese music culture which is enchanting and timeless.



Figure 10. Javanese gamelan musicians and musical instruments (source :<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fBmsqK4Y8a0&t=113s>)

- **Indonesian Panorama:** Showing views that have typical Indonesian characteristics are also presented in this film, providing a background that enriches the narrative as well highlighting temple buildings in Indonesia. By utilizing the architectural and landscape beauty of Indonesia's temples to add a spectacular visual dimension to this film, the scenes set in temples not only offer images of temple buildings that are part of Indonesian culture, but also enrich the narrative by connecting the story with cultural heritage. and Javanese spirituality.



Figure 11. Scene with a view of the temple building in the background
(source :<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fBmsqK4Y8a0&t=113s>)

- **Visual Expression:** "Opera Jawa" is very rich in visual expression, where each scene is designed to provide a strong sensory experience to the audience, creating a meaningful visual sensation. The visual expression in this film is displayed through the use of rich

colors, aesthetic image composition, and dynamic camera movements. Each scene is carefully designed, utilizing light and shadow to emphasize emotion and narrative. Natural landscapes, traditional architecture and art installations are used creatively to create backdrops that are not only beautiful but also full of symbolism. The actors' dance movements and body expressions are integrated with other visual elements, creating harmony that enriches the story. Through this innovative and artistic visual approach, "Opera Jawa" not only presents a story, but also a visual experience that arouses and deepens the audience's understanding of the culture and emotions expressed in the film.



Figure 12. Visuals in the film Opera Jawa
(source :<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fBmsqK4Y8a0&t=113s>)

CONCLUSION

Garin Nugroho consistently uses the film medium to highlight and introduce the richness of Indonesian culture to the international stage. Through his works such as "Daun Di Atas Bantal" and "Opera Jawa," Nugroho combines elements of traditional culture with insightful narratives and stunning visuals, making them effective tools of cultural diplomacy. His films not only entertain, but also introduce Indonesian values, customs and art to global audiences, encouraging a wider appreciation of the nation's cultural heritage.

Garin succeeded in showing that arts and culture can be a strong bridge in diplomacy, promoting intercultural dialogue, and strengthening international relations through understanding and respect for differences. Through in-depth analysis of the use of language, symbolism, characterization and visuals in his films, this article emphasizes Garin Nugroho's important role as an ambassador of Indonesian culture in the world of global cinema.

Garin's films, such as "Daun Di Atas Bantal" and "Opera Jawa," not only show authentic and complex daily life, but also invite viewers to look deeper into the society around them.

Highlighting relevant and pressing social issues, showing how art can be used as a tool to convey important messages and trigger reflection. In "Daun Di Atas Bantal," Nugroho depicts the lives of street children with sharp realism and empathy, exposing another side of social reality that is often overlooked.

Meanwhile, "Opera Jawa" not only displays the beauty of traditional dance and music, but also raises universal themes such as love, conflict and spirituality which can be felt by audiences from various backgrounds. Thus, Nugroho's works not only

function as entertainment, but also as a medium for education and advocacy, introducing audiences to various aspects of Indonesian life and culture, and inviting them to reflect on existing social conditions. The combination of stunning aesthetics and strong narratives in his films proves that Garin Nugroho is a filmmaker who not only cares about visual beauty, but also the social and cultural impact of his works.

In this way, Garin Nugroho's films are not only the pride of Indonesian art, but also the main driving force in advancing Indonesian cultural diplomacy on the international stage.

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