

Rise Ahead of Regime Downfall: Historical Review of Indonesian Animation from 1966 to 1998

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Abstract: This study aims to explain the development of Indonesian animation during the New Order era (1966-1998). The regime that has been in power for 32 years, with all its political and economic policies has had a major impact on the development of Indonesian animation. Using the historical approach, this research tries to explore historical facts related to Indonesian animation through literature review and in-depth interviews with animation figures in the New Order era. The results show that Indonesian animation in the New Order era is dominated by animation for advertising, some animations for TV series, and no feature-length animations at all. The slow development of Indonesian animation in the New Order era is closely related to the political and economic policies of the regime, especially the policy relating to television which became the main medium for animation at the time. The Indonesian animation finally found its momentum of resurgence through the first major national event of comics and animation, titled "National Comic and Animation Weeks of 98" (PKAN 1998) in February 1998 in Jakarta. Two months before the New Order regime collapsed through the movement of Reformation in May 1998. The event was organized on the initiative of animators, studios, comic and animation communities, art and design colleges, and gained support from the New Order government through the Ministry of Education and Culture at the time. PKAN 98 is what can be claimed as the beginning of Indonesian animation resurrection formally. An irony, Indonesian animation precisely rise up at the end of the downfall of the New Order.

1 INTRODUCTION

Animation is a medium of art that in the context of the history of global animation has long-standing in Indonesia, namely through wayang as the origin of animation before the discovery of the film at the end of the 19th century by Lumiere Brothers (Koendoro, 1998). But long rooted does not mean Indonesian animation is growing rapidly. On the contrary, Indonesian animation is very slow progress, especially in the New Order era. Although by some figures, the 80s during the New Order period was often regarded as the beginning of the rise up of Indonesian animation, but the fact Indonesian animation never really rose that time, proved by the lack of animation produced and too dominant of imported animation. For 32 years no more than ten animated series titles were produced, not even a single feature-length animation produced during the New Order. Indonesia only produced the first feature-length animation in the Reformation era,

through animation entitled "Homeland" in 2004, with the quality still far below the feature-length animation of America or Japan. Animation during the New Order period was dominated by animation for advertising (Kurnianto, 2015).

Historically, attempts to make animated films have been done since 1955 (in the Old Order era). That is after President Soekarno sent a famous artist at the time, Dukut Hendronoto to learn animation directly to Disney Studios in the United States in 1955. Soekarno in 1956 even visited Disneyland, welcomed by Walt Disney himself. Soekarno then listed as the first president to visit Disneyland in a series of his trip to the United States. Dukut then much involved in the production of animation in the State Film Company (Perusahaan Film Negara/PFN) and Televisi Republik Indonesia (TVRI). The first Indonesian animation created by Dukut titled "Si Doel Memilih", a 2D short animation propaganda produced with PFN. PFN is a Dutch state-owned film company revitalized during Soekarno's reign.

While TVRI, newly founded in 1962 also on the initiative of Sukarno. After the fall of the Old Order regime, TVRI in the New Order era became one of the main propaganda media of the new government. New Order government policies related to television, both TVRI and private television influenced the development of Indonesian animation during the New Order period until the later era (reform era). This happens because television is the main medium of animation in that era, which in the context of the history of global animation is called the era of television (1958 - 1985) (Cavalier, 2011).

Based on the description above, it takes a historical review to see traces Indonesian Animation especially in the New Order. Why the New Order? The Indonesian animation period in the New Order era was chosen because there was no clear agreement on the period of Indonesian animation history. This happens because of the lack of study and research of Indonesian animation history. Gotot Prakosa is the first academician and practitioner of animation to ever do an animation history research for his thesis. In his thesis, Prakosa also uses the Indonesian political history to reverse the history of animation, entitled "Indonesian Animation in the Reformation era" (Prakosa, 2004). Therefore the periodization of Indonesian animation following the period in political history is used solely to facilitate the scope of the study as well as complement the previous research. In addition, the strong political and economic influence and the duration of the New Order regime in power also became an indispensable consideration in viewing the development of Indonesian animation.

So the outline of this paper will describe how the development of Indonesian animation in the New Order era. With three main points namely; 1) What is the political and economic policy of the New Order and its influence on the development of Indonesian animation? Especially related to the policy related to television as the main media of animation at the time. 2) What kind of animation form is prominent during the New Order created by animators or animation studios in Indonesia? Especially animated for television, both TVRI and Private TV. 3) What is the role of animators, animation studios, and animation communities in an effort to rip off Indonesian animation revival during the New Order?

2 METHODS

Historical studies, especially in arts and design are divided into two groups: (1) A historical overview of a particular work or design activity, (2) Review of design history (Sachari, 2005). Methods in historical research or called the historical method consists of four stages namely; Heuristics (data collection), source criticism, interpretation, and historiography. Collection of historical sources through interviews and literature studies. Interviews in this study as primary sources, and literature studies as secondary sources. As a preliminary research, the authors conducted in-depth interviews to figures who had been involved in the development of Indonesian animation, among others; Wagiono Sunarto, Gotot Prakosa, Amaro Katamsi, and Syah Inderaprana. Literature study is conducted on library archives, especially those in Sinematek Indonesia and National Archives. Analysis and presentation of data is done in diachronic or synchronous.

3 LITERATURE REVIEW

Indonesian animation research and studies is still very limited. The one who started the animated history research was Gotot Prakosa in 2004 through a thesis entitled: "Indonesian Animation in a Reform Era". The thesis focuses on the history of Indonesian animation of reformation era, a political history of Indonesia after the fall of the New Order regime in 1998 (Prakosa, 2004). Prakosa himself in the interview much regrets the lack of study and research and archiving data animasi Indonesia. For example, the first Indonesian animated film ever made by Dukut Hendronoto in 1955 until now is unknown and claimed to have disappeared (Prakosa, Sejarah Animasi Indonesia, 2014), (Prakosa, Film Pinggira; Antologi Film Pendek, Film Eksperimental, dan Film Dokumenter, 2008). Even Wagiono Sunarto as a direct student of Dukut Hendronoto stated never before seen the first animated Indonesian form (Sunarto, 2014).

In a previous study, in addition to finding the lack of research and archiving of animated films, the authors also found the fact that Indonesian animation fates similar to comics and films but not "lucky" both medium. New Order films faced ups and downs but never found a golden age in the 80s before the "coma" in the 90s. While the Indonesian comics had triumphed in the 70s and receded in the year 80 until finally "coma" in the 90s. The difference is that if

movies and comics have experienced a golden age in the 80s and 70s, animation has never enjoyed such periods in the New Order era, even until now (Kurnianto, 2015). In addition to dealing with government policy, this is related to the complexity of animated film production when compared to film or comic production. Animation requires far greater resources, especially the relatively expensive human and tech resources of the day. The discovery of digital technology for animation that ultimately helped the development of Indonesian animation to grow more rapidly in the Reform era (Prakosa, Animasi: Pengetahuan Dasar Film Animasi Indonesia, 2010) (Inderaprana, 2014).

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 The New Order's Political and Economic Policy on Television and Its Impact on Indonesian Animation

After the fall of the Old Order regime and changed into the New Order Regime at 1966, political and economic changes that have wide impact on the Indonesian people lives took place. The New Order government changed the political and economic direction of government to be pro-Western and more liberal. The focus of the New Order government was economic growth that supported by political stability which then eventually led to authoritarianism (Ricklefs, 2001). In this study, economic factor along with political and economic policies of the New Order government influenced cultural developments a lot, especially cinema or film (Nugroho & Herlina, 2014). In the reign of the New Order the film industry never evolved into important and respected industry because of the regime's cynical view against the role of film in country development (Heryanto, 2015). The same cynical view also applies to animation, a more complex and expensive medium when compared to films at that time. Moreover, government focus at that time was on the natural resource-based and agricultural industries sector. So, it is not surprising that in the reign of the New Order, no more than 10 titles of television animation series ever produced and never produce animated movies even once. The animations produced in this era are mostly animated for Ads. It cannot be separated from the New Order policy that was set TVRI as the only national television at the time. As the only national television station,

government policy relating to TVRI has been shaped the development of animation as one of the show's content. The New Order's policy for television station made it as a mouthpiece of government development propaganda and its status as a state television. This policy generates strong government control over the content of the show (Armando, 2016). The option to made TVRI as a government-controlled broadcasting system and not a private or public broadcasting agency, according to Armando is a common option in many countries in the third world. But the choice has serious consequences for animation. In the midst of government efforts to build economic growth supported by political stability, the government has very strict control over the content or programs of TVRI. Programs or television programs must, of course, be aligned with government programs. Consequently, the creativity related to the program content becomes very limited. Especially with the lack of financial support for TVRI.

Therefore, as TVRI efforts to obtain additional funds, in the 1970s TVRI create a special program called "*Mana Suka Siaran Niaga*". This program triggers animation production specifically for advertising. Anima Indah animation studio that is considered as the first animation studio in Indonesia at that time produced many animations for advertisement. Anima Indah was founded in 1972 in Jakarta by an American named Lateef Keele. But the advertising phenomenon in TVRI did not last long. That is after the government decided to ban advertising on TVRI because it is considered to trigger consumptive culture and social inequality in Indonesia. This move was taken by Presidential Decree on April 1, 1981 through the Decree of the Minister of Information (Armando, 2016). The removal of ads on TVRI automatically removes one of the TVRI funds and affects the entire system within its ad network and its advertisers. Some animation studios that originally relied on ad production eventually died, including Studio Anima Indah (Prakosa, Animasi: Pengetahuan Dasar Film Animasi Indonesia, 2010). With the expensive tools and the lack of human resources for animation, TVRI subsequently took a brisk walk by importing animated films especially from the United States to fill the vacant in animated series content especially for the children segment. The funding issue is also a constraint in the famous *Si Unyil* series production during the New Order era. Where originally PPFN with Soeryadi (Pak Raden) as the initiator, planned to make the *Si Unyil* series in animation form in 80s.

But because of lack of the cost, *Si Unyil* produced into puppet animated series (Sunarto, 2014).

By the 90s, after several years of constraints, local entrepreneurs with special access to President Suharto, who had the highest authority in making the decision, finally established the first private television station in Indonesia, RCTI (*Rajawali Citra Televisi Indonesia*) in 1987. Followed then in 1990, SCTV (*Surya Citra Televisi*) was established, and TPI (*Televisi Pendidikan Indonesia*) as well. The birth of this private television according to Armando is without a blueprint. Because the birth of Indonesia's first private television is not the result of mature government planning. As a result, there is a lot of overlapping regulation surrounding broadcasting media due to the seizure of influence and government support (Armando, 2016) (Katamsi, 2014). But the presence of private television re-grows the passion of television advertising that had stopped almost 10 years earlier. According to Dwi Koendoro the birth of private television encourages the birth of animation companies as well, especially for the makers of advertising film, in addition to event bumper, graphic layout and the possibility of making animated series. However, the presence of private television does not provide a wide opportunity for Indonesian animation to compete with imported animation (Koendoro, 1998). Private television policy related to local content and overlapping government regulation on private television, actually contributes bigger portions for imported animations especially animation from Japan, after dominated by animation from United States previously in TVRI era.

4.2 Indonesian Studio and Animation Production in the New Order Period

In the reign of the New Order, TVRI was the only TV station in Indonesia until the national private television came up in 1987. TVRI has also started broadcasting animated films created by Walt Disney and Hanna-Barbera circa 1970 (Prakosa, Animasi: Pengetahuan Dasar Film Animasi Indonesia, 2010). At the same time, there was also came up a new policy on TV commercial serving in TVRI which bring "*Mana Suka Siaran Niaga*" program up. That's when the animated TVC was born in Indonesia that gives a real picture of the state of the animated film industry that cannot be separated from the growth of television. Animation in TVC form became vibrant and succeed to spur economic income and growth both TVRI and various parties that involved in the

TVC manufacture, including some animation studios. *Anima Indah* animation studio that is considered as the first animation studio in Indonesia which at that time produced a lot of TVC animation is one of them. Anima Indah was established in 1972 in Jakarta founded by an American named Lateef Keele. Anima Indah is among the pioneers of animation in Indonesia as it sent their crew to England, Japan, America and others (Sunarto, 2014). The Animator consist of; Denny Djunaid, Wagiono, Darmono Sudarsono, Purnomo Adi, and Partono. After Anima Indah broke up, all crew are continued their profession in the animation world. Denny Djunaed is like followed Dukut Hendronoto footsteps, he had the opportunity to visit Disney Studios in Burbark California, United States. As he returns to Indonesia, he produced animated cartoon series "*Putra Angkasa*" together with Wagiono, as it sponsored by "*Yayasan Kesejahteraan Anak Indonesia (YKAI)*". But the series stopped in two episodes due to funding constraints (Koendoro, 1998).

A private television called RCTI was established in 1987. SCTV, and TPI, others private TV station followed later in 1990. The presence of private television re-grows the passion of TVC that had stopped for almost 10 years. The birth of private television according to Dwi Koendoro encourages the birth of animation companies, especially for TVC making, in addition to event bumper, graphic layout and the possibility to make animated series. The animation after the birth of a private television station was considered astonishing by Koendoro, who saw a lot of Indonesian potential artists in animation performance. What is meant by Koendoro is primarily digital animation has begun to grow since the mid-90s (Koendoro, 1998). That animated studios include *Yasawirya Tama Cipta* (YTC) by Youk Tanzil, Jatayu Cakrawala led by Harry Simon, and Media Animasindo by Cici and Daniel Harjanto. Media Animasindo as Proanimasindo partner, then worked on hand drawing combined with computer animated series titled "*Satria Nusantara*" that played on TPI. Beside that there are Avigra and Spectagraphic studio that also located in Jakarta. While in Surabaya also established PT Index that produces the counseling film that won the FFI trophy in 1994. Even PT Index, which has only 10 members, was able to create the first 3D animated computer series titled "*Hela Helli Hello*" (Koendoro, 1998). Some other studios include Juwita Indah, Red Rocket Animation Studio in Bandung, and Bening Studio in Yogyakarta.

4.3 Animator, Community, and Indonesian Animation Festival in the New Order Era

According to Gatot Prakosa in the 70s many films using 8mm celluloid cameras, rampant use of cameras make the film as a trigger film and animation festivals. In 1973 Mini Film Festival initiated by the Jakarta Arts Council (DKJ) came up. From this festival comes the name of Dwi Koendoro through his short animation entitled "Stone" (Prakosa, Film Pinggira; Antologi Film Pendek, Film Eksperimental, dan Film Dokumenter, 2008). Dwi Koendoro is a cartoonist who learns animation by self-taught. Thus in the 70s in addition to TVC animation, it began to appear short animations that are more experimental for the needs of film and animation festivals. Dwi Koendoro is one of Indonesia's premier animation pioneers, along with Mulyono, Daniel Harjanto, Wagiono, Denny Djuaned and Johny Jauhari pioneered the founding of Indonesia's first animation association named ANIMA (Association of Indonesian Animation) in 1993 (Koendoro, 1998) (Katamsi, 2014). Experimental animations also appeared at 80s especially made by IKJ students including Gotot Prakosa in it. The animations are able to penetrate international animation festivals in several countries from Germany, Netherlands, France, to Japan. Those short animation has succeeded in raising the image of Indonesian animation globally, something that is difficult to do by animation TVC at that time.

Ahead of the fall of the New Order in the midst of the economic crisis that struck Indonesia as well as Asian countries, just two months before the big demonstration known as the May 1998 Reform Movement, there was National Comics and Animation Week 98 (PKAN 1998). The first major event of Indonesian comic and animation was successfully held from 6 to 12 February 1998 in Jakarta. The event brought together academics, practitioners, enthusiast, and various comic and animation communities of Indonesia and gained the support of the New Order government through the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia at the time. This grand event was declared by Dwi Koendoro as an animated milestone of Indonesia (Koendoro, 1998). Thus PKAN 1998 can be considered as the beginning of the awakening animasi Indonesia, which ironically occurred at the end of the fall of power of the New Order regime.

5 CONCLUSIONS

The development of Indonesian animation cannot be separated from the context of Indonesian political history. The New Order's political era, which had been in power for 32 years, proved to have a lot of influence on the development of animation in Indonesia, especially the policy related to television as the main medium of animation at that time. As a developing country, animation as a complex and expensive art medium at the time, requires full governmental sustainability in support of its development. The focus of the New Order government on economic growth by relying on natural resource-based industries and agriculture, which is sustained by political stability ultimately leads to authoritarianism. On that basis the New Order government made television as a medium of political propaganda with tight control of the state. Impact, high cost animation, great creativity space, as well as adequate resources are in a difficult position. The New Order's cynical view of animation puts it in an unimportant position in the government's "development" programs. Thus was born a variety of policies that counterproductive to the development of Indonesian animation. New Order government policies on TVRI and the policy towards the birth of private television overlapping with no blueprint actually hampered the development of Indonesian animation. For 32 years, Indonesian animation has been dominated by ads animation, some serial animation productions, and not even a single feature-length animation produced. Indonesian Animation eventually lost in competition with imported animation from the United States and Japan. So amidst the impartiality of the New Order government, the rise of Indonesian animation was finally initiated by individuals or animation communities amid growing art and design education in Indonesia at that time. The Indonesian animation finally found the momentum of its formal awakening through the first major national event of comics and animation, titled "National Comic and Animation Week of 98" (PKAN 98) in February 1998 in Jakarta, two months before the fall of the New Order government in May 1998 by the reform movement pioneered by college students. PKAN 98 is what can be formally claimed to be the beginning of the awakening of Indonesian animation. Events organized on the initiative of animators, studios, comic and animation communities, as well as several colleges of Art/Design is actually received support from the government of the New Order through the Ministry of Education and Culture at the

time. Being an irony, Indonesian animation actually rose at the end of the fall of New Order.

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