

An Analysis of Birds of Prey Movie Viewed from Its Cultural Values and its Contribution to Cross Cultural Understanding

Suprihati Ningsih¹, Rahmawati Sukmaningrum², Ajeng Setyorini³

^{1,2,3}Universitas PGRI Semarang, Indonesia

*suprihati37@gmail.com

Abstract

This study was conducted to analyze cultural values found in Birds of Prey movie and its contribution to Cross Cultural Understanding Teaching. The objectives of the study were (1) to know the implication of cultural values found in Birds of Prey movie based on iceberg analogy. (2) To find out the contribution of Birds of Prey movie to cross-cultural understanding. The methodology of this research was descriptive qualitative research. The main sources of this research were Birds of Prey movie and the script of Birds of Prey movie. The writer used some steps in analyzing the data. First, analyzing words/sentences indicate the cultural values in the script of the movie. Second, categorizing the cultural values based on the elements of culture. Third, finding the correlation of cultural values in Birds of Prey movie to Cross Cultural Understanding. Fourth, elaborating the contribution of cultural values to Cross Cultural Understanding based on theoretical review and personal judgment. Fifth, writing the result. The last, Making conclusions and suggestions. In the process of analysis, the writer found several cultural values which covered symbols, language, food, clothing, beliefs, attitudes, values, and artifacts. This movie teaches us about social life, how to become a tough woman, effort and hard work, solidarity, and emancipation of women where women are usually underestimated and labeled as weak humans. The contribution of this movie to cross cultural understanding teaching is giving information about other countries' cultures and increasing knowledge. Movie can be an alternative media to cross cultural understanding teaching. Therefore, it is suggested that the teacher can use movies as media in teaching Cross Cultural Understanding in order to make students interested in learning about the culture.

Keywords: Cultural values, Birds of Prey, Cross Cultural Understanding

Introduction

Language Every person who lives in society has various kinds of characteristics. The differences in these characteristics can create something new that becomes habits and over time become a culture. Spencer-Oatey (2008:3) claims that culture is a fuzzy set of basic assumptions and values, the orientation of life, belief, policies, procedure, and behavioral conventions that are shared by a group of people, and the influence (but do not determine) each member's behavior and his/her interpretations of the 'meaning' of other people behavior.

Cultural differences can cause problems in social interaction because the different patterns of verbal and non-verbal communication may create serious errors and lead to misinterpretation, misunderstanding, and confusion (Reisinger and Turner, 2003:21). So, cultural understanding is needed in communication.

A movie is a medium of communication that is formed by combining two senses, sight, and hearing, which have a theme of a story that reveals many social realities. According to Christine Roell (2010:1) says that films are a great medium to use not only to practice English but the movie contains behavior, culture, values, and tradition. Based on the statement above it can conclude that movies can be useful for intercultural learning. A movie can create relaxing situations in the classroom and increase students' interest in learning culture.

Based on the description above, the writer chose a Hollywood movie entitled “Birds of Prey” for analysis. Birds of Prey is a 2020 movie, directed by Cathy Yan, is one of the action, adventure, and comedy movies that DC fans are looking forward to after previously releasing Suicide Squad in 2016 which still stars Margot Robbie as Harley Quinn as the main character. This film tells the story of 4 hero characters to save a young girl named Cassandra Cain from the figure of the crime lord known as Black Mask or Roman Sionis.

Birds of Prey is an interesting movie because the story of Harley Quinn is different from the usual DC Films. Birds of Prey movie emphasizes the complexity that only Harley Quinn can have. In this movie, the character Harley is presented in a different way, which makes her a troublemaker trying to do good. In this movie, DC Films also strengthens the girl power element through the presence of Batgirl, Cassandra Cain. The female characters in the Birds of Prey movie each have unique abilities and have their attractive side. Through differences in different life backgrounds, it will create a different culture. This movie can be used as a reference for learning cross-cultural understanding. Through Birds of Prey movie, Cathy Yan delivered an important message to women that with strength and self-confidence, they can break the notion that without the help of men, women cannot progress and become great. As of the time the final project was written, birds of Prey films had generated an estimated \$205 million at the box office. It proved that this film is quite popular among the audience.

Literature Review

1.1 Culture

1. Definition of culture

Spencer (2008:3) also states that culture is a fuzzy set of basic assumption and values, orientation of life, belief, policies, procedure and behavioral conventions that are shared by a group of people and the influence (but do not determine) each member's behavior and his/her interpretations of the ‘meaning’ of other people behavior.

Based on the definitions above, the writer concluded that culture is part of human life which is complex that includes values, orientation to life, beliefs, and behavior which is passed down from generation to generation. Every group in society has different culture from each other, they use culture to distinguish one another.

2. Elements of culture

In 1976, Edward T-hall developed the iceberg analogy of culture. If the culture of a society was the iceberg, Hall reasoned, than there are some aspects visible, above the water, but there is a larger portion hidden beneath the surface. He put forward that

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culture has two components and that only about 10% of culture (external or surface culture) is easily visible; the majority, or 90% of culture (internal or deep culture) is hidden below the surface. Visible culture consists of language, food, and clothing. Then, the invisible culture such as communication style, beliefs, attitudes, assumptions, values, and perceptions.

a. Symbols

Culturally, a symbol is an object, word, or action that represents a commodity differently without a natural relationship. Symbols can be objects, images, sounds, colors to facial expressions.

b. Language

Language is a communication system consisting of a series of sounds and written symbols that people in a country or region use to speak or write.

The importance of language in communication can be seen from the interaction between people who have different cultures.

c. Food

Food is frequently used as a means of their cultural identity. A person chooses food according to the environment, daily habits, education, customs to religion.

d. Clothing

Clothing is used to express ourselves through the clothes and accessories we decide to wear. Through the clothes we wear, we will provide information about social values, including their social status. Clothing also can be used as an identity of a country.

e. Communication style

Everyone has a different style of communication, which can be seen from the way they interact and exchange information with others. According to psychologist Edmund J. Bourne Ph.D. and his book titled *The Anxiety and Phobia Workbook*, there are five different types of communication styles:

1) Assertive communication style

Assertive communication is regarded as the most effective form of communication. The assertive communication style displays communication that is open but not overbearing.

2) Aggressive communication style

Individuals with an aggressive communication style are sarcastic and critical and always display disrespectful behavior towards others.

3) Passive-Aggressive Communication Style

Passive-aggressive communication is a style of communication in which someone appears passive on the surface but is indirectly aggressive. Passive-aggressive communicators are aware of their needs but sometimes find it difficult to express them.

4) Submissive communication style

Submissive communicators are people who are obedient and avoid conflict. This type of communicator tends to believe that the needs of others are more important than their own and feel as though the opinions of others are more intelligent and valid than theirs.

5) Manipulative Communication Style

Individuals with a manipulative communication style will always do whatever it takes to gain personal advantages in every situation. Such people are

always adept at influencing or controlling others. There are ulterior motives in the words they speak, which are completely unaware of others.

f. Beliefs

Cultural beliefs are assumptions that are considered true and not accepted by society. Beliefs stem from the experiences of ancient people which developed very slowly over decades and centuries. Cultural beliefs are assumed to be true without the need for further justification because belief change takes time and tends to develop over time.

g. Attitudes

Attitude is a human way of thinking about something that usually reflects that person's behavior. The formation of attitudes depends on what kind of parenting you received in your life. Good parenting will create a positive attitude as well.

h. Values

Values are cultural standards for distinguishing what is good and just in society. According to Haralambos (2000), "A value is a belief that something is good and desirable". Every human being has different cultural values. These differences can come from ethnic and social backgrounds such as age, gender, profession, and beliefs. So differences in cultural values will affect how we treat others and want others to treat us.

i. Perception

Culture has a major influence on a person's perspective and perception of what he sees, feels, and experiences. Understanding perception in other areas will help people to avoid misinterpretation. One example of perception is belching while eating. In the West in general, as well as in most parts of Indonesia, belching during or after eating is considered impolite behavior, while in Arabia, China, Japan, and Fiji, belching is encouraged because it signifies acceptance of food and satisfaction.

j. Tradition

Traditions can be in the form of daily habits or behaviors that are passed down from generation to generation.

k. Assumption

Cultural assumptions determine what is normal or acceptable in any social situation. Assumptions can help facilitate communication within a culture without having to explain in detail because people share accepted norms that assure us that messages are understood in terms of what was intended in communication.

l. Artifact

Artifacts are unique human-made objects that have significant meaning and are the result of observable cultural activities. Artifacts from the past can be in the form of weapons, arrowheads, boomerangs, bronze, coins, or certain statue. One of today's artifacts that can be identified in the future is a smartphone.

Movie

Vassilion (2006: 2) utters that film is moving picture defined as: (1) a sequence of photographs projected onto a screen with sufficient rapidity as to create the illusion of motion and continuity or (2) a form of entertainment that enacts a story by a sequence of images giving the illusion of continuous movement.

Birds of Prey Movie

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Birds of Prey is a 2020 movie, directed by Cathy Yan, is one of the action, adventure, and comedy movies that DC fans are looking forward to after previously releasing Suicide Squad in 2016 which still stars Margot Robbie as Harley Quinn as the main character. This film tells the story of 4 hero characters played by Margot Robbie as Harley Quinn, Mary Elizabeth Winstead as Helena Bertinelli / Huntress, Jurnee Smollett-Bell as Dinah Lance / Black Canary, and Rosie Perez as Renee Montoya, to save a young girl named Cassandra Cain (Ella Jay Basco) from the figure of the crime lord known as Black Mask (Ewan McGregor).

Cross Cultural Understanding

Turner (2003:13), says that “Cross Cultural Understanding is some cultural different that are reflected in food, music, artifact or social behavior, cultural different such as kinship system, social organizations and many day to day to practices are hidden deeply in culture and require total immersion in culture.

Method

The writer used descriptive qualitative method to analyze the data in this study. Based on Cohen (2007:461) says that “Qualitative data analysis involves organizing accounting for and explaining the data; in short, making sense of data in terms of the participants definitions of the situation, nothing patterns, themes, categories, and regularities.”

A research design is the setting of conditions for collecting and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in procedure. In fact, the research design is the conceptual structure within which research is conducted; it constitutes the blueprint for the data collection, measurement, and analysis of data. As such design includes an outline of what the researcher will do from writing the hypothesis and its operational implications to the final analysis of data (Khotari, 2004:31).

Therefore, descriptive qualitative method was selected by the writer because the method describes, classifies, and analyzes the data that was conducted to find out the cultural values of Birds of Prey movie.

The object of this study were the movie entitled, Birds of Prey. The duration of the movie is 1 hour and 49 minutes. The writer analyzed the movie from the beginning until the end. The reason why the writer used Birds of Prey movie as an object of the study is that this movie is popular and has a lot of cultures that come from different characters.

The writer used movie script in which to analyze cultural values in Birds of Prey movie. The data were collected by observing the Birds of Prey movie to find appropriate information. The writer downloaded the movie and script of the movie from the internet and then identified the words/sentences that indicate cultural values.

Finding and Discussion

The cultural values found in Birds of Prey movie

Some of the cultural elements contained in Birds of Prey movie are:

a. Symbols

Culturally, a symbol is an object, word, or action that represents a commodity differently without a natural relationship. Symbols can be objects, images, sounds,

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colors to facial expressions. One of the most common cultural symbols is the picture. In this study, the writer found two symbols which are the light bulb and the middle finger up.

The light bulb is a popular symbol. The light bulb is used as a motif and is usually used to represent the origin of a bright idea, insight, or sudden flash of understanding on how to reach something in a new or different way.

Minutes 00:06:06 – 00:06:09 shows that the light bulb symbol represents Harley Quinn got the best idea when she thought of a way to show everyone that she and Joker had broken up.

Conversation: (00:06:02 – 00:06:09)

["Joke's On You" playing]

[groans softly] And luckily for me, I have all my best ideas drunk.

I have the best idea!

The second symbol is raising the middle finger. In Western culture, showing the middle finger has become a vulgar gesture that incites anger or rebellion. The middle finger represents an obscene gesture in various cultures and is often used for offensive or humorous effects. Over time, showing the middle finger is now often used to express displeasure, anger, joy, or protest.

In the scene minutes 00:03:01 - 00:03:03, Harley Quinn holds up her two middle fingers in front of her friends with the intention of showing excitement that she will show the world about the new Harley Quinn. So that he can be free out there without protection from his ex-boyfriend, the Joker.

Conversation: (00:03:01 - 00:03:03)

[Harley] It was time for Gotham to meet the new Harley Quinn, so I really put myself out there.

b. Language

Language is an important component of a person's identity. Language relates fundamentally in an effort to understand values, beliefs, and abstract things related to culture. The existence of language will help someone in communicating with others. In Birds of Prey movie, the language used throughout the movie uses English. In this movie, the characters speak English and often use slang words.

Conversation: (00:12:26 - 00:12:29)

[Harley] Not too much, Sal. I wanna taste the cheese.

c. Food

Culture determines how food is prepared, cooked, presented, and consumed. For example, American people eat beef and often eat fast food like burger and sandwich. Food is very closely related to socio-cultural aspects. This can be seen in the way of

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choosing food. A person chooses food according to the environment, daily habits, education, customs to religion.

Minutes 00:12:34 - 00:12:38, Harley Quinn really loves egg sandwich. She ordered Sal to make an egg sandwich for her with some requests. She is happy with the perfect egg sandwich as a way to start her new life.

Conversation: 00:12:13 – 00:12:40

Egg, bacon, American cheese.

Soft, toasted buttered roll.

Just a dash of hot sauce.

Not too much, Sal.

I wanna taste the cheese.

What a way to start my new life.

[sighs happily] With the perfect egg sandwich.

Mmm!

According to Savic (2016:272) adapted from Sargent (1968:150) states drinking alcohol as a symbol of mateship and social solidarity. In any culture, when people discuss or get together, they drink beer. It means the cultural aspect of food and eating make it a daily habit in their life.

In the scene minutes 00:08:37 - 00:08:40, people are together and eating some food. There are a few alcoholic drinks on the table to top it off. This proves that drinking alcohol has become a habit in American life.

Conversation: (00:08:37 - 00:08:40)

Look at this. Is it Halloween? Hey. How you doing?

d. Clothing

Clothes are a symbol of personal identity. People can judge others by their appearance from how people get dressed. American has many clothes which inform someone about where people come from and how that culture is.

Based on Birds of Prey movie, minutes 00:16:29 - 00:16:32 the writer found the clothes Harley Quinn always wears are eye-catching as when she wears a gold jumpsuit over a pink sports bra. Typically, female superheroes tend to have clothing that is more sexual and impractical. However, the Harley Quinn character expresses her chaotic personality through color, shine, and eccentric fashion styles.

Conversation: (00:16:29 - 00:16:32)

[Harley] That wasn't me.

[the man] But you dared him to do it.

e. Beliefs

Beliefs or Religion is an aspect of culture that has many things in affect people's lives. Religion consists of belief in a supernatural power or great power which is considered to be the creator and sustainer of the entire universe. One's belief or religion is not taboo. Everyone has the right to believe in God. America is a country where the majority of people are Christians. In the Birds of Prey movie, the writer found several scenes where the characters believe in God.

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Minutes 00:09:33 - 00:09:35, when Montoya was investigating a murder case, he suddenly heard an explosion from outside. It is an explosion from a toxic industrial processing plant that was blown up by Harley Quinn. Montoya was shocked and said "Jesus Christ". This proves that Montoya believes in Jesus Christ as God.

Conversation: (00:09:33 – 00:09:44)

[explosion]

[Montoya] Jesus Christ.

This is Montoya. What the hell was that?

[alarm blaring]

[indistinct shouting]

[Munroe] Shit.

[Montoya] Wow.

Minutes 01:15:48 - 01:15:51 shows when Lance and Zsasz come together to the Booby Trap at the amusement mile to find Harley and Cain. By then, Cain had been locked and taped in the toilet by Harley. But Lance managed to find Cain and thanked God because Cain was still fine. Then lance helped him remove the tape.

Conversation: (01:15:36 - 01:15:57)

No fair.

Was that really necessary?

You don't know her like I do.

[Lance] Cass? [muffled shouting] Oh, thank God.

I'm gonna get you outta here.

Did she really tape you - to a damn toilet?

- Mmm-hmm.

f. Attitudes

Attitude is a human way of thinking about something that usually reflects that person's behavior. Attitude can mean a lot of things. It can be an expression of favor or disfavor towards another person, an evaluation of an object or situation with a degree of positivity or negativity, or your approach to anything based on your set of rules and principles.

In minutes 01:26:55 - 01:26:57, Bertinelli talks to Cain to keep Cain calm and not afraid to make him feel better. This shows an attitude of sympathy and tolerance truly. culture like this is often found, and this is the natural attitude of humans as social beings.

Conversation: (01:26:45 - 01:26:57)

[Helena] Come on. Come on. It's okay.

Come on.

You shouldn't have to see this.

Here, hold on to this for me, okay?

That's all you think about.

[Helena] Just close your eyes and hold it tight. Okay?

[breathing heavily]

Here. Get down. Come on. You'll be safe.

g. Values

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Values are cultural standards for distinguishing what is good and just in society. Every human being has different cultural values. The differences in cultural values will affect how we treat others and want others to treat us.

Birds of Prey contains many empowering values regarding the solidarity and emancipation of women where women are usually underestimated and labeled as weak humans, in this film the figure of a woman becomes the main point of the strong side. This solidarity is proven by the collaboration between the heroines who previously did not know each other, in the end, they had to work together to protect a little diamond pickpocket girl named Cain from Sionis violence. Though they don't always work together, there are many instances where each woman saves the other, with a lack of a male savior.

In minutes 00:29:38 - 00:29:41, Black Canary prevented Quinn from being kidnapped while drunk in his post-breakup fallout. This proves that in this film women's solidarity is highly displayed.

Conversation: (00:29:41 - 00:30:02)

Hey, get the door, man.

I got her, I got her.

There we go.

[Harley] Wait.

Isn't that Joker's girl?

Not anymore.

[Lance] Got room for one more?

Hey.

[all grunting]

[Harley] Huh? I don't need your help. I got this.

[Lance] You got this? You sure about that?

h. Artifact

Artifact is archaeological objects or historical remains, that is, all objects made or modified by humans that can be moved. Cultural artifacts are important to reveal information about the cultural practices of that time. In general, cultural artifacts can be any past or present object that can be used to identify a cultural group. In the Birds of Prey movie, the writer finds artifacts in the form of crossbows and grenades.

In minutes 00:09:01 - 00:09:04, the writer found a crossbow. A crossbow is a weapon that includes arrows being fired. Crossbows played an important role in warfare in North Africa, Europe, and Asia. This weapon was developed in Ancient Greece and East Asia with Ancient China as the main source of archaeological evidence. In the Birds of Prey movie, Bertinelli or Huntress uses a crossbow to kill his enemies to avenge his family.

Conversation: (00:09:01 - 00:09:19)

[Helena] Do you know who I am?

[Rossi] You fucking bitch.

[Rossi choking]

[Rossi exhales] And this arrow through his throat...

The writer also found an artifact in minutes 01:23:57 - 01:23:59 in the form of a grenade. Grenades are explosive weapons usually thrown by the hand, hence they are

also called hand grenades. Hand grenades, pineapple grenades, or hand grenades are hand-held and throw bombs. Grenades were often used in warfare in the past. in the Birds of Prey movie, Cassandra Cain found a grenade in the box and used it against the Sionis.

Conversation: (01:23:57 - 01:23:59)

[Cain] Dope

1.2 The Contribution to Cross Cultural Understanding teaching

Teaching and learning Cross Cultural Understanding is needed in global era. Cross Cultural Understanding contains the various cultures in the world. Through Cross Cultural Understanding teaching, we can know and understand the condition of our country and its society. Students can have a chance to learn and to understand how cross cultural exists in real life. It will make students easier to find phenomena or issues that occur. The writer used movie as media because movie is enjoyable. By watching a movie, students can analyze the cultures based on the scenes in the movie. Through movies, students also have a chance to improve their ability in critical thinking toward cases. In the cases that occur in the movie, students get knowledge about new cultures and they can learn about different cultures in the world. The writer realized that the contributions of using the “Birds of Prey” movie cannot be reached well if the method used in teaching Cross Cultural Understanding is not prepared well. Cross Cultural Understanding is one of the subject matters that must be taken in English department. In order for the students to understand cross cultural understanding and its elements the method used is by doing the analysis of the movies.

The contribution that can be given to teaching cross cultural understanding are; the movie which is analyzed can be designed as the assignment of the students, based on the research finding there are eight cultural values that have been found in Birds of Prey movie so it is effective to give cross cultural understanding material deeply; and the last is the references that the writer used in this research can be used as an additional reference to cross cultural understanding teaching.

Based on the research finding the cultural values that the writer found in Birds of Prey movie are various. There are many cultures that are found in the movie. The lecture can take Birds of Prey movie as a media in giving assessment to students. Learning Cross cultural Understanding is not only through analyzing videos or books but also can through movies. It is more effective because the students will not be bored to just analyze but they also can watch the movie. So, it will make the students more interested to learn cross cultural understanding.

Conclusion

Based on the discussion above, we may come to the conclusion. Based on research findings and discussion, the objectives of the study were, (1) To know the implication of cultural values found in Birds of Prey movie based on iceberg analogy, (2) To find out the contribution of Birds of Prey movie to cross-cultural understanding.

The writer provides conclusions from all the results of the movie analysis that has been carried out. Birds of Prey movie has cultural values according to what the writer has analyzed. These cultural values contain Western culture. There are eight cultural values contained in the Birds of Prey movie. Based on the analysis, the writer found symbols, language, food,

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clothing, beliefs, attitudes, values, and artifacts. These cultural values show how their culture looks and becomes an identity of a person.

The contribution of Birds of Prey movie based on the results of the analysis is that it can be used to provide information to students and teachers about other countries' cultures, and increase knowledge. Through Birds of Prey movie, the writer wants to give new media in Cross Cultural Understanding teaching. The lecturer can use this movie as teaching material when teaching students in the class. By using a movie, the student will be more interested in learning cross cultural understanding.

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