

The Birth of Nationalism from Rural Landscape

An Analysis of News Documentary Films in Indonesia 1942-1945

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Abstract – This paper aims to explore the significance of portraying space in narrating the independence war struggle of Indonesians people from the perspectives of film studies. In the absence of war documentaries, Japanese made newsreels produced by Nippon Eigasha Djawa or Japan Motion Picture Indonesian branch can present alternative images to discuss the war struggle. When filming the people, attention was also given to the portrayals of the space, which tend to receives less sufficient attention from the public. Nonetheless, it plays a vital role in offering a fresh viewpoint on how rural areas transform into battlefields. The study employs analysis of both visual and textual texts inside the news-documentary films to discuss three points pertaining to rural landscapes: (1) the representations of space in the films (2) the forms of interaction between space and society, and (3) the forms of activities taking place in the space in regards to independent struggle and nation founding.

Keywords: *landscape, nationalism, news-documentary, rural space.*



I. INTRODUCTION

During the Dutch colonialization in Indonesia, modernization activities were highly concentrated on urban areas, resulting in clear boundaries between modern and rural spaces. Fast development and construction were centralized in the city of Batavia, which is now Jakarta, as depicted in Indonesian newsreels *Nieuws uit Indonesië: markt in Batavia* and *Tandjong priok in de maasbruggen* showing Tanjung Priok's port construction, a large number of colonial government buildings, modern homes, and automobiles. While lives in a village or rural area seem to be associated with backwardness, disorderly behavior, and unsanitary living conditions, like in its educational propaganda films for Javanese, people in the village had poor sanitation conditions, which put them at high risk of contracting worm and bacterial related diseases. Looking at the disparity, a study said that Dutch modernization brought about an increase in individualism and social class division (Colombijn & Coté, 2015), which deteriorated the spirit of unity, national identity, and nationalism. This situation changed during the

Japanese occupation period as it is said, 'Japan's aim is purely altruistic which is to establish an order of justice, racial equality, and friendly intercourse among the free people in Asia' (Berreman, 1944). Their mission is to achieve equal development in all areas and a unified society regardless of their backgrounds. Villages gradually saw a shift in the development and progress previously concentrated in cities and urban landscapes. However, this topic is not well-researched due to limited access to visual records. Whereas, wartime media in Japan and the colonies paid attention to rural areas and marginalized community as sources of nationalism and national identity.



Fig.1. The Representations of City Scapes and Urban Areas During Dutch Colonial Era
Source: NV Nederlandsch Indische Film Maatschapij (1937)

By the commencement of film law in 1938 by their Home Ministry, Japan sought to maximize the use of films as an instrument of nation-building, which again propagated equality among people or ethnic groups and eliminated materialistic elements from the screen. Rather than showcasing the life of a metropolitan city, films from that period put forward narratives about Japanese traditional village life. One example is *Sanshiro Sugata*, a drama film in 1943 by Akira Kurosawa, which narrates the main character's journey to become a judo warrior. Similar modest rural lifestyles are also promoted in the news documentary films featuring the activities of Japanese students or military soldiers during the war preparation. The presence of rural in Japanese news documentary films was celebrated as a place where national consciousness was found and developed. Not limited to Japanese films, in other areas, rural life is close to the image of national characters. As in Vietnamese films, rural populations were linked to the revolutionary government and the military front (Win, 2017). Films centered in Indonesian traditional villages like *Tanah Surga Katanya* also 'attempt to project the image of Indonesia based on the life and conflict experiences of the main character' (Limanta & Kurnia, 2018).

During times of conflict, rural areas—frequently overlooked in contemporary research—have a significant role as sites of struggle and revolution. Films during the world war addressed serious topics that affected the nation's life (Althaus et al., 2018; Willems et al., 2021). If we look closer at the newsreels, one character unique to Japan's news-documentary is the significant attention to space. When they began producing news documentary in Indonesia, the same style and policy were used accordingly. The news documentary films made in Japanese studios combine the environmental and rural space with human activities to narrate the birth of nationalism in Indonesia. Through critical analysis, this study aims to explore the representations of traditional rural space in Indonesian news documentaries emerging during the Japanese occupation period and its connection with Indonesian nationalism. This research is also expected to offer more discussion in the history of Indonesia about the concept of 'nationalism by the peasant' developed in Indonesian rural areas as reflected in newsreels. These Japanese-produced newsreels were then used as the objects of analysis. They contain accurate portrayals of village lives in that period and can be utilized as historical visual records, but only under specific restrictions and thoughtful deliberations. As cultural artifacts, films represent, translate, and mediate the transformations a society experiences, exhibiting in themselves a historical specificity rooted in the materiality of the time they were made (Tomoyuki, 2017). Even though it is unclear if these newsreels intentionally supported the Indonesian nationalist movement, the news department continued to produce

materials and reports to that end (Report to Mr. APM Audretsch Concerning Sendenbu, 1943). However, a closer examination of the contents reveals that the stories reflect that ideology.

II. UNDERSTANDING SPACE IN JAPANESE FILMS

From 1942 to 1945, the Japanese imperial government in Indonesia delivered an order to the news department within its imperial army division to regularly produce newsreels to report and document wartime events. The records adopted news documentary film styles, narrating the contents in Indonesian. The products were distributed to all parts of Indonesia and shown to the public as openings to feature films in the cinema. People praised the film's visual quality and as well as the contents that depicted historical events regarding the time and space. This research stresses the importance of that space in the news documentary and its role in supporting the independence struggle of the people in Indonesia. Space can be defined in several terms. It can be defined as an area, perceived by man, whose appearance and character are the result of the combined action of natural "and" or "or" human factors (Council of Europe Landscape Convention, 2000). Therefore, space can evolve due to the interaction between humans and nature. Kuhlenbeck (2006) argues that space is the area of so-called humanistic geography that stresses the experience of space and place, and the relevance of meaning and intentionality in a geographical context. Thus, space is 'present' because human experience gives meaning to it and human experience over space can vary from behavioral to cognitive to affective experience. It becomes a physical multisensory medium (Centeno-Martín, 2021) for humans or society to 'do' with nature. Space is a landscape that governs one's perception and abstract thinking through visual and spatial metaphors (Fujiki, 2021). We perceive the tangible atmosphere in natural settings, structures, or landscapes.

Space has a prominent place in Japanese films. First, it creates a strong national identity that differentiates it from other nations, like distinguishable features of an architectural structure specific to a country, its urban landscapes, and popular landmarks. For instance, the accurately rendered detail of shikumen architecture in Miyazaki Hayao's film *Flavors of Youth* creates a culturally specific urban landscape that mimics modern Shanghai (Aoyama & Ng, 2024). Japanese films employ nature and human relations to evoke the audience's emotional connection to the spaces and characters. Donald Richie agrees, "Atmosphere or mood is always the result of a sense of space...The celebrated Japanese concern for nature is a part of this" (1990, p. 14). Second, the integration of space in film discussion also has an ecological message that reinforces the importance of living in harmony with nature (Russell, 2010). Using Miyazaki Hayao's ideology as an example, man is at the centre of the narrative, but always at his side are nature and man-made spaces, both in harmony (representing good) and in opposition (representing evil), until a balance of mutual respect is achieved between the individual and the genius loci (Bartolomei et al., 2023). Therefore, the majority of typical Japanese films or animations set in wartime stress environmental conservation and sustainability Miyazaki (Pan, 2020). Destructions of ecological and man-made spaces are presented as inevitable effects of human activities and war.

Some studies are also concerned about the intercorrelation between space and film. For instance, a study by Ran Ma illustrates how films may be better contextualized and unpacked if the landscape is grasped concerning a multiplex of discursive and biopolitical projects manufactured, choreographed, reproduced, and distributed by heterogeneous interrelated institutional and individual actors and components working through and across various geopolitical locales or scales (Ma, 2021). In the context of this study, news documentaries provide the closest representations and alternative depictions of actual practices regarding the interaction between society and landscapes or space. The dynamic understanding of space based on discourse and historical reading would provide a concept of space not as a container but as a part of social relations, space as discourse (Kuhlenbeck, 2006). Rather than seeing space as a mere inanimate landscape or architecture, space is fluid as a site and resulting from human behaviors. For example, various environmental disasters due to human activities have been seen, such as construction, war, economics, and other exploitative activities.

III. METHODOLOGY

The methodological approach for this study combines visual and textual analysis of the films. The visual analysis begins by taking notes of the landscapes in the news documentary, such as natural spaces, human settlements, government buildings, traditional and cultural buildings, and public spaces. The analysis is done by observing where the activities related to the independent war struggle take place.

This also identifies what elements in those rural spaces contributed the most to the nation's founding. Furthermore, the analysis will be supported by identifying of the shot scale. Not only to create visually pleasing images, using camera angle will provide cohesive narratives, show informative visual or intimate emotions, and surrogate for the audience (Heiderich, 2021). Long shots, medium shots, and close-ups emphasize on certain elements within space-human interaction, from providing factual descriptions of a physical space to highlighting human behaviors. The shooting technique is observed by examining the ratio of human subject presentation on screen. For instance, the human subjects are presented with their entire body in a medium shot to highlight their activities or their facial expressions are shown on full screen to accentuate their emotions and impact the viewer.

Finally, textual analysis will be conducted to explore the roles of spaces in human activities during their independence struggle. To understand these roles, we must observe the language in practice and the textual function of the words in this context. We need to learn how the narrative is carefully planned and the choices made depending on the communicative goals (Fatihi, 2023, p. 41). One of the most popular methodologies to study language and discourse is transitivity analysis by Halliday. The underlying principle of this analysis is that language presents itself when we explore its grammar in functional terms from the standpoint of how it creates and expresses meaning (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p. 20). This meaning is created through grammar which refers to the transitivity process itself.

Based on the meaning construction, the grammatical system is represented by three different processes: material, mental, and relational process. Material processes can be defined as the clauses of doing and happening. In this type of process, the subject or Actor does an action. An example of a sentence in the material process is They built a house. Then, clauses of sensing like feel, think, remember, love, or want, as in I know what you think, belong to the mental process. The subject is identified as the Senser. The last process is the relational process, whose clause characterizes or identifies. This process is characterized by the verb to be in a sentence: for example *She is a university student*. To perform the analysis, the verbs in the news documentary film narratives are grouped according to their functions, whether to highlight the characters' traits, emotions, or actions. The analysis continued by counting the appearance of these verbs to examine which process or function is most important in the landscape. Carrying out the identification process will help to understand the roles of physical landscapes as performative or affective spaces in independent struggle. Finally, the author will identify the recurring elements from the news documentary and organize all observations into a coherent, logical conclusion.

I	gave	my love	a ring that has no end
Actor	Process	Recipient	Goal

Fig.2. Example of Material Clause With Recipient
Source: Halliday and Matthiessen (2004, p. 191)

The analysis was be conducted on five editions of a Japanese news documentary named Nanpo Hodo. The first was Nanpo Hodo number 7, released on September 1, 1943, and depicted the Japanese army and navy's routine drills and training in the south. Published on January 1, 1944, Nanpo Hodo number 20 describes an address made by Oto Iskandardinata to stoke the nation's warrior spirit, a parade of Indonesia's volunteer army led by Soekarno and Hatta, and the diligent work of Indonesian youths to construct a military base. The Fourth Session of Chu ō Sangi In (Central Advisory Council) in Jakarta, the Japanese Language Competition, and the Heiho training session in Celebes and South Borneo were all covered in Nanpo Hodo number 26, which was published on November 17, 1944. Published on January 7, 1944, Nanpo Hodo number 37 featured a traditional dance and soldier training conducted at Surakarta Palace, people planting crops and cotton in waste areas, instructions and tutorials for planting cotton, the distribution of mujair fish to every household as a malaria preventive measure and to add nutritional foods, a mock battle with knives, and a war simulation. The final one was Nanpo Hodo number 43, which was released on July 1, 1945, and described organizational meetings with Japanese leaders in Makassar, the coronation of the new Susuhunan (King) of Solo, and the Japanese-coordinated construction of a dam to irrigate agriculture fields.

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Regarding the representations of landscapes and human, the study will address the questions on what forms of interaction exist between the space and society and how the interaction is performed within the space. The thorough observation of the visual will tell us how society is given importance inside the space, supported by the analysis of what sort of activities occur.

A. *The Representations of Space in Japanese News Documentary Films in Indonesia*

This section will discuss the representations of space in the news-documentary films. The first shots in the news-documentary films show geographical landscapes, emphasizing the centrality of space in the beginning and building the narratives. The scenes mostly feature the rural environment as a space where most peasants live and interact daily for example housing areas, paddy fields, or village halls. This style is similar to other areas. The news documentary usually depicts a landscape where agricultural landscapes, semi-natural, and natural ecosystems coexist (Bartolomei et al., 2023). The rural and nature representations are important in the story development about the characters and their meaningful life experience. In most Japanese films, rural space is represented as a site of Japanese authentic and national identity (Centeno-Martín, 2021), and Indonesian news documentaries follow the same guidelines. Based on the analysis, rural space as the battleground for independence consists of government buildings, public space, natural landscapes, and human settlements. These are deemed the main and significant sites for independent struggle, and every site has specific features compatible with the development of Indonesian nationalism which will be described in the section below.



Government hall for Chuo Sangi In meeting



Public gathering in a village field



Land opening for building military base



Farming in a house as the smallest unit of battle site

Fig.3. The Representations of Space in Nampo Hodo
Source: Djawa (1945)

The first landscape we can observe from the news documentary is government buildings, considered important spatial elements for the preparation of independence where independent preparatory meetings and government policy formulation took place. One example is Chuo Sangi In, a meeting held in Gedung Pancasila. The building, set like a tribunal, became the witness when the five principles as the prototype of national ideology, Panca Dharma, was announced publicly by the nation's founding father, Soekarno. The earliest effort for the independence movement was also narrated to begin from this building. For instance, in Surakarta Palace, people had started implementing the 'new life' ideas to help with the war effort, such as planting cotton or crops on vacant land. Nowadays, as we look at these government buildings, we are reminded of Indonesian government nationalists' efforts to establish the independent nation of Indonesia. The buildings are then conserved to preserve the legacy

of nationalist and independence movements. According to research, architecture manifests national character and reflects national consciousness (Savchenko & Shevchenko, 2023).

In addition to government buildings, the news documentary portrays public space as significant for the independence movement. Large village fields make up the majority of public space portrayals in the news documentary. In this place, all organizational members of the independence movement from all layers of society gathered to listen to the speeches of Soekarno and Japanese military leaders that could burn their fighting spirit. Together, they occupy a single space, symbolizing the unity of the multiethnic and multicultural Indonesian population. The importance of space lies in its role in the nationalist movement. This propaganda, can be explained as a subject that brings people together rather than just a landscape. As Japan wants to highlight the principle of sameness in Asia (Mark, 2018) the representation of public space also corresponds to this aim. The village field might be used as a military training ground for the voluntary soldiers and male villagers. The space shows the spectacles of soldiers' bodies in action, as objects of measurement, improvement, and discipline, and as members of mass formations (Workman, 2014), further emphasizing this rural space's meaning as unity. Another landscape that can be found in the news documentary is a rural street. There are scenes showing Indonesian natives applauding the victorious marching voluntary soldiers, members of organizations, and leaders of the independence movement. Rather than the image of a city street with its heavy traffic, Japanese-made news documentary films prefer presenting the image of street as a space where the inhabitants celebrated patriotism and nationalism. This illustration suggests that a nation's energy originates from its rural areas.

Fields and dams also have a primary position in the news documentary, constituting another element of the rural landscapes. Based on the visual narrative, there was an event of prolonged drought resulting in the harvest drops. With the assistance of Japanese technicians, Indonesians built irrigation dams to irrigate their rice fields and add resources for the war. With this depiction, the impact of human activity on the space is also given an importance. Although the appearance is less frequent than others, natural landscapes convey the interaction between space and humans. We can also observe people clearing the land to build a military base, symbolizing the act of creation in the space. A study on village society under Japanese occupation shows that village inhabitants moved toward constructing new life under Japanese occupation to achieve self-sufficiency and clothing (Sato, 2015, p. 251). Based on the news documentary, self-sufficiency programs were initiated in rural areas as a primary element of the nation's founding. Therefore, the films sought to imply that rural area should be counted as significant unit within a nation. The analysis also agrees that rural area is presented as an allegory of civilization (Centeno-Martín, 2020). In this space, we can observe rural inhabitants acting as national bodies, applying or tutoring some new techniques and employing recent technologies to construct buildings and plant crops they might never have experienced.

Human settlements are the last form of space that manifests in the visual record. People's housing is portrayed as usual farmer's house in rural settlements. The wall is made from bamboo and hardened sand as the flooring. There is also a garden where people can grow crops and raise chickens. Several footages also show modern housings in the village with open land surrounding. In the depiction of the news documentary, people are instructed to cultivate crops or cotton and raise mujair fish on the lands surrounding their homes. These activities are described as providing aid for the war effort. Therefore, when a country is at war, it is not only the responsibility and duty of certain society groups, but also that contribution should extend to all layers of society. This contribution can be made from their own houses. What can be concluded from this depiction is that the home, as the smallest unit in a rural landscape, is also a site of struggle.

Based on studies, a film with this sort of narration about rural and traditional lives is called *shomin eiga*, which 'sought to depict everyday lives and human emotions of college students or businessmen as something utterly relatable, rather than the lives of beautiful elites' (Inuhiko, 2019). Since Japanese-made news documentary films are produced and distributed to reinforce Indonesian national consciousness and raise their spirit of nationalism, presenting rural lives with local peasants are more relatable as most Indonesians come from this background. This film also 'portrays normative Japanese families in the background' (Workman, 2014). Therefore, homes, particularly those in rural spaces become the source of struggle and nationalism. For instance, as narrated in some long feature films, the main characters stated their interest in joining the voluntary army as their national duty, and their parents supported their decision.

Based on the abovementioned analysis, rural lives are dynamic and identified with national characters. The news-documentary making in Indonesia, as can be observed, pays significant attention to depicting the physical spaces such as buildings, rice fields, housings, and other natural spaces while narrating human behaviors, highlighting its coexistence with humans as a vital site for independent struggle in Indonesia and nationalism building. In this rural space, people perform activities that symbolize their national consciousness and national belongings. Even from their house, they performed their struggle to achieve independence and form the new independent nation of Indonesia. From this space, people also know they share the same identity as Indonesians. Therefore, rural space representations are significant in supporting the narrative ideology. The films provided narrative integrity and attractive scenery (Hori, 2018, p.124).

B. The Rural Space and Their Interaction with the Society

The next topic of discussion is the forms of interaction between space and humans. Society and space are not separate entities. The next key element to analyze from a news documentary is the shot scale, which tells the position of humans within the space. The importance of the shot scale lies in its effect on the viewers' emotional cognition (Bálint et al., 2020). In short, the shooting angle is significant in strengthening the message delivery of the news films and helping the audience interact with the film story. Each film in Hayao Miyazaki is marked by a focus on landscape details, creating rich and immersive settings that act as a character in and of themselves (Bartolomei et al., 2023).



Fig.4. Types of Spatial Shots in Nampo Hodo

Source: The figure is created by Author using photos from Djawa (1945)

The first impression of the news films was the use of advanced camera techniques by Nippon Eigasha Djawa's staff to create dynamic moving images. The events were documented by combining long, medium, and close shots. All Nanpo Hodo news films begin with a long shot. It aims to give context about the time and space of the event before eventually moving closer to the subjects. Therefore, the audience can build background information about the event and feel the atmosphere. Another research also mentions that as important as a close shot, a long shot positively contributes to the level of narrative understanding (Benini et al., 2022). In terms of space, long shot also tends to emphasize the space as distant for people, but it aims first to establish the connection between the audience and the depicted space. Employing a long shot also provides the audience with factual data about the space (Centeno-Martín, 2021) or when and where the events occur.

In Japanese news documentary film style, it is common to see footage much closer to the people of the landscape (Centeno-Martín, 2020). Therefore, the medium shot mainly portrays humans as the main object. Compared to a close shot, a medium shot is neutral, so the effect is more objective in reporting news (Benini et al., 2022). Another advantage of positioning the object at a medium distance is incorporating one's personal experience in the space and creating intimacy between people and space. This type of shot provides the audience to experience the event from their own perspective. Then, rather than as a mere observer, the narrator invites the audience to be witnesses who have even become involved in it so they can value the Indonesian people's real struggle and effort for gaining independence. For instance, the scenes often provide evidence of voluntary soldiers' military training or common people participating in an air raid or war training. The audience was also guided to connect with the characters and observe their actions because this type of shot to emphasizes the subject's

movements- attention not on the geography but on the people who coexist with it (Centeno-Martín, 2021).

Table 1. Distribution of Camera Angle

Nanpo Hodo Number	Long Shot	Medium Shot	Close Up	Extreme Close Up
7	4	77	19	2
20	1	32	12	1
26	4	28	8	-
37	5	30	17	9
43	12	33	14	1
Total	26	200	60	13
Percentage	8.7%	67%	20%	4.3%

Source: Author (2024)



Fig.5. The Connection Between Human and Landscape in Indonesian News Documentary Film 1942-1945

Source: Djawa (1945)

In the case of narration, the audience should not be distanced from the screen but must be positioned as part of it. In one of the scenes, Otto Iskandardinata gave a speech to unite Indonesian people to fight to the death for freedom while looking at the camera toward the audience in front of the screen. To accentuate the messages for the nation-building project, several scenes also frame the subjects' facial expressions in great detail. The result of observation from the five news films shows that short-scale shots take 20% of the total scenes. This close-up scene can appeal to the viewers' emotions because it portrays the subjects's facial expressions and emotional reactions. Projecting the face as larger image, the audience will be guided to discern the characters' emotional behavior. Results of studies on close-up shot scale show that the face manipulates the understanding about the mental states of others (Bálint et al., 2020). This situation is considered as the affective space.

C. The use of landscape in the society

Regarding spatial relationships, movement is pivotal because it generates different perceptions of the visual environment (Kuhlenbeck, 2006). Images and narratives are basic and interrelated units in films. The narrative language also affects the way we perceive the images. One method to analyze the film language is by establishing codes belonging to a certain means of expression and classifying each part of the film text based on a particular code. The rationale is that film text consists of a combination of codes and we need to examine the meaning of each and the possible effect of each on the audience.

In the development of politically motivated news, people also make lexical and grammatical choices, both consciously and unconsciously, that reflect their ideology (Fatihi, 2023, p. 45). To establish a complete frame of the film discourse, we should examine the verb as a substantial body within the film script that regulates action and relates it with how the space becomes the arena for the characters to perform their actions. This study classifies the actions in the spaces into three conceptual units of processes.

Table 2. Distribution of Process in Nampo Hodo

Types of Process	Percentage (%)	Samples of Verbs
Material	35	<i>bergerak</i> (move), <i>bersatu</i> (unite), <i>menyerang</i> (attack), <i>berkorban</i> (sacrifice), <i>melatih</i> (train), <i>membela</i> (defend)
Mental	7	<i>mengerti</i> (understand), <i>kedengaran</i> (is heard), <i>memandang</i> (see), <i>ingat</i> (remember), <i>bersedia</i> (is willing)
Relational	58	<i>adalah</i> (to be), <i>menjadi</i> (become), <i>menandakan</i> (mark)

Source: Author (2024)

Table 2 illustrates what kind of human behaviors occur in the space. The actions reveal the deep interconnectedness between humans and the space in which they live. When identifying how society utilizes these spaces, one interesting result of language coding is that the appearance of mental processes has the lowest percentage among others and is even rare. This conveys how space tends to become an arena of physical labor for people living in the rural area. With many portrayals of rural landscapes, the news-documentary tends to provide romanticized imagery of a rural space. In Japanese-made films, landscapes interact with characters as they often find wisdom and inspiration from surrounding nature, showcasing a deep connection between humans and their natural environment (Bartolomei et al., 2023). As described in the following section, the characters featured in the news documentary discover their identity and develop their spirit of nationalism. At the same time, rural space supports their process of ‘being’ an Indonesian independent nation.

As a medium of nation-building project, films assist people in embracing the concept of new life and models of moral qualities as a modern nation. In most parts of the episodes, there are certain chunks of text or narrations carrying relational or identifying functions. Like a long shot, the relational process aims to provide factual information about the space. It describes the atmosphere, spatial landscapes, and characters. Therefore, space also functions as a character-defining element (Bartolomei et al., 2023). The forms of the relational process provide images and depictions that define righteous attitudes, behavior, and values for independence. Everyone is described to pay total contribution to support the war effort regardless of age, gender, and social status. Their contribution could take different forms depending on their abilities, such as strengthening national defense, adopting self-sufficient living, increasing agricultural products, and maintaining a healthy living environment emphasizing the acts of creation done within the space. People actively enact certain behaviors within a particular space to form identities, experiences, and meanings (Kang, 2015). Based on the analysis, the most prominent type of process used in the narrative is the relational process. This process highlights the meaning of ‘being’ or ‘becoming’, so the message typically explains to the spectators about their national identity or the identity that they are supposed to possess. As Indonesians, rural inhabitants perform expected roles that can make them considered Indonesian citizens. The report describes the local inhabitants performing their native identity, showing their daily and real activities as farmers, voluntary soldiers, independent preparation organization members, or common people. The sequence of the films looks like ethnography, depicting a slice of life in the colony (Jeong, 2019). The analysis of similar Japanese propaganda films made in Korea saw this concept as ethno-nationality, representing Korea in its local color (Baek, 2018).

Activities taking place in the rural areas are mostly correlated to achieving independence and founding the nation of Indonesia. In coherence with the visual elements, the narrative texts of the films also employ material processes to illustrate activities done by the actors or agents. Narrators describe the actions while simultaneously embodying their visual experience, observing the events through expressions like ‘Look!’ to communicate with the audience watching the news. Most verbs are in active

forms to describe actions performed by the actors, such as train, sacrifice, and attack. Active voice in the films plainly explains and highlights actions or actual practices and habits of the ideal member of Indonesian society. For example, both visual and textual elements dramatize the actors' movements, like building a military base, training themselves, or planting cotton in their garden, which can give recommendations about what to do to win the war and gain independence. This type of film or video can be a powerful shaper of behavior. As mentioned in the preceding analysis, rural space is depicted as a site of struggle and an arena to build the nation. Material processes amplify the energy and dynamic of the densely populated rural space, marking a sign of progress during the Japanese occupation era. Children in Indonesia were educated in schools; young men received training in technical skills, while young women received training in medical knowledge. This is a sign of development for Indonesia because 'Dutch colonial government had paid so little attention to improving the skills of the indigenous population' (Booth, 2019). Because of this interaction between natural and human forces, landscapes change over time, while the new development and construction it brings signify a new life. Therefore activities in rural spaces are also connected to the creation process.



Fig.6. Inhabitants' Activities in the Rural Landscape
Source: Djawa (1945)

The mental process is one form that does not occur often in the rural space. In rural areas, the ability to think and perceive appears less valued. This condition is partly due to limited educational opportunities during the Dutch colonization. Despite the low presence of mental-related activities, with the active involvement of the inhabitants in the independence struggle, rural space is more dynamic. It corresponds to the principle of total mobilization of resources and people in the colony (Jeong, 2019).

In conclusion, due to their dynamic, rural areas tend to be the most ideal place to grow awareness and consciousness. This discussion demonstrates the close relationship between human activity and the landscape. The film reinforces the initial visual dynamic between the character as the subject and the landscape as the object (Fujiki, 2021). By presenting relatable and authentic situations and activities in rural areas, the film 'allows viewers to familiarize themselves with national history in a more playful way, and to identify more directly and personally with their own country' (Laruelle, 2021). Furthermore, their nationalist spirit is fueled by the will to achieve independence from Dutch colonialization. Thus, the result of this study also agrees that 'the Japanese did not invent Indonesian nationalism; it grew out of Dutch economic exploitation' (Doolan, 2021).

V. CONCLUSION

The main components in the rural landscape, like buildings, farms, dams, and even the smallest units like private houses, become important sites of struggle, indicating that people in rural areas are more prone to war suffering. For this underprivileged group, war takes its forms in their everyday life. This research reveals that rural space is described as playing a major role in fostering Indonesian national

identity. While cityscapes and urban areas are typically associated with movement and progress in movies, the Japanese occupation government considers rural areas a source of national identity. Rural as active space appears side to side with human behaviors, and it receives special attention from the Japanese imperial government in its propaganda project. Most activities involve creation, and in some ways, creative destruction. Therefore, this rural space deliberately changes due to human behaviors to prepare for the independence war and becomes a signification of progress. However, rather than glorifying the face of the war itself, news documentary pays more attention to progress due to the creative behaviors of humans. This is to mention the inevitable nature of the war itself, and independence war preparation can be perceived as a creative process that turns the space into a labor site.

The way human activity alters the landscape makes it intriguing to observe how rural space functions as a transitional element between pre-modern and post-modern Indonesia. The study's focus on employing rural space during the independent war era makes further investigation on the topic of Indonesian post-independence wartime films able to help answer this question. They might have a similar approach to portraying the rural areas, but their meaning to the characters might differ. The images of government buildings, mountain areas, military bases, and houses are common and primary elements to portray the landscapes and society at war. However, rather than presenting the creative process, it glorifies the destruction of space, with massive scenes of bombing and fire, indicating that today war is perceived as more destructive.

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