

Redefinition of Japanese Culture and Structure of Feelings in *Kubo and the Two Strings*

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Abstract

This research aims to reveal how Japanese culture is being redefined as a dynamic social process. The social dynamic processes involve emotional experiences that are formed from individual perspectives into collective feelings. It views culture as something that continues to develop along with social changes and the collective feelings felt by society. These ideas are represented in the film *Kubo and the Two Strings* (2016). This research uses a qualitative approach to Marxist literary criticism. The film *Kubo and the Two Strings* is not only as entertainment but also as a representative of deep social criticism of social movements regarding power dynamics and cultural identity. This study contributes to the field of Marxist studies by highlighting cultural dynamics and how the structure of feelings works in society to create newness without abandoning conventional traditions to achieve balance. In addition, it provides insights for future research and encourages broader exploration of increasingly diverse cultural dynamic contexts which influences the interpretation of defining culture itself. The results of this research prove that *Kubo and the Two Strings* (2016) represent a redefinition of Japanese culture in terms of the 3 main aspects dominant, residual, and emergent. Supported by the structure of feelings that were felt by Kubo. These findings are a powerful example of how art can serve as a tool to examine changes in culture.

Keywords

Film, Redefinition of Culture, Structure of Feelings

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INTRODUCTION

Films are not only made but also produced, which means they are closely linked to the social and economic environment, both of which are important in the production process (Bordwell et al., 2021). Films provide us with a very satisfying way to understand and feel. They guide us through the experience. This experience is often driven by a story that centers on a character, while films can also explore visual elements, sound textures, or ideas. Films are a combination of narrative elements and cinematic elements, this makes them need to be read differently from other written works (Sudarisman, 2016). Apart from combining narrative and cinematic elements, the film is also the result of a modern collaboration that combines literature and media (Hanifah et al., 2024). In digital animated films, visualization is the cinematic element that plays the most important role. Presenting stories in visual form is expected to reflect and highlight themes of culture, identity, and heritage.

Films can depict people's life experiences, fiction, and biographies for public amusement (Artelu & Indah, 2023). Marxists not only discuss social and economic matters but also culture. Apart from Karl Mark and Friedrich Engels, Williams also contributed to the understanding of this theory. Focuses on how culture interacts with social and economic structures so that they shape the identity of lived experiences. Williams introduced the concepts of cultural dynamics and structure of feelings. Emphasizes that collective experiences and feelings in a society can reflect broader social conditions. Culture itself can be a tool for resistance and liberation. This is related to where individuals and groups can create new meanings and identities that challenge the hegemony of the bourgeoisie or can be called dominant. The complex relationship between economics, society, culture and power is covered in Marxist studies.

Literature is not only an art form, but also a social practice that can influence and be affected by changes in society (Williams, 1977). The film *Kubo and the Two Strings* (2016) highlights Kubo's journey in search of identity. Emphasizes cultural dynamics and collective feelings that reflect social experiences and changing societal values. The presentation of an in-depth narrative regarding the dynamics of power and society's resistance to domination makes it an ideal object for Marxist studies, especially in Williams's perspective.

The researchers have found three relevant previous studies related to the subject and theoretical references with this study. The first research is an article, entitled "A Study on the Structure of Feeling in Charlotte Bronte's *The Professor*" (Hou, 2024), which reveals the conflict and contradiction between the real feelings of the characters in the novel and dominant cultural characteristics also how the author reveals the participation of literary works in the development of the British empire. The second previous research discussed Japanese culture through a Spanish lens as represented in the film *Gisaku* by Baltasar Pedrosa. The research is entitled "Japan in Spain. Japanese Culture through Spanish Eyes in the Film *Gisaku*." (Pérez, 2018), this film is a hybrid anime related to transnational representation of Japanese national identity. Revealing how film served as an attraction to the transcultural exchange production strategy

developed to attract Japanese audiences. The third previous research discussed relics such as fan and kimonos belonging to Skušek's Japanese wife. The research is entitled "Dancing with the Fan: The Role and Value of a Japanese Fan and Kimonos in the Transmission of Japanese Culture by Marija Tsuneko Skušek" (Gerželj, 2021), in that research revealing the role of these objects in spreading Japanese culture to Slovenian audiences with a focus on Japanese dance as one of the ways of transmission. Highlighting the importance of understanding the background of an item and understanding about the value of transforming the function of items of daily use into refined art objects in museums. The difference between this research and the previous studies above apart from studying the cultural dynamics represented in a film, it also examines how the structure of feelings is built through a character's life experiences to create a new, balanced identity. This shows a fresh analysis of different objects in Marxist discussions.

In the scope of Marxist, emphasizes that literature cannot be separated from the social, economic, and historical context in which it is created. It also criticizes the reductionist view that considers literature only as a reflection of dominant ideology or as a tool of propaganda. In line, that literature can also function as a medium for resistance and criticism against cultural hegemony. Based on the background, it can be carried out aimed at examining more broadly the reflection of cultural dynamics in the search for identity and the concept of the structure of feelings that surround all elements of the movement. In line with that, this research reveals how this film is not just entertainment, but also a medium for social and cultural reflection that is relevant to the current context and presents a fresh analytical focus.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The story contained in a literary work, including a film, can wake up your entire brain when you hear it. Apart from language, elements related to sensation and emotion also come to life, making the events in literary works seem almost real to you (Lindsay, 2015). Culture is not static, but it moves with the times. This movement involves several concepts in culture such as dominant, residual, and emergent, each concept plays a role that influences cultural dynamics (Williams, 1977).

1. Dominant

The concept of Dominant culture is the values, practices, and ideologies that are the strongest and most influential in a society at a certain time. This concept reflects existing power and control and is often related to the ruling social class. Dominant elements often influence society's perspective to become a widely accepted norm.

2. Residual

In contrast with residual cultural concepts, which are values, practices, and ideologies that originate from the past but still exist in society now. This concept can influence the way people think and behave, often reflecting cultural legacies that persist despite social and cultural change.

3. Emergent

The concept of emergent culture refers to new values, practices, and ideologies that are developing and starting to gain influence in society. This concept reflects innovation, change, and response to new social conditions. Like a dynamic culture, emergent emerges as a reaction to dominant elements and can potentially become dominant in the future if it receives sufficient positive support in society.

These three concepts cannot be separated from the cultural dynamics that occur as well as the structure of feelings that represent feelings of community collectivity and provide support for cultural dynamics and identity in the contemporary era. An exploration of how new generations interact with their cultural heritage, as well as how the collective feelings of Japanese society are awakened in facing the challenges of globalization.

In the context of the redefinition of Japanese culture, this film shows how Japanese culture can be reinterpreted through different lenses. Kubo, as a character rooted in tradition, also reflects changes in the way identity and heritage are viewed. The researchers then explore how this film presents a complex representation of Japan, as well as highlighting the diversity of experiences and views that exist in contemporary Japanese society. Moreover, the examination of Japanese traditions, mythology, and life practices in this film could shed more light on the integration or encoding of culture into people's daily practices. Such traits as reverence for the family, emphasis on oral traditions and legends, and affinity for nature can be viewed as the best of the cherished values in Japanese culture.

The concept of structure feelings refers to emotional experiences and collective values, it can ultimately shape changes in society at a certain time. The presentation of the concept of structure of feelings and cultural dynamics in a film is a literary work that allows the audience to connect with collective experiences. This has relevance in contemporary cultural studies which emphasize the relationship between art, society, and the possibility of change that occurs in the culture of a particular society. This study provides a comprehensive analysis of how cultural dynamics move over time as represented in the film produced by Laika Studio *Kubo and the Two Strings* by Knight (2016).

The article written by Yeo (2021) entitled "The virtual cultural tourist: Film-induced tourism and *Kubo and the Two Strings*" also discusses how films are a medium for introducing Japanese culture to audiences who are positioned as virtual cultural tourists. The cinematic experience experienced by the audience is likened to a real media pilgrimage through Japanese culture, history and aesthetics. Likewise with the article written by Huddleston and Helfenbein (2018) entitled "Waiting for Superman: A cultural studies analysis in the nightmare of the present" which discusses the important role of film which offers opportunities for cultural studies analysis with clear implications for educational theory and the curriculum. This article offers a perspective that aims to help revive the dialogue between cultural studies and curriculum theory and

provide fresh understanding. So this research also has the potential to reveal the cultural dynamics highlighted by the film *Kubo and the Two Strings*.

RESEARCH METHOD

According to Abdussamad (2021) “Qualitative research is research that is more focused on describing the nature or essence of the value of a particular object or phenomenon.” A qualitative approach means that objects are explored through layers of interpretation that make our understanding of literature even richer because such insights are subjective and nuanced. It reflecting the complexity of human experience and expression. Overall, qualitative research became a needed part of the literary critique also to capture all the richness of the literary text and its impact on the reader and society. Therefore, the research used qualitative approach to Marxist literary criticism to conduct data analysis. This perspective is in accordance with the object of study of *Kubo and the Two Strings* which explores the themes of class struggle and family relationships in traditional Japanese culture.

According to Nasution (2023) there are two types of research data in the study. First, primary data were the main data obtained from research object directly. Secondary data was the second type of data, namely data obtained from research subjects or the first source used for research. This secondary data served as a reinforcement of primary data. The primary data was the film *Kubo and the Two Strings* (2016) by Travis Knights which was available on the Netflix platform. To gain a more comprehensive understanding, secondary data is needed from books, research journals, articles and reports which contain information about cultural dynamics that is relevant to this research.

The data collection used a documentation technique. According to (Miles & Huberman, 1994) data collection has three steps; first, data collection involved repeatedly watching *Kubo and the Two Strings* (2016) film for additional understanding by reading the film scripts. The data collected is in the form of images from screenshots of scenes and several relevant dialogues, such as depictions of cultural dynamics and feelings that arise from the journey in search of identity. The second is data identification, identify scenes and dialogue in the film that are related to the research focus. Third data analysis, after being identified, the data was then analyzed using Marxist theory by Raymond William related to the redefinition of culture and the structure of feelings. The data analysis used is descriptive technique, the researchers carried out analysis based on text or narrative which was constructed by Shannon Tindle and Marc Haines and also elements of visualization of Japanese cultural representations presented during film screenings, which could reflect changes and relationships phenomenon (Rusandi & Rusli, 2022). The last step was data interpretation, how researchers interpreted the redefinition of Japanese culture and structure of feelings in film *Kubo and the Two Strings* through Marxist theory especially from Raymond Williams, supported by valid evidences. Interpreting the theory was the final step such

as; drawing and verifying conclusions. At this stage, the researchers conclude the data that had been obtained and tested its suitability and validity (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this research, the film *Kubo and the Two Strings* (2016) is used as the main object to analyze the representation of Marxist aspects through dialogue and visualization. The data presented is the result of analysis with detailed explanations, according to the classification and research themes.

1. Refinition of Japanese Culture

Cultural ideas, separated and understood through complex systems and practices that have developed since then. In *Marxism and Literature*, Williams redefines culture as not just high art or elite practice, but also incorporates societies and their everyday experiences and practices. Instead, he argues that culture is constantly changing, shaped by social interactions and historical context, and is not a static aspect of society.

The concept of “Selective tradition” that Williams introduced which suggests that what is considered “Culture” is often determined by those in power, leading to the marginalization of alternative voices and practices. This idea can be implemented to the redefinition of Japanese culture in *Kubo and the Two Strings* film. By Understanding culture as an “Whole way of life” that encompasses material and ideological aspects, helps us recognize the contributions of different social classes and communities in a specific region. Therefore, culture is essentially political because it shows and helps shape power relationships in society. Expanding on what is meant by the term “Culture,” includes everything from a person’s way of life, to the way of thinking, way of relating to other people and the social changes that occur. It means we must reconsider our concepts of language. Underscoring the need for a different analysis of Japanese cultural practices in the film *Kubo and the Two Strings* that recognizes the link between tradition and modernity, especially towards marginalized voices.

The redefinition of culture that challenged traditional hierarchies and encouraged a broader understanding of cultural production, especially the redefinition of Japanese culture. It confirming that culture is often compromised by its relegation to “Superstructural” status underscores the need to reconnect cultural practices with their social and historical contexts. This perspective is crucial for analyzing Japanese culture, as it reveals how various social classes and communities contribute to a dynamic cultural landscape. The idealization of culture has led to a disconnection from society and history, which can be seen in Japan's evolving identity, where traditional practices coexist with modern influences, reflecting a rich tapestry of experiences that shape the nation's cultural narrative.

1.1 Dominant

In the film *Kubo and the Two Strings* presents several cultures that reflect the culture previously defined by previous Marxists, culture is just hegemony regulated by those in power. The Moon Clan is a representation of dominant power and

groups referred to as ‘Marginals’ or what many people know as ordinary and marginalized groups are represented by society and the character Kubo himself.

Culture as a process shows that culture never stops but is in a continuous evolutionary process, shaped by existing social and economic conditions. In this respect, culture is not only a reflection of reality; it is also a tool with which to shape and transform it. In tune with the idea of a particular and unique ‘Way of life’, Kubo’s character maintains that once culture is understood as a process, we shall be better equipped to analyze how power, class, and ideology works in society.

The redefinition of Japanese culture in this film is also triggered by the hegemony of the dominant upper class over ordinary people. The character of The Moon King, namely the grandfather of the main character Kubo, represents the upper class and social class dominance. The dominant culture is a tool of power that tries to maintain hegemony, while emergent culture offers space for resistance and change. The moon king is depicted as having supernatural powers that are stronger than ordinary humans, living as comfortably as heaven and depicting this mortal world as a hell full of suffering, in contrast to it which offers eternal life.

Some evidences are presented in a scene where Kubo has to fight directly with the Moon King who is said to be his grandfather. The sentence uttered by Kubo’s grandfather refers to the dominant culture, where there are sarcastic sentences regarding humans as weak and impermanent creatures as in the sentence, “As long as you cling to that silly, useless eye, you can’t come up to live with me in the heavens”. With the statement “Staring with that lonely eye at hate and heartache and suffering and death.” (Haimes & Tindle, 2016). Kubo’s grandfather views the mortal world as hell full of suffering and ugliness.



Figure 1. *Kubo and the Two Strings*, min. 1:23:34

The conflict between the character who represents power or what we call the Moon King and the marginalized Kubo can be seen as a reflection of class struggle, as we can see in figure 1. This dynamic aligns with Marxist theory, which argue that society is fundamentally divided into classes with conflicting interests, “It is true that in the structure of any actual society. and especially in its class structure, there is always a social basis for elements of the cultural process that are alternative or

oppositional to the dominant elements.” (Williams, 1977). The Moon King embodies the ruling class, exercising control and perpetuating a narrative that serves his interests, while Kubo represents the oppressed. Not only that, in terms of the ideology underlying the characters’ actions, it can influence their perspective on the world. The Moon King’s hegemony reflects this concept, as he imposes a narrative that reinforces his power. Kubo’s journey symbolizes the struggle against this hegemony, as he seeks to challenge the status quo and create space for his own voice and identity. The characterization of the Moon King as cold, without feelings, without humanity, without empathy, and without love makes this character the embodiment of hegemonic power, as a dominant culture. His efforts against Kubo represent an attempt to control cultural values and identity through ideological domination. The conflict that arises between Kubo and the Moon King regarding the Moon King wanting Kubo’s left eye shows how emergent culture can disrupt the dominant order and open up space for the redefinition of cultural values.

1.2 Residual



Figure 2. *Kubo and the Two Strings*, min. 10:30

This film opens with a culture that is thick with residual Japanese elements as can be seen in figure 2. There is a role of residual culture in redefining Japanese culture, referring to cultural elements originating from the past such as folklore, arts and crafts also traditional musical instruments which are presented as an integral part of the narrative and characters. In several scenes, the art of paper folding, namely origami, is often highlighted, where origami also develops and used as a tool to divide society upper class and lower class (Hastuti & Mulyadi, 2022). Commonly used in residual culture. Likewise with the traditional musical instrument Shamisen. If we examine it more deeply, the combination of shamisen music, origami, and Japanese folklore about samurai sword heroes, creates a traditional performing art. Although, this does not refer to traditional performing arts such as Bunraku. Bunraku is a traditional Japanese performing art that is very similar to what has been combined in this film, as in (Dong et al., 2022) wrote that humans simultaneously use facial expressions, eye movements, and gestures to express their feelings. Instead of facial expressions, Bunraku puppeteers express the puppet’s emotions

using their unique manipulation techniques utilizing Jo-Ha-Kyū, Jo or begin as opening, Ha or break as middle, and Kyū or rapid as climax. Like Jo begin slowly, Ha speed up, and Kyū end with swiftly. In Bunraku, there are three types of performers: (1) three ningyozukai (puppeteers) who manipulate a single puppet, (2) a gidayū (chanter), and (3) a musician playing shamisen (a three-stringed Japanese guitar) on one stage in a special puppet theater. It seems that this residual culture is combined with emergent culture so that it can reach a global audience. In line with this research regarding residual culture within the Marxist scope, these two elements are the elements that most often appear to represent residual culture.

1.3 Emergent

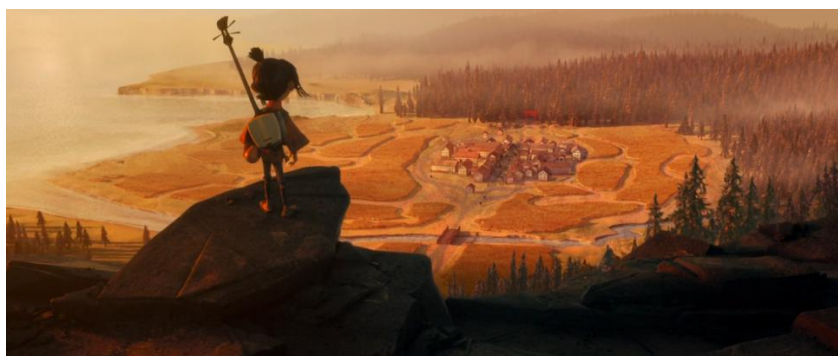


Figure 3. *Kubo and the Two Strings*, min. 06:18

The residual culture that was explained in the previous point transforms into an emergent culture. Shamisen and origami are legacies of the past that continue to survive and become an integral part of Kubo's identity, as can be seen in figure 3. As the film progresses the traditional musical instruments Shamisen and Origami are redefined to become more than just symbols of tradition. In emergent culture, culture refers to new cultural elements that emerge in response to changing social, political, or economic conditions. As follow by "By 'emergent' I mean, first, that new meanings and values, new practices, new relationships and kinds of relationship are continually being created." (Williams, 1977). Shamisen, transforming tradition into a tool of resistance. Describes how old cultural elements can be adapted to meet new ideological challenges. A similar thing happens to the art of origami paper folding, in residual culture origami represents a Japanese artistic tradition related to perseverance, harmony and the relationship between humans and nature. In the context of redefinition in the narrative, origami is used by Kubo to create living magical figures, making them symbols of resistance to the hegemonic power of the Moon King. In a global context, this art not only functions as a local tradition, but also as a universal medium for telling stories that are relevant to modern audiences.

These two elements are a strong representation of Japanese culture, being part of a change that has an impact on part of the narrative of this film. From residual culture to emergent culture and integrated into modern narratives. This

includes understanding culture as a dynamic. How the function of Shamisen and Origami changes to emergent culture is relevant to reflecting emergent culture and the characterization of Kubo is also part of the representation of emergent culture itself. Emergent cultures often reflect changes in the way people think and interact. Emergent culture can create alternatives to existing culture and often functions as a form of resistance or criticism of dominant norms.

The trigger for the emergence of emergent culture that appears in this film is due to a change in social class between Kubo as a representative of ordinary society and the upper class as the dominant thing represented by the Moon Clan consisting of King Bulan and The Sisters who are the grandfather and aunt of the main character Kubo. Changes also occur in values and norms, Kubo's way of viewing the world, including race and identity, can trigger the emergence of a new culture that is more inclusive and diverse. The visual presentation and narrative in the film are adjusted to bridge local traditions with universal values such as love, memory and the journey of searching for an identity. Changes in norms are also reflected in this film, where dissatisfaction with existing norms can trigger a search for alternatives that are more just and equal. Kubo's character can reflect all of these things, his journey is a form of the process of how Japanese culture itself develops. Through residual culture and a global lens, Kubo represents all emergent cultures presented in the film. Creating a change but still maintaining traditional values in the culture itself. Changing the dominant social class to be equal, upholding human values, and creating a new definition of culture, more acceptable to all global and traditional societies.

The entire narrative in this film invites the audience to look at culture broadly, to understand that there is no longer such a thing as cultural hegemony or social class, and to even view the world as something dynamic and complex, viewing a world that is inseparable between social, economic and historical. Therefore, the redefinition of culture occurs here. The redefinition of culture in this film is a clear example of how residual, dominant, and emergent cultural elements interact to create a narrative that is relevant for modern audiences.

Based on a Marxist lens, Williams helps us to understand that culture is not a static entity, a meeting between old and new values. *Kubo and the Two Strings* presents Japanese traditions not only preserved, but also mobilized to resist hegemony and create new spaces for cultural expression. Ultimately, this film represents how culture can be redefined to face contemporary challenges, while also being an important reflection on identity, memory and social change.

The redefinition of Japanese culture in *Kubo and the Two Strings* may also be seen for global audiences, as a deep mirroring of cultural memory and resilience. Some audiences perspective reflect the movies related to redefinition of japanese culture from The Los Angeles Times and The Film Stage in IMDb (Internet Movie Database). The Los Angeles Times adds weight to the manner in which this film

shows cherished legends comfort at times of distress, adding emotional depth to these narratives about culture. Meanwhile, The Film Stage comments on how packed the movie is with Japanese mythology and praises the novelty in the storytelling-but only wishes it was focused a bit more to amplify the impact. These perspectives together serve to show how the film speaks to international viewership because it embeds the traditional element of culture with universally understandable feelings of loss and hope, therefore changing their scope toward Japanese culture in a contemporary framework.

2. Structure of Feelings

The structure of feelings can inform every particular work of art including literary works produced in a certain period, which means that more literary texts can be pinned down as a representation of either a purely dominant ideology or a purely residual ideology or purely emergent ideology, but a piece of literature represents a complex totality within which a number of ideological elements are in a state of dynamic interaction with each other (Sahoo, 2024). Structures of feeling reflect particular social and economic conditions, and serve as a link between individual experience and the larger social structure. This concept combines elements of social structures (larger conditions) and individual feelings (personal experiences).

Williams argues that understand the “Structure of feelings” as a way to analyze how individual feelings and experiences are connected to broader social and economic conditions. In a literary context, you can see how characters in films reflect or challenge the dominant feelings of society at that time. Thus, literary analysis focuses not only on theme or style, but also on how the work interacts with society’s collective feelings.

There are several structures of feeling that reflect collective emotional experiences and social changes that are relevant to the film’s narrative. Williams’ concept of structure of feeling refers to affective experiences that have not been fully articulated in the dominant ideology but are felt in everyday life. *Kubo and the Two Strings* conveys complex emotional layers through its characters and narrative, reflecting a collective feeling that transcends the individual and speaks to a global audience. This part combines feelings of loss, connection, identity, and resistance to authority. The film shows how structures of feeling can be articulated through cultural media to reflect the dynamic human condition.

The concept of structure of feelings serves to explain how certain groups in society create a shared understanding that goes beyond official ideology. This concept are forms of collective consciousness that develop in certain historical periods, often latent or marginal. Shows how structures of feeling can be an activator of social and personal change.

2.1 Loss and Longing



Figure 4. *Kubo and the Two Strings*, min. 28:57

The feelings of loss and longing felt by the main character Kubo regarding his parents is an important part of the narrative, as can be seen in figure 4. His mother died to protect Kubo from an attack by the Moon Clan (The Sisters) who wanted to take his left eye, while his father, who was long gone in battle against Kubo's mother's sister, sacrificed himself to protect Kubo and his mother. Even though these feelings are personal, if viewed more broadly, these feelings can reflect the collective experiences that develop in society in the face of social change. The way Kubo overcomes these feelings by accepting reality and continuing to live is a reflection of how individuals and society deal with transitions and transformations. It emphasizes the concept of culture is 'Dynamic' including the lives of the people within it.

2.2 Hope and Resilience in the Face of Adversity



Figure 5. *Kubo and the Two Strings*, min. 58:02

Kubo's journey in searching for his family's identity can emphasize several aspects of feelings, such as the emotional connection between Kubo and the two animals (the monkey and the giant beetle) which develops magnificently, aspects of humanity, care and love always accompany them in building interactions (Figure 5). That's the narrative presented. Resilience in facing difficulties in the narrative is not difficult because it is faced together. The conflict between an emergent culture that seeks to maintain residual cultural aspects and a dominant culture that seeks to erase emotions, emotional connections, memories, and human relationships, involves

more than just physical conflict. Furthermore, this conflict is a struggle to maintain emotional values such as love, humanity, memory and relationships with the past. This reflection of the collective feelings of society will certainly develop into hope. Maintaining their identity under the pressure of a dominant power that threatens to flatten all cultural differences.

Some evidences are presented in the scene when Kubo is involved in a fight with the Moon King, where in the end Kubo realizes that behind every bad thing that happens in this world, there is actually beauty, which is much more beautiful. Everyone can feel and see it, including Kubo, even though he uses one eye. From that, Kubo's character finally finds out why his eyes were targeted by the Moon Clan, with the quote "I know why you want my eyes. Because without it I can't look into the eyes of another and see their soul. Their love." (Haimes & Tindle, 2016). Realizing that the only thing that cannot be changed and controlled by dominant culture are memories, memories of those we love and who are long gone. Keeping memories deep in the heart, living with love, makes an individual stronger than the dominance of the Moon King.

In the retelling above where there is a part of Kubo's dialogue with his grandfather. He said that behind bad things there is beauty in them; it refers to his right eye which was taken away by his grandfather and now he only has one eye to be able to see good things. In the end, Kubo found out the reason why his grandfather wanted his eyeballs so badly, it was all because only Kubo could unite emergent culture and dominant culture when viewed through a Marxist lens. Only Kubo can see every collective feeling of society through living souls, sorrows and joys, all filled with love. Appreciating how memories can coexist with the current situation develops deep in each of their hearts that can never be taken away by the dominant, and that is the reason why the ordinary people in this film have a strong positive energy.

2.3 Tradition and Modernity



Figure 6. *Kubo and the Two Strings*, min. 1:28:13

Williams tried to show the direction of awareness of social life which departs from materialism to awareness of culture. Because, if not following up on the previous theory initiated by Marx, there are possible indications of the 'Deification' of material nature (Aziz, 2021). According to Wilkins (2019) there is a sense of

balance to many aspects of Japanese culture and life—balance between modern and historical, balance between city and nature, balance between the individual and the society. Modernization refers to social, cultural and intellectual conditions or circumstances that arise as a result of major changes including changes in ways of thinking. This is often related to values such as rationality, individualism, secularism and progress. This includes changes in the way people think and interact with each other. It also encompasses wider social experiences, such as changes in social relationships, power structures, and identity. The difference between tradition and modernity in the scene above is very great. The conflict between traditional values and modern challenges; In figure 6, Kubo tries to respect his cultural heritage, yet he has to face the new realities. In a Marxist context, this shows tension between residual and emergent culture. There is a sense of ambivalence and tension that arises from trying to balance respecting tradition and adapting to changing times.

2.4 Love in Their Souls



Figure 7. *Kubo and the Two Strings*, min. 1:32:45

At the end of the scene, there is a portrait of Kubo's complete family smiling with great relief (Figure 7). Audiences must have guessed that the climax of this film's narrative is that Kubo has reached emotional maturity through his struggle against the Moon King. These emotional changes reflect larger processes of social transformation, in which traditional values such as love, loyalty, and courage are integrated with new experiences. This structure of feelings reflects the dynamics that occur in society when old values adapt and adapt to new realities. By maintaining cultural identity, the creation of emergent culture can develop in a broader cultural context without the presence of a dominant culture. In general, Japanese society often considers it important to maintain this cultural heritage as part of their national identity. Therefore, the structure of feelings in this film shows that residual culture is not completely separate from emergent culture, but rather influences and adapts to each other. Based on the previous point regarding tradition and modernity becoming a combination and creating harmonization. The Japanese view of culture represented in this film is about emergent and residual, reflecting rich and complex dynamics in an ever-evolving social and cultural context. This is

in line with Raymond Williams' definition of culture regarding redefining a culture through a Marxist lens.

The structure of feelings described above is a feeling of collectivism experienced by society. In this section we can understand how *Kubo and the Two Strings* reflects complex emotional experiences and how cultural values are formed in a broader social context. This structure of feeling is a means of understanding and dealing with cultural and social change, as well as being a bridge between past and present, between tradition and innovation, and between individuals and society. That's how the structure of feelings works.

The film *Kubo and the Two Strings* is an animated production that narrates the story of Kubo's journey in an attempt to find his identity and face his family's legacy. From a Marxist viewpoint this film goes beyond being just a piece of art. *Kubo and the Two Strings* is a representation of the redefinition of Japanese culture apart from the cultural hegemony of dominating power. Reflecting how culture can adapt and develop also creating space for dialogue between tradition and modernity. Apart from redefining Japanese culture itself, this film is a representation of how the structure of individual feelings can develop into collective feelings of society and build strong emotional connections. Where this feeling structure appears to be a means for society to understand and be able to deal with cultural and social changes in the scope of life.

Based on the explanations, the scene of war between the Moon King and Kubo is one of the strong depictions of cultural hegemony and resistance. We can understand how this confrontation symbolizes the struggle against oppressive power structures in Japanese culture. During this pivotal scene, Kubo's defiance against the Moon King serves as a challenge to the hegemonic forces that try to eliminate individual and cultural identities. The dominant powers impose their values and suppress other voices. On the other hand, Kubo's storytelling as an act of resistance shows how deep cultural memory is, combined with personal feelings. It was perfectly embodying Williams's concept of the "Structure of feeling" in capturing emotional and social undercurrents of a community. This scene not only redefines Japanese culture as a dynamic interplay of tradition and resistance but also shows the power of narrative in reclaiming identity and agency against oppressive forces.

CONCLUSION

The film proved can reveal two aspects covered by the Marxist lens, the redefinition of Japanese culture and the structure of feelings. In the scope of redefining Japanese culture, this film shows how Japanese culture as a residual culture, was re-adapted in a new form for a global audience. There is no longer a dominant culture. Such arts as origami and shamisen were not only preserved as residual culture but also redefined as symbols of courage and freedom. Within the scope of the structure of feelings, Kubo's character succeeds in reflecting collective emotions such as loss and longing, hope and resilience in the face of adversity, respect, and love. This structure of feeling illustrates how art and culture function as tools of resistance. Forming a change

that starts from individual feelings to feelings of collectivism in a wider social scope. The transition between Marxist theory and cultural studies emphasizes the importance of seeing how power, ideology and culture are interconnected in forming social identity.

The discussion of cultural dynamics related to the movement of the times which continues to develop is a limitation of this research. The dynamic cultural interpretation requires further analysis of relevant objects, such as exploring other films related to cultural contexts that function as media for social discussion. The results of this research are intended to provide insight into cultural studies in films. Therefore, further research can produce findings that provide broader insight into subsequent cultural developments.

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