



LESSON 7

Southeast Asia,
film and empire

Integrated essay

Euro-American colonialism has long been recognized as one of the central episodes in Southeast Asian history, defining borders, shaping cultures, and leaving a lasting legacy in the structures of state authority. Indeed, all Southeast Asian nations experienced formal colonization with the notable exception of Thailand.

The emergence of colonial control coincided with the development of film as one of the dominant media for popular culture across the world, including in Southeast Asia. Film promoters gained large profits by distributing Hollywood productions all over the world. Rapidly, film also provided a powerful vehicle for colonizers and colonized alike. Imperial powers created film boards, celebrated their accomplishments, and chronicled the cultures of the people they controlled through film. Meanwhile, Southeast Asians began spreading anti-colonial nationalist messages by re-deploying and re-purposing artistic techniques drawn from Western film.

In this lesson plan, the focus is on two forms of film that are critical to understanding the relationship between cinema and empire: movies created by colonial agencies to promote their regimes, and movies created either by Southeast Asians or their supporters. Although most films seemed to borrow heavily from the repertoire of Hollywood blockbusters, colonial and anti-colonial films also functioned quite differently, blending global and local influences to advance specific political projects. These films would both maintain empire and play a critical role in the development of 'modern' national cultures that persist to the present day.

In relation to one of the key themes of this Unit, regionalism, these films will show how Southeast Asians came to view themselves not only in opposition to colonial powers, but as part of a global community that included other Asian nations. It will also show how important global forces are for defining what constitutes the 'nation' and an idea of local culture.

Note: The success of this lesson depends significantly on the cooperation and substantive input from students. A major challenge lies in concretizing the idea of local, national, and global which may be generated by film during the age of European and American colonialism.

Supplementary resources

Chua, Ai Lin. 2012. 'Singapore's 'Cinema-Age' of the 1930s: Hollywood and the Shaping of Singapore Modernity'. *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 4, pp. 592–604.

Bloom, Peter J. 2008. *French Colonial Documentary: Mythologies of Humanitarianism*. University of Minnesota Press.

De Klerk, Nico. 2016. 'The Transport of Audiences': Making cinema 'National'. Abel, R. et al (eds), *Early Cinema and the 'National'*. pp. 101–108. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Hogenkamp, Bert. 1997. 'Indonesia Calling: A Film on the Crossroads of Four Continents'. *Labour History*, Vol. 73, pp. 226–231.

Setijadi-Dunn C., and Barker, T. 2010. 'Imagining 'Indonesia': Ethnic Chinese Film Producers in Pre-Independence Cinema'. *Asian Cinema*, Vol. 21, No. 2, pp. 25–47.

Sorlin, Pierre. 1991. 'The Fanciful Empire: French Feature Films and the Colonies in the 1930s'. *French Cultural Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 5, pp. 335–351.

Tofighian, Nadi. 2008. 'José Nepomuceno and the Creation of a Filipino National Consciousness'. *Film History*, Vol. 20, No. 1, pp. 77–94.

Subject	History/Social Studies/Cultural Studies
Topic	Southeast Asia, film, and empire
Level	Lower secondary
Key idea	During the colonial period, colonial powers as well as nationalist movements used movies to deliver their respective political messages. Building up on global and local elements, movies played an important role in defining what constitutes the 'nation' and an idea of local culture.
Key concepts	Colonial powers Independence movements Local culture and global cultures Movie industry Pop (popular) culture
No. of periods/lessons	2 periods (1 period is approximately 50 minutes)
Facilities needed	A/V equipment and Internet access to play the video clips (or hard copy with similar content) Sources and handouts for distribution
Prerequisite knowledge	Students should have some rudimentary familiarity with film, movies and ideas of culture.

Learning objectives

By the end of the lesson, the students will be able to:

KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	ATTITUDES
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understand the history of empires through an accessible topic: film and movies. 2. Be able to identify key historical facts in the construction of empires, such as which empire governed which nation and the timeline of colonization. 3. Appreciate the importance of films in disseminating political messages, including that of local film in creating new 'national' cultures and independence movements. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Practise listening, watching, and note-taking skills. 2. Put into practice online research, discussion and writing skills. 3. Develop analytical and critical skills. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Appreciate the debates about local versus global culture. 2. Critically discuss the difference between the 'cultural imperialism' of Hollywood and the political imperialism of empires as represented by colonial film production. 3. Respect the efforts of Southeast Asians to adapt and localize international films.

Period 1

Section	Lesson Development	Resources	Rationale
Introduction [5 minutes]	<p>1. Hook activity: Trailer of a French film, <i>Indochine</i></p> <p>1.1 Show the movie trailer.</p> <p>1.2 Ask the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you think of or feel when you watch this movie trailer? • What type of relationships between Southeast Asians and Europeans do you see? • What type of relationships do you see between men and women? • Who or which characters seem to be in control? • Does there seem to be conflict? <p>1.3 Possible points to highlight are proposed in Source 1.</p> <p>1.4 Conclude that this movie shows several dimensions of European colonialism in Southeast Asia, particularly political domination, complicated relationships between Europeans and Southeast Asians, and violent conflict. Film provides an interesting entry point into understanding the history of imperialism and empire in Southeast Asia.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Source 1: <i>Indochine</i> trailer (2m 1s) youtu.be/FxMoREeix6Q <i>Caution: The video shows people kissing at 0:59 – 1:01. Teacher should use discretion as to whether it is appropriate to show this part of the clip.</i> 	<p>The hook activity engages students in the lesson. It lays the foundation for the upcoming discussions on the power of film – a topic relatable to lower secondary students – to illuminate what might be otherwise seen as uninteresting historical events like empire and imperialism.</p>
Development [40 minutes]	<p>2. Teacher talk: The history of film and empire</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries several Western powers took control over Southeast Asian nations (Source 2). • In the meantime, the film industry rapidly developed. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Motion picture cameras invented in 1890s; - First film studio built in 1897; - First permanent theatre showing only films: 1906; - First feature length film using multi-reel film: 1906; - First talking movie: 1923. • Although many nations produced movies, the drama, action, and spectacle of exotic locations made American films the most popular. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In 1926, there were twenty-nine movie houses in French Indochina. American films and films known as 'Film America' accounted for 75 per cent. - In pre-war Singapore, 70 per cent of films shown were American versus only 16 per cent for British. - In colonial Indonesia, the first movie shown was made by Dutch-German crews, <i>Loetoeng Kasaroeng</i> (Enchanted Monkey). - Cinema halls and film distribution are also quite cosmopolitan in nature. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Source 2: Map of imperial powers in Southeast Asia ca. 1930 	<p>The teacher talk introduces the concept of 'political imperialism' versus 'cultural imperialism.'</p>

Section	Lesson Development	Resources	Rationale
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several film companies were established by colonial governments. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mission Cinématographique de l'Indochine, with offices in Hanoi and Saigon received a five-year contract with the French administration to produce a minimum of 2,700 meters of film per year. By 1927, it distributed 152 films through the Paris-based Indochinese economic affairs office. In addition to producing photographic and documentary footage, Indochine Films was also charged with showing French propaganda films in towns and villages throughout Indochina. - Patronage Laïque Cochinchinois was a French lay educational initiative based in Saigon. With thirteen projectors, the organization developed an archive of 840 films and presented approximately 5,000 recreational screenings. Many of these films were American and European westerns and comedies. They also compiled and screened at least 1,000 educational films on various topics including hygiene. - The Association Koloniaal Instituut in Amsterdam was founded in 1910 as a centre for the promotion of science, education, trade, and manufacturing. Worried about a lack of interest in the Dutch colonies, in particular the East Indies (now Indonesia), the association's founders conceived of the Colonial Institute as a centre for the collection of data and the spread of knowledge about Dutch overseas territories. They commissioned photographic and cinematographic materials on a vast range of topics such as nature, local customs and traditions, local industry, everyday life of European and local populations, infrastructure, education, hygiene and health care, and cash crops, among others. • Ask students their opinion on why colonial governments wanted to make films. <i>Possible answers may include:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Not profit-driven as it was for Hollywood;</i> - <i>Aimed to document and control local cultures;</i> - <i>Usually, it showed the benefits of being ruled by a colonial government;</i> - <i>It reinforced the idea of racial hierarchy;</i> - <i>It communicated the idea of 'progress' and 'modern life', made possible by the colonial power.</i> 		

Section	Lesson Development	Resources	Rationale
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The group work activity will analyse a film made by J.C. Lamster, a Dutch army captain commissioned by the Koloniaal Instituut to make films on the East Indies. <p>3. Group work: Guided discovery and cooperative learning</p> <p>3.1 Divide the class into groups of three or four students.</p> <p>3.2 Distribute Handout 1.</p> <p>3.3 Groups watch the film by J.C. Lamster (Source 3).</p> <p>3.4 Groups divide the questions among their members and fill in the handout (15 minutes).</p> <p>3.5 Elicit responses from the groups.</p> <p>3.6 Emphasize the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most of the film focuses on transport, railroads, roads, cars, horse-drawn transports, etc. Farming and trees are often shown. Only a few Indonesian people appear in the movie and it is difficult to see them well. The focus on infrastructure and agriculture is meant to show how the Dutch improve lives in Indonesia. <p>However, it is not really a film about Indonesian people nor is it trying to include Indonesian perspectives.</p> <p>4. Discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How can one define and characterize colonial film? How do colonial films represent race and culture? Do colonial films allow any inclusion of local Southeast Asian voices? Are colonial films likely to make as much of an impact as Hollywood or popular films? <p>5. Sharing personal experiences</p> <p>5.1 Explain that all movies try to portray a specific place and time. Much as in J.C. Lamster's work, they use technology, language or cities to convey that sense of time and place.</p> <p>5.2 Divide the class into groups of three or four students.</p> <p>5.3 In each group, students share about recent movies they have seen.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> They will specifically focus on (1) the technology; (2) the type of place (countryside, city, specific nation); (3) the language used (national/local, contemporary/old-fashioned, formal/informal). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Source 3: J.C. Lamster's film trailer (3 m 38 s) youtu.be/jrgt83wPGiM Handout 1: Analysing J.C. Lamster's film trailer 	<p>Cooperative learning design encourages students to develop learning skills in a social setting – cooperation, communication, leadership, followership, analysis and synthesis.</p> <p>The group discussion allows students to compare personal experiences with what they have learned in class</p>

Section	Lesson Development	Resources	Rationale
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They will also try to identify local and global themes. • They will consider whether these elements of contemporary film are similar or different from what was shown in J.C. Lamster's film. <p>5.4 Elicit answers from groups.</p>		
<p>Closure [5 minutes]</p>	<p>6. Conclusion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the colonial period, while most movies are foreign to Southeast Asia, they usually are not produced by the colonial regime but by Americans. • However, messages and influence of these films can, in part, help to reinforce the control of the colonial regime. • The J.C. Lamster film illustrates that colonial authorities took film seriously as a way to represent local cultures, to define what constituted 'progress' and 'modern life,' and to control Southeast Asian nations. • Even fun and entertainment could be important sources of power for imperial regimes. • Nowadays, contemporary films still borrow heavily from their precursors. <p>7. Suggestions for home extension activity</p> <p>7.1 Groups can finish the assignment as homework and support their responses with information exchanged during the discussion.</p>		<p>The summary highlights the key points that students are expected to take home.</p> <p>The home extension activities help students to consolidate and extend the knowledge acquired.</p>

Period 2

Section	Lesson Development	Resources	Rationale
Introduction [5 minutes]	<p>8. Teacher talk</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the colonial period, not all films were made by Hollywood or colonial governments. A film industry produced by local people emerged during this period. • However, often Chinese or Indians living in Southeast Asia produced these films, showing the complex nature of global influence in this industry. • Examples of Chinese Indonesian films: <i>Si Tonjat</i> (1930), <i>Terang Boelan (Full Moon, 1937)</i>, <i>Impian di Bali (Dreams in Bali, 1939)</i> and <i>Rentjong Atjeh (Acehnese Rentjong, 1940)</i> • Also, local films were still very much influenced by Hollywood and Western productions. • Nevertheless, various national cultures started to appear through these productions. • These films often played a large role in nationalist movements. 		The teacher talk provides basic knowledge and information on local and national film that will allow students to complete the group work.
Development [40 minutes]	<p>9. Group work: Analysis of advertisements for locally produced films</p> <p>9.1 Divide the class into groups of three or four students.</p> <p>9.2 Distribute Source 4 – three advertisements from two films <i>Kris Mataram</i> and <i>Rentjong Atjeh</i> – and Handout 2.</p> <p>9.3 Groups divide the questions among their members and fill in the handout (10 minutes).</p> <p>9.4 Elicit responses from the groups. Suggested answers include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indonesian features in both posters: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Kris Mataram's poster mentions that the film is 'spoken and written in Malay' (Bitjara Menjanji Melayu);</i> - <i>The main actress, Fifi Young, is wearing a traditional Javanese dress known as lurik kebaya;</i> - <i>The men are wearing songkok/kopiah Malay hats;</i> - <i>The font style is Javanese;</i> - <i>The poster mentions that the film includes nine popular keroncong songs, a popular Indonesian style of music;</i> - <i>The Javanese keris is a strong symbol of Javanese culture;</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Source 4: Selection of movie posters • Handout 2: Analysing movie posters 	Group discussion of images and advertisements encourages students to engage in careful reading and analysis, to cooperate and share responsibilities, and to learn how to improve their communication skills.

Section	Lesson Development	Resources	Rationale
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In <i>Rentjong Atjeh</i>, local weaponry, the Acehnese rentjong is shown; - Characters wear traditional garments such as batik. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hollywood and Western features: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Kris Mataram</i> has a mix of Dutch and Malay language; - <i>Kris Mataram</i> also shows Western romantic poses; - <i>Rentjong Atjeh</i> shows a generic exotic landscape that could be located in the South Pacific or in many other locations, a typical feature of Western style films; - The primitive nature of local people is exaggerated in <i>Rentjong Atjeh</i>; this is also a typical feature of Western films about non-Western peoples. <p>9.5 Emphasize that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New local film industries blended Hollywood and local styles. • Even if these posters borrow negative images of non-Western peoples inspired by Western films, they are also beginning to forge distinctive national cultures. <p>Note: The Indonesian movies posters can be replaced by posters of movies produced in other countries by local directors, and showing both global and local features.</p> <p>10. Group work: Analysis of nationalist film <i>Indonesia Calling</i></p> <p>10.1 Provide a brief overview of the film:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Indonesia Calling</i> is a 1945–1946 film made by a Dutch documentary film maker, Joris Ivens. • Joris Ivens was the Netherlands East Indies film commissioner. • The movie is filmed in Sydney, Australia. • It documents how trade union seamen and waterside workers refused to service Dutch ships (known as the ‘Black Armada’) containing arms and ammunition to be sent to suppress Indonesia’s independence movement. • Ivens’ documentary gradually became a symbol of the defence of Indonesian independence even for those who had not seen the film. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Source 5: <i>Indonesia Calling</i> youtu.be/iAzfM9cQvZQ • Handout 3: Understanding <i>Indonesia Calling</i> 	<p>Video watching and group discussion encourage critical analysis and discussion skills.</p>

Section	Lesson Development	Resources	Rationale
	<p>10.2 Emphasize the contradictory fact that an Indonesian 'nationalist' film was made by a Dutchman who served as Netherlands East Indies film commissioner.</p> <p>10.3 Divide the class into groups of three or four students.</p> <p>10.4 Distribute Handout 3.</p> <p>10.5 Watch the movie or selected parts of it.</p> <p>10.6 Groups discuss and fill in the handout.</p> <p>10.7 Elicit responses from the groups. Alternatively, students can present their findings as a home assignment report.</p>		
<p>Closure [5 minutes]</p>	<p>11. Conclusion</p> <p>11.1 Summarize or highlight the major points in the past two sessions, adding some key components from the discussions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Movies have been used for entertainment, economic as well as political purposes. • During the colonial period, movies were used by colonial powers as well as by nationalist movements to deliver their respective messages. • Independently from their makers and objectives, movies often blended global and local features. • Nowadays, contemporary films still borrow heavily from their precursors. <p>12. Suggested home extension activities</p> <p>12.1 Students create a blog to post their reflections on contemporary Southeast Asian film.</p> <p>12.2 Students write a news report or a review on a contemporary Southeast Asian film. They evaluate how much of the content, style and imagery is inspired by Western and Hollywood film and how much has a distinct local character.</p> <p>12.3 Students create a poster for their own film that will reflect local culture together with common themes from Hollywood cinema to appeal to popular audiences.</p>		<p>The summary highlights the key points that students are expected to take home.</p> <p>The home extension activities help students to consolidate and extend the knowledge acquired in a concrete and creative manner.</p>

Sources and handouts

Glossary

Colonialism:	a relationship between an indigenous (or forcibly imported) majority and a minority of foreign invaders. The fundamental decisions affecting the lives of the colonized people are made and implemented by the colonial rulers in pursuit of interests that are often defined in a distant metropolis. Rejecting cultural compromises with the colonized population, the colonizers are convinced of their own superiority and their ordained mandate to rule.
Cinema:	motion picture, the art of moving images; a visual medium that tells stories and exposes reality.
Culture:	the system of shared beliefs, values, customs, behaviours, and artefacts that the members of society use to cope with their world and with one another, and that are transmitted from generation to generation through learning.
Dutch East Indies:	a former name (1798–1945) of Indonesia, also called the Netherlands East Indies.
Empire:	extended relations of power across territorial spaces over which they have no prior or given legal sovereignty, and where, in one or more of the domains of economics, politics, and culture, they gain some measure of extensive hegemony over those spaces for the purpose of extracting or accruing value.
Nationalism:	the term 'nationalism' is generally used to describe two phenomena: (1) the attitude that the members of a nation have when they care about their national identity, and (2) the actions that the members of a nation take when seeking to achieve (or sustain) self-determination.

Source 1: *Indochine* trailer



Indochine trailer (1993)

Video clip (2 m 1 s)

youtu.be/FxMoREIix6Q

Source: Video Detective

Caution: The video shows people kissing at 0:59–1:01. Teacher should use discretion as to whether it is appropriate to show this part of the clip.

Background on the movie *Indochine*

Indochine is a Sony Pictures Home Entertainment movie from 1992.

It tells the story of Elaine, a French woman owning large rubber plantations, and Camille, her Vietnamese adopted daughter. Both women fall in love with the same French navy officer during the uprising against French colonial power in Viet Nam.

It was directed by Regis Wargnier and starred Catherine Deneuve, Vincent Perez, Linh Dan Pham, Jean Yanne, and Dominique Blanc.

In 1993, it received many international awards including the Best Foreign Language film at the US Academy Awards and the Golden Globes as well as several French Cesar awards.

Guiding questions for class discussion

- What do you think of or feel when you watch this movie trailer?
- What type of relationships between Southeast Asians and Europeans do you see?
- What type of relationships do you see between men and women?
- Who or which characters seem to be in control?
- Does there seem to be conflict?

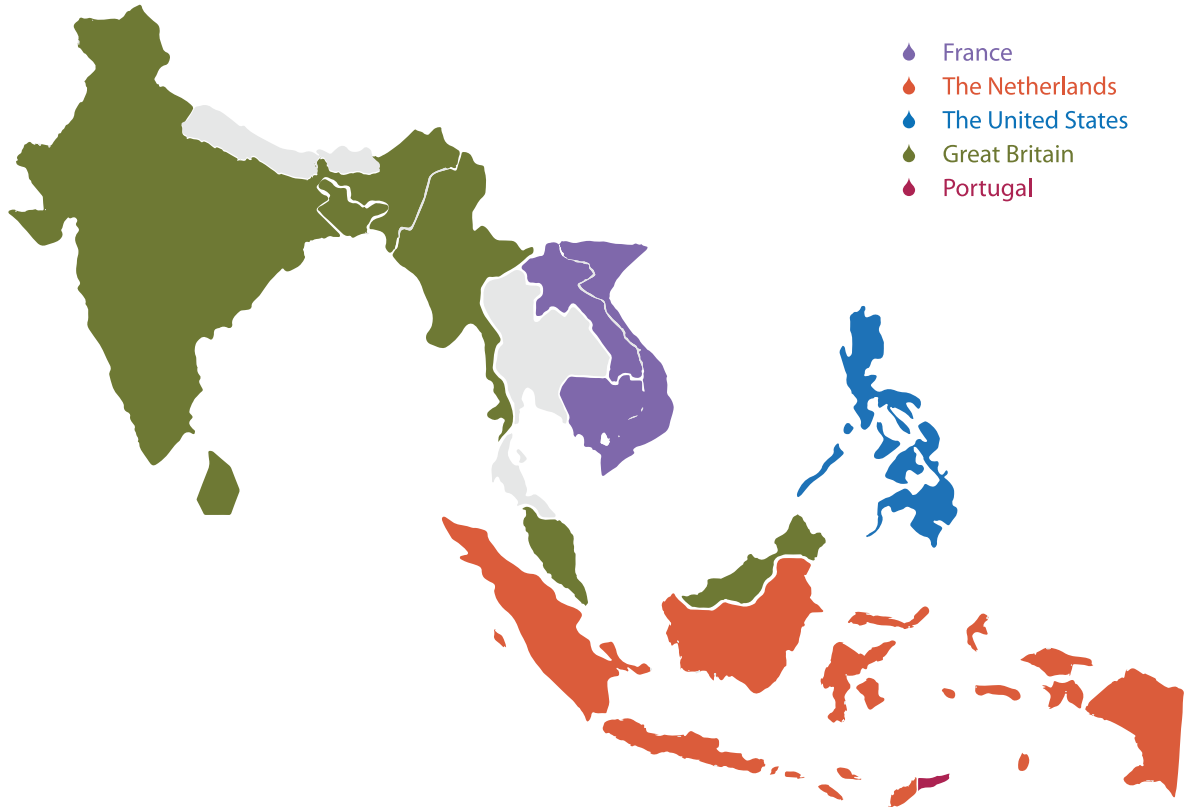
Possible elements to highlight

This movie shows several dimensions of European colonialism in Southeast Asia, particularly political domination, complicated relationships between Europeans and Southeast Asians, and violent conflict.

- The reaction of Vietnamese to the European woman played by Catherine Deneuve (0:33).
- The romantic triangle between the European man, the European woman, and the Vietnamese girl.
- The tendency to depict Vietnamese as large groups, e.g. in the street (0:12), on boats (1:14).
- The uniforms of the French officer.

- The clothes.
- The French party (1:09).
- The clothing of the Vietnamese girl, sometimes Western style and sometimes Vietnamese style.
- The friendship between the Vietnamese girl and the French woman (0:44, 0:48, 1:08): they have a mother-daughter relationship though adoption.
- Vietnamese woman performing the sign of the cross (1:21).
- Opium smoking (1:24).

Source 2: Map of imperial powers in Southeast Asia ca. 1930



Colonized nations:

- Burma: 1824–1948
- Cambodia (Indochina): 1887–1947
- Indonesia: 1800–1949
- Laos (Indochina): 1887–1947
- Malaysia: 1874–1957
- Philippines: 1521–1898 (Spanish), 1898–1946 (United States)
- Singapore: 1819–1959
- Thailand: not officially colonized
- Viet Nam (Indochina): 1887–1947

Source 3: J. C. Lamster's film trailer

Trailer of the J.C. Lamster's film produced by the Koloniaal Instituut in Amsterdam

Video clip (3 m 38 s)

youtu.be/jrgt83wPGiM

Source: Beeldvoorbeeld

Note: Turn volume off so film can play silently as it was originally intended

Background on the film

The Association Koloniaal Instituut in Amsterdam was founded in 1910 as a centre for the promotion of science, education, trade, and manufacturing. Worried about a lack of interest in the Dutch colonies, in particular the East Indies (now Indonesia), the association's founders conceived of the Colonial Institute as a centre for the collection of data and the spread of knowledge about Dutch overseas territories.

In 1911, the Institute approached J.C. Lamster, an army captain in the Dutch East-Indies, with a deep knowledge of the colony, its people, and their customs during one of his leaves.

J.C. Lamster was sent to Pathé, in Paris, for a crash course in filmmaking. He was then commissioned to make films about the East Indies. Photographic and cinematographic records included a vast range of topics such as nature, local customs and traditions, local industry, everyday life of European and local populations, infrastructures, education, hygiene and health care, and cash crops, among others.

Guiding questions for class discussion

- How can one define and characterize colonial film?
- How do colonial films represent race and culture?
- Do colonial films allow any inclusion of local Southeast Asian voices?
- Are colonial films likely to make as much of an impact as Hollywood or popular films?

Possible elements to highlight during the discussion following the group work

- Most of the film focuses on transport, railroads, roads, cars, horse-drawn transports, etc.
- Farming and trees often shown.
- View of local Indonesians is often quite obscure, hard to see people.
- Focus on transportation and agriculture is meant to show how Dutch improve lives in Indonesia.
- However, it is not really a film about Indonesians; little room for inclusion of Indonesian perspectives.

Source 4: Selection of movie posters

Kris Mataram is a 1940 film directed by a Chinese Indonesian, Njoo Cheong Seng. It is a romance about a Central Javanese aristocrat.

a. Promotional poster 1 from *Kris Mataram*

Kris Mataram

JOIHUA WONG
Introducing
FFI YOUNG
(DEWI MAYA)In

Kris Mataram

Kronjeng Special

Merata PERHO 7 terapan
MELINGGONG 11 Aug. 1940

Source:

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kris_Mataram

b. Promotional poster 2 from *Kris Mataram*

JOSHUA WONG
— SUPER —
— PRODUCTIE —
1940
BITJARA MELAIDE
MENIANJI

PREMIERE
BOAT W. JAYA
DEN
THEATER
BATAVIA
KEMIS
20
JUNI '40

PREMIERE
BOAT SUMATRA
ORIENTAL
BIOSCOOP
PALEMBANG
SELASA
25
JUNI '40

PREMIERE
BOAT G. JAYA
SAMPORNA
THEATER
SOERABAJA
SELASA
5
JULI '40

ORIENTAL FILM COMPANY
FIFI YOUNG
OMAR RODRIGA
RATNA WATI MOEN

KRIS MATARAM

ORIENTAL FILM COY DISTRIBUTEUR

REPERFORMED BY
BATAVIA C
TELEFOON 802-44

Source:
commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Kris-mataram-fifi-young.jpg

c. Promotional poster 3 from *Rentjong Atjeh*

Source:

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rentjong_Atjeh

Source 5: *Indonesia Calling*

***Indonesia Calling* (1946)**

Video documentary (22 m 52 s)

youtu.be/iAzfM9cQvZQ

Source: wwssjj

Background on the film

- *Indonesia Calling* is a 1945–1946 film made by a Dutch documentary film maker, Joris Ivens.
- Joris Ivens was the Netherlands East Indies film commissioner.
- The movie was filmed in Sydney, Australia.
- It documents how trade union seamen and waterside workers refused to service Dutch ships (known as the 'Black Armada') containing arms and ammunition to be sent to suppress Indonesia's independence movement.
- Ivens' documentary gradually became a symbol of the defence of Indonesian independence even for those who had not seen the film.

Guiding questions for class discussion

- Can Southeast Asia nationalism be promoted by a colonizer?
- How did European colonialism affect Southeast Asian nationalism?

Handout 1: Analysing J.C. Lamster's film

J.C. Lamster's film trailer

youtu.be/jrqt83wPGiM

Background on the film

The Association Koloniaal Instituut in Amsterdam was founded in 1910 as a centre for the promotion of science, education, trade, and manufacturing. Worried about a lack of interest in the Dutch colonies, in particular the East Indies (now Indonesia), the association's founders conceived of the Colonial Institute as a centre for the collection of data and the spread of knowledge about Dutch overseas territories.

In 1911, the Institute approached J.C. Lamster, an army captain in the Dutch East-Indies with a deep knowledge of the colony, its people, and their customs during one of his leaves.

J.C. Lamster was sent to Pathé, in Paris, for a crash course in filmmaking. He was then commissioned to make films about the East Indies. Photographic and cinematographic records included a vast range of topics such as nature, local customs and traditions, local industry, everyday life of European and local populations, infrastructures, education, hygiene and health care, and cash crops, among others.

1. Watch and take notes on J.C. Lamster video. Here are some aspects of the videos to which you should pay especially close attention:
 - a. Types of transportation shown in the film
 - b. Types of buildings shown in the film
 - c. Clothes of Indonesians
 - d. Portrayal of Indonesians

2. Did you think this film did a good job of showing Indonesian culture?

3. Why do you think there are so many roads and railroads shown in this film?

4. Do you think this film would hold the attention of audience? Why or why not?

5. Do you think this film would be helpful in establishing Dutch control in Indonesia? Why or why not?

Handout 2: Analysing movie posters

Kris Mataram is a 1940 film produced directed by a Chinese Indonesian, Njoo Cheong Seng. It is a romance about a central Javanese aristocrat.

Rentjong Atjeh is a 1939 pirate action movie.

1. What aspects of Hollywood or Western film culture do you see in these posters?

2. What aspects of local Indonesian culture are shown in these films?

3. Do you think these film posters illustrate a positive or negative view of life in Indonesia? Why? Provide examples.

4. Do you think there is a good balance of local Indonesian and global Western influences in these movie posters? Why or why not?

Handout 3: Understanding *Indonesia Calling*

1. Fill in the blanks with the correct answers:

a. _____ (number) Indonesians boarded the Esperance Bay ship from Australia to Java to become the first Indonesians to make this journey after World War II.

b. The representative of the Australian Trade Union movement gave a _____
_____ (object) as a gift to the Indonesians making the voyage on the Esperance Bay ship.

c. What examples does the narrator give that Australians 'know the Indonesians well'?

d. Which of these 'freedoms' was NOT proclaimed as part of the new constitution of independent Indonesia?

- (1.) Freedom of the press
- (2.) Freedom to join a party
- (3.) Freedom of expression
- (4.) Freedom of assembly

e. What was the name of the dance that the narrator claimed was over 1,500 years old and arrived before the Dutch or the Portuguese came to Java?

f. How much in profits did the narrator claim the Dutch had stolen from Indonesia?

(value of money in pounds)

g. Why did Indonesian seamen (sea workers) go on strike? Explain:

h. How many Dutch soldiers were on one boat in an Australian harbour waiting to go to Indonesia? _____ (number)

i. What did Australian and Indonesian workers do to stop these Dutch boats?

j. A representative from what other country voiced support for Indonesian independence?

k. Why do you think a Dutch filmmaker would have supported Indonesian independence? Explain and provide examples:

l. How do you think Indonesians could have cooperated with Europeans or Australians to advance the cause of independence?

m. Do you think this sort of foreign film would have had a big impact on Indonesian nationalism? On Indonesian national film?

