

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Theoretical Framework

2.1.1. Stuart Hall's *Decoding*

Williams (2003, p. 191) states that David Morley and Charlotte Brunsdon's study towards the audience for BBC TV news magazine *Nationwide* in 1978 is commonly supposed as the beginning of the audience research in which the approach was influenced by Hall's *encoding-decoding*. Hall's *decoding* can't be detached from the concept of *Encoding*, namely a process of creating the messages in media texts by the producers. Hall (2003, p.195) argues that the content of media is encoded ideologically so that there is one dominant message coming from media's tendency to reproduce the meaning preferred by the powerful groups in society. Because of this reason, Hall proposes a concept of *Decoding* to understand the media texts or messages from the audience side. Media texts are open to various interpretations depending on the audience's social background and experience.

Hall distinguishes three kinds of decoding or reading of media content.

First and in keeping with the professional code, an audience member may adopt a dominant code which accepts the preferred meanings intended by the

encoders (i.e. media producers). A second possibility is that an audience member adopts a negotiated code which accepts some preferred meanings of a media production but opposes others. On a general level, the encoded meanings may be understood and endorsed; but on a more specific, local level these meanings and the rules within which they operate may be discarded, as audience members consider their own positions to be exceptions to the general rule. . . Third and finally, an audience member may completely disagree with the preferred meanings of media producers (both on a general and local level), in which case they adopt an oppositional code and ‘decode the message in a globally contrary way’ (Laughey 63)

Ien Ang develops Hall’s three categories of audience decoding to the spectators of *Dallas* movie and categorizes the spectators as the lovers, the ironists and the haters (Puryanti, Itafarida & Nuzuliyanti 2007). Meanwhile, Storey (2006, p. 149-151) suggests four positions of consuming *Dallas* from the letters Ang receives based on the ideology of mass culture: (i) the haters; (ii) ironists; (iii) fans; (iv) populists. The haters identify negatively *Dallas* as both an example of mass culture and a means to support their dislike of the program. The ironists are possible to like

Dallas and still subscribe to the ideology of mass culture, resolved by ‘mockery and irony’. The difference of both positions is that, on the one hand, the ironists can have pleasure without guilt although they know mass culture is bad; on the other hand, the haters can suffer a conflict of feelings due to the ironists’ same knowledge of mass culture.

The fans and the populists are those identified as people duped by mass culture. To defend their pleasure against the withering rejection of mass-culture ideology, the fans utilize different strategies. Firstly, they ‘internalize’ the ideology; acknowledge the ‘dangers’ of *Dallas*; but, declare one’s ability to deal with them in order to derive pleasure from *Dallas*. Secondly, they ‘negotiate’ *Dallas*. Thirdly, they use ‘surface irony’ as a defense mechanism to fulfill the social norms set by mass-culture ideology, while secretly they ‘really’ like *Dallas*. The populists have a belief that one’s taste is equal to another’s taste because taste is autonomous and open to individual inflection (Storey 2006).

2.2. Review of Related Studies

In terms of related studies, the writer faces difficulties in finding similar studies about the redefinition or recontextualization of the concept of *dakwah* or *da’i*. But, the writer finds several studies that use in-depth interview as the method to collect data and audience reception or decoding as the method of analysis.

First is the research conducted by Puryanti, Itafarida & Nuzuliyanti (2007) entitled ‘*Film Princess Hours: Resepsi dan Pembacaan Makna Budaya di Kalangan*

Remaja'. This research not only identifies and categorizes teenage spectators watching *Princess Hours* films, but also reveals the underlying ideology. The researchers use an ethnographic audience research towards eleven teenage respondents by asking them to send her opinions about the film in papers and then categorize the respondents in the positions of the lovers, the ironists and the haters, based on Ang's categorization of *Dallas* movies' spectators (Puryanti, Itafarida & Nuzuliyanti 2007). Thus, this study is different with Puryanti's in terms of the object of the study and the method of data collection, although both similarly use Ang's *Watching Dallas* to analyze the data collected and categorize the respondents.

Second is the study conducted by Ida (2008) entitled '*Consuming Taiwanese Boys Culture: Watching Meteor Garden with Urban Kampung Women in Indonesia*'. This research analyzes how the selected viewers of *Meteor Garden* connect the characters and system of values in the television drama to their own cultural beliefs and how their class, gender and age have an impact to their responses. The research utilizes an ethnographic audience approach by conducting interviews and informal conversations with urban *kampung* women aged between 25 and 40 years (Heryanto 2008). Ida's research is different with this study in terms of the participants of the research since Ida's uses urban *kampung* women as the participants. Yet, this study is similar with Ida's because both use interview to understand audience's reception in order to gain data for analysis.

Third is the study conducted by Adelia (2008) entitled '*Female University Students' Perception towards White Skin: a Case of Airlangga and Petra Christian*

University Surabaya'. This research attempts to analyze the fact whether female university students perceive white skin as an important factor of beauty and the factors that shape their perception towards white skin. The researcher uses in-depth interview to collect the data and interprets the collected data by employing the theory of perception (Adelia 2008). The similarity between this study and Adelia's is in the method of data collection by conducting in-depth interview, although both are different in terms of the object and method of data analysis.