

## Tourism Promotion Symbols for Bandung City in a Teenager Romantic Film ‘Dilan 1990’

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Film induced tourism is one of the fastest growing sectors in the tourism industry because cinematographic history is able to persuade the audience to travel to places that are used as the setting places of several scenes in a film. This study aims to examine the message of tourism promotion in a teenager romantic film set in Bandung, West Java, entitled ‘Dilan 1990’ which was adapted from a novel by Pidi Baiq of the same title. The data were collected by observing the film using observation tables, as well as audience reviews obtained through internet searches as a reference in interpreting symbols and knowing the audience's reception of this film. The audience's reviews were taken from various websites including the Internet Movie Database, TripAdvisor, and from several independent travel blogs articles. The analysis used a qualitative descriptive method using three theories, namely, the theory of semiotics, reception, and promotion. The analysis shows that symbols of tourism promotion in the content of the film ‘Dilan 1990’ included the beautiful and clean city of Bandung, Bandung's natural scenery, and Bandung's heritage iconic buildings. The positive images of Bandung city were aesthetically presented on the film through well-structured of plot story, scene, and acting, thus make the promotion of Bandung become indirectly powerful. This study also stresses that the ‘Dilan 1990’ not only provide a powerful form of promotion for Bandung city but also has inspired the local government to build new city parks namely ‘Taman Dilan 1’ and ‘Taman Dilan 2’ that boosted the images of Bandung as an attractive city to visit.

*Keywords: tourism promotion, film tourism, Bandung tourism, Taman Dilan*

### ***Simbol-simbol Promosi Pariwisata pada Film Romansa Remaja ‘Dilan 1990’ untuk Kota Bandung***

*Film induced tourism* adalah salah satu sektor yang berkembang cepat dalam pertumbuhan industri pariwisata, dimana hal ini dikarenakan *cinematographic history* yang mampu membujuk para penontonnya untuk berwisata ke tempat-tempat yang menjadi latar dari sebuah film. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji pesan promosi pariwisata dalam film ‘Dilan 1990’ yang diangkat dari novel berjudul sama sebagai objek analisis. Data dikumpulkan dengan melakukan observasi pada film menggunakan tabel observasi, serta review penonton yang diperoleh melalui penelusuran internet sebagai referensi dalam menginterpretasikan simbol dan mengetahui resepsi penonton terhadap film ini. Review penonton diambil dari beberapa website resmi di antaranya Internet Movie Database, Tripadvisor, dan beberapa artikel dari blog perjalanan independent. Analisis dilakukan dengan metode deskriptif kualitatif menggunakan tiga teori yaitu, teori semiotika, resepsi dan promosi. Hasil yang diperoleh dapat disimpulkan bahwa simbol-simbol promosi pariwisata yang muncul dalam konten-konten film ‘Dilan 1990’ meliputi aspek sebagai berikut: a) Kota yang asri dan bersih, b) Keindahan alamnya, dan c) Bangunan-bangunan Ikoniknya. Pesan promosi pariwisata yang muncul dari film ‘Dilan 1990’ berasal dari plot cerita yang menarik, sehingga menimbulkan adanya niat dan aktivitas *film tourism* pada kota Bandung. Kontribusi film ‘Dilan 1990’ untuk Kota Bandung sangat nyata dibuktikan dengan dibangunnya destinasi wisata baru, yakni Taman Dilan 1 dan 2 sebagai tempat rekreasi yang tidak hanya dibangun untuk para penggemarnya saja, namun juga masyarakat umum.

*Keywords: promosi pariwisata, film tourism, pariwisata Bandung, Taman Dilan.*

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*Received: September 22, 2022; Accepted October 10, 2022; Published October 18, 2022*

*<https://doi.org/10.31091/mudra.v37i4.2084>*

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## INTRODUCTION

Promotion through digital or online platforms is one of the most powerful ways nowadays to introduce a product, service, even a tourism destination, or a combination of all three. Digital promotion is growing in line with the development of internet of things technology, digital promotion through films has occurred earlier but it is presented offline. While internet technology is astonishingly available, the distribution and consumption of films also take place through the digital form. People not only watch movies in cinemas but also through the internet network digitally. A phenomenal example is the use of online movie watching applications such as Netflix which has 45.5 million subscribers by 2021 so the films have high potential as a medium of tourism promotion today (Kompas, 2021). [Herlambang \(2019\)](#) explained that a film can form positive branding for a certain area because it contains symbols that can certainly affect the audience's perception of a destination. A tourism destination can be introduced interestingly through the cinematography and storyline that is delivered, so that it will have a film tourism effect on the area that is used as the setting of place. Film tourism is a traveling activity by visiting places that appear in a film, to feel new atmospheres, experiences and indicate that someone has traveled to these places ([Tanskanen, 2012](#)).

A film conveys symbols that can persuade the audience emotionally and attractively so that its potential in promoting a destination can contribute to the development of Indonesia's tourism (Fauziah, 2019). According to [Kasapi \(2017\)](#) the emergence of tourist destinations in a film can make the audience feel interested in visiting and seeing it in person, so this is what causes an increase in the number of visitors to a certain destination area. One area that is famous for its appearance in popular films is Bandung City. Through the film entitled 'Dilan 1990' which was adapted from the novel with the same title by Pidi Baiq. This is explained that Bandung City experienced a rapid increase in visitors due to the explosion of audiences from this national film released in 2018 and directed by Fajar Bustomi. The film that produced by Max Pictures received a high response from its fans in Indonesia and even neighboring countries such as Singapore, Malaysia, including Japan, and reached 6 million viewers during its screening period (Yuliastara, 2018). In addition, this film also won an award from the Indonesia Record Museum in the categories of 'Film with the Most Viewers at Premier Gala and Film with the Most Viewers on First Day Screening' thus making this film one of the most successful

national films to be screened outside Indonesia. ([Nareswari, 2018](#)).

Bandung City, which has a heritage area of historic buildings, villages, and gardens that have been arranged, has become better known to the wider community because of the popularity of 'Dilan 1990'. Research conducted by Evangelista (2019) describes the surge in visitors experienced on Asia-Afrika Street and Buah Batu area where Dilan and Milea are explained to live and attend school. The Central Statistics Agency (BPS) recorded that the number of tourists visiting Bandung in 2017 was 170,000 tourists, and the raising occurred in 2018 to 2,490,461 tourist visits. In 2019 the Governor of West Java, Ridwan Kamil, inaugurated the construction of Dilan Park (Pojoek Dilan) which is located in the center of Bandung City by carrying a contemporary concept that not only contains facilities for relaxation, but also some unique decorations as a literacy center for literary and film reflection. In addition, this development is also supported by the Minister of Tourism, Arief Yahya, as one of the icons of Bandung City that can attract tourists to visit ([Berita Satu, 2019](#)).

This article analyzes the symbols of tourism promotion contained in the content of the film 'Dilan 1990' for Bandung City which contains rational, emotional, and moral appeal. It is expected that this study enrich the body of literature of film tourism to support future research of the field and inspired tourism and film stakeholders so that they can support the production of quality films that give substantial impact for tourism promotion.

## RESEARCH METHOD

The method of study is qualitative-interpretative where the symbols found in the film are interpreted and studied using three theories enclitically: semiotics, reception, and promotion. The main theory used to examine the content that containing tourism promotion symbols in the film entitled 'Dilan 1990' is the semiotic theory by Roland Barthes and supported using reception theory by Stuart Hall and promotion theory from Kotler and Keller. The reception study was explained by analyzing audience reviews taken from internet sources in the form of comments and article reviews on personal travel blogs used as secondary data to help strengthen the interpretation process. The reviews collected were obtained by using keywords to get relevant reviews related to the influence of 'Dilan 1990' film in causing film tourism in Bandung City.

## PROFILE AND THE STORY OF 'DILAN 1990'

'Dilan 1990' was directed by Fajar Bustomi and released on January 25th, 2018, before the covid pandemic appear, so it received such a wide acceptance and large audiences. This film has won various awards for its actors, actresses, and producers. Some of them are awards from the Indonesian Record Museum in the category of 'Film with the Most Viewers at Premier Gala' and 'Film with the Most Viewers on First Day Screening' ([Nareswari, 2018](#)). This film, which was adapted from a novel by Pidi Baiq with the same title, was produced by Max Pictures in collaboration with the producer and Secretary General of Indonesia Film Company Association, Ody Mulya Hidayat, and cinematographer Diman Imam Subhono, making this 110-minute film can be enjoyed by various groups ([CNN Indonesia, 2018](#)).

Bandung, which has beautiful tourist spots and unique historical heritage buildings, was chosen as the setting for this film. This choice was proven to be very appropriate not long after having a positive impact as seen by several travel agencies (travel agents) compiling tour packages by visiting locations that appeared in the film (Evangelista, 2019). The popularity of 'Dilan 1990' made the Governor of West Java, Ridwan Kamil, in 2022 again inaugurate the construction of the second Dilan Park after the development of the first Dilan Park built successfully. The second Dilan Park is in Lembang, offering a variety of tourist facilities that attract visitors not only from fans but also public in general.

This teen romance film begins with a meeting between Dilan and Milea that occurs on their way to school. Dilan, who was riding his motorbike, greeted Milea, a new student at his school, to get acquainted. Their relationship which was originally only limited just to wanting to know each other turned more intense by day. Dilan with his various strange jokes and short poems can make Milea felt more cheerful in living her daily life in Bandung. Several conflicts also occurred, ranging from Dilan's dispute with one of the teachers, the attack on their school by motorcycle gang students involving Dilan himself, Milea's breakup from her lover in Jakarta, making Dilan and Milea's relationship strained due to misunderstandings, and the peak conflict where Dilan and his close friends fight at school. All these conflicts ended with a resolution, where the two of the main characters finally formalized their relationship at their favorite restaurant, Warung Bi Eem.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This romantic-themed film that tells a love story between Dilan and Milea sets in Bandung City in the 1990s when the ages of the main actors are around 16 or 17 years old ([Laksana, 2018](#)). The choice of setting in the 1990s is what makes this film try to re-present the atmosphere of the city in that year. A lot of efforts have been made to adjust the color of the image that looks like it was taken from a camera with the quality of the camera produced in 1990, the type and style of clothing for the actors, the atmosphere of the environment that is still quiet with minimal vehicles, and the placement of other details such as mailboxes, public telephones on the roadside, and the motorbike that Dilan uses to go to school every day. In terms of tourism promotion, the cinematic shown in this film can provide an overview of the tourist attractions that can be found in Bandung. Through this film, several corners in Bandung which at first did not have much attention, now have the spotlight because of their appearance in this film, even one of the roads that brought together the main characters in this film is often known as 'Jalan Milea' which is located on Cilaki and Cibeunying Street ([CNN Indonesia, 2018](#)). Besides, the explosive popularity of this film has made the local government built an attractive city park designed with a contemporary concept containing murals, photos, and iconic sentences from the film ([Satria, 2018](#)). Meanwhile, the symbols related to the potential of tourist attractions that show are related to the beauty of Bandung City. The existence of tour packages with the theme of this film offers trips to places where the two main characters make their trip (Evangelista, 2019).

[Kautsar \(2022\)](#) commented on his blog site that the places that are used as locations for this film are new tourism potentials that have emerged in Bandung, so this popularity has made the government build Dilan Park as an icon of the city. Another comment written by [Novirdayani \(2018\)](#) said that this film made her feel back to Bandung in the nineties with the details of goods and typical interiors at that time. The light storyline by raising the romance of this schoolgirl leaves an impression that is hard to forget for the audience (IMDb, 2018f). The emotional appeal that stands out in this film contains symbols of tourism promotion messages that give rise to film tourism in the Bandung, especially those directly related to the storyline of this film, such as Dilan's and Milea's House, and SMA Negeri 20 Bandung. The content in this film focuses on the storyline that highlights the daily life of high school youth in 1990. The following discussion describes the symbols of tourism promotion in the film 'Dilan 1990' which

includes three aspects, namely cleanliness, beauty, and Bandung's iconic building. These three aspects are related to Bandung brand identity than the movie refreshed.

#### *a) Beautiful and Clean City*

The charm of Bandung City in this film focuses on aspects of beauty, cleanliness, and atmosphere with a cool tropical climate. The beauty aspect that can be

seen is the cinematography that highlights the view of Bandung City in the morning, afternoon, and evening, with green trees that grow towering on the side of the road and are well maintained. Aspects of cleanliness are shown in the film, highlighting the environment around the school, clean and tidy public facilities. While the aspect of the atmosphere of the city with a tropical climate refers to the sunny and cool weather of Bandung.



Picture 1. Street shots that look beautiful and clean, the atmosphere of the morning, afternoon and evening (Source: 'Dilan 1990' Film Produced by Max Picture )

Picture 1 shows a view of the clean condition of each road that enters the film frame. This is an indication of the maintenance of a waste-free environment so that the beauty shown through the many green plants around it looks well maintained. The reddish sky shown in the upper right image is the condition of the city in the late afternoon. The background sound of wind and birds is faintly heard in this scene, which implies a connotative meaning which means that there are no signs of air pollution in this city, besides being caused by the many green plants that are planted, the lack of private vehicles passing by is also a factor that affects the cleanliness of the air.

Considering the time setting used in this film is the early 1990s, what is seen in the film cannot be used as a definite benchmark by the audience to judge the condition of Bandung City when compared to the current situation. Sunny weather without air pollution is an additional point offered by the city to attract potential tourists. In addition, the condition

described is a rational attraction shown through the cinematography of the environment, which mostly highlights the condition of public roads that are quiet, clean, and beautiful.

#### *b) Bandung's Natural Scenery*

The panorama of Bandung's natural beauty is depicted through several scenes, for example when Milea and her friends go to Jakarta to support their team of school representatives competing. There are extensive tea fields and quiet streets, giving a beautiful atmosphere with fresh air and clear skies. This soothing natural nuance with a quiet atmosphere of passing vehicles gives the impression that the place shown is a comfortable place to take a recreation from the daily routine. The vast expanse of green tea fields and plots makes the scenery look beautiful from a distance. The rational appeal shown in this scene certainly has the potential to attract various tourists.



Picture 2. Tea Field Scenery (Source: 'Dilan 1990' Film Produced by Max Picture)

Bandung tourist area in this film (see Picture 2) shows the audience, the natural scenery that is still preserved and original, this is also not something that can be engineered easily. The natural scenery of the tea field seen in the film gives an indication that in Bandung, this type of scenery still can be found and enjoyed today.

The audience's positive reception can be represented by Hasan's opinion (2020) which is expressed in an article published on the Kompasiana blog explained that the attraction in Bandung is real, especially in the beauty and cleanliness of the city in general facilities, and in its natural beauty which is still preserved well. That's the reason why Bandung won Adipura award from the Ministry of Environment and Forestry of Republic of Indonesia three times in a row. This is a point of natural attraction owned by Bandung that can be developed well in the future.

Through this film, several scenes that show the weather, cleanliness and beauty of the environment can be persuasion the audience to take a trip to Bandung.

### ***Bandung's Iconic Buildings***

In this film, several iconic buildings are directly related to this film and Bandung. Most of the scenes in this film were shot at Milea's house, and her school, these two places are icons for the encounter of the two main characters and living their stories. [Novirdayani \(2018\)](#) stated in her review, that 'Dilan 1990' made her reminisce back on the atmosphere of Bandung City in the ninety's era. In addition, the locations shown in this film are beautiful and clean areas, such as the Cibeunying and Cilaki Street which are now known as 'Milea Street', SMAN 20 Bandung, and Asia-Afrika Street, also giving the impression of bringing the audience along for a walk in the area, the old city of Bandung (Picture 3 and Picture 4).



Picture 3. Shot of Milea's and Dilan's House, Classroom and Warung Bi Eem  
Source: 'Dilan 1990' Film Produced by Max Picture

The shot is taken with an eye bird view showing the shape and condition of Milea's house from a height. Some scenes show the Dutch model house surrounded by green plants and large trees. Dilan's house is another iconic building, where Milea gets to know all of Dilan's family members. The shot was taken from the front, highlighting a house with a half hedge and brown fence. The scene is taken in the morning when Dilan is about to go to school, then returned home with Milea. Like Milea's house, which has a lot of plants, Dilan's house is also dominated by plants in its front yard, so it looks beautiful and shady.

The next scene shows the condition of the school, starting from the school hallway, Milea's classroom,

and the canteen where Milea is often seen hanging out with her friends. Many scenes shot in this school, make it one of the iconic places in the film. Next, is the scene that takes place at Bu Eem's stall, where Dilan and his friends gather during recess or skip class. The building which is dominated by light blue color with wooden tables and chairs makes this place feel like an old building in the 1990s. This place is where the final scene takes place, where the two main characters find a happy ending, making it one of the iconic places that have an emotional bond against this film. The emotional appeal of this place can certainly attract potential tourists to take a retracing to a place where the two main characters witness the resolution of their relationship, especially for those who are fans of this film.



Picture 4. Asia–Afrika Street (Source: 'Dilan 1990' Film Produced by Max Picture)

Asia–Africa Street (Picture 4) is another iconic location that appears in this film when Dilan takes Milea around the city on his motorbike before stopping at a traditional market and buying groceries. In this scene, the scene is done with a medium shot showing the buildings along the road, then switches to a bird's eye view which clearly shows the road conditions from above, and switches back to Dilan who is driving into the frame. Another iconic place that appears in this film is Asia-Afrika Street which is a tourist spot open to the public, where several museums have also been built around this road, such as the Mandala Wangsit Siliwangi Museum, the Asia-Africa Museum, the Geology Museum, and the Postal and Giro Museum (Piknik Wisata, 2021). A rational appeal for those who are interested in history, so they can do historical tours at this location.

The description of the iconic buildings in Bandung which was shown in the film received a positive response from the audience. The audience's reception to this can be seen from Apriyanti's comments on her blog:

*“Visiting these iconic buildings which became the shooting locations for the ‘Dilan 1990’ film make me*

*who at first didn't know much about Bandung know the interesting spots in this city, so I decided to explore Bandung further, especially the tourism destinations.” (Apriyanti, 2020).*

The reception above which shows that this film highlights many of the beauty and characteristics of the iconic heritage of Bandung City is able to convey the meaning of tourism promotion messages through its cinematography of the depiction of Bandung City with several iconic places that are directly related to the film and create an emotional appeal for the potential tourists. The attraction offered focuses on the environmental conditions of the beautiful and clean city of Bandung, as well as the symbols of the existence of tourist inducements which are implied in this connotative meaning towards iconic places that are directly related to film and are a factor in the occurrence of film tourism.

The lack of depiction of local culture and Bandung's natural attractions is because the focus of this film is the love story and daily life of the main characters, so the publications occur in these iconic buildings. Supriyadi (2018) in his writings on the IDN Times page stated that one of the weaknesses of this film is in its cinematography which does not capture other

natural scenery of Bandung. Therefore, it can be concluded, this deficiency in terms of tourism promotion has an impact on the lack of knowledge of potential tourists about attractive natural tourist attractions and local culture that exist to this day.

Based on the content and audience reception, this film can promote Bandung City through the cinematography of the city's atmosphere and storylines that leave an emotional impression to the audience. Its appearance makes several spots in Bandung named after one of the main actors, namely 'Jalan Milea' and Dilan Park which were built right in the middle of Bandung City (Veran, 2020). The iconic buildings used in this film also make it one of the rational appeals offered to potential tourists in the form of tours (Evangelista, 2019). In addition, this film also collaborates with several fashions and food brands, such as Dilan and Milea jackets, Dilan and Milea chocolates, and stamps which direct or indirectly have promotional impacts to make more people watch the film and promote Bandung ([Liputan6, 2018](#)). Above all, the film has created a new sub-brand identity of Bandung as an ideal city to visit for teenagers, youth, and public in general. It is strengthened the images of the so called 'Paris van Java' city as a cosmopolite yet heritage city to visit.

### CONCLUSION

As it is clear from the outset, 'Dilan 1990' film fill up with strong symbols and act of tourism promotion. This tourism promotion conveyed through an interesting and well-crafted storyline and cinematographic images of Bandung city. In particular, the film giving attention to the characteristic of Bandung city including the beautiful and clean city, Bandung's natural scenery, and Bandung's iconic buildings. The meaning of tourism promotion messages that arise in this film for Bandung City is related to comfort, unyielding spirit, and romance. The film also portrays the dimension of Bandung as cosmopolite town yet strong with iconic heritage buildings.

The development of Dilan Park as a recreation area shows that the 'Dilan 1990' film not only promotes the uniqueness of Bandung tourism but also provides innovative ideas for the construction of tourism facilities with the film's branding, because mostly the fans are teenagers, so the promotion of tourism in the film can be seen as an effort to introduce Bandung's tourist attraction among the new generation. This business is ideal in the concept of continuous promotion in various creative ways.

Seeing the many positive benefits of film tourism, it is recommended that there will be cooperation between the government and tourism promotion agencies in supporting films that have the potential to promote tourism areas widely, as well as supporting national film producers to produce films that are designed to promote tourism. Indonesia is on an international scale, so we need experts in the fields of publication, promotion, and semiotics to get more competent input regarding the existence of tourism promotion symbols (either connotatively or denotatively) that are found throughout the film. Hence, the success of 'Dilan 1990' not only lays on its entertaining aspect, but also on its direct and indirect act of Bandung tourism promotion.

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