

= Gagak Item =

Gagak Item ( [ ?a??a? i?t?m ] ; Vernacular Malay for Black Raven , also known by the Dutch title *De Zwarte Raaf* ) is a 1939 bandit film from the Dutch East Indies ( now Indonesia ) directed by Joshua and Othniel Wong for Tan 's Film . Starring Rd Mochtar , Roekiah , and Eddy T. Effendi , it follows a masked man known only as " Gagak Item " ( " Black Raven " ) . The black @-@ and @-@ white film , which featured the cast and crew from the 1937 hit *Terang Boelan* ( Full Moon ) , was a commercial success and received positive reviews upon release . It is likely lost .

= = Production = =

Gagak Item was directed by brothers Joshua and Othniel Wong ; filming the work in black @-@ and @-@ white , they also handled sound editing . It was produced by Tan Khoen Yauw of Tan 's Film and starred Rd Mochtar , Roekiah , Eddy T. Effendi , and Kartolo . The Wongs and cast had first worked together on Albert Balink 's 1937 blockbuster *Terang Boelan* ( Full Moon ) , before joining Tan 's Film in 1938 for the highly successful *Fatima* ; Gagak Item was their second production with the company , which hoped to mirror *Terang Boelan* 's success . Through these prior films Mochtar and Roekiah had become an established screen couple .

Saeroen , a journalist @-@ turned @-@ screenwriter for *Terang Boelan* and *Fatima* , returned to write the script to Gagak Item . The film , a love story , followed a girl and a masked man known as " Gagak Item " ( " Black Raven " ) and was set in rural Buitenzorg ( now Bogor ) . The titular bandit was similar to Zorro , a character popular in the Indies at the time ; such figures had been a staple of travelling theatre troupes beginning in the early 1930s . When writing the script Saeroen continued the formula he had used in *Terang Boelan* , including action , music , beautiful vistas and physical comedy . The film had six songs performed by Hugo Dumas ' musical troupe Lief Java ; the troupe was known for its keroncong performances , mixing traditional music with Portuguese influences . Gagak Item featured vocals by keroncong singer Annie Landouw .

= = Release and reception = =

Gagak Item was released in late 1939 and was screened in Batavia ( now Jakarta ) , the capital of the Indies ; Medan , North Sumatra ; and Surabaya , eastern Java . Some screenings of the film , also advertised under the Dutch title *De Zwarte Raaf* , had Dutch @-@ language subtitles . A novelisation of the film , published by the Yogyakarta @-@ based Kolff @-@ Buning , soon followed . Gagak Item was one of four domestic productions released in 1939 ; the film industry had undergone a significant downturn following the onset of the Great Depression , during which time cinemas mainly showed Hollywood productions , and had only begun recovering following the release of *Terang Boelan* .

Gagak Item was a commercial and critical success , although not as much as Tan 's earlier production . An anonymous review in *Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad* praised the film , especially its music . The reviewer opined that the film would be a great success and that the film industry in the Indies was showing promising developments . Another review in the same paper found that , although " one may shake one 's head over the cultural value of indigenous films " , the film was a step forward for the industry . The review praised Roekiah 's " demure " acting .

Following the success of Gagak Item the Wongs , Saeroen , Roekiah , and Mochtar continued to work with Tan 's Film . Their next production , *Siti Akbari* ( 1940 ) , was similarly successful , although again not as profitable as *Terang Boelan* or *Fatima* . Saeroen , Joshua Wong , and Mochtar left the company in 1940 : Wong and Mochtar after payment disputes , and Saeroen to return to journalism . Through 1941 Tan 's Film produced fewer movies than its competitors , and was ultimately shut down following the Japanese occupation in early 1942 .

Gagak Item was screened as late as January 1951 . The film is likely lost . Movies in the Indies were recorded on highly flammable nitrate film , and after a fire destroyed much of *Produksi Film Negara* 's warehouse in 1952 , old films shot on nitrate were deliberately destroyed . The American

visual anthropologist Karl G. Heider writes that all Indonesian films from before 1950 are lost . However , JB Kristanto 's Katalog Film Indonesia ( Indonesian Film Catalogue ) records several as having survived at Sinematek Indonesia 's archives , and film historian Misbach Yusa Biran writes that several Japanese propaganda films have survived at the Netherlands Government Information Service .

= = Explanatory notes = =