

Sumba From Java: Notes on Garin Nugroho, Ifa Isfansyah, and Mouly Surya Films¹

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Abstract

The emergence of initiatives to make films that focus on the East Indonesia has a long history. It is not only seen as an attempt to uncover the unexplored, but also became an effort to see how decentralization carried out by the State. The paper will focus on three films take place in Sumba, the East Indonesia region, which is famous for the mooi scenery. First is Garin Nugroho in *Letter For an Angel* (1994). Second is Ifa Isfansyah in *the Golden Cane Warrior* (2014). And the last one is Mouly Surya in *Marlina The Murderer in Four Acts* (2017). By comparing Garin Nugroho, Ifa Isfansyah, and Mouly Surya, it can be seen the perspectives of filmmakers from Java seeing Sumba. How is Sumba represented? How is the Sumba identity articulated? Using concept of 'the real gaze', the films are closely read. The concept help the reader seeing which film bravely showing the traumatic experience of the gaze and which films aren't. The use of the gaze could make better understanding on the complexities of Sumba who forced to take national identity of being an Indonesian.

Keywords: Indonesian cinema, Garin Nugroho, Ifa Isfansyah, Mouly Surya, Lacanian Real Gaze, Psychoanalytic approach to film, film and ideology, nationalism, Sumba

At a glance, Garin Nugroho, Ifa Isfansyah, and Mouly Surya depict Sumba as lacking – there is no certainty regarding to the law. They use different narratives and approaches to tell Sumba condition. Nugroho emphasizes on the Sumba who have two Name-of-the-Fathers, two kinds of laws, the tradition and the state. *Letter for an Angel* (1994), follows a kid name Lewa who questioning his identity on being Sumbese (the Sumba). While in the case Ifa Isfansyah, he brings *silat* (Indonesian martial art) and warrior story in the synchronic mode, uses Sumba only for setting for the shot. *The Golden Cane Warrior* (2014) shows hierarchy between warrior and common people. The main characters are the actors from Java, while the figurants are people from East Indonesian. The last one is Mouly Surya, female directors, who made *Marlina the Murderer in Four Acts* (2017). *Marlina* tells about a woman seeking justice after she should defending her self from perpetrators who raped then stealed her belongings.

Garin Nugroho (b. 1961) belongs to the generation of filmmakers who still experiencing tight control from the State. His first film was made in the 1984 entitled *Wagon 1,2*, - film that questioning position of the Father in the state. Most of Nugroho's films have an aim to criticize New Order. He used different style, ranging from film inspired by Truffaut style entitled *Love in a Slice of Bread* (1991), to the dramatic one

¹ The paper was presented during Inter-Asia Cultural Studies Conference 2019, 1 – 3 August, in Dumaguete City, Philippines.

like *Guru Bangsa: HOS Tjokroaminoto* (2015). *Letter for an Angel* is a unique one. It was funded by Pusat Produksi Film Negara (State Film Production Center), which is known producing propaganda films. The film is ambivalence, pointing on how the State couldn't see and answer the complexities of the fusion of identity in Sumba area. Nugroho is sharpening his criticism toward New Order in this film.

Ifa Isfansyah (b. 1979) and Mouly Surya (b. 1980) belong to the generation after Reformation. Both of them started making film after the "short" dead of Indonesian cinema. Isfansyah debut on commercial theatre could be traced in the film *Garuda di Dadaku* (2008). He made *The Dancer* (2011), which based on Ahmad Tohari novel *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk*, when ronggeng dancer get impact after 1965 events. While Mouly Surya debut can be traced since *Fiction* (2010), a film about a young woman deeply in love with a plumber told through the main character's view that couldn't differentiated between real and fiction world. She goes further in directing *What They Don't Talk About When They Talk About Love* (2013), a very fresh film, imagining how the disable characters could have normal life using juxtaposition in the narrative. Isfansyah with *the Dancer* in 2011 and Surya with *Fiction* in 2008 got Best Director in Indonesian Film Festival, a prestigious annual awards in Indonesia.

The emergence of initiatives to make films that focus on the East Indonesia has a long history. It is not only seen as an attempt to uncover the unexplored, but also became an effort to see how decentralization carried out by the State. Comparing with the economic growth, between the East and West Indonesia is very different.

Before Reformation in the 1998, economical growth and access to education in East Indonesia was different. No wonder if there was no filmmaker emerged from the East. On the other hand, Indonesian directors, mostly living in Java, who interested to make film in the East Indonesia were few. One of the biggest factors is the tight supervision carried out by the New Order, based on the themes raised in the film. And if there were filmmakers made a film about East Indonesia, they were trapped, became an extension of colonialism seeing the region as the exotic one.

After Reformation, when the issue on decentralization and regional autonomy began, a hope is emerged. It enabled the growth of economic and raised access to knowledge. In the past few years, several directors from the East have emerged. Meanwhile, several directors from Java and West Indonesia become aware that there are still very few films that talks about East Indonesia. In addition to the shifting paradigm in looking at the Eastern Indonesia, the presence of foreign donors to support film production in another area outside Java. This opened up a lot of interest and encouraged the emergence of initiatives to make films to explore the culture and situation in East Indonesia.

Through deployment of the gaze, my writing compares the three films on how the filmmakers from different generation seeing Sumba. I attempt to answer these following questions: How Sumba was fantasized, and how the fantasy could bring enjoyment for the spectator – does it make the viewer questioning ideology or submitting ourselves to the dominant ideology. My research focuses on the close reading, on the way the film texts articulate Sumba identity. I will show that each filmmaker conceptualizes the identity differently and in the end I will categorize from the way their films deploy the gaze.

An Overview on the Real Gaze

For the early Lacanian theorist, gaze is the key to understand imaginary tricks in cinema. Further study the use of gaze as a concept can be seen through Laura Mulvey's writings in the anthology of *Visual Theory and Narrative Cinema*. Gaze is use to see the relation of male gaze in the Hollywood film and its relation to the patriarchal system.² The concept of the gaze from McGowan actually wanted to restore its understanding in accordance with what Jacques Lacan had said. For McGowan, the gaze of early Lacanian theorists, marrying the immaturity of Lacan concept regarding the subject with concept from Louis Althusser Ideological State of Apparatuses. The Lacanian subject consist understading in the three phases: real, imaginary, and symbolic. In the Mirror Phase Essay, Lacan explained that a child aged 6 – 18 months will finds identity through the mirror, but it is still fragmented. In the Imaginary order, there is an alienated situation because mirror can give false identity. The only way the individual can understand their identity, better he/she should embrace symbolic order, the world of language. In this order, the individu became a subject, because they will learn about the law, socialize, and undergo obligations. In the process when subject entering the world of language, there is a thing that must be sacrificed. It is a jouissance, an essential pleasure but at the same time it can be a reminder that the process is painful. The object *a* is a metaphor that *jouissance* is always absent. It becomes a remainder, something that cannot be symbolized.

McGowan traced back the gaze from Lacan's writing in *Seminar XI*, the gaze in Hans Holbein's painting, *The Ambassadors* (1533). Two travelers and their properties were drawn. But when we are looking at the bottom, there will be an anamorphic part: nothing will appear immediately, but once we tilt our head, you will see image of a skull. According to Lacan, this is the gaze, something that is reminiscent of discomfort, interference our moment of seeing the painting. The spectators will think that their saw the painting at a safe distance, but it turned out that the painting was the one who looked at them. McGowan developed the real gaze from Lacan to examine film text, and he goes further that text is able to show a variety of treatments on how they showing the gaze.

Psychoanalytic approach for cinema focuses on the filmic excess. According to McGowan, filmic excess is same like 'obtuse meaning', concept from Roland Barthes –

² In Indonesia, academic who use this concept to read a film is Intan Paramaditha. She examines Nan Achnas' film entitled *Whispering Sands* (2000) in the article "Pasir Berbisik and the new women's aesthetics in Indonesian Cinema". (Source: <https://www.ejumpcut.org/archive/jc49.2007/PasirBerbisik/>) Intan saw contestation between gazes of women and men in the film. There was also Dag Yvenson who studied the *Earth is Getting Hotter* (1973) directed by Ali Shahab. Yvgeson said, even though camera shots and cinematic images still objectify women, but this was used to disarmed men's desire. Both Paramaditha and Yvegson used the gaze to see how ideology worked in the universe of filemic texts. (see Yngvesson, Dag. 2014. "The Earth is Getting Hotter: Urban Apocalypse and Outsider Women's Collectives in Bumi Makin Panas," *Plaridel*. Vol. 11 No. 2. August 2014)

signification beyond its denotation and connotation meaning.³ Filmic excess or gaze or object *a* in the film is not a limitation of the text narration. It is a non-sense that presents in the narrative structure of the film. The surplus can show itself. It can appear on the content or the aesthetic choices in the film. As McGowan quoted from Brett Farmer (taken from *Spectacular Passions*, 2000: 81), “Moments of excess appear as a deviation from or a going beyond the motivations of dominant narrative demands either at the level of narrative content, such as certain scenes, shots, characters, or actions that have no apparent narrative function and bear little if any relation to dominant diegetic foci, or at the level of textual form, such as unconventional camera work, obtrusive editing styles, extravagant mise- en-scène, and the like.”⁴

In the process of subject identification, object *a* and fantasy are two sides in a coin. Both have different characteristics, but for sure they are shaping our reality. Film is able to bring these things to spectators. Object *a* is never fit in the screen. It can be presented as the object, which is reminding the traumatic experience or it can be subdued by the presence of a fantasy. McGowan said, film constructs fantasy so that the audience can see openly and clearly the hidden enjoyment that shapes our subjective experience.⁵ The presence of object *a* can be a trigger of subject’s desire. Desire is the part that keeps the plot running. Fantasy is a scenario that somehow gives the answer for subject desire. Through the world of desire, question arises. While in the world of fantasy, scenario ‘we will be fine’ sometimes dominated.⁶ McGowan goes further by categorizing film according to their deployment with the gaze. First is cinema of fantasy, films that depicts the gaze through fantasmatic distortion. Second is cinema of desire, films that sustain the gaze that haunts cinematic image. Third is cinema of integration, films that incite desire only to resolve it into a fantasy scenario that provides a screen through which the spectator can experience the gaze without its at- tendant trauma. The last one is cinema of intersection, films that has ability to stage a traumatic encounter with the gaze.⁷

The Traumatic Sumba

Seeing Nugroho’s film is like understanding the way camera works, depicting reality as it is. The tradition, the way people speak, to the architectural aspects are shown in the *Letter For an Angel*, no more no less. Nugroho bravely showing images that will make audiences losing control on what they see on screen. Image such as the slaughter of horses, reading of the heart of a pig, the roar of tears at a grandeur death ceremony, deaths know no time, stabbing by a group of children, the tradition of riding a horse, to the position of women who submit to men as well as to tradition are clearly

³ McGowan, Tood. 2007. *The Real Gaze: Film Theory After Lacan*. New York: State University of New York. page 27

⁴ Ibid,. Page 28.

⁵ Ibid,. Page 32.

⁶ Fantasy supports reality. Through fantasy, the painful process to embrace symbolic order could be limited. According to McGowan taking examples from Hollywood film, the world of fantasy depicted as hopeful so the spectator will be trapped in the illusion. But, there is also film emphasizes on the use of fantasy, not bringin the illusion but to uncover the work of ideology. The examples are films from Stanley Kubrick and Stan Lee.

⁷ Ibid,. page 18 – 20.

displayed. The effect is certainly nausea, or, at least we will close our eyes hoping the film ended. Though Nugroho's film is hard to follow because he heavily used symbolism, but certainly Nugroho actually follow the logic of fantasy. Nugroho creates sequences that tells us the excess on the ability of subject attach to national identification, but he does so toward radically different ends. Nugroho's film breaks the power of fantasy, at the point where we would expect an experience of the ultimate enjoyment, a radical failure to enjoy.



Figure 1. Image of 'this is mother' that trigger Lewa in anger. Courtesy: PPFN.

Letter for an Angel follows Lewa's question: who am I; why did I lose my mother; why my 'Father' is not my father. As a motherless child living in an island that have two Name-of-The-Fathers, the tradition and the State, Lewa is unable to identify himself. Ibu Guru (teacher) shows what mother is during classroom through reading lesson using a book probably imported from Java. Lewa suddenly gets angry, seeing image of women using kebaya and the caption is 'Ini Ibu' (this is mother).⁸ He said, "this is not my mother" in anger, showing that he refused fantasy offered by the teacher. The scene also becomes a key to understand the hegemonic process of New Order, *Jawanisasi*, or becoming a Javanese: when people from different ethnic should learn about Javanese and embrace it as part of their identity as well. After Lewa founds a camera, because people came from outside Sumba (the model and photographer team), Nugroho wants to emphasize that there is also modernity came to Sumba. Sure it boosts Lewa's confidence, but it brings him to another problem. Lewa can show that a picture of Madonna as his mother and a picture his father's dead body to friends, imagining that he still has image of the family. But the tribe sees Lewa breaks the line –taking picture of a dead body is a taboo, then they throw him to the river.

⁸ In Indonesia, students started learning to read with 'Ini Ibu' (this is mother) or 'Ini Bapak' (this is father) in the classroom. The method was founded by Siti Rahmani Rauf and implemented during New Order era.

The conflict is intense when Kuda Liar ruins everything. In the beginning, Kuda Liar killed Berlian Merah's husband. Kuda Liar is an Elvis Presley wannabe riding a "fancy" car in the Sumba landscape, a mafia and a seller of cows in Sumba. His origin is unknown, but Nugroho emphasizes that Kuda Liar identical with Jakarta through photos of him near National Monument in Jakarta. When he got married to Berlian Merah, Kuda easily enter the system of Sumba tribe. When the other tribe is starting the war, Kuda is joining the tribe where Lewat and Berlian Merah belong to, riding a horse near the tribal chief. Kuda Liar motive is obvious. Berlian Merah becomes a way so that he can become part of the clan. When Berlian Merah miscarries, Kuda Liar laughs in pain and says, "It's good. Maybe it's not my child". Kuda Liar probably understands that he will not have bloodline that strengthened his position in the tribe. Therefore he tried to conquer others, by raping Lewat's teacher and making situation getting worse. Kuda Liar can be seen as the hypermasculine figure, can do whatever he wants in Sumba.



Figure 2. Kuda Liar the Elvis Presley wannabe. Nugroho is giving details of the characteristic through mise-en-scene. Courtesy: PPFN

As a child, Lewat repressed his feelings on the situation around him. But when he aware that Kuda Liar did the bad things to Berlian Merah and Ibu Guru, something forced this child to kill and revenge. From his father statement, "your mother goes to heaven, after she was chased in that car," Nugroho hints the horrible condition that the Sumba has faced. It is an allusion, that Lewat's mother had terrible experience as same as Ibu Guru who was raped in the car by Kuda Liar. The tribe law could not touch the perpetrator. Lewat still wants finding an answer about his identity so he writes a letter to an angel. After he follows the postman, he realizes that Ibu Guru is the one answer his letter, using name 'bidadari' (an angel). After many dissapoinments, when Lewat could not get exact answer; when he knows Ibu Guru is the angel; when fantasies that offered to him were failed, Lewat killed Kuda Liar.

Nugroho finalizes the clash between modernity, tradition, and the state through the scene when Lewa prosecute because his act killing Kuda Liar and taking a picture of Berlian Merah's chest. Berlian Merah, the representation of the tribe defending Lewa, because she knows that both of them having mutual relationship. Berlian can be a substitute mother for Lewa, and vice versa. The court sees different. Lewa's act cannot be tolerated. This decision made the tribe angry, so they protest in the court, screaming that added the intensity. This is the best part as Nugroho attempts to grab the complicated of the problem. In the end, Nugroho did not give more fantasy scenario. Metaphorically, Berlian Merah gives a book and a cleaver, put them besides Lewa's body who now sleeping in the rehabilitation center. Nugroho shots Berlian Merah crying, indicating that the experience is really painful and traumatize one.

The Infant Sumba

The Golden Cane Warrior shows the gaze as something that can be tamed. Biru, Gerhana, Dara, and Angin are Cempaka's pupils and children of Cempaka's enemy. As the great warrior but knowing that she will be dead soon, Cempaka wants one of her pupil inherit the golden cane. When Cempaka uncovers Sumba cloth, and shows it to the four pupils, the golden cane has a status as the object *a* that could trigger their desire to master it. Cempaka knows that Biru and Gerhana want to take revenge and having big ambition to be a ruler, so she delivers the golden cane to Dara. Then the story of the film revolves following the warriors who want to take the golden cane.

For critic like Pandji Putrananda, the *Golden Cane Warrior* is considered a failure, could not bring back a nostalgic feeling to the old Indonesian martial arts film. The silat movement is too subtle, lacking in strength, and of course not nationalist enough.⁹ A defend comes from Makbul Mubarak. He says that this film was an exploration of Jinghu film, where martial arts movements were not as intense as the old Indonesian martial arts films. The film forms is more contemplative.¹⁰ But those critics failed to see the relation of the film with the dominant ideology when the film was produced. They did not emphasizes the used of Javanese (or people from Java) actors as the main character, the warrior. The Sumbese became the figurant, common people that should be protected and never get involved in the fight over the golden cane. The film is like an extension of Javanisation, considers another place outside Java as something that is still virgin that should be protected and its beauty should be freezed. The hierarchy that people from Java is above others is depicted through hierarchy warrior – common people. Though it was unintended, but the way Isfansyah chose the properties became the proof that the hierarchy is still exist, even for the film that was made using synchronic mode. Isfansyah shows the identity of being Sumba through the use of properti in his film, such as the style of common people in the film, typical fabric wraps Cempaka's golden cane, to the use of *ketipung* in the scene alteration.

⁹ Putranda, Pandji. 2014. "Pendekar Tongkat Emas: Kelahi juga Butuh Strategi". Source: <https://cinemapoetica.com/pendekar-tongkat-emas-kelahi-juga-butuh-strategi/>, accessed in January 10, 2019.

¹⁰ Mubarak, Makbul. 2014. "Seusai Menonton Pendekar Tongkat Emas". Source: <https://cinemapoetica.com/pendekar-tongkat-emas-kelahi-juga-butuh-strategi/>, accessed in January 10, 2019.

The Golden Cane Warrior only uses Sumba from beautiful and comforting scenery aspect. We can see several screen-saver-look-alike images appear as signs of time alteration. Isfansyah goes further with using colour filters to depict the mood Sumba. He does not have courage to take Sumba from different angle, take the bad side when the sun is blazing and could blinding our eyes. Besides that, Isfansyah depicts that only the warrior can be a leader. The Sumba should be protected like a child. For example when Angin sacrifices himself for the sake of people safety. Faces of Sumbese always happy, never questioning what happened surround them. They did not get involved in the fight between Gerhana-Biru vs Dara-Elang. Their innocences should be kept. The women of Sumbese can be safely weaving the fabric; the children happily running from one place to another: and the men can play music safely.



Figure 3. The warriors are fighting over the golden cane. Behind them are the common people, mostly the Sumba as the actor. The hierarchy is clear. Courtesy: Miles Films.

If Nugroho wants to emphasize the Sumba habits in their daily life, Isfansyah only uses it as a decoration. Riding horses is used to symbolize Elang and Dara desires for each other. Traditional music is removed from its roots, used as accessories for scenes with messy editing (sometimes scoriung is interrupted before it reaches the climax). Sumba landscape was used because it was still virgin, less symbolism to remind the spectator that Sumba is still in Indonesia. It is a perfect place to make a film with beautiful scenery, infiltrate illusion.

The Neutral Sumba

Uninvited guesses arrive at Marlina's house. Five men, followed by two younger men, want to take cattles, and if there was time they will sleep with Marlina. The protagonist made a chicken soup containing poison, leaving four men in her living room dead. Meanwhile, Markus the leader forced her to have intercourse, and few seconds later his head was beheaded. During the day, Marlina walked to the Police Station bringing Markus's head as her prisoner. She met Novi, sharing sympathy. In the police

station, the cops are hearing Marlina's complaints, without giving certainty about her case. Finally Marlina decides to finish everything alone.

Responses for *Marlina* are varied. Maggie Lee, reviewer from Variety, called Marlina as the first 'Satay Western' and praised the feminist perspective.¹¹ The term 'satay western' has been used widely, even by Surya her self, when she should publicize *Marlina*. Another praised come from Ellena Ekarahendy, pointing sisterhood as the answer for women survive from patriarchal system.¹² But some of responses noted on the way Surya use Sumba as the setting of the story. Jofie DP and Danang T.P. are questioning Surya position on seeing the Sumba because they see that Marlina is only fabricating the local characteristic of Sumba.¹³ The last one came from Manuel Alberto Maia, who emphasizes that, "collective struggle should be the frame of this film because the alienation of women goes far beyond authority over the body, kitchen and bed".¹⁴ For sure, Surya eliminates communal aspect in Sumba. All things that identified as 'Sumba' are merely accessoris. Marlina, the main character, uses Sumba clothes and necklace, presenting herself as a widow. Riding a horse, using of a cleaver, all things that have masculine characteristic, arbitrarily stuck to Marlina's body. The message is obvious: in one point of time, a woman can distort tradition. However, because the conflict is following Marlina, who lacked Sumba's identity, the images were arbitrary losing their roots.

Actually, if we take a look back at the films produced after Reformation era in Indonesia, form and way of producing film like *Marlina* are founds in other commercial films. Marlina story is similar to *Suzanna: Breathing in Mud* (Rocky Soraya and Anggy Umbara, 2018), about a woman who takes revenge to her perpetrators alone. Both of these films emphasizes on the individualism as the fantasy to answer woman's problem. This is also supported by the way the directors chose the setting. Surya builds Marlina house in the hill far from residents. The landscape of Sumba streets was almost empty without anyone passing by. And the last one is the lack of dialog between Marlina and the people. Regarding the denouement, in New Order's films, society and state usually help the character; while films after Reformation mostly eliminates society contribution.¹⁵

Because Isfasyah and Surya came from same generation, they share same ways to deploy the gaze. They give comfortable image, even though the story follows desire formulation. In Isfansyah's film, desire emerges when golden cane forcibly taken by the

¹¹ Lee, Magie. 2017. "Film Review: 'Marlina the Murderer in Four Acts'". Source: <https://variety.com/2017/film/reviews/marlina-the-murder-in-four-acts-review-1202446324/> accessed January 21, 2019.

¹² Ekarahendy, Elena. 2017. "Marlina Si Pembunuh dalam Empat Babak: Perempuan Jagoan dan Olok-olok Zona Nyaman" accessed January 21, 2019.

¹³ DP, Jofie and Danang T.P. 2017. "Marlina Timothy si Pemakan Sate dalam Empat Babak". Source: <http://lsfcogito.org/marlina-timothy-si-pemakan-sate-dalam-empat-babak/> accessed January 21, 2019.

¹⁴ Maia, Manuel Alberto. 2017. "Bertemu Marlina di Jakarta". Source: <https://cinemapoetica.com/bertemu-marlina-di-jakarta/> accessed January 21, 2019.

¹⁵ I have been conducting research on Indonesian film that was screened from August 2018 up until now. Comparing with several films from New Order, mostly the ending of the film diminishes society contribution to solve main character's problem. It can be seen especially in the horror movies, such as *Asih* and *Suzanna: Breathing in Mud*.

antagonists, Gerhana and Biru. The film ended when Sumba back in harmony, Dara can defeat her older brother and sister the antagonists. While in Surya's, desire follows Marlina who seeks justice for her self. Marlina is a victim of robbery and rape. Even the ending seems radical, but it just superficial. The point is Surya only giving a promise that there will be sisterhood, which can defeat gender inequalities, without considering the aspect of Sumbese daily life and tradition. Surya emphasizes using image that reminds us with the opening one, tranquility living in a house far from civilization.



Figure 4. Marlina is bringing Markus' head. Meanwhile, Novi is asking Marlina to make confession to the church, but Marlina refused because she was innocent. Courtesy: Cinesurya

To understand works by Ifa and Mouly better, we shall see a concept from Todd McGowan about cinema of integration. This kind of cinema is dominating the world today, from Hollywood to the big film festivals. It is not simply because the capitalist class controls the means of (filmic) production. It offers subjects the opportunity to experience the traumatic excitement of the gaze while remaining safely within the structure of fantasy.¹⁶ How Mouly Surya making audiences comfortably watching Marlina? Take a look at Marline when she brings Markus' head in the 'Journey', 2nd act. The head have traumatic aspect, but Surya can normalize the political values of this scene. She kept Makus head as usual as possible. And when Markus' body without head follows Marlina, the audiences still secured. This is the way cinema of integration brought the traumatic gaze: a smooth insertion of the gaze into the field of the visible, an insertion that causes the gaze to disappear.¹⁷

The cinema of integration is as much as possible to reduce class antagonism through the union of two lovebirds from different social class backgrounds. In *Marlina*, Surya did not choose that path. But she goes further depicting individualism through the film. It can be seen through the scene when people suddenly run away seeing Marlina bringing Markus's head. When a policeman answering Marlina's case, the protagonist is so sure and accepting that the visum couldn't be conducted immediately. These examples emphasise Marlina's position as an individual to not depending on Other. Actually from the very start, Marline known that Other rejects her case through the no

¹⁶ McGowan, Tood. 2007. *The Real Gaze: Film Theory After Lacan*. New York: State University of New York. Page: 115.

¹⁷ Ibid., Page: 116.

signal scene, when Marlina tries called the cops. And the next three acts could be read as the way Surya brings the Other's lack into empirical matters.

Conclusion

Although these three films both bring actors from outside Sumba as the main actors and are far from the reality, only Garin Nugroho that is trying to bridge the gap. Nugroho recorded all the good and bad things from Sumba. *Letter for an Angel* can be categorized as part of cinema of fantasy because Nugroho was able to show rejection of the scenario offered by Lewa. The gaze is distorted in the film. He did not try to solve the problem in the film. In this way, Garin Nugroho's film is able to make the spectator ask about the dominant ideology of that time, the New Order.

For films from Ifa Isfanysah and Mouly Surya, I categorize as cinema of integration because of their ability to comfort the spectator with mooi Sumba image. The spectators invest in illusion so they fail to see the ideological system within they actually exist. By only producing beautiful images, without showing space or other circumstances behind the beautiful ones, the audience is secured. Both Isfansyah and Surya did not dare to cultivate the communal side and the collective struggle of an ethnic group that must shed its identity in order to embrace the national identity.

This research will be richer if it is supported by quantitative data regarding the effect of mooi Sumba. Did tourism soar after the Warrior of Golden Cane and Marlina launched in the big cities? If this is the case, then the film could trigger the spectator's desire to "conquer" Sumba as virgin place. The second one, this research will have deeper understanding on the situation Indonesian film industry that have close "relationship" with fundings that demands filmmakers go to the East as a mean of infiltration. Well yes, New Order was falling 20 years ago, but I think the fundings presence nowadays can be regarded as the Father of Indonesian film industry. It will be interesting if nowadays we can find 'ambivalence' film like Garin Nugroho in *Letter for an Angel*, film that was supported by the State and at the same time criticize the order. Will it come an era when filmmakers made a film that was funded by foreign donors to infiltrate the East Indonesian, but at the same time they could criticize them?

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Biography

Umi Lestari is an independent researcher and film critic. She achieves Master Degree from Religious and Cultural Studies Program, Sanata Dharma University, Yogyakarta, with thesis entitled *Nationalism through Nawal Ismail's Films*. Before becoming independent, she was working at Indonesian Visual Art Archive, based in Yogyakarta. Umi was working in Forum Lenteng, Jakarta, as the editor in chief of Visual Jalanan. Besides that, she took part as film selector for Arkipel: Jakarta International Experimental and Documentary Film Festival (2015 and 2016), as well as in 2015 Indonesian Film Appreciation and Gelar Karya Film Pelajar 2018. Reach Umi at <https://umilestari.com/> to see her progress on seeing Indonesian commercial film nowadays.