Genre versus Local Specificity: Configuring Rangda and Durga in Balinese and Bengali Films

Makbul Mubarak

The transnationalization of genre has been an unavoidable phenomenon in world cinema. This paper looks at the encounter of one of the most transnationalized genre of Hollywood, that is horror, upon its encounter with Balinese local specificities that are portrayed in Indonesian film. This paper argues that horror has been in an active interaction in cinematically framing the Balinese culture. However, some elements of horror looks unease in the sense that it tends to exclude some indispensable elements to Balinese culture. The paper takes on the gap between the position of Rangda—the Balinese goddess—in Balinese culture and films. In the Balinese culture, Rangda is portrayed as the dark element that completes the ideal circle of life, while in the horror film *Mystics in Bali* (Sofyan, Katili, Guwnawan & Djalil 1980), Rangda is portrayed simply as a mere evil. In the course of reading this, the paper conducts a comparative strategy to show that such a phenomenon is not unique to Indonesian cinema, but also to the other geographies that are in a constant critical interaction with Hollywood.

Keywords: Rangda, Durga, Balinese Film, Bengali Film, transnationalization

Genre and Local Specificity

Many of the so-called exploitation films which came out of Indonesia during the 1980s were made in the horror genre. Examples are *The Queen of Black Magic* (Kasdani & Sudijo, 1981), *Lady Terminator* (Soraya & Djalil, 1988), *The Devil's Sword* (Samtani, Kasdani & Timoer, 1983), *Mystic in Bali* (Sofyan, Katili, Guwnawan & Djalil,1980), and *Dangerous Seductress* (Soraya Djalil, 1992). These films usually relied on the pulpy visual effects used in the duel between the good side, usually represented by the religious leaders, against the ambassadors of the bad, ranging from the popular ghosts in the local traditions throughout the archipelago to the "hybrid" monsters adapted from the science fiction films but with a special hatred towards the religious order—something that went hand in hand with the political arrangement of the New Order.[1]

But why horror?

Christina Klein (2010) mentions, from a very American perspective, that horror is one of the most transnationally used genres for its highly commercial appeal. Klein identifies a high level of hybridization in the genre with the cinematic traditions of the other geographies, such as with Hong Kong gangster movies, Korean monster flicks, and the Thai Westerns. Klein argues that what leads to this phenomenon is the very nature of the horror genre—their structural repetition and variations, rigidity and flexibility that relatively does not demand a deep familiarity with foreign cultures or cinematic traditions from its viewers. Horror genre is "a more easily acquired mastery of a recurring set of conventions" (p. 3).[2]

This paper proposes to use the figure of *leak* in the Indonesian New Order horror film *Mystics in Bali* (Sofyan, Katili, Gunawan, & Djalil, 1981) to look at the use of the global horror genre convention in the context of Indonesian cinema and its impact on the local film's storytelling. In performing this duty, the paper compares it with its Bengali counterpart in India, Satyajit Ray's *The Elephant God* (1979), to show that such interaction between global genre and local cultural material often costs a shift, for good or bad, to the local cultural material the film tries to portray. There could be a reservation whether comparing the work of a globally known auteur like Satyajit Ray to a locally commercial film helmed by a relatively unknown director is ideal enough. This paper focuses more on the modes of portrayal of each respective figure it looks into regardless of who is making the film, in what kind of place it is predominantly screened, for which kind of audience it is targeted, and so on. These kinds of question are not included in the focus for it could lead to another complexity that might veer the paper away from its aim. For example, the film *Mystics in Bali,* a blockbuster, though not as famous as it is now before the British distributor Mondo Macabro distributed it worldwide, Satyajit Ray was not considered an important auteur. Only after his films were screened in European film festivals that he was hailed as an "auteur"—a term which originated in Europe to read the works of several American directors. Using the term "auteur" would also need another separate effort that is to look at the interaction of a Euro-American term when it is applied to another territory—something that is not the focus of this paper.

Taking horror films of the New Order as "exploitation films" would unavoidably label it from a firmly, if not unmistakably, Euro-American imaginations for there has never been any label under the name "exploitation" on these films in Indonesia. To keep the analysis grounded on the feet of the film itself and not get it lost in unnecessary imaginations, I propose to take a closer look at the phenomenon of the New Order horror film from the genre

perspective and to retain the local specificity akin to Indonesian cultures in the film by employing the concept of horror as an adaptive genre.

The film in discussion here is *Mystics in Bali* (in Indonesia, the film is known as *Leak*, the black magic practice in Bali), made in 1980 about a Western anthropologist who comes to Bali to study the local magic tradition *leak*. *Leak* is a Balinese magic practice where the highest queen of *leak* is called Rangda, a scary woman who is considered as the embodiment of Devi Durga in the Hindu religion of India (Triadnyani, 2012). Rangda in the film is portrayed as an old woman with overly long nails, living in a forest, and is willing to teach *leak* magic in exchange for a chance to possess the body of her pupils. In Balinese mythology, Rangda is a widow[3] who originally comes from Java under the name Calon Arang. Calon Arang was socially ostracized because she was accused of doing black magic, which in fact she did. There are several versions of Rangda's stories in classical literature and popular culture. Some scholars like Covarrubias (2008) and Belo (1949) consider that Rangda exists only in the dance and theater performance. However, in his novel *Cerita Calon Arang* (*The Story of Calon Arang*), the leftist writer Pramoedya Ananta Toer (2006) rewrites the story of Calon Arang and gives it a quality of social empowerment. In Toer's novel, the tale of Calon Arang retains itself as a myth while also giving an important social commentary akin to Indonesian social condition, especially within the linkage of Javanese and Balinese culture. In 2007, the groundbreaking novel *Janda dari Jirah* (*The Widow from Jirah*) by Cok Sawitri came out with another perspective. She argues that Calon Arang is a real figure from the tenth- to the eleventh-century Java under the rule of King Airlangga. She was from the Kahuripan Kingdom in East Java but then migrated to Bali as a political exile. The debates that revolved around the position of Rangda, the key figure in *Mystics in Bali*, show that Rangda has a profound social power and has been used by artists and scholars to reflect on their situation. In another film, *Ratu Sakti Calon Arang* (Soraya & Gautama, 1985), the connection between Rangda in Bali and Durga in India is even more visible.[4]

What I am suggesting is a common ground for comparison between the sociability of Rangda in Bali and Durga in India through cinema. In the Indian case, I will propose to see the sociability of Durga in the filmic atmosphere of *Durga Puja*[5] in films such as *The Elephant God* (Bansal & Ray, 1979). *The Elephant God* tells the story of a detective working on the case of the lost gold Ganesh statue in Varanasi during the celebration of *Durga Puja*. In Indian mythology, Ganesh is the son of Durga. In the early part of the film, many clues lead to the gold Ganesh statue being hidden in the crotch of a Durga statue in the same house: an illusion of putting

back Ganesh to his mother's womb, a mythic allusion. Later we find that Ganesh and Durga in *The Elephant God* are merely objects of a social intellectual testing conducted by the rich Ganesh statue owners over the intelligence of his appointed detective. This gap between mythic allusion and social circulation of Durga and Ganesh is very visible in the difference between the English title, *The Elephant God*, points solely to the mythic allusion of the film. The relationship between Durga and her son, and the original title *Joi, Baba Felunath* (*Hail, Baba Felunath*), is a praise for the ability of the detective to solve the mystery around him through his pure social intellectual capability.[6]

Both *Mystics in Bali* (Sofyan, Katili, Gunawan, & Djalil, 1981) and *The Elephant God* (Bansal & Ray, 1979) touch upon the social circulation on the myth of Durga and her embodiment, Rangda. Durga and Rangda are icons identical to each other and are used to comment on their different social and historical condition. Another important thing to notice is the way these films look at the social circulation of myth in their respective areas. Both films use an outsider protagonist (Western anthropologist, a Bengali detective in Varanasi) to keep their observation in a certain distance.

Comparing the Balinese and the Bengali film shows the double influence in *Mystics in Bali* (Sofyan, Katili, Gunawan, & Djalil, 1981). One is the figure of Rangda, which is the local embodiment of Indian-made Durga; second is the employment of horror genre from Hollywood. This comparison is to show that the first penetration has been through a long process of cultural chewing which took centuries to make, ranging from the local oral tradition, religious influences, and the social ups-and-downs in Bali, while the other influence happened instantly by simply applying the commercial convention of Hollywood genre. In *Mystics in Bali*, this paper argues that the parroting of Hollywood horror genre has, as a consequence, resulted to the vanishing of Rangda's culturally relevant meanings, something that have been formed through the ages, in favor of a commercial temptation that arrived overnight.

To begin with, we will give a contextual landscape for Rangda in Balinese theater and cinema.

Cultural Specificity in *Mystics in Bali*

In Bali, Rangda is known as the incarnation of Durga and both are seen as two inseparable features (*Rwa Bhineda*)[7] in a "double-side-of-a-coin" manner. Rangda possesses a pervasive role in Balinese culture. She is an equal being of Shiva's wife Durga, she is the queen of *leak* (black magic). She is referred to as the goddess of darkness and destruction. Some people consider her as a total myth while others believe that Rangda once existed

in person and lived in Bali.[8] She exists in literature, myth, religious texts, children stories, dances, theater performances, mask arts, ritual offerings, and films. This chapter, among all, reads the pliability of Rangda through many forms of cultural expression that preceded its cinema production; namely, in Balinese theaters and literature, and then in terms of her presence in films.

In his account of Balinese theater, Antonin Artaud (1958) points out a mesmerizing concept aside from his influential formulation on total theater and of Balinese theater as the perfect prototype in his much later "theater of cruelty." In contrast to the western theater and its tight hold to realism, Balinese theater provides a metaphysics of reality. Its stage seeks to employ the role of the actors, the music, the masks, and the dancers in a theatrical form that are no longer based on words, but based on signs. In Artaud's own words:

> What is in fact curious about all these gestures, these angular and abruptly abandoned attitudes, these syncopated modulations formed at the back of the throat, these musical phrases that break off short, these flights of elytra, these rustlings of branches, these sounds of hollow drums, these robot squeakings, these dances of animated manikins, is this: that through the labyrinth of their gestures, attitudes, and sudden cries, through the gyrations and turns which leave no portion of the stage space unutilized, the sense of a new physical language, based upon signs and no longer upon words, is liberated.
>
> These actors with their geometric robes seem to be animated hieroglyphs. (p. 54)[9]

For Artaud (1958), Western theater is familiar with the discourse on realism to which the theatrical artistic practices lead, while Balinese theater, he said, is familiar with the discourse of reality to which the ideal conception of pure theater is addressed (Bansat-Boudon, 2012). It is then less helpful to compare Artaud's conception of "total theater" to Bazin's (2007) vision for "total cinema," for which the former leans on the reality while the second looks out for realism. Bazin advocates the "complete illusion of life," that "little by little made a reality out of the original myth." In other words, if the total cinema is a myth to which the technical development of cinema is heading for the sake of its primal perfection, then reality must be out of it. What has to be there is the complete illusion of life, or "a recreation of the

world in its own image" (Bazin, 2007, p. 36). Artaud (1958) was perfectly aware of this issue twenty years before Bazin published his seminal work. In *The Theater and Its Double*, Artaud (1958) firmly clarifies that what he wants is "to resuscitate an idea of total spectacle by which the theater would recover from the cinema, the music hall, the circus, and from life itself what has always belonged to it" (p. 86).

However, a striking conceptual connection can be found in Artaud's works on theater and in Eisenstein's (2010) work on cinema, especially montage of which he defines as "an idea derived from the collision between two shots that are independent of one another not in its relation to plot but in its relation to form"[10] (p. 95). Eisenstein was inspired by a model in the Japanese hieroglyph that juxtaposed two independent ideographic characters that gave birth to a whole new meaning. Artaud (1958) introduces Balinese theater as an animated hieroglyph, a stage full of moving signs taken. Hieroglyph comes from latin (*hiero*/holy, *glyph*/carving) and the concept became ideograms which we now see in Chinese and Japanese writings. The latter is the same concept from which Eisenstein was inspired. For Artaud (1958), the Balinese theater visualizes the language of objects, movements, attitudes, and gestures on condition that their meanings, their physiognomies, their combinations be carried to the point of becoming signs, forming a sort of alphabet made of signs. The task of theater is thus to form a veritable hieroglyph with the help of languages and objects.

If hieroglyph is for Eisenstein (2010) two juxtaposed ideographic characters that are independent from one another yet form a new meaning in the intellectual sense of the word, Artaud (1958) takes it more as a poetic interpenetration, a state that transcends the experience of languages, feelings, and life. Animated hieroglyphs replace words. In his melodious style, he writes:

> It happens that this mannerism, this excessively hieratic style, with its rolling alphabet, its shrieks of splitting stones, noises of branches, noises of the cutting and rolling of wood, compose a sort of animated material murmur in the air, in space, a visual as well as audible whispering. And after an instant the magic identification is made: WE KNOW IT IS WE WHO WERE SPEAKING (p. 67).

Through a poetic revealing, Artaud (1958) is trying to interpenetrate Balinese theater with Balinese nature and life. As if he is trying to put the audience on the stage and put the stage into the audience's mind. The most important thing, for Artaud, is trying to give a larger role to the Balinese

theater from a religious ritualistic practice to a popular practice without losing spiritual quality. Artaudian hieroglyph animates on and off the stage and perception by musing on the "beyond-the-language-ness" of the Balinese theater stage and its capability to pervade the mind of "WE," the social life of the audience.

Balinese theater requires an active participation of its audiences to complete itself as a total theater. In Artaud's (1958) words, "there is no transition from a gesture to a cry or a sound: all the senses interpenetrate, as if through strange channels hollowed out in the mind itself!" (p. 57). Artaud allows the scope of the animated hieroglyphs to be larger than mere on stage precision. Its scope reaches the minds of the audiences ("through skin," wrote Artaud in his manifesto) and the animated life of the hieroglyph itself.

Secondly, by juxtaposing Artaud (1958) and Eisenstein (2010), we find that both theater and cinema have a conceptual closeness to the animation and life of hieroglyphic signs: to its successions, movements, and superimposition; to its noises of branches and woods; to its shrieks and splitting stones; and to its gestures and sounds.

Balinese theater is more than just a performance in a closed place like what Artaud (1958) used to see in Europe. Balinese theater is also more than just a ritualistic practice (although it contains many aspects of that quality). Rather than being a sacred performance, Artaud found "Balinese theater [as] a 'spectacle-popular, and secular' like the common bread of artistic sensations among Balinese people who 'take the struggles of a soul preyed upon by ghosts and phantoms from the beyond as the basis for their civic festivals'" (p. 56).

Rangda

Rangda is a popular figure in Balinese theatre and dance whose life is told through the folktale of Calon Arang, the main plot of which is set in the eleventh century. The Calon Arang tale centers on Rangda, a widow that practices a powerful black magic that spreads lethal epidemic to the whole Kahuripan Kingdom under King Airlangga (1006–1042 AD). As a king, Airlangga feels obligated to conquer Rangda. Airlangga asks insights from a hermit named Empu Baradah, who, under his personal willingness, sends one of his best pupils named Empu Bahula to propose to Rangda to marry her daughter, Ratna Manggali, whom despite her beauty, no one in the kingdom wants to marry considering the reputation of her mother. Being Rangda's son-in-law, Empu Bahula strives to find her secret book of sorcery in order to outsmart her magic.

The plot is very simple, yet background stories and debates that revolve around this folktale are abundant. All sources of Calon Arang folktales agree that Rangda originates from Jirah (some sources pronounce it as *Dirah*, another says *Girah*, or *Gurah*, but all these term refer to the same village located in present day Kediri regency), a village in East Java under the territory of Kahuripan Kingdom. After Empu Baradah defeated her, Rangda and her pupil escape to Bali and continue to practice and spread their crafts of what is known today as *leak,* a black magic that is widely believed to send someone to sickness or death. In Bali, Rangda is known as the queen of *leak*. Through *leak*, Bali has established its own tradition distinct from the version of Calon Arang that took place in East Java. This is supported by the fact that the only available source of Calon Arang's tale (*Serat Calon Arang*) written in Balinese script dates back from around the thirteenth to the fourteenth century, and later translated into Dutch by Purbatjaraka in 1926 (Santiko, 1997).

Rangda is a significant figure that exists across various art works in Bali. She also signifies the debate between good and evil as she embodies both qualities.

The figure of Rangda is featured in *Barong* performance, one of the most popular Balinese arts that combine dance and theater. Barong is a four-legged mystical creature with a long back and curved tail. As the protector of mankind, Barong is associated with white magic. The part of Barong is played by two men. One performer manipulates the head, and the other performer harmonizes the movements of the tail with the movements of the head. The mask of Barong varies, resembling a wild boar, a tiger, or a lion. The holiest mask is called *Barong Ketet*. It is the mask used most often in *Barong* performances.

Rangda is the complement of Barong; she represents dark power. She rules evil spirits, embodies destructive power and practices black magic. Fire flares from her long hair. She has a big chest and long tongue. Her long fangs and bulging eyes make her face look scary. In the first act of *Barong* performance, Rangda is attacked by armed men with *keris* daggers (a traditional sword used mainly in Java and Bali). With her supernatural powers, Rangda reverses this aggression. The performers fall into trance and begin to plunge the blades of their *keris* into their own bodies. Barong then uses his power to protect the men in such a way that the blade of the *keris* cannot hurt the men's bodies. It is true that Barong dance is about a battle between good and evil. But the plot, rather than aim, to eliminate the black magic of Rangda, prefers to make men invulnerable to the threat of black magic while the black magic itself continues to exist. Just as the *rwa bhineda* (balancing difference) structure[s] between Durga and Rangda, Barong and

Rangda also exist in this structure. But instead of establishing a *rwa bhineda* in the form of incarnation, Barong and Rangda are complementary to each other in the sense that both complete the cycle of life. That is why at the end of *Barong* performances, Rangda is not dead but continues to exist. Barong's contribution is limited to cure Rangda's magic influence on the *keris* performers and not to kill her.[11]

During his attendance to see Balinese theater performances in the Paris Colonial Exposition 1931, Artaud happened to see this Barong dance performance.[12] This was, as mentioned by Savarese and Fowler (2001), the most bewildering turning point in how Artaud sees theater art as a whole. As if Artaud, in a surreal manner, has found his ideal prototype of total theater. In Savarese and Fowler's sentence, "Artaud's encounter with the dances of Bali, [was] clearly a significant moment in his life" (p. 53). Rangda is a significant figure that exists across various art works in Bali, she also signifies the debate between good and evil as she embodies both qualities, a goddess and an evil.

Rangda in Films

In 1926, the first film was made in Bali by a German filmmaker named W. Mullens with the title *Leichenverbrennung und Einascherung einer Fürstebwitwe* (*Royal Cremation*) and *Bali-Sanghijang und Ketjaqtanz* (*Sang Hyang and Kecak Dance*). These films are extremely exotic and portray the "weird" aspect of Balinese culture for the eyes of foreigners. The topic of Rangda is portrayed in the second film, made in 1927 under the title *Calon Arang,* by an unknown filmmaker. It is mentioned that the film is made in collaboration with the Italians who owned the movie theater in Denpasar where Charlie Chaplin's films were also screened. *Calon Arang* (1927) is described as "a tropical romance featuring palm trees, beachcombers, and 'the inevitable bevy of dusky beauties such as never seen on land or seas'" (Chin, 2001, p. 13).

The Bali-based researcher Michelle Chin (2001) writes:

> The Rangda (witch-heroine of the *Calon Arang* story) and the kris dance eventually became the most potent of all the elements of Bali's image, and could be counterpoised to the superficial image of the tropical paradise. The gentle figure of the young female dancer of the Sang Hyang trance dance was balanced by the horrible figure of the witch of Calon Arang. If Dr Krause tried to emphasise harmony and the organic community in his description of Bali, then the Rangda represented the other side of this image, the feeling

A still picture from Calon Arang (1927) (source: michellechin.net)

> that lurking under the harmony there were wild forces ready to run amok. The 'Island of the Gods' has also been called 'The Island of the Demons', most notably in a German film shot in 1931, and later in a Dutch novel of 1948 (p. 12).

In spite of her exotic portrayal, Michelle Chin (2001) shows that Rangda was not only a goddess in ritualistic practice, and/or in performing arts, but also one of the earliest portrayals captured by moving images made in Bali. So pervasive is Rangda that later, her figure is portrayed again in a film and a novel and it remains so until today.

After *Calon Arang* (1927), the figure of Rangda continued to be portrayed in films, from Baron Viktor von Plessen's *The Island of Demons* (*Insel der Dämonen*), shot in 1931 and released in 1933 to Sisworo Gautama's *The Magic Goddess of Calon Arang* (*Ratu Sakti Calon Arang*) in 1985. Both *Calon Arang* and *The Island of Demons* are now lost, but that doesn't exclude it from our view. However, for the sake of accuracy, we will look deeper into two films made in 1980s that revolve around the image of Rangda: *Mystics in Bali* (Sofyam, Katili, Gunawan, & Djalil, 1980) and *The Magic Goddess of Calon Arang* (Soraya & Djalil, 1985).

Mystics in Bali

Mystics in Bali (Sofyam, Katili, Gunawan, & Djalil, 1980) opens with Rangda dancing before a black screen. A second after, the title appears to begin a story about Balinese black magic like what the character Hendra introduces to his new white girl friend Cathy in one of the first sequences, "Voodoo is nothing compared to *leak*, it is the most powerful black magic" (scene 3).

Cathy is an American anthropologist who comes to Bali to learn about *leak* for her new book. In Bali she meets Hendra whom she falls in love with. Together with Hendra, Cathy rides on a boat to an island to meet a *leak* master, an old woman with super long nail and deafening laughter. Cathy introduces herself,

> I am so interested in this *leak* magic. I want to find the secret behind this unusual branch of black magic and the only possible way to do that would be to learn that myself, the same way I learn voodoo, the black magic of Africa. (Scene 6)

The most conspicuous thing in the first half of the film is the geography. The *leak* master is depicted living in a deserted island full of graveyards and fragrantless skeletons, excluded from the Balinese society, captured in the film through its mainland's stunning shrines (*pura*) and humble priests. This sequence is followed by Cathy being accepted as the *leak* master's pupil and has to provide offerings (*sesajen)* for the *leak* master. Since then, Cathy's intention to learn *leak* for academic purposes goes awry. Cathy, in fact, is being used by the *leak* master to suck the newly born babies from their mothers' vulva in order to rejuvenate the *Leak* master.

What is absent in *Mystics in Bali* (Sofyam, Katili, Gunawan, & Djalil, 1981) is the principle of *rwa bhineda*, that is, to put in Rangda in a dualistic structure with Durga and to put Rangda as the complementary element of Barong. Instead, the film puts her as the plague of the society by putting her vis-à-vis the religious leaders as simply bad character aiming at simply bad things that makes her very dangerous to be acknowledged as an integral part of the society. One dialogue by a religious priest confirms this, "There is a way to conquer them (the *leak* magicians), otherwise the world will be taken over by them." ("Consultation with the Religious Priest Scene") Rangda is not at all portrayed as part of the Balinese religious tradition. Instead, she is placed as the opponent, symbol of evil that has to be banished by the virtue of religion. In the craze of "terror" caused by the *leak*, several priests gather to find solutions, "I am afraid that the world has become a very evil place these days. Many have forgotten the almighty God and his teachings to us" ("Preparation to Attack *leak* Scene"). Rangda lost her position as the incarnation of the almighty Durga to be portrayed as a demon.

In the second half of the film, conspicuous are the transformations of the *leak* practitioners into animals: pigs, snakes, and in one scene, a mice falling out from Cathy's mouth. In the last battle against the priest, the *leak* master changes into a giant pig and finally shows her real shape: she is Rangda,

with her giant tusk and eyes just the way she appears at the Balinese theater. According to Karl Heider (1991), the depiction of wild man and association with animal in their antagonistic role is a very common construction in Indonesia to exclude The Other as the non-modern and on the other side, construct the protagonist as the religious yet open to modernism. This is, for Heider, the Indonesian response to science-fiction, in the sense that Indonesia has almost never made a science fiction to depict The Other like what Heider has encountered in the west. Instead, Indonesian cinema prefers to portray "the wild" and "the animal" for this same purpose (exclusion) (p. 108).

Heider (1991) continues that for film directors, there are three main strategies to construct The Other in films. The first is to deny the difference—which is to say, to deny "The Otherness," to insist that every human is basically alike. He mentions the American film *Mary Queen of Scots* (Berman & Ford, 1936) as an example. The second is to construct the other as the "Noble Savage," a concept he derived from Owen Lovejoy and Franz Boas's anthropological categorization of "chronological primitivism" (Heider, 1991, p. 109). In a formulation, as Hoxie Naile Fairchild (1961) has mentioned, "a Noble Savage is any free and wild being who draws directly from nature virtues which raise doubts as to the value of civilizations" (p. 20). Robert Flaherty's *Moana* (1928) is featured as an example. The third strategy is the extreme opposite of the second, the "Ignoble Savage," the lack of civilization that reveals not the natural goodness of human but the natural evilness (Heider, 1991). This is where Heider found resemblance with how Indonesian film constructs The Others.

However, Heider (1991) is aware of the problem of seeing Indonesian cinema through the Western categorization of the Ignoble Savage. In Indonesian cinema, he writes, the available prototype is not of a natural man, but something that is more natural than human. Heider associates this with the mythological position of orangutan and Hanuman. In Ramayana, Hanuman brings the army of monkey to aid Rama in recapturing Sinta when she is kidnapped. Ramayana, indeed is a Hindu mythology that is widely used in Bali. In analyzing Indonesian films, especially genre films, Heider introduces a new category that he terms "the animal-human" (p. 115), to read the fashion of exclusion of The Other.[13]

The other text that we will look here is *The Magic Goddess of Calon Arang* (*Ratu Sakti Calon Arang*), which was made in 1985 by the country's most respected genre director, Sisworo Gautama Putra and stars the horror icon Suzanna in the leading role as Calon Arang (Rangda's previous name) and at the same time play the role of her daughter, Ratna Manggali. The film opens with a voice over, "This tale from the 11th century, during the reign

of the King Airlangga, is a lesson for us that no matter how divine a black magic is, it can never destroy the teaching of religion, a teaching based on the truth" (Soraya & Gautama, 1985, "Opening Scene").

The opening is a blatant clue that this film will contrast the natural good people under the teachings of the religion with a natural bad power influenced by black magic. *Mystics in Bali*'s (Sofyan. Katili, Gunawan, & Djalil, 1981) exclusion is apparent. The film tells the story about Calon Arang (Rangda), a widow with powerful black magic skill that intends to trample down the in-power King Airlangga and rule the world. If *Mystics in Bali* put the black magic in contrast to religion, *The Magic Goddess* (Soraya & Gautama, 1985) steps further by putting black magic vis-à-vis religion and the state.

The next sequence shows Calon Arang doing her ritual offerings to Durga to beseech a groom for her longtime single daughter Ratna Manggali, a kind-hearted young lady whom a lot of people are afraid of for her mother's reputation. The ritual offering scenes by Calon Arang to Durga is frequently repeated for different propensity each time. During her second ritual offering, Calon Arang asks Durga to give her power to destroy the whole kingdom and take over it. Upon receiving her blessings, Calon Arang and her pupils spread plague to the people throughout the kingdom with her magic power.

There are several things worth emhasizing. First, Calon Arang is not portrayed as the embodiment of Durga but merely as her servant unlike what it is in the Balinese religion. The pieces of evidence are scattered throughout the repetitive ritual offerings that resemble those of *pesugihan*[14] (a pact with the devil to gain wealth or fame) rituals in Java. This is interesting since Balinese culture doesn't recognize *pesugihan* rituals. The logic of *pesugihan* is that one makes a pact with the demon through a ritual offering (the offering mainly consists of blood, certain flowers, or animal flesh) in exchange of the demon's power to be used for a certain purpose, mainly to gain more wealth or to harm somebody. A dialogue by one of Calon Arang's pupil affirms this logic, "You are wrong, don't follow god, follow our queen Calon Arang!" (Soraya & Putra, 1985, "The Battle Between Calon Arang's Followers and the Religious Men Scene").

The shot of Calon Arang's ritual offering is always followed by the religious people in white robe praying in the temple and then followed by the fighting scenes between Calon Arang or her pupils versus the religious people. Just as in *Mystics in Bali*, Rangda is excluded from the religious cycle and is portrayed mainly as The Other. *Rwa bhineda* system is once again absent from the film.

King Airlangga who is very disturbed upon seeing the increasing havoc caused by Calon Arang, decides to contact Empu Baradah, a priest who lives far from the kingdom's capital to seek his cooperation in solving the problem. Empu Baradah asks his son, Empu Bahula to come to Calon Arang and beg her blessings to let him marry her daughter, Ratna Manggali. This is a strategy so that later, Empu Bahula can steal the sorcerer's book of *Tantrayanamantram* from which Calon Arang learns her magic power. In the end of the film, Empu Bahula steals the book and conquers Calon Arang. Before her death, Calon Arang asks Empu Baradah to purify herself, heal the power of black magic from her so that she can die peacefully. Calon Arang can only die peacefully if she renounces her black magic world and join the religion and the state, to relinquish her exclusive attribute. In other words, the exclusion keeps on existing and this can only be solved when the excluded people conform with the majority.

The structure of storytelling, such as what is found in films telling the tale of Rangda is not very unique. It is a structure that is pervasive in the films made in 1980s Indonesia, especially those that are made in the horror genre. Apparently horror genre had given these films a distinct touch.

The Problem of Genre

From Artaud's (1958) reading on Balinese theater and the reading on two Balinese films that have been provided, discernible is the problem of the hindrance of *rwa bhineda* upon its entering to cinema. In performance theater, the *rwa bhineda*, symbolized by Rangda and Barong, is preserved as the inseparable duo who contributes to the prosperity of life. However, when it is translated to cinema, this dualism becomes separated in which one is seen as the protagonist (the natural good) and the other as antagonist (the natural bad).

The Balinese films mentioned above are made in the convention of horror genre. According to Noël Carroll (1990), the horror genre has exclusive elements: onset, discovery, confirmation, and confrontation in a structure that he calls "the complex discovery plot" (p. 97). Onset is the condition where "the monster's presence is established for the audience" (p. 100), discovery is when "after the monster arrives, an individual or a group learns of its existence" (p. 101), confirmation is when the "discoverers or the believers in the existence of the monster convince some other groups of the existence of the creature and of the proportions of the mortal danger at hand (some of these monsters are often said to spell the end of human life as we know it)." (p. 103), confrontation is when "humanity marches out to meet its monster" and "generally takes the form of a debacle" (p. 103). The confrontation "may assume the shape of an escalation in intensity or complexity or both. Furthermore, the confrontation movement may also

adopt a problem/solution format" (p. 103). *Mystics in Bali* is told exactly through this format of horror genre as we see in the table below.

Table 1: *Mystics in Bali* and *The Magic Goddess of Calon Arang* according to the complex discovery plot.

Film	Onset	Discovery	Confirmation	Confrontation
Mystics in Bali	Hendra's confirmation that *leak* magic exists and it is one of the most powerful magic in the world.	Hendra and Cathy encounter the *leak* master at a remote island outside of Bali's mainland.	Hendra tries to convince, confirm, and consult a Hindu priest about the *leak* problem .	The Hindu priest confronts the *leak* master in a fighting bout and wins it thus solving the problem.
The Magic Goddess of Calon Arang	- The opening voice over establishes the presence of Calon Arang and her black magic. - The first ritual offering scene of Calon Arang.	The village people encounter Calon Arang who is in the middle of searching for a virgin to be sacrificed.	Airlangga's minister come to inform Empu Baradah and convince him to help.	- Empu Bahula marries Ratna Manggali. - Empu Baradah conquers **Calon Arang.**

Here, the paper argues that the highly rigid horror convention has been forcing a lot of foundational principle to stay out of the filmic text or to remain untranslated into the film, or to twist and produce new meanings that in reality are not what they are. In the horror genre, the existence of monsters is necessary in order to invoke fear and thrill in the audience. Here is where the figure of Rangda is mistranslated: her figure is transformed from the goddess that rules the darkness, an embodiment of Shiva's wife Durga whom the Shivaist (Hindu religion of a majority of the Balinese) worship, to The Other, the monster, the plague that should be banished through, ironically, religion itself. In other words, the genre convention has been trapping the local specificity of the Balinese to stay off its own cinematic language and discourse. Unfortunately, the majority of studies on and marketing of Balinese cinema has been conducted through genre framework without questioning the form of its social and cultural surrounding.

Such a phenomenon is not unique to Indonesia. This paper seeks to perform a comparative film strategy to see how such phenomenon also happens in another place without losing the cultural specificities of that place. This comparison aims to show the transnational scale of the interaction between global genres and local materials.

A Shift to Bengali Cinema: *The Goddess* and *The Elephant God*

The complexity of genre and its relation to the revealing manner of goddesses were visible in the "older brother" of the Balinese; namely, the Indian, specifically the Bengali cinema where many of cinematic experimentations have been done. Our case study will deal with two of the Kolkata-based filmmaker Satyajit Ray's films in which he experiments with Durga as his focus. The first is *The Goddess* (Ray, 1960), about Doya, a woman who is believed by his rich father-in-law as the incarnation of Kali.[16] Second is *The Elephant God* (*Joi Baba Felunath*) (Bansa & Ray, 1979), Ray's mystery film about a detective who is, during his visit to the Durga Puja celebration in Benares, is invited to solve the mystery of the lost golden Ganesh.[17] In Indian mythology, Ganesh is the son of Durga from one of her pleasant embodiment, Parvati. The presence of Durga fills the air of the Durga Puja celebration where the film is set.

Our main attempt here is to see how the genre convention is used around the figure of the goddesses in each respective case study. But before that, let's see how the notion of genre, especially those of melodrama and its relation to realism, developed in India. As noted by Kobita Sharkar in Ravi Vasudevan (2001), there are two main traits of Indian melodrama that could be envisaged since the 1950s. First, the melodrama films shift are in line with social changes which goes with economic progress. This means that Indian realistic films' methods mirror the West (20011).

It is possible that this view is in fact complementary with and sprang from the ideology of the national context: that of the Nehruvian state, with its emphasis on economic transformation and a critically founded individualism (Vasudevan, 2001). The second trait, however, is quite contradictory. As Vasudevan gleans from an earlier writing published in 1958 by *Indian Film Review*, the Indian audiences at the time "delighted more in the present than in the past or future" (p. 14). The Indian audiences were also oriented toward an epic tradition "which you can read from anywhere to anywhere, as long as you like" (p. 14). This second trait shows that the Indian audiences prefer a certain restrained storytelling convention rather than an open and free experiment with form even though it is for the sake of rediscovering their own indigenous traditions.

Another important point was made by M. Madhava Prasad (2001) in his account of Indian genre films in comparison to Hollywood films. He noted that in contrast to Hollywood mode of production, where "the commodity unit is the individual film" (p. 47), and where "each film is marked by a high degree of internal unity and the values and skills that enter into its production are organized into a stable hierarchy, whose primary effect is that of a tightly-organized coherent narrative" (pp. 47-48), films made in India, through their more independent production, is "marked by the relative autonomy retained by the various elements that flow into the production process" (p. 48). This means that a certain narrative structure (i.e., film songs, film dances) has an autonomous existence, and so do the dialogue and the star image. There are "certain fragmentations of film texts into its component parts" (p. 48), that are "organized by means of a minimal narrative framework" (p. 48).

Prasad (2001) further argues that the cinematic realism that is being developed in the West initially by Bazin (2007), where the "chunks of the real" (Prasad, p. 49) could be received by the audience as the bearer of Symbolic function, is different from what is found in Indian cinema. He explains it through a binary table that he terms "fictive contractual relations in the (film) performance apparatus" (p. 51):[18]

Table 2: Relay of Meaning and Production of Meaning (Prasad, 2001, p. 51)

Relay of Meaning (Heterogeneous manufacture), whose sample could be found in Indian cinema.	**Production of meaning (Serial manufacture), whose sample could be found in Hollywood cinema)**
1. Message from the Symbolic (God, King, Star) 2. Transmission of message through performance (producers, actors) 3. Reception of the message (audience)	1. (No message from the Symbolic) 2. Reality as raw material for meaning production (author/producer) 3. Reception as meaning production by audience as bearers of Symbolic function.

It is exactly against these theoretical backdrops where *The Goddess* (Ray, 1960) was made. The film in a sense is readable through the first categorization proposed by Sharkar (1957) and Vasudevan (2001). There is a certain move from the kind of melodrama that "you can read from anywhere to anywhere" (Gupta, p. 14), to a type of melodrama that follows more a logical progression and avoids a lack of characterization.[19] The protagonist Doya, in spite of her almost-muteness throughout the film, is a very strong character in her relations to the story of the film in terms of

logical progression. The story starts right after Doya's marriage to the rich Umaprasad who leaves for the city to study. In the absence of her husband, her father-in-law Kalikinkar dreams about Doya being the incarnation of the goddess Kali. Kalikinkar family's respectable social position drew much attention to his new daughter-in-law. People come to Kalikinkar's house to worship her. A child is miraculously healed from his illness after he sought help and drank her "holy water." Meanwhile, in her state of confusion, Doya is powerless to challenge all the people's attention and Kalikinkar's control.

Using the logic of Prasad's (2001) illustration, it is understandable that Satyajit Ray chose not to employ a hundred percent of the Hollywood model neither to choose a hundred percent of the Indian model. In *The Goddess* (Ray, 1960), Doya is left in a state of confusion whether she is really the incarnation of god through whose body the goddess is present on the earth, or if she is made as the god's message transmitter by the powerful patriarch that surrounds her. In presenting this, Ray avoids confirming either of them. Instead, he relies on the cinematic realism style where the transmission of the symbolic message is blurred and pushed aside from the main performance. Amidst Umaprasad's attempt to protect Doya from the exploitation, Doya whispers "What if I am really the goddess?" (Ray, 1960, "Doya's Confusion Scene"), Ray combines the elements that Prasad (2001) has foregrounded as exclusively Indian ("Message from the Symbolic") and the elements that are akin to Hollywood production ("Reality as Raw Material for Meaning Production," "Reception as Meaning Production by Audience as Bearers of Symbolic function"). There is a radical cross from the first category of the heterogeneous production (message from the symbolic, in this case god, embodied through Kalikinkar's dream) to the category of serial production where the raw material is presented as the arena of meaning production not by the performer, but by the audience as the bearer of the Symbolic function (as written on the third category of the serial production). In other words, *The Goddess* (Ray, 1960), is a work that defies both categories but at the same time employs some elements from each category. It refuses to ground firmly on one category. Through this perspective, we will later see how the goddess is placed.

Meanwhile, Satyajit Ray's *The Elephant God* (1979) spots a clearer category as its playground. The film is constructed as a genre film derived from the popular Feluda (real name: Prodosh Chandra Mitra) character, the main protagonist in the detective story created by Ray himself and was first published in the children's magazine *Sandesh* in 1965. Considering its plot elements, it is clear that *The Elephant God* (Bansal & Ray, 1979) is a mystery film in the sense that it works in the "whodunit puzzle that have many more

than two alternative answers—it has many potential answers as there are suspects" (Carroll, 1990, p. 235).

Feluda, his cousin Topshe, and the thriller writer Jatayu visit Benaras during *Durga Puja*. There they meet the Ghosal family. Upon hearing that Feluda is a private investigator, the Ghosal family head entrusts him with the task of finding out the culprit of an attempted theft that took place in their house. The object of this theft is a golden Ganesh statue that was brought over from Nepal. At the same time, a carver is working on a Durga statue in the house of the Ghosal family. Outside, the arrival of a saint by the name of Machhli Baba in Benares for the *Durga Puja* arouses the excitement of the local people. The latter two are important clues for Feluda to solve the mystery of who—among all people with logical motive to steal the Ganesh statue—the thief is, then to find where the real Ganesh statue really is.

Placing Goddess

In Indian culture, goddesses have incarnations thus goddesses are recognized through a dual quality and this is known as *shakti*, Female Power (Brill, 1977). This exists in *The Goddess*, where sight of the lovely form of Durga and the formidable vision of *Kali* may offer a startling contrast for they are a single manifestation of the important concept of *shakti*. This is portrayed very well by the film's textual strategy to incorporate both qualities in the film. Through the concept of *shakti*, the goddesses have been defined and characterized as all-powerful from very early times. The religious text *Devi Mahatmya* from the fifth century described Durga as a superbly powerful goddess. Her incarnation Kali was born from her anger as she rode her buffalo to confront her enemies. This makes for the Durga-Kali dualism that is deeply rooted in the tradition and has been perpetuated for centuries. The concept of *shakti* is very similar to the concept of *Rwa Bhineda* in Bali, in the sense that both point to the dualism of goddesses: Durga-Rangda and Durga-Kali.

In *The Goddess* (Ray, 1960), both aspects of Durga-Kali quality are preserved in a manner that perpetuates their precise position in the Hindu tradition. This is enabled by Ray's routine crosscuts between interior shots of Doya, the incarnation of Kali, and the exterior shots of the Durga statue being carried by hundreds of people toward the river during the *Durga Puja* carnival. In both series of shots, the two goddesses are worshipped and celebrated through a mode that retains their exact cultural quality and it happens repeatedly throughout the film. Satyajit Ray crosses the traditional distinction of genre and performance and it rewards him the ability of perpetuating the real quality of the goddesses he portrays as it is in the Hindu tradition.

In contrast, *The Elephant God*'s (Bansal & Ray, 1979) quest in finding the thief and the *Ganesh* statue, on staying firmly in the genre framework has transformed the story into a black-and-white opposition: Feluda versus every suspects in the *Durga Puja* festival, including the carver of the Durga statue and the Durga statue itself. *The Elephant God* springs within the mystery genre convention that is deeply rooted in the West: a private eye is hired to find an object or to solve a murder and the story gradually treats everybody and every object around as potential suspects and clues (i.e., *The Maltese Falcon,* Walis & Huston, 1941). In *The Elephant God*, both lost object and murder case exist and these plot elements lead the atmosphere of *Durga Puja* and the Durga statue into a kind of "mysterious other" that our protagonist has to face. The audience's symbolic identification is continuously glued to the Feluda figure who is confronting his antagonistic Durga statue and *Durga Puja* celebration. The quality of Durga and *Durga Puja* is never explained beyond the genre's necessity to use it as mere plot elements.

Conclusion

Comparing Balinese to Bengali films require extra attention to see the differences and commonalities as both cultures are deeply rooted in Hindu tradition and present similar local materials to their cinematic interaction with global genres. They differ in the way that Bengali cinema has a variety of ways in interacting with the global genre. One director, like Satyajit Ray, uses different ways in immersing his work with the influence of the global genre while in Indonesia, the lack of variety in dealing with the global genre is visible in its films. When one does it in a certain way, the other would do it the same way.

This analysis shows the risk of a certain convention within certain genres, especially the global ones, in conveying the local specificity of a cultural community, and in turn, shows that genre is never universal; it always inherently contains its own local specificity. Of the works that we have mentioned, three of them work through convention that is previously established in another place and this have disregarded ways of articulating the local specificities of the community that these works represent. Meanwhile, one of them reworks the global and local genre convention and it results in its ability to convey the local theme and retain its quality. This is not to say that genre is bad, but to say that genre should be able to interact with the complexity of a certain cultural specificity.

References

Artaud, A. (1958). *The theater and its double*. New York: Grove Press.

Bansal, R.D. (Producer), & Ray, S. (Director). (1978). *The elephant god* [Motion picture]. India: R. D. Bansal & Co.

Bansat-Boudon, L. (2012). Artaud and Balinese theatre, or the influence of the Eastern on the Western stage. *Samskrtavimarsah 6: World Sanskrit Conference Special*. Lecture conducted from Rashtriya Saskrit Sansthan, New Delhi.

Bazin, A. (2007). *What is cinema? Vol. 1*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Belo, J. (1949). Bali: Rangda and Barong. American Ethnologiccal Society Monographs, No. 16. New York: Augustin

Berman, P. (Producer), & Ford, J. (Director). (1936). *Mary of Scotland* [Motion picture]. United States: RKO.

Blank, H., & Wallis, H. (Producer), & Huston, J. (Director). (1941). *The maltese falcon* [Motion picture]. United States: Warner Bros.

Brill, E.J. (1977). *Myth cult and symbols in Shakta Hinduism: A study of the Indian mother goddess*. Leiden, Leiden University Press.

Caroll, *N*. (1990). *The philosophy of horror: or, the paradoxes of the heart*. London: Routledge.

Chin, M. (2011, August 1). Bali in Film: From the Documentary of Sang Hyang and Kecak Dance (1926) to Bali Hai in Hollywood's South Pacific (1958). *Bali Echo*. Retrieved from http://michellechin.net/writings/04.html.

Covarrubias, M. (2008). *Island of Bali.* Hong Kong: Periplus

Eisenstein, S. (2010). *Eisenstein's selected works vol. 1*. London: I.B. Tauris.

Fairchild, H. (1961). *The noble savage: A study in romantic naturalism*. New York: Russell & Russell.

Flaherty, R.J. (Producer), & Flaherty, R.J. (Director). (1926). *Moana* [Motion picture]. United States: Paramount.

Heider, K. (1991). *Indonesian cinema: national culture on screen*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.

Gupta, C. D. (1958, January). In defence of the box office. Indian Film Review, 9-14.

Klein, C. (2010). The American horror film? Globalization and transnational U.S – Asian genres. In Hantke, S (Ed.), *American horror film: The genre at the turn of the millenniu*m. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi.

Lansing, S. (1994). *The Balinese (Case Studies in Cultural Anthropology)*. Stamford: Cengage Learning.

Mullens, W. (1926). *Leichenverbrennung und Einascherung einer Fürstebwitwe* (*Royal Cremation*). Dutch Indies: Unkown.

Mullens, W. (1926b). *Sanghijang und Ketjaqtanz* (*Sang Hyang and Kecak Dance*). Dutch Indies: Unknown.

Plessen, B.V., (Producer), & Plessen, B.V. (Director). (1933). *The island of the demons* [Motion picture]. Germany: Unknown.

Prasad, M. (2001). *Ideology of the Hindi Film: A Historical Construction*. Cary: Oxford University Press USA.

Ray, S. (Producer), & Ray, S. (Director). (1960). *The goddess* [Motion picture]. India: Satyajit Ray

Samtani, G., & Kasdani, S. (Producer), & Timoer, R. (1983). *The devil's swords* [Motion picture]. Indonesia: RAPI.

Soenarso, R. (Producer), & Karya, T. (Director). (1986). *Mother* [Motion picture]. Indonesia: Satria Perkasa Esthetika Film & Sufin.Productions.

Santiko, H. (1997). The goddess durga in East Javanese period. *Asian Folklore Studies*, 56(2).

Savarese, N., & Fowler, R. (2001). 1931: Antonin Artaud sees Balinese theatre at the Paris colonial exposition. *The Drama Review, 45*(3).

Sawitri, C. (2007). *Janda dari Jirah* (*The Widow from Jirah*). Indonesia: PT Gramedia Pustaka Utama
Sharkar, K. (1957). Influences on the Indian Film. *Indian Film Quarterly*. Volume number (issue number), page range.
Sofyan, A.M., & Katili, H. (Producers), & Djalil, H. (Director). (1981). *Mystics in bali* [Motion picture]. UK: Mondo Macabro.
Soraya, R. (Producer), & Gautama, S. (Director). (1985). *Ratu sakti calon arang* [Motion picture]. Indonesia: RAPI.
Soraya, R. (Producer), & Jalil, H. (Director). (1992). *Dangerous seductress* [Motion picture]. Indonesia: RAPI.
Triadnyani, I. (2012). Fenomena Rangda dan Pemaknaannya dalam Novel Janda dari Jirah. The 4th International Conference on Indonesian Studies. Lecture conducted from ICSSIS, Jakarta.
Toer, P.A. (2006). *Cerita Calon Arang*. Jakarta: Lentera Dipantara.
Vasudevan, R. (2001). *Making meaning in Indian cinema*. Cary: Oxford University Press USA.

Notes

[1] New Order is a term that Soeharto coined when he came to power in 1966 to refer to the era of his political administration. He characterized his era as the New Order in contrast to the Soekarno era that he dubbed as the Old Order. The New Order lasted for 32 years from 1966 to 1998 when the Asian monetary crisis had reached its peak and the people, symbolized by the massive wave of student activists, demanded Soeharto to step down. The New Order is remembered for its repressive style which glorified stability as priority on top of many sociopolitical elements in Indonesia.

[2] Klein 2000: 3-4

[3] Rangda is the Balinese pronunciation of the word 'Janda' in Javanese and Indonesian, a word which means "widower."

[4] Although very visible, the relation between Rangda and Durga in *Ratu Sakti Calon Arang* is a bit reductionistic. Rangda is portrayed as a worshipper of Durga and not her direct embodiment. Moreover, the portrayal of Rangda in *Ratu Sakti Calon Arang* ignores a lot of dualistic quality (*rwa bhineda*) which is the key storytelling style of Rangda's tale. In this film, Rangda and Durga are used as a representation of merely Satanic power without mentioning their other quality. In this film, the reason why Calon Arang does the black magic is overly simplistic and politically incorrect: to rule the world and find a spouse for her daughter Ratna Manggali. The problem then is solved through an ideal religious practice of Hinduism. The film misses that Durga herself is Shiva's wife, one of the most powerful goddesses in Hindu mythology.

[5] *Durga Puja* is an Indian festival that marks the victory of Durga over the evil buffalo of Mahishashura.

[6] It is also interesting to notice that the lost object in the film is Ganesh, the god of knowledge, an object that is used to test the flawlessness of Baba Feluda's knowledge and intuition.

[7] In Balinese, *rwa* means *two*, and *bhineda* means *different*, hence *rwa bhineda* stands for two different things that coexist for the aim of balance and prosperity in life.

[8] Many sources provide debates on the existence of Rangda-in-flesh, such as Pramoedya Ananta Toer's *Cerita Calon Arang* (1954), Cok Sawitri's *Janda dari Jirah* (2007), and *Serat Calon Arang* which was written in the twelfth century.

[9] Some scholars like Savarese (2001) and Boudon (2012) translate the term as "living hieroglyph."

[10] According to Eisenstein (2010), putting the words "independent of one another" is clearly Eisenstein's way to differ himself from Pudovkin's epic principle that emphasizes on the unrolling of ideas in single shot which he mentioned in the previous paragraph.

[11] See More in Lansing (1995).

[12] According to Savarese and Fowler (2001), the performance that Artaud attended in the Paris Colonial Exposition 1931 culminates into two main attractions: Rakshasha and Barong performance (Savarese & Fowler, 2001, p. 52).

[13] Heider argues that the animal-human are mainly presented in genre films. However, there are some directors who try to challenge this modes of construction. FoAnr example is Teguh Karya's *Mother* (1986), in which he presents the Papuan man in his most multidimensional presence in a Javanese family (Heider, 1991, p. 115)

[14] *Pesugihan* is a ritual where one makes a pact with the demon, therefore abandon his faith in god, in order to use the demon's power for a certain purpose. This ritual is widely popular in Java.

[15] Kali is one of the wrathful embodiments of Durga in Indian mythology.

[16] The english title of the film *The Elephant God* actually refers to Ganesh the elephant god, the main object of the film, while the real title of the film *Joi Baba Felunath* (*Hail, Baba Felunath*) is a "cheer" to Feluda, the protagonist of the film.

[17] Prasad proceeds with the binary structure from his reading on earlier writings by scholars, such as Geeta Kapur (1987), Anuradha Kapur (1993), and Ashish Rajadhyaksa (1987, 1993), produced the concept of *frontality*. Prasad writes:

> "The question is: what is the nature of the fictive contractual relation that sustains the film text as performance? The answer suggested by the above formula is that in performance governed by the frontal aesthetic relation, a message/meaning that derives from a transcendent source is transmitted to the spectator by the performance, whereas in the realist instance, no such transcendent source of a meaning/message can be posited. Instead the text is a figure as raw material for the production of meaning, the latter task being the spectator's by right. Thus, in the first case, the performance as a whole (i.e., including the activity on stage and in the seats) is an apparatus for the devolution of a message/meaning through the combined activity of the artist/producer and the spectator on the text as raw material.
>
> Consequently, in the first case textual integrity is provisional, and derives not from any internal articulation of its elements but solely from the control exerted by the transcendent point of emanation of the message; whereas in the latter instance, such a transcendent point of devolution of meaning being absent, the text must achieve an internal articulation that guarantees its identity as a separate individual product." (Prasad, 1998, p. 21)

[18] "Logical progression" and "characterization" are two traits of the realistic melodrama proposed by Kobita Sharkar. (Sharkar, 1957, p. 6)

MAKBUL MUBARAK is a journalist and film critic based in Indonesia (corresponding author: mubarak.makbul@gmail.com).