

A New Female Identity in Indonesian Films: A Feminist Critical Discourse on *Marlina Si Pembunuh Dalam Empat Babak*

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ABSTRACT

After the New Order Era (1998-present), women's involvement in the Indonesian film industry increased significantly. Previously, Indonesian cinema conceived more unfavourable content toward women. However, nowadays, women are no longer regarded as forceless and dependent in the eyes of men but as the inspirers who are active and highly educated. They serve as producers, directors, trainers, publicists, and distributors behind the camera. This article contended that these women filmmakers develop a distinct female identity from their male counterparts. It further examined how they establish a distinct feminine identity by incorporating a variety of female characters throughout their films. This study applied Robert Stanton and Sara Mills's analysis technique to filmmaker Mouly Surya's *Marlina Si Pembunuh Dalam Empat Babak* to demonstrate how she deals with the identification of female characters focused on women's concerns, stereotypic phenomena, and how women use movies to express themselves. The results show that women filmmakers represented the women's revolution in filmmaking. They filmed not only to amuse but also to liberate women from stereotypes and to oppose gender-based violence. Besides, films are also considered an ideological tool for combating men's stereotyped images of women and can be used to increase respect for the issues of women's marginalisation.

Keywords: *Female identity, women filmmakers, Indonesian film, feminism, patriarchy.*

INTRODUCTION

Films can assist audiences in changing their identities, transferring cultures, or even stopping the chaos that occurs, resulting in a movie with a purpose and function in society (Maharam, 2021). Dismally, women's discourse in national and international films frequently receives negative stereotypes. Women are often invisible and silenced in economics, politics, religion, science, and technology, but not in media and advertising, where women are made to appear very "incapable," according to Kassanova (2020). This cannot be separated from the perspective of filmmakers, who are played mainly by men when it comes to seeing women. Alternatively, to put it another way, the Male Gaze. Laura Mulvey coined the term "Male Gaze" in her essay *Visual and Other Pleasures*. Mulvey (2009) begins her argument by stating that in a world governed by sexual imbalance, viewing satisfaction is divided into two categories: male (active) and female (passive). Men are spectators, while women are performers. Mulvey argues that women are turned into sexual objects, erotic spectacles to satisfy the arousal of heterosexual men. Viewers are compelled to watch a film from the perspective of a heterosexual male. A male gaze in a film will exploit women's bodies and sexuality, becoming a source of sexual satisfaction for the audience. Therefore, when women appear on the screen, they only sell the beauty, sexiness, and behaviour they desire. As a result, when women appear in the film, their ability to act is frequently overlooked. However, only physical factors are visible. This debate can be seen in the movie's character. Explaining that the obedience of a woman or wife is only judged by her level, even if she is treated

oppressively in domestic life. This discourse also portrays women as a source of sin, crime, and social problems.

The flow of Indonesian films is divided into four categories. First, there was the colonial period (1916-1944). The first film made at this time was *Loetoeng Kasaroeng*, directed by L. Heuveldorp, a Dutchman. At the time, films featured a large number of indigenous males and female actors portraying violent, cruel, and sexual scenes. Because actors do not have control over film production, they are often referred to as "anak wayang" at this time. During the Old Order (1945-1965), Soekarno, the then president, argued that popular culture, such as music, literature, and films, should reflect the national identity and that all western traditions should be rejected. Women are portrayed in films as weak and passive, but they are trusted by society. These perspectives, such as sex, violence, and mystery, are prevalent in the cinema. In contrast to the man depicted as superior, men have a higher level of education than women (UNESCO, 2021). Then, during the New Order (1968-1998), films had to portray the state authorities in a favourable light. Otherwise, they would have been silenced or vanished. Imanjaya (2009) defined several films that featured the 'voice of the ruler.' The state of national film is also deteriorating, as Indonesia is facing an economic crisis. This condition impacts Indonesian film, as only low-budget films such as manipulating women's bodies (sexploitation) are produced to pique the audience interest. In this era, sexploitation became a strong character of the commercial group of filmmakers' identity.

After the New Order (1998-present), Indonesian youth have a space to express themselves, as well as a new alternative for public viewing. With the film, women's themes began to shift away from the previously sexualised theme and toward a more daring theme depicting marginalised women's voices (Barker, 2019). The film industry evolved and stereotypical roles of women began to shift. Women are no longer portrayed as weak in front of men but as inspiring, highly educated, and active. According to Labidi (2021), this means that films are no longer just for entertainment but also for the liberation of women against stereotypes, gender equality between men and women, and women's advancement.

The presence of female directors in filmmaking has a significant impact on the plot of a film. Women's participation in the film increased the structure of filmmaking and the representation of women. In addition, women in other roles, such as director, screenwriter, editor, designer, and various film production roles, have increased significantly, such as Nan T. Achmas with the film *Pasir Berbisik* (2001), Nia Dinata with the films *Ca-bau-kan* (2002), *Arisan!* (2003), *Berbagi Suami* (2006), and *Arisan!2* (2011), Djenar Maesa Ayu with the films *Mereka Bilang Saya Monyet* (2008) and Ratna Sarumpaet with the film *Jamila dan Sang Presiden* (2009). According to Kurnia (2014), there have been 22 female directors since the reformation. Although this represents only 10 per cent of the existing directors, their presence has the potential to colour the journey of Indonesian films. This increase demonstrates the filmmaking advancement, particularly the women's advancement in film.

This article contends that these female filmmakers create a distinct female identity from their male counterparts. First, this article discusses how they establish a distinct female identity by incorporating various female characters into their films. This study divides into two stages of analysis of female identity in film. According to Stanton (2007, p. 18), the first stage will include selecting several scenes that discuss the identity behind the motivations of the female characters in the movie: arguments, behaviours, and character discussions through actions (super objectives, main objectives, and main action). It is then analysed using Sara Mills' feminist critical discourse analysis technique (1992). Sara Mill's work focuses on

postfeminist discourse, which attempts to dissect and expose sexism and gendered notions in text. Her research focuses on the portrayal of women in the media, both written and visual.

LITERATURE REVIEW

a. A 'Gender Oriented' Indonesian Film

Scholars and researchers studying gender in Indonesia have debated whether the Old Order and the New Order are stringent regimes in regulating the role of gender in films. Robinson (2009) states, "regimes exercise gender power through policy... and state control over women's organisations in the family model that registers male power." Similarly, Ceuterick (2020) asserts that a film is a powerful tool for regulating gender image. It can help individuals rethink the true meaning of women and men to add to the dignity of position and role in society. However, women's films were less prevalent during the Old Order (Barker, 2019). As a result, they must collaborate with men in the film industry as directors, producers, screenwriters, and others. So, even if women are portrayed as weak and passive in the story, the public will believe it. It contrasts with what men considers superior. Men have a higher level of education than women.

Finally, after New Order, there was a shift in Indonesian cinema. According to Dayanti (2017), this was caused by the political upheaval of 1998. The fall of the New Order government ushered in new developments in the Indonesian film industry. The absence of repression encourages artists, including filmmakers, to have freedom of expression and to make films on a variety of subjects, including films outside the mainstream that could not be made during the New Order era. As a result, film workers have freedom of expression and are free to produce films with various themes, including films that were previously prohibited from being produced, such as films about government resistance. If male directors raised the theme of violence against women in films prior to the New Order, female directors used films as a medium of resistance after that era. Resistance is the opposition of one group to another that dominates, such as social class, gender, ethnicity, and even age. It is a process of responding to or resisting what one party does due to dissatisfaction with rules and norms that are deemed harmful. Some groups in society that have power and dominate other groups; women's resistance in this context is women's resistance to reshaping women's voices and perspectives in the social order (Barker, 2019).

b. Feminism

Feminism is a social movement and a way of thinking that encompassing a "broad range of theories, politics, and actions that oppose the established gender order" (Hearn & Hein, 2015, p. 626). In general, feminism emphasises how traditional conceptions of gender contribute to certain voting rights over others, limited classification, and unequal gender relations (Desautels, 2021). Diverse schools of thought have articulated feminism in a variety of ways. Feminism, generally, includes an ideology for discussing women because it believes women have suffered from gender injustice (Oktaviani et al., 2021). Feminism is not a rebellion against men but rather an attempt to combat social institutions such as the household and marriage to deny their nature, rather than an attempt to overcome and exploit women.

According to O'Donnell (2020), the feminist perspective can be found in popular cultural texts such as films. First, Liberal Feminists are concerned with women seeking opportunities in traditionally male-dominated fields. Examples are job opportunities where women and men have equal rights, such as firefighters, police officers, doctors, or stay-at-

home parents. Second, Radical Feminists believe that injustice and oppression stem from how systems create men and women differently (as subjects and objects of gender identity) and the values (or lack thereof) associated with them. The goal of radical feminist criticism is to show how hegemonic beliefs and behaviours based on sex, gender, or sexual orientation are reinforced or challenged. For example, the text reinforces hegemony by depicting men as subjects while depicting women as objects. Third, there are Marxist feminists. This feminist viewpoint ensures that women and men have equal economic opportunities, such as equal pay for similar work. In addition, this Marxist feminist viewpoint "discusses" myths about women having less education and work experience than men. Fourth, Cultural Feminists aim to promote skills, activities, behaviours, and perspectives that have traditionally been socialised and defined as feminine. From the cultural feminist viewpoint, men and women should accept stereotypical feminine skills, actions, behaviours, and characteristics (such as cooking, cleaning and raising children).

There is no clear criterion for whether a film is feminist or non-feminist. Furthermore, no film has explicitly labelled "feminist film," which is an identity rather than a movie (Malouf, 2004). According to Perkins and Schreiber (2019), a feminist film contains feminist discourses about women that are descriptive of the culture in which men live. According to Boczkowska (2021), feminist films are expected to be a medium for re-evaluating negative stereotypes about women in this context. For example, negative stereotypes held that women were better suited to care for the family than work outside the home, that women could only cook, and that wives had to obey their husbands.

c. Identity

Identity is a set of meanings that change depending on who and when a person has solid social dominance. Thus, a person's identity is inextricably linked to his or her social environment. Identity can be further subdivided into various identities that shape individuals, including sexual, gender, personal, religious, and national identity (Hedges, 2021). In the film, the cast members' identities can be represented by their characters. A film story has five character roles, according to Stanton (2007). First and foremost, there is the protagonist. Many people believe that the protagonist in a story is a good character. According to the definition, the protagonist is the main character or the person who tells the story. Typically, this protagonist portrays as a hero. However, it does not rule out that the protagonist is an 'evil' character, such as Amy Dunne in *Gone Girl* or Jack in *The House That Jack Built*.

Then there is the antagonist. The antagonist is the character who opposes the protagonist. The antagonist has only one goal: to provide the protagonist with challenges, obstacles, trials, and tests to realise his desires and dreams. The term antagonist is derived from the ancient Greek word *antagonists*, which means opponent, competitor, or rival. Because of the protagonist's inner conflict, the role of the antagonist can emerge in some stories. Third, there is foil. A foil is a character whose job is to highlight particular qualities of the protagonist or antagonist. The use of foil allows the audience to understand the characters' nature and motivation better, distinguishing between good and bad, intelligent and stupid, strong and weak. Catalyst is the fourth component. A catalytic character encourages the protagonist to start a story at the beginning of the film. Fifth, archetypes. This character will usually tell or ask the protagonist to do something that will later become an essential part of the overall story in the film. Archetypes are typical character roles that are universally accepted and ingrained in the general audience. Hero characters must be

courageous, mentor characters must be wise, and sidekick characters must have loyal roles and characteristics.

In this study, the researcher used Robert Stanton's character analysis framework to examine the characters of female actors (2007). Stanton proposes several approaches to character analysis, including arguments. The audience can learn about the characters from the actors through argumentation. Similarly, there is the behaviour when the actor expresses his thoughts on a particular issue. The audience can portray the actor's character through behaviours that the actor frequently repeats, for instance, temperament, habits, and privileges. Then there will be a discussion. It can be seen in the actor's conversations with other actors, as well as their conversations while discussing others who were not present at the time. When speaking, this can reveal information about the actor's character. The final element is action, which is the actor's reaction to his situation. This is one way to learn about a character's personality. This is also known as motivation. Stanton (2007) divides character motivation into three parts to make it easier to identify. Super objectives are an actor's primary motivation or what the actor desires. Examples include how evil actors require respect and power from others. Then there are the main objectives, which focus on what the actor wants and how he or she actively moves to get it. Then play the action, which is why the actor did the action. For instance, what is done, why it is done, and what results are obtained as a result of it being done.

Filmmakers have a significant impact on the storyline of a film, and their work significantly impacts society. The director came up with the filmmaking ideas, disseminated through the film to change the culture. Like other forms of mass communication, the film constructs its reality with that nature, creating and promoting a specific image of the segment of society discussed.

d. Marlina Si Pembunuh Dalam Empat Babak

Marlina Si Pembunuh Dalam Empat Babak or *Marlina the Murderer in Four Scenes* premiered in Indonesia on November 16, 2017. Mouly Surya, who was previously known for the movie *Yang Tidak Dibicarakan Ketika Membicarakan Cinta* (2013) and *Fiksi*. (2008), directed this film. Since its premiere at Directors Fortnight in May 2017, *Marlina Si Pembunuh Dalam Empat Babak* has been distributed in over 40 countries, including the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Singapore, and Italy. In addition, Pandora also announced plans to screen the new *Marlina Si Pembunuh Dalam Empat Babak* film in Japan in 2019 (Brzeski, 2018).

Marlina, the protagonist, is a widow who lives alone in Sumba, East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia, after her husband dies. The plot of this film has been divided into four scenes by the director. The story and the first conflict begin in the first scene, titled *The Robbery*. Marlina (Marsha Timothy) is a widow living in a Sumba neighbourhood. Her husband (Tumpal Tampubolon) had just died, but the funeral procession was rescheduled due to a lack of funds. Marlina's husband's body is still in the living room, wrapped in a traditional Sumba cloth and curled up like a newborn. Marlina was seven months pregnant when her late husband died, and her son was buried in front of her house. Her son's name, as seen on his tombstone, was Topan.

Marlina's husband, on the other hand, obtained money from a robber named Markus to carry out her son's funeral procession (Egy Fredly). The poor husband died without paying off his son's burial bill. One day, Markus paid a visit to Marlina's house. Markus was allowed

into Marlina's home by Marlina, who said nothing. While drinking Marlina's coffee, Markus remarked that he and six of his cronies would come to take all of Marlina's livestock and sleep with her if they had time. Markus came because her husband was unable to pay the funeral expenses for his late son. In the evening, six more people arrived. Marlina was asked to prepare them a chicken soup meal. Marlina eventually poisons the four robbers with a poison she keeps in a drawer in her room and kills Markus with his Katopo. While the other two robbers, Franz (Yoga Pratama) and Niko (Haydar Salishz), had left before the dinner with all of her cattle to sell. Marlina murdered four people who ate the chicken soup she served.

The following scene is *The Journey*. Marlina was waiting for a truck while transporting Markus's severed head to the police station. Novi (Dea Panendra), a Sumba woman who is carrying a ten months old child, was interviewed by Marlina. She is described as lively, opinionated, and courageous. Even though Marlina was ahead, she showed no signs of panic, and Novi could talk to her regularly. Unfortunately, Marlina's truck crosses paths with a truck driven by Franz and one of his friends. They were in the middle of the road on their way to her house. Marlina hid beneath the chair so she would not notice when they passed. Franz arrived at Marlina's house to find five of his friends had died, and he forced his friend to flee due to nausea. Franz and his friend then speed away on their motorcycle to find Marlina.

In the third scene, *The Confession*, Marlina is approaching the police station. She was unexpectedly summoned to a visit by a young woman who ran a food stall. Topan, the girl's name, sounded similar to Marlina's late son's name. Marlina finally succumbed and ordered chicken satay. While eating, Marlina debated whether or not to take Markus's head to the police station. Marlina finally handed over Markus' head to Topan, who wrapped it in a wooden crate and drove it to the police station. Marlina arrived at the police station and sat in the lobby while the three cops finished their ping pong game. Marlina finally serves after one of them comes to a halt. However, the police did not take her claim seriously, questioning why Markus could rape Marlina if he were an elderly and frail man. The police also stated that to investigate Marlina's case, they needed to process the crime scene. In contrast, to investigate the rape case, they needed to conduct a post-mortem, which could not be done at the local police station. In other words, the police are unable to investigate the rape.

Birth is the fourth scene. Franz and Niko discovered the bus Marlina had previously boarded. When Franz noticed Marlina was not on the bus, he inquired of Novi. Novi lies to Franz in order to save Marlina. He points in the wrong direction, so they cannot find Marlina. Franz keeps Novi at Marlina's house despite knowing he was duped. If Novi wants to be free, she must contact Marlina and request that Markus' head be returned. Marlina arrived at her house not long after. Franz was given Mark's head, which was then reinserted into Mark's body. Then Franz told Novi to make chicken soup while robbing Marlina. Novi finally took a machete in the kitchen and cut off Franz's head after hearing Marlina's screams in the room. Then, not long after the incident, Novi gave birth at the house with the assistance of Marlina.

METHODOLOGY

Marlina Si Pembunuh Dalam Empat Babak (2017) was selected for this study as it was produced in the 2000s. By that year, women were already in public spaces and organisations, and were no longer portrayed as housewives and sexual objects. Furthermore, women are emerging as participants in the filmmaking process in Indonesia, such as filmmakers, directors, scriptwriters, and others who address women in their films. The film is then directed by women, and the main actors are all female. In addition, themed justice. This

theme of justice was used as a criterion for film selection as it was discovered that the presence of films about violence against women and its resistance from the perspective of female directors marked a change in filmmaking. Besides, the film has won several national and international awards, such as the Maya festival competition and the Indonesian festival award (for Best Actress, Best Film, Best Film Score, Best Director, and Best Cinematography). Furthermore, this film received international recognition in the Best Script category at the FFIFS in Morocco, Best Actress at the Sitges International Fantastic Film Festival in Spain, and Best Asian NestWave Film at The QCinema Film Festival in the Philippines. According to Maggie Lee, principal film critic at *Variety*, the film *Marlina Si Pembunuh Dalam Empat Babak* was called "Western Satay " as a reference to "Western Spaghetti" popularised by Sergio Leone in the 1970s.

This study divides into two stages of analysis of female identity in film. According to Stanton (2007), the first stage will involve selecting several scenes that discuss the identity behind the motivations of the female characters in the film: arguments, behaviours, and character discussions through actions (super objectives, main objectives, and main action).

Table 1: Scenes are chosen based on motivational characteristics

Act	Action Character	Scene	Describe
I	Super Objectives	00:20:20	The robber who was eating chicken soup died as a result of food poisoning.
	Main Objectives	00:24:34	Marlina was on the bed when she severed Markus's head.
	Main Action	00:14:06	Marlina takes poison in the room.
		00:15:15	Marlina mixed the poison into the chicken soup.
		00:24:47	Marlina called the police station.
II	Super Objectives	00:27:56	Marlina is carrying Markus's head.
		00:35:52	Marlina said that head Markus is her prisoner.
	Main Objectives	00:31:34	Marlina threatens the driver with a machete to board the truck.
	Main Action	00:32:29	Marlina moved the machete closer to the driver's neck.
00:37:47		Marlina hides from Frans.	
III	Super Objectives	00:37:52	Marlina went to the police station.
	Main Objectives	00:24:31	Marlina took the horse.
	Main Action	00:46:15	Marlina takes a horse and carriage to the police station.
		00:54:26	Marlina gave the police a statement.
IV	Super Objectives	01:21:20	Marlina returns home in order to rescue Novi from Franz.
	Main Objectives	01:21:44	Franz receives Mark's head from Marlina.
	Main Action	01:25:17	Marlina assists Novi in the assassination of Franz.

In the second stage, researchers utilised Sara Mills' (1992) method of analysis by studying selected scenes using critical discourse to demonstrate how filmmakers deal with the identity of female characters. Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA) is a viewpoint that seeks to investigate gender perceptions that are commonly held in specific communities and discourse contexts. In particular, focus was given on the feminism discourse, or how women are portrayed in the text. The text in question is not only written but also in the form of images and movies.

Feminist critical discourse analysis as a critical perspective at the crossroads of critical discourse analysis and feminist studies, both of which are guided by the goals of social liberation and transformation. In contrast to the feminist approach, which employs descriptive discourse analysis methods, feminist critical discourse analysis has the advantage of being operational. The belief that language can construct identities, including gender, serves as the foundation for feminist critical discourse analysis. Thus, gender is constructed, which means that gender is constructed in discourse both socially and individually (MacLeod & McArthur, 2019; Cheong, 2020; Kim & Maglio, 2021). So much so that feminist critical discourse analysis believes that discourse is always empowering.

Mills believes that the audience as the recipient is just as crucial as the filmmaker in producing a film. As a result, Mills' feminist critical discourse analysis method includes three positions, namely the subject-object position and the audience position. That will produce the film's structure and how the meaning is treated in the movie as a whole. Furthermore, through knowledge, the audience identifies with and places him/herself in the film. A position will put the audience in one of those positions, influencing how the movie is presented. Finally, how the film is told and the works (actors, cameras, etc.) reveal who is in control and who is not, whether women or men. Thus, according to Mills, the filmmaker indirectly shapes the concept of the audience's position in a film.

Table 2: The FCDA framework developed by Sara Mills (1992)

No	Position	Things that should be described
1	Subject-Object	a. What is the presentation style of the person or event? b. What or who is being watched? c. Who is the text's subject (person/event) who tells the story? d. Who is the main character (person or event) in the text? e. Are there any opportunities for social actors or groups to present their presence or ideas to others?
2	Audience	a. How are the audience's positions depicted in the text? b. How do the text's audience see themselves? c. With whom do the audience identify?

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This film is supported by the four main characters who help lead the story, namely Markus, Marlina, Novi, and Frans. They were divided into two groups, with Markus and Franz playing the role of antagonist and Marlina and Novi playing the role of protagonist. To determine what identity the filmmaker wishes to convey, we can respond to Sara Mills' questions as follows:

a. ACT I

Subject-Object

In this act, Marlina is the main character and the subject. She describes herself as chatty but full of tactics and strategies. When Markus stated that six of his friends would come to take all of Marlina's livestock and sleep with her, Marlina remained silent and devised a plan. One of Marlina's actions to defend her "kingdom" (read: her house) and her body from the outsiders was the plan to poison them. When Markus raped Marlina, she also tried to exert control. During intercourse, Marlina shifted her body position from the bottom to the top of Markus's body. This is similar to how Canadian academics discovered that women in top sex positions are the most dangerous for men when it comes to sexual intercourse (Bureau,

2019). As a result, Markus is no longer the object of lust, but Marlina is in charge of the emotions. As a result, she demonstrates her strength and ability to fight even under challenging circumstances.



Figure 1: Marlina killing four robber

Marlina was successful in killing four robbers. The four men eating with Marlina are the objects in this scene. They play supporting roles in presenting the figure of Marlina, attempting to break free from male dominance. The four men are seen practising patriarchal culture in this scene. They assigned the woman (Marlina) to only cook in the kitchen. Marlina obeyed orders not out of fear but to trick them into eating the poisoned food. This trap is what distinguishes Marlina as a "winner."

Audience

When Marlina managed to kill the four men, she 'broke the fourth wall' smiling at the audience. This was done to emphasise her role in the film. The method of breaking the fourth wall allows the characters in the story to speak directly to the audience. According to Williams et al. (2021), the breaking the fourth wall technique was first used in silent films by several filmmakers such as Buster Keaton, Oliver Hardy, Stan Laurel, and Charlie Chaplin. In other words, the character will speak to the audience through the camera.

This film is about women's control, and Marlina is a symbol of power. The film also employs composition and blocking to demonstrate who is in charge and who is not in the frame. Furthermore, it describes who is dominant, who is the leader, and who is standing in the background. Women have the right to be free and struggle, even when subjected to oppression. That is what Marlina did during Markus's rape scene. The audience is invited to witness many women who have been victims of sexual violence, particularly in remote areas of Indonesia such as Sumba. According to *Komnas Perempuan* in their *Annual Notes* research, violence against women reached 348,446 in 2017 (the same year the film was made), continuing to rise from previous years, with the NTT-NTB region accounting for 4% of all incidents. This scene appears to depict Yappa's situation—the tradition of kidnapping women in Sumba. Filmmakers are attempting to convey Yappa's work system, in which a man believes he can do whatever he wants to the woman he likes, even if it is against the rules.

b. ACT II

Subject-Object

Driver: "Eh turun turun turun, ko tidak bisa!" ("Eh, get down, get down, you can't go!")

Marlina: "Sa mo pi kantor polisi, masuk sudah!" ("I'd like to go to the police station; come in!")

The subject of this act, Marlina, is described as the leader because she successfully changed the truck's destination. When a *katopo*, a weapon commonly carried by Sumbanese men, is placed on the driver's neck, he becomes terrified. In Marlina's words, "... masuk sudah!" (... come in!) are a firm-toned sentence instructing someone to comply with his wishes. So, when Marlina issued orders to the truck driver, it was clear that she had control over the driver and was no longer a powerless woman character. There is also the determination to fight for justice.

All truck passengers get off while the object is everyone except Marlina. One reason was that they were terrified of Marlina threatening the driver with a *katopo*. The passengers who got off the truck appeared to be afraid of Marlina. Rather than dealing with her, they chose to get off and wait for another truck. Aside from getting off the truck, one of the men's fears was triggered when he responded to a boy's words. "*Kita naik lagi saja bapa, sa tidak takut,*" ("Let's just take it up a notch. I'm not scared"), the boy said, but the man responded, "*Jangan nanti masalah lagi!*" ("Don't be in trouble again"). The men are afraid to fight Marlina, a woman.



Figure 2: Marlina drew the *katopo* closer to the driver's neck

Audience

A mother (Yohana) abruptly stopped the truck on the way to the police station and boarded it without further ado. Although the driver had stopped her, she was unconcerned. The driver could only remain silent and obey her orders at that point. Furthermore, a man rode alongside the mother and was in charge of guarding the horse she had brought.

A scene, in which men who usually have power over women are the male figures who become the object of power and control, was shown. The audience is made to understand how men feel when they are in the presence of women as objects. The audience also realises that women and men have gender equality. Above all, the audience is invited to recognise that women are not weak figures; women will do anything, in any way, to obtain the right to freedom.

c. ACT III

Subject-Object

As a subject in this third act, even though Marlina is aware she was a killer, she feels compelled to fight for her rights to protect those who wish her harm. She had time to tell Novi that she did not feel guilty about her actions. Marlina believed what she had done was self-defence, in which she defended herself in a dangerous situation. As the object that should be assisting the community in obtaining justice, the police only attempt to argue, refute, and respond

modestly to Marlina. With this response, we know that the police did not care enough about the harassment incident experienced by Marlina. "*Kalo dia tua dan kurus kenapa ko biarkan dia perkosa ko?*" said the cops. ("If he is old and thin, why do you let him rape you?"), it is clear that even though there are victims, there is still a defence against fellow men.



Figure 3: Marlina gave the police a statement

Audience

In this scene, from the researcher's perspective, the audience is invited to witness Marlina's vigorous fight for justice. They see Marlina's struggle, which did not receive a favourable response from the police, who were supposed to protect and serve the community. Women who should have rights in various aspects of life, including public life and politics, do not appear in this scene. The audience is required to see and think critically about something that is happening in this scene. According to Horkheimer (Jahn, 2021), critical theory must educate people from an irrational society to a rational society. By presenting this scene from the perspective of a researcher, the audience is encouraged to be rational among humans and support and respect one another to achieve gender equality.

d. ACT IV

Subject-Object

Marlina receives word that Novi is being held hostage by Frans. In order for Novi to be released, Marlina had to return home to retrieve Markus's head and reattach it. Frans, a robbery gang member, told Novi to prepare the chicken soup. Frans is the patriarch here and thinks he is good enough to have sex with Marlina. Despite being beaten by Markus, Marlina attempts to save Novi by being beaten again by Frans. Marlina appears in this scene as a representative of the Sumba feminists, Foremba. Even in the face of adversity, she is willing to make the right decision. Women must stand up and fight for what they deserve and what is right, even under duress. Franz, who was also the object, appeared helpless to do anything but flee because Marlina and Novi were plotting his murder. This collaboration demonstrates how women will band together to combat harmful traditions.



Figure 4: Marlina assists Novi in the assassination of Franz

Audience

The audience is shown this scene and learns that women can wield power and control. It will be easier for women to obtain their rights if they cooperate and work together. Unlike most films, which depict scenes in which men gang-rape women, this scene depicts the inverse. According to the researcher's analysis, the filmmakers are attempting to reverse the situation in which women can also perform gang acts on men, even though rape is not involved in this scene. The same can be said for the weapon used by Marlina to behead Franz. Sumba men use *katopo* wherever they go, and it is even thought to protect women (Sulistiyawan, 2017). However, in the film, *katopo*'s role is reversed as Marlina uses it to protect herself. Filmmakers no longer refer to *katopo* as a gendered weapon.

CONCLUSION

The flow of films in Indonesia is heavily influenced by the authorities and gender. The space of freedom created after the new order period was used by Indonesian women to work as behind-the-scenes film actors, which was previously thought to be men's work. The role of women in Indonesian cinema after the New Order period is important in describing the overall content of the film. They can generate film ideas, which are then disseminated through films in order to effect social change in the community. These social changes can take the form of community kindness ideas, which invite people to change their attitudes, behaviour, or practises in a positive direction, particularly regarding how they see women.

Marlina Si Pembunuh Dalam Empat Babak (2017) is one of the films with a justice theme that is thought to examine the problems faced by women and stereotype phenomena by introducing various female characters into her films. *Marlina Si Pembunuh Dalam Empat Babak* depicts women's resistance to patriarchal power as feminism. The filmmaker employs female characters to explore power, control, and dominance themes. Marlina's figures represent a woman who is not afraid to face challenges. Marlina fought for her female dignity and rights in a variety of ways.

A film directed by a woman appears to challenge Laura Mulvey's concept of the Male Gaze. Male Gaze describes the objectification of women in the form of women's bodies. Inability to become subjects and recognition by narcissistic audiences has consequences for a sense of triumph over power. Instead, women filmmakers use film to express themselves as women and investigate issues that women face, such as stereotypes. As a result, women filmmakers are representations of the development of filmmaking, and they make a film not only to entertain the community but as a medium of liberation from stereotypes and medium to combat gender-based violence. Films have the power and ability to reach many social segments of society, allowing filmmakers to be more versatile in exploring their abilities to

influence audiences. Aside from being viewed as an effective communication medium for disseminating ideas, films are also considered an ideological tool for combating men's stereotyped images of women. In particular, films can be used to increase respect for marginalised women.

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