

The Production of the *Pinggiran*:
A Genealogy of the Visions of Gotot Prakosa

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Introduction

This thesis is about the contestation of the space of film. The space of film is the conjunction of a physical site and an imaginary site. Films are projected into physical spaces, but they also provide an image from which the audience produces their personal thoughts¹. The thesis addresses how these two types of space were contested in Indonesia by Gotot Prakosa and his collaborators during the years of the regime of General Suharto. I argue that both kinds of film space emerge in a tension between a literal and imagined center and '*pinggiran*'. Although the *pinggiran* is usually understood as 'the margins', it also can be construed as a creative edge from which to create artistic compositions that do not return to the imaginary center. I argue that the production of central spaces, in both geographic and ideological ways, by the government of General Suharto animates the conditions whereby Gotot Prakosa and his collaborators produce a *pinggiran* vision of society with film that critiqued the Suharto government but with several different oblique artistic techniques.

In the first chapter, I first begin by situating the cinema practice, which Gotot and his fellow classmates from *Institut Kesenian Jakarta (IKJ)* and other related Jakarta *milieux*, named *sinema ngamen* (Street Cinema, Busking Cinema). I illustrate that this counter-circulation of cinema throughout Java, which stimulated social conversation and critique, emerges during the rise of *Televisi Republik Indonesia (TVRI)* in the 1970s and 1980s, during "The New Order". *TVRI* monopolized the commercial airwaves and circulated governmental 'propaganda' which praised the progress of 'development' in Indonesia. *TVRI* produces governmental space within the homes of television owning Indonesians. I argue that the practice of *sinema ngamen*, which circulated cinema without the permission of the government into public communal viewing spaces, constitutes a contestation of the audio visual space of Indonesia. Each circulation territorializes the nation with the production of spatial (and social) relationships with the audio-visual medium, for both the government and the film-makers perceived that the film medium played an important role in the preparing the mental space of people to constitute thought.

In this chapter I also trace the genealogies which intersect in the cinema aesthetic of Gotot Prakosa. I illustrate how his art emerges at the intersection of several 'art languages'². I suggest that his film aesthetic of short, experimental, abstract films emerges from the close relationships with music and dance, which were fostered at *Institut Kesenian Jakarta* in the period when he was a student. I suggest that the cinema of abstract, experimental films is animated by the thought that cinema could combine with music in order to form non-verbal artistic expressions. This characteristic allowed *film pinggiran* to express critical ideas with sound and vision without having to utter spoken statements and risk incurring the wrath of the New Order government.

In the second chapter, I illustrate how the camera films of Gotot Prakosa move the audience towards the thought of the *pinggiran* by drawing on recognizable, common cultural places and sounds (*topoi*) and juxtaposing these forms with contradictory and dissonant relationships³. I show how these films, which are bereft of the spoken human voice, create relations between sounds and images that *implicitly* raise social questions regarding the meaning of 'development' and the society which it builds. I argue that despite the abstract aesthetics of the films, the position of the critique is one where the 'edge' of society, in both imaginary and literal ways, are exalted over and against the ideology of the 'center' and the narrative of development as progress.

In the third chapter, I illustrate how the *pinggiran* impulse operates in the animation films of Gotot Prakosa. I show that the animation films, which are also without the human spoken language, move the audience towards the thought of the *pinggiran* by raising recognizable social questions, subverting their common narrative arc, and aborting the film without a solution to the social questions they raise. I argue that this technique pushes the deliberation of the meaning of the film itself and into the mental and physical space of reception. The technique pushes the questions out of

¹ Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*. (Oxford: Oxford University, 1991), 31-48.

² I use the term 'art language' to signify the semi-autonomous disciplines of art such as literature, poetry, painting, sculpture, film, music, dance and theater.

³ The term 'camera film' is used to distinguish these films from animation films.

the space produced *during* the film itself and into the space of human thought, after the film ends, in the 'real world'. I argue that both the camera and animation films introduce uncertainty and ambiguity not only as a strategic technique in the conditions of the military authoritarian order of General Suharto, but also as a means of including film in the process of stimulating the spirit of democratic thought.

Throughout the paper, I use the term *pinggiran* to describe this general aesthetic and geographic movement away from the centers of governmental geography and ideology. The *pinggiran* is a general characteristic of the films of Gotot Prakosa and it manifests itself in heterogeneous cinematic ways. The term *pinggiran* is used to signify the aesthetic method of reconfiguring a central *topos*, be it the geographic spaces of the movie theater or the television, or the common forms of cinema, such as the documentary and long form cinema, and responding by producing a 'peripheral vision' of that center. It is an impulse that seeks to produce audio-visual statements whose ideologies do not converge back into the center. The claim of this thesis is that the *pinggiran* perspective of Gotot Prakosa is animated by the efforts of the New Order regime to regulate life itself. The *pinggiran* films of Gotot Prakosa critique the centralizing and standardizing rationality of the New Order, but they do not present another ur-narrative of life. Instead, the films produce a mental space for an audience to raise critical thoughts in the conditions of the New Order. In producing a *pinggiran* film space, the films destabilize the meaning of the omnipresent, centralizing rationality of the New Order.

To my advisers, my classmates, my family and Jenny:
I deeply appreciate all of your generosity.

Chapter 1

Sinema Ngamen and Film Pendek: The circulations and counter-circulation of Cinema in the middle Suharto Years

This chapter discusses the conditions of sovereignty in Indonesia in the 1970s and 1980s in order to foreground the reasons that Gotot Prakosa and his film collaborators sought to produce a *pinggiran* cinema. I argue that the governmental practice of regulating and centralizing Art production, through the construction of physical art space as well as the erection of a national governmental television network, creates conditions whereby Gotot Prakosa and other artists seek to produce peripheral cinema aesthetics and decentralized modes of circulating of cinema. I argue that this pattern of producing the *pinggiran* was animated by two distinct though related movements. One is the movement of Gotot Prakosa and his classmates, away from Jakarta and into other Indonesian and foreign geographies. This geographic movement creates the conditions whereby Gotot sees the centralizing ideology of the New Order but from another geographical perspective. The practice of leaving Jakarta and circulating cinema outside of institutional regulatory frameworks furnishes the belief that changing the site of reception of film can subvert the totalizing power of the governmental television. The second movement is the aesthetic search for an artistic medium that could convey an oblique, critical message in the authoritarian conditions of the New Order. I argue that this *pinggiran* cinema aesthetic emerges at the convergence of several Art Languages but that the particular spatial characteristics of cinema made it into a medium whereby abstract, critical messages could be projected into Indonesian sovereign space. This spatial projection created a visual counter-statement to the governmental cinema which the government projected through the television.

In 1992, the *Yayasan Kesenian Jakarta* produced a *sejarah* (history, story, genealogy, lineage) of *Taman Ismail Marzuki*, commemorating the first 25 years of this site of state geography. The book opens with dedication letters written by several government officials, blessing the book and *Taman Ismail Marzuki*, the *Pusat Kesenian Jakarta* (The Center of Art of Jakarta). Dr. Salim Said, a chairman of The Arts Council of Jakarta, begins his dedication in this manner:

Sejarah Pusat Kesenian Jakarta pada dasarnya adalah sejarah dua pihak. Ia adalah sejarah kreativitas para seniman dan tanggapan publik terhadapnya, tetapi pada saat yang sama ia adalah juga sejarah perhatian Gubernur DKI terhadap kesenian dan kebebasan kreativitas¹.

The history of the Center of Jakarta Art (*Taman Ismail Marzuki*) at its foundation is a history with two sides. There is the history of the creativity of artists and the public thought towards it, but at the same time, there is also the history of the attention of the Governor of the Jakarta Metropolitan Area towards art and the freedom of creativity

I begin this essay with this quotation to foreground that *Taman Ismail Marzuki* is the site where the conditions of '*kesenian dan kebebasan kreativitas*' (art and the freedom of creativity) meet the *perhatian* (awareness, concern) of the Indonesian art governance². The site therefore produced the *sejarah* of both the governmental oversight of the arts of *Taman Ismail Marzuki* as well as the history of the art that emerged from the artists themselves. What this statement does not express is that these two *pihak* (sides, parts) of *TIM* were in a contestation and confrontation with one another.

1 Pramana Padmodarmaya, ed., *25 Tahun Taman Ismail Marzuki* (Jakarta: Yayasan Kesenian Jakarta, 1994), 18.

2 "Sejarah Lembaga Bantuan Hukum" <http://www.ylbhi.or.id/sejarah/> and "Biography Ali Sadikin" <http://info-biografi.blogspot.com/2012/09/biografi-ali-sadikin.html> Accessed 5.10.13. I use the term 'art governance' not to signify the *Dewan Kesenian Jakarta* (The Council of Jakarta Art) but instead the relationship between Artists and the government of Jakarta. *TIM* is subsidized by the Jakarta government. In this period, the Governor of Jakarta was Ali Sadikin. Sadikin, a Sundanese, was appointed by Soekarno in 1966 and had tense relations with Suharto. Not least of the causes of this acrimony was the fact that Sadikin was Sundanese whereas Suharto and most of his governance was Javanese. Sadikin was in the *KKO-AL* (Marines), and not from the Army as Suharto was. Furthermore, Sadikin granted land, near *TIM*, for the creation of *Lembaga Bantuan Hukum* (Legal Aid Foundation). After he stepped down from his position as Governor, he openly turned against Suharto, signing *Petisi 50*, a petition signed by 50 people protesting Suharto's prosecution of rivals under the pretense of violating Pancasila.

In this essay, I suggest that this antagonistic relationship between art governance and the artists be considered as part of the animating conditions of the rationality of moving away from the *pusat* (the center) and towards the *pinggiran* (peripheries, edges, exteriors), in intellectual, aesthetic and geographical ways for a certain group of artists working at *Taman Ismail Marzuki* in this period, including Gotot Prakosa.

The book which Salim Said introduces celebrates 25 years of *TIM* from the perspective of the body of art governance. In doing so, the book displays photographs of the 'traditional arts' of Indonesia. Dayak, Irian Jaya, Java, Bali, and Betawi dancers all appear from the perspective of watching from the audience. The optic recorder of the art governance also captured the images of musicians at a workshop working on '*musik pinggiran*', where 'brave' (*berani*) musicians were producing 'a new tradition'³. They listened to Philip Glass, John Cage, Konrad Boehmer, Nicole Lachartre, while composing their own works⁴. By reaching for foreign, modern music, *musik pinggiran* evinces that part of the production of the *pinggiran* meant incorporating new artistic sources from Europe and North America. A single photograph of the event *meta ekologi* also appears in this lineage. The shot, taken by a photographer, looking down at these men who have submerged themselves into a mud pit to perform a dance, documents this activity, but does not make it beautiful⁵. The caption gives credit to Sardono W Kusumo and names him, '*penata tari terkemuka*', the dance choreographer who is the most leading, prominent, or most forward looking⁶. With this epithet, this edgy dance is incorporated into a narrative of the *histoire*⁷ of 'great' Indonesian art of this 'center of art', collecting into the same national series 'the most forward facing' dance with the traditional arts. Although there is no written language documentation nor description of *meta ekologi* in this book, the appearance of this photograph in the art governance recording of the history of *Taman Ismail Marzuki*, brings into visibility that art governance, which supported *Taman Ismail Marzuki*, and created the possibility for a state art institution, also spied on 25 years of art events at *Taman Ismail Marzuki*.

Taman Ismail Marzuki was apportioned by the Governor of Jakarta in 1967 to create a state space for art, and included as a part of this space, an art institution *Lembaga Penelitian Kesenian Jakarta (LPKJ)* (literally the Institute of Art Research of Jakarta)⁸. The noun *lembaga* (an institution, body, institute) is the noun for a governmental or peri-governmental organ whose concern is to maintain the *function* and organization of society. *Taman Ismail Marzuki* and *LPKJ* are art 'institutions' founded by and with a social contract with the government. Their creation evinces the wish of the government to produce a society with art, but at a site within the visibility of the state. In the middle of the 1970s the name of *LPKJ* changes to *Institut Kesenian Jakarta* (hereafter *IKJ*) and although both *Lembaga* and *Institut*, mean 'institute', the new name was more 'modern' and mirrored, in some way, the name *Institut Teknologi Bandung* (hereafter *ITB*), an institutional site in the city of Bandung and a center of 'modern', 'scientific' thinking. *ITB* is a center of modern and especially pictorial art production in this era⁹. Artists from both *IKJ* and *ITB* are producing modern art that does not continue the lineage of social commitment that the prior generation of LEKRA artists did.

Taman Ismail Marzuki, the name of the site within which *LPKJ-IKJ* exists, is another word

3 Pramana, *25 Tahun Taman Ismail Marzuki*, 130-141

4 Ibid.

5 Pramana, *25 Tahun Taman Ismail Marzuki*, 167.

6 Ibid.

7 Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*. (Princeton: Princeton University, 1953), 480. Auerbach writes that Balzac meant by calling his work *histoire*, that it is not *history* in the sense of scientific investigation, of that which has occurred, but that *histoire* is fiction, it is invention. It is emerging in a process resulting from history but into the contemporary. The French language word *histoire* contains both English words 'history' and 'story' as one. This coincidence has been dramatized by Jean Luc Godard in his *Histoire(s) du Cinema*, calling itself both the History/Histories and the Story/Stories of Cinema.

8 Pramana, *25 Tahun Taman Ismail Marzuki*, 24.

9 Claire Holt. *Art in Indonesia Continuities and Change*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967)

of governmental geography, but from another episteme, before *lembaga* and *insitut*. *Taman* is, in Java, a name for a 'garden', or 'park', but in its contemporary usage, it is a space constituted by the sovereign ruler, for the subjects¹⁰. In the tradition of *hikayat* literature, the *taman* is the site of civilized space, a space for the sovereign's gaze and control¹¹. The *taman* creates the conditions for a social field at the same time that it bounds and constrains the field. *Taman Ismail Marzuki* emerges in 1967, in Jakarta, in the immediate historical postcontemporary of *the* cairn which the history of Indonesia, Java, and Jakarta 'use', to organize their periods, September 30, 1965¹². The creation of *Taman Ismail Marzuki*, a 'garden' for State artists, emerges directly after the new regime of General Suharto killed approximately 1 million Indonesian citizens under the pretense of their identity as communists¹³. A part of this campaign included sending many 'communist cultural workers' to a prison island colony, *Pulau Buru*, a *great* distance from this 'center' of Art Work in Jakarta. At the same time that the government of Indonesia built a *taman* for Cultural workers within the visibility of the State, the prior generation of art workers were incarcerated in a penal work camp. Both actions evince the creation of governmental spaces to control the artists which they feel present a threat to their legitimacy, but the difference between the conditions of life in the penal colony of *Buru* and, for Gotot Prakosa, living and working in *TIM*, constitute a contradiction¹⁴.

Gotot Prakosa entered the faculty of cinematography of *IKJ* as a student in 1975¹⁵. The faculty opened in 1971 and he is a part of what I will refer to in this essay as the first generation of filmmakers from *IKJ*¹⁶. As *IKJ* exists on the ground of *TIM* at the intersection of what Salim Said refers to as the two sides of artists and art governance, this essay foregrounds the semi-autonomous conditions of both *IKJ* and *TIM* so that it is clear for the reader that this field of *Taman Ismail Marzuki*, both as physical ground and as an ideational field, is a site that is geographically and spiritually a 'center' of Art in "The New Order". I would like to suggest that Gotot Prakosa and his cinema collaborators locate the rationality and the geographical space of the *pinggiran* in relationship to *TIM* and *IKJ*, as a center to be moved.

In this first generation of *IKJ*, a great deal of the activity surrounding film as an art meant *watching* foreign cinema in '*Kine Klub*', a group pioneered by D.A Peransi¹⁷. The artistic identity of film, as the art of witnessing and not necessarily producing, occurred at the same time that Sardono W. Kusumo, Putu Wijaya and many other Indonesian artists were gaining attention for producing their own works. I would like to suggest that this situation induces three separate but related consequences for Gotot Prakosa and the first generation of filmmakers at *IKJ*. Firstly, the identity of film as an art language is particularly uneven with the other languages of painting, music, dance,

10 In *Hikayat* literature, '*taman*' is most often reserved for the Sovereign's pleasure garden.

11 S. O. Robinson, ed. *Hikayat Andaken Penurat*. (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1969), 23.

12 Krishna Sen, *Indonesian Cinema Framing the New Order*. (London: Zed Books, 1996). As an example of the fixity of this historical marker in the discourse of Indonesian history, Krishna Sen's opens her book with "This book is about institutions and texts of Indonesian cinema since 1965."

13 Robert Cribb, *The Indonesian killings of 1965: studies from Java and Bali* (Clayton: Centre for Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, 1990). The figure of one million given here is a general figure and not one which mediates in the scholarship on the killings of Indonesian citizens in the aftermath of October 1, 1965.

14 Asvi Warman Adam, "Malari 1974 dan Sisi Gelap Sejarah" from *KOMPAS* 16 Januari 2003. Accessed April 30, 2013, <http://dendemang.wordpress.com/2008/01/16/malari-1974-dan-sisi-gelap-sejarah/>. It is in the 'center' of Jakarta, during the reorganization of governance, that a resistance to the regime of General Suharto is built. The production of the *pinggiran* by the Artists of *IKJ* is one part of the broader Jakarta 'student movement', evinced in events such as *Peristiwa Malari*, when the military violently attacked the student-led protests of the arrival of the Japanese Prime Minister

15 Gotot Prakosa, *Film Pinggiran*. (Jakarta: Fakultas Film dan Televisi Insitut Kesenian Jakarta & YLP, 1997), Rear Cover.

16 Ibid, 3.

17 Pramana, *25 Tahun Taman Ismail Marzuki*, 100-107. In the book commemorating the 25 years of *TIM*, the section on film is, in a large part, the story of what *Kine Klub* watched. This is in contrast to the sections on literature, painting, theater, dance and poetry, which tell the story of the production these arts at *TIM*.

theater, poetry and literature at this moment and this initial artistic identity of 'lagging behind' the other languages creates the very possibility of a leap and the creation of an Indonesian art film practice¹⁸. Secondly, due to the close proximity of the other formal art disciplines at *TIM* and *IKJ*, the early film production of Gotot Prakosa is, from the beginning, an interdisciplinary art form, incorporating the other art languages into itself¹⁹. Thirdly, the nature of film as an early or not yet even birthed art practice confers to it a lightness, as it does not, linguistically, inherit the weight (or richness) of a tradition like the other languages. These schematic relationships help situate the unique nature of the first generation of film-makers at *IKJ* as they shift away from witnessing and circulating foreign cinema into producing their own form of cinema-as-Art.

The Cadastral Television

These film students also had the unique experience of studying and producing the first generation of art film in Indonesia at the same time that the film medium had been taken up by the government of General Suharto and used as a medium for the aural dissemination of the ideology of "The New Order". Television and film, along with the radio and other print media, made the messages of the government audible and visible to much of the population. It was the experience of these *IKJ* film-students to learn the mode of production of cinema at the same time that another segment of film was produced for 'propaganda'²⁰. Therefore in addition to the aforementioned aspects of the 'immature' artistic identity of film at *IKJ*, film is also the language that manufactures state 'propaganda'.

The identity of film and television as the governmental language and apparatus of disseminating propaganda is cemented in 1976 with the launch of the Palapa Satellite, for the satellite created a unified field of audio-visual circulation of television in Indonesia²¹. But the invocation of Palapa to name the national satellite, which brings television to the entire territory of Indonesia, highlights a governmental imagination in which television, like the military, unifies the territory of Indonesia. The government of General Suharto extended the television and the military throughout the entire nation²². The name Palapa refers to the mythical *Sumpah Palapa*, when Gajah Mada, a Warrior Minister of the Majapahit Empire, vowed that he would "not eat the fruit of the Palapa until he had brought about the unity and oneness of the Majapahit Kingdom"²³. The commingling of the military, television and territorial unity is apparent from the beginning of the governmental imagination of television. But the satellite also furnishes the government with a communication network in this most territorially fragmented nation-state in the modern world; the Palapa satellite, in conjunction with the television, produced an Indonesian state space in each personal home that owned a television. The operation is a bit like the Trojan Horse, for with the television, the military-government is able to produce geographic space within each home that possesses a television²⁴.

The launch of Palapa was not enough to create the communication regime of propaganda through television. After the launch, the population of television sets dramatically increased, both

18 Frederic Jameson, *Marxism and Form*. (Princeton: Princeton, 1971), 18, 309.

19 Anton Kaes "German Cultural History and the Study of Film: Ten Theses and a Postscript" in *New German Critique* 65 (1995): 56. Kaes calls Film the 'syncretic medium par excellence'.

20 Katinka Van Heeren. *Contemporary Indonesian Film Spirits of Reform and Ghosts From The Past*. (Leiden: KILTV Press, 2012), 91-94. The most dramatic instance of this is the production of *Pengkhiantan Gerakan 30 S PKI* (P G30 S PKI) which in 1984 dramatized the events of September 30, 1965 from the perspective of the Suharto government. It was aired each year on television and students were forced to watch it in school.

21 Phillip Kitley. *Television, Nation and Culture in Indonesia*. (Athens: Ohio University, 2000), Ch 2.

22 Marcus Mietzner. *The Politics of Military Reform in Post-Suharto Indonesia: Elite Conflict, Nationalism and Institutional Resistance*. (Honolulu, East-West Center: 2006).

23 Suharto speech, 1975, quoted in Joshua Barker, "Engineers and Political Dreams Indonesia in the Satellite Age" in *Current Anthropology*. 45, (2005), 703.

24 Gotot Prakosa. "Poster Film Indonesia" in *Jurnal Imaji*, 3, (2011), 94-97. and David Dhakidae *Cendekiawan dan kekuasaan dalam negara Orde Baru*. (Jakarta: PT Gramedia, 2003), 269-270.

provided for free by the government as well as by personal purchase²⁵. It must be emphasized that in 1976, there is only one television channel, *Televisi Republik Indonesia (TVRI)*; a television set is tantamount to this single government controlled channel²⁶. This conjuncture of infrastructures provided the conditions whereby the television, and therefore the audio-visual medium, became intimately identified with the Suharto regime and propaganda²⁷. The television, like the creation of *Taman Ismail Marzuki*, evinces the governmental strategy of centralizing and regulating the production and circulation of images. In a speech in 2011, Gotot Prakosa brings forth his memory of television of this period:

Menteri Penerangan RI saat itu adalah H. Harmoko yang juga membuat acara di TVRI yang sangat populer dan merakyat, namanya KLOMPENCAPIR (Kelompok Pendengar, Pembaca dan Pirsawan) yang muncul setiap minggu sekali dan pendekatannya dalam bentuk propaganda, hanya menunjukkan keberhasilan usaha ataupun program pemerintah yang nyatris (*sic*) tanpa cacat itu, demikian juga banyaknya pemberitaan dalam Warta Berita yang ada di TVRI yang mayoritas berisi peresmian pabrik, pembukaan jalan tol atau pembukaan dan peresmian sebuah acara yang diadakan oleh pemerintah RI yang biasanya malah menonjolkan sosok Menteri yang memiliki program tersebut. Usaha ini bisa jadi memang pesanan dari pada Menteri tersebut agar dapat terlihat oleh Presiden, dan Presiden menyenangkannya. Dari kejadian inilah kemudian muncul istilah ABS (asal Bapak Senang)²⁸

The minister of Information of Indonesia at that time was H. Harmoko²⁹ who made the program for TVRI which was very popular and populist named KLOMPENCAPIR (a group of listeners, readers, viewers) which arose each week and had the approach of a form of propaganda, only showing successful efforts of government programs which are will nigh flawless, likewise there was much reporting in the News Report of TVRI which mostly consisted of inauguration of factories, opening Toll Roads or opening and inaugurating a program which is made by the government of Indonesia which usually even featured a Minister who owned the given program. These efforts can indeed be messages from these Ministers so they are seen by the President, and make the President happy. From these situations then arose the term ABS³⁰.

The weekly nature of KLOMPENCAPIR and the daily appearance of the government opening factories and toll roads in the television consecrates a ritual communion between the audience-as-citizens and the government by means of the television. Furthermore, I would like to suggest the images of factories and toll roads, arriving as *the* image adhered to the ideology of governmental propaganda and the glory of development, form a visual *topos* (shared, common, cultural site) that serve to animate another search, by *IKJ* filmmakers, for the vision of the *pinggiran* of these objects of 'development'. The flood of images of factories and toll roads-as-development, in the daily television, animate the thought of Gotot to look through these images of 'development' in order to see another perspective of these spaces that contradicts their presentation in the television.

25 Kitley, *Television, Nation and Culture in Indonesia*, 57. Kitley cites that 500,000 television sets were registered in 1975 and 2.5 million were registered by 1981.

26 Ibid.

27 Kitley, *Television, Nation, and Culture in Indonesia*, Ch 2. Kitley marks the 1976 launch of the Palapa satellite as the event which initiates the effort of making the television and TVRI central communication tools for the government of General Suharto. Kitley remarks that the government distributed thousands of televisions to *rural* parts of Indonesia in order to counter the position that the satellite and TVRI are only for the elite. Kitley notes that the government fashioned their idea of the television as a tool for the government 'communicating with' citizens on the Japanese use of the radio during their occupation.

28 Prakosa, "Poster Film Indonesia", 96.

29 Anonymous Interview with *Reformasi* era student activist. During student protests of General Suharto in the 1990s, students punned the Minister's name as such: HAR (*hari hari*) MO (*omong*) KO (*kosong*). '*hari hari omong kosong*' can be translated approximately to Every day bullshit.

30 ABS is difficult to translate. It translates literally as 'the source of father/man's happiness' but it refers to a situation where the formality has been provided and the situation appears fine, but this withholds another reality.

The Several Lineages of *Film Pendek*

The milieu of the first generation of *IKJ* cinematography students emerges from the freedoms of *TIM*, the propaganda of *TVRI*, and the pedagogy whereby students could themselves control the mode of production of a film. In this habitat, the practice of making short, brief films arose as a loosely defined genre named *film pendek*³¹. In this section, I draw attention to the several and disparate conditions which bring this form of *film pendek* into being. One of these conditions is the material scarcity of film-stock³². Short films are favored for the pragmatic reason that film-stock was a scarce commodity and shorter films meant the possibility of making more films. But these students are not the first Indonesians to create '*film pendek*'. It is instead a genre with several iterations of statist pedigrees, extending back to the earliest moments of the Republic of Indonesia and continuing through the regime of General Suharto. Each regime used *film pendek* in some manner as a vessel for their particular genre of propaganda. In this section, I suggest that the claim to the moniker of '*film pendek*' by the *IKJ* first generation was motivated by the conditions of the *perhatian* (awareness/attention) by the Governance of the Artists of *IKJ* and *TIM* that Salim Said pointed out at the outset of this essay. The claim to the tradition of '*film pendek*' provided one level of linguistic visibility and neutrality to the governing authorities, which simultaneously provided a degree of autonomy to reconstitute the meaning of *film pendek* in ways contradictory and antithetical to the State *film pendek* traditions.

Although the *film pendek* of Gotot Prakosa emerges in the audio-visual (propagandist) milieu of *TVRI* and KLOMPENCAPIR, the position of the audio-visual message as a site where the modern sovereign state ideates their citizens is true in the situation of General Suharto and the periods and regimes which preceded it³³. The consecration of the audio-visual apparatus as an ideological tool of a governing sovereign ruler emerges during the World War Two Japanese occupation in the lands of what would become the Republic of Indonesia³⁴. The Japanese used both radio and cinema, as there was not yet television, to produce an aural circulation of messages of propaganda. Usmar Ismail, the totemic Indonesian filmmaker of the post Revolutionary period, wrote that he came to understand that Cinema is a tool which creates (normative) messages to society, during the Japanese Occupation:

datangnya para instruktur Jepang ke Indonesia telah menyadarkan pengertian fungsi film. Hal itu perlu dikembangkan pada usaha dalam membangun perfilman nasional...barulah pada Masa Jepang (tidak zaman Belanda) itu orang sadar akan fungsi film sebagai alat komunikasi sosial...Di situ digunakan bahasa Indonesia yang terjaga, hingga film itu lebih mendekatkan diri kepada perasaan kebangsaan³⁵

The arrival of the Japanese film instructors to Indonesian created the awareness of the function of film. Film needs to be developed as an effort to build a national film... It was only at the beginning of the Japanese period [ed: not the Dutch period], that people became aware of the function of film as a tool for social communication... In films, Indonesian language is used formally and well, so that film intensifies the closeness of the feeling of nationalism.

The Independence of Indonesia did not erode the relationship of the moving image as a message medium by which the nationalist Indonesian articulations circulated. The *Pusat Produksi Film*

31 Prakosa, *Film Pinggiran*, 1-3. Gotot notes that *this* Jakarta generation of *Film Pendek* had predecessors, such as '*Delapan Mini*' movements which Norman Benny, Johan Teranggi and D.A Peransi were involved with in Jakarta. There also was a '*sinema delapan*' movement in Medan in the early 1970s.

32 Gotot Prakosa, University of Minnesota Presentation, March, 2 2012. Gotot relayed that he made his first films by retrieving discarded film-stock from the garbage and painting directly onto the celluloid.

33 Krishna Sen's *Indonesian Cinema Framing the New Order* London: Zed Books, 1994. This position of the movie theater as a site for normative foundation in the 'New Order' is the central thesis of Sen's book.

34 Marcel Broersma and Joop Koopmans *Identiteitspolitiek. Media en de constructie van gemeenschapsgevoel*. (Hilversum: Verloren, 2010), 55-59. Mannus Franken produced *Tanah Sebrang: land aan ke overkant* in 1937 a 'propaganda' film in order to encourage Javanese to migrate to Sumatra. But Dutch propaganda films are oriented for Dutch audiences, presenting 'Our East' (*Onze Oost*) as a place where a great fortune can be made.

35 Misbach Yusa Biran. *Sejarah Film 1900-1950 Bikin Film di Jawa*. (Jakarta: Komunitas Bambu, 2009), 348.

Indonesia (PPFN) and the *Departemen Penerangan* produced *film pendek* in the 1950s and 1960s known as *film Gelora Nasional (GN)* (The surging or ascending National films)³⁶. The method of distributing these messages to society was through a practice known as *film layar tancep*³⁷. This method entailed projecting these national glorification films, in open air settings, for the public to view, and moving the film and projector, throughout the nation, '*keliling desa ke desa*' going from village to village³⁸. The ideology of the method of dissemination resides in the name of the government department responsible for this practice itself, the '*Departemen Penerangan*'. This is often translated as the Department of Information, but the word '*penerangan*', comes from the root word "light". The Department of Information sees itself as transmitting enlightening rationalities, bringing rural areas out of the darkness and into the light.

Although the content of *film pendek* shifts from the pre-1965 form of '*gelora nasional*' and one which sought to *membakar semangat bangsa untuk lebih cinta pada tanah air* (the set ablaze the passion of the nation for increasing their love of 'this land and water' (Indonesia)), to the *Gelora Pembangunan* (the glorification of building, construction, or 'development') of the next regime of "The New Order", the method of diffusing the governmental ideology through the audio-visual medium to the population connects both regimes³⁹. Both regimes produced and circulated 'governmental' cinema⁴⁰. Both of these regimes built their cinema infrastructure and ritual for the purpose of grafting their ideological interests, through the apparatus of cinema, to interpellate audiences into citizen-subjects. The cinema, like the school and the religious institution, were and are sites whereby sovereignty recognizes all individuals as subjects.

Despite the continuity in the ideological practice of dissemination, I would like to suggest that the shift, between the open air *film layar tancep* and movie theater *film pendek* screenings of the "Old Order", to the *television* screenings of the Palapa-era Indonesian audio-visual propaganda constitutes a qualitative jump that separates two kinds of rituals of propaganda. They constitute two separate epochs of relations between the government and the population as mediated by the audio-visual medium. For the personal television puts the mouthpiece and photographic images of the state recorder into the homes of Indonesians in the late 1970s. It makes the communion of government and audience-as-citizens a ritual of the private home and not necessarily a communal one, as were the events of witnessing propaganda in the prior period. Although *TVRI* of the post-Palapa 1970s and 1980s can be labeled 'banal' or 'propaganda', I would like to suggest that its *serialization*, its predictability, its transition from the story of surging nationalism to the celebration of infrastructure, and its 'naturalization' into the private home, combine to form a 'central' audio visual space from which film-makers of *IKJ* depart, geographically and mentally, to produce the *pinggiran*. The *IKJ* film-makers also radiate *their* message, 'from village to village', just as the governmental audio-visual has done. The short form and the pattern of disseminating and emitting messages throughout society, from the *pusat* towards the *pinggiran*, characterizes both the *TVRI* and the *IKJ* filmmakers. But the *IKJ* film-makers, they were seeking to destabilize the status quo with the film medium, not to ensure its reproduction.

One of *TVRI*'s flagship broadcasts were the short film advertisements for the family planning program, *Keluarga Berencana (KB)*⁴¹. *KB* was so important to the Suharto government as it is an early program which received the backing of foreign capital investors⁴². Furthermore, the

36 Prakosa, *Film Pinggiran*, 184

37 *Tancep* means literally 'to stick into the ground'. Screens were stuck in the ground for these open air screenings.

38 Prakosa, *Film Pinggiran*, 184.

39 Gotot Prakosa et al. *Kamera Subjektif Rekaman Perjalanan Dari Sinema Ngamen ke Art Cinema*. Jakarta: Dewan Kesenian Jakarta dan Yayasan Seni Visual Indonesia, 2006, 46. Hereafter "Prakosa, *Dari Sinema Ngamen*"

40 Ibid.

41 Phillip Kitley *Television, Nation, and Culture in Indonesia*, Ch 2. and Veronika Kusumaryati "Experimental Filmmaking in New Order Indonesia" (Conference Paper presented at "Critical Histories of Activism: Indonesia's New Order and its Legacies". University of California, Los Angeles, April 14, 2013.

42 Donald Warwick. "The Indonesian Family Planning Program: Government Influence and Client Choice" *Population and Development Review* 12 (1986) 453-490.

program also evinces how deeply intertwined the military was in the regulation of life in the New Order of Indonesia, for the health programs integrated their promotional activities with the military at local levels of government⁴³. The government used cinema to spread the message of *KB*, through the television, but also through open air '*layar tancep*' public screenings⁴⁴. The practice of spreading the message of *Keluarga Berencana* with cinema has two important continuities with prior governmental practices of 'emitting' governmental cinema. Firstly, it was, like the *gelora nasional* films of the 1960s, undertaken as a territorial practice of the government, spreading these films throughout the islands of Indonesia as a symbol of Indonesia⁴⁵. Secondly, the audio-visual message, is, as in prior propaganda regimes, a rationality oracle which illuminates, with the songs and images, the visibility of the *good* Indonesian family, which is the family of the mother and father and two children. In one version that still circulates today, the 30 second film ends with the image of a father in the foreground, holding a briefcase, reaching down to hug his daughter, while his son leaps for joy running from the house to see his father returning from work. Furthest in the background, the stay at home mother is waiting in front of the family home. The text reads "*Keluarga kecil/ Dengan Semangat dan Harapan yang Besar*" (A Small family/ With a Large Spirit and Hope)⁴⁶. The father has a job which requires a (modern) briefcase and his two children and family await him at home. The formula is one of the small family full of spirit and hope. The content has only altered slightly from the *Gelora Nasional* films, but the territory of the audio-visual medium still projects the rationality of the government, of what a good family *looks* like.

Gotot produces a film named *A Film About Family Planning* in 1979 which maintains the form of the short film 'about family planning', like the governmental version. It is perhaps the most obvious situation where the production of the audio-visual space of *TVRI* produces a *topos* which, itself, prepares the second, palimpsestic encounter, of its refashioning. In Gotot's version, a painted penis twitters on the moving image, searching for the painted heart. They enjoin. In the heart grows another heart followed by the birth of another heart. The process repeats several times until the hearts join in a circle to prevent the penises from entering again. The penises, with the aid of the rapid music of "The Flight of the Bees", appear in a frenzy, unable to enjoin with the hearts. In the end, the penises wrap around each other, moving up and down together and produce hearts repeatedly. In this climax of the animation, large black question marks blink in the 'background' as this 'film about family planning' finishes.

The film is a parody or a mimicry of the government's cinema campaign to narrativize the glory of family planning, in the same brief audio-visual format as the government uses. Even though this film is obviously and not obtusely a reversal of the state narrative, the *meaning* of this parody is ambiguous, as the final flickering question marks dramatize. Is the film painted in the commentarial or ethnographic register? I would like to suggest that the normalization or standardization of life in the conditions of Indonesia during the reign of General Suharto, as can be seen in the content as well as the form of dissemination of *Keluarga Berencana*, coupled with the very real threat of corporeal penalty at this time, animates a cinema aesthetic in Gotot Prakosa which maintains ambiguity in its final moment, refusing to provide another authorial version of family planning. The film instead insinuates that the conditions of 'family planning' are not as they appear on the television. Furthermore, the parody is not a simple reversal; the aesthetic of the film produces another *kind* of thought about family planning. Though the government's *KB* films are 'about' family planning, there is no depiction of sex. In Gotot's film, there are twittering penises and the moment of birth is depicted, momentarily, with splayed female human legs before the chase

43 Ibid, 458.

44 Kitley, *Television, Nation and Culture in Indonesia*, Ch. 2.

45 Veronika Kusumaryati notes that in her 2012 Summer Research in 'Papua' several people could recall the *KB* screenings from the 1970s and 1980s. Veronika Kusumaryati "Experimental Filmmaking in New Order Indonesia" (Conference Paper presented at "Critical Histories of Activism: Indonesia's New Order and its Legacies". University of California, Los Angeles, April 14, 2013.

46 "JAdul TVRI- GenerasiKB" Accessed 5.1.13. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XMvVHayQTjg>

scenes resume. These images themselves form the contradiction with the state cinema, for this version shows that family planning is about a gendered libido in some way. But the film does not provide another ur-narrative of sexuality or 'family' in this brief statement. Instead the conclusion to this animation, of coiled penises making life forms, is neither an ethnographic nor exactly prophetic statement regarding homoerotics. Rather its absurd or comical ending ensures the persistence of the erotic and the unpredictability of life and sex, which the government's image of family planning is actively attempting to eradicate.

But how could Gotot have made such a seemingly blatant 'subversive' film in 1979 in the conditions of censorship during the regime of General Suharto? It is important to underscore that *pinggiran* films are sociologically marginal films in that they are not distributed commercially and they therefore do not reach the majority of citizens of Indonesia. By circulating films in decentralized and secretive networks, the film-makers evaded the censorship that the movie theater cinema incurred⁴⁷. But I would also like to suggest that in order to be able to produce film in The New Order, Gotot Prakosa and the students of *IKJ* claim that they themselves are practicing the 'state' tradition of *film pendek* in order to gain the material and ideological support of the *Dewan Kesenian Jakarta* (The Art Council of Jakarta). By naming their own practice '*film pendek*', they stitched themselves into the lineage of state sanctioned and well nigh statist film productions, from both the Suharto and pre-Suharto times of Indonesia. As the filmmakers themselves very much relied upon the favor of the government when seeking resources for *IKJ* and for taking trips out of the country to attend film festivals, the name of '*film pendek*' provided linguistic ground for their argument that they, too, are producing Art that the Art Governance can think of as glorifying the nation. The following passage exemplifies this mode of address from the filmmakers to the Art Governance:

Tahun 1960an kita sempat melihat film-film pendek "Gelora Nasional" yang diputar di bioskop sebelum film-film Cerita Panjang diputar. Saat itu Film Pendek dimanfaatkan untuk membakar semangat bangsa untuk lebih cinta pada tanah air. Namun sayang sekali acara tersebut menghilang belum sempat berkembang menjadi lebih baik⁴⁸

In the 1960s we watched *film pendek* (short films) of "National Glory" that broadcast in the movie theater before a 'long film' (narrative film). At that time *film pendek* was used for igniting the passion of people for intensifying their love of '*tanah air*' [literally 'the earth and water' but signifying Indonesia]. Despite this, it is a pity this activity disappeared before the opportunity to evolve/thrive and become superior

Although this passage is not given an attributed author, it was most likely written by Gotot Prakosa himself, and submitted to the *Dewan Kesenian Jakarta* (The Committee of Jakarta Arts), in an effort to seek financial support for a group of filmmakers to travel to Europe to attend film festivals. The passage places the art practice of *IKJ* 1982 filmmakers into the lineage with the Soekarno era "*Gelora Nasional*" films, as well as portraying their own films as ones created to intensify the spirit of love for their country⁴⁹. Gotot places himself and the *IKJ film pendek* tradition into this practice of film-making, while still saving a place for himself by claiming that that great national moment of film-making dissolved before it could develop. The new generation therefore can reinvigorate this lineage and *continue* the greatness of a State Art form. The narrative also attaches the film-

47 Krishna Sen, *Indonesian Cinema Framing The New Order*, Ch. 3.

48 Prakosa, *Dari Sinema Ngamen*, 46.

49 Ibid. The letter also writes that it is not just '*seniman*', artists, who understand the power of cinema. The letter writes that a *Bupati* in Kutai, Kalimantan Timur, named Awang Faesal, recorded '*desa*' activities and traveled to the next '*desa*' to show the other villages what was happening in other communities. This anecdote is, in this letter, most likely used as a way to distance the thought that cinema is for 'high' artists, separated from society. It is an interesting anecdote, coming in 1982, for this same idea of cinema circulation, characterized the Soviet Agitation Propaganda circulation, though without the Communist ideology. The mention of this *Bupati* is interesting because this practice of using cinema as a way to bring a message to villages about what is happening in other places is the exact same practice that Gotot Prakosa and his generation take up in the 1980s.

making into another governmental narrative of the 1980s, which is that of 'developmentalism'; the letter claims that Indonesia has great *film pendek* creators but they need more resources from the government in order to be as great as the other developed nations⁵⁰.

Despite the continuity which the letter claims with the state lineage of cinema, the letter also distinguishes how *film pendek* is neither narrative or documentary and it is here that we can see how the film-makers both maintain and reverse the form of state propaganda. For another audience, in a 1997 book, Gotot explained the reason for not practicing the narrative cinema tradition by saying that narrative cinema is enslaved because it only can 'say' a 'certain story' and this limits the possibility for 'expression'.⁵¹ The more careful distinction is between *film pendek* and 'Documentary'. In the Indonesian language, documentary is often called '*film non-cerita*', Non-narrative/story film. It infers in its name that it is not a story but instead an 'objective' genre of 'documentary'. This genre is much closer to the genre of Gotot Prakosa but in the passage we can see how it will be reformulated by Gotot and his collaborators:

Film cerita kita semua telah mengetahui sebagaimana film-film komersial yang diputar di bioskop umum. Dan Film Non Cerita lebih banyak mengarah pada pengertian “Dokumenter” (versi kita?), yang selalu sarat dengan pesan pesan sponsor dan sifat-sifat menggurui yang berlebih-lebihan atau hanya sekedar dokumentasi belaka dari seorang pejabat yang meresmikan Pabrik atau jembatan⁵²

We all already recognize narrative cinema as commercial films that appear in the public movie house. And Non-narrative/story is more aimed at a “documentary” understanding (our version?), which is heavily loaded with the messages of the sponsor and the nature of instructing, excessively, or merely documentation of one government official who is consecrating a factory or bridge⁵³.

Gotot is attracted to the power of the '*non-cerita*' genre, (our version?), but rather than create praise poems of bridges and factories, he wants to change the '*sponsor*' from the Government to Artists. This form of '*non-cerita*' film, films that are 'without a story', are the problem and the site of the solution, because by naming itself '*non-cerita*', it gives itself the possibility to break free from the shackles that keep cinema as the Art that 'just' tells a story. *Film pinggiran* emerges from the recognition of the problems and the limitations of the conventional film genres and moves to produce another genre which did not reproduce governmental ideology nor the limitations of the story of narrative cinema.

The letter also cues that it is crossing the separation which Salim Said consecrated as Artists and Art Governance, by claiming that this *film pendek* is an Indonesian cultural product, that must be raised up, in a nation that is developing. Technology in this situation is an alibi for the filmmakers, for it signals that we are like the other developed countries using technology but we still need more. In this way, *film pendek* positions itself at once against the material, consumptive

50 Prakosa, *Dari Sinema*, 47. The letter states “Di sebuah negara berkembang seperti Indonesia ini, yang diharapkan akan menjadi Negara Maju, memiliki masyarakat sangat majemuk.” In a nation-state developing like Indonesia, which is believed will become a Developed Nation-State, has a very complex society” But the 'development' is raised to illustrate that many people in the country have entered into a consumptive life and *film pendek* will develop the nation intellectually.

51 Prakosa, *Film Pinggiran*, 25. Speaking of the other possible registers of cinema that are not narrative cinema, he expresses the other possible genres as a negation of narrative cinema “bukan diperbudak hanya untuk melulu menungkapkan suatu cerita”. It is not enslaved only for saying a certain story.”

52 Prakosa, *Dari Sinema Ngamen* 46.

53 Prakosa, “Poster Film Indonesia”, 96. It is not inconsequential to note that this same reference to the memory of *TVRI* as one which witnessed factories and bridges, recurs in the writings of Gotot Prakosa after Suharto's reign ended. Though in the conditions of 'post-Suharto' Indonesia, this same story, from the recollection of Gotot Prakosa, now includes another element of the story of the witnessing of the factories and bridges. which animated the contradictory desire of the 1970s IKJ film-making generation. In 2011, in a speech, Gotot Prakosa recalls that the factories and bridges were not witnessed without a government official to consecrate the vision of *TVRI* that the 'glory of development or construction' is *made* with the vision of the government official presiding over the inauguration. This slightly sharper version of the recollection does not appear in the letter of 1982 which is addressed to the *Dewan Kesenian Jakarta*.

society of capitalism, a direct appeal to the government's ethical posture against 'the consumptive lifestyle', but yet also requests more development and technology⁵⁴. By claiming that *film pendek* serves both the appetite to 'develop' at the same time that it will dampen the 'consumptive lifestyle', it locates the position of the lacuna which undergirds the practice of this Suharto-ian oligarchy, which wanted development to mean the production of bridges and factories as well as an art practice that criticized those Indonesians who wanted to buy foreign commodities.

Sinema Ngamen

Behind this presentation of *IKJ film pendek* as an art which will develop and glorify the nation, these same artists participated in a circulation of ideas which sought to shift the spatial production of the cinema away from the 'central' geographies and forms of cinema. The practice entailed both a geographical movement, leaving *IKJ* in Jakarta with films and producing communal film viewings without the television. In this section, I suggest that this impulse, which the film-makers name *sinema ngamen*, is driven by the will to create different kinds of cinema spaces and experiences so that the audience will possess a different perspective of *TVRI* after experiencing this other cinema ritual. I suggest that this geographic and aesthetic motion is undertaken in order to constitute a power of collective vision in cinema which cultivates speculative, not quiescent, thoughts in the audience.

The first condition that this generation of *IKJ* film-makers creators sought to cultivate in this peripheral practice of cinema is to displace the physical, geographic site of the reception of film out of its institutional apparatus of the movie theater and the television. Gotot starts a piece of writing entitled "*Melihat kejujuran melalui film pendek*" Seeing honesty through *film pendek*, with:

Baiklah, yang dimaksud dengan film pendek atau film alternatif di sini adalah film-film yang masa putarnya di luar ketentuan untuk film cerita di bioskop⁵⁵

Well, what is meant by 'film pendek' [literally: short or brief film] or alternative film here are films that when the moment they are shown is outside of convention of narrative film in the *bioskop* (the movie theater).

The first ethic of this cinema practice is to displace the site of the circulation of cinema, for the form of the geographic space at the site of reception forms the bounds within which human thought takes place. Moving the projection of the film out of the television and film theater changes the types of thoughts people are capable of having when looking through a film. This generation of filmmakers named themselves and their work *Sinema Ngamen*. Gotot explains the meaning of this name:

sinema ngamen disebut *ngamen* karena misinya memang mengapresiasi dengan gaya *ngamen*. Membawa separangkat proyektor 8mm, 16mm serta beberapa judul film karya mereka sendiri dan teman-temannya, dipertontonkan dari RT atau RW, selayaknya mengamen, sekaligus membawa misi memasyarakatkan film pendek atau film alternatif. Pemutarannya tidak dituntut hal yang berlebihan. Di ruang rapat, jadi. Di sekolahan, jadi. Di pelataran rumah, jadi.

Pendekatannya lebih manusiawi, tidak terlalu berjarak pada media yang biasa eksklusif. *Sinema ngamen* dan *sinema jemuran* boleh disebut mencoba "memanusiakan" film.⁵⁶

Sinema ngamen is called *ngamen* because its mission is really to appreciate the style of *ngamen* [busking in the street, traveling troupe of singers]. Bringing a 8mm or 16mm projector with some film titles and some works of us and our friends, to be watched in the community hall, as much as we can busking, at once bringing the mission to socialize *film pendek* or alternative film. The showings don't need anything else. If there is a meeting room, we can show it there. In a school, there too. In the yard, there too.

54 Prakosa *Dari Sinema Ngamen*, 59. "Kita memerlukan suatu spirit yang dapat menciptakan solidaritas untuk memperjuangkan kondisi perfilman kita dari kehidupan kita sendiri yang masih konsumtif." We need a spirit that produces solidarity for struggling against the condition of film from our individual lives that are still consumptive.

55 Prakosa, *Film Pinggiran*, 25.

56 Ibid, 117.

This approach is more humane, not too much distance with the media that usually is exclusive. *Sinema Ngamen* and *sinema jemuran* can be considered to try to make film into a human thing.

The passage conveys the spirit of autonomy that pervaded this practice; the film-makers brought their own films and equipment to a community and were able to show films without the institutional constraints of the television or movie theater. I would like to suggest that the meaning of “‘memanusiakan” film’ (lit: to humanize film, to make a human thing of film), as “‘memanusiakan” is held in extra inverted commas, is not intended to mean that the filmmakers want to increase the supply of televisions in Indonesia, nor *institutionalize* the practice of bringing cinema to communities, as much as they sought to change the character of the human reception of the *other* major ritual of television by producing another, 'humane' practice of watching films as a group. These community events sought another *form* of social relationships where the audio-visual medium convoked a community into public spaces where film does not conventionally project. Altering the site of the film projection and changing the content that appears together serve to make the reception of the *TVRI*, which instructs its audience, appear unlike it had before the experience of *sinema ngamen*⁵⁷. The practice sought to cultivate a comparative framework in the minds of the audience so that when they watch *TVRI*, they will be able to compare this presentation with another form of presentation. Gotot wrote of this environment that this *sinema ngamen* practice cultivated:

Film, secara sederhana, sebetulnya hanyalah susunan gambar yang ada dalam seluloid, kemudian diputar dengan mempergunakan teknologi proyektor, yang sebetulnya telah menawarkan nafas demokrasi, bisa ditafsirkan dalam berbagai makna. Ia menawarkan berbagai pesan, bisa dimanfaatkan dalam berbagai kegunaan. Karena itu, film menjadi begitu menarik untuk ditelaah dari beberapa sisi.⁵⁸

Film, basically, actually is only an arrangement of pictures that exist in celluloid, then are rotated by the technology of the projector, which actually afterward offers a breath of democracy, which can be interpreted with various meanings. It offers sundry messages, it can be used for a variety of uses. Because of this, film becomes very interesting for being examined from several sides

Film is a bit like magic, transforming from *pictures* in celluloid and becoming something that 'breathes democracy'. I would like to underscore how this 'magic' transformation is a time and situation specific event. The conditions of the absence of democracy create the possibility where the ritual of television can be reconfigured to produce a democratic sphere of thought by maintaining the skeleton of the audio-visual encounter, but reconstituting it with a 'more humane practice'. This 'democratic property' of the encounter emerges due to the *change* that the film brings into the production of a space; the film is a temporary conduit, a medium that educes the breath of democracy from the communicants. The possibility for the emergence of this event can be accounted for in that *sinema ngamen* is of such a radically different character than *all* of the other major forms of audio-visual experience at this time. The production of the *pinggiran* is the production of a relation; it draws its power from producing a *change* in the conventional ritual of cinema.

For Gotot Prakosa, the possibility to conduct and transform this ritual encounter lay in the human condition of sight itself, for the images were '*data otentik*', authentic data, about the real world which needed no speech in order to confer their meaning. As such, film was able to make

57 Prakosa, *Dari Sinema Ngamen*, 3. In 2006, Gotot wrote of the same period “Ada ide untuk mempertunjukkan film karya mahasiswa ke desa-desa, kalau perlu *door to door*; istilahnya dari rumah kerumah, *ngamen*- lah, maka juga muncul penamaan *Sinema Ngamen*. Layarnya juga terbatas, bahkan sprei kasur, yang sedang dijemur pun bisa saja, hingga ada juga istilah yang muncul, sebagai '*sinema jemuran*', maksud sprei yang sedang dijemuran atau jemuran sprei bisa juga jadi layar film.” There was an idea for showing films, the works of university students, going from village to village, if they had to, door to door, in the street, so that the name Street Cinema arose. The screen for showing films were also very limited, so that bedsheets, that were being laid upon could be used, so that the term Laundrysheet cinema arose and it meant that the bedsheet being dried could be used to show films.

58 Prakosa *Film Pinggiran*, 22.

visible what *TVRI* would not. Primary in this counter-circulation of *sinema ngamen* was the tremendous ecological destruction which was taking place but which was absent from the *TVRI* news:

Pada intinya film menjadi data otentik untuk membuka persoalan tentang keadaan suatu perkembangan budaya pada masa itu. Mungkin kasus ekologi, atau kasus kebudayaan itu sendiri, tentang tari dan keadaan rumah adat, artinya arsitekturnya menjadi bahasan utama dalam diskusi setelah pemutaran filmnya, oleh karena itu film-film yang kami buat sering kita namai film-film *never ending story*, karena endingnya selalu tidak pernah selesai⁵⁹

The essence is that film became 'authentic data' for opening an issue about an issue regarding a particular developing culture situation at that time. Maybe an ecological situation, or a cultural situation itself, about dance and the existence of traditional houses, meaning that architecture itself became the foremost topic in discussions after films, and because of that the films that we made often were called films 'never ending story' because the ending always never ever ends.

This passage will be raised again later in the essay when raising the question of why architecture is so central to this clandestine social thought animated by the audio-visual medium. But by claiming to show 'authentic data' regarding 'ecological situations', the statement dramatizes what it is standing in opposition with, namely, that *TVRI* visually ignores that the government and its oligarchic partners are engaged in a practice of *producing* the visibility of 'ecological situations', a euphemism for the destruction of the forest. Hence the film-makers name their cinema practice the '*never ending story*', for they were not going to stop circulating these images while the story, that is, the ecological and cultural stories, continued to be visible.

The Rejection of Inheritance: The Changing Faculties of Sight and Sound

Earlier in the essay, I introduced the thought that cinema at *TIM* and *IKJ* in the middle of the 1970s possessed an artistic identity of being 'young' or even 'behind' the other art languages. I suggested it as a way to schematically see that while Gotot Prakosa and his classmates did not inherit a tradition of Indonesian Art as the other languages did, they, at the same time, came into close proximity with these other arts at *IKJ*, in this governmental '*taman*'. In this section of the essay, I suggest that the form of cinema which Gotot Prakosa produces exists at the conjuncture of painting, dance, music and film, whose partially discrete genealogies meet at *IKJ* and *TIM* in the middle of the 1970s as Gotot Prakosa enters *IKJ*. His aesthetic incorporates and translates several other art languages into film; film becomes an art which enjoins other thoughts, while still producing a new space not yet produced by other arts.

Gotot begins film-making after he had already studied painting in Jogjakarta at the *SSRI* (*Sekolah Seni Rupa Indonesia*)⁶⁰. Before this, he was a student at *Taman Siswa* in Yogyakarta⁶¹. Already able to paint but unable to create film with a camera, his first films were created, as he has explained in several places, by collecting the film-stock that his teacher at *IKJ*, Sjumandjaya, threw into the garbage⁶². Gotot retrieved this 16mm film-stock, cleaned it and painted directly onto the

59 Prakosa, *Film Pinggiran*, 17.

60 *Seni Rupa* is difficult to translate. It could be called Arts of Form, 'Fine Arts', 'the plastic Arts', though it is a more general term than painting (*lukis*) or sculpture (*patung*).

61 Holt, *Art in Indonesia: Continuities and Change*, 195. Holt writes in the 1960s about *Taman Siswa* as "an Indonesian version of progressive education, a mixture of concepts of Montessori and the Dalton system, tinged with the anthroposophic teachings of Rudolph Steiner and the ethical-esthetic approach of Rabindranath Tagore... The arts, especially painting, were an important feature of the *Taman Siswa* curriculum as an outlet for the pupil's inner impulses" See

62 Prakosa, Minnesota Presentation, 3.2.12. and Prakosa, *Cantrills Filmnotes* 63/64 (1990) 25-31. He spoke about this in two 'foreign' positions in 2012 at the University of Minnesota as well as in 1990 in Australia.

surface, creating the first animation ever to appear with this technique in Indonesia⁶³. When Arthur and Corrine Cantrills met Gotot and saw these films in Australia in 1990, they remarked that these films 'look like' the films of American Stan Brakhage, to which Gotot responded that this is true but he had never seen the films nor knew the techniques of Stan Brakhage when he made these films⁶⁴. It was instead his experience with painting coupled with the scarcity and expense of film-stock at *IKJ* at the time that produced the conditions whereby his first experiment in film-making came out 'looking like' Stan Brakhage's works.

The conjuncture of 1975 at *IKJ* is such that film is in the 'young' position compared to the other modern formal art disciplines. The representational forms of film had not yet gone 'past' realism, to 'modernism', as painting, theater/dance and music already had⁶⁵. This birth of *film pendek* emerges when there were not modernist Indonesian cinema forefathers, 'subjects' to be known, nor a sociological position of the Indonesian modernist cinema *autuer*. Therefore their experiment did not bear the negative, formal reflex of seeking to destroy the old and recreating the new, as other formal art languages did⁶⁶. The consequence for this first wave of experimental Indonesian filmmakers is that their work is not concerned with establishing itself as different from *a priori* modernist forms.

In this set of relationships, I would like to suggest that although the cinema of Gotot Prakosa bears kin relations to each of the other formal art disciplines, music is the 'other half' of the audio-visual medium which meets Gotot's painting as *film (pendek)*. The two non-verbal languages form such an inextricable bond that the cinema-thought of Gotot Prakosa proceeds in such a way that it can be thought of as producing visual rhythms⁶⁷. In 2010 Gotot Prakosa writes this much of animation:

Lebih jauh lagi teknik dan medium ini memungkinkan untuk dipergunakan sebagai medium eksplorasi film animasi abstrak, dikarenakan selain ada yang memang bisa diduga, atau diprediksi hasil akhirnya dengan dihitung dan didesain seperti memproduksi film animasi fiksi dengan dimulai dari tata suaranya, kemudian dibuat gambarnya sesuai dengan desain yang dibuatnya, tetapi teknik ini juga sangat cocok bagi pembuat film yang memiliki visi kesenirupaan (seni lukis dan sebagainya) yang bisa langsung mengekspresikan *image* atau gambar secara spontan di atas seluloid dan seterusnya secara ekspresif senimannya menggambari sesuka hatinya secara spontan tanpa menduga hasil akhirnya, dan seringkali hasil akhirnya merupakan (surprise) kejutan-kejutan tersendiri, baru kemudian hasilnya direspon oleh seorang musisi yang berkerjasama mengekspresikan selera seninya dalam bentuk musiknya. Disini konsep audio-visual semestinya dibalik menjadi visual-audio. Bagaimanapun film semacam ini tetap sebagai karya seni⁶⁸.

Furthermore, this technique and medium [animation] allows for the use as a medium of exploration of abstract film animation, because although there are possibilities which can be expected, or predicted by the finished results by counting and design, such as producing fictional animation films begun by organizing a voice, then a picture made with a certain design, this technique is really suitable for filmmakers that have an artistic vision (painting or otherwise) which can directly express an image with a spontaneous method atop the celluloid and continue to create with an expressive method of the artist, illustrating at one's heart's content with a spontaneous method, without guessing how the work will finish, and so often the ending of the work forms a surprise, surprising himself, only then the result is responded to by a musician that collaborates to express a sentiment of art with the musical form. Here, the concept of audio-visual should be turned around into visual-audio. After all, a film in this genre, indeed is a work of art.

63 Prakosa, Minnesota Presentation, 3.2.12.

64 Prakosa, *Cantrills Filmnotes* 63/64 (1990), 26.

65 Holt, *Art in Indonesia: Continuities and Change*, 234. Holt locates the emergence of 'Cubism' in Bandung in the 1950s with the painters who studied with a Dutch Teacher M.N Mulder, known as 'Ries'.

66 Jim Supangkat et al. *Gerakan Seni Rupa Baru Indonesia*. (Jakarta: PT Gramedia, 1979). This is very much the concern of the *Gerakan Seni Rupa Baru* artists in Bandung who are concerned with the formal innovation, 'past' the disciplinary separations of sculpture and painting.

67 Barry Spinello "On Sound and Image as a Single Entity" *Offscreen* 11 (2007) 1-6.

68 Prakosa, *Animasi Pengetahuan Dasar Film Animasi Indonesia*. (Jakarta: Fakultas Film dan Televisi Institut Kesenian Jakarta- Yayasan Seni Visual Indonesia, 2010), 124. Hereafter "Prakosa, *Animasi*"

Gotot pursues the possibilities for the relationship of sound and image and I suggest that this thought does not emerge from *studying* this possibility, as much as it emerged from the initial conditions of his animation production, when he could paint onto the discarded film-stock, but needed a specialist of music to be able to create a total 'film'. As the film medium relied upon both musicians and visual artists, *film pendek* was a collaborative project. It did not take away from the practice of music or visual arts but instead provided another space for new and surprising artistic consequences.

His earliest animations, from 1976, *meta meta* and *impuls*, contain no visual 'signifiers' with definite corresponding visual 'signifieds' to which the audience would *necessarily* refer the image. The visual shapes that fill the films are twittering globule-shapes filled with bright primary colors, thickly painted lines, patterns of dots, brightly colored circles and spirals, all appearing momentarily before transmogrifying into another shape and color, flashing on the white/clear plate almost as quickly as they leave. The music of *meta meta* that animates this motion and gives it rhythm is made by Slamet Abdul Sjukur. It is a rapid, 'regular' rhythm drum beat overlaid with a tape loop so that the same one second of arrhythmic, dissonant shrieks repeats every six seconds throughout the short film. The looping shriek produces a visual rhythm of discomfort, as well as directing attention to the visual metamorphoses of colored shapes. The shapes and the sounds together form no linear or diachronic narrative; instead this is, as the title suggests, a 'meta' consideration and not a grand narrative. The music is made of collected fragments of sound, stitched together into repetitive 'tape loops'; sounds are recorded, 'distorted', and spit back out. This is music similar to John Cage and Philip Glass, both of whom were listened to by Gotot Prakosa and Slamet⁶⁹. But despite this foreign influence, the music is composed with Indonesian musical sounds. The aesthetic of the film emerges from the contact with foreign modern musicians, but the meaning of this *pinggiran* music rests in creating sounds from Indonesian instruments but presenting them with such a dramatically and recognizably different narrative from its conventional structure.

At this moment of collaboration, Slamet Abdul Sjukur had only recently returned from studying modern music for several years in France⁷⁰. It is Slamet, 20 years Gotot's senior, who works with Gotot as a young filmmaker and whose music Gotot heard making these films. These sound constellations are made by *disturbing* the conventional, man-made harmonics of the *gamelan* instruments. In the March 2012 presentation Gotot Prakosa gave at the University of Minnesota, he remarked that when he and his collaborators created audio for these early experimental animations, they took *gamelan* instruments and banged on them, throwing them against the ground in order to create new patterns of sound⁷¹. The practice of 'desecrating' the sounds of the *gamelan* is itself a symbolic act of resistance or irreverence in Java, but it is done not *only* for symbolic violence. I would like to suggest that this act of creating a sound-image which can both be recognized, in timbre, by the audience, at the same time that the sound-image is refigured, evinces from the earliest animations that Gotot used the available tools to create images that moved away from the center.

This general genre of sound was named *musik pinggiran* (peripheral music)⁷². A newspaper reporter who attended a viewing of the 1977 film of Gotot Prakosa, *Jalur*, called the film and the experience '*dahsyat*' which means approximately awe-inspiring destructiveness and the monstrous⁷³. I would like to suggest that this 'monster'-nature of Gotot Prakosa's films emerges as the vision which heard the sounds of *musik pinggiran* at this moment of experimentation at *TIM* and *IKJ* in

69 "Asian Pacific Online Film Library" Accessed 5.10.13 <http://asiapacificfilms.com/films/show/414-kubis> . The 1978 Gotot 4 minute film '*Kubis*', which is not included on the 1999 VHS *Between Three World* compilation, has a Philip Glass soundtrack.

70 "Slamet Abdul Syukur" Accessed 5.1.13, <http://www.culturebase.net/artist.php?3718>

71 Gotot Prakosa, University of Minnesota Presentation. 3.2.13.

72 Pramana, *25 Tahun Pusat Kesenian Jakarta Taman Ismail Marzuki*, 135-140.

73 Prakosa, *Dari Sinema Ngamen*, 133.

1975. These experiences of working with other musical artists who were also searching to produce *pinggiran* images served to found sound as *the* other agent of power, with vision, in the film of Gotot Prakosa.

Film as Foreign Language

Although *film pendek* drew inspiration from other art languages practiced at TIM, D.A. Peransi is the first film teacher for Gotot Prakosa and the other film-makers of this generation. I would like to suggest that his teachings are part of the foundational knowledge of film, as a technical language of recording, which create the possibility for the existence of *film pendek* as well as provide a departure point for the generation of 1975 *film pendek* creators to establish another artistic identity of their own and distinct from his.

Although Peransi made films in Indonesia during the 1960s, his experience studying Cinema in the Netherlands and France from 1970-1972 had a dramatic impact upon him and consequentially the first generation of IKJ cinematography students. When he returned to Jakarta, he told the students of IKJ stories about the actually existing *revolutionary* European film-making, especially The New Wave (*Gelombang Baru*) in France and New German Cinema (*Gerakan Sinema Jerman Baru*) in Germany⁷⁴. The story that the European cinema revolution was created by youth student filmmakers (*pemberontakan orang-orang muda pembuat film*) inspired *these* young Indonesian student filmmakers to believe that the cinema could be an art and not a just commercial production⁷⁵. Therefore the beginning of this *film pendek* contains a foreign mythical element, of the revolutionaries who proclaimed the Mannheim Declaration at Oberhausen in 1962, that a non-commercial cinema could be made⁷⁶.

The other foreign relations aspect present at the birth of *film pendek* of this period, can be understood by the fact that the 8mm cameras, which are used by IKJ students, are not imported because students want to make artistic films but instead because there was already a social group who used the camera for pleasure⁷⁷. Gotot himself received his camera as an '*oleh-oleh*' (a gift) from '*seorang paman*' (an uncle) who went abroad and brought this back for Gotot. The camera is a tool which, he writes, felt like "*sebuah 'petel', senjatanya Petruk, sang punakawan yang kemana-mana dibawa pusakanya itu di pinggangnya. Saya juga demikian*". A "*petel*" is the weapon of Petruk, the servant/clown who wherever he went, brought this weapon/tool at his waist. I also was like this⁷⁸. Petruk is a Javanese *wayang* character, who is often understood as presenting himself as a foreigner in Java, and his '*petel*' is a machete⁷⁹. I would like to suggest that statement articulates how Gotot imagines part of himself and his weapon as not 'from' Java but instead with some foreign element. But the statement is also important because it suggests that he did not consider his camera as a pleasurable toy, but instead as a 'weapon'.

Be this as it may, it is not only these foundational, though invisible, foreign ancestors of *film pendek* that condition film as a bridge between Indonesia and the outer world. The experience of witnessing foreign documentary filmmakers, coming to Indonesia to shoot documentaries was a part of the experience of being a film-student at IKJ in this period⁸⁰. I think it is possible to say that these experiences of watching foreign documentarians caused Gotot from a young age to question the position of the camera as a 'gaze' that produces visual history. Watching these foreign filmmakers, in Indonesia, put their camera into every point of life, "*tanpa sungkan dan was-was*" (without hesitation or doubts) and "*tidak merasa menyalahi sopan santun atau etika dan tata krama*

74 Prakosa, *Dari Sinema Ngamen*, 1.

75 Prakosa, *Film Pinggiran*, 2

76 Ibid.

77 Ibid, 5.

78 Ibid, 2.

79 N. Riantiarno. *Semar Gugat*. (Jakarta: Yayasan Bentang Budaya, 1995),

80 Prakosa, *Dari Sinema Ngamen*, 8. Gotot does not mention specifically who the documentarians are but instead focuses on their general interest in documenting Indonesian cultural practices.

dari kebudayaan lokal” (not feeling like they are violating politeness or the etiquette and manners of local culture) cultivated the belief that the camera is a powerful machine but also one which can do terrible harm⁸¹. The problem of the foreigners shooting documentaries is not only that the interactions are insulting to 'local customs', but it is in this moment that Gotot recognizes part of his self in the other, for he too is a film-maker. This interaction raises the foundational problem of film-making itself, which is that of the gaze and the subsequent alienation of images. Additionally, these repeated events raise the recognition that Indonesia, and 'primitive' people, are an exotic 'other' for an outside world. I think it is fair to suggest that part of Gotot's identity as a film-maker is formed in these repeated encounters, for he sees that he is not the object of the foreign gaze (he is 'modern') at the same time that he sees that his camera does not see in the same way as the foreign camera does in these situations. They are looking for something different than he is. The irony of the entire situation is that while Suharto demonized the consumptive lifestyle of foreign cultures and romanticized village life in Java, the *foreign* documentarians are simultaneously romanticizing the village⁸².

Peransi teaches the language of French and German narrative cinema and its concomitant theory of production. For Peransi, this form is so powerful because the film-maker creates a 'virtual world'; it is completely a miracle of vision, an entirely real vision that can be produced and put into circulation⁸³. The power of the film is that this vision is entirely 'virtual' and yet feels, to a human, entirely 'real'⁸⁴. This belief in the simultaneous virtuality and reality of film was passed down to his students and can be seen in the belief that film is 'authentic data' and that images themselves communicate. Peransi also taught the students the technical language of film, of how a film is composed with unequal parts, and it is the organization of the uneven blocs that must be apprehended in order to create films that take hold of their audience's emotions.

But the cinemas-as-story form which Peransi learned in Europe and teaches at *IKJ* is not taken up by Gotot Prakosa. The narrative structure, of both the documentary and *film cerita* genres to which D.A. Peransi remained faithful, were passed over in favor of short, abstract, film expressions. Although he does not directly refute the language of the New Wave and D.A Peransi, the motivation for pursuing the short, experimental, and usually animation, genre can be glimpsed in this passage from Gotot:

Mayoritas film dipakai untuk 'alat bercerita' dan bukan berekspresi. Keterkungkungan sebagai alat tersebut menyebabkan film menjadi terbatas, dan film pendek hanya sebagai ekstensi dari film cerita panjang saja.⁸⁵

The majority of films are used as 'storytelling tools' and not expression. Constraint as a tool causes film to be limited, and *film pendek* only is only as an extension from long narrative films.

I suggest that this contrast between film as a 'tool for storytelling' and 'expression' is similar to the difference that Gotot draws between the center and the *pinggiran*. The center arts are arts which are telling stories but they do not challenge the notions or the normativity of the 'center'; he, instead, is creating 'expressions' which do not refute or cancel the form of narrative cinema, but they produce another space whose dimensions allow for another dimension of human thought. In *film pendek*, the form is the narration of an expression; the story is expressed with audio and visual signs. The thoughts are, like the written aphorism, a riddle. They must be unwound and retied by human thought.

81 Ibid.

82 Kitley, *Television, Culture and Nation in Indonesia*, Ch 2.

83 D.A. Peransi, *D.A Peransi & Film*. (Jakarta: Lembaga Studi Film, 1997), 4.

84 Ibid.

85 Prakosa, *Film Pinggiran*, 30.

Film as an autonomous World: The Indonesian Travels of Gotot Prakosa

During his years as a student at *IKJ*, Gotot traveled with friends from the Anthropology department of *Universitas Indonesia* to see, study and visually record other Indonesian cultural forms which were not 'modern' in the ways like their 'modern' city life in Jakarta⁸⁶. Although some of these trips took them long distances to other islands, Gotot also traveled to a region near Jakarta in West Java whose land and people are known as *Badui* and whose cultural practices have resisted the uptake and incorporation of machinery and electricity into their culture. Recalling this experience 30 years after, he wrote:

Di Badui luar itu, ada desa yang ditinggalkan penduduknya, karena saat itu ada program dari pemerintah Orde Baru yang disebut *resettlement* yang mempersiapkan desa baru untuk warga Badui Luar yang berpakaian hitam hitam plus sorban hitamnya kesebuah desa di dekat Lui Damar agar menjadi "modern". Kita diajak oleh salah satu petunjuk jalan warga Badui Luar yang sudah akrab dengan Don melihat sebuah desa yang hancur, rumah-rumah panggung dari kayu kualitas murah yang hancur dimakan rayap, kayunya retak dan patah di sana-sini karena lapuk kena hujan dan panas, tetapi karena tidak dihuni, juga berakibat mempercepat kehancurannya⁸⁷

In Outer Badui, there is a place where the residents have left, because at that time there is a program from the New Order government, named 'resettlement' that prepares a new village for people of Outer Badui, that wear all black and black cloths on their head, to another village near Lui Damar, so that they will become 'modern'. We were invited by an Outer Badui, already a good friend of Don (a friend of Gotot) to see a destroyed village, houses made with cheap wood, destroyed by termites, the wood broken down by rain and hear, but because they are not occupied, these were prepared to be destroyed.

There is a particular irony to this experience of witnessing the destruction of 'unmodern' lifeforms and not being able to document it, with his camera-as-weapon. For he did not have his camera at this moment because it is against the customs of the *Badui* to use machines or technology on their lands. The feeling of being bereft of one's weapon produces the feeling of being a 'foreigner', witnessing the Indonesian government destroying the Life of the other, the *Badui*. He feels the power of the camera to provide a testimonial of '*development*' at the moment when he has been dispossessed of his camera because he has followed the 'local customs' of the *Badui*.

In his constituting the category Modernism, without positive or prescriptive aesthetics, where artists *try* to create the new, Frederic Jameson instead situates the arrival and departure of Modernism as a formulation which emerges in Europe due, in part, to the experience of the urban intellectual *sensing* a vast gap between the city and the not city. Jameson argues that the experience of this feeling led the European modernists to raise the question of Deep Time, (ie: how 'long' separates the city from the countryside?) not as a conscious aesthetic ideology, but as an 'organic' consequence of the spatial fragmentation of capitalist development. It is the particular position of the late 19th and early 20th century European urban 'intellectuals', (Proust and Mann in this narrative), to *travel* between these two situations and experience the shock of these cultural separations; 'modernism' is not, at the outset, the 'quest' for the new. It is a reaction against the representational code of 'Realism' (of Flaubert or Tolstoy) which was, for the next generation, incommensurate to convey the feeling of shock of arriving in Combray from Paris⁸⁸.

I would like to suggest that these same *mechanics* of the experiential shock, brought about by traveling between the city and its spatial non-identical form (in this case witnessing the destruction of the *Badui*), 'work on' Gotot Prakosa in the late 1970s and can be considered as another instance in a world of Modernisms. Although the mechanics that produce this shock for 'intellectuals' in both Europe and Indonesia are both brought about by the travels between an urban capital and an 'other space', the meaning that this travel confers upon Gotot Prakosa is only 'one half' of this constitution of spatial identity which induces the Modernist impulse. For it is the

86 Prakosa, *Film Pinggiran*, 3.

87 Prakosa, *Dari Sinema Ngamen*, 7.

88 Frederic Jameson. *A Singular Modernity*. (London: Verso, 2002). 141-215.

distinction of the Cold War 'third world' *urban* filmmaker-intellectual-*mahasiswa* to know that Jakarta is not *Tanah Badui*, but yet still know that Jakarta is not constituted in the same way as Paris or Frankfurt constitute each other. Gotot begins the story of the birth of *film pendek* at *IKJ* in 1975 with the stories of D.A Peransi and the German revolutionary student filmmakers who have already created "New German Cinema". Therefore the *registration* of this shock to Gotot, that the Indonesian government, orchestrated by the Military, is actively destroying the civilization of the 'premodern' in the name of 'development' (*pembangunan*) do not bequeath the same cultural motifs as those that emerged for Proust and Mann as the markers of the vast separation between the city and the not-city. As the project of Jameson is to underscore that modernism is not an aesthetic but instead a form of representation which emerges at a particular stage or transition of capitalism, I suggest that this shock, which is intimately tied to the identity of the city as the site of machines and the not-city as the site with less machines, occurs under different situations in each 'post-colony' and these situations do not form a homogenous field of objects. As the government of General Suharto is 'liberalizing' the political-economy of Indonesia in this period, I suggest that the experience of Gotot Prakosa, witnessing the destruction of the *Badui*, bereft of his Sony weapon, suggests itself as an event in the history of Modernism that precedes the shift into postmodernity.

In order to underscore the qualitatively discrete circumstances of the 'post-colony urban filmmaker' from the pre- World War One Parisian author, I will raise a reflection of Gotot Prakosa's first overseas travel to the Philippines in 1981, which I hope will meaningfully illustrate that although, like Proust, Gotot has both 'world' and 'national' elements which produce his consciousness and his works, the relationship between the national and the world are not the same at these two discrete sites of Modernism⁸⁹.

The Goethe Insititute, the cultural governmental body of *Germany*, was a foreign structure in Jakarta in the 1970s and 1980s which provided a semi-autonomous film screening institution, and thus was less under the direct espionage of the Suharto regime than *TIM*⁹⁰. The Goethe Institute organized and prepared Gotot's travel to the Philippines for an animation workshop in 1981. I think that we can see that the foreign relationships of the 1980s have shifted from those of the prior generation, for D.A Peransi traveled from the 'post-colony' (Indonesia) to the 'post-metropole' (Netherlands) in 1970, whereas Gotot Prakosa is invited by the German foreign cultural embassy in Jakarta to travel to the Philippines.

The experience of Gotot traveling to the Philippines complicates the '*pergi-pulang*' (traveling back and forth) notion of the travel of the modernist in the early 20th century in Europe, for this is the travel of one urban-intellectual-filmmaker to another Southeast Asian country to meet other Southeast Asian urban-intellectual-filmmakers. The trip was supposed to be an animation workshop in Manila, but the arc of the travel twisted immediately after arriving into a situation where students were protesting against President Marcos:

Tetapi ternyata saat itu dalam keadaan genting, saat mahasiswa turun ke jalan mendemo Presiden Marcos, maka acara workshop pun dialihkan di kota Baguio, di tempat pembuat film eksperimental Kidlat Tahimik. Dari sana saya kenal Carl Fugun, dipanggil Charlie, seorang editor film yang pernah mengedit beberapa film Rainer Werner Fassbinder, ia juga *total filmmaker*, intinya semuanya dipegang, sebagai pembuat film independen yang bisa apa saja....Dari Baguio City, saya mengenal kerja film yang lebih merakyat. Kidlat seringkali memutar film-film Jerman di rumahnya yang

89 Pascale Casanova *World Republic of Letters* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004) and "Combative Literatures" *New Left Review* 72, (2011), 123-134. Pascale Casanova puts forth that each piece of literature, and its character as either 'inert' or 'engaged', must be understood to have been produced in a situation which has both a 'national' and a 'world' aspect to the articulation. This essay suggests that while this framework is important for understanding the entire problem of 'influence' or 'localization', but the framework, in my opinion, is insufficiently sensitive to the intra-national and 'regional' dynamics that circulate in this 'Republic', especially in 'post-colonial' situations. Furthermore, as the 'Republic' is concerned with 'letters', the system does not afford for the circulation of the forces of 'engagement' and 'inert-ness' *between* the semi-autonomous Languages of Art, so that the forces that produce an engaged literature can 'jump' to other codes, such as music, dance, film and painting.

90 Prakosa, *Dari Sinema Ngamen*, 14-15.

menjadi studio dan semacam tempat workshop yang nyaman⁹¹

But it turns out that that time (of arrival in the Philippines) was a precarious situation, at the time the student *descended* (my emphasis) to the street to demonstrate against President Marcos, so that the plan for the workshop was diverted to Baguio city, at the place of the experimental filmmaker Kidlat Tahimik. There I met Carl Fugun, who we called Charlie, a film editor who had experience editing the films of Rainer Werner Fassbinder, who is a *total filmmaker*; meaning that he held everything, as an independent filmmaker who can do anything...From Baguio City, I met met/encountered a film work that is more oriented towards a form concerned with society. Kidlat often showed German films in his house which he turned into a studio and a sort of comfortable/pleasant/enjoyable workshop

The expectations for the trip were thwarted because students descended onto the streets to protest against their own authoritarian regime. Consequently, Gotot traveled to the home of Kidlat Tahimik, who had already made at this time, '*total films*' such as "Perfumed Nightmare"⁹². I would like to suggest two ways in which this experience presents the possibility that Modernism of the 1970s and 1980s has qualitatively different characteristics than the ones which Jameson delineates as occurring before the Second World War in Europe. Firstly, the experience of witnessing Filipino students fighting against the injustices of their President, as an Indonesian coming from the conditions of "The New Order", produces a shock because of the recognition of the *similarity* between the authoritarian conditions of Indonesia and the neighboring Philippines. Rather than polarizing the identity of 'the capital' and 'the province', this encounter bequeaths a sense that the conditions of authoritarianism of Indonesia is not an isolated world phenomenon. Southeast Asia possesses several dictators who are fighting against their own university students. This is not the radical 'otherizing' of the city and the countryside but instead the recognition that the conditions of Indonesia are not aberrant in this region. Secondly, *film*, itself, has brought Germans, Americans and an Indonesian to Kidlat's home in the Phillipines. This is 1981 and before Rainer Werner Fassbinder died, which 'killed' New German Cinema and marks, for some, the beginning of the end of the belief in film as a modernist medium⁹³. At this time in the Phillipines, film is something that can be worked for, for it is a common field, a shared Language where Germans, Filipinos and Indonesians can Artistically collaborate. Film *is* the language of communication of this conversation. Furthermore, working with 'Charlie', who edited the films of Rainer Werner Fassbinder, a mythical hero of *auteur* film-making, is an experience where New German Cinema becomes part of Gotot's own personal genealogy. This experience furnishes the belief in the medium of cinema at the same time that it underscored that the government of General Suharto is not the only dictatorship in the region of Southeast Asia.

After this first interaction with the Goethe Institute in Jakarta, Gotot received another invitation from them, to show his films at the Oberhausen Film Festival. The Oberhausen Film Festival is the very festival that D.A. Peransi spoke of in the 1970s to inspire the young student film-makers of *IKJ*, as it is the birthplace of New German Cinema⁹⁴. Although the 1984 trip to Germany was predicated on Gotot showing three of his films (*meta ekologi*, *A Film About Family Planning*, *Dialogue*) at Oberhausen, the most dramatic experiences of the trip were not showing his works, but instead the experience of watching television and Art House cinema in Frankfurt. Watching 'Art' cinema with the urban bourgeoisie *created* another perspective of the identity of the public sphere in Indonesia at that time. He writes:

Maka saat itu pula saya melihat ada Art House yang cukup *establish* di kota Frankfurt, maka sudahlah

91 Prakosa, *Dari Sinema Ngamen* 21.

92 The English translation loses the sound of the Tagalog "Mababanggong Bangungot"

93Kaes, Anton. "New German Cinema" in *The Oxford History of World Cinema* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1996), 625.

94 Oberhausen, the name of the site where New German Cinema, so famously began with its Manifesto, to create a New Cinema. In the aftermath of the 1962 event, the event provided something like an annual meeting of foreign emissaries of world alternative cinema, where cinema from Poland and Indonesia can be seen in the same movie house in the same day.

mulai membayangkan dan berandai-andai saja jika di Indonesia ada gedung seperti itu, kenyataannya sangat berlain, di Indonesia ada Menteri Harmoko yang senang tampil di *Klompencapir* di Televisi Republik Indonesia.⁹⁵

So I then also saw there is Art House which was already established in Frankfurt, then I began to imagine and just think hypothetically if in Indonesia there is a building like this, and in reality it is totally different, in Indonesia there is Minister Harmoko who is happy to emerge in *Klompencapir* in *TVRI*.

It is this apprehension of this separation, between the public sphere controlled by Harmoko and the Frankfurt Art House cinema that shocked Gotot more than any of the 'extreme' aesthetics of the films seen at Albertz Hall in Oberhausen⁹⁶. The social ritual of cinema in Germany produced another aspect from which to consider the identity of the conditions of sovereignty in Indonesia, where Art Cinema was not yet a mass cultural practice.

I would like to suggest that the nature of the travel for Gotot, where Germany (and then Switzerland) are the 'foreign' and Jakarta is the 'home', must be distinguished from the 'nature' of the travels of the German filmmaker Wim Wenders, when he traveled to Jakarta for workshops at the Goethe Institute and *TIM*⁹⁷. For it is the *position*, or the *identity* with which one begins and ends the encounter with the 'other', that is not the same for the German in Java as for the Javanese in Germany. For the home of Gotot in Germany is Jakarta and the conditions of the circulation of images as controlled by Harmoko and *TVRI*. They are not just 'different'; Harmoko and *TVRI* feel more oppressive after seeing the masses of ordinary urban citizens in the Frankfurt movie houses.

In conclusion, I would like to draw attention to the infamous passage of writing where Jameson wrote that third world literatures will not offer the *satisfactions* (emphasis mine) that Proust and Joyce do⁹⁸. The implicit addressee of this statement is a small cadre of the English Language academy of the 1980s. I draw attention to this comment, for it collapses into its opposite (and transforms) in the urban 'third world' post-colony film-maker Gotot Prakosa, who seems to find such *immense* satisfactions in his genealogy of the history of cinema, identifying with pleasure, his likenesses, in the animation cinema of Len Lye, Norman McLaren, Barry Spinello, Jiri Trnka, Alexander Alexeieff and so many others⁹⁹. For it is through this genealogy of *film pendek* and *sinema ngamen*, a history of the conditions of the circulations and counter-circulations of cinema in Indonesia, that we can see how Gotot Prakosa came to have such a deep appreciation for other *pinggiran* film-makers, in other national situations.

95 Prakosa, *Dari Sinema Ngamen*, 18.

96 Ibid.

97 Prakosa, *Dari Sinema Ngamen*, 15.

98 Frederic Jameson "Third World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism" *Social Text* 15 (1986) 65-88, 65.

99 Prakosa, *Animasi*. This work is a totalizing history of Animation Cinema, most of which takes place in Europe and Japan.

Chapter 2: The Reconstitution of Nature in the Camera Films

This chapter is concerned with two camera films of Gotot Prakosa: *Jalur* (1977) and *meta ekologi* (1979). In this chapter, I argue that the camera films produce an aesthetic *pinggiran* by raising recognizable audio and visual *topos* and create dissonant relationships between these cultural motifs. I argue that the relationships between sound and image implicitly raise questions regarding the meaning of 'development' and social class, but do so without using human speech. The *pinggiran* aesthetic of these films is such that they do not seek to produce *new* shared cultural sites but instead change the visual perspective of these sites so that a critical perspective can be *seen* in these social habitats.

Jalur (Lane, as in a lane of a street) (1977) is the one of the first camera films Gotot Prakosa makes¹⁰⁰. It is made with a 16mm Bolex Camera¹⁰¹. The visual image is taken from the perspective of a camera operator, who sits in the front-left seat position of a bus, traveling on the road from Jakarta to Bandung. The invisible bus driver is to the right of the camera. The bus drives on the left hand side of this road, which was built by the Dutch¹⁰². The image looks directly forwards, at the backs of sundry buses, motorcycles and trucks and occasionally, the open road. The sides of the road are filled with small shops in the outskirts of Jakarta which give way to visions of the empty road and the *sawah* (rice fields) as the journey leaves the metropolitan area and traverses the *desa* (rural areas). But this 6 hour, 180km bus trip appears, in its entirety, in 12 minutes of film. The film is the vision of a bus trip at 'hyperspeed'. The compression of 6 hours into 12 minutes produces a filmic space of tremendous spatial and temporal density. In 12 minutes, the *space* of 6 hours and 180 km of bus travel is made visible. Like nearly all of Gotot's films from this period, *Jalur* contains no human language voice. Instead, the conjuncture of the sound and vision meet to produce a rhythm, and it is this terrible, fierce rhythm that confers the meaning of this audio-visual expression.

When David Hanan, an Australian film-scholar and long time interlocutor of Gotot, collected Gotot's films in 1999 to put into circulation on a VHS cassette, he asked Gotot to give a metanarrative for this abstract film expression¹⁰³. To describe this film, Gotot offered, in English, an oblique statement about how this is a film about the feeling of contemplation of taking a bus-trip¹⁰⁴. But writing in *Bahasa Indonesia* in 2010, Gotot offered another narrative that does not contradict his first statement but evinces how different conditions of discourse dramatically shape articulated statements. Different conditions can give rise to 'alternate stories', depending on the situation of articulation. He writes in 2010:

Film karya Gotot Prakosa berjudul *Jalur*; 1977, 12 menit, tentang perekaman perjalanan dari Jakarta ke Bandung di atas kendaraan. Perjalanan ini direkam berdasarkan *mood*, atau suasana, setiap saat direkam frame-per-frame menggunakan kamera Bolex dan sebagainya, seperti yang diterangkan dalam Bab Object Animation, seperti yang dilakukan oleh animator dan sutradara Amerika Tim Burton.

100I use the term 'camera' film to distinguish this series of films from the 'animation' films.

101Prakosa, *Animasi*, 255.

102Much later, in 1996, Bernie Ijdis, a Dutch film-maker made a conventional documentary about this road, *Jalan Raya Pos (De Grootte Postweg)* which is narrated by Pramoedya Ananta Toer.

103“Short Films, Videos, Animation Works by Gotot Prakosa” VHS, Melbourne: Between Three Worlds, 1999. All of the viewings of the Gotot's films in this essay emerged from this VHS. It collects 11 works from 1975-1987. Gotot has said that he has created over 400 cinema works in his life. University of Minnesota Presentation, 3.2.12.

104 “Short Films and Animation Works by Gotot Prakosa”, Accessed 4.9.13

<http://artsonline.monash.edu.au/mai/work-by-gotot-prakosa/> It is not specified whether Gotot wrote or spoke the following description of the film: “A trip from Jakarta to Bandung. This film is the expression of the trip, as though it were a meditation, a trip in which you ignore everything around you.”

Sebetulnya idenya adalah membuat dokumentasi perjalanan yang dikarenakan ada isu mau dibuatnya jalan Tol Jakarta-Bandung, dan diprediksi nanti akan tidak ada kendaraan mobil yang mempergunakan jalanan lewat Parung lagi. Nantinya Jakarta-Bandung akan terasa dekat, karena jalannya dipotong melalui jalan lurus yang akan dibangun itu. Berdasarkan isu dan berita itulah, ide mendokumentasikan jalan lewat Parung yang kelak akan ditinggalkan pengendara untuk lebih memilih jalan Tol. Konsep waktu riil perjalanan yang menggunakan kendaraan umum ditempuh dengan 6 jam, akan dimampatkan menjadi sekitar 15 menit atau kurang, dijadikan *film time*.¹⁰⁵

The film work by Gotot Prakosa entitled *Jalur* (The lane) 1977, 12 minutes, 'is about' recording a journey from Jakarta to Bandung atop a vehicle/transportation. The journey is recorded and based on *mood*, or atmosphere, each moment of recording frame by frame using a Bolex camera, as is described in the Chapter on Object animation, like that which is used by the American animator and director Tim Burton.

Actually, the idea to make this documentation of the journey was caused by the issue regarding the desire to make a Toll Road from Jakarta to Bandung, and it was predicted that later there would not be car vehicles which used this road through Parung again. In the future, Jakarta to Bandung would feel close, because the road would be cut and a direct road would be built. Based on the news of this issue, the idea to document the road through Parung which later would be left by riders who instead chose the Toll Road. The concept of the real time of the journey which takes about 6 hours, will be compressed to become about 15 minutes more or less, and become '*film time*'.

The brief genealogy of related statements, of the film itself in 1977, the comment in English language for the 1999 distribution of the film, and the post-reformasi 2010 statement written in *Bahasa Indonesia* of the the process of inventing the film, illustrate how powerfully the conditions of the circulation of discourse define the possibilities for statements. For the written explanation of 2010 would have been subversive in the 1977 Jakarta public sphere and, likewise, the film itself was 'conditioned' by the constrained conditions of speech in 1977. The film tells the story of the imminent destruction of this road, not in these linguistic terms, but instead with a human speechless, audio-visual statement.

Indeed, the conditions for the recording of this film were generated by the land acquisition of the government. But I would like to suggest that this statement, as it is not told in these linguistic terms, and instead with a speechless statement of vision and audio, is a 'general' story, that *includes* the story of the destruction of this road for whomever in the audience already knows this story, at the same time that it provides a tableau for the recognition of other stories, which can be found in this composition of sound and sight. This vision of the road in the film appears at once as an image from 'reality', from the human experience of seeing this road, a common experience for many people of western Java, as it connects the two largest metropolitan areas in western Java, at the same time that this normal vision has been used to shift to another shared, collective, hyperspeed vision which is the film itself. I would like to suggest that part of the cinema project of Gotot Prakosa is to show general and collectively recognizable situations, which are then diverted, in the course of the film, from their normal social meaning in order to produce a new 'peripheral' meaning of the common collective site itself. This reconstitution of common situations suggests that the films are not telling a particular or specific story as much as suggesting an abstract narrative *arc* in which each person in the audience will see something different.

The sound of the film, like the visual register, draws on socially recognizable sound-images, at the same time that it arranges them in such a way that the audience knows that this is not a natural field recording. The configuration of the reformed audio confers part of the meaning in this film that has no linguistic sound-images. The film reproduces the familiar audio noises a traveler hears on the road. The sounds include the combustion explosion that provides energy for transportation vehicles, the horns of trucks and automobiles honking, and the whirring of their engines. Therefore both the sounds and the vision 'fit' as the experience of the bus traveler. The

105Prakosa, *Animasi* 255.

sound of the film is not the sound from this filmic vision of the road; it has been collected and composed into an orchestrated symphony of machine noise and pasted to the vision. The film draws on the recognition of the original form of these events but rearranges them to heighten the sensitivity to the power of machines.

If the machine noise track is the melody voice of this film-song, the contrapuntal voice arrives, after the journey is already underway, in the sound of a *lagu Sunda*. This genre of music, *kecapu suling*, is from the region of *Sunda*, the very region that this position of this camera is going towards on this journey. Its arrival creates a new set of relationships between sound and image. The *kecapu suling* music, made by the *old (lama, kuno)* instruments bring a man-made tonic to this terrifying road trip. The sound of slow strings and bamboo wind instruments, contradict the frenetic vision and coarse machine sounds into which it mixes. But the music, like the vision, gives a linear feeling of forward movement. The dramatic contrast is between their two forward tempos. For the *kecapu suling* moves at a *lento* pace, while the vision of the bus is an exaggerated *presto*. The audience is made to feel both, in their body, at the same time. Although the film does not linguistically intervene in the film, I would like to suggest that the audio is not ethically evenly distributed between the two audio aspects. The power of the field of this film is such that when these two audio poles face each other, the 'true' identity is the beauty of *lagu Sunda* and horror of the pace of the bus and the sound of the machine. The film does not just tell the story of the destruction of this road but of the more general arc of how human thought shifts between a mode that produced the speed of *kecapu suling* to a mode that produces the speed of the automobile.

The field of vision and sight are not, however, disturbed in the same way. Whereas the vision of the bus trip has been dramatically accelerated in the forward direction, turning this recognizable vision into an accelerated version of this normal direction of vision, the sound, which adheres to this vision, has not been altered with the same forward direction. The noise sounds have been collected with a stationary microphone, recording the inside of a tunnel, or under a bridge, as traffic moves by. When the 'hyperspeed' forwards direction meets the stationary orchestrated noise, the relationship creates a sensation in the body where the vision tells the body that it is moving forwards at a tremendous speed, whereas the hearing function tells the body that it is sitting stationary in a chaotic traffic pattern. The contradictory directions of the movement of the image and the sound pulls the bodies of the audience apart and induces a queasy hypnosis. But the audience cannot choose any direction to begin their meditation; the macabre is identified with the machines and the only signs of bliss or respite in the film comes from the aural nostalgia of 'traditional' music. The film does not comfort the audience to forget that the sounds of the street; the work is a reminder these machines are our 'mood', this speed and this noise is our life. It is, in this period, also called 'development'. The film takes the audience between the society whose collective thought is frozen in the timbre and tempo of this *Sunda* music and the social thought ossified in the automobile and compares them. The result is a vision which contradicts the panegyrics of *Gelora Pembangunan*, which instruct the viewers of *TVRI* that the road is the symbol of the glory and achievement of a developing society. The film visualizes a different perspective of the meaning of the road. Rather than praising the road as *TVRI* does, the film situates the road as the site where the pain of modernization is seen and heard.

The sound of Land: *meta ekologi*

This essay began with a description of an event named *meta ekologi* (Meta Ecology), which was captured by the optic recorders of both the art governance of Indonesia and Gotot Prakosa. From these recordings, Gotot and Sardono W. Kusumo created the film *meta ekologi* in 1979. David Hanan, the Australian scholar of Indonesian cinema, called the film a 'cinematization of dance' and 'one of the most remarkable films ever made in Indonesia'¹⁰⁶. Like most of Gotot's films from this

¹⁰⁶"Short Films and Animation Works by Gotot Prakosa". The word 'cinematization' appears on the VHS jacket of the 1999 "Between Three Worlds" release.

period, it does not use the human spoken language. Instead, like *Jalur*, it confers the meaning of its expression through a relationship of sound to image. I would like to suggest that the power of this camera film is drawn from the meaning of the contradiction of the sound and the image. *Meta ekologi* raises recognizable cultural motifs and reconfigures them so that the new relationship between the elements of sound and image itself carries the message of critique.

Although this method of the separation and reconstitution of the elements of drama (Music, Text, Setting) is often attributed to the German dramaturgist Bertold Brecht, I would like to suggest that the creators of the film *meta ekologi* were not 'translating' the ideology or doctrine from the German so much as they were, like Brecht, searching for another relationship between the author and the audience in drama¹⁰⁷. That they both practiced the separation and reconstitution of sound and image so as to put the two elements into intellectual contradiction does not mean that Brecht was an 'object of translation', as much as it suggests they all sensed the power sound and vision have in constituting the human consciousness of the audience¹⁰⁸. As these artists sought social change in their societies, they all sought to increase the coefficient of contradiction between sound and image for their audiences so that drama itself would not renew the *a priori* social contract but instead question it.

For Brecht, the theater is a site of the pedagogical encounter; he prophesized that the Modern Epic theater will “develop the means of pleasure into an object of instruction, and to convert certain institutions from places of entertainment into organs of mass communication”¹⁰⁹. The language is structurally similar to the statement Gotot Prakosa made regarding the “memanusiakan' film”; Gotot sought to change the social, geographic and theoretical ritual of cinema as an activity of consumption. The similarity of the two movements underscores how both Brecht and Gotot identified the theater and then the movie theater as specific sites where the normative social contract is renewed and therefore made vulnerable.

Although Gotot Prakosa and/or Sardono W Kusumo, the two primary creators of the film, more than likely at some point were introduced to the concepts of the 'separation of the elements', as there was a substantial exchange of art between Europe and Jakarta, I will suggest that that sort of scientific genealogy of identifying origins is misguided, for as this essay has shown, the practice of the separation of the elements is always already existent, from the absolute beginning of Gotot Prakosa's cinema, when film meant painting images atop recycled celluloid and adding an audio track. The suggestion here is not that the chain extends directly from Brecht through Jean Luc Godard, who was deeply influenced by Brecht to Peransi, who was enamored with Godard, to Gotot, who was taught the language of film by Peransi, but instead that the apprehension of the relationship of sound and image emerges, to use a bankrupted word, organically. These artists apprehended that bourgeois melodrama renews the conditions for the reproduction of normativity in society just as much as the school systems¹¹⁰. As such, the theater and cinema system is the privileged site which radical pedagogues, like Brecht, Godard and Gotot, seek to reformulate. As drama audiences are composed of sentient people, whose consciousness comes together at the meeting of vision and sound, these dramaturgists aim their counter-form of cinema at the question of how to formulate another relationship of sound to image than the types already ambient in their respective national traditions.

In order to get a sense of the overall shape of the film, the following exchange between the

107Bertold Brecht “The Modern Theater is the Epic Theater”, in *Brecht on Theatre; The Development of an Aesthetic*. tr. John Willett. New York: FSG, 1964,42.

108Ibid, 38. Brecht writes“Music plays the chief part in our thesis” Brecht and Weill had some familiarity with *pre-Indonesia* (pre-Indonesia), composing the song “Surabaya Johnny” for the 1929 play “Happy Ending”.

109Ibid, 42.

110Louis Althusser, “Ideology and the State” in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*. (New York: Monthly Review, 1972), 143. Louis Althusser focuses on the school and the family in his now canonical “Ideology and the State” but in his catalogue of 'Ideological State Institutions', the last two sites he mentions are “The communications ISA- (press, radio, television, etc.) and The Cultural ISA- (Literature, Arts, Sports)”

Cantrills and Gotot is included to be able to hear the voice of Gotot Prakosa in 1990 speaking, in English in Australia, about the 1990 film:

*A film we like very much was **Meta Ekologi***

That was made in 1979, and based on a performance by Sardono W Kusumo and his group. We see them in a mud pool in a slum district of Jakarta, with the local people watching the performers who become entirely covered with mud. It's a response to an attempt to enter into dialogue with the ecology of earth and water- humanity expressing its feelings through the body by trying to become one with the universe. It has references to farming peasants, working on the land and covered with mud. It's a process of poeticization.¹¹¹

In the film, the dancers begin outside of the mud and then enter to submerge themselves in the mud and begin their dance movements. As Gotot said, their bodies were the agents which expressed the meaning of the film. Although the film *meta ekologi* is without this linguistic metanarrative, the question of the relationship between land, society and class structure can be heard in this 1979 *mahasiswa* (university student) newspaper article, commemorating the one year anniversary of the government program *Normalisasi Kehidupan Kampus* (The normalization of the life of Campus) at *ITB* in Bandung. The article is printed only 2 months after the *meta ekologi* Event. Heri Achmadi, then a student activist, wrote:

Anggota keluarga Suharto mendapat hak monopoli cengkeh yang menghasilkan keuntungan milyardan rupiah, konsensi-konsensi hutan dan hak guna tanah untuk perkebunan

Dan bahkan anggota keluarga suharto pula ternyata yang menjadi 'contoh' bagaimana harus berkomplot dengan para cukong Cina, dan modal asing. Begitulah, untuk memberi hidup para teknokrat Berkelay yang bercokol di taman Suropati Jakarta, telah menyusun rancangan ekonomi yang *sangat konservatif* dan *anti kerakyatan*. Rancangan Pembangunan Ekonomi bersifat *liberal kapitalistik* yang menggunakan *pasar bebas* sebagai kunci mekanisme perekonomian indonesia, jelas-jelas hanya menguntungkan mereka yang memiliki modal kuat dan manajemen tinggi yaitu pemilik modal asing dan cukong-cukong Cina¹¹².

Members of the Suharto family received monopoly rights on cloves (for cigarettes) which resulted in billions of rupiah, forest concessions and rights to use land for plantations.

Even the family members of Suharto actually become 'examples' of how to conspire with Chinese financiers and foreign capital. On this way, they are giving life to the Berkeley technocrats (Berkeley mafia) that are entrenched in Suropati¹¹³, who have prepared a draft of the economy that is *very conservative* and *against the people of society*. The draft of the development economy has a *liberal capitalist* orientation that uses the *free market* as a key mechanism for the economy of Indonesia, clearly only benefiting those who have strong capital and high management, which are the possessors of foreign capital and the Chinese finance barons.¹¹⁴

Land, the commodity, was a primary asset whereby the Suharto-ian oligarchy cultivated its fortune. The theater of *meta ekologi* emerges from a West Java student *milieu* which identified that the government was *in the process* of constructing a political economy, with the *teknokrats* who studied at the University of California Berkeley, which is '*anti kerakyatan*' (against the common people). At the same time, the euphemistically named *revolusi hijau* (the green revolution) in reality meant the enforced planting of standardized rice strains, a transformation which was enforced by the Military¹¹⁵. Land, therefore, is not merely an ancillary aspect of the student-led critique of the

111Prakosa, *Cantrills Filmnotes* 63/64 (1990), 26.

112 *Kampus Karya Dan Opini Inteligensia Muda* edisi Desember 1979

113Suropati refers to *Taman Suropati*, the location of the National Development Planning Body (*Badan Perencanaan Pembangunan Nasional*).

114 *Kampus Karya Dan Opini Inteligensia Muda* edisi Desember 1979

115Marina Welker, "The Green Revolution's Ghost: Unruly Subjects of Participatory Development in Rural Indonesia," *American Ethnologist* 39 (2012): 391-392. Welker writes that the national program known as *intensifikasi massal* (mass intensification) was carried out not only to standardize rice strains, but also to transform farmers from their

regime of Suharto in 1979. It is, rather, the site whereby the meaning of the Suharto regime are located. Rather than suggesting that this performance and dance constitute a visually cloaked signifier with a stable linguistic signified where the meaning of *meta ekologi* is located, I would like to suggest that the very abstract, ambiguous, uncertain *visual* and *audio* nature of the Event is itself a response to the Military State linguistic narrative of the rationalization, functionalization and standardization of which the student generation could identify in narratives generated by programs like “The *normalization* of the Life of Campus”.

Meta ekologi is shot in black and white film and the bodies of the chests, heads, faces, hair and limbs of the dancers all assume various hues of the color of mud. The only white color in the film is the brilliant white clothing of a man who smokes a pipe while the others construct the *sawah* before the dance begins. The Dutch colonial officers wore white suits in Java and this dress marks his difference with the dancers. This gesture of the white suit costume, a vision so intensely identified as Dutch in Java, draws on the associations of the Dutch and the asymmetrical power of colonialism. The marker of social difference provides a visual symbol to shape a narrative arc. As the man in the white suit begins the film outside of the mud, remaining white and clean while the others struggle in the mud, in the end, he wades into the mud, swings his arms violently, as possessed by a malevolent spirit, before he, too, as if going into a coffin, is swallowed by the mud. Although this costume visually signifies the colonial relationship, I think that it is possible that this white suited man is not necessarily a visual signifier whose 'true' identity is 'a Dutch Man' or 'an Indonesian Minister' or 'General Suharto', but rather that the story of Mankind and Land is the story of class division, where the many labor in the mud and the few wear suits outside the mud¹¹⁶. It is a general story of 'human ecology' that existed at both international and intranational scales of focus.

After wading into the mud, the dancer's bodies fall, in the shape that a tree falls, not bracing themselves nor breaking their falls, their arms at their sides the entire time. They lie like corpses in the mud before they begin to move. The audio of this entire film is the sounds of crickets and frogs, a recording from another site which is brought to bear on this visual register. The movements of their bodies, alone, then together, struggle, in chains as though in an enforced labor, push then pull, and roll over each other. There is no cessation, no rise or fall to the speed of the movement. People themselves are both the gears and that which is being ground. No strategy of movement changes the conditions; when one man manages to exit the *sawah*, the others throw mud at him and he throws mud back at them. The sounds, which meet this image, are sounds that can be heard at night in the 'original' *sawah* (wet-land rice paddy) or the *hutan* (the untamed forest). That site is far away, mentally, from this simulated *sawah* in this space of the 'center of Jakarta art'.

The dancers climb on each other's backs up a mud-slicked tree trunk. It is a recognizable national symbol; each year on National Independence Day, all over the wet-land agriculture areas of Indonesia, the same ritual is practiced as the celebration of the State of Indonesia. Each year, people go into the mud to play games, such as climbing coconut and palm tree trunks and searching for coins submerged in the mud, which the sovereign ruler has orchestrated for the subjects. The most recognizable amongst these is '*manjat pinang*' (climbing a palm tree trunk), whereby men stand on each other's shoulders in order to reach the top, 'working together', for a chandelier of prizes waiting atop the trunk. In acting together, climbing on each other's backs, they can reach the top of the tree¹¹⁷. But in this version in *meta ekologi*, there is no prize at the top of this tree trunk. It is empty.

One could never say with *finality* the meaning of this dance performance and subsequent film, but its very ambiguity, producing problems it does not resolve, is, I would venture, part of the (absence of) *telos* of the visual practice of Gotot Prakosa. This film produces problems for the audience by raising recognizable audio and visual *topoi* (*sawah*, men in the *sawah*, white suits,

'traditional subjectivity' into modern, rational scientific subjects.

116Pramoedya Ananta Toer's *Bumi Manusia*, which is translated as “This Earth of Mankind” but could also be written in English as “Earth (of/as) Mankind” enters print circulation in 1980.

117I witnessed these celebrations in Central Java, August 17th, 2007.

manjat pinang, the sounds of the 'authentic' *desa*) which are ominously reconfigured but never reach a clear narrative resolution. A prosperous Indonesian society is often visualized with the vision of healthy rice fields¹¹⁸. This film draws on that historical *topos* of the *sawah* in order to collect and produce another recognizable vision of society and one that is not at all healthy and prosperous. Rather than healthy rice fields encircled by majestic volcanoes, the vision is of men who take the visual shape of *kerbau* (water buffalo) and *buaya* (crocodile). As in *Jalur*, the common cultural *topoi* are reconstituted not with a random relationship, but instead to accentuate the problems of the relationships of mankind to itself and to the land.

The image of dancers engaged in a struggle in the staged *sawah* of *TIM* is animated by the audio which, as a cultural *topos*, is from the *sawah* or the *desa* and not the everyday ambient audio of *TIM*. The power of the relationship of sound to image in the film emerges from the cognitive separation of the 'original' *sawah*, as a site far away, spatially, from the city itself. This cultural binary, of separating of the '*desa*' from the '*kota*' in geographical and representational ways, is reproduced in art. D.A. Peransi, surveying the '*konsep bermasyarakat di dalam film Indonesia*' (The concept of social life in Indonesian film), cites *first*, in his conceptual catalog, the construction of the separation of "*Desa vs. Kota*" (The countryside vs the city), as a narrative pattern in Indonesian cinema¹¹⁹. But it is not only that they are separate: film identifies the 'nature' of this difference. In mass-culture movie theater films, the city is often the place of hedonism and sin, Mercedes and night clubs, and the country-side is the source of 'well-mannered' women and supernatural power¹²⁰.

Although the film separates and draws upon the power from the reified social difference of '*desa*' and '*kota*', the identity is not equal and opposite. The reconstitution of the sound of an 'original' *desa* at the site of this urban 'fabricated' *sawah* creates a spatial relationship, a hermeneutic cognitive map, where the power remains in the 'original' *sawah*, despite the struggle of mankind in this city *sawah*. The power of this audio-visual art is that there is not a single definitive reconstituted relationship between the *desa* and the *kota*. By contradicting the socially constructed meanings of *17 Agustus*, *manjat pinang*, and the *sawah*, the audience receives a general notion that mankind and the earth are engaged in a struggle and no solution can be seen or heard. But this narrative outlasts the 14 minute film. Furthermore, it makes the imagination of the 'original' *sawah* as a site to see social health into a farce, for the mud is the arena of human struggle and class division, not tranquility and prosperity. By raising these cultural motifs and relating them in contradictory ways, the film makes cinema a site not where one finds comfort or distraction from the forces of modernization but instead a place where one is made to witness a figuration of the human pain that produced 'modernization'. Both *Jalur* and *meta ekologi* constitute the *pinggiran* by changing the conventional relationships between sound and image. The nature of the contradiction of the two registers is such that both films, without ever using spoken human voice, articulate a critical perspective of society.

118 *Mooie Indie* (The Beautiful Indies) began as a genre of painting in during the Colonial period, where beautiful landscapes of Volcanoes and *sawah* reflected the (imagined) health and prosperity (*sejahtera*) of the Indies.

119 Peransi, D.A. *Peransi & Film*, 144.

120 Ibid

Chapter 3

The Estrangement of Belief in the Animation Films of Gotot Prakosa

This chapter is concerned with the animation films of Gotot Prakosa: *Koen Faya Koen* (1979) and *A...Absolute...Z...Zen...?* (1983). In this chapter, I argue that these films, like the camera films, can be considered to be animated by the *pinggiran* rationality of changing the audio-visual perspective from which the audience produces its thought. But rather than changing the perspective with the contradictory montage of sound to image as the camera films do, these animation films produce a *pinggiran* thought by raising recognizable social narratives, refusing conventional narrative endings, but ending the film without narrative clarity. By refusing to answer all of the questions raised in the film, the structure of these animations push the social questions of the film out into the audience and 'real life' itself. The *pinggiran* impulse of these films is such that they shift the situation of the film as an art that is consumed into one that animates critical thought.

The animation works of Gotot Prakosa, like the camera films, do not use the human linguistic-language. But whereas the expressions of *Jalur* and *meta ekologi* emerged from the repetition of the dissonant horizontal montage (the synchronic relationship of the sound of the *desa* meeting the image of the *desa* in the city, the slow sounds of *kecapi suling* meeting the vision of the hyperspeed bus), I will suggest in this chapter that the power of the expression of the animation films are generally produced by the vertical, diachronic element of film. In particular, I suggest that the absolute final position of the animation produces the element of reversal or contradiction of the narrative that in the camera films was experienced throughout the entire duration of the film in the contradictory relationship of sound to image. Whereas the location of both the power and the ambiguity of the camera films derived from the immediate match of sound to image, the ambiguity of the animation films is determined by the relationship of the final sequence to the entire narrative. The final shock *reverses* the expectations which the narrative had built; this final piece sends a shock back through the series of images provoking a new series of questions about the narrative at the very moment that the film ends. These films do not so much 'conclude' as they die a premature, uncertain death. Without a resolution and with a guided uncertainty, the films push the problems of the narrative out of the form of cinema itself and into the minds of the audience. Both the camera and animation films cultivate techniques to move the practice of the reception of the cinema in such a way that the audience themselves are called out to answer the questions which the cinema raises.

A....Absolute...Z....Zen...?

The 14 minute 1983 animation *A...Absolute...Z...Zen....?* is, ostensibly, a narrativization of a sequence of 19th and 20th century times in Japan, drawn and seen from the perspective of a 1980s Indonesian animator, as a recorder of history. The animation opens with sounds and visions of a 'classic' *pre-modern* Japan: men and women in robes, Buddhist temples in sylvan valleys, paintings of cresting waves, a society of pious Buddhists, flowering trees, all set in a slow montage to spare, slow, string music¹²¹.

The vision of the sitting Buddha appears from the horizon, becoming larger and closer as the sound of gong music tolls. As the next segment begins, the lifeforms of the prior, pastoral, 'premodern' Japan are confronted by men who are all wearing tall black boots and who have red circles on their cheeks and hats. The animation does not give them a human voice, but their mouths are moving and their brows are furrowed. Without guns or depicted corporeal violence, the 'old' forms which populated the first section of the film, appear, each alone in the frame, flickering momentarily, before they are extinguished, passing from the visible to the invisible.

After another intertitle of a Buddha arriving from the horizon, another vision and sound of Japanese society appears. A sallow faced man, with fading red circles on his cheeks, wearing business suit and tie, occupies the entire film image, swinging his arms and legs. He appears as a

121 Tony Prabowo is the musician given credit for the music at the end of the film.

person does when he is running, but in this image the man never moves. He keeps swinging his body, but he remains in the same position in the center of the image. The audio is eerie, dissonant, analog electronic music. Its rhythm produces the syncopated, off-beat feeling of triplets in quarter time; the sound of the machine and the movement of the human body are not synchronized.

While this man swings his arms, trying to run, the image transforms, surreally into beautiful large birds, which transform back into a jogging shaped body. The sound, which accompanies these transformations and heightens the 'surreal' sensibility, are the sounds of a horn player opening and closing his mute while playing a melody line. It produces an unsteady moving sound while the sallow faced man in a business suit is stuck yet he is still 'moving'.

The story is told as a linear history of Japan, as each sequence appears after, in historical time, the prior period. The next period depicts the birth of the modern military machines. Birds, flying in the sky, transform, into airplanes with missiles, guns and bombs. Men with red circles on their cheeks search the entire flat 2-dimensional wartime map of the world, passing over Africa before encircling Indonesia. It is a cue to the Indonesian audience that this story *is* about us, but it is not the story which, at this historical moment, depicts Japanese imperialism in Indonesia. Instead, the linearity of the story is interrupted. After the vision of another cross-legged Buddha arrives from the horizon, the animation (drawn cartoons) is supplanted by a montage of photographs of 'Japanese Buddhist architecture'. The photographs that compose this sequence, of temples from every imaginable angle, gives way to a montage of photographs which capture the architecture of modern industrial Japanese society: highways, power-plants, factories, smoke stacks, apartment buildings. These images are in a similar family to those which *TVRI* glorified.

As the film has already at this point practiced a diachronic, linear, historical narrative, this sequence is positioned for the audience as a historical shift from the social *vision* of Buddhist architecture to the vision of modern industrial architecture. Whereas the aspect ratios of the photographs of the Buddhist temples were composed to balance height and width, the photographs of the modern factories are not compositions as much as they are functional snap-shots which could appear in technical manuals or in modern, commercial architecture firm studios. As the film has already established its shape as a diachronic, historical narrative, the audience believes in this linearity and that the origin of the society of the 'first' architecture is sequentially before the social origin of the latter.

In the final segment, the production of missiles and war airplanes continues to proliferate until it gives way to the visualization of modern industrial commodities. Out of invisibility come commodities which populate life for a certain population in Indonesia in the 1980s. This rapid concluding montage of the saga of Japan as *seen* from the perspective of a 1980 Indonesian Animator, begins another diachronic historical sequence of appearance. The first to appear after the military weapons is the *truk* (truck), *mobil* (car) and *motorcycle* (motorcycle), which precede the flood of audio-visual *communication* machines: first the camera, then the telephone, the television, the film camera, and finally the myriad audio-visual machines which *produced* the very story of *A....Absolute...Z...Zen...?* The position of film in modern society itself is left unresolved, as the rapid montage of audio-visual machines is relieved by a final sleeping Buddha, drawn sleeping with a long chain of "ZZZ" in its thought cloud.

The dramatic social shift which interrupts the historical narrative of the film is the shift in the production of social architecture. The position of architecture, which Schelling called 'frozen music', is a social site that acutely (or definitively) reflects changes not only in social thought, but in social sight¹²². This architectural contrast, which is placed in Japan in the film, came about during the 1980s when, in the social conversations that accompanied film screenings during the traveling film practice of *sinema ngamen* in Java, participants discussed the meaning of the *changes* of architecture in Indonesian society. Writing in 2006 of that earlier period, Gotot wrote that architecture was the '*bahasan utama*', the 'main/central topic' of conversations that included other

122Jameson, *A Singular Modernity*, 173.

social problems, such as ecological and cultural situations. He writes:

Pada intinya film menjadi data otentik untuk membuka persoalan tentang keadaan suatu perkembangan budaya masa itu. Mungkin kasus ekologi, atau kasus kebudayaan itu sendiri, tentang tari dan keadaan rumah adat, artinya arsitekturnya menjadi bahasan utama dalam diskusi setelah pemutaran filmnya¹²³

Essentially, film became authentic data to open the question regarding a certain state of the development of culture at that time. Possibly an ecological situation, or a cultural situation itself, regarding dance and the existence of traditional houses, meaning that architecture itself became the main subject after these film screenings.

The consideration suggests that film could open a conversation regarding the question of where we, as a society of thinking and laboring people, came from and what is the meaning of the change from some prior period of mankind. The images provide, if nothing else, the possibility to suggest a contrast, a grounding of the meaning of Then and Now¹²⁴. I would like to suggest at this time, when *TVRI* celebrated the inaugurations of factories and bridges, the group of *sinema ngamen* reached for another visibility of 'traditional' architecture as 'authentic data' that not all societies in the lands of Indonesia have valorized the factory and the bridge. Architecture is a visual language that make visible other related, ambient, though invisible, social thoughts. The shape of the story is similar to *Jalur* in the sense that the machine prevails past the end of the film, but the detour of the film gives the audience an aural and visual suggestion that society has not always sounded and looked this way.

The film shows the stages and transitions that occurred within the 20th century in Japan, but this narrative bears a similar shape to the path of change in Indonesia, where, as Gotot witnessed in the 1970s in *Tanah Badui*, the 'old' forms of life were materially destroyed under the banner of 'development'. The film is not the tragic story of the violent 20th century Japanese invasion of Indonesia. The tragic 20th century story of modernization and mechanization appear in Japan, but the film also provides a visual statement where Indonesians can see the shift from traditional architecture to the rise of industrial architecture, as these images are in the visual memory of the audience because of *TVRI* and *film Gelora Pembangunan*. These images now have a different position; they do not evince progress, they visualize general social decline. Visualizing this sequence of events in Japan and not in Indonesia prevents the film from being a subversive anti-development statement 'about' Indonesia at the same time that it is a general social statement, which represents the narrative arc, abstractly, with the change in the production of architecture.

Lastly, I would like to suggest that the events that Gotot chooses to represent as the important cairns of the changes in society in the 20th century are such that a modern political sovereignty militarizes, which leads to the rise of industrial age capitalism. The story is positioned in Japan, but it is the story of the metamorphosis of both societies, from producing the symbols of Buddhism, through militarization, to the society of factories and commodities. Militarization is depicted in Japan with a shot where only running black boots can be seen running across the screen for several seconds. But the symbols of boots and the military have an Indonesian meaning that can be seen in this vision of Japan. For this is film is made in 1983 and the state and the military are in union at this time in Indonesia. The narrative of the story is *visualized* in Japan, but it produces geographic and hermeneutic space in Indonesia. At the same time, the film is a story of Japan and one that places the violent years when Japan occupied Indonesia into a longer historical genealogy. The tragic arc of the story is the construction of missiles and the military which extinguished the religious society that preceded it.

Hocus Pocus: The Power of Uncertainty

123Prakosa, Gotot, *Dari Sinema Ngamen*, 12.

124Janet Wolff, *The Aesthetics of Uncertainty*. (New York: Columbia University, 2008), 126.

Koen Faya Koen is a 3 minute 1979 animation film created by Gotot Prakosa. It is created before Gotot travels to the Philippines to study animation with Kidlat Tahimik. Although it is not as epic in scale as *A....Absolute....Z....Zen?* (it is 3 minutes not 14 minutes in length), I would like to suggest that the narrative pattern of both animations are similar in the way that they both place a narrative uncertainty in the absolute final sequence. Neither finales provide definitive conclusions; they instead raise general social questions but abjure conclusive endings, leaving the audience with the satisfaction of the shock but still implicated in finishing the story that the film raised.

The film begins with a large intertitle KOEN FAYA KOEN¹²⁵. A man bellows the recognizable words in a slow, guttural chant, 'Koen, Faya, Koen' and it is one of the only recognizable human language utterances in all of Gotot's films of this period. These Arabic language words appear in al-Quran several times when Allah creates the world and it means, approximately, "Be, and it is so"¹²⁶. Gotot also said that the term was used by Jakarta street magicians as a 'hocus pocus'-like phrase to call attention to the creative act of power and magic¹²⁷.

The film begins with slow, echoing electronic music which sounds like the sound we associate with deep-space. From the nothingness comes the first globule of life. As it continues reshaping itself with the 'space' music, a God-like figure appears with a wand in his hand and conducts the life matter into mankind. From the dividing globule emerges two human figures. Their skin is white, their bodies are nude. One has long blonde hair and the other short brown hair, but their backs are facing the audience and they are looking at a tree. There is no linguistic speech but these visual symbols converge so that the scene is a recognizable creation story.

But this God, while watching his Garden, transmogrifies, *magically*, into a demon. The Demon brings a golden horn to his mouth and the music changes from God's echoing space music to a fast-paced, dark techno-electronic music. The cartoon slows to shows God's face as he sees what has happened to his Garden that now appears more like a nightclub. His hand goes to his forehead, his mouth opens so wide as to compose most of the 16mm slide shot, his tongue flails and an audio voice emits a slow, shrill, shriek. The montage cuts to the demon who emits a wicked guffaw. The couple then appears, the audience still only able to see their backs, walking quickly, almost dancing to another genre of electronic music which is now closer to the house-techno subgenre¹²⁸.

Although the spirit of the film emerges from the Jakarta Street magician's interpretation of "Koen Faya Koen", as the film takes pleasure in seeing God lose power to the Demon, the name of the film "Koen Faya Koen" situates the audience with the impression that this is the garden of creation and therefore this is a man and woman. The final shot of the narrative begins as a closeup of the couple holding hands, looking into each other's eyes as if they are at a wedding altar. At this moment, we see that it is not a long haired woman and man but a long haired man (with a goatee to boot) clasping the hands of the short haired man, looking into each other, naked, in the garden. The zoom then reverses and their full naked bodies, both with penises, confirm the twist of the film.

The determinacy of the sexual meaning of this finale notwithstanding, the ending can be understood as taking pleasure in the power of surprise and reversal. The animator can tell the story of the garden of creation, subvert it, but still abstain from providing consequences for a story that reverses general social beliefs. I would like to suggest that the consequence of this ending for the audience is to practice *thinking* the reversal of belief; the conclusion of two men in the Garden seems to be less a 'truth-claim' or an acrimonious attack on Islam as much as the general dismissal of the attempts to erode the mystery of life in government programs such as *Keluarga Berencana*

125The spelling of 'Koen' is with the old Dutch spelling and not the 1979 contemporary Indonesian spelling 'kun'.

126"Short Films and Animation Works by Gotot Prakosa". The exception to the language-less works is *Wahyu and his Works* (1987), which Gotot reads his speculative, poetic thoughts in English, in a more 'classic' essay film fashion voice-over, throughout the 20 minute video.

127Ibid.

128Kembrew Mcleod, "Genres, Subgenres and Sub-subgenres and More: Musical and Social Differentiation within Electronic/Dance Music Communities" in *Journal of Popular Music Studies* 13 (2001): 59-75.

(Family Planning) and *Revolusi Hijau* (The Green Revolution). Gotot's other 1979 animation *A Film About Family Planning* also provided a twist on the story of sexual normativity; that film resolves with penises wrapped around each other after the female symbols have blocked their approaches. Rather than suggest a pedagogy of sexuality about sexuality to either of these forms, the male-to-male resolutions of both films *reverse* the expectations of the *social* narrative of the garden of creation and State family planning; each therefore highlights and subverts social narratives not to reinscribe another truth but, I will suggest, to take pleasure in the method of canceling a narrative and allowing the audience to reflect on the multiple possible meanings that emerge from the thought that the garden contains two men. The film produces a space of *imagination*, a space to think that social ideology is underpinned by myth and that one can produce another structure of myth in animation.

These two animations do not end in the sense of a conclusion as much as they die an early death. The conclusion of the story waits for the audience to produce the ending. These last moments divert the confirmation of the simple renewal of the social contract with which they opened themselves. This essay earlier underscored the passages in the writings of Gotot Prakosa regarding the cinema practice of *sinema ngamen* in order to situate that these films were not sent away through commercial infrastructure to a separated audience. Instead they were brought to the moment of visual reception, in order to produce a space as a *preface* for a conversation about social situations. The work itself begins the process of interior hermeneutic reflection. The problem of the ending of the work troubled Bertold Brecht as well; he appended an epilogue to *The Good Woman of Setzuan* after hearing that the audience was so troubled by the inconclusiveness of the play:

You're thinking, aren't you, that this is no right
Conclusion to the play you've seen tonight?
After a tale, exotic, fabulous,
A nasty ending was slipped up on us.
We feel deflated too. We too are nettled
To see the curtain down and nothing settled.
How could a better ending be arranged?
Could one change people? Can the world be changed?
Would new gods do the trick? Will atheism?
Moral rearmament? Materialism?
It is for you to find a way, my friends,
To help good men arrive at happy ends.
You write the happy ending to the play!
There must, there must, there's got to be a way!¹²⁹

Both *Koen Faya Koen* and *A....Absolute...Z....Zen...?* claim a strange or unconventional ending to a recognizable social narrative. In the latter, the prehistory of Japanese audio-visual machines in Indonesia is given with the rise of the Japanese war state and in the former, the story of the Garden of creation is populated by two men. The reversals at the end of these *short* films demystify the hierarchy between the cinema and 'the real world'; the films are concerned to prepare a space for the audience to see into themselves and 'the real world' with this *arc* of reversing expectations, and estranging commonly held beliefs.

This method of confronting and destabilizing the beliefs and thoughts of the audience with drama and cinema by forcing the audience to *think* of a solution to the unresolved dilemma, is raised in both the drama and theoretical works of Bertold Brecht. He named this dramatic technique the *verfremdungseffekt*, the alienation/estrangement/distantiation effect¹³⁰. Brecht is an unabashed ideologue of the 'V-effekt'; the dramaturge must build this practice if drama is to break from its complicity with bourgeois ideology. As the epilogue to *The Good Woman of Setzuan* suggested, the

¹²⁹Bertold Brecht tr. E Bentley *The Good Woman of Setzuan*. (New York: Grove Press, 1966), 141.

¹³⁰Jameson *Brecht and Method* (London: Verso, 1998), 85. Jameson prefers 'estrangement' as 'alienation' in German Marxism is *entfremdung*.

production of drama is the first position of this thought, but it cannot, in itself, rebuild the world. The audience and their norms build the world.

I have suggested in this essay that the cinema-practice of Gotot Prakosa positions film as the opening to an audience to question their personal and social norms and values. Similarly, I suggested that the coincidence of the separation and reconstitution of sound and image in the camera films of Gotot Prakosa and Bertold Brecht does not emerge from an assiduous study of Brecht, as a 'subject to be known'. Instead, I suggested that their similar vision of drama and cinema are each organic reactions against the position of drama and the movie theater in their societies as the site where citizens ritually renew their normativity, as consuming messages without a 'final' challenge to their ideological framework. With much the same mechanics, I would like to conclude by suggesting that the Gotot's method of 'estrangement', which prepares audiences to respond to this narrative challenge, emerged in a similar organic way as it did for Brecht, as a counter-practice to the comforts of melodrama and long form cinema, which are distractions and entertainment and not sites of a radical pedagogical encounter. The important difference to underscore is that the radical cinema-practice of Gotot and his collaborators (*sinema ngamen*) sought to prepare an audience for the feeling of democracy. I will repeat a passage which was raised in the first chapter in order to underscore that although both Brecht and Gotot practiced the method of estrangement, the structures that brought this practice into being are each culturally specific and separate. Gotot writes:

Film, secara sederhana, sebetulnya hanyalah susunan gambar yang ada dalam seluloid, kemudian diputar dengan mempergunakan teknologi proyektor, yang sebetulnya telah menawarkan nafas demokrasi, bisa ditafsirkan dalam berbagai makna¹³¹.

Film, with a simple method, actually it is only a composition of images on celluloid, when it is shown with a projector, is actually offers a breath of democracy, it can be interpreted in a variety of meanings.

It is in the conditions of always already existent military authoritarianism of the 1970s and 1980s Indonesia, and not rising European Fascism, that Gotot Prakosa develops these practices. The difference in these conditions are underscored so that it is clear that *sinema ngamen* is a part of a larger art society in Indonesia in this period that sought to produce works, where the familiar became strange, and which contested the ideology of rationalization. The theory of the production of *sinema ngamen*, *never ending story*, *rush copy cinema*, the names that Gotot Prakosa and his collaborators gave to their cinema practice is that the production of the cinema is the first step that prepares the second step, the *masa putarnya* (the moment of cinema reception) which produces the space where the audience thinks. This is carried out in the camera films by the separation of the elements and in the animation films by the estrangement-effect. But the goal of the entire mode of production is to change the visual perspectives created by audio-visual media. By changing this perspective, towards the *pinggiran*, Gotot sought to produce a cinema that could educe democratic feelings, which did not exist in the circumstances of watching television nor in going to the movie theater in Indonesia in the 1980s, for that 'audio-visual labor' sought to prepare the space of the 'developing' (and quiescent) society.

In the first chapter of this essay, I included a passage where Gotot explained that the freedom and power of creating 'abstract animation film' (*film animasi abstrak*) lay in the unique relationship between the visual and audio animators. Together, they are able to produce with their art, a visual rhythm for the audience¹³². He writes in another passage '*Timing* bagi animasi adalah 'roh' yang harus dikenal dan dipahami buat para pembuat film'¹³³ *Timing* for animation is the 'spirit' that has to be recognized and understood by film-makers. In another "Fantasi, fantasi, dan fantasi.

131Prakosa, *Film Pinggiran*, 22.

132Prakosa, *Animasi*, 124.

133Prakosa, *Animasi*, 266.

Itulah prinsip dasar yang harus dipegang untuk pembuatan film animasi”¹³⁴ Fantasy, fantasy and fantasy. That is the basic principle that has to be grasped for making animation films.

I would like to conclude by suggesting that the *Bahasa Indonesia* phrases '*film animasi abstrak*', the power of animation timing as a 'spirit' (*roh*), and the principle of '*fantasi*', do not refer only to the production of abstract aesthetic *representational* spaces. They also signal the relationship film has to the inner planes of thought in the audience. Films can educe different types of thoughts. Gotot Prakosa, in the conditions of the 1970s and 1980s in Indonesia, sought to produce film with several different techniques that all sought to produce a space for critical reflection. In order to do so, several oblique film-making techniques were used. The continuity that connects all of these films is that *film pinggiran* produced new social space, space in which questions received uncertain answers. The *pinggiran* does not necessarily 'push the boundary' further away from the center, it instead makes the edge a real place, in the mind.

¹³⁴Prakosa, *Animasi*, 98.

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