



The Murderer, The Killjoy:

An Exploration of Art, Affect, and the Patriarchal Wound through Mouly Surya's 'Marlina The Murderer in Four Acts' (2017)

Utrecht University | MA Arts & Society

Selena Fatima Sierissa Soemakno | 7031920

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First Reader: Dr. Edward Hubbard

Second Reader: Dr. Evelyn Wan

**Trigger Warning: This thesis deals with themes of s*xual violence, abuse, and deep emotions.
Words are censored for the protection of readers, as well as participants.**

Foreword

To the women, womxn, androgynous gals, gays, queers, non-binary people, trans queens, neurodivergent visionaries, artists and writers of colour, witches, lightworkers, ancestral healers, fluid creatures, divine beings in pursuit of knowledge, thank you for all that you have taught me. Thank you for raising me. To Akin, a true educator and caretaker of students' minds, thank you for all your guidance. To my sisters, Guen and Icha, you are the reason why I fight the causes I fight for. To my mother and grandmother, Mama Margie and Oma Peggy, thank you for carrying families on your backs. To Rose Bush, my chosen family, thank you for celebrating existence with me. *ON* by BTS. *Three Women* by Lisa Taddeo. *Dreams of Gaia Tarot Deck* by Ravynne Phelan. *Untamed* by Glennon Doyle. *Girl, Woman, Other* by Bernardine Evaristo. *The Master's Tools will Never Dismantle the Master's House* by Audre Lorde. And finally, to Mona. May we do more than just survive—may we thrive.

This may have been one of the hardest processes I have had to go through. Written in the midst of a pandemic, of a family move, of a second spiritual awakening, and while the media constantly showed pieces of pain and hurt that were circulating all over the world. It was difficult to read books, watch movies, listen to music, or keep up with the news because all of my energy was spent on unblocking these affects that my trauma body tried to internalise. But I did it. Here we are now. The fear of not conveying everything properly or enough debilitated me for a very long time until I realised that I needed to deconstruct what 'proper' meant, and why it was a cage I needed to step out. To the zombies of the institution, may we all resurrect our bodies and move forward to resurrect the bodies of our loved ones too.

With Love

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Introduction

“Why am I compelled to write? Because I have no choice. Because I must keep the spirit of my revolt and myself alive. Because the world I create in the writing compensates for what the real world does not give me. By writing I put order in the world, give it a handle so I can grasp it. I write because life does not appease my appetites and hunger. I write to record what others erase when I speak, to rewrite the stories others have miswritten about me, about you. To become more intimate with myself and you. To discover myself, to preserve myself, to make myself, to achieve self-autonomy. To dispel the myths that I am a mad prophet or a poor suffering soul. [...] And I will write about the unmentionables, never mind the outraged gasp of the censor and the audience.” (Anzaldúa 187¹)

As an Indonesian woman, my patriarchal wounds have been ever-present throughout my life, growing up in areas surrounding Tangerang and Jakarta in Indonesia, and raised in a multicultural Muslim-Javanese family. Violence—implicit and explicit, verbal and physical, direct and indirect—is something I am all too familiar with as a person with a feminine body in the sociocultural spaces I inhabit. Every person in my life who identifies with living under the Indonesian patriarchy either has their own story or has a loved one in their life who has survived violent patriarchal wounding, in one form or another. As Katherine McGregor and Hannah Loney writes in “Gendered violence in the making of modern Indonesia²,” from the Dutch colonial period, the Japanese occupation in the early 1940’s, the Indonesian National Revolution starting in 1945, the mass violence of the mid 1960s, the occupation of East Timor starting in 1975, and the May 1998 violence, “waves of violence against minority groups, the degrees of inclusion or exclusion of persons by the nation-state—but also by local communities and families—had had direct bearings upon patterns of violence,” (McGregor

¹ Anzaldúa, Gloria E. “Speaking in Tongues: Third World Woman Writer.” *This Bridge Called My Back*. Persephone Press, 1981.

² McGregor, Katharine and Hannah Loney. “Gendered violence in the making of modern Indonesia.” *Gender, Violence, and Power in Indonesia: Across Time and Space*. Routledge, 2020.

and Loney 1) and has only been further accentuated by structural inequalities based off of economic stature, sexuality, gender, the law, geographic location, social status, religion, ability, the body, and other markers of identity.

In the wake of mainstream feminism in a post-#MeToo society and the first ever Women's March in Indonesia taking place in 2017, gender-based violence has begun to gain traction amongst news outlets, the media, and scholars—s*xual violence being at the forefront of local discussions regarding the patriarchy. According to a CNN Indonesia article titled “Komnas Perempuan Pushes Bill on the Elimination of S*xual Violence” by Yohannie Linggasari³, this movement was underlined by the Elimination of S*xual Violence Bill (RUU-PKS⁴) drafted and supported by the National Commission on Violence Against Women or Komnas Perempuan⁵ and the Service Provider Forum, pushed to be included in the 2015-2019 Supplementary National Legislation List. In a fifteen-year-long research Komnas Perempuan conducted, there are at least fifteen types of s*xual violence experienced by survivors—mostly women and children—in Indonesia, however only p*netrative cases of r*pe are recognized and regulated in the current legal system (Tashandra)⁶. RUU-PKS urgently highlights other forms of violence that need to be regulated, such as s*xual harassment, s*xual exploitation, s*xual torture (Linggasari), threats, attempted r*pe, forced marriage, forced pregnancy, forced ab*rtion, forced contraception or sterilization, s*xual control including discriminatory rules for morality and religion, as well as provisions regarding recovery for victims of s*xual violence to ensure survivors' accessibility (Tashandra). At the time of conducting this research, as of June 2021, the bill still has yet to be passed. In a written statement, Presidential Chief of Staff, Moeldoko, stated that “sexual

³ Linggasari, Yohanni. “Komnas Perempuan Dorong RUU Penghapusan Kekerasan Seksual.” *CNN Indonesia*. 8 November 2015

⁴ *Rancangan Undang-Undang Penghapusan Kekerasan S*ksual*

⁵ *Komisi Nasional Anti Kekerasan terhadap Perempuan*

⁶ Tashandra, Nabilla. “Komnas Perempuan: 13 Kekerasan Seksual Belum Diatur dalam UU.” *Kompas*. 07 September 2015.

violence cases keep rising and there are more complex forms of violence. This law [needs to be passed urgently],” while opening the meeting of the acceleration task force for the law issuance in Bina Graha Building, Jakarta on June 22nd 2021(Muthiariny and Afifa)⁷.

Although pressing patriarchal issues are slowly being uncovered in Indonesian society, much of it remains within the limitations of a cisgendered-heteronormative setting between men and women, and is often defined by direct violence, mostly due to the lack of legitimization of s*xual violence in the eyes of the nation-state, as previously described. Hence, I deliberately chose to use the term ‘patriarchal wound’ instead of ‘s*xual violence’ or ‘gender-based violence’, not because these terms are not apt for describing what Marlina or the participants of my research have experienced, but because I would like to expand what it means to be a survivor or to identify with living under patriarchal oppression. When searching for participants, I wrote to my fellow Indonesian women, girls, femmes, and those who identify with living under the danger of the male gaze and patriarchy. In my call to my community, I intended to reach all those beyond the hegemonic power; those who identify as feminine, those who exist in fluidity, those who are Othered, and those who are considered effeminate in the context of Indonesian patriarchy.

Moreover, the term ‘patriarchal wound’ immediately positions resulting social issues within an affective context by focusing on what it leaves survivors with, rather than focusing on the violence itself. The term ‘wound’ borrows from holistic spirituality and contemporary trauma-informed psychology (ex: “the father wound” or “the mother wound”) to describe something that exists simultaneously on an individual and collective level; something we all carry, yet do so in our own individual ways. Although it is a term I have adopted myself, scholars and researchers have already exemplified the term in the blogosphere. For instance, Dr. Ann Filemyr defines the patriarchal wound as “ancestral suffering and intergenerational

⁷ Muthiariny, Dewi Elvia and Laila Afifa. “Govt Urges House to Pass Sexual Violence Eradication Bill Soon.” *Tempo*. 22 June 2021.

trauma caused by the power imbalance between genders.”⁸ The patriarchy is perpetrated through all aspects of society; religious ideologies, colonialism, neo-colonialism, the media, legal and economic systems, cultural norms, family patterns, and of course, art. The ‘wound’ is also familiar terminology in affect theory, which will be further explained in the next chapter. According to “The Contingency of Pain” by Sara Ahmed⁹, an over-investment, or a fetishization, of the wound is problematic because “the transformation of the wound into an identity cuts the wound off from a history of ‘getting hurt’ or injured, [turning] the wound into something that simply ‘is’ rather than something that has happened in time and space.” (Ahmed 32) Instead of sensationalising stories of pain participants have entrusted me with, I would like to move away from the spectacle of survivor’s stories as are often portrayed in the media, especially in films. The wound in my research, therefore, emphasizes my intention to firstly socially contextualise affects, and secondly move beyond a systemic analysis of gender relations in Indonesia by way of leaning into the individual affective attachments of these social contexts.

The first time I reflected on my own patriarchal wounds through artistic and cultural theory was when I first watched *Marlina The Murderer in Four Acts*¹⁰ (2017), Mouly Surya’s third directorial debut. In the depths of my own homesickness as an Indonesian Bachelor’s student in the Netherlands, I discovered a local art house cinema that hosted an ‘IndoFilmCafé’, a small event where films about or from Indonesia were screened once a month. Cold and missing home, I braved my own social anxiety and went to see the first film they were showing, not knowing much else other than that its title; ‘Marlina The Murderer in Four Acts’. There were perhaps six other people in the theatre, all of whom were elderly couples, most of them ‘Indo’¹¹. Yet, even then, I felt more at ease than I had ever felt in a

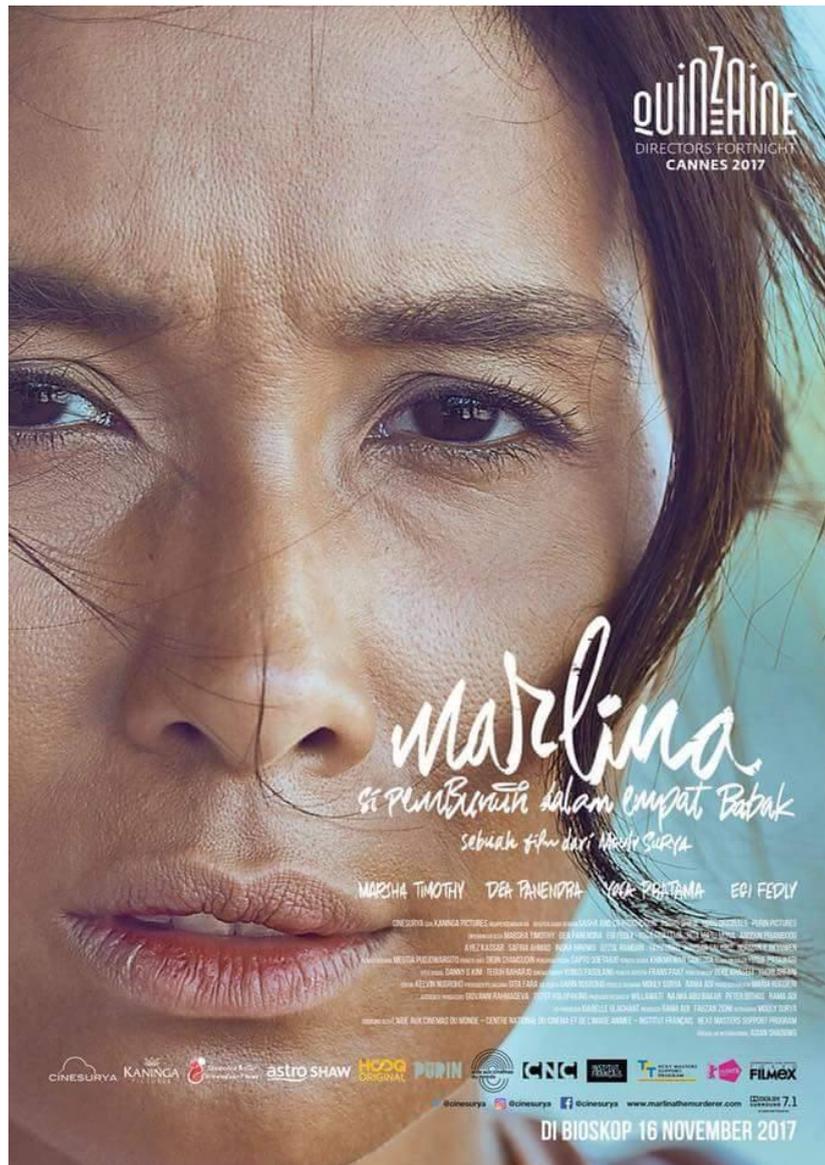
⁸ Filemyr, Ann. “Healing the Patriarchal Wound.” *Southwestern College & New Earth Institute*.

⁹ Ahmed, Sara. “Contingency of Pain.” *Politics of Emotion*. Routledge, 2013.

¹⁰ *Marlina Si Pembunuh Dalam Empat Babak*

¹¹Multiracial diasporic Indonesians living in the Netherlands

Dutch cinema, watching an Indonesian film spoken in a dialect I did not understand, translating subtitles with my lacking Dutch abilities, and being in a room with people who shared a history with me, despite most likely growing up very differently than I had. I had always been very comfortable with open displays of emotional responses at the cinema. To me, watching a film at the theatre is a way of feeling communally. Despite growing up in a culture that often prefers to avoid open discussions of emotions, watching films has always been a way for us to laugh, cry, and be transported by art together. Watching *Marlina The Murderer in Four Acts* with fellow Indonesians did not only feel like a momentary bridge to return home, it also gave me a bridge to a new space I had never had access to before; a space where I could explore the unspeakable. With these strangers, I trembled with rage, cried in anguish, and released a heavy sigh. My chest was heavy with knowing, but my shoulders were light with the relief of being seen. Walking out of the theatre, I knew I would deeply contemplate the emotional journey I had gone through with these people for the years to come.



(Figure 1)

Marlina The Murderer in Four Acts (*Marlina Si Pembunuh Dalam Empat Babak*) is a 2017 Indonesian film directed by Mouly Surya and written by Rama Adi and Surya herself. Starring Marsha Timothy as Marlina, it is based on a one-page screenplay by Garin Nugroho, one of the most revered Indonesian film directors to date. Following Marlina's journey through four acts (*The Robbery*, *The Journey*, *The Confession*, and *The Birth*¹²) after being assaulted and robbed in her own home, she murders her attackers and carries the head of her r*apist across the island of Sumba to seek justice, creating bonds with the women she meets in

¹² See Appendix 1 for diegetic synopsis

the process. According to Putu Agung Nara Indra Prima Satya¹³, Nugroho was inspired by his stay in Sumba, especially the region's unique traditions, terrains, and strong patriarchal values—as well as the experience of seeing a person carry a human head and bring it to the police station while directing his films in the nineties, but decided to give the story to Surya to expand from her perspective as a woman (Satya 227). The film gained international acclaim after becoming the fourth Indonesian film in history to make the official selection of Cannes Film Festival, as well as being featured at the Toronto International Film Festival, AFI Fest, and Golden Horse Film Festival. Maggie Lee's review of the film featured on *Variety* in particular praised Surya for pioneering a new genre; the 'flamingly feminist' Satya Western.¹⁴ A co-production between Indonesia, France, Malaysia and Thailand, "at once tightly controlled and simmering with righteous fury, [the film is] gorgeously lensed, atmospherically scored and moves inexorably toward a gratifying payoff," reviews Lee. Since then, the film has also been shown in international theatres, including Germany, the Netherlands, Italy, Japan, the United States, and Malaysia.

Watching *Marlina The Murderer in Four Acts* for the first time felt doubly urgent as an Indonesian feminist who felt faraway from home. As an audience member, I found the violence Marlina undergoes achingly familiar. It is a bleak reality that underpins our daily experiences, a ghost that has been erased from sight, yet will always be felt. According to "93 Percent Survivors Stay Silent About Their R*pes: Online Survey" by Devi Asmarani, after the group-r*pe and murder of a schoolgirl incited public outrage and the beginning of the social media movement, #MulaiBicara (#TalkAboutIt), Change.org facilitated an online survey. Conducted by Magdalene Indonesia, an Indonesian feminist magazine, and Lentera Sintas Indonesia, an organization that provides recovery for s*xual abuse survivors, the survey revealed that "ninety-three percent of r*pe survivors never reported their cases to the

¹³ Satya, Putu Agung Nara Indra. "Tiga Babak Kekerasan dalam Marlina Si Pembunuh dalam Empat Babak." *Jurnal Inada*. Vol.1, No.2, December 2018, p. 222-229.

¹⁴ Lee, Maggie. "Film Review: 'Marlina the Murderer in Four Acts.'" *Variety*. 26 May 2017.

authorities, [...] the six percent who did ended up seeing their attackers walk free, [and] only one percent of the survivors who pursued legal action saw their cases resolved.” (Asmarani)¹⁵. The evidence is prevalent, and is amplified by our own viral social media movements in recent years. Viral campaigns¹⁶ such as #KitaAgni (We Are Agni) was started in solidarity with an anonymous student at Gajah Mada University whose s*xual abuse was silenced by the institution in favour of the university’s prestige, #SayaJuga (Me Too) was started by Indonesian Activist, Tuna Pawestri, as a local equivalent of the #MeToo movement, #TolakEksekusiBuNuril (Reject the Execution of Ms. Nuril) was started in solidarity with a teacher from Mataram who was criminalised and imprisoned on the bases of defamation after publicly outing her r*pist, and #SahkanRUUPKS was an online petition and viral movement that pushed for the Draft Law on the Elimination of S*xual Violence (Sheany). Aside from finding an outlet on social media, there have been numerous studies done in recent years as these violations gain traction amongst Indonesians. Komnas Perempuan’s (National Commission for the Elimination of Violence Against Women) annual report, for instance, revealed how a steady increase of 408,178 cases of violence against women had been reported throughout 2018 alone.

The urgency of this issue on a societal level, as well as the exploitation and abuse patriarchal subjects live through in all aspects of everyday life, demonstrates not only the relevance, but also the importance of *Marlina The Murderer in Four Acts* as a case study of art representing reality. As Marlina discovers that the institutions of power in her society will not avenge her, her Indonesian audiences are similarly unable to claim the justice they so deserve. When the systems of our nation and its institutions fail to protect us, how do we

¹⁵ Asmarani, Devi. “93 Percent Survivors Stay Silent About Their Rapes: Online Survey.” *Magadelenne*. 21 July 2016.

¹⁶ Sheany. “The fight against sexual violence in Indonesia.” *Sheanyyas*. 7 May 2019.

heal? As a fellow Indonesian woman living with patriarchal wounds, I aim to support Indonesian filmmakers telling the stories of people that are too often untold. By using this film as a case study, I would like to reflexively use my own culture's tools, that being local art and communal sharing, rather than the impersonal, rationalized methods of Western academia, which I will explain further in later chapters. With the participants, I intend to build knowledge through love, appreciation, and emotion for those in my community.

Positioning myself not only as an audience member of the film as a starting point, but specifically as an Indonesian woman who understands the complexity of the violence Marlina experienced, I am interested in how witnessing a character's relatable journey can elicit intense emotional reactions within us. In this era of fast paced information technology, exacerbating social unrest, and the perpetual capitalist tendencies of the art world, my research proposes an almost 'back-to-basics' approach. That is, going back to the 'heart' of art. How can art, with the current demands of society, go beyond representation, aesthetics, or institutional analyses? Analysing art through the lens of feelings, embodied emotions, and self-expression is certainly not a newfound convention, yet it is equal parts rare and urgent. In an institutionalised environment, survivors' stories and experiences often no longer belong to the survivors themselves. They are taken by the state, news outlets, politicians, researchers, and social movements as a grounds for argument and championing. All the while, the art world continues their endeavour in keeping pace with the demands of widespread social justice activists.

Although what many others have done has been extremely crucial in the fight against the patriarchy, I would like to use my thesis as a way of creating space that is a result of this appropriation—a reaction that does not ignore its context, but is as removed from the shackles of institutional or societal judgements of 'right' and 'wrong' as possible. While keeping in mind underrepresented voices from often overlooked communities, my thesis will

explore the affectivity of art as a tool to explore the tumultuous emotions and experiences of Indonesian survivors of Patriarchal Wounds through experimental ethnography, whilst using a local feminist film as a case study. Furthermore, my positionality as a member of the community the film represents allows me to conduct ethnographic research amongst my own peers with as much nuance as I can muster. This research precisely tackles the heart of how the arts, and the societies in which artworks are set, are connected. In my research, I am investigating and arguing for an affective approach, which foregrounds specific bodies that are often silenced, emotions that are seen as irrational, and whilst using tools that challenge Western academic tradition. Thus, my research question arises, “How does an Indonesian film such as *Marlina The Murderer in Four Acts* dir. Mouly Surya, through its tackling of Patriarchal Wounds in its society, invoke affective responses amongst its audience?”

In addition, my sub-questions include:

- What are affects and how does one experience them?
- How are the narratives in the film shaped by the emotions that arise due to patriarchal wounds?
- How do patriarchal subjects in my Indonesian community respond to the film?
- How does art, through the film, invoke affect amongst its audience?
- What is the affective quality that is embodied in the aesthetic system of the chosen scenes from the film?
- How do the participants’ affective responses differ from each other despite coming from similar or connected communities?

Before delving into the first chapter, I recommend reading the first appendix, which is a diegetic synopsis, in which I relay a full overview of the plot, characters, as well as important affective points in Marlina’s journey. In the first chapter of this thesis, “Knowing Feeling,” I delve into critical affect theory, as well as the particular scholars my analysis

borrowed from and builds upon. Furthermore, the second chapter, “‘Writing into the Wound’ with My Community,” is a theoretical and methodological exploration of my ethnographic research, as well as my analysis in the fourth chapter. Using an amalgamation of Arts-Based Engaged ethnography and Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis, I explain why these two methods are the best vehicles with which I can conduct my research. The fourth chapter is an analysis of four scenes from the film, chosen based on my ethnographic findings. Through interviews and affect logs I conducted with participants, I will deconstruct their affective responses and contextualize their emotions in Indonesian society. Finally, in my conclusion, I will reflect upon my findings, as well as the entire process of this research.

Chapter 1: Knowing Feeling

How does one rationalize a people's livelihood? I suppose, the same way a government politicizes our bodies; the same way art creates a narrative of a wound that has existed for centuries; the same way people live on in spite of what they have lived through. How does the erasure of the so-called 'Third World' body occur, even as feminist theory permeates the posthumanist art world? How does the Third World Woman student reconcile between the clear boundaries academia has created around subject and researcher, emotion and fact, art and society? As Gloria E. Anzaldúa writes in "Speaking in Tongues: A Letter to Third World Woman Writers,"

"For the Third World woman, who has, at best, one foot in the feminist literary world, the temptation is great to adopt the current feeling-fads and theory fads, the latest half truths in political thought, the half-digested new age psychological axioms that are preached by the white feminist establishment. Its followers are notorious for "adopting" women of color as their "cause" while still expecting us to adapt to *their* expectations and *their* language." (Anzaldúa 186)

As a fellow Third World woman learning from and researching within the frameworks of Western academia, I am concerned with all of the issues Anzaldúa raises in the passage above. In my analysis, I foreground Sara Ahmed's feminist interpretation of affect, specifically its socialization, as explicated in *The Politics of Emotion*¹⁷. I argue that affect theory is an apt theoretical framework to use for this research due to its critical nature and feminist reflection on knowledge production. Fundamentally, Ahmed views affect as attached to individual and collective bodies, which "take the shape of the very contact they have with objects and others, [thus] attributing 'others' as the 'source' of our feelings." (Ahmed 1)

Aligning with the context of this research, bodies that carry patriarchal wounds are, therefore,

¹⁷Ahmed, Sara. *Politics of Emotion*. Routledge, 2013.

what Ahmed refers to as ‘feminised’ bodies. Vulnerability, openness, and softness towards displays of emotions have been historically Othered in the Western (academic) framework. Under the patriarchal gaze, “‘emotion’ has been viewed as ‘beneath’ the faculties of thought and reason. To be emotional is to have one’s judgement affected: it is to be reactive rather than active, dependent rather than autonomous. Feminist philosophers have shown us how the subordination of emotions also works to subordinate the feminine and the body.” (Ahmed 3)

As I am researching my own community, a community that has been structurally erased under the Western, colonial, imperialist, and patriarchal gaze, foregrounding that which is considered effeminate and non-active is a reflexive act of questioning the power structures in academia.

1. 2 Affect Theory

Critical affect theory has been expanded upon by numerous scholars after being popularised by Brian Massumi’s “The Autonomy of Affect¹⁸,” published in 1995, and Eve Sedgwick’s *Touching Feeling*¹⁹, published in 2002. Since then, Clare Hemmings has dissected these two seminal texts in “Invoking Affect: Cultural theory and the ontological turn²⁰.” In this critique, Hemmings views affect as a transferable state of being, as opposed to interpretations of emotions, that enable drives to be satisfied and ties us to the world (Hemmings 551). Similar to Ahmed’s argument for affect as a socialised sensation, Hemmings explains how affect places “the individual in a circuit of feeling and response, rather than opposition to others.” (Hemmings 552) Ahmed expands on this by specifically discussing how this feeling is embodied, theorising that “‘being emotional’ comes to be seen as a characteristic of some bodies and not others [because] emotions operate to ‘make’ and ‘shape’ bodies as forms of

¹⁸ Massumi, Brian. “The Autonomy of Affect.” *The Politics of Systems and Environments, Part II*, No. 31. Minnesota UP, 1995.

¹⁹ Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky. *Touching Feeling*. Duke UP, 2002.

²⁰ Hemmings, Clare. “Invoking Affect: Cultural theory and the ontological turn.” *Cultural Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 5. Routledge, 2005.

action, which also involve orientations towards others.” (Ahmed 4) In the case of my research, certain bodies are attributed affects invoked by patriarchal wounds due to the body’s relation to its subjectification under structural oppression.

In turn, this attribution is a process whereby emotions circulate between bodies, either ‘sticking’ to them or continuously moving.

“If the object of feeling both shapes and is shaped by emotions, then the object of feeling is never simply before the subject. How the object impresses (upon) us may depend on histories that remain alive insofar as they have already left their impressions. The object may stand in for other objects, or may be proximate to other objects. Feelings may stick to some objects, and slide over others.” (Ahmed 8)

Building upon Sarah Ahmed’s feminist contextualisation of affect theory, I recognise affect as movement. Emotions move, and art moves us. Art holds us in place and creates a dwelling place through which affects are invoked from within us and move through us. The invoking of these affects occurs through what Ahmed calls ‘attachment’. This attachment connects bodies to affects, as well as bodies to other bodies, especially those in close proximity with each other (Ahmed 11). Attachment is what causes certain bodies to ‘stick’ to certain affects more so than others. This ‘stickiness’, or closeness, refers to the sociality of bodies, which enables a process whereby being emotional becomes a characteristic of some bodies and not others (Ahmed 4), depending on the social context bodies are placed in. According to Hemmings, in a myriad of ways, “affect manifests precisely not as difference, but as a central mechanism of social reproduction in the most glaring ways.” (551) In other words, affect is not only symptomatic of power structures in society, but the emotional labour of internalising, reflecting on, and externalising affects reproduces these very systems. This process is built upon hierarchies, privilege, traditions, and class systems that create fragmented experiences amidst communities and individuals. Applying this to my research, I

am interested in targeting these embodied experiences of affect and how they move through each participant respectively. Furthermore, unpacking the social context of these affects through communal storytelling and creative reflection will be the heart of my ethnographic research.

It is also imperative to note Ahmed's criticism towards the psychologised cognitive model of emotion as interiority. The psychological model dictates that we have feelings and they are ours, therefore they belong to us internally. If one were to express their feelings, then they would 'give' these feelings to whomever witnesses this externalization. This witnessing could then build feelings of community or alienation, depending on whether or not these affects are shared. Ahmed critiques this 'inside out' model of internal feelings moving outwards. Instead, Ahmed offers a model of 'sociality of emotion'. In this new model, "emotions are not simply something 'I' or 'we' have. Rather, it is through emotions, or how we respond to objects, [texts], and others, that surfaces or boundaries are made: the 'I' and the 'we' are shaped by, and even take the shape of, contact with others." (Ahmed 10) Thus, the sociality of emotion implies that every emotion, or affect, is laden with its own stories, histories, and cultural references that shape our identities. Viewing affect as a direct cause of society directly suggests the need to deconstruct the systems that have evoked these affects, and places responsibility in the injustices of society, rather than in the individual for being sensitive to affects. An essential element in the context of dissecting patriarchal wounds, this model paints painful affects as symptomatic of a wider oppression, rather than a singular reaction towards one experience. This is not to say that affects can be generalised within a community and its 'stickiness,' especially because survivors' experiences can be incredibly unique, even more so due to a community's intersectionality. Yet, in a culture of victim blaming, gaslighting, and general distrust, analysing affects through the sociality of emotion will require accountability and can create space for ethnographic investigation. Accordingly, I

am interested in the complications of affects, especially when analysed in a community—how affects may clash, become problematic in comparison to others, and challenge each other—because they will indeed demonstrate how every single person’s experience is meaningful for radical academic reflection.

In selecting affect theory as my theoretical framework, I am mindfully foregrounding embodied knowledge as a valid means of knowledge production that has long existed in my culture. In conducting this research, I believe it is important to recognise that writing this thesis as a so-called ‘Third World’ Indonesian woman, choosing an urgent topic such as our patriarchal wounds, holds a doubled tension. On the one hand, undergoing emotional labour with a body and mind, that in Western academia, is Orientalised and feminine, I am fulfilling my patriarchal role as the effeminate emotional caretaker, thus perpetuating the power structures I am scrutinising. Yet, on the other hand, creating space for and carrying out such labour in a culture where these issues are often suppressed establishes an interesting opportunity to hold discussions seldom had. These discussions are imperative for an Arts & Society-centric research because my research offers a subjective reading of art that actively considers itself as a direct product of social and cultural construction. As Joanne Whalley and Lee Miller write in *Between Us: Audiences, Affect and the In-Between*²¹, affect is a project to explore promising tools and techniques for non-dualistic thought and pedagogy as “analytical readings are no more accurate for their ignorance of feelings. Thinkings are no more objective or reliable, they are merely more normative and thus defensible.” (Whalley and Miller 132) In my research, I would like to explore academic and social discourse through contextualising that which may sit outside of discourse—that which is emotional, historical, ancestral, communal, spiritual, and cultural. Moreover, this exchange of affective knowledge is an intrinsic part of many communities of colour, Non-Western, South-East Asian,

²¹ Whalley, Joanne and Lee Miller. *Between Us: Audiences, Affect and the In-Between*. Macmillan Education UK, 23 November 2016.

Indonesian, minority, spiritual, feminine, woman-lead, queer communities, and so on. I, therefore, argue that this is not a sign of the emergence of affective scholarship, but a turning (and returning) to tools that have long existed in non-Western processes of knowledge production.

Furthermore, through Ahmed's feminist lens, all that occurs in society, and consequently, in the creation of art—how politics, culture, and systems of power uplift certain communities or individuals and oppress others—are the driving forces of affective movement between bodies. It is through sociality in particular that we are able to create boundaries between the inside, the outside, and the 'I/We,' and 'Us/Them' feeling. This stickiness of bodies that group the participants of my research together. It would be overly simplistic to view patriarchal wounds as only an issue of s*xual violence between men and women in a cisgendered and heteronormative setting. Viewing another's body as a non-autonomous object that can be taken or used without one's consent is a symptom of the patriarchal system. Hierarchies of power, established through the patriarchy, determine whose bodies are 'sticky'. Therefore, s*xual violence occurs in all communities, between a multitude of dynamics, on varying spectrums of violence. As a result, survivors exist in a multitude of demographics. Keeping in mind the case study of my research, I would like to focus on Marlina as the protagonist, which is why in the process of reaching out to my community, I purposefully reached out to participants who relate to her feminized body and sociality, seen as the patriarchal Other as a childless, middle-aged, r*ped widow—regardless of their gender identity, sexuality, or romantic experience.

Therefore, aligning with Anzaldúa's critique, as a woman of color, a 'Third World' woman, and an ancestral healer, it is my intention to deconstruct colonial academic conventions through adopting the Western language and academic practices for the cause of 'Third World' people—to use it to the benefit of my people's exploration and learning of

themselves from their own points of view. As a result, I will not be coaxing my research to find a uniformed, unanimous, or tokenized answer from the community to impart a sacred wisdom on the West. Instead, my first and foremost aim is to give my participants the local tools, language, energy and encouragement to reflect on their emotions through art on their own terms, at their own pace to the extent that I am capable of providing.

Chapter 2: ‘Writing into the Wound’ with My Community

“The researcher is always implicated in their research. Her body is in the archive, even if the intention is to move towards some sort of objective relationship with the material being studied. In the context of the spectatorial, there is no real way to step outside of one’s subjective position.” (Whalley and Miller 5)

In the audiobook *Writing into the Wound: Understanding trauma, truth, and language*²², Roxane Gay asks the crucial questions that are inevitably raised when writing about trauma. Namely, how do we convey the realities of trauma and its aftermath without being exploitative? How do we write trauma without traumatizing the reader or re-traumatizing ourselves? How do we write trauma without cannibalizing ourselves? How do we write about the traumatic experiences of others without transgressing their boundaries or privacy? How do we tell stories of trauma without allowing the trauma to become the whole of our narratives? I can not ensure that the snake will not eat its own head in my research. However, I can write from a frank, subjective, and informed point-of-view, to hopefully get my intentions with this research across. As my research question indicates, *Marlina The Murderer in Four Acts* will be used as a starting point of both the research and the discussion I will have with the research. This chapter will lay out the two main methodologies I will use and why they are best suited for the scope of my research, as well as detailing how they will allow space for mindfulness, empathy, and affect in the conducting of this research.

Following Suzanne Goopy and Anusha Kassan’s model, I will employ Arts-Based Engaged Ethnography (ABEE) as the main methodology. To assist me in cinematographic analysis, I will also be using John A. Bateman’s Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis approach. While conducting this research and, consequently, writing this thesis, I aim to shed

²² Gay, Roxane. *Writing into the Wound: Understanding trauma, truth, and language*. Scribd Originals, 11 February 2021.

light on the emotional process that is simultaneously carried out on a personal, as well as on a communal level. This duality lies in the fact that although we have our own wounds, these wounds are solidified, established, perpetuated, and interconnected with our society and their wounds. Similarly, writing this thesis has given me the realization Gay speaks of in the audiobook, that “when writing about trauma, you have to be prepared to handle not only your own trauma, but being exposed to the trauma of others.”

Adopting a critical perspective on anthropology, it is imperative to firstly consider the unethical origins of ethnographic research. Established as an academic discipline in the nineteenth-century, as D. Soyini Madison Writes in *Critical Ethnography: Methods, Ethics, and Performance*, anthropology originated from a practice of conducting surveys, in what the West considered faraway lands, “generally based upon predetermined questions for the interests and benefit of the colonial empire.” (Madison 7) This developed into the twentieth-century process of long-term participant observation of the ‘primitive’ Other, as practiced in British functional anthropology by Bronislaw Malinowski and Franz Boas in the United States. Colonial values and mindsets are quite literally embedded in the foundation of anthropology, and was, according to Talal Asad’s *Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter*, an “attempt to extend [the West’s] knowledge of man and society to ‘primitive’ communities, ‘simpler peoples’, or ‘pre-literate societies’.” (Asad 11) As it became a flourishing academic profession, anthropology produced analyses of non-European societies dominated by (Western) European power, carried out by Europeans, for a European audience (Asad 15).

As my research aims to tackle societal issues that occur through various intersections of identities and communities, it is of vital importance that power structures within my research, both implicit and explicit, are considered. This power imbalance is particularly dangerous due to the sensitive nature of the contents of my research and the already present history of patriarchal oppression that occurs in Indonesia. This is not to say that matters of

patriarchal s*xual violence must be censored, ignored, or taken away from. However, as I intend to create a space for Indonesian patriarchal subjects to explore their patriarchal wounds, I—positioned as the researcher—will have to take mindful measures of ensuring the mental, physical, and emotional well-being of the participants while they partake in my research. As survivors, we experience the affects first hand, thus exposure to such content could cause a reliving of wounds instead of a reflection. For further protection, each participant will sign a consent form to ensure that no personal information will be shared without their approval.

As an Indonesian woman disrupting the colonial academic tradition, implementing a feminist intervention through a mediation of an audience's experience watching a movie (that in itself is a feminist intervention of the patriarchal cinematic industry), I am actively rethinking these dynamics of research. With a great capacity for one-sided and provisional exploitation, I would like to consider how using ethnographic research can be a critical challenging of imperial empiricism and its conventions. Minding ethical responsibility, Madison's critical ethnography focuses on challenging "institutions, regimes of knowledge, and social practices that limit choices, constrain meaning, and denigrate identities and communities." (Madison 4) This criticality can not be achieved without considering my positionality as a researcher. "Positionality is vital because it forces us to acknowledge our own power, privilege, and biases just as we are denouncing the power structures that surround our subjects." (Madison 5) Participating in this research are people from my own community; Julie and Debby are friends that I have known since childhood, Shelby is a friend I met through networks of high schools in Jakarta, Airis was my senior in high school, Dewi is a friend I met during a performing arts project, and Rinening was a friend of my sister's that I quickly grew close to during my visits home while studying in the Netherlands. Doing my research in and about my own community, I am using the social conventions of

communities built on support, camaraderie, and understanding. For instance, during our interviews, the language we use with each other is a mixture of Bahasa Indonesia, English, and slang that is somewhere in between, yet completely different. My interactions with participants will be done through platforms that are accessible to my community, such as video calls and direct messages on social media.

Because I already have a rapport with the participants who I consider friends, I am able to practice empathetic listening and place my energy in ensuring a safe space where they are able to freely share their experiences at a pace that is comfortable for them. These are especially important factors when building knowledge with a community, especially one that is subjected to an oppressive patriarchal system, because “knowledge is power relative to social justice, because knowledge guides and equips us to identify, name, question, and act against the unjust.” (Madison 4) Therefore, by creating space for our own embodied knowledge, building knowledge on our emotions, and publicly ‘outing’ our patriarchal wounds through means that are considered Other in the white, Western, patriarchal institution is in itself a radical act of protest against the age-old premises of white patriarchal research and gaze.

2.1. Arts-Based Engaged Ethnography

The first method I am using, ABEE, was purposefully created to conduct ethnographic research that allows creative inquiry and ethical engagement, which are crucial when researching what Goopy and Kassan refer to as ‘harder-to-reach’ minority communities. Furthermore, ABEE aims to deconstruct the authoritative voice granted to researchers, who is typically white, Western, male, heterosexual, able-bodied, (upper) middle-class, cisgendered, and so on, by using cultural probes and focus groups “for researchers to create data from multiple voices via multiple mediums [and creates] a space that, intentionally and actively,

seeks to encourage the generation of new insights and new possibilities for understanding.” (Goopy and Kassan 4) Thus, through ABEE, rather than using my knowledge as a researcher as a starting-off point or writing for the violent gaze of Western Academia, I aim to access affects that have been silenced through patriarchal cultural dogma, and to build new ways of self-expression with the participants.

The ABEE process consists of three pillars; cultural probes, semi-structured individual interviews, and focus groups. In this research, I will mainly focus on cultural probes and semi-structured interviews due to the sensitivity of the subject matter. However, if and when participants become comfortable and express the desire to participate in focus groups, then such spaces shall be created in the process. Firstly, cultural probes are creative responses—mainly visual artefacts such as photographs, videos, sketches, or drawings—that anchor the ABEE research by empowering the creative work of research participants, as well as facilitating a familiar, accessible, understood way of accessing affective awareness of everyday life (Goopy and Kassan 3). Cultural probes are a crucial segment of this research as an Arts and Society thesis as it foregrounds artworks and creativity in an investigation of social issues. In addition, to broaden the scope of understanding, my research will expand the qualifications of a cultural probe so as to create space for non-visual and non-traditional forms of creativity. On that account, cultural probes can include music, film, television shows, creative writing, poetry, voice recordings, videos on social media, memes, and any other forms of expression participants may relate to. These additions will hopefully enable participants to use familiar tools to reflect on certain everyday practices and experiences, can give a scope beyond the direction of the researcher whilst still being guided, and will hopefully encourage participants to explore different mediums, regardless of the proficiency of their art knowledge.

Marlina The Murderer in Four Acts will therefore be a cultural probe that acts as a starting point of this research. For the ethnographic portion of finding data, I will implement ABEE through three phases. Phase 1 is an introductory phase in which my participants and I can ‘break the ice’ and share initial experiences through a one-on-one conversation and survey²³, Phase 2 will include watching the film and documenting their responses through an Affect Log²⁴, and Phase 3 will be a final reflective session in which participants can further expand on parts of the film that struck them most. It is crucial to highlight that in Phase 2, the viewing experience will completely accommodate each participant and their respective ‘wounds’. Due to the explicitly violent scenes the film contains, I will provide options for different ways of learning about Marlina’s story, such as watching the film through timestamps that exclude scenes depicting abuse, reading a synopsis, viewing stills from the film, or simply discussing the film in a safe conversational setting. The process of surviving because of and in spite of our patriarchal wounds is not a linear one, nor is it uniform. Therefore, there are many trigger points which could potentially harm a participant that I must constantly regard with utmost care. These options are imperative especially because Phase 2 will occur during Ramadan, hence my mindfulness will function on numerous intersections of identity and experiences, especially in the Indonesian cultural setting. For instances such as these, using cultural probes is a perfect solution for expressing that which may be too painful to discuss, particularly for participants who may have heavier affective triggers.

Furthermore, to solidify a mutually beneficial relationship wherein participants feel fully comfortable to explore their affects, semi-structured individual interviews will be conducted. Interviews contain the potentiality of being a space fraught with power dynamics due to interviewers’ control over the questions asked, the responses these questions could

²³ See Appendix 2

²⁴ See Appendix 3

lead to, and the environment in which this—often one-sided—exchange of knowledge takes place in. In ABEE, however, participants are invited to be and act as agents. “As agents, participants are given the space, the permission, and the opportunity to reflect on and verbalise their experiences, feelings, and attitudes as well as to locate and contextualise their experiences.” (Goopy and Kassan 5) To fully realise this method in my ethnographic research, I aim to create a space for exchanges of knowledge, memories, experiences, stories, and affects. To encourage learning from and sharing with each other, participants will be briefed beforehand on this dynamic I would like to build; a collaboration in establishing a safe space for sharing as equals. I will do so by communicating in the brief that they have the freedom to lead the conversation, decide what will be discussed, whether or not they want to share about certain experiences, and that I will use trigger warnings if I ever intend to share potentially harmful information. In the same vein, I will not be asking about direct experiences or memories in interviews, and instead allow participants to add personal anecdotes if and when they feel comfortable.

2.2. Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis

In addition, I would like to point out that, fundamentally, I recognise the film as a case study of artistic representation of patriarchal wounds, a text to be analysed, a cultural probe used for ethnographic research, and a space for exploration of affects. Viewing this research through this lens, I will use Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis as a second methodology for the analysis portion of this thesis. A qualitative analytical approach developed in the 1970s, it was pioneered by scholars such as Roger Fowler, Norman Fairclough, and Ruth Wodak. According to Wodak, at its core, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is “concerned with analysing opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance,

discrimination, power and control as manifested in language.” (Wodak 2²⁵) The power language holds resides in the way people who have social power use it, and the context in which this power is constructed. Therefore, CDA also “requires a theorization [...] of both the social processes and structures which give rise to the production of a text, and of the social structures and processes within which individuals or groups as social historical subjects, create meanings in their interaction with texts.” (Wodak 3) Aligning with the values of Ahmed’s affect theory, CDA aptly combines the need for textual and contextual analysis.

Furthermore, considering this research is centered around the film as a case study, the method of CDA I have chosen expands the capacity of this methodology according to John A. Bateman’s model of Multimodal CDA, which is a mixture of CDA and Visual Analysis. Building upon feminist film theory, Bateman proposes a methodology that explicitly targets ensembles of diverse semiotic expressions (Bateman 489). Viewing *Marlina The Murderer in Four Acts* as a ‘filmic text,’ this method of analysis will apply to the intrinsic ideological and discursive placements of the film’s portrayal of gender relations and social positions, which are not only depicted through language, but visual attributes, gestures and actions as well (Bateman 487-488). In the upcoming chapter, I will be analysing filmic components such as characters, genre conventions, narratives, montages, the mise-en-scene, sociopolitical context of certain scenes, camera angles, movement, and the ‘gaze’ of the camera. I will also be tackling critical filmic and textual theories, such as Laura Mulvey’s ‘male gaze’ and Liedeke Plate’s ‘rewriting’. These components will thus contribute to demonstrating the larger affective movements that Surya, through directorial choices, invokes in the audiences of the film.

Moreover, by combining ABEE with Multimodal CDA, I will be able to foreground the participant’s affective and embodied responses. Bateman approaches Multimodal CDA

²⁵ Wodak, Ruth. “What CDA is about - a summary of its history, important concepts and its developments.” *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*. Sage Publications, 2001.

from the perspective of the viewer as the deconstruction of the film needs to be “anchored with respect to audience’s reception practices as well as in the ways the film is constructed.” (Bateman 502) Comparably, in *Bodies in Pain: Emotion and the Cinema of Darren Aronofsky*²⁶, Tarja Laine refers to the audience’s bodies as the ‘lived-body’ to indicate the transactional process of the body engaging with the world through film. To ‘think-feelingly’ is thus an “*active* process of intervention, a matter of *doing* instead of merely knowing. [...] Thinking must be understood as an embodied practice.” (Tarja 10) Through their affective responses and embodied experiences while watching, the participants are positioned as the audience and the driving force of this research. Once the scenes are chosen, I will be deconstructing how each scene evokes affects through film techniques, how participants experience these affects, and which discussions these affects invite into our space of exchanging knowledge. Therefore, Multimodal CDA is a fitting methodology that will assist my research in centering participants as the driving force of my analysis because it precisely examines the audience’s ‘thinking-feeling’ while watching, solidifying the embodied practice through a critical analysis of the filmic text.

²⁶ Laine, Tarja. “Introduction: Aronofsky, Auteurship, Aesthetics.” *Bodies in Pain : Emotion and the Cinema of Darren Aronofsky*, Berghahn Books, Incorporated, 2015

Chapter 3: Analysis

3.1. The Widow



(Figures 2 and 3)

The first scene that was most discussed by participants was the scene where the bandits forced their way into Marlina's home, took her livestock, and demanded to be fed as they openly conversed about their previous victims in her living room in the first act, 'The Robbery'. I am interested in how many participants mentioned the same scene, but were each struck, or triggered, by different components. For instance, Rinening reacted to the non-physical forms of violence Marlina had to endure before Markus r*ped her, especially due to her status as a widow. Markus' verbal harassment, nonchalantly stating that Marlina is lucky to still be wanted despite being a widow, and the rest of the men forcing themselves

into Marlina's living room, made her feel unsafe and terrified in her own home (Fig. 3). Moreover, the violence Marlina experienced unfolded in front of her husband's corpse (Fig. 4), which signifies the blatant lack of respect these men have for Marlina. According to a BBC Indonesia article by Ayomi Amindoni²⁷, the Marapu death procession that is local to Sumba dictates that the corpse be preserved in a foetal squatting position to symbolise a new birth. The presence of death sitting in the corner of the living room, then, also "creates the horror of revealing Marlina's lonesome status [because] no one can 'give her protection'." (Amindoni) Marlina's house in itself is also framed as though far away from the rest of civilization, symbolising her distance from society, and as a result, protection. As the bandits take over her space, there is a feeling of desperation and suffocation as we realise that Marlina is utterly alone, with no one to help her if and when these men decide to physically attack her.



(Figure 4)

Under the Indonesian patriarchy, marriage is fraught with heteronormative and sexist teachings. Markus' verbal abuse, for instance, reminded Rinening of her own mother's status as a divorcee. In our Phase 1 conversation, we discussed marriage, a prevalent theme in her life as a girl raised with conservative Javanese values. There is a clear social indoctrination that girls must aspire to marriage as if a goal, an ideology that consists complex relationships

²⁷ Amindoni, Ayomi. "Mouly Surya interview: Cultural irony in Marlina the Murderer in Four Acts." *BBC Indonesia*. 20 November 2017.

of having ‘legal’ sex (sex after marriage) in the eyes of religion, being lead by a man, being viewed as a ‘successful’ woman on the grounds of assimilation, and following conventions to avoid being shunned by your own community. Rinening’s experiences with her community’s view on marriage culminated when her parents divorced as the people around her family began insulting her mother for being “a failed woman” who “could not keep a man.” In Bahasa Indonesia, the word for widow, *janda*, doubles as the word for divorcee. Airis also shared how as a Muslim girl, she was taught how to be a woman during lectures at the Mosque. Growing up in Borneo during the first few years of religious radicalism in 2010, Airis was around thirteen years old when she first learned that she would go to hell if she did not serve her husband.

“My mom is a widow. I know what she has been through from being newly divorced and achieving the status as a widow. The slight insults about her new status and how it defines her as a so-called ‘failed woman’ because of their mindset that she can’t keep a man to stay in her marriage.” (Rinening)

Watching Marlina get ostracized for being a widow, a *janda* like her mother despite their different predicaments, invoked feelings of anger, shame, and discomfort for Rinening. According to Ahmed, the turning of shame works through pain felt by bodies in that the ‘bad feeling’ of hurt is attributed to oneself, rather than others. Therefore, “the subject, in turning away from another and back into itself, is consumed by a feeling of badness that cannot simply be given away or attributed to another.” (Ahmed 104) In shame, one is already exposed to others, thus shame involves an individuation and concealment of our vulnerability “linked precisely to the inter-corporeality and sociality of shame experiences” (Ahmed 105) through turning away, lowering our face, or averting our gaze, thus creating a wound from being forced to hide away into ourselves. The patriarchy dictates that there is decorum to uphold—a standard that we, as patriarchal subjects, must live up to. Marlina, through the

patriarchal lens, is a childless widow. To the patriarchy, she does not have a purpose to serve as a mother, nor a provider to be protected by as a wife. Therefore, being single, a widow, or a divorced patriarchal subject within the context of the Indonesian patriarchy can evoke feelings of shame because we are not only exposed as subjects who are not desired by men, subjects who do not desire men, wives who could not take care of their husbands, or subjects who fail to fulfill our roles in society as dutiful and obedient wives, but we are also exposed as subjects without the protection of men, the gatekeepers of patriarchy, and are therefore vulnerable to abuse from other patriarchal oppressors.

This shame, however, can be broken once we see that this individuation and exposure is based on a culture of misogyny, sexism, and unjust violence. Instead of feeling Marlina's negative affects when watching her be shamed for her status as a widow, Rinening felt her "head boil" from the anger of witnessing such an interaction. In her own life, Rinening did not see her own mother become a tragic figure after divorcing her father. On the contrary, she saw her mother gain freedom. "Now she can do as she likes; whether she wants to start dating or get married again, she can start a business, she can resume her dream of being a lawyer. Whereas in the past, her goals were dependent on her having to take care of the kids," Rinening shared. Similarly, Airis learned from her grandmother, who married much later in life than her society expected of her, had four kids after the age of thirty-five, and pushed Airis to become independent by studying abroad in Europe. Although marriage, and similarly divorce, is personal and depends on individual relationships, in Rinening and Airis' case, there is a clear dissonance between what the patriarchy tells them about marriage and what they have seen firsthand from the figures in their lives.

Markus' words and the warnings Rinening and Airis received growing up, then, both function as vehicles of policing fellow members of our community by instilling the fear of shame as punishment. Ahmed views the language of fear as "the intensification of threats,

which works to create distinction between those who are ‘under threat’ and those who threaten.” (Ahmed 72) Communities are built on the shared risk of this threat, therefore fear aligns bodies with and against others. The mobility of the bodies of patriarchal subjects are extremely different from that of the bodies that impose patriarchal structures. Markus, who we can assume is a straight cisgendered man, has a body that, in Ahmed’s terms, is not ‘sticky’ in this crisis of violence. Due to the positioning of his identities, we can assume that Markus is not subjected to shaming for being unmarried at his age. Applying this theory to the participant’s experience watching this first scene, the threat of becoming the failing patriarchal subject due to our inability of following society’s rules of a woman, for instance, evokes reactive feelings to this shame—fear, anger, disgust, rejection, and so on—within the audience, depending on one’s own experience with these narratives. Due to our patriarchal wounds, participants’ bodies align with Marlina’s bodies, hence allowing her affects to stick to us simply through witnessing the exchange.



(Figure 5)

In addition, our bodies have limited mobility in that it is difficult for these affects to ‘leave’ our bodies because our shared experiences can cause us to internalize these emotions. Therefore, the very structures that hold patriarchal subjects in place also ensure that wounds do not heal through the implementation of the fear of shame. As Ahmed writes, “the approach to the event—in which it is repeated and transformed into a fetish object—involved

forms of alignment, whereby individuals align themselves with [the patriarchal body as being wounded].” (Ahmed 74) The experiences of over-repetition and over-saturation of this fear thus become lived as patriarchal wounds. Which is why, for many participants, watching verbal abuse can be viscerally triggering as it is associated with every other wound they have experienced under this very system. Any signs associated with the oppression of patriarchal subjects then become ‘sticky’, just as our bodies are, and this stickiness allows a multitude of complex and painful affects to stick to a single event or display of oppression. Women cooking in the kitchen, for instance, do not necessarily signify patriarchal wounds. In fact, in the film, the kitchen is portrayed as a sort of quiet safe haven—solitary and calming with the gentle fire in the corner. However, as a result of its stickiness to the context of the patriarchy in this film, Marlina cooking in the kitchen (Fig. 5) signifies the subordination of women due to the violent erasure of her autonomy. This is the case for the other scenes in this first act; the men sitting in Marlina's living room, demanding to be fed, signifies the patriarchy unconsensually invading the spaces that belong to us. Taking her livestock, although occurring off screen, signifies the forceful taking of her livelihood, and by extension, her body. For Dewi, watching the men take away Marlina’s livestock made her feel extremely sad. “I felt my stomach sink and also [felt] a lump in my throat because of my sadness,” Dewi writes. “I know how much livestock can provide for a single individual and I share a feeling of humiliation with Marlina in watching her life’s work and sustenance be taken away.” I argue that even the smallest acts of or hints towards patriarchal violence can instantly invoke heavy or overwhelming emotions laden with history. By showing these violent acts through quiet allusions, Surya, as a filmmaker and an Indonesian woman, communicates an understanding towards the trauma and pain that non-physical acts can and have caused.

3.2. The Murderer



(Figures 6 and 7)

Although Surya uses the first act to create a foundation of affects that will be explored and resolved much later in the film, she has already created an uncomfortable dissonance of violence within the last few scenes of this opening act. There are a few striking scenes that evoke strong affective reactions from the participants, namely when Surya breaks the fourth wall by positioning Marlina in front of the camera to look at the audience after murdering the bandits, when Markus r*pes her, and when Marlina beheads and kills Markus to protect herself. These scenes are especially prominent because the blatant violence on display is such a departure from the tense, yet collected, forewarnings of danger from previous interactions between Marlina and these criminals. Instead, these violent scenes elicit direct emotional responses that make the audience feel as though they are going through what Marlina experiences.



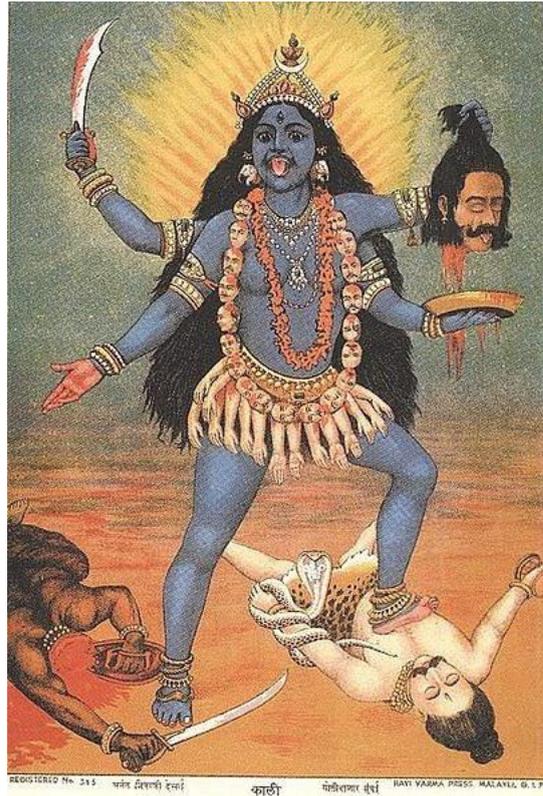
(Figures 8, 9, and 10)

The r*pe scene is one that almost every participant mentioned in their Affect Log. One of the most gruelling scenes in the film, as a researcher, it was a scene I had to prepare my participants for the most through trigger warnings and briefings, and as a fellow audience member, it was one of the scenes that induced the most anxiety in my body. As Julie shared in our Phase 3 conversation, “[they] watch every movie with a fear that it may lead to assault. It is hard to admit, but the way [the film] showed assault too directly and raw was triggering, so I avoided these scenes.” On the other hand, in the Affect Log, Dewi writes of her shock at the complexity of emotions the scene brought up. Disgusted, shocked, and then amused, she recognizes the grotesque humour of Markus seeming as though he is cl*maxing as Marlina decapitates him (Fig. 8). Beheadings and severed heads have varying histories and carry numerous symbols, depending on the cultural context. On the one hand, as an art student, the

image of Marlina severing Markus' head is immediately reminiscent of *Judith Beheading Holoferness* by Caravaggio (1599) and *Judith Slaying Holoferness* by Artemisia Gentileschi (ca. 1614-1620), as seen above in figures 9 and 10. The paintings depict a heroic woman, Judith, and her servant, as they behead the Assyrian general Holoferness. According to Angelica Frey²⁸, Judith is a beautiful young widow who, to save her people, seduces the general to save her people. When he falls asleep, Judith decapitates him with his own sword after reciting a long prayer to God. In gaining the victory for the Israelites, "blood spurts everywhere as the two women summon all their strength to wield the heavy sword. The tension and strain are palpable." (Kleiner²⁹) Although Judith's narrative is not local to Indonesian culture or the Sumba island, the parallels are undeniable. Unlike other biblical heroines who obtain victory through feminine or domesticated means, Judith's character combines piety, feminine virtues, and strength. A *femme forte* as well as a *femme fatale*, her story is an exploration of the power of female virtue as a woman practicing celibacy following the death of her husband, beauty as a seductress, and power as one who wields the sword (Frey).

²⁸ Frey, Angelica. "How Judith Beheading Holofernes Became Art History's Favorite Icon of Female Rage." *Artsy*. 4 April 2019.

²⁹ Kleiner, Fred S. *Gardner's Art through the Ages: The Western Perspective*. 14th ed. Cengage Learning, 2012.



(Figure 10)

On the other hand, as a Javanese Indonesian woman, I am also reminded of a narrative that is closer to my own culture; the Hindu goddess Kali (Fig. 10). In her iconography, Kali is often depicted in her naked form, wearing a garland of men’s decapitated heads, standing on top of her husband, Shiva, all the while holding a lone severed head in one hand and a bloodied knife in another. According to Deboparna Poddar³⁰, Kali—derived from Kalika, meaning ‘she who is dark’—depicts sexuality, fierceness, anger, and wonder through her wild powers of femininity and violence. Often associated with destruction as well as creation, her divine feminine power, *shakti*, is both ferocious and nurturing (Poddar). According to Annalisa Merelli³¹, duplicity and multiplicity was a trait associated with female divinity in antiquity, in contrast to “the demure, graceful ideals that are mainstream around the world—including in India, the land that gave birth to this fierce goddess and yet

³⁰ Poddar, Deboparna. “Here’s why Kali is the most badass goddess of all time.” *The Tempest*. 19 August 2020.

³¹ Merelli, Annalisa. “Kali is the 3,000-year-old feminist icon we need today.” *Quartz*. 8 January 2020

prescribes the ideal woman as dutiful, submissive, obedient.” Similar to Kali, Marlina, previously a mother and a wife, is framed as the murderer—the one who enacts violence.

Despite its varying histories, under the Indonesian patriarchy, this violence is associated with masculinity. Sumba, the island the film is set in, has had its own long history of head-hunting as per Marlina’s method. According to a VICE article by Milène Larsson³², clans local to the island “practice head-hunting, sorcery, and ritual blood sacrifice according to their Marapu religion, and the official Indonesian law often gives way to *adat*—local clan law and traditions.” In many of these indigenous cultures, head-hunting, a battle amongst the boys and men of neighbouring clans to spill blood on soil for the harvest, is a battle that “only forty years ago, the government forbade the use of metal-tipped spears and parangs [long-bladed machete-style knives, carried by every Sumbanese man] during the Pasola.” (Larsson) Beheadings, on the other hand, according to Danielle C. Geirnaert³³, was a symbol of the village men as warriors. The village’s reputation, in regards to masculinity, was displayed on a skull-tree that stood in the centre of the village to expose the skulls of beheaded enemies (Geirnaert 452). As Umi Lestari heavily criticizes in the article “Sumba From Java: Notes on Garin Nugroho, Ifa Isfansyah, and Mouly Surya Films³⁴,” Surya overlooks many of the cultural components of societies in Sumba. Despite using the iconography of a beheading and using the severed head as a symbol of victory in war, I view the setting of the film as an appropriation of the location, especially when considering Surya’s own inspirations from Western—as well as Eastern—cinematic traditions, and that the film was a collaboration between many different Asian countries. Although the cultural and ethnic background of the participants of this research differ, I myself am not from

³² Larsson, Milène. “Blood Sacrifice in Sumba.” *VICE*. 9 July 2013.

³³ Geirnaert, Danielle C. “The Pogo Nauta ritual in Laboya (West Sumba): Of Tubers and Mamuli.” *Rituals and Socio-Cosmic Order in Eastern Indonesian Societies*. No. 4, Brill Academic Publishers, 1989, p. 445-463.

³⁴ Lestari, Umi. “Sumba From Java: Notes on Garin Nugroho, Ifa Isfansyah, and Mouly Surya Films.” 22 January 2019.

Sumba, nor do I practice the local rituals. Therefore, considering the more diverse audience the film tackles, I argue that Markus' beheading can be read as a feminist statement of placing a woman in the masculine role of the warrior.



(Figure 11)

When considering Marlina's killings, her first method in murdering is a stark contrast to Markus' beheading. She begins with poisoning the criminals (Fig. 11), which is in itself a passive way of ending another's life. Similarly, these men also committed indirect acts of violation through burglary and verbally discussing their plans of abuse without directly hurting her body. However, Marlina's plan fails with Markus and unlike his crew, he commits actual physical and s*xual assault. Marlina, in turn, takes Markus' blade in her hand, wields it, and severs his head. Markus' violence against Marlina and her self-defense are direct, physical, corporeal, and personal. During a Phase 2 discussion, Shania shares how she sees how distinctly Indonesian these scenes are. The way in which these men raided her home through passive-aggression, how Marlina poisons them, and how Marlina stares the camera down as they collapse behind her are a clear reflection of the way Indonesian society allows affects to move. This sequence of events shows how the normalization of silencing a larger social issue permits abusers to carry out violence uncontestedly, whilst survivors of abuse must fight to find pockets of protest, self-defense, or revenge. According to Bateman,

“indications of social [...] positions can be given visually in terms of depicted attributes, gestures and actions rather than in language behaviour.” (487-488)³⁵ Marlina’s murders in the first act show the complicated dichotomy between Indonesian propriety and misogyny. There is a stark contrast of the culture of polite small talk, being courteous to one’s guests, and serving food as the woman of the house on the one hand, and on the other, an openness with violent acts, especially as Surya shows the gore of these horrendous acts in a manner that is blunt, straightforward, and plain.

Additionally, I argue that in this film, Surya tackles the colonial and patriarchal gaze in cinema. Described as a ‘Satay Western’ in many of the reviews, in an interview with BBC Indonesia, Surya herself stated that she was inspired by the Western-like terrain of Sumba and saw Marlina as the lone hero typical of the genre (Amindoni). According to “Film Genres” by David Bordwell, Kristin Thompson, and Jeff Smith³⁶, “the typical Western hero stands between two thematic poles. At home in the wilderness but naturally inclined toward justice and kindness, the cowboy is often poised between savagery and civilization.” (337) Savagery forcibly knocks on the door of Marlina’s house that feels completely isolated from the rest of the island. After spilling the blood of her attacker, she journeys through civilization in search for her justice.

³⁵ Bateman, John A. *Multimodal; Film Analysis: How Films Mean*. Routledge, 10 April 2014.

³⁶ Bordwell, David et al. “Film Genres.” *Film Art*. 11th ed. McGraw-Hill, 2017.



(Figures 12 and 13)

Moreover, the Western hero often fights bandits, who symbolise a threat to stability and progress, oftentimes reflecting the social processes of the audience the film targets (Bordwell et al. 338). Using the lens of the Western genre, Surya uses r*pists as a symbol of regression, oppression, and injustice, which is a clear contrast to the patriarchal narratives in Indonesian culture. Laura Mulvey, who coined the term ‘male gaze’ in her 1975 essay, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema³⁷,” theorized that the function of the woman in forming the patriarchal unconscious is her absence of the p*nis, symbolizing a ‘castration anxiety’. Therefore, the woman is a signifier for the ‘male Other’ in patriarchal culture, “bound by a symbolic order in which man can live out his fantasies and obsessions through linguistic command by imposing them on the silent image of woman still tied to her place as bearer of meaning, not maker of meaning.” (Mulvey 57-58) Both Shania and Julie, who had watched the film prior to participating in this research, said that they both immediately knew

³⁷ Mulvey, Laura. “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema.” *Screen*. Vol. 16, Issue 3, Oxford UP, 1975.

the movie was directed by a woman. “It was refreshing because women are always portrayed as damsels in distress, especially in Indonesian thrillers,” Shania said. Surya challenges the Indonesian male gaze by playing with Marlina’s role as a non-submissive woman who fights back and takes this castration a step further by beheading Markus while he was literally using his p*nis to dominate her. Surya subverts the tropes of the Western hero, the lone male ranger, and the sharp-shooting white cowboy by presenting an Indonesian heroine who is a blade-wielding widow—a slayer of r*pists—who reshapes the discourse of the feminine patriarchal Other as passive, weak, or submissive subjects.

How does the feminine gaze of the film, shaped by the patriarchal wound, influence the audience’s affect? This question is especially critical when considering the depiction of a scene that contains so much pain. Marlina undergoes an overflow of emotional labour as the subject of r*pe, becoming a murderer in self defense, and unlike Markus, has to live with the memory of these events. Debby, for instance, felt “upset, anger, and annoyed” as she cried tears for her own body that shares Marlina’s pain of being violated without consent in varying degrees. For her, watching this scene brought back memories of “the times [she had] been harassed or assaulted.” Similarly, the scene triggered sadness and fear that she felt in the sinking feeling in her stomach, her heart beating faster, and a clenching feeling in her chest that makes her feel as though she is out of breath. According to the chapter “The Affective Politics of Fear,” Ahmed states that fear does not come from within and then moves outwards towards objects and others. Rather, as I previously mentioned regarding the alignment of bodies, fear works to secure the relationship between bodies who have an imbalance in social power to begin with, bringing them together and moving them apart through bodily reactions, or in her words, “on the surface that surfaces through the encounter.” (Ahmed 62-63) Audience members whose social positioning equates to that of Marlina’s, like Chesa and Debby, no longer even need to come into contact with bodies that socially dominate them

under the patriarchy. Because of the trauma they have experienced in the past, their wounds carry affects of fear and pain that are ‘sticky’, and therefore cannot be erased as the system that causes it is still very much in place.

The element of fear plays a significant role in the affective experience of audiences watching the film. By abruptly interrupting the violent act that incites fear in audiences through murder, a means that overpowers the consequences of r*pe, Surya encourages a release of these fearful affects. Ahmed theorizes that the politics of fear between bodies stems from the fear “of being incorporated into the body of the other: [...] fear works by establishing others as fearsome insofar as they threaten to take the self in.” (Ahmed 64) R*pe, in this sense, is a cannibalistic patriarchal fantasy of obtaining and maintaining power through a full objectification, consumption, and ownership of the patriarchal Other. The subsequent structures that enable r*pe, such as victim blaming, silencing, and gaslighting, thus become the mechanisms that entrap affects of fear in the bodies of patriarchal subjects without the need for actual repeated cannibalism. In a survey conducted by Lentera Sintas Indonesia, feminist magazine Magdalene, and petition website Change.org, ninety-three percent of survivors polled had not reported the crime due to fear of repercussions. In an interview with the Thomson Reuters Foundation, Sophia Hage, the campaign director at Lentera Sintas, stated “the number one reason they are not speaking up is because of the social stigma and the victims are afraid to be blamed, so there is a deafening silence around the issue.”³⁸ Simply knowing that these entire systems oppress others on such an overwhelmingly large scale is enough to reopen the wound, which is why participants’ bodies reacted to the danger portrayed on screen. Through the alignment of bodies and the stickiness of affects, Marlina’s fear is taken on by the audience’s bodies and becomes our own.

³⁸ Yi, Beh Li. “Over 90 percent rape cases go unreported in Indonesia: poll.” *Reuters*. 25 July 2016.

However, I argue that through the beheading of the r*pist in the film, Surya creates space to allow these affects to detach from the bodies of the audience. In her Affect Log, Dewi wrote that watching this scene made her feel an abnormal sequence of disgust, shock, and amusement. Despite feeling tension in her genitalia and the widening of her eyes, she laughed when she saw Markus' head fall off his shoulders. "The laughter feels like a societally unacceptable reaction. So I think that reflects me. It reflects that the fear of her assault and the tension breaking by the death of her assaulter so that she is safe makes me feel safe. And so I laughed," Dewi writes. By reclaiming the power of violence and giving it to the patriarchal subject, and doing so in such an absurd manner in comparison to reality, Surya appropriates this cannibalistic fantasy into a feminist one. By giving Marlina the power to wield the golok, the r*pist loses his status as a dominant owner and becomes a beast Marlina slays instead. The act of murdering not only establishes Marlina's safety, albeit momentary, but in doing so, Surya also rejects affects of fear and returns it to the body it was instilled by in the first place. Hence, for audience members such as Dewi, this returning of negative affects also allows for a sort of release, which was embodied by her laughter. Despite Dewi's doubts of the appropriateness of her reaction, morality aside, there is an evident relief that occurs through the reclamation of the body when affects associated with losing your autonomy finally 'sticks' or 'slides' onto another subject, even more so when it is returned to the person who instilled it in the first place.

3.3. The Citizen



(Figure 14)

Thirdly, a scene that struck many of the participants due to its striking realism, is the scene where Marlina arrives at the police station and reports the burglary, as well as the r*pe. During the Third Act, Surya portrays Marlina, the lone warrior who has journeyed the wild terrains of her island, preparing herself for the pinnacle point of her destination; getting her justice through the institution of law. Meeting another feminine figure, Topan, who shares her late son's name, reminds Marlina of her strength as a mother, and taking a much needed rest through her meal reminds us of Marlina's humanness, of her mortality and her weakness, despite fulfilling the role of a warrior. At the police station, Marlina finds herself sitting in the absurdity of watching police officers play ping-pong in the middle of the office, waiting for one of them to finish so that she could report everything she had gone through the night before. 'The Murderer' who fearlessly carried the golok and the severed head of her r*pist is a stark contrast to the Marlina who sits silently in the middle of the station (Fig. 14), visibly gathering the courage to speak for herself in the face of a man in power as the police questions her. To Marlina's evident surprise, the police officer seems unbothered and detached, barely focusing on the violation of her body that she has experienced. Throughout the entire second act, Marlina goes on a gruelling journey across a seemingly vast island, under the hot sun, whilst carrying last night's terrifying events, literally through carrying

Markus' head and figuratively through carrying the affects stuck to her. Looking for protection and justice from authority, she is instead met with “a structural institution that is cold, incapable, stiff, and devoid of empathy” (Satya 227)—unable, and perhaps unwilling, to help her as she needs.



(Figure 15)

“Two people were going to r*pe me,” Marlina explains.

“But it did not happen?” The officer responds nonchalantly.

“Yes it did. Markus.” She replies, clearly haunted and angered by what has happened to her, as well as the officer’s current doubtful attitude towards her.

“If he was old and skinny, why did you let him r*pe you?” He asks—blunt, uncaring, and crass.

“He was with his friends.” Marlina answers simply.

In the Affect Log, Debby wrote that it angered her to witness the police officer’s questions that suggest the blame belongs to the victim, even more so when considering the fact that such comments and questions are so common in Indonesia, especially on social media. In an article for *The Jakarta Post*, Evi Mariani³⁹ illustrates how prevalent victim blaming is in our society. For instance, ‘netizens’ virtually abused a soap opera star, identified

³⁹ Mariani, Evi. “Persistent victim blaming in society shows how sick we are.” *The Jakarta Post*. 8 January 2019

as VA, who was arrested by the police after being accused of prostitution by sharing pictures of her and writing deprecating comments. This has happened countless times before on social media alone, with other examples of television stars' nude pictures being spread for 'netizens' to discuss the rates she presumably charged, an employee who outed her then-boss and r*pist to the media was dismissed because of her position at the workplace, and media outlets reporting a victim's attitude after she was murdered for refusing a man's advances (Mariani). R*pe Culture is a system that functions on multiple levels, both as a symptom of s*xual violence, as well as a structure that perpetuates it. Intersectionality of various identity markers, such as class, sexuality, gender, ability, race, ethnicity, religion, and more, interrelate with and co-construct taboos, education, language, laws, media, popular culture, dogma, silencing, punishment, blaming, and other aspects of the normalisation of s*xual violence in society (Asmarani). When Debby witnessed Marlina receive such comments from the police officer, she closed her eyes and shook her head because it was true to the r*pe culture patriarchal subjects face everyday. "It annoyed me so much, especially when the officer told her to be patient. The police station is just like real life," Airis says during our Phase 3 conversation. Dewi adds that their nonchalant attitude frustrated her, manifesting as a lump in her throat. "It is a reflexive anger I have always had for the police. Growing up in Indonesia meant that I have never trusted the police just as a societal norm. [It is] frustrating to see them [misusing authority and being so] careless when someone is waiting for their help," writes Dewi.

But how do the police officers not feel Marlina's affects while she reported the r*pe? Ahmed theorizes that an attunement occurs when our bodies and our affects align with others; it is that which allows our bodies to register that we are affected by the emotions and experiences occurring around us (Ahmed 222). Much like empathy, "we can close off our bodies as well as ears to what is not in tune. An experience of non-attunement refers then to

how we can be in a world with others when we are not in a responsive relation: we do not tend to ‘pick up’ on how they feel.” (Ahmed 223) For audiences who do not understand the affects our patriarchal wounds leave stuck to bodies, they would not be attuned to the subtle displays of the pain, desperation, hope, fear, sadness, and anger Marlina shows in subtle facial expressions. Furthermore, as Ahmed writes, an artwork that details the description of another’s experience could transfer affects, but we could not understand it if we do not share the suffering. “The negative emotions of anger and sadness are evoked as the [viewer]’s: the pain of others becomes ours.” (Ahmed 21) This communal affectivity, however, is only accessible to those who understand the immediate danger Marlina experiences. Viewers who are unaware of Surya’s allusion to the rampant victim blaming in our culture will not have an equivalence of shared negative feelings, rather merely feeling sad about Marlina’s suffering. This aboutness “ensures that [Marlina remains] the object of [the viewer’s feeling].” (Ahmed 21) Therefore, I argue that Surya aims for a gaze that is devoid of the male gaze. By showing Marlina’s pain through miniscule facial expressions and subtle tension that speak volumes for the participants, as evident in their Affect Logs, Surya rewrites the usual assumed positionality of the audience and leans into the gaze of those who carry the same patriarchal wounds. “As audience members, we ‘know’ that something is shared in the moment of exchange, that we are substantively changed by the simple experience of witnessing.” (Whalley and Miller 125) The scene is a subtle reference to reality rather than a large, obvious statement because Surya, through Marlina, is directly sharing affects with those who have carried out the same emotional labour in their own way.

In exploring pain, Ahmed also tackles the fetishization of wounds. As an audience member, participants are “elevated into a position of power over others. [...] The over-representation of the pain of others is significant in that it fixes the other as the one who ‘has’ pain, and who can overcome that pain only when the [powerful] subject feels moved

enough to give.” (Ahmed 22) This tension that arises when representing a subject’s pain is intriguing when considering the scope of my research. First and foremost, the participants are receiving affects and reacting to them from the perspective of their own patriarchal wounds, regardless of whether or not they experienced the same kind of abuse Marlina went through. Rinening, for instance, stated that her “head was boiling” from the words of the police dismissing Marlina’s experience and felt “a clenching feeling in her chest” that made her feel out of breath. Julie had a similar experience where they felt anger manifesting as a warm feeling on their face, especially when the police said that it would take at least a month until a r*pe test would arrive on the island. “Javacentricism is violent.” Julie stated, referring to the lack of resources from the government in non-Javanese islands.

Shelby, on the other hand, felt numb and had to roll her eyes because she “knew that talking to the police would amount to nothing” as it reminded her of talking to authoritative figures in school who would dismiss the importance of the subject before she would even begin sharing her story. This numbness that Shelby highlights is an important part of pain as an affect that is so fraught with power structures and a history of oppression. “There is a connection between the over-representation of pain and its unrepresentability. [We] may not be able to describe ‘adequately’ the feelings of pain, and yet [we] may evoke my pain, again and again, as something that [we] have.” (Ahmed 22) The series of horrific events Marlina went through parallels the everflowing nature of terror-filled stories that participants have shared with me throughout this research. Even in writing this thesis, by exposing myself, witnessing others’ and bearing all of our pain, I have experienced both the suffocation and the numbness of such affects. This is precisely why our community needs art to communicate the pain—to transfer affect without the need of the emotional labour of reciting, and therefore repeating, the pain over and over again. This scene invokes affects in so many participants because it fully encapsulates the differences in how patriarchal oppressors and subjects have

bodies that differ in mobility and attunement, how affects surface on the body in a myriad of ways, and how the positionality of each participant can vary their affective responses. Furthermore, in relation to the other key scenes in the film, the scene is a culmination of demonstrating how patriarchal wounding occurs on both the macro level of institutional neglect and physical violence, for instance, and the micro level of social aggression, shown through examples of gaslighting and shaming. As an audience who share experiences with Marlina, we are thus able to receive her affects even through the most miniscule reactions she gives in this particular scene, without the need for an obvious display of emotional unraveling.

3.4. The Wounded Killjoy



(Figure 16)

One of the last scenes of the film, the final scene many participants reacted to, is the scene where Marlina helps Novi give birth on the floor, seconds after Novi beheaded Franz in the midst of him r*ping Marlina. An intense scene filled with Novi's screaming, both women's audible sobbing, and the high-pitched cries of Novi's newborn baby, it is one of the loudest scenes of the film. It is also the only scene in the entire movie where Surya openly displays Marlina's emotional reaction, facing her towards the camera as she sobs (Fig. 16). Beforehand, when Marlina faced the camera during an intense scene, she would contain her

affects, simply showing a knowingly grim expression before getting assaulted, or showing a sinister smile after murdering the bandits. Correspondingly, the only other time she cried was after her devastating interaction with the police officer at the station, with her back turned to us as the young Topan comforted her by telling her not to cry, literally advising Marlina to avoid the surfacing of her affects on her body.

I argue that the representation of crying, as well as the audience's own reflective reaction, is an example of what Ahmed describes as a 'leak' of bodies. 'Leaky' bodies, I argue, are vulnerable bodies. According to Ahmed, "vulnerability involves a particular kind of bodily reaction to the world, in which openness itself is read as a site of potential danger, and [...] emotions may involve readings of such openness, as spaces where bodies and worlds meet and leak into each other." (Ahmed 69) Furthermore, as Anu Koivunen, Katarina Kyrola, and Ingrid Ryberg explains in "Vulnerability as a political language"⁴⁰, vulnerability shows our capacity to be wounded. "As bodily, social, and affective beings, we all have the capacity to be vulnerable to one another and to the conditions of inequality, discrimination, exploitation, or violence, as well to the natural environment." (Koivunen et al. 4) Therefore, the 'leakiness' of Marlina's body is what allows repressed affects to come to the surface of the body, materially externalised by way of tears. When watching this final scene, Debby wrote that she felt "touched" as she cried along with the characters. "This scene showed the beauty of loyalty and strength of women. It triggered a good memory of when my friends [...] opened up about our experiences with sexual harassment and assault, [as well as] patriarchy in general. [It] gave us this unspoken agreement and bond to always look out for each other [in] this sense," Debby explains in the Affect Log. Similarly, Airis felt "relief" and "calmed" watching Novi help Marlina by killing Franz, causing her "heart rate [to slow] down." By depicting Marlina's shameless and fearless vulnerability, audiences who carry the same

⁴⁰ Koivunen et al. "Vulnerability as a political language." *The Power of Vulnerability: Mobilising Affect in Feminist, Queer and Anti-racist Media Cultures*. Manchester UP, 28 December 2018.

wounds are given an opportunity to have their bodies ‘leak’ and recognize how Marlina’s situation reflects the sociality of their own wounds.

Moreover, not only does Marlina’s embodied emotions affect the audience, the scene is also Surya’s way of ‘unsilencing’ the affects of patriarchal subjects. If silencing is ‘a tool of forgetting,’ as Liedeke Plate theorizes in “Untold Stories: ‘Writing Back’ to Silence⁴¹,” I argue that Marlina’s constant repressing of emotions that express the pain she has felt throughout the film symbolises the patriarchy’s efforts to silence its patriarchal subjects through structural means previously discussed, such as verbal assault, shaming, and victim blaming. Novi, who has been a stark contrast to Marlina’s reserved emotionality, has shown vulnerability in her honesty throughout the entire film. Telling Marlina about her sexual desires as a pregnant woman, yelling at Umbu when he accused her of cheating, pushing Franz back when he tried to physically overpower her, and showing the audience her pain while she goes through contractions before giving birth, Novi is what Ahmed defines as the ‘feminist killjoy’. As Ahmed writes in “Feminist Killjoys⁴²,” in society, women’s aim is “to be pleasing in [the man’s] sight, to win his respect and love, to train him in childhood, to tend him in manhood, to counsel and console, to make his life pleasant and happy, [and] any deviation from gender roles defined in terms of women being trained to make men happy is a deviation from the happiness of all.” (Ahmed 55) Throughout the film, both Novi and Marlina literally *kill* the joy of patriarchal oppression through murdering the men carrying out this oppression, but Novi particularly does so with a vulnerability that is much more apparent. While Marlina, who as previously explained, is a failed woman in the eyes of the patriarchy as a childless widow, becomes masculinized through Surya’s use of the Western genre conventions, Novi is neither a ‘good woman’, nor a ‘good man’ as she completely refuses to fulfill any of the roles prescribed and imposed by the patriarchal figures around her. Thus, by

⁴¹ Plate, Liedeke. “Untold Stories: ‘Writing Back’ to Silence.” *Transforming Memories in Contemporary Women’s Rewriting*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.

⁴² Ahmed, Sara. “Feminist Killjoys. *The Promise of Happiness*. Duke UP, 2010.

showing her vulnerability, Novi kills what Ahmed refers to as the ‘sociality of happiness’ (Ahmed 56), based on a status quo that depends on oppressed feminized bodies remaining silent regarding their oppression.

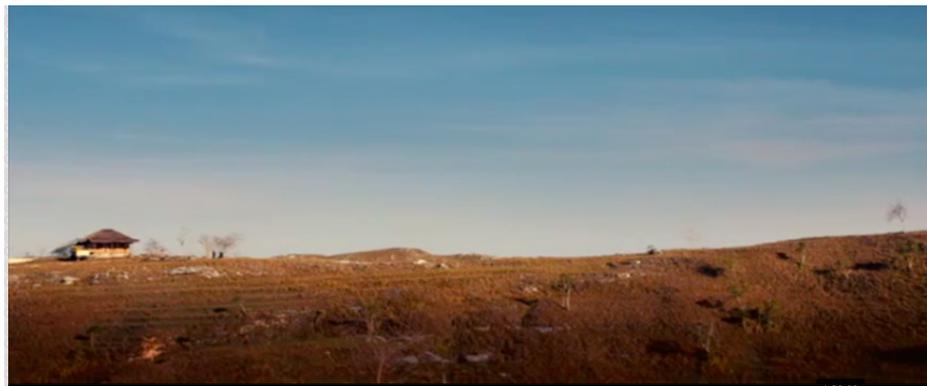


(Figure 17)

Consequently, Surya uses Novi’s character as a vessel for many of the affects Marlina repressed as a masculine-presenting warrior. However, this emotional repression that is typically attributed to the Western hero comes to a bursting climax when Novi’s baby is born with uncontrollable loud cries, symbolising pure human emotion before the social oppression of silencing (Fig. 17). Koivunen, Kyrola, and Ryberg state that “claims of vulnerability can translate to claims to agency and voice,” (3) and this voice unsilences Marlina’s affective experience. “Women’s rewriting [...] aims to remember: by voicing the silent and the silenced, it seeks to propel them into the space of representation that is also the space of remembrance.” (Plate 97) In this last scene, in witnessing Novi and her baby cry loudly with each other, in finding safety in Novi’s presence, and in helping another life enter this world, Marlina remembers every affect she has gone through in the last few days and is moved to tears. Surya shows close-ups of Marlina and Novi sharing tears, laughter, and a hug, depicting the painful mixture of disbelief, relief, anguish, love, anger, wonder, fear, and hope that have culminated through each of their entangled journeys under the patriarchy. “Dominant structures stabilize conventions and naturalize them [...]. Resistance is then seen

as the breaking of conventions, of stable discursive practices, in acts of creativity.” (Wodak 3)

Surya, in depicting this last scene where these two women are able to freely express an affective release, partakes in her own ‘resistance’ and ‘rewriting’ by redefining the patriarchal binaries of masculinity, femininity, and emotion. As Rinening says, “we are finally letting it out. We are tired of holding back. I refuse to digest their words and power, they make me sick. I am already nauseous.” Connecting the scene to Rinening’s response, it is clear how affect is something that not only sticks to our bodies, but also something we ingest; something that enters our bodies and leaves a mark before leaving us, like the metaphor of ingesting food that Rineing uses—like energy. Thus, by representing the complex and dynamic nature of all of the characters’ affects being released, Surya rewrites and redefines what it means to be a powerful woman. In this new representation, Surya, through Marlina and Novi’s characterizations, rejects the rigid boundaries of ‘submissive victim’ or ‘domineering warrior’. Instead, Novi is a killer as well as a birth-giver and Marlina is simultaneously a warrior as well as a victim, a hero as well as a killer, and finds her own peace all the while never receiving the justice she so deserves.



(Figure 18 and 19)

In addition, Julie's reaction towards the ending scene demonstrates once again that a single scene could invoke a variety of affective reactions, depending on the audience's own experience. Watching this scene, Julie felt nervous instead of relieved due to the complications of healthcare in Indonesia and how structural oppression will affect the birth of a new life. From the fire of the kitchen stove their mother was forced to cook on, in the room where the woman who helped deliver them was r*ped moments before, with the dead body of a r*pist still laying a few meters away, Novi's baby is born with a stream of cries that does not seem to stop. Novi, audibly sobbing as she looks down at the newborn child in her arms, nods as if in understanding before gently hushing them. Julie also mentions that "seeing the main characters have a good ending is powerful, but the emotions doesn't equate the overbearing fear" they felt from witnessing the violence in previous scenes. As previously mentioned, affects of pain and fear are so deeply intertwined, especially in the context of societal oppression. Ahmed writes that "it is because no one can know what it feels like to

have my pain that I want loved others to acknowledge how I feel. The solitariness of pain is intimately tied up with its implication in relationship to others.” (Ahmed 29) As Indonesian patriarchal subjects living in a society that does not foreground or empathise with our wounds, we are unable to externalise our emotional labour. As a result of silencing, we are forced to keep our experiences and its resulting emotions hidden, without solace or safety from institutions and larger communities. Therefore, we seldom have the space or energy to carry out the emotional labour of processing these affects, causing them to remain attached to our bodies for extended periods of time, forming wounds and trauma.

Although the pain of wounds and the wounds caused by pain are not a part of our identity, bearing witness to others’ pain authenticates its existence. As Whalley and Miller refer to Massumi, “it will have been real because it was felt to be real. Whether the danger was existent or not, the menace was felt in the form of fear. Threat does have an actual mode of existence: fear, as foreshadowing. Threat has an impending reality in the present. This actual reality is affective.” (54) Before the film ends, there are two more shots, namely the rising of the sun signalling the dawn of a new day (Fig. 18) and Marlina, Novi, and the baby riding on a motorcycle to drive back into the rest of civilization (Fig. 19), all the while the scoring returns to a playful, yet foreboding melody. I argue that by using these techniques, Surya shows the audience a self-reflexive nod of the simultaneous hope and anguish that comes from knowing another day will come, which by extension, also means that we must live another day with the wounds we have. In the same vein of Plate’s ‘remembering’, to expose and depict wounds through art is to bring pain into the political public, which requires giving up the fetish of the wound through different kinds of remembrance. “The past is living rather than dead; the past lives in the very wounds that remain open in the present.” (Ahmed 33) Thus, as audiences carrying the patriarchal wounds Marlina, Novi, and Novi’s newborn child carries, we feel the reality of their affects because of our shared sociality. Due to the

current state of our society, with its perpetuation of oppressive structures, our wounds remain open, bodies remain 'leaky', and affects remain 'sticky'.

Chapter 4: Conclusion

In conclusion, to answer my research question, “How does an Indonesian film such as *Marlina The Murderer in Four Acts* dir. Mouly Surya, through its tackling of Patriarchal Wounds in its society, invoke affective responses amongst its audience?” through using affect theory as defined by Sarah Ahmed, Arts-Based Engaged Ethnography as constructed by Suzanne Goopy and Anusha Kassin, and John A. Bateman’s Multimodal Critical Discourse, I have found that affect arises through the surfacing of our embodied responses, the movement of affect from art to audience, our attunement to the rest of our communities, and the ‘stickiness’ of our bodies as subjects of the patriarchy. Our wounds exist in a socialized context, based on shared histories and structures of power, and affective movement occurs between bodies, objects, and art situated in these very contexts. This is demonstrated in my analysis, through participants’ reactions to most striking scenes of the film, namely when the criminals overtook Marlina’s home, when Marlina severed Markus’ head, when the police officer failed to assist Marlina, and when Marlina helped Novi give birth on her bedroom floor. Although many participants responded to similar scenes, they had their own individual experiences of affects attaching to their bodies.

As Ahmed writes, we all know our pain because it burns through us, and this pain is often represented within Western culture as a lonely thing (Ahmed 23-28). But in Indonesian society, the patriarchal subject does not burn alone. The patriarchy is so pervasive in our culture that it ‘leaks’ into our everyday lives, on all levels of our lives as social beings, and thus the most miniscule sign and symbol, such as the scoring or the cinematography of a film or an actors’ facial expression, become indications of the dangers of structural oppression. And as a result of our wounds, affects ‘stick’ to our bodies. In my analysis, I explain that Surya’s directorial choices, such as the positioning of the camera, the dialogue, the mise-en-scene, the representation of setting, subverting genre conventions, use of scoring,

rewriting gender roles, and unsilencing affects contributes to this ‘sticking’ process. Furthermore, it is precisely because of our wounds that we become attuned to one another’s bodies within our communities, and how art can become a platform and a medium with which we can explore how and why affects of pain, joy, anger, frustration, annoyance, hope, and so on, ‘move’ through our bodies.

The process of this research has been a gruelling one just as much as it has been rewarding. To be able to claim my space within the framework of a historically colonial and patriarchal institution, while simultaneously practicing an active and reflexive mindfulness towards critically reconstructing theories and methodologies to benefit my community rather than perpetuate power-laddened hierarchies has been extremely valuable as a student, communal activist, and ancestral trauma healer. It was also energetically and academically stimulating to be able to tailor my ethnographic research to each participant. Each participant went through the phases in their own individual ways. For instance, there were two participants who withdrew from the research, one because the emotional labour required to participate took away energy from prior commitments, and another because of the triggering nature of the contents of this research.

For the participants who partook in all three phases, their experiences also differed. The patriarchy is traumatic. It is violent. It has wounded us, but many of us do not necessarily live in this trauma every second of every day. Like Marlina carrying the severed head of her r*pist, we carry our trauma, it does not carry us, and this feels differently for each of us. Some conversations could last for two hours on video calls, where participants came with several points of discussion without prompting, while others were reserved and felt only comfortable to share for half an hour at a time. Being a part of the community I am researching, it is important that I already understand how every person has their own ways of sharing and talking, and how, in Indonesian culture, there are implicit boundaries regarding

how much people are willing to share within their comfort. Regardless of each participant's previous experiences (wounds), this research is vulnerable and sensitive at its core, and I had to take great care as a researcher to ensure that participants always felt comfortable to go at their own pace, or sometimes, not go further at all. Thus, my intention was to create an environment whereby watching and discussing the film is opening a vulnerability, allowing affects to move through our bodies in a safe and guided space.

In addition, as a researcher, there were limitations due to COVID-19 and Ramadan that I had to cooperate with. Due to COVID-19, I was unable to carry out my ethnographic research in person, in Jakarta, with the participants. As a result, I conducted most of the research through social media, such as through video calls and direct messaging. I was initially worried that this would create tension or discomfort as virtual interactions could often feel impersonal, but by going through multiple phases, I could build towards a reciprocal relationship with each participant. This was also extremely important as I share actual friendships with these participants, and during the process of this research, I was not only a researcher or a scholar, but I was also building a deeper personal connection with people I hope to share friendships with for many years to come. Furthermore, COVID-19 also hindered my initial ideas of arranging a full cinematographic experience of screening the film, as I had first watched it, so the participants became audience members in the comfort of their own home. Similarly, this hindered any initial plans of conducting group discussions. Although many of us are in mutual social circles, many participants do not personally know each other, and I wanted to mediate the introduction in a space that is much more warm and comfortable than a virtual call. Moreover, a large portion of this research was conducted during Ramadan. Coming from a society that is heavily influenced by religion, as a researcher, it was also my responsibility to protect participants and ensure that they had full control of the content they were watching.

This writing process has been a vehicle for a return to our bodies. The same way that it is our bodies that are targeted, attacked, and taken in our patriarchal society, it is just as meaningful to reclaim our bodies and rewrite how it has been represented in academia for far too long, just as Surya does with Marlina and Novi's characterization throughout the film. It has been an emotionally taxing, as well as invigorating experience. The harrowing subject matters of this research permeated my everyday consciousness, thoughts, and interactions. While I was doing this research, I was confronted with every sleepover where a friend would confess that they had been s*xually assaulted without anyone knowing, every time another student came forward about a teacher's advances, every emotional conversation I had with my cousins, every time I see another survivor get verbally abused for coming forth with their stories, every time I have feared for my own life while walking down the road, every time a girl's pictures are spread around schools without their consent, every interaction within queer communities that can not be reported because of our nation's institutional and social punishment of non-heterosexual and/or non-cisgendered people, every time I had to have a male friend with me to feel safe while running errands in my own city, every time a male relative says that they do not believe in r*pe culture, and so forth.

As Roxane Gay says, "I had a responsibility not only to myself, but also to my readers who in response to my trusting them with so much intimacy, asked me to trust them with their own intimacies. I realized when writing about trauma, you have to be prepared to handle not only your own trauma, but being exposed to the trauma of others." Through writing this thesis, I went on a journey beginning with internalizing all the hurt and pain that the patriarchy has caused to reflect on our wounds, externalizing narratives society has projected on to us as survivors to release 'sticky' affects, and persevering to carry on with life in spite of what we have survived, while facing daily micro and macro violence in my own life at that. The writing process has been healing as much as it has been wounding. Oftentimes, it

felt unspeakable in my own life. When people asked me about the process in the midst of writing this thesis, I often could not find the words to describe how I felt other than “heavy” and “liberating.” In writing this thesis, I had to carry the stories of my participants in a way that followed the Western framework of explaining, legitimizing, and validating our embodied knowledge through conventions such as research questions, methodologies, and so on. Yet, at the same time, in doing my research I found community, kinship, and had the space to release affects attached to wounds, to cry for wounds that had not been cried for in a long time, and to expose truths and emotions that were unspeakable before I had this language to guide myself with. It is my pain as much as it belongs to the participants. It is attached to my knowledge, my memories, the way my body moves and holds itself when I enter a room, meet any other person, or tell my stories. The writing, much like affects, is embodied, internalized, and projected back out into the world.

In a way, academia will immortalize my work, stuck in the archives of fellow approved theses. My community, on the other hand, is and will forever be in constant flux and flow. In the archives, my work will be finished. In my community, people will continue to go on their non-linear and nuanced journeys of hurt, power, silence, loudness, pain, joy, anger, love, shame, injustice and victory. Hence, my responsibility as a researcher goes beyond this thesis, and I will continue to build these affective connections for the rest of my life. Because of the ever-continuing nature of this research and the patriarchy, there is an abundance of space for further research to be done. In the context of the film, it would be extremely valuable for someone from the community in Sumba to see how audiences in that specific area react to their patriarchal wounds and affects that arise in watching the film to reclaim the appropriation Surya has committed with this film. This is especially important because Java-centricism is violent and prevalent in Indonesian society, and the scope of this research is limited in my own positionality. In regards to affect theory, it would be very

interesting to see how it could be a foundation for activist work, as an argument for feeling, which has been shamed, hidden, silenced, and reprimanded in our society. I initially intended to create a directly creative research project in which participants would be able to externalize the invoked affects and create their own art based on their experience as an audience to the film. However, due to the limited scope of this research, I was only able to carry out the first half of this process. In the future, I would love to collaborate with my community as an artist, as well as a researcher. Lastly, I would like to gently invite the readers of my thesis to reflect on their own affects and question how their embodied experiences are socialized. Who knows where your emotions may take you.

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Appendix 1: Marlina's Journey (Diegetic Synopsis)

Marlina The Murderer in Four Acts begins with an introduction to its first character; the island of Sumba, in the East of Indonesia, a vast environment in which Marlina's story is set. The distinct sounds of nature invites us into this world; a mixture of rustling of leaves and tall grass, the distant waves lapping on the shore, and the steady chirp of crickets. A bell tolls and the story begins with act one, "The Robbery". Director Mouly Surya guides the story with music and the scenery, cueing us into coming events before they take place. The first act begins with a trumpet, reminiscent of the dangerous, yet heroic masculinity depicted in Spanish bullfighting music. The horizon stretches and Surya shows us the vastness of the sky and the mountains of this terrain, as a croaking motorbike drives through uneven roads towards a home on the peak of a hill. There is a headstone on the front of the house with the name Topan written on it and the man riding the motorbike parks hops off to touch it curiously. Marlina opens the door to her home, clearly confused by this man's presence.

There is a quietness to their interaction, a feigned politeness that only builds tension as all music ceases. Surya forces our attention on what is left; their dialogue, that feels as though it may explode at any given moment, and the sounds of nature a reminder of how alone Marlina truly is on the edge of this seemingly empty island. Absurdly, they exchange pleasantries despite the fact that he is clearly an uninvited guest in Marlina's home. The man has no care for Marlina's obvious reluctance as he sits on her living room floor and begins playing his ukulele, disregarding the mummified corpse sitting in the corner of the room. Marlina, who has recently suffered great loss with the death of both her child and her husband, is now alone and this man seems to know it.

As if stuck in a bad dream, Marlina wearily serves her unwanted guest and she hides in the kitchen, her inner turmoil far away from us. Tension rises as Marlina begins to question her safety, and this is juxtaposed by the soothing sounds of the fire crackling in the kitchen,

the sight of the afternoon light streaming through the cracks of wooden and bamboo walls of the house, and the sounds of her livestock outside providing a sort of companionship for Marlina. There is a gentleness to this light as it illuminates the man and Marlina, whilst her mummified husband sits in the shadows. Their dialogue, initially polite has now turned venomous, and the man tells her that he is not alone, his friends will arrive, shortly, they will steal her livestock, and “go to bed with her.”

An abrupt jump cut shows us that nightfall has arrived. Remaining in the kitchen while she finishes cooking dinner, Marlina gathers herself. Distraught, but not panicked. Fearful, but not horrified. Her inner turmoil is hidden away from us. The other criminals arrive with a truck that feels menacing compared to Marlina’s humble home, and they greet the man who we learn is Markus, the leader and eldest of the gang. In the quiet night, pleasantries, hollers, and laughs are exchanged. The jovial camaraderie between them only heightens the tension because it becomes clear that these acts of taking are a routine for them—both of women’s belongings and their bodies. It is not long before they demand to be served dinner; chicken soup. Marlina cautiously retreats to the kitchen—a clear safe haven and spatial shield from the men—and her fear begins to rise to the surface as she breaks the fourth wall, staring down the camera with a glare. In the eerie glow of the fire, Marlina cooks dinner and secretly puts poisonous berries into the broth. Once the food is cooked, the living room becomes a well-lit tableau featuring the juxtaposition of Marlina tensely serving the men chicken soup, rice, and tea, while her mummified husband sits in the corner, eyes closed and peaceful. Marlina says nothing, keeps her head bowed in waiting. She looks at us once more, scared yet resolute until each man falls. Then, she lifts her head and gives us a hint of a ghostly smile.

After Marlina murders the other men, she enters her bedroom where only Markus is left alive, napping. After her attempt to poison him fails, he physically overpowers her and

everything becomes extremely still except for the sinister sounds of Markus' abuse. It only takes a few moments for Marlina to flip him around and whilst he is still distracted, she grabs his golok and chops his head clear off, blood softly splattering on the walls. The gore feels oddly clean and distant, yet mortifying and disgusting. Surya does not spend time focusing on Marlina's pain or sorrow, nor does she create a spectacle out of Markus' killing. Tonally, everything unfolds very matter-of-factly, as if in an almost sarcastic or annoyed manner, despite the bubbling tension that is particular to thrillers. Absurdly, after Marlina has killed Markus, she whips out a phone that feels as if it came out of nowhere, and tries to call a number that is unavailable. It raises the question of when the film is set, why she had not called for help when Markus first arrived, and whose help she seeks. The first act ends with a lamentation on the environment once more; a piano plays a tune, the moon is full, the curtains in the living room billow in the nightly breeze as Marlina, alone and wrapped in different cloth now, leans her head on her dead husband's shoulder after putting away the bodies and burning Markus' guitar. She does not cry, she does not rage. She only sits in quiet reflection as she looks out into the distance.

Act Two, "The Journey", begins the next day, far away from Marlina's home as she walks on the road that stretches long before her. She has changed into much more feminine colours—pink and red—and she carries Markus' purpling head strapped in place by white cloth. Her journey is quickly interrupted by a pregnant woman, Novi, who approaches Marlina with caution as the severed head comes into view. "*I'm going to bring it to the police station.*" Marlina simply says. Disregarding it out of politeness, Novi rants about the pain her now ten-month-long pregnancy has caused her body and the lack of understanding her husband, Umbu, has for her. She reveals that Umbu accuses her of cheating, which is why, according to superstition, the baby is a "breech baby." Marlina is clearly annoyed and in a deadpan, sharp voice, she states that she does not understand Novi's pain as her own son,

Topan, passed away after his eighth month. When a public transport truck arrives to pick up the two women, Marlina threatens the driver with Markus' stolen golok, demanding a trip to the police station. All the other passengers, who are men, leave and complain about women "always causing trouble." There is a sense of black comedy throughout Marlina's travels in the truck, even as they meet other people who address Markus' severed head. Barely any words are exchanged and the only sound comes from the loud local radio. Instead of tension, there is a feeling of awkwardness and an avoidance to the danger Marlina possesses as a person carrying such a deadly weapon.

This absurd playfulness, however, quickly dissipates when Marlina passes by the truck that belonged to the criminals, driven by two of the youngest men who left Marlina's home to take her animals away before dinner. The two men are on their own journey to return to Marlina's home, with the intention of picking up the rest of their gang, only to find their corpses instead. On the other hand, Marlina, while relieving herself on a hill with Novi, begins to hear the very same notes Markus played on his guitar. On the top of the hill behind her, she sees his headless body sitting criss-crossed the way he did on her living room floor. Frightened of this ghost that has followed her, Marlina tells Novi that she was r*ped and that she killed them all. Novi, bewildered, questions Marlina why she intends to report them to the police when she has already killed them, warning her that they might accuse Marlina of murder despite it being in self-defence. Cutting their argument short, Marlina hides when she hears the motorcycle and sees the remaining two criminals overtake the truck and hold the other passengers as hostage. Novi, attempting to help her friend, distracts the men by misdirecting them in the other direction, and the men take her as hostage as well. Now left with only a horse and Markus' reappearing ghost, she embarks on the rest of the journey on her stead—her bag that holds the golok on one side of her hip and Markus' wrapped head on the other.

Act Three, “The Confession”, begins with Markus’ guitar permeating the sound off screen, a knowing greeting before his severed body comes into view, walking in time with Marlina who slowly journeys on the horse. Arriving at the police station, the sounds of the ocean and the whipping wind blend in with the shouts of boys playing on a makeshift soccer field in the sand. Distracted by a little girl who calls out to her, Marlina is offered food at a modest warung and she decides to sit for a meal, neatly putting away the wooden box and market bag she carries next to her. Ironically, the little girl recommends their chicken soup to Marlina. Marlina, seemingly open and approachable for the first time, smiles warmly at the child and asks her for her name. Topan. Marlina laughs drily at this, “same as my child’s name, he’s a boy though.” She tells the girl. Topan nods, saying that her mother gave her a boy’s name so that she will grow up as strong as one. Despite her young age, Topan speaks as though a professional adult, serving Marlina satay and iced tea. Although bemused, Marlina is worn out from the tiring journey, and there is a dangerous edge to her stare as she eyes the police station from the window. However, with Topan, she remains playful and asks the child if she can leave the wooden box with her at the restaurant, which Topan is curious about. Lightheartedly, Marlina tells Topan that if she opens the box, demons will come out. “It’s a secret, not for kids. Otherwise your daddy will be angry.” Marlina warns teasingly.

Now inside the police station, Marlina sits in the waiting room that has been taken over by an entire pingpong table. In a mixture of detached exhaustion and suppressed rage, Marlina absurdly watches the police officers play the game before she is called into the office. The office is clearly run down; walls are moulding, paint has crumbled off, and documents are messily strewn about. Sitting by the wooden desk, the officer asks Marlina to detail the events, his tone matter-of-fact and a cigarette lazily dangling from his lips. Marlina is then put in the position that is painstakingly familiar to survivors. Carelessly questioned by the authorities, Marlina struggles to remember every vivid detail of the violence, tripping over

her words and getting her facts muddled. The officer tells her instead that in order to process her report, they will need to investigate her home and gather evidence, but there are no vehicles available for another few days and it will take another month for the equipment to arrive at the island. Marlina, losing hope, realises that these men will be of no help to her. Dejected and frustrated, Marlina returns to the restaurant and begins to sob as Topan holds the older woman and tells her not to cry. Staying with the child, Marlina takes a shower by the water and takes a nap in Topan's room. While Topan remains asleep, Marlina awakes and discretely takes Markus' severed head out of the wooden box to transfer it into a drawstring sack. Taking the rest of her belongings, Marlina kisses Topan's head before journeying back home on the horse. The sun is ruthless once more and she stops on the side of the road to relieve herself. Before Act Three ends, Marlina grabs her phone and dials a number.

Act Four, "The Birth," returns our attention to Novi and the other truck passengers who were held hostage by Franz. Waiting on the side of the road, the hostages watch Franz clean blood off his own golok as the other bandit drags the now bloodied body of the previous truck driver away to bury. The rigid air of fear and anxiety doubles when Novi's phone begins to ring and Franz tells her to pick it up. "Umbu?" She calls out to him and begins to cry into the phone. On a power high, Franz grabs the phone and tells Umbu lies of Novi sneaking away to meet men without his permission, only heightening Novi's distress. The other passengers retaliate and attack Franz before running to overtake the truck and run away. Borrowing a phone from a house by the street, Novi hurriedly calls Umbu and convinces him to meet her so she can explain the previous call. The other passengers take her to the hill where Umbu awaits. Novi, who seems relieved to finally be with her husband, begins to recite everything that happened, starting with meeting Marlina that morning. Umbu cuts her off and begins yelling at Novi about having to provide for her when the baby she carries is a 'breech baby'. Novi refuses his accusation and yells back at him, calling him an

idiot for believing such lies. Umbu, in a flurry, hits Novi before leaving her angrily yelling on the ground. Franz then comes into view and we realise that he was watching the events unfold from the top of the hill this entire time. Although Novi puts up a fight, Franz forces her to call Marlina with her phone. Novi tries to lie at first, but quickly begins to cry out of fear and begs Marlina to help her. Franz, now on a short fuse, demands Marlina to bring home Markus' head before hanging up. Riding on the back of Franz's motorcycle, Novi journeys to Marlina's house, which feels far away, as though it is located at the very edge of the island.

Arriving outside of Marlina's home, Novi's water breaks and drips down on the ground below her. Wordlessly, she takes the clothes hanging to dry on the bamboo rack outside the house and goes inside. The house is now empty apart from the body of Marlina's husband still sitting in the corner of the living room. The score turns into a distracting flute and a sinister rhythm as Novi finds the corpses of the other bandits piled in a room. Retching, she grabs the golok on the pile of bodies before struggling to waddle to the kitchen. While Novi changes into Marlina's clothes, Franz weeps for Markus. The sun sets, and the full moon forebodingly mimics that of last night, and we are left to wonder of the danger we will see this time around. Franz comes out of Marlina's room and unravels the cloth around the husband's corpse to use for Markus' headless corpse instead, now posed in the same position, as Novi watches wordlessly. Surya breaks the fourth wall once more as Franz and Novi stares at us, forming a chilling tableau as they sit criss-crossed on Marlina's living room floor with two different male corpses pillaring them on either side.

The image is interrupted by Marlina returning home and she quickly hands over Markus' head and checks on Novi's well-being. "Can we go now?" Marlina asks, but Franz demands Novi to cook for him and for Marlina to keep him company before they go. In front of Franz, Novi's face hardens and asks him what he wants to eat—chicken soup—but in the

safety of the kitchen, Novi is distraught and erratic as she haphazardly pours water in the pot. She cooks all the while quieting her own cries of pain as her contractions come and go. Suddenly, she hears Marlina weeping and screaming for Novi's help from the bedroom. Novi turns to us once more, a grim look on her face before grabbing the golok and cutting once while Franz is on top of Marlina. While Franz is frozen in shock, Marlina moves from beneath him and holds Franz down as Novi cuts one more time, severing his head as Marlina did with Markus. Novi gently falls to the ground and Marlina quickly comes to her aid and helps her give birth, guiding her breathing. The loudest sound heard in the entire duration of the film is the sound of Novi screaming and the squelching sound of a baby coming out of her. Marlina laughs breathlessly, smiling as she cries and hands over the baby, who is suddenly already wrapped in cloth, to Novi. At the sight of her baby, Novi cries as well. The two women share a hug and cry together, as if finally releasing all of the relief, grief, sadness, and happiness. The sun rises one last time, the electric guitar theme returns as the motorcycle roars, and this time it is Marlina and Novi on it, riding back towards civilization. The music turns wistful, like a playful goodbye with a hint of something whimsical and warning as Markus' guitar finishes its theme one last time and the screen fades to black.

Appendix 2: Phase 1 Survey Format

Brief Introduction

For reference, here is a summary of the project:

- What is affect?
 - Affect is about emotions, feelings, and embodied experiences
 - If you're interested in the theory, I mainly use Sara Ahmed's book called *Politics of Emotions*
 - Sara Ahmed believes that emotions are specific to social and political contexts
- My intention is to explore how feeling through art can mobilize marginalized Indonesian communities to explore their wounds
 - This will be done through artistic prompts, which are questions that allow you to begin creatively thinking of a certain topic I ask you to discuss
- The movie that I'm using for the case study = *Marlina Si Pembunuh Dalam Empat Babak* dir. Mouly Surya
- You have total control of our interaction; which art mediums you prefer to use in answering my prompts, what type of conversations you would like to have with me, whether you would like to talk, vent, rant, complain, and whatever else you want regarding how you feel your experiences have been, living under the patriarchy
 - If you feel like you may feel about something differently than others, or if you've experienced something you feel like no other woman, femme, or person has, you're also encouraged to share, if you would like
- Phases
 - Phase 1: Icebreaker Prompts
 - Phase 2: Film Prompts

- Phase 3: Communal Discussions

Icebreaker Prompts

**Please answer the questions however you see fit or are comfortable with. You are by no means obligated to answer merely with written words, you have the freedom to be as creative as possible with the answers.*

1. What is your favourite Indonesian artwork (work made by an Indonesian, work set in Indonesia, work that is distinctly Indonesian in content, or work that reminds you of Indonesia even if it is non-Indonesian)? Why?
2. What is an artwork you remember making you feel strong emotions? Which emotions? How did it make you feel that way?
3. How have you experienced the patriarchy in Indonesia? Is there a particular memory/instance you would like to share?
4. How do you feel the Indonesian patriarchy takes form? How has it affected you?
5. Which emotions do you associate with your patriarchal wounds?
6. Are there any Indonesian artworks that touch upon sexual violence/the patriarchy that has resonated with you? If so, what are they? If not, are there any non-Indonesian artworks that do this?
7. Do you feel comfortable speaking about the patriarchy, your patriarchal wounds, or sexual violence in front of the Indonesian public (on social media, at school, at your work place, etc)? Why/why not?
8. Do you feel like your society or community (please specify) values your emotions or discussing them?
9. As a marginalized Indonesian person (woman, non-binary, queer, non-Javanese, etc), do you feel silenced by society (feel like people do not listen to your voice, people do

not believe you, people do not support your perspective)? If so, how/when do you feel this way?

10. How do you feel about making art works that will possibly confront the Indonesian patriarchy throughout this project?
11. Do you discuss the patriarchy/sexual violence with your friends? Why/why not?
12. Do you discuss the patriarchy/sexual violence with your family? Why/why not?
13. Which topics do you think are important to be talked about when discussing the Indonesian patriarchy?

Appendix 3: Affect Log

Phase 2 - Watching *Marlina Si Pembunuh Dalam Empat Babak*

Viewing the film

- (Link to the movie)
- **TRIGGER WARNING: Please be advised that this film contains graphic scenes of s*xual violence and murder. Please contact me if you would like timestamps to avoid these graphic scenes. Please take care of yourself first and foremost if the film is triggering for you.**

Affect Log

While you watch the movie, please keep a note of the emotions that arise for you using the log below. Please add more rows if you see fit.

Scene (or Timestamp)	Affect	How does this affect feel?	Does this affect trigger anything?
<i>Put a brief description of the scene you're watching...</i>	<i>Which emotions arise while you watch? Shame, anger, sadness, happiness...</i>	<i>Is it a sinking feeling in your stomach? Does your heart rate go up?</i>	<i>Does it reflect your own life or the society you live in? How?</i>

Cultural Probes

You are invited to include “cultural probes” that you may produce while watching this movie, or if it reminds you of other moments in your life when you were thinking about the topics discussed in the movie. Cultural probes can look like:

- A playlist of music you listen to when feeling an emotion deeply
- Selfies you took in the height of a certain emotion
- Diary entries
- Notes you’ve made on your phone
- Instagram posts or memes about issues you’ve felt deeply about
- Scenes in TV shows
- Your favourite quotes
- Famous paintings or photographs
- Mythology or literature
- A text message explaining how you feel
- Anything that has connected to you on the topic of the patriarchy (especially in the Indonesian setting)

While you go through this second phase of the project, please also begin to collect these moments, activities, or “probes”. **The next time you feel an emotion caused by the patriarchy, or the next time you’d like to rant, I am also gently inviting you to record your thoughts** (voicenotes, using your phone camera, writing down thoughts, etc.)