



Gaze In The Javanese Women's Motion Concept (Case Study of 'Setan Jawa' The Movie by Garin Nugroho)

Agustina Kusuma Dewi | Yasraf Amir Piliang

ISRD Institut Teknologi Bandung

Abstract

The conceptual conception of women in Indonesia is carried out in various ways and mediums, including movies. In relation to the medium of a social discourse, movies have distinctive characteristics, namely long lasting and spread to various places.¹ Whereas from the perspective of psychoanalysis itself the movie also gets a special place. The psychoanalyst Marxists, for example, see the potential of movie in playing the subconscious so that it has the potential to become the power of mass hypnotic culture.² One view that is very close to the issue of women's traditional arts is male gaze Laura Mulvey (1990). Mulvey explained the male gaze concept in the cinematography industry was overly using men's views. Women themselves are not positioned as self-possessiveness subjects but as objects of male gaze. 'Setan Jawa' The Movie is the first black and white silent movie by Garin Nugroho accompanied by a live gamelan music orchestra created by Rahayu Supanggah and premiered in September 2016. Combining the Lacan discourse and few of Mulvey's concept, regarding the discourse on women, the 'motion' concept of Javanese women in the 'Setan Jawa' framing seems to try to offer the formation and interpretation of different public discourses.

Keyword

Motion Concept, Setan Jawa, Vouyerism, Laura Mulvey, Lacan Discourse

1 Shaheen, Jack (video recording), Hollywood's Reel Bad Arabs: Problems and Prospects, 2008.

2 Miller dan Stam, A Companion to Film Theory. UK: Blackwell publishing, 2004, p.123.

Introduction

The message in the movie is influenced by men who are then conveyed to the audience, while women are only a spectacle. Laura Mulvey said that this was due to the fact that the entire cinema apparatus was very dependent on concepts that emerged from the perspective of men in seeing women, related to the social processes that occur in society, which actually express inequality in social power. The objectification of sex is a major process in conquering women, because by objectifying this, sex becomes a material reality and not just a psychological or something that shows a certain attitude or something ideological. Although each movie displays the character of women, but in that genre—through long-standing movie production practices movie a place for women is only an additional role so that the image and actions of women function become very rarely and/or are not important in the narrative. In these narratives, women do not act but only become part of the context of men's actions.³

Male gaze can also mean male fantasies about female figures, women are also directed 'to be look at ness'. In order for women to be positioned as pleasing to the eye, women are displayed for visual and erotic power, described as sexual objects, presenting themselves to male satisfaction. Movies also often feature men as protagonits, women are only used as passive material for male gaze (active). Women have never been won, but presented as 'femme fatales': women who have a strong attraction for men, but cause danger and cause unhappiness. Morally, every motion of female behavior in the movie is considered to have emptiness.

Javanese Women's Motion Concept

Erika Oppenheimer⁴ in her follow-up study on Karl Duncker's research on motion, identified two conditions for visual stimuli to be organized and/or translated into 'motion', namely *the direction* and *speed*. These two indicators are aspects of the findings that resulted from her research on movie. In movies, another aspect that is assumed to also influence 'motion' is *time; duration; intensity*. In movie, motion is actual motion; the actual movement of objects from one point to another.⁵

The motion of Javanese women tends to have a slow (not indolence) concept of speed, a form of motion that impacts time feels slowed because every second in the motion of Javanese women is a manifestation of the intensity of body behavior. The system of understanding the motion of Javanese women presented in subtle, gentle concepts as well as 'objects' which 'must

3 Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and the Narrative Cinema" dalam Tonny Bennet et al. (Eds), *Popular Television and Film*, (London: Open University Press, 1981), p.209

4 A German-American-born psychologist known as Erika Fromm and one of the co-founders of Hypnoanalysis who has an interest in the field of psychoanalysis and works with Max Wertheimer w hen he won his Doctoral degree at the University of Frankfurt (Arnhem, R, 1997, p.157)

5 Arnhem, R., *Art and Visual Perspective*, p.157-160.

be obedient or submissive' then implies the emergence of various forms of exploration of the intelligence of the female body as a means to revive its sophisticated movements.

Javanese women with gentleness are not only questions about women's physical movements but also their 'psychic bodies' which include perception, imagination, interpretation, and understanding of Javanese cultural values. Substantially, the motion of Javanese women is not only a visible movement, but more deeply manifests into a motion that manifests an expression of 'social body'-the palace and Javanese culture, and or a particular institution which in that expression contains deep essence concerning the issue of legitimacy power, belief, ethics, and aesthetics, with various philosophical meanings and symbolic meanings inherent in their forms. The expression of Javanese women's motion is framed in the social and cultural body that surrounds it, which is inseparable from imagination, ideas, ideals, hopes, souls, and feelings, then born into a movement that is 'turned on' through its body.

Gaze in the Javanese Women's Motion Concept on the 'Setan Jawa' The Movie

'Setan Jawa' takes up the Javanese mythology story which is part of the wealth Indonesian culture, which stores noble values and moral teachings rooted in the history and traditions of the people. Mythology contains local wisdom that is able to form patterns of community behavior in order to respect and do better towards something that is considered valuable and sacred. 'Setan Jawa' are told in the frame of history in the early 20th century as an interesting time concept to be explored, diachronic events allow the expression of this movie to move between tradition and contemporary and in a variety of cross disciplines and cultures. This movie brings together contemporary perspectives with traditional dance, music, and fashion in the wider space of interpretation.

The dialectics of words and images in the 'Setan Jawa' is constant in the interwoven signs that culture interwoven around that. The question arises that behind the words, the subconscious idea, the main reference in the mind is the image, the impression of external experience that is printed, painted, or reflected on the surface. Awareness of self-concept as an identity. The relationship between words and images reflects, in the fields of representation, tagging, and communication, the relationships that are placed between symbols and the world, their signs and their meanings. In movies, women are often portrayed through imagery of human beings who lack intelligence, irritability, easier to cry; even if there is a picture of an independent woman, in the end women are shown as examples of women who oppose the reality that lives in the community. The appearance of an image like this is constructed through the view that women are only responsible for activities in the house and women are under the control of men. This view occurs through values that are formed and manifested by patriarchal society.

Mulvey's Essay was written as his claim to the dominant discourse that existed in Hollywood cinema, women were always made as objects for men. This male gaze perspective is adapted into a story and then shown to the public who are not only men but also women. The agenda for deconstruction of the perspective in movie, revealed by Mulvey through his two essays 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema' and 'Afterthoughts on Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema', was written in the 1970s. These two essays depart from the thoughts of psychoanalytic figures, especially Jacques Lacan, who describe the psychological state of a human being.

Through this essay, Mulvey introduced the concept of male gaze while regretting when the dominance of patriarchal ideology remained and continued to be produced for dissemination through cinema. The alternative ideology offered by Mulvey later to the public was a reversal gaze, female gaze. Using the Lacan method combined with various Mulvey concepts regarding cinema and visual enjoyment revealed that 'visuality' is structured gender. There are distinctive patterns or ways of showing men and women.⁶ The female body is positioned as something to be seen and displayed, this can be seen from how they are displayed with a strong visual code and erotic effects.⁷ This is intended to adapt the audience to feel the same desire felt by the characters visualized in the movie.

The Lacan discourse which is used as a method to explain the construction of the concept of motion of women in 'Setan Jawa' has advantages in seeing the text and its relation to subjectivity, so that it can explain how the construction is produced by the text and how the text elements work with human psychic.⁸ Adopting Freud's concept, Lacan states that desire can manifest in four ways⁹: 1. Passive Narcissistic Desires. One can desire to be the object of love from Liyan (or admiration, or idealization, or recognition); 2. Active Narcissistic Desire. A person can desire to be Liyan—desire where identification is a particular form, while love or worship is another form; 3. Active Anaclitic Desire.

One can desire to have Liyan as a way to get satisfaction; 4. Passive Anaclitic Desire. One can desire to be someone else's desire or be possessed by Liyan as an object of Liyan's source of satisfaction. This is how desire to work in a discourse, to be a guide for knowing how a text constructs a discourse and how a discursive power of a text. Lacan has a structured unconscious proposition like language.¹⁰ Language is used as a means to understand unconsciousness. In 'Setan Jawa', there is almost no big close up shooting technique that emphasizes a part of an

6 *"In a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female. The determining male gaze projects its fantasy onto the female figure, which is styled accordingly."* (Mulvey, 1989, p. 19).

7 Lacan said on (Bracher, 1997) that *"Before desire learns to recognise itself... through the symbol,"* Lacan says, *"desire exists solely in the single plane of the imaginary relation of the specular stage, projected, alienated in the other"* (p.40).

8 Bracher, Mark, *Jacques Lacan, Diskursus dan Perubahan Sosial: Pengantar Kritik dan Budaya Psikoanalisis*. Yogyakarta: Jalasutra, 2005, p.19.

9 Bracher, Mark, *Jacques Lacan, Diskursus dan Perubahan Sosial: Pengantar Kritik dan Budaya Psikoanalisis*. Yogyakarta: Jalasutra, 2005, p.30.

10 Bracher, Mark, *Jacques Lacan, Diskursus dan Perubahan Sosial: Pengantar Kritik dan Budaya Psikoanalisis*. Yogyakarta: Jalasutra, 2005, p.68.

object that often constructs female body parts as a source of male sexual satisfaction. The process of capturing this movie does not form a construction through the imaginary realm that the female body is a means to become the object of a man's sexual desires.



Figure 1. Asih (Asmara Abigail) descends from the train with a smooth and smooth motion.¹



Figure 2. Setio (Heru Purwanto), staring at Asih.²

In Figure 1, 'Setan Jawa' does not show the use of active children's desire to make the body of another person to get pleasure. With regard to visualization in movie, the construction of voyeurism¹¹ that is able to offer visual satisfaction is more likely to be related to the imaginary realm than to the real. As in Figure 1, Asih is one of the main characters of women in 'Setan Jawa', in that scenario Asih does not look directly at the camera, but instead points to the lower left axis. In the view of psychoanalysis, this is very important because maintaining the anonymity and separation¹² of the audience so that the audience gets scopophilic (seeing and be seeing) pleasure from voyeurism, the presence of the audience must not be recognized and this is an important condition for voyeurism mode. So that the character may not look directly at the camera and interact with the audience because it will damage the practice of voyeurism itself.

Laura Mulvey argued that the activeness of men seeing gave birth to overwhelming curiosity while women were also passive objects to those visions. The active view of the man dominates the balance and women who become objects and at the same time creates the impression of voyeurism among the audience if the audience feels what the subject feels. Voyeurism is a technique that brings men to sexualistic fantasies. This sexuality fantasy is then shown in the next scene taken with the expression of the dissolve to outside, describing the character of Setio looking at Asih, who in the process of being descended from a horse carriage with subtle movements, showing his social class in society. Setio was depicted staring straight at the camera, but the corner of his eyes showed that he was actually 'in deep-staring' Asih. In this scene, there is a reversal-gaze that positions women looking at men and men staring at women, with the basis of their desire, through the body and gestures as the medium shown in the movie.

11 Voyeurism is a "view" that actively objectifies others, controls others, and shows curiosity. This view must also create a private atmosphere "their desire to see and make sure of the private and forbidden curiosity about other people's genital and bodily functions" (Mulvey, 1975, p.17).

12 "Producing for them a sense of separation and ... condition of screening and narrative conventions give the spectator illusion of looking at a private world" (Mulvey, 1975, p.17).

When the body is an irreplaceable medium to experience and interact with the material, social, and mental spiritual world¹³; hence the concept of the movement of Javanese women no longer raises the desire construction in real terms but has entered into an imaginary order. By using the capital they have - for example intelligence, power and fame - women should be actively and creatively involved in the formation and interpretation of public discourse that is more woman-faced or at least not resistant to women. The visualization does not only make women as objects sexually, but also construct patriarchal power relations. By way of disciplining a form of perspective or way of seeing.¹⁴ On the other hand, 'Setan Jawa' The Movie in this scene, illustrates the existence of male-gaze that was born because of the discourses that emerged from patriarchal culture, a way of view that has been applied to men so far, and this perspective may not be the same, different, in contrast, contrary to the views of women; in which there is a desire for ownership, which stems from a passive narcissistic desire to be an active anaclitic desire; the desire to master for satisfaction.

Conclusion:

Transcendental Javanese Women's Motion Concept

As digital technology grows, the speed of technology changes spontaneous consciousness and perception and flows into consciousness by involving existential human problems where people must always be aware and responsible for their actions. If there are no last two aspects, it could be that humans will be marginalized in this technological community.¹⁵ Parallel to technological developments in Western cinema, quoting Laura Mulvey, who quoted a Hollywood director, Budd Boetticher, as saying, *'What counts is a movie that shows female superhero figures, not what women present. Women are one of the heroes, not just lovers or fears of women who inspire heroes, or even care about women, which makes her act like she does. In itself, the woman is not located in her fragility which is important, but in how the 'body' can be the medium of imaginary things to be concrete.'*

Body movements in motion concept of Javanese women are no longer in the order of fantasy sexuality, but in the construction of motion as a manifestation of a more philosophical

13 Simatupang, Lono, A Performance of Art-Culture Research Mosaic. Yogyakarta: Jalasutra, 2013, p. 58, 74-75.

14 Berger (1972) explained as follows: "Men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at. This determines not only men and women, but also the relation of women to themselves. The surveyor is female, the surveyed, female." This visualization also forms an active / male and passive / female power relation. Men become subjects who see and women become objects that are mastered so that it reinforces the traditional unconscious concept which shows the exhibitionist role of women as looked at and displayed, with the presence of women in visual and erotic codes that strongly make women's construction shaped as to-be-looked-atness (Mulvey, 1975, p.19).

15 Francis Lim, Philosophy of Technology; Don Ihde about the World, Humans, and Tools, Yogya: Kanisius, 2011, p.134.

expression. Regarding the discourse on women, the 'motion' concept of Javanese women in the 'Setan Jawa' framing seems to try to offer the formation and interpretation of different public discourses by presenting other constructions related to the 'arguing' between 'dominating' and 'dominated', between self and others. The eyes of a camera are not likened to the eyes of a man so that the appearance of women in 'Setan Jawa' (Figure 3) is no longer subject to the control of men's gaze.



Figure 3. Asih looks directly at the audience, negating the separation and anonymity of the voyeurism concept³.

With flexible gestures but full of confidence, Javanese women are described as 'heroes' in imaginary meanings; not merely as an object of satisfaction and or fantasy of sexuality. A reversal gaze that identifies women as having full autonomy for themselves, even for their destiny; and vice versa, a man can lose the power of his body when he is faced with destiny. 'Javanese women's concept motion on 'Setan Jawa' are constructed into a more transcendent concept, not only related to values that are formed and manifested by patriarchal society and desire, but also have important actions in the narrative and are not only part of the context and the rationale of a man's actions, but through *her* submission to accept the movement of destiny, trying to give an equal fight to her existence as a 'noble' human being.

Footnotes

- 1 Source: <https://www.esplanade.com/-/media/images/events/2017/s/setan-jawa-04.jpg> 5/12/2018
- 2 Source: <http://www.perempuanindonesia.co.id/images/bankimages/16090067.jpg> 5/12/2018
- 3 Sumber : http://www.iaingrandage.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/MG_9828.jpg 5/12/2018