Attuning to the whisperings: Cinematic epistemologies from within environmental crises

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Abstract

What might be decolonial strategies of acting on the causes, histories, and effects of environmental crises?

Aiming at a complex understanding of situated issues pivoting around environmental crises—as experienced, made sense of, and acted upon by those who are affected by it —this writing centers cinematic epistemologies from Indonesia in the study of environmental crises mitigation practices. The intellectual territory and foundational assumptions of mainstream environmental discourse and visuality fail to acknowledge persisting roots in the colonial, capitalist and patriarchal logic of modernity enabled by epistemicide. I will propose to turn the gaze to cinematic epistemologies—as multi-species assemblages—bearing transformative potential for cultivating the grounds for care as a process of relating, for a different way of becoming attuned to the world. Their inherent micro-political potential lies not in putting forward alternative knowledges, but in alternative (intuitive, experimental, affective) conventions of knowledge production and dissemination.

Keywords: cinematic epistemologies, care, environmental crises, epistemicide, decoloniality, anthropological method

> *And when we try and listen, all we hear is a whispering, and we cannot understand the whispering, because our minds have been invaded by a war. A war that we have won and lost. The very worst sort of war. A war that captures dreams and re-dreams them. A war that has made us adore our conquerors and despise ourselves.* (Roy, 1997, p.53)

These words from Arundhati Roy's (1997) *The God of Small Things* speaks of all the things that I am grappling with over the following pages. A very particular kind of *war:* the historical genesis and violence of epistemicide and its perverse appearance as progress, as something to aspire to: *a dream captured by a war. Whisperings:* as a conceptual placeholder for all those ways of knowing that fail to be legitimized in modern scientific systems. I use the word attunement to indicate that what we are looking for is not something new to be discovered, these are embryonic potentialities for other ways of world-making already existent and operating. The *whisperings* have been there all along. The question becomes how can we make and hold space, how can we care for them? Being attuned to something is different from understanding something intellectually. Attunement needs more. Attunement carries an element of response-ability. My writing here comes from a place of desire to create grounds for thinking and being that are conducive for such an attunement to those *whisperings*.

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The Anthropocene story and epistemicide

We find ourselves in a world where environmental crisis, industrial disaster and displacement are in full cruel bloom. As oceans intrude livelihoods, forests burn and populations are being forcefully evicted a need emerges to talk about these things. In 1995 Crutzen, together with Rowland and Molina received the Nobel Prize in Chemistry for their research on the destruction of the Ozone layer through accelerated pollution. A few years later Crutzen and Stoermer launched the extraordinary career of the term 'Anthropocene', to 'emphasize the central role of mankind in geology and ecology' (Crutzen & Stoermer, 2000, p.17). The 'age of humans', the name given to a new geological epoch, where human intervention alters the surface of the earth, gained traction in many academic disciplines as well as in the art world. It is always the loudest story that is being echoed over and over again and the 'Anthropocene' story is one of those. A story that tells us over and over, that 'human activity' has become the central driver of changes to the earth systems, has become mainstreamed and normalized even though (or precisely because?) it carries only the concerns of some. It speaks:

> *We (humans) are all the same. We are together in this.*
> *Are we?*
> *We are not all the same.*

We are not equally creating environmental and post-industrial disasters and we are not equally experiencing these disasters. Environmental crisis is a global problem that is caused and experienced unequally. In Indonesia and many other locales, mainly of the Global South, the temporality of environmental crisis is different. The climate apocalypse does not linger on the horizon. It already happened. This is the aftermath. In what Lempert (2018) calls the 'post-apocalyptic present', dealing with climate crises and post-industrialism is not a choice or a theoretical intellectual task, but an everyday reality.[1]

In addition to the 'generalism of agency' (Berlant, 2020) and its washing over social inequalities, another point of contention against the Anthropocene story is its obscuring of violent histories and structural root causes. A more complex historical gaze replaces the universal Human with a very particular kind of human: Modern Man, 'the self-making and planetary destroying CEO' (Haraway, 2016, p.32). Modern Man is a conceptual placeholder, embodying a being and doing in the world that originated during the industrial revolution of England and was then exported to the rest of the world under the hopeful yet fraught banner of 'progress'. How we think of our being in the world determines how we act in the world. Modern Man understands himself from the arrogant and delusional assumption of human exceptionalism, the idea that humans are outside of nature and therefore in a position to control and exploit it as a resource. The Modern Man way of being in the world is a tremendously violent concept that creates empirical realities with the most horrendous implications. Years after the introduction of modern and scientific ways of thinking, during my fieldwork with Indonesian film communities and in the years afterwards contemplating, it has become crystal clear that the persistence and continuing force in scale and circulation of epistemicide for the sake of 'rational', 'objective', 'universal' knowledge, and related to this modernity's foundational dualism between nature and culture still reverberates and has brutal effects on so many levels and lives. The two short films around which the discussion in the later part of this article will pivot are poignant examples of these reverberations. Among those who still cling to this worldview, it finds its perverse mutations in accelerationist techno-fixings, geo-engineerings for further domination and dreams of colonizing Mars for ultimate alienation. The proponents of this story adhere to subsequently

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[1] For a critical consideration of the differing crisis temporalities see for example Danowski & Castro (2017) and for a discussion of artistic practices emerging in such places refer to Lempert (2018).

changing variations of 'progress' narratives of civilization, modernization and globalization. Stories that map cultural differences in both hierarchical (modern, non-modern) and temporal terms (the idea of a linear progress towards modernity across space and time). Beautiful stories of 'salvation', 'progress' and 'development' that do not tell of 'the networks of sugar, precious metals, plantations, indigenous genocides, and slavery' (Haraway, 2016, p.48). Adding stories of the entanglement of slavery and race in global capitalism to the discussions around human interventions and geology, Katryn Yussof's (2018) story of *A Billion Black Anthropocenes or None* reminds us that 'no geology is neutral' (p.108).[2]

Calling into remembrance 'the pathways of violence through which modernity was built' (Berlant, 2020) is important because these violences persist. The fact that the physical presence of the colonizers has formally ended means nothing when a logic of violent domination— pierced onto lands, bodies, minds and souls—persists. Following Quinzano, a sociologist, activist and intellectual from Peru, Mignolo and other decolonial thinkers speak of 'coloniality' to acknowledge the ongoing persistence of the forces (capitalism, colonialism and the patriarchy) that make up the very fabric of our world.[3] And this extends to the realm of knowledge production and dissemination. In the war of making the modern world, epistemological violence flattened landscapes of diverse situated wisdoms intorational knowledge to be mainstreamed in modern educational systems. Everything other—the whisperings—was marginalized and rendered illegible to the dominant criteria of what was defined as 'valid' and 'legitimized' knowledge. To critically name the violent imposition of knowledge systems Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2016; 2017) speaks of epistemicide: 'the destruction of the knowledge and cultures of these populations, of their memories and ancestral links and their manner of relating to others and to nature' (Santos, 2016, p.18).[4] Ecologist Dhrubajyoti Ghosh (2019) talks about 'cognitive apartheid' as the 'systematic exclusion of the knowledge of the poor by the educated elite', pointing out that the locations of the perpetrators of epistemicide are not necessarily geographical but epistemological.[5]

In Indonesia at the beginning of the 20th century Dutch colonial officials established a 'highly rationalized, tightly centralized' (Anderson, 2016, p.121) modern educational system 'in complete contrast to traditional, indigenous schools, which were always local and personal enterprises' (Anderson, 2016, p.121). In these spaces, a fundamentally different worldview of 'progress', naturalism and human exceptionalism was taught and scientific method was put as the ultimate benchmark. The following contemplations from a conversation with Cahyo Prayogo (Yoyos) one of my collaborators who is a filmmaker and activist (whose work will be discussed in the latter part of this writing) in Indonesia, gives a sense of the sentiment in the aftermath of epistemicide:

> Yoyos: *The land*
> *The universe*
> *Javanese people see.*
> *What you plant is entrusted.*
> *The Earth is your mother.*
> *What you ruin.*
> *Some day it comes back.*
> *You have to be careful.*
> *Keep it to a minimum, don't damage.*

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[2] Other terms were proposed to describe the current moment that try to grasp the actor more critically for example Capitalocene (Parenti, & Moore, 2016) Donna Haraway's infamous Chtuluzene (Haraway, 2016.) and the Plantationocene (Haraway et al., 2016).
[3] See also Santos (2016; 2018); Grosfoguel (2013); Cupples & Grosfoguel (2018).
[4] For the notion of epistemicide also refer to Santos (2016; 2018).
[5] The quote is from Acharya (2019). A video lecture with Dhrubajyoti Ghosh (2017) elaborating on the notion of cognitive apartheid can be found here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i0fRbwHOokU.

They know about the rain.
Everyone is getting ready.
The ants are getting out of the ground.
When there is a big rain.
They are getting out of the soil.
The dragonflies.
They come to the house.
Wind.
A circle.
There is going to be long rain.
Nature has signs.
And can advise something.
There is a sign.
A tsunami is coming.
There are fish coming out of the sea to the beach.
The fish came out of the sea two days before in Palu.
These are the signs.
This is very technological.
These signs.
This knowledge.

Rosalia: *Where do you learn about these things? In school?*

Yoyos: *No not in school.*
When colonialism entered Indonesia.
There was a knowledge clearing.
Because with logic it is not possible to understand this.
Colonialism brought formal schools.
Before we learned from the village, from the family, this was most ideal.
Before it was all normalized.

Rosalia: *Does it still exist?*

Yoyos: *A little.*

Translated excerpt from Cahyo Prayogo (Yoyos) in conversation with Engchuan on 12.10.2019 in Yogyakarta, Indonesia

The question of legitimization of knowledge systems is fundamentally a question of world-making, of their actualization in policies and mitigation strategies. There is an intimate relationship between the discrediting and eradication of certain knowledge systems and the domination of the neoliberal capitalist fossil burning West: 'modern epistemology was built precisely to make sense of, justify, and legitimize coloniality' (Mignolo, 2017, 14).[6] Or as Santos puts it: 'herein lies the crucial role of the epistemologies of the North in contributing to reproducing capitalism, colonialism, and patriarchy' (Santos, 2018, p. 6). These modern knowledge systems are the very systems where today most of discussions on the climate crisis are taking place. Global research and policy-making on the climate crisis mostly happens on the level of nation-states and supranational organizations, institutions that build on, assume and reproduce human exceptionalism. An artificial and doomed yet highly productive hierarchy

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[6] The quote is from: Woons & Weier (2017). For a more comprehensive insight also refer to e.g., Mignolo (2011).

posits scientific ways of knowing inside well funded educational systems and at the core of political decision making and sidelines more experimental forms of knowing to the realm of the arts. Those 'imaginations' and 'fictions' do not click in the modern scientific knowledge making apparatus that is the brainchild and perpetrator of epistemicide based on the naturalized assumption that the only 'legitimate' knowledge is science rooted in evidence and has a certain 'nature', provable facts and certain characteristics: male, rational, objective. This chain of assumptions renders truth only discoverable through the methods of the modern scientific apparatus which thrives on the illusion of facts and relegates everything else to the other side of the spectrum. Yet, the notion of Science (as rooted in evidence through method that distinguishes between fact and fiction) and the predominance of facts (as objective and neutral) upon which the modern world is built is highly contestable.[7] Indeed, 'there is a lot of fiction involved in creating and upholding the facts' (Wark, 2020) and invite us to 'think of the Enlightenment as a kind of fiction about facts' (Wark, 2020). When all we care for is that which is actualized and not the unactualized potentialities then we have a problem and we do have many problems. Instead we may shift our attention towards caring for unactualized potentialities. We need what Donna Haraway calls 'speculative fabulation'.Yusoff and Gabrys (2011) likewise make a case for imaginative thinking practices because 'imagination not only shapes the perception of the climate change but co-fabricates it in ways that effect the possibilities to act on it' (2011, p. 520).

Epistemicide left us (all of us) with structures and institutions for the repetitious actualization of the Modern Man worldview and over time created the illusion as if our contemporary spiraling towards ecocide in neoliberal capitalism is the natural and only way of our world. Capitalist realism (Fisher, 2009) is a sad testimony to the fact that it is now easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism.[8] However, we have to remember that 'what appear to be ontological matters are in reality historical matters parading in ontological garb' (Todd, 2005, p. 14). Epistemicide is foreclosure of other possible worlds. Thinking with Arundhati Roy, it is the 'war that captures dreams and re-dreams them' (Roy, 1997, p. 53). The whisperings are those knowledges that remain unactualized potentialities for other worlds.

The main evil against which we must be fighting are not greenhouse gas emissions, changing water levels and temperature changes, these are only symptomatic of the logic of Enlightenment modernity, the idea that we are not related, somehow separate from and exterior to our environments. Our main blockage to be overcome is the conceptual division between nature and culture, subject and object, the idea of nature as resource, landscape as backdrop, the fundamental assumptions behind the neoliberal capitalist project that takes us —some more than others — down a deadly spiral towards extinction.

The conceptual error that this article contends with—and I am not the only and not the first one to say this—is the assumption of the nature culture divide and the neoliberal exceptional human at the center of the world, in all its omnipresence and naturalization. It has been exposed by many as a 'foundationless foundational claim' (Blaser, 2013, p.551) or 'the foundational delusion of the West' (Plumwood, 2001, p.26) in ecofeminist philosophy.[9] Other ways of relating to and being in the world have persisted despite everything and anyone who has looked beyond the West knows that the separation of Man from nature does not apply everywhere in the world. Anthropologists have over and over 'debunked the 'nature- culture distinction' as a peculiarly western invention, inapplicable to their specific field site' (Heywood et al, 2017, p.4).[10]

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[7] See for example Haraway (1988) and Latour & Woolgar (1986) among many others.

[8] For the notion of capitalist realism see Fisher (2009). The quote 'it's easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism' is the title of the first chapter where the phrase is 'attributed to both Fredric Jameson and Slavoj Žižek' (Fisher, 2009, 2).

[9] Other thinkers to be mentioned here are Donna Haraway, Anna Tsing, Rosi Braidotti, Isabelle Stengers.

[10] This line of thinking is often summarized as the Ontological Turn and is sometimes traced back to Marilyn Strathern, who ahead of the emergence of the notion, in *The Gender of the Gift* (2001) did the analytical move of inventing new concepts rather than explaining difference

Amerindian critical theory and the ontological turn has been picked up by scholars looking at entirely different locales, Yuk Hui's (2008) speculations on the question of technology from China for example, builds on Philippe Descola, Viveiros de Castro and Tim Ingold. [11] The biologist and evolutionary theorist Lynn Margulis, grounded in her studies of microbes and bacteria, argued, that we are all made of collaborative bacteria and that symbiosis is the driver of evolution.[12] She proposed an evolutionary theory, a becoming-with that is based on cooperation and not a Neo Darwinian survival of the fittest and competition. Her story of 'the intimacy of strangers', proposing a worldview of collaboration and inter-dependency, was dismissed from becoming legitimated knowledge because it does not fit the neoliberal, capitalist colonial enterprise. Her formative paper was rejected by about fifteen journals.

On moving beyond critique

Paying attention to 'the reconstruction of genesis: by bringing back into view the conflicts and confrontations of the early beginnings and therefore all the discarded possibles, […] retrieves the possibility that things could have (and still could be) otherwise' (Bourdieu, 1994, p.4).[13] It allows to 'question […] the "possible" which, among all others, was actualised'(Bourdieu, 1994, p.4). However, times have changed and 'the emancipatory potential that initially accompanied the articulation of […] critique has dissipated' (Balsom, 2017). In the year I was born, 'in 1988, Donna Haraway recognized that though the critique of objectivity has been necessary, there were dangers in proceeding too far down the path of social constructivism' (Balsom, 2017).[14] And perhaps at this point we may say that 'constructivism has lost its intellectual edge' (Brubaker et al, 2018, p.8).[15] The reason being that looking backwards is important—to understand differently how we got here—yet it is only part of the work. Mere critique is not helping us to move forward: 'even if critical examination of the history and structure of capitalism and colonialism provides a convincing explanation of the emergence of the Anthropocene, it isn't similarly illuminating of the requirements and obligations of existence in a destabilized, upside down world' (Jensen, 2020). For those on the other, colonial side of the 'abyssal line' (Santos, 2018), those who suffer under the conditions of the patriarchy, racism and capitalism—things that can be theoretically de-constructed and de-naturalized as only one of 'the "possible(s)" which, among all others, was actualized' (Bourdieu, 1994, p.4) by the ideal neutral and outside observer—to those, mere critique is not changing the everyday experience of life. It is only the first necessary step. Calls for linking the discipline of Anthropology to abolitionist causes or alternatively 'letting Anthropology burn' (Jobson, 2020) are becoming louder and I wholeheartedly agree with these desires. Instead the more interesting question—as McKenzie Wark (2020) asks — 'is how to move on from a paranoid reading that finds fiction in facts and usually fictions that have power attached to them?'[16] Or as Mignolo (2017) puts it 'once people understand the universal fictions of modernity and the logic of coloniality enacted in order to advance the promises of modernity, the question of how to delink from that bubble becomes the main driving factor of decoloniality'.

Critique is not enough, and for those who cannot afford the luxury of not being affected by the issues under critique, it has never been. Negative dialectics feels like 'a restless form of

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away with 'culture'. This is by no means a discussion of the ontological turn that would do the concept and its contestation justice. Please refer to Heywood et al. (2017) or Holbraad & Pedersen (2017) for an introduction.

[11] Hui (2018), referring to Descola & Sahlins (2014) and Castro & Skafish (2014)

[12] Margulis together with James Lovelock also formulated the Gaia Hypothesis.

[13] Bourdieu was thinking in a different time and context about the genesis of the state but I think the same direction of critical thinking on the question of which possibilities are getting actualized can also be applied to the issues at the center of this writing.

[14] Balsom (2017) referring to Haraway (1988).

[15] This quote is from a very different context (questions of nationalist politics, ethnicity and nationhood). My argument here is not on content but a contemplation on ways of critical thinking.

[16] To unpack the complexity of this beautiful statement: in my interpretation paranoid reading is a reference to Sedgwick (1997) and the fictions that have power attached to them refers to constructivist ways of thinking.

thinking which does not proceed from, or expect to arrive at a transcendental or transcendent ground or principle' ("Negative Dialectics," n.d.) creating frustrating situations, where even from an adverse position we still stay within the same power structures.[17] The reason being that 'rebellion is as much of a cage as obedience is. They both mean living in reaction to someone else's way instead of forging your own. Freedom is not being for or against an ideal, but creating your own existence from scratch' (Doyle, 2020, p.155).[18]

Anthropocene Visuality and the problem of Critique

Anthropocene visuality, as picked up by art historian and cultural critic T.J. Demos in *Against the Anthropocene*, is a case in point of the need to be very careful of the parameters and assumptions of critique. Demos elaborately demonstrates that many of the images that are used to tell stories related to environmental crisis today reinforce universal human exceptionalism. The 'Blue Marble' image of our beautiful Earth for example has become a shorthand symbol in well intended 'climate change' visuality and climate change demonstrations. This image zooms out so much that violent histories and existing inequalities can be conveniently ignored. Human beings are brought 'together visually—and thus socio-politically' (Demos, 2017, p.18). Another example of how 'imaging systems play more than an illustrative role' (Demos, 2017, p.28) are drone images of industrial activity. They register the harm done to the earth but also 'grant viewers a sense of control over the represented object' (Demos, 2017, 28) in this case, the Earth. As visually mediated illusions, maps and diagrams do the same kind of work—and we will come back the question of maps later.

Even from a place of critique of human behaviors, the Anthropocene story and its visuality rests on the ontological assumption of the human being exterior and superior to nature and therefore in a position to extract from nature as a resource:

> '*In other words, Anthropocene visuality tends to reinforce the techno-utopian position that "we" have indeed mastered nature, just as we have mastered its imaging—and in fact the two, the dual colonization of nature and representation, appear inextricably inter- twined*' (Demos, 2017, p.28).

This is an important point to take from Demos analysis of Anthropocene visuality: an acknowledgement that mainstream visual culture and its claim to represent scientific facts is far from neutral, is involved in the obscuring, in fact does the obscuring of environmental crisis.[19] Likewise, thinking with and of epistemicide, the alleged superiority of 'scientific' knowledge crumbles. All those benchmarks, against which *whisperings* (experimental, extra-institutional works) are often subconsciously measured, have huge historical and ideological baggage. Acknowledging this hopefully allows to look at the films that will be discussed in the later part of this article unlearned, with fresh eyes, not benchmarking them against what epistemicide did and defaulting into dismissing them as something not to be taken as seriously as 'scientific' knowledge.

How to move from critique?

Turning to the question that remains. What is the alternative? What and where and how are knowledge practices that might actually become useful to escape this spiral of cruel optimism (Berlant, 2011) and cognitive and social injustices? Or thinking with Arundhati Roy—how can we become attuned to the whispering again? This is a question that I want to contemplate on for the rest of this article by adding to a critique of Anthropocene visuality—as fundamentally

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[17] The phrase is from "Negative Dialectics," the concept roots back to Adorno (reprint 2000).

[18] This is a quote from a NYT Bestseller book that is categorized under the keywords self-help and happiness because it presents to me another (and possibly more accessible way) of talking about the limits of what Adorno called negative dialectics.

[19] For a much more comprehensive account of this argument refer to Demos (2016; 2017)

reproducing the assumption of human exceptionalism—the questions of—who speaks (authorship) and how (forms of language)— of who is in the position of 'representing the world as one's own and in one's own terms' (Santos, 2018, p.6) and in which ways?

Other ways of knowing, thinking and making the world are not less good or less feasible. Their only shortcoming is that they are not legible to the established systems and therefore prevented from being actualized—all the time. The problem is not to be located in the *nature* of this or that knowledge, as something that exists as a disentangled entity or object, but in the legitimizing and world making apparatus that dismisses some and makes others real. Therefore, I do not believe the answer is a complete dismissal of scientific knowledges. These are delusional demands, detached of any empirical experience, often imposed from a position of privileged distance from the everyday experience of climate disasters. We also do not need yet another 'alternative' knowledge or else we will remaining stuck in an endless competitive loop of either or colonial logic of modernity that only focuses on symptoms not causes. The way forward is neither ''indigenous' nor 'modern': no specialist science, no indigenous group, no doctrine or philosophy already holds the key to the future if only we could find it' (Ingold, 2017, 22), it is yet to be mapped out. What we need is 'a more just relationship among different kinds of knowledge' (Santos, 2016, p.42), we need to work towards something like Isabelle Stengers' *cosmopolitics*. Consequently, the analysis that I propose, entails 'an alternative thinking of alternatives' (Santos, 2016, p.42): a moving of focus from the nature or content of knowledge as object towards processes of epistemological convention.

Focusing on processes of knowledge formation rather than knowledges per se, Santos proposes the Epistemologies of the South as 'a set of inquiries into the construction and validation of knowledge born in struggle, of ways of knowing developed by social groups as part of their resistance against the systematic injustices and oppressions caused by capitalism, colonialism, and patriarchy' (Santos, 2016, p.x).[20] Epistemologies of the South is a project that aligns with my desires to argue for, 'valorize and maximize […] (the) transformative potential' (Santos, 2016, p.42) of all those *whisperings*. We have a responsibility and need to cultivate response-ability to make and hold space for other processes of knowledge formation, for moving from monocultural to pluricultural knowledge systems.[21] As an ideality, Epistemologies of the South is placeholder for the many projects committed to epistemic decolonization to accomplish social justice. It is an aspiration acknowledging, honoring and believing in the need for another world. Epistemologies of the South conceptually outlines a vision for alternatives to the legacies and movement of epistemicide. Epistemologies of the South indexes a movement from critique towards criticism, a collective rehearsal where 'we could stop all the critique and we could start to write about what we loved, […], and this could take the form of criticism instead of critique, criticism like what collectives do because they want more collectivity' (Moten et al., 2021). [22]

Cinematic epistemologies and community filmmaking in Indonesia

In the midst of all these violent histories and ongoing injustices this writing was initially inspired by something very precious. I will now turn to concrete empirical examples of cinematic practices in film communities in Indonesia as examples of practices that already perform the gesture that academic critiques argue for discursively. Here the ideality, of moving towards criticism and of building a pluriverse of knowledge practices is already a reality. This is exactly what the people I am so lucky to be working with and unlearning from are doing! Even if they

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[20] Also refer to Santos (2018).

[21] The notion of response-ability (Gordon, 2008) is used by Donna Haraway and Karen Barad and other feminist thinkers to think about the responsibility to respond, 'grounded in the moral practice of assuming responsibility for contemporary events' (Thomas, 2018, p.209).

[22] The phrase is from Moten et al. (2021) which speaks from and to a different context but the overall desires resonate with my intellectual endeavor.

don't operate literally under that banner, the cinematic practices in film communities in Indonesia are in tune with the imperatives, desires and promises of the Epistemologies of the South. They constitute latent possibilities that are embryonically present as ways of being in the world, equipped better to deal with environmental crises, that never quite gain momentum in the same way as 'the self-making and planetary destroying CEO' (Haraway, 2016, p.32).

The thought process leading to this article began with an ethnography of knowledge practices in Indonesia between the years 2018 and 2020, where I spent time with community filmmakers, mostly on the island of Java. In its current form, I conceive of it as a response to (not a representation) of cinematic epistemologies and community filmmaking in Indonesia. This particular writing draws mostly on conversations with two of my collaborators, exceptionally beings, who I am so lucky to have met and have the honor to be working with and unlearning from: Cahyo Prayogo (Yoyos) and Tunggul Banjaransari. The two short films that I want to think with and from in this article are Seorang Kambing (A Goat) directed by Tunggul Banjaransari, a speculative dystopian sci-fi on water scarcity in the Gunung Kidul region in central Java and Sapu Angin (Windswept) by Cahyo Prayogo, an experimental work on land grabbing in Surabaya.

These two short films are 'part of the wider komunitas film phenomenon, an assemblage of film communities all over Indonesia whose activities pivot around the making, screening, and discussing of (mostly) short films. The term komunitas film can refer to one particular community, mostly attached to a university campus, as well as to these film communities collectively. Most komunitas film emerged in the more liberal environment that developed following Indonesia's political reformation in 1998, along with the deregulation of the film industry that had been heavily centralized during the preceding New Order regime. The dawn of digital filmmaking technologies was a key enabler in the expansion of film communities, as it made the medium of film accessible to wider ranges of society' (Engchuan 2021: 225). Elsewhere (Engchuan 2021a; 2021b), I argue that in addition to technology and political conditions it is also a particular mindset of collectivity (gotong royong) that acts as a driver for cinematic practice as a mode of production that does not follow the logic of capitalist exchange.[23]

I am speaking of cinematic practice, because komunitas film do not only make films but also create screening spaces. There are regular, local film screenings on university campuses, at cafés, or at other improvisational cinemas and on a yearly or bi-yearly basis, depending on funding and manpower, there are film festivals in different cities that take place over several days. Films become door openers to create the spaces to talk about local social issues. Many of the films that are produced and screened within this ecosystem focus on local social issues and act as triggers for discussions after the screening. And these discussions focus more on the content than the form of the film and one can think of them as spaces where urgencies that need stories find a space to be articulated, amplified and related to. The cinematic (films) and social spaces (screenings) have to be thought of as co-constitutive within a larger epistemological process and knowledge ecosystem.

Impressed by the variety and sheer amount of the films produced and screened in these spaces, my research became a project of looking at social phenomena through films with filmmakers. I watched hundreds of short films produced within the film community ecosystem. Watching the films and talking to the filmmakers I felt that I got a much deeper understanding of social phenomenon than in any of the articles I have read on these same issues written by outsider observers who just tangentially engaged with a community at a certain place.[24] However, I knew that taken only as objects within the institutionalized spheres of knowledge production these films would not be taken seriously, would always be 'art', 'experimental',

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[23] For a more comprehensive explanation on film communities as a relational ecosystem please refer to Engchuan (2021).
[24] For a critique of tangential encounters through ethnography also read Ingold (2017).

'amateur' but never scientific knowledge or data to be acted upon, (unless interpreted by a researcher).

Methodological considerations for a processual and dialogical Anthropology

This writing comes from an intuitive feeling that these cinematic practices seemed so much better equipped to make sense of and in environmental crisis and that that their de-valuation as non-scientific is in fact a dangerous mistake. I want us to take a step back for a moment to the meta-gesture and desire of knowing as a process not knowledge as a thing. Is the desire not fundamentally about understanding and explaining social phenomena, about engaging reality and understanding our world? Then the question of who can embark on this process and what determines what is considered knowledge is posed anew.

A question that is all too often already answered in the rotten colonial conventions at the core of the discipline of Anthropology as a 'modern science (…) produced by outsiders studying insiders, the latter conceived of as research objects, probable providers of information but never of knowledge' (Santos 2018: 150,51).[25] The tasks are clearly divided, the labour of analyzing and interpreting social situations are activities that mark the domain of the researcher. Something that is done in isolation, geographically and temporally detached from the places where 'data' was collected. Those disciplinary conventions create external researchers who become experts *speaking about,* an act of domination, even with the best of intentions. Holding on to these conventions takes away dignity for no good reason. Looking at examples like these films it becomes crystal clear that this kind of analytical labour is being done by the filmmakers and artist already and better. Representing the world in their own terms, local knowledge holders are in a better position to speak about local socioecological issues. These filmmakers do not exist outside of the modern epistemicidal world system. They are in the middle of it and their whole existence is a question of how to 'negotiate that—not overcome it but actually ride it' (Moten et al., 2021). They have something to say about the experience of environmental crisis and speak from a different place with a different stake. They come from a granular understanding acquired through lived experience. Those who live by the edge of the forest know the forest differently. They have childhood memories. They feel its void once the trees are removed. But they are not legible to scientific knowledge systems. They would not get a doi. The issue is not that these films do not tell urgent and important stories, it is the predominant systems inability to grasp them. The reason for these films to not be equally valued and acted upon as scientific actionable knowledge lies not in some kind of inherent quality but in the rigid and violent conventions of legitimization of knowledges predominant in our modern world. The illegibility of such practices to dominant knowledge systems renders it an imperative to stretch the notion of science.

What I argue for with this writing is a re-valuation of the violent and dangerous prejudices against all things too easily dismissed as *imagined*, *fiction*, *not making sense, intuitive*. It is the imperative, desire and promise of the Epistemologies of the South to 'valorize and maximize their transformative potential' (Santos, 2016, p.42) a practice that is perhaps in tune with Stengers 'taking care of the possible', 'a commitment to take care of futures yet unknown, but that anthropologists should be careful to keep open' (Duclos & Criado, 2020, p.19).

The two works that I want to think with and from in this article are Seorang Kambing/A Goat (2017) directed by Tunggul Banjaransari, a speculative dystopian sci-fi on water scarcity in the Gunung Kidul region in central Java and Sapu Angin/Windswept (2017) directed by Cahyo Prayogo, an experimental work on land grabbing in Surabaya. Both of these films talk about environmental crises in languages that are other to a fact-based and scientific mainstream climate crisis visuality. In order to get a sense of their situated value and significance, it needed for me to engage in an ongoing dialogue with the filmmaker. Knowing here was not something

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[25] Santos, Boaventura de Sousa. The End of the Cognitive Empire: The Coming of Age of Epistemologies of the South. Durham: Duke University Press, 2018: 150,51.

out there, to be analytically grasped, but a process of dialogical engagement. My practice performs this shift in perspective from knowledge as an object toward knowing as a process, both theoretically as well as methodologically. Something akin to Tim Ingold's speculative Anthropology as 'philosophizing in the world, in conversation with its diverse inhabitants rather than in arcane reflections on an already established literary canon' (Ingold, 2017, p. 24).

Seorang Kambing: speculative and subjective future stories

Seorang Kambing (A Goat) is a dystopian and gloomy sci-fi set in a future where the anticipated horrors of environmental crisis are already real. The film is a speculative work that maps the terrain of a post-Anthropocene future, where more-than-human powers steer the direction of history. It takes us into a cinematic world where water scarcity has reached its ultimate acceleration and the endless growth curve of capitalist extractivist dreams has crashed its delusional promises. Tunggul, the filmmaker had already written the script for Seorang Kambing when he was asked to join a project called 'Stories about climate change and us', initiated by an international organization in Jakarta.[26] Interestingly there was a comment from someone on the project team later on that this was 'not a film about climate change' and he was subsequently not allowed to use their logo. His story did not match the expectations of what kind of stories about climate change should be told. These are anecdotal yet concrete and tangible instances, when the Epistemologies of the North operate their judgements against practices and epistemologies, which they fail to understand when they are not attuned.

The film is incredibly rich and the following excerpts are just glimpses:

We see a man in a room sitting on his bed. He puts makeup on a goat.

A female voice from the off:

> *It is one year after the riots.*
> *Luckily me and the other women have left.*
> *We are peaceful now not a lust symbol.*
> *They are fighting over water.*

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[26] I decided not to disclose the name of the organization because this is not a project of pointing fingers or blaming but of unlearning unconscious assumptions and practices of judgement, such as the one mentioned here.

They are stupid and will never understand what really happened.
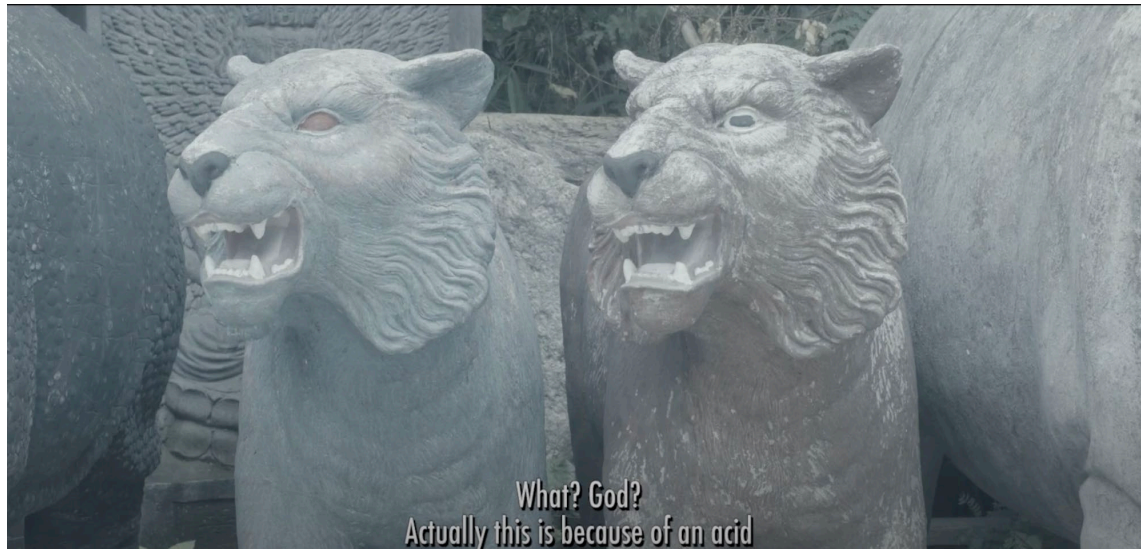
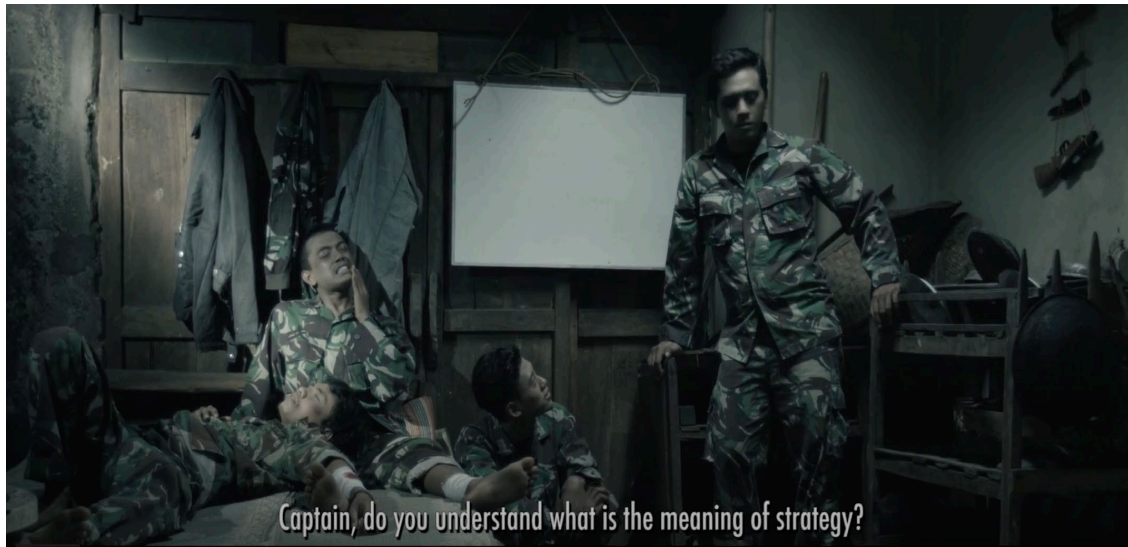They appeal to God but there is no salvation.

Men are clueless and consume dubious drinks made of gasoline. They are talking about a lost goat. There are rumors that a ghost has taken the goat. A ghost that looked like a tiger.

The goats they care so much about are eluding them. They try to count them but fail to do so.

They have to kill the tiger. Then they can live in peace.

The army is trying to come up with a strategy but they don't know what a strategy is. The book where it is written is too long to read and remember.

The army has to be there, it's fake but imagine there is a siege and no army there. Not cool.

We see a man in the cave. He pets a tiger head. A young boy hits his head with an empty gasoline container. He puts the tiger head on and paints his body with tiger stripes.

When the army arrives they are too afraid to enter the cage. They set up a fire outside.

The young boy enters the cage. He shouts: The tiger fainted. Will they live in peace now?

The film leaves this question open.

The film was shot in the Gunung Kidul region on the island of Java in Indonesia, a mountainous limestone area called Mount Sewu (thousands mountains). The predominant topography of the region is Karst and the limestone hills are clustered with caves. The area once used to be covered in vast forest but most of the native teaks have been removed. This has caused an acute water shortage, especially in the months of April to October during dry season. Over the last hundred years this region has experienced severe droughts and famines, seeding the conditions for poverty. With the controversial construction of a new airport in Yogyakarta, the Gunung Kidul is supposedly to become the new Bali, a touristic space where nature is extracted and local communities are being evicted.

Seorang Kambing is the filmmakers comment on the local situation in the Gunung Kidul area. The local social issues addressed in this film are layered. The obvious ones are water scarcity and poverty in Gunung Kidul. According to the filmmaker most people and also researchers talk about Gunung Kidul using what he calls 'the poverty narrative' (Banjaransari, 2019) but he is not happy with it. In our conversation it turned out that he takes issue with a mere poverty framing because it leaves people as passive victims. His diagnosis of the problem in Gunung Kidul society is that 'people are in a comfort zone and don't criticize' (Banjaransari, 2019). To him this is a 'risky society' (Banjaransari, 2019). According to him the issue is also to be located in the behaviors he is observing, and he says he 'does not agree with people's behavior' (Banjaransari, 2019).

The title he chose for the film is a direct comment on this uneasiness. Seorang is a linguistic qualifier used for humans in the Indonesian language. The title thus performatively breaks the human/nature dichotomy and more than anything—as the filmmaker told me mocks humans or in his words— 'I used seorang to make equality or even presenting satire to retarding humans' (Banjaransari, 2018). The goats in the title and throughout the film are a reference to and comment on the Javanese Raja Kaya—the public display of cattle to showcase wealth and social status. 'In the past, rich people would place their cattle and cowsheds in front of their yard as a symbol of their social status. The more cattle they had, the more respected they would be. These people were called Raja Kaya in Javanese' (Banjaransari, 2018) Tunggul, told me about another dimension to this supposedly local tradition: 'Raja Kaya is modern perspective of local tradition, my father said, its started to happen during the colonialism era in Indonesia, it does not come from animism-hinduism in Java' (Banjaransari, 2018). To him the notion of Raja Kaya shows how animals are 'used in socio-materialistic struggle' (Banjaransari, 2018), something he wholeheartedly disagrees with. The title is a critique of the practice of human exceptionalism over animals.

The ominous tiger in the film that is only present in stories is another direct reference to the situated experience of life in Gunung Kidul. In the film we can see only parts of the tiger, its head, which the trail person claims is a bag and later in its zoomorphic form— when the bag is put on the head and the little boy creates the tiger that everyone was searching for. The filmmaker told me that:

> *The tiger is contemporary form to terrorize people in Gunung Kidul. A few years ago there was a rumor about a corpse and a tiger in a cave. The police and the army then put a tiger trap in the cave. That really happened in 2015 maybe. They used smoke to make the tiger come out. But it did not happen. There was no tiger. We don't know if there are tigers in this area. I have never seen one. The main issue is there are many landlords who try to occupy the areas close to the beaches in Gunung Kidul. Now that it is a popular tourist destination many people come here to buy land. The locals know that this increases the value of the area. So the buyers worked together with the police with that narration. Because this area where the corpse was found and the tiger story came up was close to that area. And then it was said that this is not a good place to make the land cheaper. Of course this is my interpretation but after that the prices in the area went down and investors bought the land. So they still use these mythical stories in contemporary times.*

Excerpts from Banjaransari in conversation with Engchuan on 30.11.2019 in Yogyakarta, Indonesia

It is important to acknowledge that this film is, as he also told me when we talked about it, his own 'interpretation' (Banjaransari, 2020) it is neither a truth claim nor a representation but ultimately the very subjective take of the filmmaker, who was born and lives in the Gunung Kidul region. His analysis of the situation is complex, angry and subjective. It boils down to his disagreement with a fundamental condition: human greed, which according to the filmmaker is the root of the problems experienced today. From our conversations it became clear that he takes an issue with arrogant human behaviors that he observes around him. This film performs a mockery both of the binary division of humans and nature and the idea of human mastery of natural resources. The film is a harsh critique of contemporary society's enslavement to progress, modernization and capitalist consumeristculture.

Human greed as a complex phenomenon with many causes and effects: colonialism, water scarcity, poverty, capitalism, is ever present but cannot be easily caught on camera. The filmmaker renders uncanny the relation between causal structures and behaviors in a decidedly speculative stance to make tangible audio visually what will happen if things continue this way. What he wanted to say in essence is that in his opinion people are confusing and stupid and the cinematic language that he employs is one that echoes back this feeling of looking around you and not understanding anymore what is happening.

Sapu Angin and multispecies storytelling

Sapu Angin/Windswept (2017) directed by Cahyo Prayogo shows almost unrecognizable image-slices of buildings, trees and fields in a view from above to what sounds like a mechanical soundtrack. The film is not edited and what audiences are looking at is one continuous shot of 5 minutes and 17 seconds.
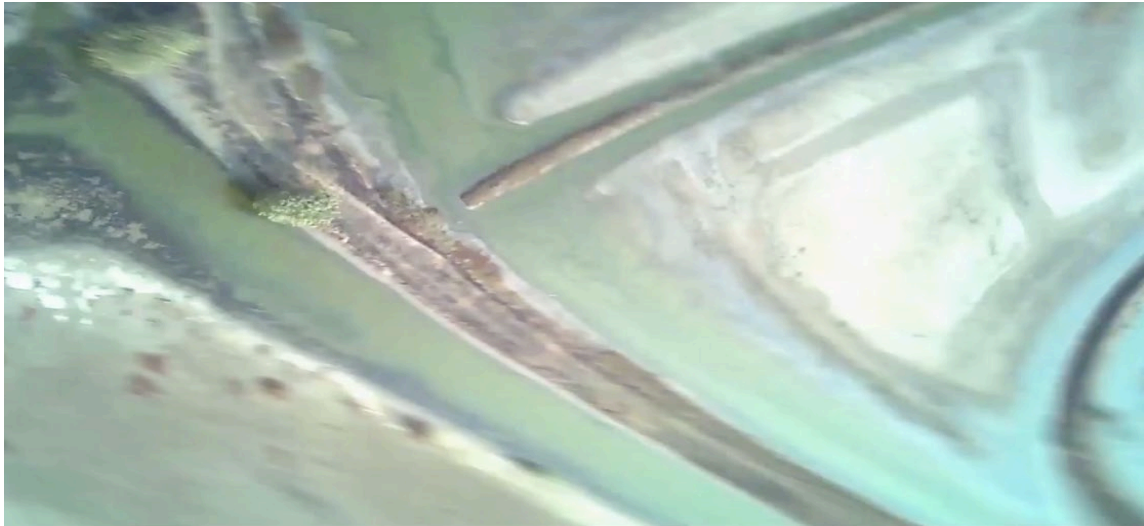
Towards the end of the film we see glimpses of a pigeon.
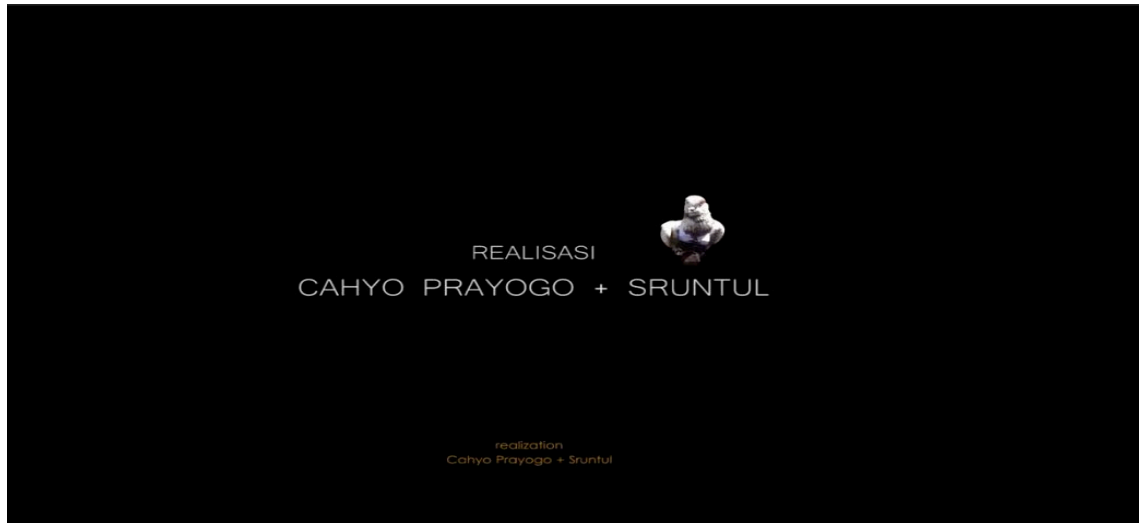
In the end credits the pigeon Sruntul is named as one of the main collaborators of the film.

There is no voiceover or explanation in letters on the screen. Unlike in conventional, didactic documentaries that strive to explain, the local social issues addressed in this film are not directly spelled. They are presented in ways that escape conventional forms of knowledge dissemination. Only in conversation with the filmmaker I was able to grasp the larger embedding that the filmic representation alludes to and stems from. When I asked Yoyos about the background of the film he explained to me:

> *The film is part of a longer project. In Surabaya I am involved with some citizens. The development there is massive and there are a lot of evictions. They have to leave. Politicians do not take side of the small people. I worked with them. Before I was involved in the advocacy sector. I accompany them to deal with the institutions. Because they are friends. This is not my job. I wanted to give a little something. Maybe to entertain so I made something like an exhibition, a festival, something cultural.*
>
> *And after that I often met them. That was back in 2015. So I started to plan the research. Where are the villages that experience eviction at the moment? In the east of Surabaya. There are many houses that are being displaced. And many pigeons also. The effects are not only with humans.*
>
> *The idea came when I met them. With the pigeon activists. I researched with the pigeon communities, with about 5-10 pigeons and then I started to work on the design. There was no reference, no one had done that. I trained the pigeons together with the pigeon community. I worked with them. I knew from them.*
> *I tried to borrow the pigeon. It took five months to train them.*

Excerpts from Prayogo in conversation with Engchuan 25.8.2019 in Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Through this conversation I learned that we enter this terrain from the perspective of a pigeon body flying over a terrain of land in the central Javanese city Surabaya. An area that

has been undergoing enormous changes in both its surface and forms of inhabitation over the last years. The pigeon maps the fragmentation of public space as a result of construction projects that led to socioecological issues experienced by the people he has been involved with for years.

After Indonesian Independence (1945) many people moved towards cities from the countryside and found refuge in kampungs (a loose settlement, that comes with a stigma of disorder and uncleanliness) in the suburban areas. Uncoordinated urban development led to flooding and blaming the encroaching kampung settlements has become a convenient leeway for politicians who set up programs to 'clear' the city and transform Surabaya into a modern city. Pigeon racing is an activity that takes place in those settlements that are now being cleared and moved. Particularly in Java, pigeon racing is big and the huge gates that can be seen from afar have a visible presence in the public space. During a competition a male and female pigeon couple is separated. The owner will be within the gate with the female pigeon while the male is taken away on the back of a motorbike, and released. The smell of the female pigeon guides the male back. The majority male audiences place bets in this gendered gathering space that at the same time encompasses a lot of care for the more-than-human companions. The owners care a lot for their pigeons that can sell at incredible prices. Pigeon racing is associated with lower classes and carries a stigma because of the gambling component that does not align with orthodox interpretations of Islam. Yoyos' film acts from and upon this larger meta-context of capitalist economic expansion, overpopulation and class struggle in a post-colonial setting.

Conceiving of cinematic practice from a relational-processual perspective here means to understand the film as a node in a longer and still ongoing process and also look at the relations that Yoyos has with the people being evicted as well as the pigeon community. Cinematic practice here is only a node in a relational process that is punctuated but not defined by the film and its making that does not end when the final file is exported or the screen turns black. Yoyos himself frames his engagement with local communities who experience eviction and the pigeon communities as advocacy and research. He becomes active in a scenario that he is still in the process of attempting to grasp. In fact, his research and activism with the pigeon communities is still ongoing to this day.

The cinematic counter-map

As part of his research with the pigeon community he told me he started mapping:

> *I wanted to understand this better. I started to make a map. Mapping for resistance. But I did not use text, it was visual mapping. From the air. But I did not want to use a drone, a machine. I wanted it to be organic, more embodied. An experience that is not human. This visual work attempts to not try to imitate the visual of a drone. I really don't want that. So I thought about how can I make this possible. How does the camera work? How can I reduce subjectivity? I used non-human labor. This was a coproduction.*

Excerpts from Prayogo in conversation with Engchuan 25.8.2019 in Yogyakarta, Indonesia

An analysis of Sapu Angin renders inapplicable the assumption that cinematic practice is a human centered process, something done by and for humans. It does not fit the box of human exceptionalism and escapes the purifying imposition of a division of society and nature. Sruntul, the pigeon is a cultural producer. As humans, our perception of the world is necessarily that of a human. But experiencing it from our perspective does not mean

we cannot see it from other perspectives. As Boddice suggests, there is *inevitable* and *arrogant* anthropocentrism 'that elevates the human perspective above all others' (Gruen, 2015, p.24). Yoyos attaching a camera to the tiny body of the pigeon is introducing a more than human perspective on the fragmentation of public space as a result of construction projects. This an example of how anthropocentrism can be not avoided but stretched cinematically. The question I am interested in here is not if he managed to really capture the subjectivity of the pigeon but what matters essentially is that he creates an awareness of the normalized subjectivity of humans that does not include that Sruntul, who is also entangled into larger processes of urban modernization. His practice is a reminder that in order for an inclusive encounter to happen we need to become attuned to not only other perspectives but also to other languages.

Sapu Angin can be conceived of as a practice of counter-mapping that moves beyond a contestation of content towards a speculation on form. The term counter-mapping was coined by sociologist Nancy Peluso in 1995 to describe mapping practices by forest users in Kalimantan in an attempt to contest maps produced by the state: 'the goal of these efforts is to appropriate the state's techniques and manner of representation to bolster the legitimacy of "customary" claims to resources' (Peluso, 1995, p. 384). The countering act in Peluso's analysis is located in the content. Sapu Angin is a practice of counter-mapping that goes further. The countering act here lies in the form. The film opens again the question of what a map is and what it can do.

The cinematic map is in contradiction with the orderly aesthetics of conventional maps that violently simplify and flatten social realities in a project of governance (see also Scott, 1998). Conventional maps convey a feeling of controllability and mastery over concrete objects through absolute vision. What the cinematic map does at its essence is offering a different experience and view of the changing surface of the earth. The film conveys layers of meaning beyond facts. The shift in perspective comes with a shift in experience. The cinematic map works on an affective level, it is experienced. It resorts to an abstract, mechanical language to convey an uncanny feeling about a situation that is eerie indeed. The cinematic map holds affective potential, it distorts with confusion and unknowability of the future and the impossibility to grasp the actor. It argues towards a changing not a conservation of the status quo. And perhaps this is closer to the experience of and makes more sense in a situation where corporations are taking over homes?

Thinking with cinematic epistemologies

As already mentioned, the thought process leading to this article began with an ethnography of knowledge practices in Indonesia. Spending more than a year in Indonesia and engaging in many ongoing conversations I was able to carefully examine the local social context from which these films emerge and upon which they act. This dialogical and processual gaze ultimately left me with more questions than answers but it also allowed me to unlearn some of the main assumptions that often dominate the discussion of artworks. I conceive of this writing as a response to (not a representation) of cinematic epistemologies and community filmmaking in Indonesia and the following thoughts are to be understood as precisely that: beginnings of thought processes that can (and hopefully will) be picked elsewhere rather than finished thoughts, statements or representations.

Cinematic epistemologies and film as multi-species assemblage

The assumption of the director as the individual auteur whose intent translates into a work reduces a multitude of constitutive actants to a single subject, the artist producing an object – the film. This assumption crumbles as soon as one looks at the processes of production. There is always a multitude of actants involved in a film production and in some cases,

as Sruntul shows us, a pigeon can become a cultural producer. These films are more than entities or objects but relational assemblages. The film as an object of analysis therefore does not exist. During the process of cinematic practice, all that is touched becomes co-constitutive. The film comes into being through the relations made among all these elements. This has implications for how I now conceive of film conceptually and methodologically. Thinking of film as assemblage allows for everyone and everything to be constitutive as it overcomes the hierarchical distinctions between the subject and the object, the process and the thing. In theorizing and thinking about film, cinema and video, the smallest unit of analysis then perhaps should not be the artist, or the video, but the assemblage as an 'open-ended gathering' (Tsing, 2015, pp.22,23) among beings from different species, as this article will show.

Cinematic epistemologies and opacity

What both of these films offer is sensing not making sense. We learn from the thick of contradiction. Ambiguity here is not something to be mastered but something to be embraced and explored. The videos perform opacity as the antidote to the ideal of representation. They do not narrate in a line but understand in a field. They do not strive for thin narrative order but demand from audiences to endure with the thick of contradiction. These are practices that as Anjalika Sqagar of the Otolith Group reminds us have to be understood 'in terms of evocation rather than explanation and effects' (2020). What they call 'post-cinematic affect allows a more complex relationship to multiple non-narratives that contribute to not-yet-articulated structures of feeling' (Akomfrah & The Otolith Group, 2020). Stepping away from linear narration and the ideal of representation at the center of the disci-pline of Anthropology towards an approximation of the world is as much an aesthetic and formal as well as an ethical choice with political implications. Linear narration and modes for producing transparency come from a place where someone is asked to make sense and explain themselves, their community, their history. Choosing not to do that is a powerful act of refusing these colonial demands to be explained or explain oneself for the sake of domination. Claiming 'the right to opacity' (Glissant, 1997) such practices entail a promise.[27] A promise to open up new imaginative horizon - on and off screen.

Cinematic epistemologies and thinking care as a process of relating

I want to end with a contemplative speculation on cinematic epistemologies and care. The Modern Man, the outcome and perpetrator of epistimicide thinks of himself as and acts as an individual that is detached. He certainly is someone who does not have the capacity to relate. Donna Haraway thinking with Hannah Arendt's 'banality of evil' relates the question of 'the evil of thoughtlessness' to 'the question of the geohistorical conjuncture being called the Anthropocene' (Haraway, 2016, p. 36):

> *Arendt witnessed in Eichmann not an incomprehensible monster, but something much more terrifying—she saw commonplace thoughtless-ness. That is, here was a human being unable to make present to himself what was absent, what was not himself, what the world in its sheer not-one-selfness is and what claims-to-be inhere in not-oneself. Here was someone who could not be a wayfarer, could not entangle, could not track the lines of living and dying, could not cultivate response-ability, could not*

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[27] Glissant's thinking refers specifically to his own experience and the postcolonial condition in Martinique, but his notion of opacity has been taken on by many, who take issue with the violence that even a well-intended gesture of wanting to 'understand" the Other entails. For the notion of the Other and the West's role in making (defining and understanding) the Orient refer to Said, Spivak, Fanon and many other postcolonial thinkers.

make present to itself what it is doing, could not live in consequences or
with consequence, could not compost. (Haraway, 2016, p. 36)

Epistemicide has brought humanity to a point where we are mostly unaware of the entanglements we are embedded in if we are lucky enough of not (yet) having to be reminded of our entanglements. The COVID 19 pandemic has made entanglements more explicit and tangible and as such the crisis has the potential to be a glitch in the reproduction of this worldview.[28] What I suggest is that video assemblages—as a glitch in the experience of the viewer—can reconfigure how we perceive of our being in the world. And this makes all the difference because it determines how we act in the world. In order to act differently in the world, we need to be attuned to it differently. And the performativity of video cultivates this capacity. The videos I discussed today performatively disturb the false consciousness of human disconnection from our environment that has led us down the spiral of environmental and social problems. And this is where I locate their power.
The videos act as portals for audiences to become aware of our entanglements. They are invitations, offerings and openings to relate to other ways of sensing, understanding and knowing. They offer 'multiple registers on the one hand and new relations on the other' (Akomfrah & The Otolith Group, 2020). These portals for becoming mutually sensitive can generate forms of care. A kind of care that comes from a place of a radical recognition of inter-dependency and relatedness. A kind of care that is not normative or an inherent character trait of a *good* person but a process of relating. The videos become vessels to relate to the movement of the pigeon, the journey of the tiger, the experience of living in an area in the aftermath of deforestation and in the advent of commercial mass tourism. We are not divided, we have never been. And cinematic epistemologies act as reminders of this fundamental ontological condition.

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[28] The 'crisis as a glitch in the reproduction of something' is a notion I borrow from Lauren Berlant who used this term in a talk as part of the Lynch Lecture Fall 2020 entitled; The Unfinished Business of Cruel Optimism: Crisis, Affect, Sentimentality.

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