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The Exoticism of the Film Marlina the Murderer in Four Acts as an Introduction to Sumba Tourism

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Introduction

- Film as a promotional medium, films can convey messages and introduce the cultural and geographical identity of a region.

- According to a report by The World Travel & Tourism Council, Indonesia is recognized as the country with the fastest tourism growth among G20 members.

- Tourism in Sumba Island is not yet optimal compared to other regions.

- The film Marlina the Murderer in Four Acts has become one form of indirect promotion that impacts the increase in the number of tourists to Sumba (BPS: 4,658 tourists in 2017 to 8,214 in 2019).
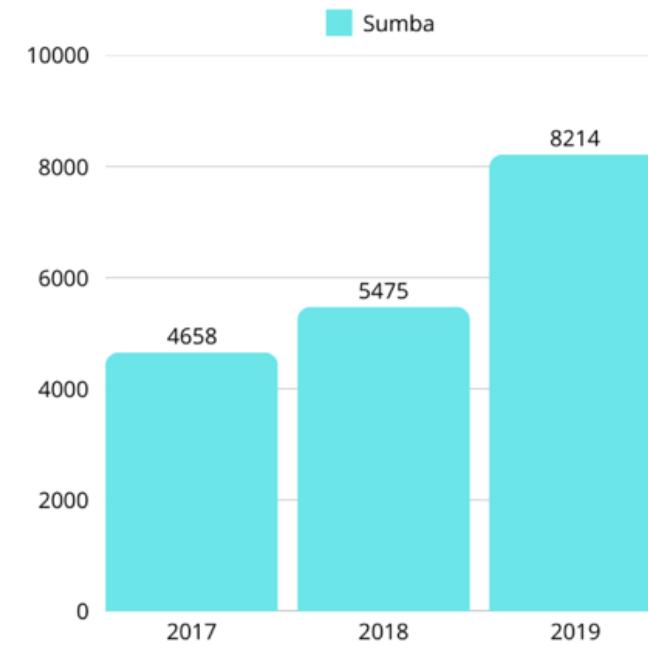
Research Questions (Problem Formulation)

- How are the visual and cultural elements in the film Marlina the Murderer in Four Acts used to promote exoticism as a marketing strategy for Indonesia's cultural and natural destinations?
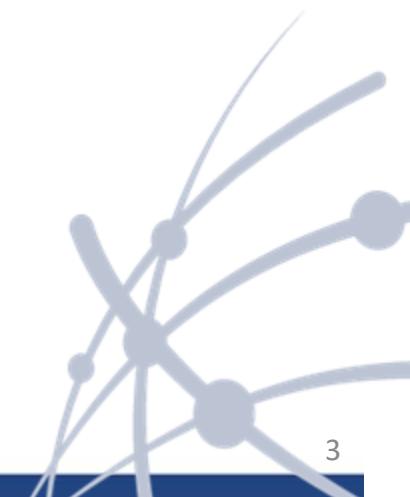
Method

Types & Methods of Research
- This type of research is descriptive qualitative
- Research using Roland Barthes' semiotic method (signs and meanings) by revealing 3 meanings, namely denotation, connotation, and myth.

Data Collection
- The researchers conducted visual observations by watching the film in depth.
- The researchers also used documentation methods (taking snapshots of relevant important scenes).

Data Source
- The film Marlina the Murderer in Four Acts.
- Relevant journal articles, semiotic theory books, and data on Sumba tourism.

Research Results

- ## Sandelwood Horse

DENOTATION	Marlina is riding a horse on a rural road with the sea in the background, surrounded by open natural scenery with trees and a bright sky.
CONNOTATION	This image depicts freedom, tranquility, and the relationship between humans and nature. The horse symbolizes tradition or a simple way of life that still persists amidst modernity.
MYTH	The exoticism here emerges through the romanticization of rural life that is far from modernity. This creates an image of 'authenticity' that is often sought by urban tourists as an escape from city life.
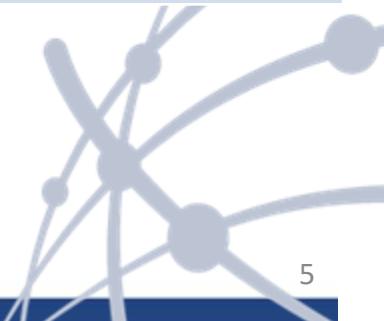
Research Results

- Bukit Tanarara

DENOTATION	A small paved road divides the dry hills that are not much covered with trees.
CONNOTATION	This road depicts Marlina's physical journey through vast and remote landscapes, reflecting her search for self-identity and emotional struggles within herself.
MYTH	This road depicts Marlina's physical journey through vast and remote landscapes, reflecting her search for self-identity and emotional struggles within herself.

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Research Results

• Traditional Transportation

DENOTATION	SekA group of residents wearing traditional Sumba clothing are inside a wooden truck with 2 horses.
CONNOTATION	Traditional clothing and simple vehicles create a strong impression of local culture. The presence of horses reinforces the image of a humble and unique rural life.
MYTH	Exoticism emerges through the myths about the hospitality of the local people and their simple way of life. This becomes an attraction for tourists who want to experience the warmth of human interactions in a rural environment.

Research Results

- Tradisi Penggal Kepala

DENOTATION	Two women standing in the middle of a vast hilly landscape. The woman on the right is wearing traditional clothing, while holding a machete and a decapitated human head
CONNOTATION	A severed head and a machete depict violence, revenge, and the struggle for life, which are the main themes of the film.
MYTH	The scene where two women walk down a distant road, one of them (Marlina) carrying a human head, creates a myth of the struggle against patriarchy.

- Bahasa Kambera

Saya sudah tau, saya sudah lihat
Sa su tau, sa su lihat

DENOTATION	A woman is speaking with the driver of a yellow truck from an open wooden vehicle, with the text 'Sa su tahu, sa su lihat' in the local dialect.
CONNOTATION	In this image, it reflects the life of the traditional Sumba community, with limited transportation access and simple social conditions.
MYTH	The use of a strong statement from a woman against the backdrop of local culture implies that women are not merely accessories to the narrative, but active actors in revealing the truth.

Discussion

- This film successfully portrays the exoticism of Sumba through deep visuals and narrative. The exoticism in this film is not only limited to the beautiful natural scenery, such as the savannah and Sumba horses, but also to the traditional life of the local community, which is simple and far from modernity.

- The visual and emotional appeal is attractive to tourists.

- There is an increase in the number of tourist visits to Sumba, indicating that the film can serve as a very effective promotional tool, even beyond the context of direct promotion.
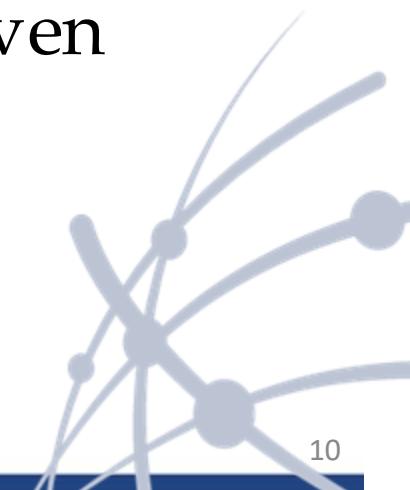
Important Research Findings

- The findings of the film "Marlina the Murderer in Four Acts" have successfully introduced Sumba as a tourist destination through strong visual elements.

- The film "Marlina the Murderer in Four Acts" serves as an example of how film media can synergize with the tourism sector to drive a creative-based economy.

- It highlights the important role of the creative economy in the development of tourist destinations through cultural media. This study shows that Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis can be used to analyze tourism promotion.

Benefits of Research

- Enriching the literature on the use of film as a tourism promotion tool.

- Providing a new perspective in the study of exoticism.

- Offering insights for tourism stakeholders in utilizing film for destination promotion.

- Can serve as a reference for the development of culture-based tourism promotions.
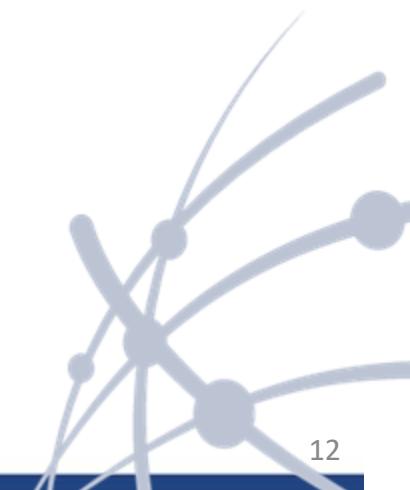
Conclusion

This research shows that the film Marlina the Murderer in Four Acts not only tells the story of a woman's struggle, but also uses the beauty of Sumba to attract tourists. The film Marlina the Murderer in Four Acts has served as a very effective indirect promotional medium. By highlighting the exoticism of Sumba's culture and nature, this film supports the strengthening of the destination's image and increases the desire to visit. The increase in the number of tourists to Sumba after the film's screening also shows that film, as a creative economy product, can synergize with the tourism sector, in line with the approach of creative economy-based tourism.

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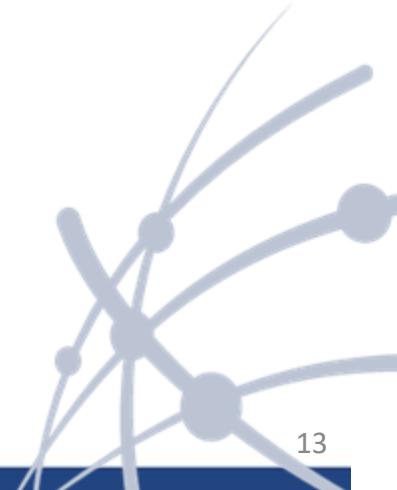
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