

## A Study of East Sumba Textile Handwoven Animals “Hinggi” Motifs Ikat in terms of Dualism and Triple Patterns

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Received July 19, 2022 / Revised December 26, 2022 / Accepted January 10, 2023 / Publish Online May 25, 2023

### Abstract

This study investigated woven cloth motifs in terms of dualism and triple patterns. East Sumba's woven fabric is a traditional Sumba fabric that preserves and stores motifs and meanings from the community's perspective and is realized in physical forms through the medium of woven fabric. Every society has a culture, and the East Sumba people are no exception. Therefore, East Sumba people's beliefs are worldviews that pervade all aspects of their lives. This cultural viewpoint manifests itself not only in thoughts but also in behavior. East Sumba people developed actions that were notably visible in many items, particularly woven fabric motifs. East Sumba's woven fabric is a symbol of Indonesian identity. Sumba's woven cloth motifs not only serve as aesthetics but also depict the strong interaction between humanity, nature, and East Sumba people's beliefs. This study was an in-depth examination of the message contained in the motifs on East Sumba's woven fabric using the concepts of dualism and triple patterns. East Sumba woven fabric documents not only cultural history but also advances cultural science in the world of interior design education, particularly for generation Z.

**Keywords:** *Aesthetic, Woven fabric, Meaning, Motifs, East Sumba, Hinggi*

### 1. Introduction

The Sumba society is a community that evolves and grows based on tradition and culture, which eventually becomes a practice that the Sumbanese people strongly hold. People in East Sumba particularly continue to retain its customs and culture to this day. As regarded historically, the social structure of the Sumba community system is divided into three distinct social stratifications: (1) *Marimba* (nobles), (2) *Kabihu* (free people), and (3) *Ata* (servant). With the arrival of Christianity, this stratification was simplified only to two stratifications: nobles (*marimba*) and servants (*ata*).

East Nusa Tenggara is a central Indonesian archipelago that is currently one of the country's most popular tourist destinations. However, evidence of the designs of East Sumba Ikat woven fabric in East Nusa Tenggara is limited (Ningsih, 2019). The uniqueness of East Sumba's weaving qualities may be noticed in its motifs; thus, this study concentrated on East Sumba's weaving motifs.

East Sumba weaving, also known as *Hinggi*, includes ikat wrap weaving. The ikat technique is the most traditional and commonly employed by the Batak people (Saputra, 2019). East Sumba woven fabric themes include horses (thought to be the national animal), dragons, turtles, and many other animals presented face-to-face and symmetrically. Within that regard, traditional Indonesian houses are often classified into three cosmoses based on their level of sacredness. First, the most sacred area is the head (roof), where the ancestral spirits reside. Second, the body section (living space, middle) is the occupants' living space and the link between the upper and lower worlds. Third, the feet (below) that is a soiled and dirty area (Halim, Darmayanti, & Amelia, 2020). As a result, examining the structure of society and the three cosmoses in traditional Indonesian houses provided the foundation for this research.

This study investigated the aesthetics of East Sumba woven cloth's animal themes in terms of dualism and triple designs in depth. As a result, it served as both cultural heritage documentation for East Nusa Tenggara and a reference for future research.

## 2. Objectives

1. To investigate East Sumba's Niche of Motifs of Ikat Weaving.
2. To identify the meaning of East Sumba's weaving designs using the concepts of dualism and triple patterning.
3. To investigate the aesthetics of the unrevealed animal designs on the East Sumba *Hinggi* ikat woven.

## 3. Materials and Methods

This was a descriptive qualitative study. The method was conducted by defining the object based on observations, which was supported by a cultural studies approach. The qualitative study analysis included the utilization of the exploratory literature. The data sources included both primary and secondary sources (Sugiyono, 2010). This study, as a descriptive study, primarily reported a circumstance or discourse without testing hypotheses or making predictions. Since the data given was qualitative, all data was classified into a substantial category. This was then evaluated using scientific references to clarify the phenomena in terms of the significance of woven fabric motifs in East Sumba (Denzin, & S.Lincoln, 2011). This study applied Jakob Sumardjo's "Paradox Aesthetics" theory in 2014.

### 3.1 Research Framework

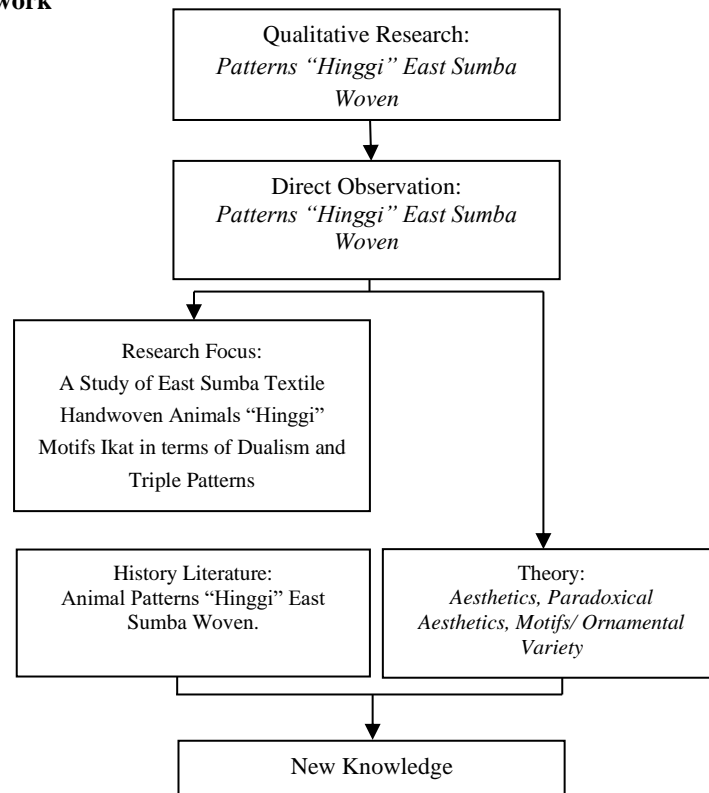


Diagram 1. Research Framework

A Study of East Sumba Textile Handwoven Animals "Hinggi" Motifs Ikat in terms of Dualism and Triple Patterns

Source: Author (2022)

### 3.2 Review of Literature

#### 3.2.1 Theory on Aesthetics

In Greek, aesthetics "*aistheta*," which is derived from "*aisthe*," means "everything that is perceived by the senses" (Junaedi, 2016). Aesthetics, according to Djelantik, Rahzen and Suryani (1999) is an area of

beauty-related philosophy. Ratna further emphasizes that humans and beauty cannot be parted; hence the type of beauty that is portrayed in the piece of art must be preserved. Many experts describe aesthetics; for example, Herbert Read defines aesthetics as the unity and relationship of forms between our sensory perceptions, whereas beauty is misdirected. Additionally, aesthetics, according to J.W. Moris, is imposed on objects that have a beauty value but are not beautiful. Moris concludes that aesthetics is both beautiful and not beautiful in (Ratna, 2011). According to Kant's expert in (Kartika, 2004), there are two types of aesthetic values: (1) pure aesthetic value, which can be found in lines, shapes, colors, and fine art; and (2) extra aesthetic value, which can be found in human, nature, and animal forms so that art enthusiasts can enjoy this other beauty.

According to Kattsoff (1953), aesthetics are associated with one's feelings, and this feeling is oriented to things that are beautiful in form and meaningful in objects. As a result, they can be appreciated by the audience (Kattsoff, 1953).

According to the above description, the aesthetic value of animal motifs in East Sumba Hinggi was included in the extra aesthetic value due to many other beauties through the portrayal of animals.

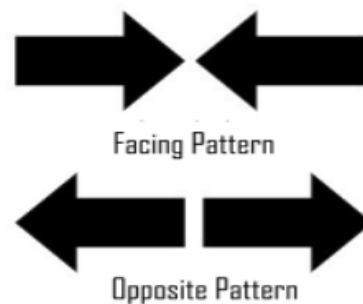
### 3.2.2 Theory on Paradoxical Aesthetics

According to Jacob Sumardjo, paradoxical aesthetics is the recognition that premodern society's aesthetics exist in a mystical, spiritual, and religious culture that is thought cosmologically and considers humans to be equal elements of the world. Thus, the reality is determined according to each individual's thoughts (Sumardjo, 2014).

In this study, the dualistic theory and the three patterns by Jakob Sumardjo were used, i.e.:

#### 1. Two Pattern Aesthetics

This Two Pattern Theory departs from mystical-spiritual and cultural-religious thinking and is based on the essential premise that life is divided and conflicts exist in pattern two communities. A number of social groups will be divided (Sumardjo, 2013). Culture is not a culture of harmony. Pattern two's paradox attempts to reconcile two antagonistic parts, both opposing and facing patterns. Pattern two is evident in society in the manner of a paradigm that emphasizes opposites rather than complementary (Sumardjo, 2013).

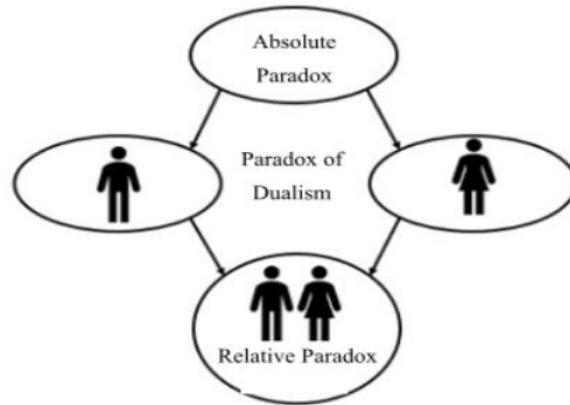


**Figure 1** Aesthetic of pattern two

**Source:** Sumardjo (2014)

#### 2. Triple Pattern Aesthetic

The Triple Pattern suggested by Jakob Sumardjo is the foundation of primordial people's beliefs. They bring together two antagonistic but complementary elements. This unification attempt creates a third universe, referred to as the "middle world," which can unify the opposing upper and lower worlds. The harmony of the two opposing worlds is represented by the events in the triple pattern. They all win, and no one loses.



**Figure 2** Three-pattern aesthetic  
**Source:** Sumardjo (2014)

The concepts of "pattern two" and "pattern three" serve as the foundation for investigating aesthetic concerns of the Hinggi ikat motif in East Sumba in order to discover the aesthetics of the Hinggi motif.

### 3.2.3 Motifs/ Ornamental Variety

Ornamental Variety or Motif comes from the Greek "*ornare*," which means decoration or jewelry (Soepratno, 2004).

Motives, according to Toekio M, are found in society as a medium for expressing feelings that are depicted in a visual manner. As a result, decoration is constantly associated with the surroundings, and it can be described as a complement to the aesthetic sense. Apparently, each decoration has a meaningful purpose (Kuntjoro-Jakti, 2010).

Ornamental diversity was brought as new aspects into local culture during the Hinduism and Buddhist kingdoms in Indonesia, serving as an addition to aesthetic value and creativity. In Indonesia, ornamental variety employs wildlife and flora in native decorative arts associated with Hinduism, human response to nature, and human gratitude to the Creator.

The decorative variation includes ornamental variety. Motifs are the results of applying natural philosophy, in which nature serves as a source of inspiration for its creation. Ornamental motifs can take the form of figurative, geometric shapes, as well as flora and fauna. In addition, ornamental motifs can be used in two- or three-dimensions art (Hasanadi, 2014).

Ornamental variety is a heritage that dates back to prehistory. In relation to that long historical background, as an archipelagic country, Indonesia has several ornaments. The natural environment, flora and fauna, and the humans who inhabit the archipelago all have an impact on ornamental variety in Indonesia. This leads to a natural human desire to decorate. This belief aspect is critical in the development of decoration, so it has a particular significance. (Halim, 2022).

Ornamental elements are frequently adapted or created from natural processes, according to (Utomo, 2007). There are five ornamental varieties: geometric, botanical, animal, figurative, and polygonal. Animals are often the major figures in Indonesian ornamental variety.

According to the experts' definitions and descriptions, the Hinggi Ikat pattern in East Sumba was a figurative motif with an animal figure as the main character.

## 4. Results

Ikat weaving is created by incorporating the weft crosswise on the longitudinal or warp threads of textiles made of yarn, wood fiber, cotton, and silk. The quality of ikat weaving is determined by the fabric, colors, and motifs selected (H Kara, 2014). Weaving, according to Budiyo, is a cloth-making technique

based on the principle of combining yarn crosswise with warp yarn and alternating weft (in) (Izzara, & Nelmira, 2021).

Hinggi is a significant woven ikat textile for the Sumba people that Sumbanese men wear. It is used on a daily basis as well as at Sumbanese cultural ceremonies. Hinggi offers a range of animal motifs inspired by Sumbanese home animals, such as horses and chickens, each with a story about their lives (Rizki, & Widyastuti, 2020). For the Sumbanese, this ikat woven fabric serves not only as a covering for the body but also as a cultural object with a profound "message" and demonstrates distinct values that are part of Indonesia's cultural history (Soeriadiredja, 2013). When employed in funeral ceremonies, the Hinggi motif distinguishes itself because it is inspired by Sumbanese's sacred objects such as animals, plants, or humans (Soeriadiredja, 2013).

#### *Ikat Weaving Motif*

In Indonesia, woven fabrics offer varied motifs, which are usually characteristics of the tribe or island where the woven cloth originated and was manufactured. The motifs created and employed as initial ideas in the creation of ornaments draw more attention and provide the first impression (Sunaryo, 2009).

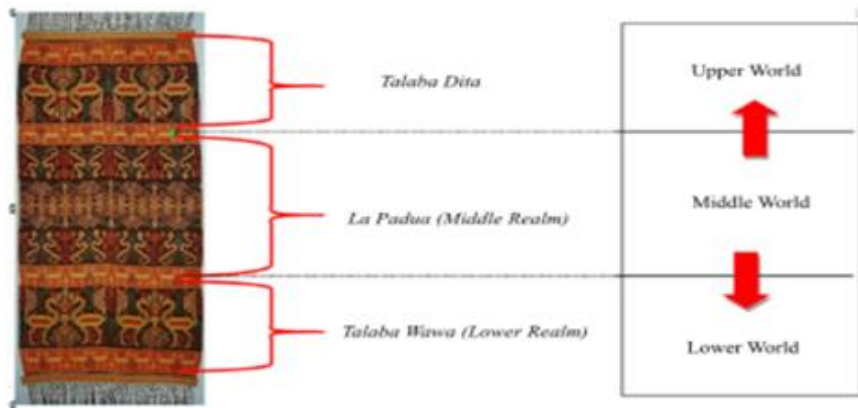
#### *Structural Principles of Hinggi Ikat weaving in East Sumba*

Hinggi is well-designed, with motifs aligned in an attractive design. Lines have an important role in the composition of Sumba woven cloth designs. The lines are horizontal lines that split the fabric into sections. Each section is a location for the woven fabric motif. Padua (central plane) is located in the fabric's transverse strip in the center. There are straight, curved, broken, or dotted lines on the fabric (Soeriadiredja, 2013).

#### *Hinggi Motif of Ikat East Sumba*

The Hinggi motif is symmetrically represented and separated into three planes: the upper plane, the middle plane, and the lower plane (Adams, 1969). In Sumba woven fabrics, this is known as the mirror image concept. The surface of the woven cloth reveals an important element in dividing the composition of East Sumba's ikat motifs into three conflicting sections. This characteristic depicts the relationship between the sections (top, middle, and bottom) (Soeriadiredja, 2013). The Cosmos Division at Hinggi Ikat Weaving, East Sumba, is shown below. Hinggi motifs are symbolic groups from the environment and local culture that include images of living creatures (people, wildlife, and plants) as well as natural objects such as artifacts in the form of jewelry. The schematic motif group, or motifs with an openwork base, consists of abstract motifs derived from local ideas and foreign influences (Indian, Chinese, Portuguese, and Dutch). The group of foreign impact themes includes eco-culture motifs from outside the East Sumba area, particularly from India, China, Portugal, and the Netherlands. The Patola Ratu motif, which is made to cover the surface of the fabric sheet, as well as figurative motifs, schematic motifs, and foreign influence motifs, show the Indian influence (Anas, 2007). Hinggi motifs are divided into two groups that are separated by a geometric intermediate motif path.

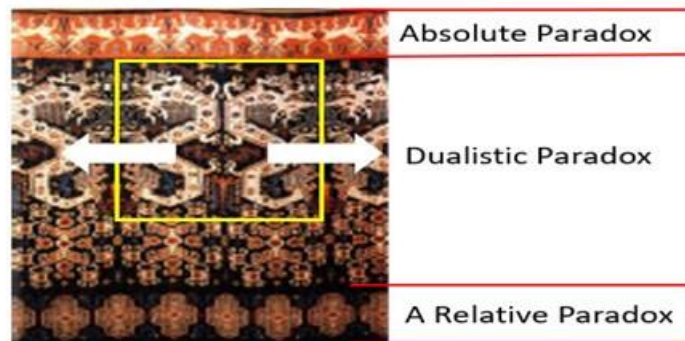
Central motifs are figurative motifs that are both local and foreign-influenced, while foreign-influenced motifs take the place of the central motif, which is shown in a larger size (Anas, 2007). As stated in the introduction, every traditional Indonesian house has three cosmic structures, and Hinggi has the following cosmic structure:



**Figure 3** Cosmos Division at Hinggi ikat East Sumba  
 Source: Author (2022)

*1. Dragon Motif on the Hinggi East Sumba*

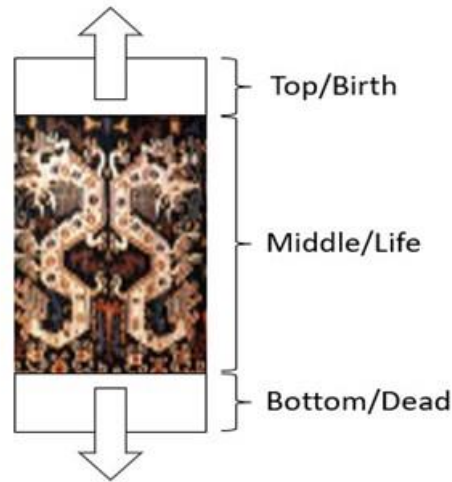
A dragon is a mythological Chinese animal that represents prosperity, goodness, and wisdom. The dragon motif is made out of a basic shape, which is a hexagonal shape. Circles and lines are complimentary ornaments for the dragon motif. The dragon motif is a Chinese acculturation motif (Hoop, 1949). Dragons are represented in a stylized form Onvlee, with no specifics of Chinese dragons. Dragons in Hinggi are described in various ways, starting from resembling China's dragon to eventually becoming simplified form (Anas, 2007).



**Figure 4** Dragon Motifs on Hinggi  
 Source: Author (2022)

The cross between vertical and horizontal appears more packed in the three-cultural pattern culture. It is an attempt to bring the heavenly (vertical) and earthly (horizontal) worlds into harmony, and the middle human realm aligns itself with the world above (Sumardjo, 2013).

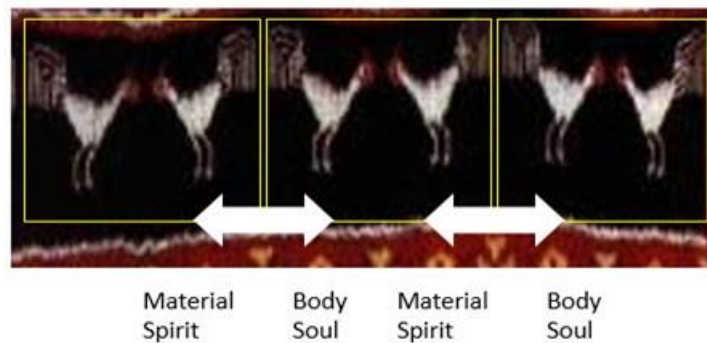
According to the research, the dragon motif in Hinggi is a combination of dualism and triple patterns. Dualism can be seen in two objects that are diametrically opposed but complement each other. They provide meaning through the color of black and white or male and female. Similarly, the triple pattern serves as a counter-balance to the two patterns, pattern two and pattern three (Halim et al., 2020). Figure 3 shows an illustration of the dragon pattern. In accordance with the findings of the preceding analysis, the middle area or humans with a dragon motif were well-balanced in life. The dragon motif in the center is believed to inspire people with dragon-like qualities such as nobility, prosperity, and generosity. As a result, people can balance the upper area. In terms of furniture design principles, the legs of the furniture perform a critical role as the foundation.



**Figure 5** Dragon's Motives Analysis  
 Source: Author (2022)

### 2. Rooster Motifs on Hinggi

The rooster is the second motif. East Sumba residents refer to it as *Manu*. *Manu* has a crest, a wattle, a high tail, three front heels, and one back heel that set him apart. In the Hinggi community, the rooster is the key character in the cockfighting game, which impacts the economic environment and serves as a forecasting animal (Therik, 2017)



**Figure 6** Equations of reverse motifs & Motifs Rooster  
 Source: Author (2022)

The "aesthetic" analysis of the chicken motif on Hinggi is shown in a mirror system. With regard to Jako Sumardjo's dualism viewpoint, the mirror system appears to be a cockfighting contest. The two-esthetic pattern emphasizing the "opposite" is commonly referred to as dualism. The Rooster motif comprises two patterns, one representing the human side and the other reflecting the life of the spirit realm. These contradicting elements, such as right-left body-spirit, yet complement each other. Dualism provides "power," "life," and "alertness" to face life, both consciously and metaphysically.

### 3. Combined Animal Motif on Hinggi

The Hinggi motif on East Sumba woven fabric is distinguished not only by its single animal theme but also by the presence of multiple animals on a single sheet of fabric. One sheet of fabric may contain three different animals: a dragon, a deer, and a horse. Horses are respected in the East Sumba community because the Sumba people like riding horses, which is a traditional Sumbanese game. As a result, horses are classified

as high-class. In the twentieth century, deer were largely found on Sumba, and there were documented exports of deer antlers as hunting trophies. The last one is the dragon, as described in the preceding description (Kartiwa, 2007).



**Figure 7** Equations of reverse motifs

Source: Therik (2017)

The symmetrical mirror method is employed to examine "Aesthetic" motifs depicting horses, deer, and dragons. This Hinggi has a dualism approach and a triple pattern. This Hinggi remains in the center area, which is thought to be a place for humans to work and follows the life cycle. There are contradictory reasons for this, as in human life, which always illustrates good and evil, dark and light patterns, as well as the sun and moon motifs, demonstrate how humans develop and become a connection with the world above. Hinggi's triple pattern is consistently divided into three parts and associated with the top, middle, and bottom.

## 5. Conclusion

The aesthetics of animal motifs in Hinggi are part of the Sumbanese people's structure and life, particularly in East Sumba. The animal motifs in each Hinggi fabric have a strong foundation with the East Sumba people's daily life and environment. It also delivers profound meaning. The background for these motifs is historical, social, and cultural circumstances. It elevates animal motifs beyond their purely aesthetic value. This contradictory aesthetic approach offers a previously undiscovered picture that is distinct in each of the current animal motifs. Based on the previous analysis of animal motifs, it was discovered that the patterns that appeared were pattern two, pattern three, and a combination of patterns two and three. As a result, it's noteworthy that the triple pattern balances the existence of two conflicting patterns. It strikes a balance between human and natural beliefs, historical activities, and traditional rites relevant to the people of East Sumba. According to (Anas, 2007), the dragon motif's structure begins with a pattern of three appearances in the form of a triangle, three stalks, and a tapered vertical.

The animal motif's aesthetic element at Hinggi is always based on other aesthetics that complement the beauty of the Hinggi ikat cloth. This research also discovered that animal motifs have a long-term aesthetic element, which means they can be employed as complementary motifs as well as complementary meanings and backgrounds endlessly. It may even benefit the people of East Sumba, Sumba as a whole, and the entire Indonesian society in the future.

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