

SILAKAN MASUK. SILAKAN DUDUK:
REFLECTIONS IN A SITTING ROOM IN JAVA

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"Please come in [*Silakan masuk*]"

"Please take a seat [*Silakan duduk*]"

These are the first two Indonesian sentences foreign visitors to Java become well acquainted with, because without them no one can be admitted anywhere nor be accepted by anyone. They are often succeeded by the following sentences which are accompanied by a cup of tea and some snacks.

"Please drink [*Silakan minum*]"

"Please eat [*Silakan makan*]"

These four sentences form the widely shared ritual of receiving guests at home in contemporary Java.¹ A popular Indonesian language textbook for foreigners who intend to visit Indonesia starts its first Indonesian conversation lesson in this manner.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Good evening, Tati.
How are you? | Selamat sore, Tati.
Apa kabar? |
| 2. Ah, fine.
Good evening.
Please come in.
Won't you sit down? | A, kabar baik.
Selamat sore.
Silakan masuk.
Silakan duduk. |
| 3. Thank you.
This is John.
John is from America. | Terima kasih.
Ini Saudara Jon.
Saudara Jon ini dari Amerika. |
| 4. Would you like to have some tea? | Mau minum teh? ² |

1. We have encountered similar occasions countless times in visiting people in Java. On the first day in Jakarta a friend of ours took us to his house. It was evident that it was going to rain soon. Upon arriving at his house I was going to unpack and deal with my sons' dirty clothes immediately. But first our friend wanted to offer us the best sofa in the house to sit on and to serve us tea to drink. We sat on the sofa and drank tea. It tasted warm and sweet. I liked it. I felt I would like Java.

We also visited another friend's house. The streets were jammed with cars and it was a very hot day. As soon as we arrived at their house we had to take our children to the bathroom and then let them take a nap. Next morning, our friend, the mistress of the house, invited me into the front sitting room and offered me a seat, apologizing, "it was impossible, yesterday ---." She made her young maid serve tea and we had some pleasant chatter.

2. John U. Wolff, *Beginning Indonesian, Part One*, 2nd ed. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Southeast Asia Program, 1980), pp. 1-2.

The title "saudara," however, which used to designate "rakyat" comradeship, is rarely heard in Java today. Neither have I been asked whether or not I would like to have tea. It seems rather to be appropriate for the host to serve tea without asking. What is said on this occasion is "Silakan minum." As for the guest, it is appropriate to take whatever drinks and snacks are served him/her anyway.³

This ritual of receiving guests is generally applicable to ordinary Javanese guests as well as to newcomers to the society. Let us see how a new student is accepted in his new classroom as it is outlined in an Indonesian school textbook for second graders.⁴ The title "pak," used here for the teacher and school head, is the shortened form of address to an older man, "bapak," designating him as one's "father" and "shelter-providing-protector [pelindung]."

New student [Murid baru]

The students of Class Two are studying.
 Budi sits [duduk] on a bench with Ahmad.
 Pak/father-shelter-provider teacher asks,
 "Who can read well?"
 "Me pak, me pak," answer the students.
 Suddenly there is a knock on the classroom door.
 Everyone looks at the door.
 The school head comes [masuk] bringing a child [anak] along.
 "Good morning, pak Harun!
 Good morning, children [anak-anak]!" says he.
 "Good morning, pak," answer the children.
 "Pak Harun, this is a new student [Ini murid baru] for Class Two.
 Children, you are getting a new friend [teman baru].
 His name is Andi," says the school head.
 He hands Andi over to pak teacher.
 Andi sits [duduk] on a bench with Hasan.
 All the students are happy to have a new friend.⁵

The pak teacher is master of his classroom. He directs his students/children as to which seat to take, as well as when to sit and when to stand up. The school head brings in a new student, or a new client-child, placing him under the shelter of the teacher. When the new student takes his assigned seat, the procedure is completed. All the students are now happy to have a new friend.

Happy? How can they ever be so? At the end of the story one creature, who neither existed nor was known by anyone in the classroom at the beginning, occupies a seat amongst the students, sharing a bench with one of them. Yet, no one in the classroom is horrified by this sudden emergence of a previously unknown creature. This is because the creature did not enter [masuk] the classroom as an unknown creature, though he actually was so. He came into the room appropriately,

3. A Javanese friend once equated "American individualism" with asking "What would you like to drink [Mau minum apa]?"

4. "As a policy, only what have been already known and understood by the children are printed in Indonesian readers for the first, second, and third graders." This comment is made on TV to explain the government's educational policy. I would like to discuss the textbook itself on another occasion.

5. Departmen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, *Bahasa Indonesia: Belajar Membaca dan Menulis 2a* (Jakarta: Balai Pustaka, 1982), pp. 11-12.

that is, he was brought in by the school head who must have been well known and respected by the teacher/master of the classroom. Then the school head introduced the creature as a "new student [murid baru]" to the teacher and as a "new friend [teman baru]" to the students. The creature was labeled "murid baru" and "teman baru." All the class members knew these words even before a "teman baru" came into existence in front of their eyes. Therefore, he was not an unknown creature but he was the "teman baru," whom they knew how to deal with. Hence he was offered a seat on a bench, that he accepted and sat on. He proved himself to be capable of playing his part as a "teman baru/murid baru." Because he too knew the word and how to deal with it. He had shared this knowledge with the students of Class Two even before his appearance in the classroom as a "teman baru." He was an additional member of the "teman" in the classroom, but he was certainly not a novel, unusual kind of "teman." Nothing really "new" happened. The sense of unexpected suddenness was removed through this process. A ritual of receiving a "new" comer has, thus, been performed appropriately. All the performers may feel pleased with their accomplishment.

It could have been otherwise, however, if the creature had not entered the room in this manner. Once, we had the chance of visiting an elementary school in a village in Klaten, Central Java. A young friend, a seventeen-year-old girl, led me into the teachers' room and tried to introduce me to them. Unlike the school head of the above story, however, my friend was not readily accepted as an introducer of an unknown foreign woman who did not know the appropriate manner nor language to use under these circumstances. No one in the room was willing to offer us a seat; rather, they got up from their own seats one by one, and began to gather around us as if to have a better look.

At this moment my husband arrived on the scene. He had some friends among the teachers and knew how to perform his part. He made a short speech [*berpidato*] to explain why he was there and then introduced me as his "wife [*Ini istri saya*]." This started the process of receiving guests. One of the teachers, whose house my husband had visited several times before, invited us into the guest room of the school, where there were two sofas and two chairs placed along the four sides of a low rectangular coffee (or tea) table, and said, "Silakan duduk." We gratefully took our seats. Other teachers, too, returned to their seats, leaving a few teachers who were to take care of the "guests [*tamu*]." They agreed to let me see the classroom, but I had to wait until they finished preparations for my appearance there. In the meantime, we were served tea and hurriedly obtained snacks were later given to our children. The preparation consisted of a teacher's explanation to his students and the arrangement of a chair. I was not the kind of creature who could be labeled by familiar terms such as "murid baru/teman baru" on her forehead. Therefore, the teacher had to take time to tell the students what I was and how the students should behave toward me, or, how to deal with me. While this explanation was given in the classroom, another teacher brought a chair from the teachers' room, so that I would be offered an appropriate seat to take in the classroom. I was not to be offered a seat on a bench shared with the students, for I was not a "murid baru/teman baru." The appropriate seat for me was placed at a front corner of the classroom, not facing toward the teacher's desk as the students' benches do, nor facing toward the students as the teacher's chair does, but somewhere in between. I can still recall the image of this awkwardly positioned chair in the room in my mind, and appreciate the fact that they still allowed me, an awkward creature to them, to enter their classroom/shelter.

Sore

In ordinary life, visits to friends or neighbors usually take place in the evening (*sore*). A brief description of receiving guests at home in the evening appears in the second grade Indonesian textbook.

Having guests [Ada tamu]

In the evening [*Sore hari*] there are guests at pak Madi's house.
 They are seated [*duduk-duduk*] on the front porch [*serambi muka*].
 The guests are pak Karta and *bu* [mother/matron] Karta.
 Pak Karta is a neighbor of pak Madi.
 Pak Karta's child has also come along.
 Her name is Dini.
 Dini is Wati's friend.
 Pak Madi's house is very lively this evening.
 Wati brings tea and cakes.
 "Please drink [*Silakan minum*]," says bu Madi.
 "Who baked it?"
 "Wati," says bu Madi.
 "She is learning how to bake cakes."
 Pak Madi chats with pak Karta.
 He talks about his gardens and rice-fields.
 Pak Karta talks about his chickens and goats.
 The children play in the yard.
 They laugh cheerfully and happily.
 It is almost night [*malam*] when the guests finally leave [*pulang*].⁶

Sore is the time for Javanese people to be relaxed and refreshed.⁷ Roughly speaking, a day is spent in the following manner, according to the family we stayed with in Solo. The family members get up at about 5:30 in the morning. Their children's schools begin at 7:00 a.m. and end at noon. The family try to take some rest from about 2:00 to around 4:00 in the afternoon. Afterward they refresh themselves by taking a cold water bath (*mandi*), that removes the heat and sweat of the day. The daughter of a family we stayed with in a village always sang her favorite songs while taking *mandi*. It is the most sensual moment of the day. By five o'clock they are fully relaxed in their clean dry clothes and enjoy tea and snacks on the front porch or in the sitting room. They eat dinner at around 7:30 in the evening and go to bed at around 10:30 at night. This after-*mandi*-before-dinner time is named "sore."

Sore forms a peculiar time and space in the life in Java. Looking back on my brief visit there, it is difficult to recall how the towns and the villages looked in the noonday. The images have been overexposed to the violent force of the sun. At night, on the other hand, the darkness was extremely heavy. The villages with no electricity were besieged by thousands of fireflies. The images which remain are of rain-soaked streets, illuminated streets of the night markets, lighted stages of theaters, and the enframed moments of *sore*. In *sore* the glittering radiance of the sun at last ceases. It gets cooler and darker every minute. Yet, there is a moment, like an air-pocket of the day, when everything seems to keep still. At that moment young men and boys are found sitting still on stone

6. *Ibid.*, pp. 18-19.

7. James Siegel, *Solo in the New Order* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, forthcoming), ch. 2.

benches along the streets or at the edge of the sidewalks in Solo, as if bathing themselves in the intoxicating air. I have seen the same posture taken by holidaying Javanese families in the mild sea water along the coasts of Bali. In those moments, the women, who have housekeeping chores such as shopping for dinner, cooking, and exchanging necessary household articles with neighbors, also manage to find a moment in which they stand still with one another on neighborhood corners. The Javanese people seem not to believe that walking or jogging along the streets does them any good. The pedicab (*becak*) drivers, too, are dreaming in their *becak* with their eyes open.

It was at this moment of the day that I was often surprised to witness the unusual vision of these sore-ing people. When, because of the increasing darkness, I could barely distinguish human figures on the streets, a group of boys would easily recognize their friend passing by at some distance, or, they would say "Hallo" to a foreigner like me. They should not have been able to see us passersby clearly in that darkness, yet they did see what we were, with the accuracy of bird-watchers, even clearer than in the noonday.

Let me present an experience I had at this time of the day in a village. We were taking a stroll, and it was sore when we reached the edge of the village. It was rather painful for us non-Javanese to sit still at such a beautiful moment. The blinding sun was finally retiring behind the mountains. I found, then, the "Javanese scenery" laid out there in front of my eyes. The blue mountains, the rich green trees and rice-fields, and a small river. It was the view I had seen in the pictures, movies, TV programs, songs, and writings of Java. It was breathtakingly beautiful and sweet.

On that spot, where we stopped to admire the view, there was a long curved stone bench by the road. The direction of the bench puzzled me, however. If I sat on the bench, I would not be able to see the striking view. The bench was placed backward. I understood how to sit on it only after I returned to the house where we were staying. It was surprising how quickly the whole atmosphere in Java turned dark as soon as the sun went down. The moment during which I could perceive the rich flavored landscape was extremely short. When we came back to the house, the household members were preparing lamps in the kitchen. The sitting room was dark, but I figured out the whereabouts of chairs and sofas because I had seen them during the day. I sat down on one of the chairs. Then I saw the view I had just seen at the edge of the village. In fact it was so dark in the sitting room that I should not have been able to see anything with my eyes. It was like an afterimage. It was as if my organ of seeing still retained the image I had just seen, because the darkness fell in such a short eye-blinking instance. The sitting room was turned into a dark room in which a photographic chemical effect worked and produced the image of the blue mountains and the green rice-fields on the wall.

It is on this wall of the sitting room that the pictures of Java's landscapes are commonly hung.⁸ A young woman who manages the guest house we stayed at in Solo, once pointed at one of these landscapes and said that the picture, with mountains, trees, rice-fields, and a river, reflected the reality (*kenyataan*) of Java. She did not find it necessary to specify the site depicted there. "Java" was the sufficient name for it. Those views I had more often seen with my eyes while traveling in Java, such as cars flooding roads, waste floating through open

8. My interest in the landscape pictures originated in Professor Siegel's lectures. For a description and analysis of the subject, see *ibid.*, ch. 4.

drainages, concrete-and-glass-made buildings, statues, and schools, are all un-authentic appendices against the "reality" represented in the picture.

Among those landscape pictures there is one strange kind of picture which is one of the "must" items in any souvenir and gift shop. It can be bought, for example, in Sri Wedari, Ancol, Sarinah, and the airport. It is a drawing rather than a painting. The drawing is done on a thick, pitch-black felt-like cloth, with strokes and brush lines of a yellowish color, assisted by a few additional colors barely strong enough for the green of the trees to be distinguished from the blue of the river. It produces the effect of an afterimage picture drawn on a screen of darkness with the rays of a searchlight originating in one's mind. That light illuminates only what one knows, or what one wants to see and wants to remember, leaving what one does not care nor dare to see, underexposed in the blacked-out space. The texture of the drawing gives me the impression that I am looking at the contents of a human body displayed inside out.

Another form of the wall hanging which seems to be a variation of this afterimage drawing is also found on the walls of various sitting rooms of the houses and offices in Java. One I saw had some passages of the Bible, inscribed with golden lines on the pitch-black felt-like cloth and hung on the wall of the sitting room of the man who was a Catholic. In another case, the passage of Panca Sila, "*Ketuhanan Yang Masa Esa* [Belief in God] . . ." was inscribed in the same manner with a golden Garuda. The Javanese are a people who inscribe their writings on the screen of darkness instead of on a white sheet of paper.

The roadside bench at the edge of the village was for the people of the village, who knew the moment of beauty so well that they would sit on and taste the sweetness of that beauty for hours even after its disappearance. They no longer needed to perceive the scenery with their eyes. They knew it. And because they knew it, they could see it. They saw the view that existed behind them, under the deepening darkness. They saw what they knew and loved, and what they understood it should look like.

The group of boys who were sore-ing on the streets in Solo recognized their friend because they knew him. They discerned a foreigner because she was foreign to their perception and disturbed their vision, the vision which was recreated on the screen of darkness out of what they had seen and knew before the sunset. Within three weeks they stopped paying any attention to us. They returned into the world of their own creation, behind which we were allowed to pass by like a breeze in the air or passing water in the river, which does not disturb the images reflected on its surface. Sore is the time when the domination of the sun's radiance over the world is overcome by the reflection of the people upon the world. Sore is the time for the Javanese people to become what the Javanese are.

Penduduk

On ordinary days, when it is sore, people who have their own houses to live in, that is people who have qualified to be *penduduk* (inhabitants, lit. one who sits, or occupies), thus, spend their time sitting on chairs, either with their guests or without guests, on the porch or in the sitting room. In contemporary Indonesia one needs to have an identification card (*kartu tanda penduduk*) to hold the legal position of an inhabitant of the town or the village in which one lives. As minimum requirements for its issue, one has to have a place to stay, a means of subsistence, and a guarantor who is capable of assuring others that the said person is a "penduduk baru." An approximate layout of a penduduk's house may

be roughly described as follows. The bathing and washing place is located at the rear of the house. Next to it come the kitchen and the eating area. The place to sleep often adjoins the place to sit, which is located at the very front of the house. The ground plan of a house shown here (Figure 1) provides an example. It is taken from one of the house-planning books, which carry the models I have often seen and the models which have been employed for those massively developed housing complexes.⁹

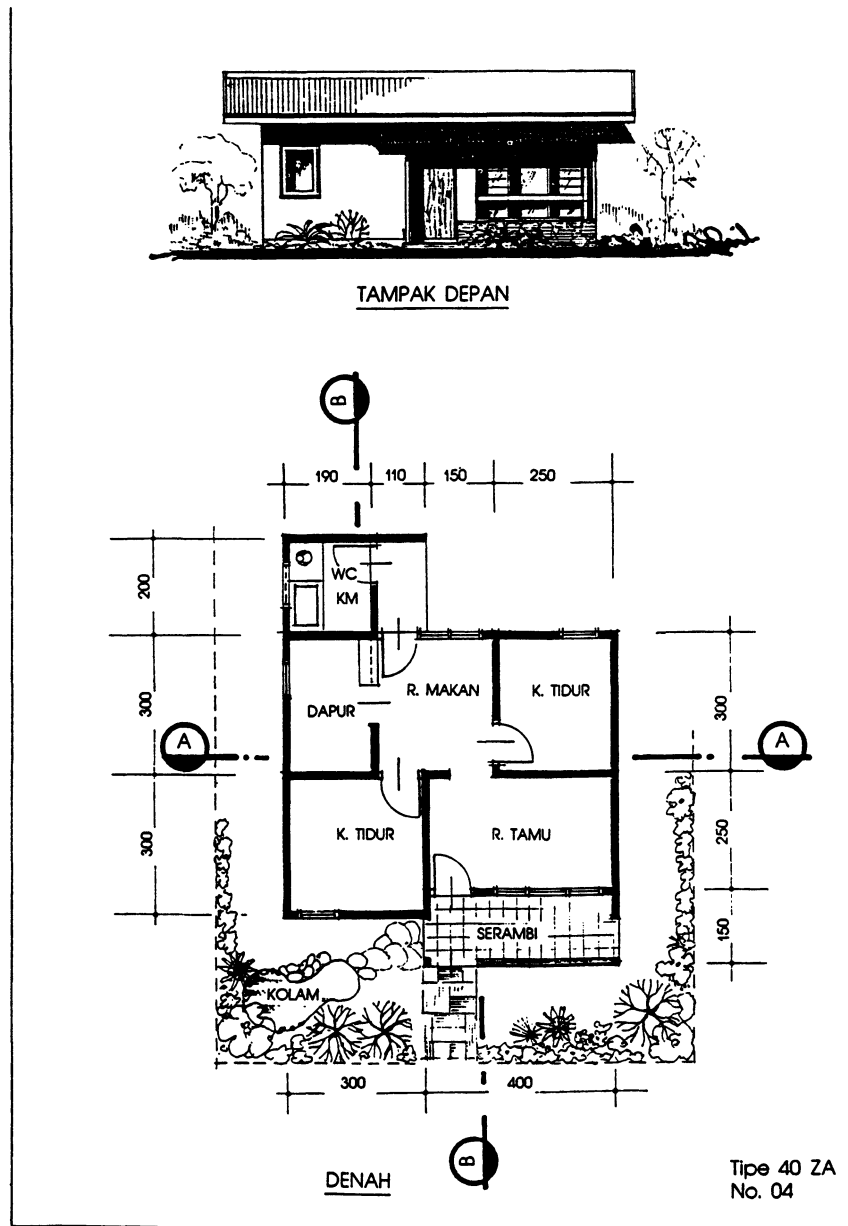


Figure 1

9. Zainal A. Z., *Membangun Rumah: Rencana dan Bahan-bahan yang dipakai* (Jakarta: Gramedia, 1982), p. 16.

In this ground plan, the guest hall [*ruang tamu*] and the front porch [*serambi muka*] are the places designed for the inhabitants to sit. Though the place to sit might be regarded as less essential than the place to cook, or, rather, the least essential place for a human being to survive physically, it is this front part of the house that a family wants to enrich in their fortunate circumstances. Sometimes they add an independent guest-sitting room made of shining stones in front of their old wooden house. The place to sit is highly multiplicable and several names help to differentiate the outcome of the multiplication. A beautiful picture from a women's magazine exhibits (Figure 2)¹⁰ a luxurious model house that has



Figure

10. "Interior," *Kartini*, No. 240, January 16-29, 1984, pp. 49-50.

and served a cup of tea with a can of snacks. The invitation is not to be given in the kitchen, nor on the roadside (*pinggir jalan*). One needs, hence, a chair, and a sitting room in which to set the chair to offer one's guest, in order to be invited to a wedding party where one will be offered a seat oneself. Figure 4 is a photo taken at a village wedding party, where all the guests are seated on chairs. One needs a chair to be a full member of the neighborhood. Figure 5¹³ is the private sitting room of President and Mrs. Soeharto, who as private persons



Figure 4



Figure 5

13. "Pendaftaran Formulir Keanggotaan GOLKAR," *Sarinah*, January 23, 1984, p. 53.

(*selaku pribadi*) are receiving their guests. The guests have come to invite pak Harto to register for the new membership form of GOLKAR. The registered members would, then, be invited to the GOLKAR meetings in which they would be offered seats. The next photo (Figure 6) is a GOLKAR celebration in Klaten. The staging is identical with that of the wedding party. In both cases numerous chairs are prepared for the guests, and a drink, usually a bottled tea (*teh botol*--the best-selling drink in contemporary Java), and a light meal are served to each one of the guests, who are to listen to the speeches and watch attractions, such as Javanese dances and gamelan music, while being seated. The arrangement of chairs, thus, has become essential--in preparation for any kind of meeting and ceremony, which are quite frequent in contemporary Java. Figure 7 is a photo of chairs being prepared for the wedding party. Consequently, a visitor to Java nowadays encounters numbers of furniture stores which are facaded with mountainous piles of chairs along the streets of even the smallest town in the midst of rice-fields. There are, as a matter of course, "chair rental" businesses and some resourceful village heads have prepared large quantities of chairs for the penduduk of their villages to use on such occasions.

Hujan

Not all Javanese are penduduk who pass their time on chairs in sitting rooms. In towns, especially in big cities, there are a good number of people who are called "urban-migran." Many of them do not have the legal position of penduduk in these towns, and they seek their living on the streets, mostly as street vendors. Consequently, in the town streets, outside the houses, and on their doorsteps, there are always people who are not to be invited even to enter a house, to say nothing of being offered a chair on which to sit in a sitting room. They do not, in their turn, carry round a chair or a sofa (which could not stand up to the sun and the rain) to offer their guests. The condition may well be observed on the rainy streets. Let us read another story from our little school textbook.

Rainfall [Hujan turun]

Now it is the rainy season.
 Almost every day the rain falls.
 Sometimes in the evening, sometimes in the morning.
 Today since morning the sky has been cloudy.
 The clouds become darker and darker.
 The sun cannot be seen.
 Suddenly the rain begins to fall.
 The rain is heavy, very heavy.
 The people who were just now walking on the streets immediately take shelter at the edge of the stores or the houses.
 There are also those who shelter under the trees.
 The bicycles and the motorcycles stop too.
 Only the cars keep running.
 The street gutters flow over.
 The trash [*sampah*] prevents water from flowing smoothly.
 Water from the gutters overflows only the main streets.
 Here and there they become flooded [*banjir*].
 Many streets and yards are inundated with water.
 Sometimes water comes into [*masuk*] the houses.

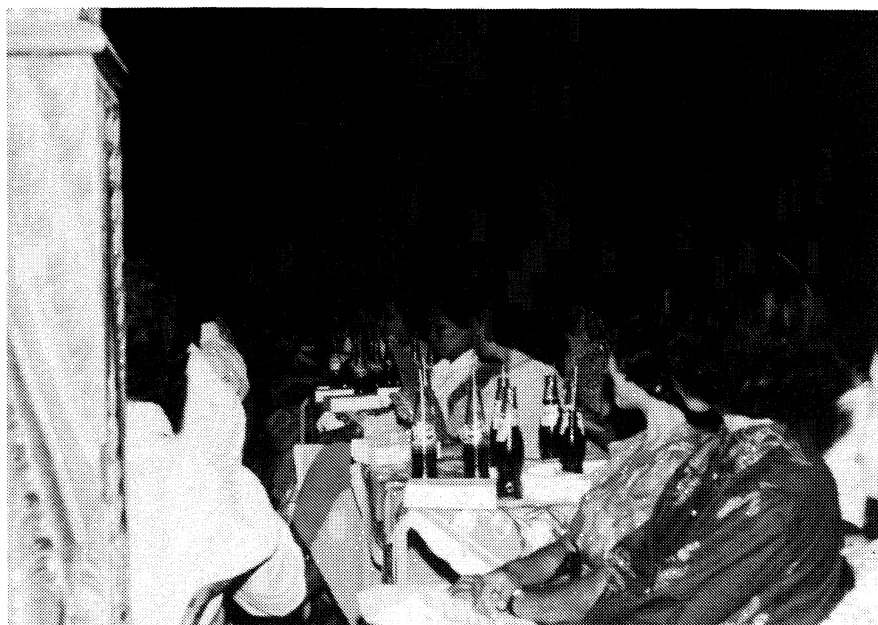


Figure 6



Figure 7

The water in the rice-fields overflows.

In the rice-fields many of the rice plants are damaged.¹⁴

A small picture is attached to the story (Figure 8). Three children are looking out of a house window, and two men are taking shelter just outside the house, on its front step. One of them stands by the window, and the other, a peddler, crouches beneath the window. The authors of the textbook, however, seem not really to believe that trees provide shelter or protection anymore. Because in the background of the picture, there is a tree whose trunk has snapped and has fallen on the wet ground, smashing the brick wall of the house.



Figure 8

I saw a similar rainy scene myself when I took a "travel colt" from Semarang to Solo. A "travel" is more expensive and yet is the preferred means of traveling over a bus today. It has a seat-reservation system, and the passengers readily pay more than for a bus because of this. Written on the ticket is only a number, the number of the passenger's seat in the "travel." No destination, no time, no price, no date is written on it. A "travel colt" is a mobile sitting room which has six to eight seats for its guests. Though none of the passengers/guests is a friend or a neighbor of the driver/host, the money the passengers pay supersedes the ritual of introducing and welcoming guests into the parlor. I saw, through the glass window of this mobile sitting room which kept moving as it penetrated the rain-drenched towns, three distinct postures which people had assumed: crouching on the sidewalks, standing under the houses' eaves; and sitting on the chairs inside the houses. The division amongst the three was apparent, because the downpour of rain had brought all transactions among the people to a standstill.

Of the people crouching on the sidewalks, not a few were sitting flat on the ground, being drenched by the cold soaking rain. These consisted of a naked mad man, beggars, becak drivers, peddlers, and sidewalk vendors commonly referred to as "kaki lima [sidewalk (man)]." They spend much of their time on the sidewalks, rain or shine. When the rain stopped, the sun would come out, and they would still be on the sidewalks, being drenched, now, by the equatorial heat of the sun. They are actually sidewalk occupiers who have no shelter in the town they now hold onto. Their only shelter is their own body, in which their eyes lie deeply sunk.

The people standing were the passersby, who had been unluckily entrapped by the downpour, against their wish to return to their own places of comfort. They

14. Departmen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, *Bahasa Indonesia: Belajar Membaca dan Menulis 2b* (Jakarta: Balai Pustaka, 1983), pp. 14-15.

kept their bodies ready to move, standing on their feet. At the very instant the last drop of rain reached the ground they would leave the sidewalks to go back home.

The facial expressions of the people sitting on their chairs inside their houses were the most peculiar to me. They seemed to be inebriated by the sight of the rain outside. A Javanese friend once remarked on the rain outside the glass window in the front sitting room, "It's nice, nah, the rain. We feel secure. We feel we are content with whatever we have in our house. No need to go out in the rain."

The peculiarity arose from the way in which they looked out. Their eyesight was fixed about four feet above the ground in front of them, yet its focus was indeterminable. The cars were the only moving objects in sight, because all other activities on the streets had ceased, but it was obvious that no one was watching the cars. No one was trying to identify the year or the make of the cars. The cars, including our "travel," were allowed to pass by, like the (passing) water in a river, without being paid any attention. Nor did they seem to notice the existence of the people just outside their houses. The rain had not only cooled the air, but it had washed away the smell of the roadside garbage. The only thing left for them to see was the rain, or, rather, the dusky screen of rain on which, as on the screen of darkness in sore, they might have projected their own visions.

The other peculiarity of this rainy scene was its soundlessness. No one was speaking. No transaction was conducted among people either on the streets or in the stores. It was only after some time that the effect of the sound of the downpouring rain came into my notice. Its explosive beats on the ground had made people, including myself, deaf mutes. No other sound could penetrate this barrier. One was left in a trance-like tranquility, listening to the rhythm, or the silence, of the rain-beats. They must have listened to it day after day during the long rainy season in Java, which had come year after year ever since they had been born in this land. And so had their mothers. They were seated in a state of religious ecstasy in a temple of rain, breathing the thick air and the scents of the rain, the land, and the tropical flora whose death and birth take place side by side. It was the way the rain fell on this land of Java.

Korban banjir

It is also this rain, however, that places the penduduk on anxious seats. Because of the excessive rain, the flood (*banjir*) is perceived as one of the largest threats endangering their positions (*kedudukan*). In February 1984, while we were in Solo, *banjir* caused sizable damage in and around the region of Yogyakarta. All the newspapers and TV broadcasts were also flooded with news of the *banjir*, making us spend much of our time reading or talking about the *banjir* in the sitting room while it was raining outside. News of the *banjir* was accompanied by many stories, which provided a rich body of literature concerning the fate of the penduduk who were to fall *korban* (sacrifice/victim) to the *banjir*. Indeed the courses followed by the unfortunate penduduk only to become *korban* in the end, seem to intrigue readers and reporters alike, endlessly. The following accounts illustrate the paths which led those sacrificial penduduk to their destinations.

On February 8, in Kabupaten Bojonegoro, it is reported that 12 *kecamatan* (128 *desa*) are inundated with water and 21,796 houses of penduduk which have housed 21,000 kk (households) are invaded by water (*kemasukan air*) as high as 75-150 cm. 5,203 souls have evacuated and 5,330 ha. rice-fields are inundated with water. The rice

plants of 3,306 ha. bimas and 2,324 ha. inmas are destroyed. It is reported that three people are dead and seven are sick because of banjir.¹⁵

What the mass of water is capable of doing in Java is to invade houses and inundate rice-fields. Though the house-invading water increases its depth gradually, it is the high point of 75-150 cm that is worth reporting. The 75-150 cm water not only enters [masuk] the houses without being invited but forces the penduduk to evacuate their houses. For it would be much too difficult to keep sitting back on chairs in water of that depth. The rice plants that cannot flee are destroyed [rusak].

Now, the penduduk who evacuated his house, and left the chairs behind, is not a penduduk anymore. He is now a korban of banjir who lodges in a hut, which does not have a sitting room, as an evacuee. The life which awaits him in the hut on the river bank, or on the road side, is described in detail. The quoted paragraphs are a small portion of numerous such accounts in the newspapers.

However, almost all korban banjir in the region are forced to evacuate [and seek refuge] on the bank of Bengawan Solo. They scrape up the parts of the houses and conjure out of them huts. On almost the entire bank in the Widang region are found huts where all sorts of activities are pursued, such as cooking, pounding corn, *sembahyang* [prayer] and massage.

[In a position as precarious] as an egg on a horn, each evacuee along the bank endures his lot in life. If the current (of the river) increases its speed, the water can pounce on their huts. And at any time the bank can collapse.

The huts which measure 3x2 meters on an average are utilized for everything. There, they sleep together, the family and the cattle. [There, they] take care of the family which is suffering from heat-chill [malaria], colic, entering-wind [cold], and generally itching all over the body. Cooking too is difficult. The ground is wet, and the firewood too is not sensitive to the fire because of being immersed in banjir. "Like this, *lho, mas*, the wood is difficult to set on fire. Only smoke comes out which makes our eyes hot," says Warsi, panting to blow on a fire while holding Suni (4 years old), her child who is suffering from fever-chill and colic, firmly in her arms.

Not only small boys whine with hunger, the cattle too are starving. Every now and then the parents ask their children to be patient, "If [the rice] hears people crying, the rice will not cook," says Saminah who has already taken refuge in a hut for ten days.¹⁶

The up-to-date therapy for these unseated, sick, and hungry korban banjir in Java is the famous *transmigrasi* (migration) program of the government.

On Wednesday afternoon Walikota [Mayor] Soegiarto discharged 29 kk [households] of korban banjir of the forked Code and Winongo River to head for the land of hope [*tanah harapan*] Kumbara, Kabupaten Muna, Sulawesi Tenggara. They included general transmigrants together with 19 kk of korban *tanah longsor* [landslide]. In aggregate a total

15. "Banjir Melanda Ujungpandang: Ketinggian Air Bengawan Solo Masih Kritis," *Kompas*, February 10, 1984.

16. "Daerah Terbaik Tuban Terbenam Banjir," *ibid.*, February 20, 1984.

of 50 kk which include 162 souls, among them school-age children and a baby of 7 months.¹⁷

The former penduduk who has become a korban banjir is, thus, apt to be transformed into a transmigran nowadays. The newspaper reporters also reported a banjir in a land of hope. The next paragraph is quoted from news on the banjir in Asahan, which has been one of the destinations of transmigran.

"I have to start all over again," said Ari, a mother who has to feed six children. Her husband is away from home. When on the third day [of the flood] the water had not yet withdrawn, her husband left their village to work as a laborer in Tanjung Balai. Ari and her children had already eaten the tips of banana stalks. She did succeed in picking a little from the local rice plants. But, because the rain never stopped, this small amount of rice could not be sun-dried, and, therefore, could not be milled for eating.

Ari, also Semadi, and many other farmers have apparently lost hope. According to Semadi, many male penduduk of the village had gone to Tanjung Balai or other towns to look for jobs. But no news of whether they succeeded or not had yet been received. Although the families who were left behind were very anxious to get it.¹⁸

The banjir has forced those transmigran-turned-penduduk again to transform themselves into the urban-migran while their families are standing under the banjir in the village. Those urban-migran are often regarded as uninvited intruders into the already overpopulated cities.

But nowadays many villagers go to towns. They leave their houses, rice-fields, and gardens in the village. They are tricked by the glitter of the life in towns. Town life is, actually, harder.

In large towns like Jakarta, penduduk are much too dense, causing housing to become extremely difficult, the prices of food to rise, and seeking employment not an easy affair. This is the situation we face at present. Many people do not have jobs. They live unemployed. Unemployment brings about thoughts and behavior which are not very healthy.

Many people are forced to lodge under the bridges for there are no other places to stay. They live only on the mercy of the others, and live as beggars. That makes security and order very difficult to guard.¹⁹

Until an urban-migran somehow establishes himself as a penduduk, he finds himself among the sidewalk people, either floating or crouching on the sidewalks without shelter to protect him from the sun and the rain.

At last we are back on the rain-soaked streets again. The distance between the seated penduduk inside the houses and the unseated sidewalk occupiers is, thus, very large. It is even larger than the distance between Java and the outer islands which the transmigran cross. No wonder they do not see each other, do not even notice the existence of each other, once the transactions on the streets

17. "Korban Banjir Yogya Bertransmigrasi," *ibid.*, March 1, 1984.

18. "Sudah Kehilangan Segalanya, Masih Juga Ditekan," *ibid.*, February 13, 1984.

19. Yusni Y. Bahar, dkk., "Desaku," *Keluarga Sejahtera*, vol. 3 (Jakarta: Pustaka Antara, 1978), p. 52.

have ceased. The life inside a house and the life on the streets are two separate worlds, far apart.

Is it really so? Despite all our readings in the sitting room, it is still only the wall of the front sitting room that divides the two worlds. A penduduk could see the sidewalk occupiers with his/her eyes if only he/she dared. The banjir water often comes into the house from the streets and unites the two worlds. Perhaps that is the reason why the family want to smarten up the front walls and multiply them. A house named "model Spanyol" has become popular in recent years. The house is characterized by its frontal part, both for the style and for the material. As the newspaper cartoon shows (Figure 9), the effect of the strangeness of the frontal style causes the world contained inside this facade to be removed from its surrounding world, that is, from the context of the streets

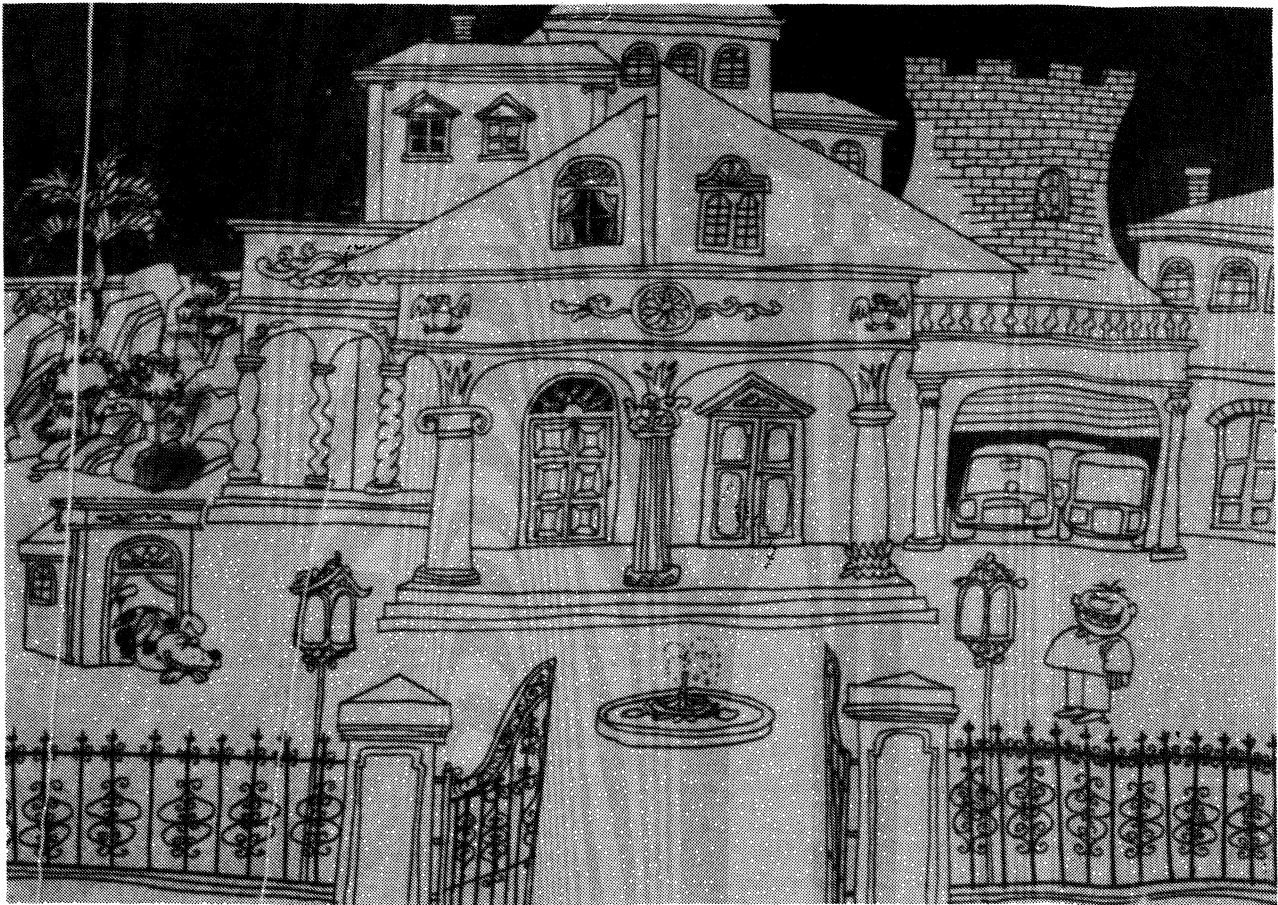


Figure 9

just outside the house. The material of the house, at least its front part, is stone. The reporter of the article called it the style of the "Stone Age." The stone house not only protects its occupiers from dangers as fierce as those of the Stone Age, but removes them from the streets of contemporary Jakarta to an unknown time-space. A high brick whitewashed fence or a sharp pointed steel fence is often created between the front wall of the house and the street. All of them--the wall, the "model Spanyol," the fence, and the dog--build up, in their accumulation, a thick security blanket that ought to dispel the penduduk's anxiety. At the same time, therefore, they stand for, in all, the depth of fear the penduduk has nurtured in him/herself.

The literature of korban creates another additional wall between the chair occupied by the reader-penduduk and the sidewalks just outside the house. Because the fact that one is reading about korban in one's sitting room is the very proof that the reader is, at least in these moments, still provided with a shelter which distinguishes a penduduk from a korban. Korban are those who are deprived of a shelter, and who are to be read about. When we stayed in a house in Jakarta, I often observed a boy who lived in the house across a narrow alleyway (gang) from ours perform his morning assignment. He cleaned the front part of his house and watered the potted green plants decorating the front porch. After he finished them all, he used to sit on a chair on the porch and read, or, rather, look at, *Pos Kota*--which was the newspaper fully dedicated to presenting photos and stories of korban, such as korban of crimes, traffic accidents, or rapes--in an apparently serene mood every morning. The korban in these photos were either lying flat on a floor or on the ground, sometimes on the bed of a hospital. If they were still alive, their eyes were covered with blacking-out marks printed on the photos. Korban are those who are denied the comfort of reading and re-creating the outside world. They are there to be seen. They are deprived of the means to protest against the way their own images are presented. Their relation to the readers of *Pos Kota* is identical with that of the "anonymous" and/or "illiterate" "natives" to the readers of ethnographical writings. Korban are deprived of their ability to read and write, that is to say, they are supposed to be "illiterates." The stories, too, almost always indicate the one-way path from penduduk to korban. The success stories from streets to cathedra are rare species in Indonesian literature compared to the domination of stories of korban, including those of heroes who sacrifice themselves (*mengorbankan diri*). The reader-penduduk are korban addicts.

Keong Mas

The wall is the essential component of the shelter which "bapak" provides today. The house-shelter of penduduk differs from a tree-shelter, because it has a wall. The protection of a tree-shelter (which is now scorned as we have seen in the school textbook) is, in theory, provided for anyone who seeks it. The protection of a house-shelter is provided only for the household members and their acknowledged guests. For, one needs to enter the shelter through the specific entrance made in the wall, which can be jealously guarded against any other intruders (*pengacau*). Only the magic formula of "Silakan masuk" opens the door of the walled shelter from inside. Thus, the house-shelter not only protects its occupants from the sun and the rain, but makes a clear distinction between those welcomed guests (*tamu*) and those uninvited intruders. It is like a snail shell (*keong*), which not only protects its occupant but enables one to distinguish between a snail and a slug.

Inside a house-shelter, the master (*bapak*) and the mistress (*ibu*) of the house have the ultimate right to determine who may be welcomed into the house and

who may not. A mistress of a household in Jakarta once told me that she had made her young housemaid leave, in spite of the contract stating she had to keep the maid at least a year, because the maid had brought her friend into her room without asking permission of her mistress.

The President and the First Lady of the Republic of Indonesia are generally referred to as "Pak Harto" and "Bu Tien" in contemporary Indonesia, in contrast to the era of "Bung Karno" and his "Nyonya"s. The first national news on TV in the evening typically starts with "Pak Harto receiving his guests," because all these official meetings are staged in a sitting-room context. In the first scene, Pak Harto is likely to be standing at the right of the TV screen, with his back to the camera. A second later, his "guests," who could be the Vice-president, cabinet members, high government officials, as well as foreign diplomats, depending on the occasion, come into the room through the entrance door at the left of the TV screen. The Bapak Negara (State) and his guests exchange brief greetings, and Pak Harto gestures in the direction of a set of chairs and tables, which his "guests" take gratefully. As if the cabinet member is seated in the meeting because he is invited to take a seat by Pak Harto, rather than because it is a duty attached to his office. Though I cannot reproduce these TV scenes here, the previous Figure 3 shows the identical setting, and there are many newspaper photos which are taken at similar angles. Figure 10 shows Pak Harto "receiving those concerned U.S. delegates on the project of increasing small households and upgrading the welfare of East Java society," in other words, the family-planning program. This news of Pak Harto is often followed by news reports in which one of Pak Harto's "guests," say a cabinet member, receives some committee members as "guests" in his own sitting room. The pattern repeats itself, reaching down to the local news in a village in Java or a town in the outer islands.



Figure 10

The newest addition to Taman Mini Indonesia Indah is a giant golden snail-shell which is named "*Keong Mas* [Golden Snail]." *Keong Mas* was built at the initiative of Bu Tien who has tended Taman Mini ever since she conceived it. She is well known as a shell collector, and her beautiful shells are displayed in glass cases in the front hall of this enormous shell structure. The shells are numerous, and greatly varied in size, shape, and color.

This *Keong Mas* is a moviehouse whose inside wall displays a large screen, claimed to be the world's largest. More than a hundred people can take seats in front of the screen and watch a half-hour film of "Indonesia Indah [Beautiful Indonesia]" which has been projected on the wall hourly since the shell-moviehouse was completed. The film has no specific story. It consists of dreamingly beautiful mountains, rice-fields, dancers in their ethnic costumes, and their *bayang-bayangan* (reflections/shadows/images) in the water. Flowers are everywhere, on earth, on the dancers, and on waters. From the midst of the film, and in the center of these flowers, Pak Harto appears. He kneels down and bows at the knees of, presumably, his parent who is seated on a chair. Then, Pak Harto takes the next seat himself and, in turn, receives a respectful bow from Bu Tien, who is then seated in the third chair and receives a bow from a younger man. The ritual continues and fades into the landscape.

This posture (*sembah*), taken by a child (*anak*) to pay respect to parents (*bapak/ibu*), is found not only at Lebaran but also in movies, magazines, and children's books. An elementary school textbook called *Prosperous Family* [Keluarga Sejahtera] has printed its illustration under the title of "Good Manners [Sopan Santun]," (see Figure 11). According to the textbook, a child adopting the posture is to declare that:



Figure 11

I wish to become a child who is loved [*disayangi*].
 I have to behave courteously to Father, Mother, and Teacher.
 I do not whine, demanding things.
 When receiving a gift, my right hand I use, thank you I utter.
 If a guest comes, I invite him to come in [*persilakan masuk*].
 I should not disturb [them], when Mother is talking with a guest.
 On Lebaran, I fall on my knees and bow before my parents.
 When someone asks for my help, I help [him/her] earnestly.²⁰

Anak is to maintain good manners toward his/her bapak and ibu. The passages make clear that good manners are to surrender one's will to that of others. By keeping one's wants behind one's bow and not demanding one's needs, one will be rewarded with one's parents' love (*sayang*).

The film on the wall of *Keong Mas*, further indicates that good manners are the prescribed procedure for an anak to obtain a seat for him/herself afterward. The seat, thus obtained, is the parental-love-materialized to reward anak for his/her surrendering of his/her will. A seat is virtue's reward. In the *Keong Mas* moviehouse, the world of Indonesia Indah is crystalized with this golden virtue as its core, which has been inherited by, and is emanating from, Pak and Bu Harto. The golden virtue radiates glitteringly out of *Keong Mas* spreading all over the Miniature Garden of the Beautiful Indonesia. Now is the Age of *Keong Mas*.

This hierarchical code of manners is effected daily in the seating regulations observed in sitting rooms. Formerly, the children, houseboys, and housemaids were not supposed to take their seat on chairs or sofas in their parents'/masters' presence. The school textbooks dutifully observe this regulation in the illustrations. Among them, Figure 12 is the first illustration from an Indonesian textbook for first graders. In the illustration, the parents are seated on chairs and the children on the floor. The male members of the family, father and sons, are to read and eat, and the female members are to feed and sit with the male members. Sometimes the children are sitting on a bench which is graded between the chairs and the floor. I was allowed to sit on a chair, not on a bench, in the school classroom I visited in Klaten.

In a guest house where we stayed in Solo, we were, as the guests of the house, usually offered seats on the red-cloth-covered, carved-wood-framed sofas or chairs in the sitting room. The young female manager used to sit on a wooden bench and housemaids on the floor steps. The young children of the house were generally found on the floor, playing with the housemen. One day our sons played cards with the children on a mat placed on the floor while a gentle floor sweeper assisted them. At my sons' request I went to see what was going on. Just before my knees touched the mat, the young floor sweeper jumped off the mat and retired backward on his knees from the sitting room. The mistress of the house immediately came forward to straighten out the situation. She, too, kneeled on the mat beside me and spoke to me about Japanese language, which she said interested her very much. When I answered her, she said, "By the way, let us talk about it more over there," and guided me to take a seat on a red sofa. There on the sofa she tried hard to stick to her "interest," and began to recite a list of all the Japanese names she knew. The sitting room is the stage in which the guests and the household members display their good manners, and the chairs are the essential setting on this stage.

20. Yusni Y. Bahar, dkk., "Sopan Santun," *Keluarga Sejahtera*, vol. 1 (Jakarta: Pustaka Antara, 1978), pp. 37-38.

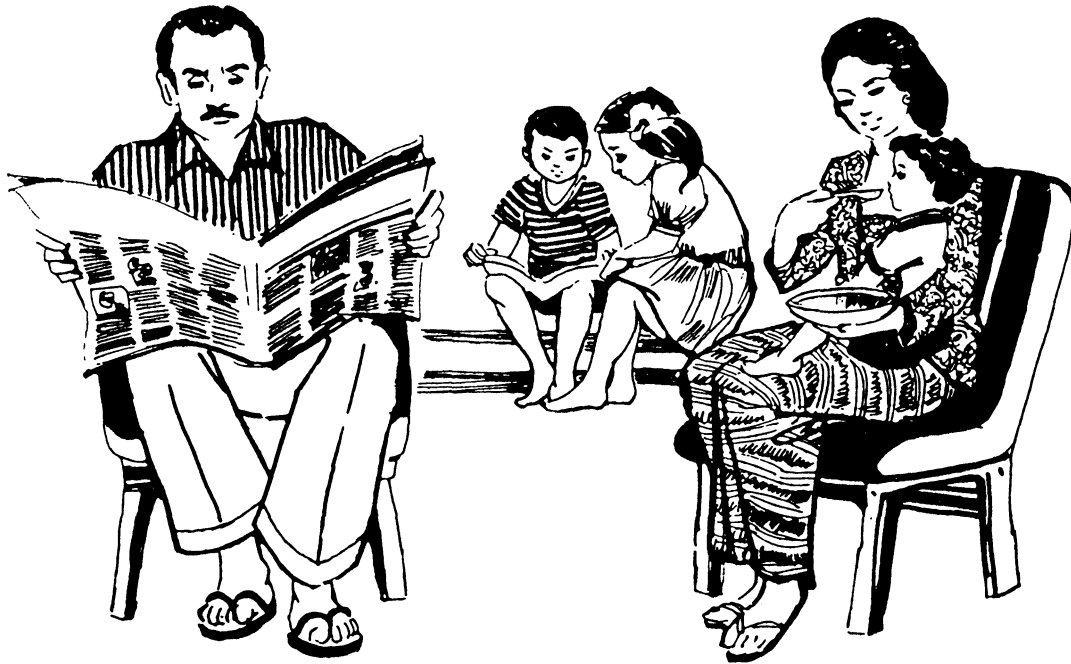


Figure 12

Dracula-pengacau

This sitting room setting provides the actual stage setting of Sri Murat, the most prominent comedy theater group in contemporary Java.²¹ An illustration I found on the wall of Surakarta Municipality Tourism Office exhibited the simplest way to distinguish Sri Murat's Theater from others. It was an illustration of a coffee (or tea) table and a set of red-cloth-covered, carved-wood-framed sofas and chairs. The group has three companies, one each in Jakarta, Solo, and Surabaya. Both in Jakarta and in Solo the group presented a two-act play every evening. Once in a while one of the two acts is played in an outdoor setting, but basically each act is presented in a sitting-room setting. At the center of the stage the set consists of a table, a sofa, and two chairs, leaving the audience side of the table open. At the left-hand side there is a front entrance door through which the "guests" enter the sitting-room stage, as the cabinet members do in Pak Harto's sitting room on the TV screen. The right hand side is supposed to be the inner chambers of the house from which the "mistress" and the "servants" appear and tea is brought out to be served to the "guests."

There are usually three types of parts for the actors and actresses to play. One consists of the adult members of the family who freely come and sit on the sofas and chairs. The second are the servants of the household who sit on the floor in the presence of their masters and guests. Third are the guests who are to be invited in and offered seats on the chairs. Altogether seven to nine actors and actresses join in the sitting-room comical conversation during the one-hour act. The sofa on the stage usually offers seats for three persons and the two chairs offer two more seats. When more than five persons on stage are entitled to sit on chairs, one of the servants brings forward extra chairs which are always ready by the wall of the sitting room.

21. For the best description and analysis of Sri Murat, see Siegel, *Solo in the New Order*, ch. 3.

The play is basically carried out by conversations among the participants of the Sri Murat sitting room, that sometimes includes the audience. The audience also bring presents (*oleh-oleh*) and throw them at a specific actor on stage. In the play in Jakarta, the actors said thanks for the gifts each time they received them, and often smoked the cigarettes which they had just received as a gift. Once an on-stage-servant even asked for a box of matches from the audience. When a clock was hung on the wall of the stage in Jakarta, the clock pointed to the exact time of day. Thus, both the actors and the audience shared the time and space of a single Sri Murat Sitting Room. There were no sidewalk people in the plays. Sri Murat's Theater is the Sitting Room of penduduk played for penduduk.

Every Thursday night is the time for Dracula to appear in Sri Murat's Sitting Room. Everyone knows that Dracula is to appear that night. The conversation in the Sitting Room is fairly well focused, which is rather unusual, on the topic of Dracula, building up anticipation of Dracula's appearance. At the moment of his appearance (in the Dracula plays we watched in Solo, Dracula was a male, who wore a tie and a long coat that made him look like a preoccupied university professor on campus in the U.S.), the stage lights were dimmed, accompanied by a low drum beat, *doro doro dororoo*. At that moment, because of the blink-like flickering of the lights, where he came from was obscured. Actually he appeared from the right-hand side where the inner chambers were supposed to be, not from the left-hand side where the front door was situated and the other guests had come in. When the lights were on again, he was standing at the center of the Sitting Room with his back against the wall, as if he had come into existence there in front of our eyes.

At this moment, my son slipped off his seat and stood up on his feet, stretching himself as high as possible (he was about 4 feet tall) so that he could have a better look at Dracula. It was the identical action the teachers of the school in Klaten had taken at my unmannerly appearance in the teachers' room. And so did all the actors and actresses on stage. All the family members, servants, and guests in the Sitting Room rose up from the chairs and the floor, to stand on their feet. Obviously the way Dracula appeared in the Sitting Room was unmannerly, too. He had no friend who would accompany him and introduce him properly by saying "Selamat sore, bapak-bapak dan ibu-ibu. Ini Mas Dracula. Mas Dracula ini dari Eropah," instead of the drum beat of "doro doro dororoo." In another play, Dracula did get introduced by the master of the household as his friend whom he had met in Europe. Yet, the household members had been suspicious of their master, who had just returned from Europe, that he himself might have become a Dracula. Hence the master was not regarded as a reliable introducer of a stranger. Consequently, in both acts, no one was willing to say, "Selamat sore, Mas Dracula. Silakan masuk. Silakan duduk." On the contrary, all of them who were already on their feet, turned their backs to Dracula and began to run away from him. A chase started round the stage.

Dracula is, thus, the one who comes into the Sitting Room inappropriately without being invited to enter. His intrusion into the Sitting Room brings about a stage of deregulation. Now everyone is on their feet. The distinction between the chair-sitters and the floor-sitters is nullified. The chairs and the sofa have become useless. No anak cares to bow at the knees of his bapak and ibu anymore. The shelter has been broken through. They all cast off good manners and run about the stage, following their own need and will to flee from Dracula. Dracula's intrusion into the Sitting Room created an effect identical to that of the intrusion of the 75-150-cm-high water into the sitting rooms at the time of banjir. Stand up and run away! The actors and the actresses on stage, who are now running around playing a chase, looked as if they were rather enjoying themselves.

A friend of ours once remarked that it was the moment of Dracula's appearance that frightened him most. At that moment he felt the existence of the spirits (*roh*) all around him. Dracula himself, who was then revealed under the bright lights on the stage after the moment of his appearance, always looked a cheap fake, he said. Indeed it was the appearance of Dracula in the Sitting Room, not Dracula himself, that not only erased the chairs but eroded all the walls, the fences, the dogs, the "model Spanyol," and the doors of the house, as well as the power of the magic formula of "Silakan masuk. Silakan duduk." Because none of them could prevent Dracula from intruding into the Sitting Room. The security blanket proved itself to be invalid. Suddenly, at the moment of Dracula's appearance, one is left, in the very late Thursday evening when all the spirits in Java are supposed to come out to fill the air, to find oneself being unwrapped to be exposed directly to whatever one's shelter has protected one from. The shell had disappeared and the naked snail found itself sharing the fate of the slug. The tranquility derived from the chairs in the sitting room has come undone.

In another Dracula performance we watched in Jakarta, Dracula was a female and the mistress of a two-storied beautiful house. Nyonya Dracula wanted to marry the man who was the most dreadful killer. Among the three candidates who claimed to be the one, a Madurese man was chosen as her husband, because he declared that he would kill all those people who would stand when he said "Silakan duduk." Indeed if Dracula is the one who makes people stand up in the sitting room, this Madurese man would make the most perfect choice one can conceive of for Nyonya Dracula's marriage partner. Actually at the appearance of the mistress of the house, all the guests in the Sitting Room stood up from their seats and left the house as quickly as possible. That is the most unmannerly conduct the guests can perform toward the mistress of the house. The appearance of Dracula frees one from one's good manners, or, from one's seat.

"Rakyat"

At this crucial moment of Dracula's appearance in the Sitting Room, however, the audience remained seated. Considering the shock the appearance of Dracula caused among the audience, who had been, up to this point, participating in the conversation in the Sri Murat Sitting Room, it rather surprised me that, in fact, no one except my son stood up on his feet.

When Dracula appears the reaction of the audience is extreme. Laughter mixes with screams. Some curl up in their seats. A woman next to me once hooked her leg over mine while she grabbed her husband's arm with both hands.²²

This description of a woman reminds me of those sit-in demonstrators who hook their arms and legs around each other in order to keep sitting as they fight against policemen, who are trying to break up a demonstration by pulling each one of the demonstrators off the ground. The appearance of Dracula is as forceful as the trained muscles of these policemen, and the audience spends as much energy to remain seated every Thursday night. It reveals the strength of the grip good manners have over the people in Solo, who are renowned as the best-mannered Javanese, and at the same time the depth of the sensation they would feel at its release.

22. Ibid.

The catastrophe Dracula's appearance brought to the Sitting Room, thus, did not reach the audience hall where the people remained seated. The Dracula-invaded Sitting Room on the stage was, at this moment, separated from the rest of the audience. None of the audience threw presents at the actors anymore. Dracula never received a pack of cigarettes. Dracula, on the other hand, never talked to the seated audience nor came to chase after them. The seated audience was invisible to Dracula.

One need not become transparent to gain invisibility. One way is to place oneself among the pedestrians and float along with others on the streets. Unless one is a freshly arrived Japanese on a street in Solo, or an alluringly dressed transvestite on a street in Jakarta in sore, one can quietly walk into invisibility. Another way is to seat oneself among those who seem to be caught at the parapet of a bridge or the edge of a sidewalk. Once I was watching a flag-raising ceremony in a junior high school, standing by the school fence at the edge of a street. Every Monday, from seven o'clock to seven forty-five, all the schools in Indonesia carry out a flag ceremony in the school grounds. After some time the teachers noticed that a stranger was watching them, and they apparently became uneasy. They looked back at me from time to time. I began to feel uncomfortable, too. Somehow I decided to sit down on the parapet of a roadside stone bridge where I had often seen students meditating in school hours. As soon as I sat down, their interest flew off my head, and they did not look back at me anymore. A four-foot-above-the-ground line on the streets in Java forms a surface under which one can quietly sink into invisibility. Being at the bottom of invisible space, a Javanese holds the reality of the world in his lap. The outside world is perceived through the reflector on which its reality manifests itself. I was not there to witness the ceremony with my eyes, I was reflecting on it, which, the teachers knew, they had nothing to do with.²³

To the seated audience, Sri Murat's Sitting Room which is invaded by Dracula has manifested the reality of Java's sitting rooms. All the sitting rooms, including their own, are under the threat of an intruder (*pengacau*) who is capable of appearing in the sitting room without being invited.

One loses this placid invisibility once one makes a stand in the midst of a street. The following conversation is quoted from Yudhistira's play *Wot atawa Jembatan*:

Student: What's there, Mas? [*Ada apa, mas?*]
 Youth: Nothing. Why? [*Tidak ada apa-apa. Kenapa?*]
 Student: I think there is something. [*Saya kira ada apa.*]
 Youth: Nothing. [*Tidak ada apa-apa.*]
 Student: Nothing! Even though you're standing here? [*Tidak ada apa-apa koq berdiri di sini?*]²⁴

If the youth was sitting on the parapet of the bridge, sinking beneath the four-foot invisibility surface, I expect that no Javanese would have come to ask him, "Nothing! Even though you are sitting around here [*Tidak ada apa-apa koq*

23. A Javanese woman who works for a Japanese company in Jakarta was astonished at the fact that every time she seated herself silently (*diam*) on her chair, her Japanese boss dutifully came to her to tell her to do "something." Being seated *diam* was an outstanding act there.

24. Yudhistira Ardi Nugraha, "Wot atawa Jembatan: sebuah sandiwara," mimeo., n.d., p. 6.

duduk-duduk di sini!]" Consequently there would be no development of the play. Standing on one's feet is to declare that one has a reason for standing. Subsequently that is to declare that here is one who has his own reason. That is to say, here is one who exists apart from all the others. One becomes visible. Standing up is equivalent to pronouncing "Here I am," ready to commit oneself to one's own fate. The posture of Bima. That is what the audience of Sri Murat chose not to do at the moment of Dracula's appearance.

On the other hand, when not a small number of people are found gathering together on their feet on a street, the act is termed "*merakyat*" in contemporary Indonesian. The term, however, does not usually apply to the assemblage of uniformed people, such as the uniformed students or armies standing in rows on the ground for flag-raising ceremonies. Their uniforms and rows indicate that their assemblage is premeditated by someone else in advance, and that each participant is following the order by surrendering his own clothing and will to be somewhere else.

During our short stay in Java, I failed to witness those acclaimed Indonesian "*rakyat*" who, I had seen in photos, jubilantly standing on the roofs (Figure 13),

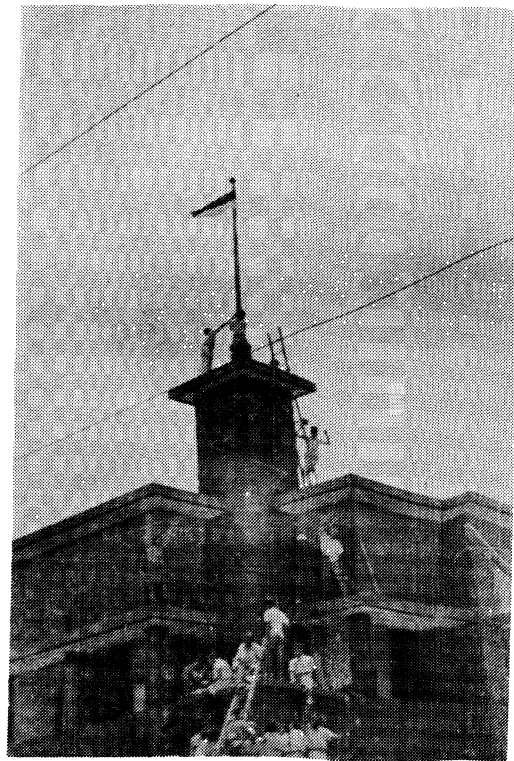
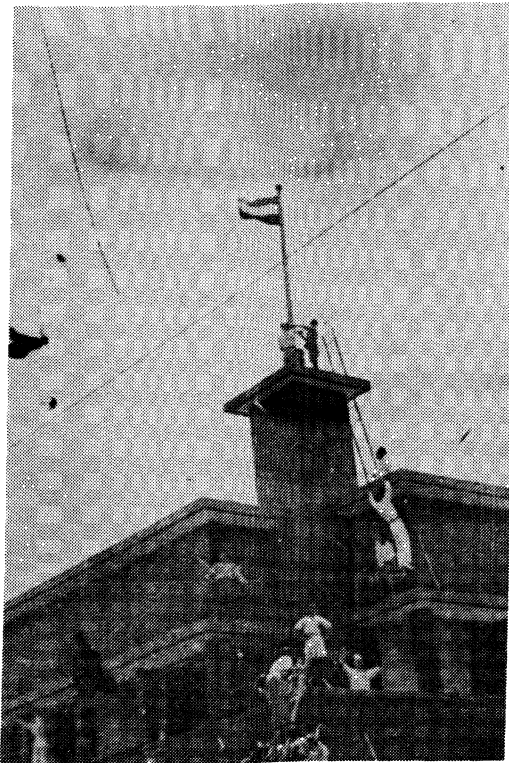


Figure 13

instead of being seated under the roofed shelter, or, who were flooding en masse a large field (Figure 14) and overflowing down the streets, instead of being flooded. In their hands were the flags of Indonesia raised as high as possible, as a device to stand out above all the others to declare "Here is an Indonesian," instead of holding *Pos Kota*. Unlike the excommunicated korban in *Pos Kota*, they marked their messages on their photos by holding placards and by hand-writing their messages on the walls, trucks, and buses. That was not a meditative mind-writing projected on the screen of darkness. Some of their messages were written in English, "INDONESIA' NEVER AGAIN The LIFE-BLOOD of ANY NATION" (Figure 15), rejecting treatment as "illiterate natives."²⁵ It must have been the time when the streets were the main theater, in which the walls were seized by the "rakyat" to frame the street-theater as *tembok* (outer masonry wall), not to frame the sitting-room-theater as *dinding* (inner partitioning wall).



Figure 14

25. These photographs are from Osman Raliby, *Documenta Historica: Sedjarah dokumenter dari pertumbuhan dan perjuangan negara Republik Indonesia* (Jakarta: Bulan-Bintang, 1953), pp. 112-13, 78, 147, 221.



Figure 15

Ronda vs. Pencuri

Is there any specific way for penduduk to deal with Dracula, or, to prevent Dracula from entering their sacred sitting room? We may begin the search by looking into how they have dealt with the smallest blood-thirsty intruder—Dracula I have found in the houses in Java, the mosquitoes. The following sentences are quoted from the first-grade Indonesian textbook:

Iwan sleeps soundly.
Wati keeps watch over Iwan [*Wati menjaga Iwan*].
So that he won't be bitten by mosquitoes.²⁶

One can, thus, prevent mosquitoes from sucking one's blood by having someone else watch over (*jaga*) oneself when one is sleeping, that is, when one is most susceptible to attack. Though the actual method of dealing with mosquitoes in contemporary Java is the use of mosquito repellent, which has replaced the mosquito net on the shopping list of a newcomer to Java, the term "watch over [*jaga*]" still prevails. Let us read an advertisement for a mosquito repellent.

Shelltox--night watch [*ronda malam*] of your house
Protect [*Lindungilah*] your house from all sorts of disturbance from mosquitoes. Protect the comfort of your family----with Shelltox, the mosquito eradicator which works quickly and effectively.

New Formula

Shelltox with the new formula contains the insecticide material which is impregnable. [It] evaporates easily so that [it] can hunt and kill the mosquitoes quickly. Furthermore other insects too will be exterminated.

A bit of spraying with Shelltox, will guard [*jaga*] your family from all sorts of disturbances by the house insects.

Entrust the comfort of your family to the most trustworthy night watch [*si ronda mala terpercaya*]...Shelltox.

In the picture of the advertisement, a family, who are watched over by Shelltox, are drinking tea or coffee in their sitting room (Figure 16).

The night watch of Java's neighborhoods is called "ronda."²⁷ Ronda keep a watch over the security of their neighborhood every night against, in general, the thieves [*pencuri*]. Ronda and *pencuri* are so closely associated that ronda without *pencuri*, or *pencuri* without ronda, is almost inconceivable. *Pencuri* is also one of the species of Dracula, or, rather, Dracula is a newly mutated *pencuri*, that still retains the original *pencuri*'s attribute of the capacity to enter a house without being invited. It is the reason why ronda, or *Hansip*, have often played the role of the pilot fish of Dracula on Sri Murat's stage. The following article on ronda and Dracula appeared among the news of banjir in Java. Though the locale of the incident is Aceh, the northern province of Sumatra, the report was written in the Javanese context of ronda vs. house-intruder.

Not "Spirit of Kojak," but an ordinary crime

Banda Aceh, *Kompas*

Dandim 0101 Lieutenant Colonel M. Djamil appealed to residents of Banda Aceh to increase security of their neighborhood by means of

26. Departmen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, *Bahasa Indonesia: Belajar Membaca dan Menulis 1b* (Jakarta: Balai Pustaka, 1983), p. 9.

27. See Siegel, *Solo in the New Order*, ch. 2.

Shelltox-ronda malam rumah anda

Lindungilah rumah anda dari berbagai gangguan nyamuk. Lindungilah kenyamanan keluarga anda ... dengan Shelltox, pembasmi nyamuk yang bekerja cepat dan efektif.

Formula baru
Shelltox dengan formula baru mengandung bahan insektisida yang ampuh. Mudah menguap hingga mampu menburi dan membunuh nyamuk dengan cepat. Bahkan serangga lainpun ikut binasa.

Sedikit semprotan Shelltox, menjaga keluarga anda dari berbagai gangguan serangga rumah.

Percayakan kenyamanan keluarga anda pada si ronda malam terpercaya ... Shelltox.

Shelltox
membunuh serangga dengan ... *Cepat!*

Shelltox
ronda malam rumah anda

Figure 16

"Ronda" at night. The same appeal was also delivered by Kopolres Aceh Besar, Lieutenant Colonel (Pol) Budiman, at a meeting with the leaders of the society in the city hall. "Investigate any unknown person who is found in the neighborhood at night. If his identity and destination are doubted, arrest him and hand him over to us immediately," said two officials, on Monday, January 16.

The appeal is made in connection with the occurrence of "strange crimes" over the last three weeks in Banda Aceh. The korban of the strange crimes are generally women, especially girls and widows. Authorities have not clarified the figure of the actor. But, according to several penduduk of the town, the actor takes the shape of "a man with the head of a cat." Yet, others say the opposite, "a cat's body and a man's head."

The creature enters [masuk] a penduduk's house at night. It is said that the actor of the crime can pass through the finest holes. Once inside a house, the criminal only seeks women to rape. Then korban's blood [*darah*] is sucked from the wounds in their necks. Afterward, "the criminal" runs away without taking any goods. If pursued, immediately after having got out of the house, it is said, the actor vanishes out of sight. But some say that he changes into a "black cat." . . .

The crime which has made the townspeople restless is called by penduduk "Hantu Kojak," "Dracula" and various other names. "Do not give false names, there is no Hantu Kojak, there is no hantu



Figure 17

[spirit] who has a cat's head, it is an ordinary crime," says Lieutenant Colonel M. Djamil, warning the community.²⁸

He says so, because as long as the incident is one of those ordinary crimes caused by a pencuri-intruder, it can be effectively dealt with by ronda. Any intruder in a house, by definition, disappears once he gets out of the house, because it is rather difficult to remain an "intruder" after one has set foot on a public street, unless one belongs to an invading foreign military force in the land. The intruder in the house becomes one of pedestrians on the street and simply walks into invisibility. It is ronda who form a wall to enclose the neighborhood and make its streets a part of the neighborhood territory. Figure 17 is a photo of *pagar desa* (village fence). A materialization of "ronda malam." Now, the intruder in the house reappears as an intruder in the neighborhood territory in front of the eyes of ronda who watch over the territory. Thus, ronda can make the intruder visible even after he leaves the house, and, consequently, can pursue the intruder who may no longer be seen by ordinary penduduk.

Yet the incident is by no means an ordinary crime. The intruder does not take any goods; therefore, he does not fit the ordinary name of "pencuri." The intruder (*pengacau*) is, like the place to sit which we have already seen, highly multiplicable and has multiple names other than "pencuri," such as "Dracula," "banjir," "nyamuk [mosquito]." The new phenomenon, "new" in the sense that pencuri did not do it, is that both "Kojak" and "Dracula" suck the blood (*darah*) of their korban. In a children's reading book, there is a section regarding the lack of *darah* (see Figure 18).

Darah is made from food.
From eggs and fish.
From meat and milk.
From fruit and vegetables.
Eat them a lot.
Eat all sorts of food.

Sufficient *darah* sharpens the brain.
Sufficient *darah* strengthens the body.
Sick people are deficient in *darah*.
Those who eat little are deficient in *darah*.
Those who do not like to eat much are deficient in *darah*.²⁹

Dracula sucks *darah* away. *Darah* is made from food. It is the food, therefore, that Dracula sucks away. Dracula sucks away eggs, fish, meat, milk, fruit, and vegetables. Dracula's appearance in one's sitting room is, consequently, equivalent to a food-deficiency in one's household. The deficiency in one's food/*darah* makes one's brain dull, and one's body weak and sick. Dracula's appearance, hence, means hunger and sickness for the family. We may recall here how the life of korban banjir was described in terms of illness and the lack of food.

Illness itself can also be understood in terms of the uninvited intruder to one's body.

Why do we become sick?

Still remember *Kakek Penyakit* [Grandfather Sickness]?
Kakek Penyakit are wicked and mischievous.

28. "Tak Ada 'Hantu Kojak,' tapi Kejahatan Biasa," *Kompas*, January 17, 1984.

29. Handrawan Nadesul, "Kekurangan Darah," *Saya Anak Sehat*, vol. 2 (Jakarta: Aries Lima, 1982), p. 16.

Kakek Penyakit are multicolored.
 Big and small.
 Kakek Penyakit are like pencuri.
 Silently enter [masuk] inside our bodies.
 We do not notice that. 30

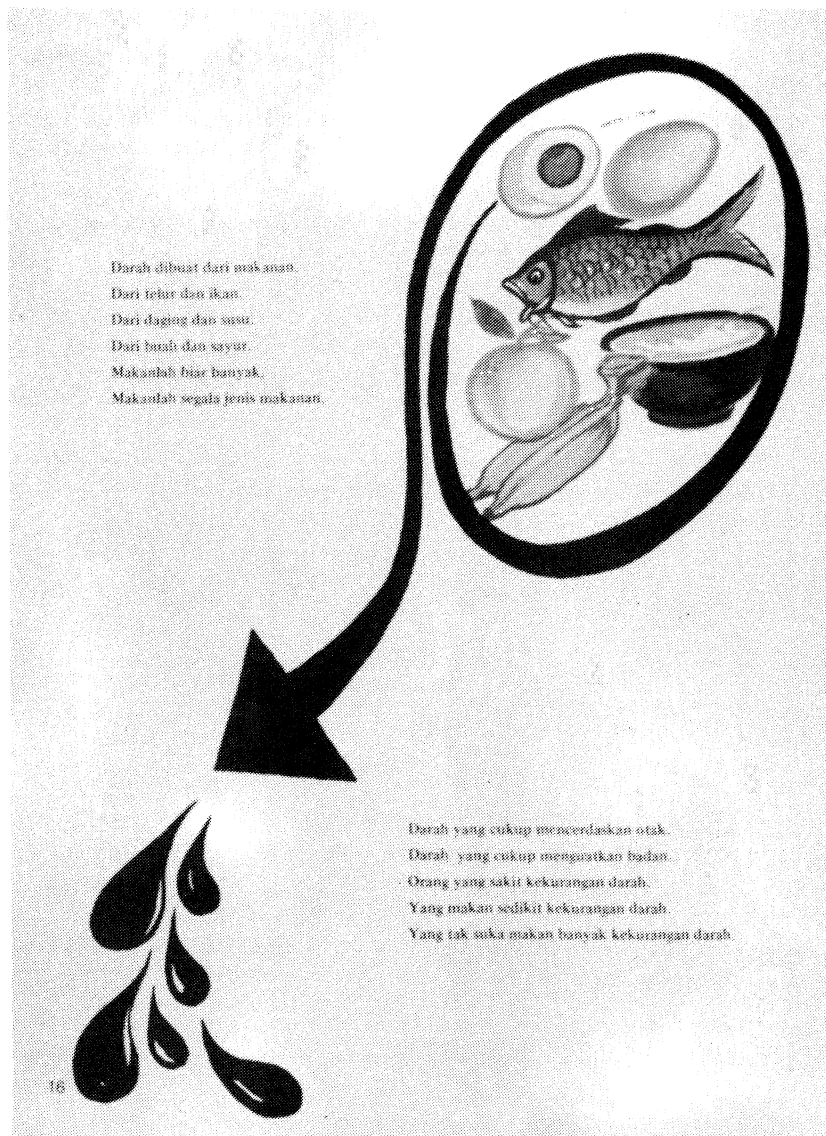


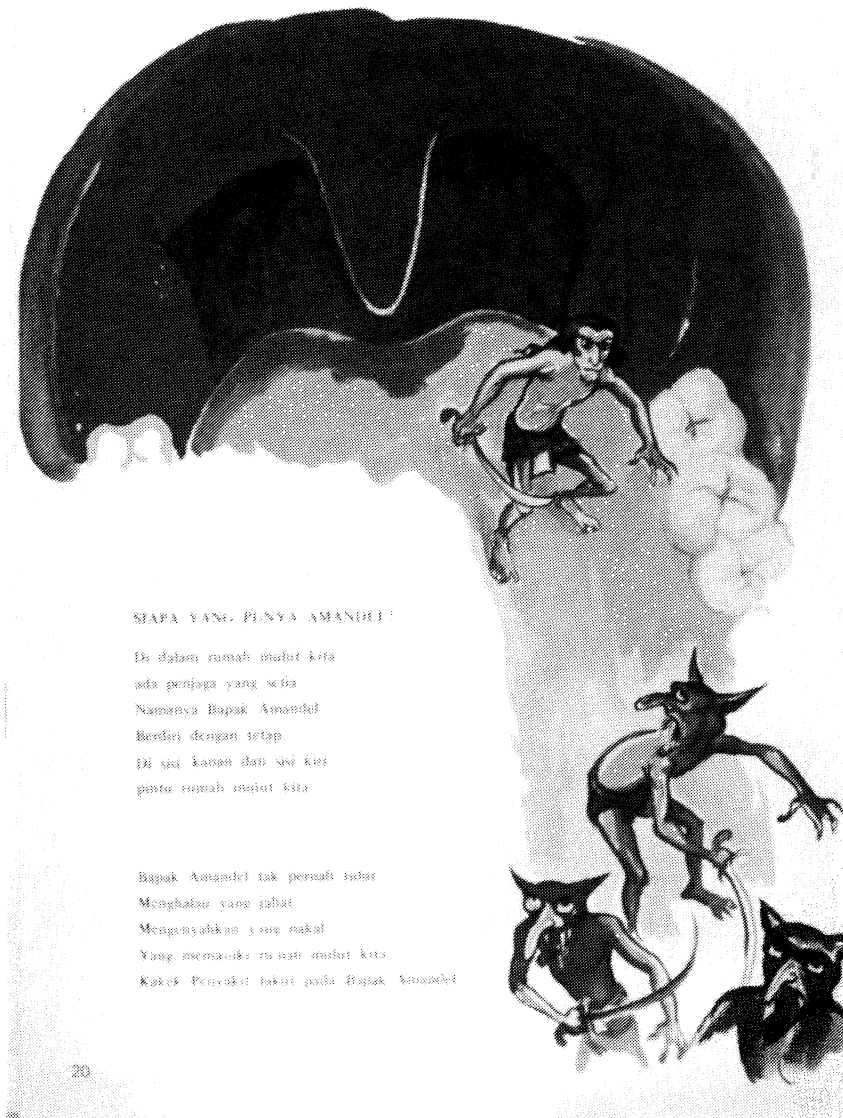
Figure 18

30. Handrawan Nadesul, "Mengapa Kita Sakit?" *ibid.*, p. 2.

Who has tonsils?

Inside our mouth-house,
there is a faithful watchman [penjaga].
His name is Bapak Tonsil.
He stands firm.
On the right side and on the left side
at the door of our mouth-house.

Bapak Tonsil never sleeps.
He expels those wicked ones,
Repels those mischievous ones,
Who enter our mouth-house.
Kakek Penyakit are afraid of Bapak Tonsil.³¹



SIAPA YANG PUNYA AMANDEL?

Di dalam rumah mulut kita
ada penjaga yang setia
Namanya Bapak Amandel
Berdiri dengan tetap
Di sisi kanan dan sisi kiri
pintu rumah mulut kita

Bapak Amandel tak pernah tidur
Mencegah yang jahat
Mengusir yang nakal
Yang memasuki rumah mulut kita
Kakek Penyakit takut pada Bapak Amandel

20

Figure 19

31. Handrawan Nadesul, "Siapa yang Punya Amandel?" *ibid.*, p. 20.

Pencuri can be dealt with by ronda, Kakek Penyakit by Bapak Tonsil (see Figure 19 for their illustration), mosquitos by si ronda malam terpercaya--Shelltox. Korban banjir were given the government's therapy of the transmigrasi program.

The most outstanding therapy to deal with the lack of the food is the government's family-planning program.

This prosperous family would be created more easily if the number of the family members were few. The family which consists of a father, a mother, and two children would more easily create prosperity than the family which consists of a father, a mother, and five children. The larger the family is, the larger their necessities become, and these necessities sometimes become difficult for the father and the mother to fulfill.³²

Like "75-150 cm high invading banjir," "five children" becomes the threat to a prosperous family life. The larger the number of the children, the larger the amount of food they would suck away. "Five children" is another name for the Dracula-intruder (pengacau) to the household. The way to deal with "five children" is to cut down the number by the family-planning program. The pills are to treat those who are suffering from food deficiency.

A visitor to Java finds family-planning advertisements standing erect along and in the middle of the streets, and on the buses, where the "rakyat" used to place their messages. By the side of the statues of "rakyat," the advertisement declares "Akseptor Lestari adalah Pahlawan Bangsa [Acceptors of eternal sterilization are the heroes of the nation]." They are national heroes (*pahlawan bangsa*) because they sacrifice themselves in order to prevent the blood/food/life suckers, in other words, "five children," from invading the household of Pak Harto. "Keluarga Sejahtera [Prosperous Family]" is the ultimate cause of those contemporary heroes of the nation, as "Merdeka" once was the ultimate cause of the "rakyat." Today Javanese streets are flooded with the message of "Keluarga Sejahtera."

Silakan Pulang

The most intriguing story of the banjir-Dracula season in 1984 appeared in newspapers in early February, which ingeniously furnished Yogyakarta with penduduk, banjir, pencuri, ronda, korban, and darah.

A Bloody Affair in the *Banjir* Area of River Code Yogya.

Yogyakarta, Feb. 7

A bloody affair in the banjir-hit location of River Code, Yogyakarta, caused the death of two Hansip members, Siau Han Bing alias Hasyim (23 yr old), and Sunardi (22), and eight others were wounded as the result of stabbings with a sharp weapon committed by a youth Srtn (21), who was penduduk of Kampong Ledoc Tukangan, Kecamatan Danurjan, on Monday night.

According to the accounts given by penduduk and Polresta [Police of Regional Town] in Yogyakarta to [the reporter of] SH [*Sinar Harapan*] on Tuesday morning, a few hours before the incident, penduduk, acting as ronda in the region where the above mentioned banjir had unfortunately struck, were noisily running after a pencuri [thief].

32. Yusni Y. Bahar, dkk., "Keluarga Sejahtera," *Keluarga Sejahtera*, vol. 4 (Jakarta: Antara, 1978), p. 55.

The pencuri succeeded in escaping, and those 30 youths and the members of *kampung* Hansip who had taken part in the pursuit, took a rest at a local security post. Srtm, whose house had been knocked down by the banjir, and who had gone along with the youth group from his kampung, was then requested to go home [*dipersilahkan pulang*] by his friends, because Srtm himself had said that he was to take an examination at the university on Wednesday.

Presumably because he was too tired and suffering inner tensions resulting from the loss of all of his clothes and books, which had been carried away by the strong current of River Code during the banjir on Saturday, February 4, Srtm felt offended. Without saying much, he went home and came back to the post again with a knife and directly attacked whoever was close to him. A member of Hansip, Siau Han Bing (Hasyim) who tried to calm Srtm, was immediately stabbed to death. Sunardi was also killed in the same manner. The eight korban who were wounded are Bambang, Wahyu, Mujiharjo, Nur, Tono, Narno, Jono, and Giyo.

Expecting that Srtm would be in a state of unconsciousness until Tuesday, he has been kept in custody in a police cell of Polresta in Yogyakarta on Ngupasan Street. He is a student in Class III of the Faculty of Economics at UPN (Veteran), Yogyakarta. He has been known as a quiet youth.

His family explained to "SH" that after the occurrence of the banjir on Saturday night, Srtm looked extremely distressed because almost all of his clothes and books were lost by being carried away by the current. The only clothes left to him were the ones he had worn until the bloody affair.

Other testimony says that it is suspected that, some time before, he had suffered from a nervous disorder and had been treated at the Mental Hospital.³³

A strange article it is. Though the incident itself in which ronda became korban is perplexing enough, the article is even more puzzling. It seems unlikely that anyone, including the reporter of *Sinar Harapan*, "SH," had had a chance to examine the murderer at this point, because the murderer, who is indicated rather darkly as "Srtm" in the article, had been kept in custody in a police cell when "SH" arrived in Yogyakarta. Moreover, "Srtm" was expected to be in a state of unconsciousness. Therefore the article is, except for the first paragraph which states established facts, "SH"'s own attempt to interpret the affair.

The stage is prepared, according to the common condition of banjir-hit areas in Java. After a banjir, people are supposed to be very tired and exhausted because of cleaning, mending, rearranging their houses, and the tensions they endured. They are, as korban of banjir-Dracula, suffering dullness of mind and weakness of body. Consequently, they lie fast asleep in their damaged houses at night, inviting the uninvited guest, pencuri, who in his turn invites ronda on to the scene. The "ronda chasing pencuri" is an indispensable part of a banjir-hit stage setting.

The classical expression, which would be derived from the description of the affair in the first paragraph, and which seems to exist at the heart of "SH"'s interpretation, is "*amuk*." A blind attack with a sharp knife at random victims at hand, under the influence of the rage which gripped the murderer in the darkness.

33. "Peristiwa Berdarah Di Lokasi Banjir Kali Code Yogya," *Sinar Harapan*, February 7, 1984.

"SH" tries to report the affair without employing the term, "amuk," which has been closely associated with the notion of "illiterate," hence, "uneducated" "natives." It is apparent, however, that "amuk" is the satisfactory expression and/or explanation of the affair to "SH." Therefore, as a result, "SH" reports on an unsaid name, "amuk," instead of on the affair itself.

The cause of "amuk" is a man's rage. "Srtn" must be, therefore, under the influence of his rage. The question to "SH" is, hence, what placed "Srtn" under the influence of his rage, and how? To "SH," the fact that "Srtn" was a harshly-hit korban banjir was the apparent cause, and the request made on "Srtn" at the security post to go back home (Silakan pulang) permitted this pre-existing cause to come into play. "Because" "Srtn" was a korban banjir, he "felt offended" at his friends' request of "Silakan pulang." The question is answered, at least to "SH." The rest of the article is merely to strengthen this answer. As a korban banjir, "Srtn" not only lost his house but all of his clothes and books, that is, banjir struck him harder and he had more to lose than the others (his books, which prove his identity as a university student [*mahasiswa*]). "Srtn" is now even suspected of having suffered from a nervous disorder, that could have made him more vulnerable to the offense he took.

To us, non-Javanese, the question remains. Why because of "Srtn"'s previous loss did "Silakan pulang" make "Srtn" "feel offended"? As "SH" implies in the article, "Srtn"'s membership of the ronda which "SH" defines as "penduduk who act as ronda" had become questionable as the result of his loss of his house, clothes, and books--all that should have proven his identity as a penduduk. An ethnographer who has lost his literacy, particularly, in English, French, and/or German, and speaks only the language of the "illiterate" "natives" he is chasing, may have some resemblance to "Srtn." Nevertheless "Srtn" still acted as a member of the ronda, in his last remaining clothes. In this precarious position, he was requested "Silakan pulang." Whatever reason the speaker of this phrase might have had, any penduduk who is always entitled to be greeted with "Silakan masuk. Silakan duduk" never deserves to receive this. This rudest possible phrase, when it was uttered, revealed and established "Srtn"'s loss of his position. "Srtn" felt offended. As if in the last agony, he tore off his last piece of clothing by staining it with the blood of the person who stood for all the loss he suffered. He was caught in darkness, for he had lost the vision as well as the seat from which he perceived the world. The readers of this newspaper article, I assume, would have thought that it was Siau Han Bing *alias* Hasyim who uttered such a rude phrase which any "proper" Javanese could never have thought of pronouncing.

Now, "Srtn" has lost all of his clothes completely. Being without clothes, he is expected to be in a state of unconsciousness (*keadaan tidak sadarkan diri*). For the nude is the reserved style of mad men in Java. One can find a naked human figure not in artistic representations in museums but on the streets. A completely naked man on a street is regarded as the one who suffers from the mal-alignment of his mind. Any respectable Javanese, therefore, would not laugh at the naked man, because it is not appropriate to laugh at one who is suffering from sickness. Suffering sickness is not something one should be blamed for. Suffering is his fate and he has no responsibility for it. At the edge of a street, a naked man may be sitting among sidewalk people without being paid any special attention, or without being feared. Why should others be frightened of him? The already naked man cannot carry a weapon in his pocket for he has no pocket anymore. He cannot hang a weapon at his uniform belt for he has no belt on. He cannot hide his weapon in his loincloth for he has no loincloth. He is, as all the other Javanese know, as harmless as those chickens who are absorbed in seeking nutrition out of the roadside garbage. In Java, a naked man on the street does not present a challenge to their clothing. He does not send out a

message that this is what I really am and all those with their clothes have sacrificed their genuine mode of existence to observe social obligations which are forced upon them. The naked, hence mad, man is merely not a full member of the human race. Clothing is the exhibition of one's mind's condition. If a man has no clothes on his body, that implies that he does not have in his body a mind which is in good working condition. Out of clothes, out of mind. In Java, mind is visible. It is the clothes around the lap that hold the reality of the world. A naked lap holds the void. We may be able to understand now the reason why "SH" never blamed the murderer, "Srtn," who is now naked. He has not even been called a "murderer." The "SH"'s account is only concerned with tracing the process by which "Srtn" eventually lost all of his possessions, particularly his clothes and, therefore, his mind. It is not a story of ronda-turned-korban. It is one of numerous stories of the suffering of penduduk-turned-korban banjir. Only, korban to banjir-Dracula is capable of becoming Dracula himself. If Dracula causes an assault upon good manners, reversibly the assault brings Dracula into the world.

Dracula-ketakutan

It is ronda, as we have learned, that is the outstanding and direct device for dealing with Dracula. Yet, we have also learned in the previous sections that ronda are not always remarkably effective in preventing Dracula's appearance. Ronda's ineffectiveness originates from the very nature of Dracula. For, unlike a pencuri, who is believed to sneak into the neighborhood from outside the ronda-made-fence, Dracula often appears from inside the wall. The splendid front wall of a "model Spanyol" house cannot prevent Dracula from appearing in its sitting room if the mistress of the house is the Dracula. However many times it may be multiplied, the wall, or walls, of a house cannot prevent "five children" from coming into existence inside the house. Ronda once was even directly invalidated by a murderer-Dracula who appeared out of its fellow members.

"Talk of the devil," or "Talk of Dracula" is the highlight of this Dracula's nature. In the Sri Murat Sitting Room, Dracula revealed his existence in front of the wall only after much of him/her had been talked about and all the members of the Sitting Room, including the audience, had been well versed in the idea of Dracula. Because everyone had come to know the name "Dracula" by the time of his appearance, Dracula was able to be accepted as "Dracula," which originally was a foreign name. "Dracula" is, therefore, the name given to the fear (*ketakutan*) which the audience-penduduk has nurtured by reflecting on it. The appearance of Dracula is the eruptive projection of their fear on the wall of the Sitting Room. The walls of a house had been constructed and multiplied out of anxiety; hence, each one of the walls buried a Dracula at its base, to begin with. The Dracula rises out of its grave to cause, and also as a result of, the erosion of the wall.

At the appearance of Dracula the stage was darkened. In the play "WOT atawa Jembatan," the first old man was also planned to appear on the darkened stage. Yudhistira described the darkness as "*remang*" which indicates the darkness of "*sore hampir malam* [late evening close to night]." Sore is the time when the perception of one's eyes is taken over by the perception of one's mind, that will be replaced again at dawn the next morning. The way Dracula appeared in the eye-blink-like flickering of the darkened stage lights, therefore, is an expression of this sensuous experience in sore. On the wall of the sitting room in a village in sore I saw the afterimage of the beautiful scenery I had seen at the end of the village. However, in Sri Murat's Sitting Room, Dracula--a strange and foreign figure--stood in the place of the beautiful scenery. Dracula is the intruder

(pengacau) into one's cherished sweet images no less than the intruder into one's sitting room. Dracula stands for the loss of the beautiful images of Java's countryside in one's mind, as well as for the loss of the wall. The wall has protected the peace of one's mind by embracing one's treasured images.

It is, consequently, the sitting-room walls that have to be guarded against the fearful image of Dracula appearing there. Ronda and all the other outer walls are not decisive means to chase Dracula-the-fear from one's mind out of the sitting room. Placing the paintings of beautiful Java landscapes on dinding (inner wall) is one way of protecting the wall from eroding. To the eyes of a non-Javanese, these paintings are not always highly artistic and admirable. They need not be. The painting itself is not meant to be studied carefully and admired for its beauty. To the Javanese, who already know too well the beauty of their land, of their village, the painting is only the key to bring that image back into existence in their mind. It is the beauty of the image each viewer of the painting has in his mind that is sublime. There is a verse that praises the peaceful beauty of a village and that accompanies an illustration of a conventional Javanese landscape in the textbook, "Prosperous Family."

My Village [*Desaku*]

My village is very beautiful [*indah*].
 Birds warble from tree to tree.
 Plants are greening in various tones.
 Coconut, nangka, banana, papaya.
 Cow, water buffalo, chicken, and duck.
 All are found in the village.

Yonder, on the hill slope, rice-fields are becoming yellow.
 The air is refreshing, and healthy.
 Houses are beautiful [*indah*], yards are spacious.
 Inhabitants [*penduduk*] are intimate, willing to help.
 Disputes, they keep away.
 Life is calm [*tenang*], secure [*aman*], tranquil [*tenteram*], and happy [*bahagia*]. (Figure 20.)³⁴

The verse has the ring of a heavenly abode. The actual landscape in a village in Java is certainly beautiful. But it becomes heavenly beautiful, *indah*, when a Javanese muses about it in his/her mind. It becomes heavenly beautiful when it is perceived on the screen of darkness by the villagers who sit on the bench with their backs facing the view, or, when it is recalled to the mind by the town residents who sit on a chair in their sitting room in front of the wall. What is represented by the paintings and the verse has little to do with what one sees with one's eyes and touches with one's hands on the earth. It is heavenly. One meets God in there. To perceive what is heavenly beautiful, *indah*, is to prove that one is seated beside Him in the heavenly garden. Life in the heavenly garden is calm, secure, tranquil, and happy. The fear is out of sight, hence, out of mind.

When one is lost to God, on the other hand, one sees Dracula/banjir/ the loss of one's beautiful village/the void beside oneself, that is, the fear. A song which once was record-breakingly popular in Java started in the following manner.

Berita kepada Kawan

Words for A Friend

Perjalanan ini

The road

Terasa sangat menyedihkan

I felt very distressing

34. Ny. Yusni Y. Bahar dkk., "Desaku," in *Keluarga Sejahtera*, vol. 4, pp. 50-51.



Figure 20

Sayang,
Engkau tak duduk disampingku kawan
Banyak cerita
Yang mestinya kau saksikan
Di tanah kering bebatuan

Tubuhku terguncang
Di hempas batu jalanan
Hati tergetar menampak
Kering kerumputan
Perjalanan inipun
Seperti jadi saksi
Gembala kecil menangis sedih

Pity,
You are not seated beside me, Friend
Many stories
Which surely bear you testimony
To a land dried and full of stones

My body shakes
Under the lash of stones of the road
My heart trembles to see
A grass-land dried
Being on this road
As to become witness
A small shepherd weeping with distress

The young traveler has left the village of his family and friends, to try his fate in an unknown town. There he sees a land dried and full of stones, an infertile land which means hunger and malady. An infertile land which could also be flooded and covered with red water that takes all the hopes away. His body shakes and heart trembles for the fear of witnessing the absence of God. Ebiet once said that he wrote his songs, which I thought were his prayers, on his small typewriter while facing a blank wall in front of him.

Mengapa di tanahku terjadi bencana
 Mungkin,
 Tuhan mulai bosan melihat tingkah kita
 Yang selalu salah dan
 Bangga dengan dosa dosa

Why on my land has calamity been manifested
 Probably,
 God began to be bored with seeing our behavior
 Which is always wrong and
 Proud of its sins³⁵

This is, however, not the only way to perceive the disaster on earth. When all the others, upon perceiving the Dracula-banjir, have evacuated their houses, there still are those who remain seated within them.

Although their houses are inundated with water and at any time liable to collapse or to be washed away, still there are some who are "headstrong [*nekad*]" in staying [*mendiaminya*] there. They philosophize "*sedumuk batuk senyari bumi* [All the steps on earth are fate and life]. No need to move. Do not be afraid [*takut*]. So long as you do not sin, you will surely be safe [*selamat*]." Kakek (Grand-father) Niti (73 years old), born in Widang, remains firm.³⁶

Kakek Niti is *nekad*. He has refused to recognize Dracula-the-fear. He perceives God's design, instead. He has learned in his long life to remain seated beside Him in the face of any intruder to his life on earth. He already dwells in the heavenly abode, that is what kakek indicates. He has conquered Dracula-the-fear.

* * *

The smallest sitting room I have seen in Java is that of a houseboy in the house where we stayed in Jakarta. At the back of the house, there is a narrow 1x3 m. space left between the back wall of the house and its fence. The only door to this space is beside the sleeping quarters of the houseboy, Andi, who has set a half-broken steel chair in the space. The hard-working 17-year-old boy, who once lost his words and looked away when he was trying to tell me about his home village where his family still live, spends his precious spare time there, sitting on that chair. When I was ironing with him I noticed the door. He invited me into the space, saying "*Silakan . . .*," and said that I too could spend my spare time there whenever I wanted. Only the grey, high walls could be seen when I seated myself on the chair. In front of the grey walls I felt like I was being allowed to perceive the mountains and rice-fields of his village which he had been unable to tell me of before. The space seemed to be even more private than his sleeping quarters. It was the smallest sitting room I had visited in Java. Yet, it offered me, it seems to me, the world of Java, as well as the original form of the sitting room. There on the small chair, I looked back on our experience in Java while traveling from sitting room to sitting room. I counted over the number of warm, red and sweet sips I have tasted in those sitting rooms.

35. Ebiet G. Ade, "Berita Kepada Kawan" (Yogyakarta, June 1979), *Album: Camellia*, vol. 2 (Jakarta: Jackson Records and Tapes, 1979).

36. "Daerah Terbaik Tuban Terbenam Banjir," *Kompas*, February 20, 1984.