Festivals in Java:

Localising cultural activism and environmental politics, 2005-2010

Alexandra Crosby
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ABSTRACT

This thesis looks at environmentalism in Central Java, Indonesia, over the years 2005-2010. Compared to the New Order that ended in 1998, this era has been characterised by greater cultural openness and political freedom. Activists have sought, found and invented new cultural spaces to agitate for change. This thesis takes two examples of this cultural activism. The first, the Forest Art Festival, organised by the group *anakseribupulau* (children of a thousand islands), was held only once, in 2006, on the edge of the forest in the town of Randublatung. The second, *Festival Mata Air* (Festival of Water), was organised by the group *Tanam Untuk Kehidupan* (Planting for Life) and held at a number of freshwater springs in Salatiga in 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2009. Festivals like these bypass colonially constructed, nationally endorsed, and globally expected modes of cultural production by working inside neighbourhoods using local methods. They exploit sites of friction between local, national and global cultural flows.

I examine these festivals using the framework of a localised version of Bakhtin's carnivalesque that incorporates a number of untranslatable local concepts and pushes and pulls at the universals that shape readings of local culture. An analysis of festivals within this framework reveals that they do more than express and exhibit culture. Festivals and the collectives that create them remix local genealogies, challenge homogenising cultural theories, and localise new technologies and aesthetics. In order to come to terms with the significance of the carnivalesque in Java new combinations of cultural theories are explored within this thesis. The features of a localised form of carnivalesque are drawn out of the festivals themselves as I examine the ways activists describe their work; the ways they interpret the globally-circulating concepts such as environmentalism; the ways they remix local rituals, stories, and images; the collaborative artworks they generate; and their localised uses of digital technologies.

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anakseribupulau, anakseribujawaban, anakseribuibu, anakseriburumah, anakseribukawan, anakseribunegara, anakseribuhutan, anakseribusekolah, anakseribuhati, anakseribualat, anakseribusolusi, anakseribukampung, anakseribujaringan, anakseribusaudara, anakseribupacar, anakseribupusuku, anakseribuagama, anakseribubahasa, anakseribunomorhp, anakseribuidentitas, anakseribuhairstyle. Maturnawun Exi dan Dju.

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FOREWORD

Like many undergraduate students in Australia in the late 1990s, I became involved in Java through an interest in the politics of resistance. I enrolled in International Studies at the University of Technology, Sydney (UTS) and, through the ACICIS[1] program, I arrived for the first time in Yogyakarta in 2000. I soon met members of the energetic Taring Padi collective and spent much of the year at Gampingan, the repurposed art school campus that Taring Padi had occupied since 1998. Gampingan had an open door policy and a seemingly infinite number of empty classrooms that could be used for studios and bedrooms. Taring Padi and the others at Gampingan were experimenting with alternative lifestyles, mixing fine art and street art, and circulating texts on anarchism and communism. Gampingan became an epicentre of politics and creativity and a point of exchange for activists and artists from all over Indonesia and the world. Like many others, it was here, through daily social interaction *(nongkrong)*, that my Javanese political education began. Australian researcher Rebecca Conroy, whom I first met over peanuts and iced tea on a Gampingan floor, writes that Gampingan became a space for 'refugees of the organised left' from all over the world to engage with what they saw as a new form of cultural activism (Conroy 2007, p. 19).

Studying visual communications in Australia, and printmaking in Indonesia, I developed an interest in the visual languages of activists. This triggered an academic interest in the politics of the collective production of these languages. I began researching zines and was soon collaborating on a publication called *Arus* (Current), each edition of which had a hand-printed silkscreen cover and a theme that nudged at social taboos. Gampingan was also where I began my long fascination with the idea of *kampung* (neighbourhood) as a way to express a collective sense of place and the social relations that seemed to form such a strong sense of community in Java.[2] Activists referred to the residents around Gampingan as '*orang kampung*' (kampung people) not in a derogatory sense but as 'belonging' to Gampingan. *Bulan Pernama*, the cultural evenings held on the nights of the full moon, were directed to these people. Posters and publication campaigns employed slogans and visual languages that activists saw as appropriate (*cocok*) to the process of engaging orang kampung, designed around particular issues that might affect their daily lives.

As my year in Yogyakarta ended, I joined the collective work on a Taring Padi mural for the Adelaide Arts Festival. Everyone who was around Gampingan at the time worked

1. Australian Consortium for 'In-country' Indonesian Studies. ACICIS is a non-profit, national educational consortium based at Murdoch University that was established in 1994 to develop and coordinate high-quality, semester-long study programs at Indonesian partner universities for Australian university students.
2. I received the Insearch Travel Scholarship in 2000, which I used to produce a solo photographic exhibition in 2002 titled 'Kampung: Images of Javanese Communities' at Side-On Gallery, Annandale, NSW

on it, with varying degrees of individual creative flair, filling in a three-stage visualisation of the history of Indonesia. A few months after returning to Australia, in early 2002, I travelled to Adelaide to meet with the Taring Padi members who had journeyed with the work. What struck me during this and other collaborations with Taring Padi was the unwavering commitment to the collective practices they had developed for producing such artworks. While Taring Padi's work does not feature prominently in this thesis, it has been of particular importance to my general understanding of how visual culture is connected to social change in Java and how the practices I associate with the Javanese Carnivalesque have come about.[3]

By the time I had finished my undergraduate studies (2004), my experiences with a range of groups in Central Java had developed into firm working relationships; I found myself with a resolute confidence in the potential of collaborations between Australian and Indonesian art communities. Rebecca Conroy recruited me to the project Beyond the Factory Walls[4], and during the planning stages of the project, I won a lottery, the prize of which was a return ticket to Jakarta. I used the prize to travel to Java and collect artworks to auction as a fundraiser for equipment we needed for the project. A conventional place to start may have been the galleries and established artist-run spaces, but I lacked the contacts to make an attempt at this. Without a background in fine art, I didn't know how to write exhibition proposals or artist contracts. So, I did what I knew how to; I visited people, hanging out with them and asking questions. We made enough money from the auction to cover the cost of the airfares for five crewmembers of Beyond the Factory Walls. I raise this experience because it was through a combination of good luck and patient research that I discovered the extended network of activist-artists in Java and realised the necessity of a nongkrong for accessing them. This was to become the foundation of my research methodology for this thesis.

A few years later, Beyond The Factory Walls grew into the Gang Festival, which Rebecca and I devised as an experiment in collective-to-collective Indonesia-Australia relationships and as an exploration of networked cultural production. My role as co-founder and co-director of the project brought me into direct contact with Vanessa Hyde and Rudy Ardianto (who later initiated Tanam Untuk Kehidupan and Festival Mata Air) and enabled me to deepen my existing relationships with other collectives such as anakseribupulau, ruangrupa and Taring Padi. The Gang Festival was a test of what a festival could be: Could it be decentred? Could artists themselves design it? Could it avoid the cultural

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3. For extensive discussions of Taring Padi see Heidi Arbuckle's book *Taring Padi: Praktek Budaya Radikal di Indonesia* (Taring Padi: Radical Cultural Practice in Indonesia) (Arbuckle 2009) and the ten-year anniversary publication (2011) *Taring Padi: Seni Membongkar Tirani* (Taring Padi: Art Smashes Tyrrany).
4. Beyond the Factory Walls was a digital video production and multimedia theatre collaboration between an Australian community television group, Actively Radical Television (ARTV) from Sydney and a Jakarta-based factory workers' theatre company, Teater Buruh Indonesia (TBI - Indonesian Workers Theatre).

condescension typical of the large-scale cultural exchanges between the First and the Third world?[5]

The Gang Festival was a collective and localised response to the contradictions of cultural activism in Java and Indonesia as a whole. In English, 'gang' refers to a collective group of like-minded persons, and, in Indonesian and Javanese, it brings to mind kampung culture because it means a narrow laneway. The Gang Festival was our answer to the carnivalesque in Java. It was an attempt to translate the excitement of post-New Order creativity into the artist run spaces of Sydney, where we lived. The stickiness of the collaborations we designed (which joined other ideas, becoming more complicated as we worked), the asymmetrical nature of all our 'cross-cultural' collaborations (and our general discomfort with many of the assumptions around what 'cross-cultural' meant), and the multiple levels of translation at work in every creative interaction, all contributed to a sense that we were working on something very strange indeed. At the time, I didn't know quite what was so distinctive about cultural activism in Java, but I felt that it deserved further research. This thesis grew from that feeling.

5. See the anthology *gang re:Publik indonesia-australia creative adventures* (Crosby et al. 2008) as well as http:www.gangfestival.com, accessed 14, March, 2011.

INTRODUCTION

This introductory chapter outlines the research undertaken and reveals the key research questions, defining the aims and significance of the thesis. It provides a preliminary explanation of the approach taken to cultural activism as well as the methods used during the fieldwork. This chapter also introduces the two case studies, Tanam Untuk Kehidupan, a collective based in the mountain town of Salatiga, and anakseribupulau, a group of collectives based in the forestry village of Randublatung. Finally, it gives an outline of the thesis structure.

This thesis is a study of two environmental activist collectives in Central Java, Indonesia between 2005 and 2010. These are Tanam Untuk Kehidupan (TUK), based in Salatiga, and anakseribupulau, based in Randublatung. While there are similarities between the two collectives, each produces specific visual languages and cultural practices that develop in different directions, following the margins and crevices of local meaning. These are expressed in the ways activists perform their collective identities, their artistic practices, and the festivals they produce—Festival Mata Air (Festival of Water)[6] and the Forest Art Festival.

I approach the festivals as forms of cultural activism because, in Java, creative practice and politics have a shared genealogy. This approach has required an interdisciplinary framework that explores the links between locally defined social relations, performance and aesthetics; national history; and global environmentalism, rather than a framework taken from social movement studies or area studies. My research has formed part of an Australia Research Council Discovery Project that explores the traffic between creative cultural practices (such as the production of visual and material culture), media and activism, with particular reference to current political debates.

Tanam Untuk Kehidupan's identity is undeniably linked to water. Salatiga is a small city at the foot of Mount Merbabu, dotted with hundreds of freshwater springs, many of which have spiritual significance in Javanese mythology. The canals, rivers and creeks that connect these springs provide water for much of the lower altitude regions of Central Java. The Dutch-built Jelok hydropower station has long been the main provider of electrical power for Salatiga. Further east, in the *kabupaten* (regency) of Blora, Randublatung is a small town with a long history of radical politics in the heart of Java's timber belt. It is located in the most eastern part of Central Java, which, according to anakseribupulau activists, means it is less refined and braver than the rest of the province.

This thesis approaches the environmental activism in these two places using multiple disciplines. I argue that a comprehensive analysis of the new cultural space and the new style of activism must draw on a range of disciplines rather than use just one approach. And the analysis must be responsive to local concepts and terminologies. The theoretical tools that inform this argument make sense of the way meaning is exchanged during festivals. I describe these collectives, as well as their festivals, as a form of carnivalesque specific to Java. The idea of carnivalesque comes from the Russian literary critic Mikhail Bakhtin who coined it to describe the way the writing of François Rabelais, in the Middle Ages, subverted the assumptions of the dominant culture through humour and chaos. Bakhtin claims that the carnivalesque is destabilising because it recovers stories that, in the past, were

6. The literal translation of Festival Mata Air is actually Festival of the Water Source, but Festival of Water is the translation used by Tanam Untuk Kehidupan and is the one I will employ for the purposes of this thesis.

either ignored or suppressed, and it disrupts the balance between language that is permitted and language that is not. Bakhtin's work on the carnivalesque has allowed other theorists to explore how many forms of cultural resistance originate in the idea of the medieval carnival. Julia Kristeva responded to Bakhtin's concept of the carnivalesque by emphasising that the potential for popular resistance in carnivalesque language lies in its refusal to be contained by cultural forms. For Kristeva, the carnivalesque can move through the boundaries of languages, identities and concepts that maintain society's norms, dismantling the divisions between actors and spectators and between individuality and collectivity (Kristeva 1980, p. 78). This thesis draws from previous applications of the carnivalesque to demonstrate the ways that festivals in Java can be read as oppositions to the containment of existing definitions of culture and activism.

Localising the Carnivalesque

The primary aim of this thesis is an application of the idea of carnivalesque to the cultural practices of environmentalism in Central Java, namely Festival Mata Air and the Forest Art Festival. These festivals themselves have some commonalities with the medieval carnival and Bakhtin's carnivalesque: they also seek to recover suppressed local stories, in particular those that tell of resistance to oppression and exploitation; they seek to remix local cultural practices that celebrated as they challenged their opposition; and they mix languages in order to disrupt untested assumptions around culture and its political context.

Through this application of the carnivalesque to very local situations, I hope to generate a new framework for understanding and theorising cultural activism in Java that takes into consideration the local, national and global flows of meaning, but also takes account of how these flows interact. Rather than the translation of a European idea to Java, this framework is a localised version of the carnivalesque; a remix that is particular to Java and the way cultural activism has developed there. I generate this remix, primarily, by employing local terms for analysis, namely *kampung* (our place), *nongkrong* (hanging out), and *jalan-jalan* (strolling) to draw out the genealogy of the practices that form environmental festivals. These terms encourage an emphasis on how social relations are produced locally, and how global flows and national identity are produced collectively at their site of application, as well as in distant places.

The local terms nongkrong, kampung and jalan-jalan do not have direct translations, yet they are conceptually essential to understanding the carnivalesque in Java. In fact it is precisely in their untranslatability that their significance can be found. Throughout this thesis I argue that within and between these terms a model emerges that can begin to describe new cultural spaces as they are generated, and which also generate these spaces. Generalisations that come with global terms like 'festival' and 'activism' need to be discarded in favour of such a model. It is a model of friction and slippage, in which terms

intermingle, combine, and actually implicate one another in the ongoing production of new cultural spaces.

I am not the first researcher to identify the usefulness of Bakhtin's work in an Indonesian context. Others have used the idea of the carnivalesque to consider the particularity of Indonesian modes of political communication and expression (Baulch 2003; Sen and Hill 2000) and this thesis certainly draws on their scholarship (see Chapter 2). However, this research applies the carnivalesque to a previously unexplored moment of political culture in Indonesia. At this moment, activists in Java are combining the conditions of a post-authoritarian nationalism, a global sense of urgency around environmental crises, and the possibilities of new technologies, with very local forms of cultural activism. In this combination, collectives invent their own forms of ritual and build a particular festival culture. The idea of the carnivalesque helps identify the politics in this culture, which is characterised as much by revelry—nongkrong, laughter, dance and music—as it is by explicit political statements.

Research Questions

The following research questions are addressed:

- How can understandings of cultural activism and the politics that produce it be localised?
  - What is the significance of environmental festivals in Central Java?
  - as sites of protest?
  - as sites of cultural production?
  - what, in fact, is new about festivals?
- How do global, local, and national flows of culture intersect at the sites of environmental activism in Central Java?
- How can the idea of the carnivalesque be applied to activism in Central Java?

Java and Indonesia

This thesis takes as its boundaries the island of Java, because, as described in the foreword, Java was my own point of departure in learning about Indonesian activism. However, as it explores global circulations of images and cultural practices, this thesis also makes continual references to the national ideas of culture and national environmental campaigns of Indonesia, as well as to the connections of activists in Java with those in Sumatra and the other islands of Indonesia.

In defining this scope, the slippage of meanings that occurs between the places of 'Java' and 'Indonesia' must also be acknowledged. This is particularly important given the ways this thesis employs 'local' terms to build a theoretical framework, drawing from both the Indonesian and the Javanese language. By raising possibilities for redefinitions of local culture and politics, this thesis also wrestles with the problematic notion of the 'local'. Rather than dwelling on the extreme diversity present in what is thought of as local

culture (languages, religions, traditions) in both Java and Indonesia, I draw from previous scholarship that has already problematised notions of local cultures as something 'pristine, authentic, essential, or indigenous' (Heryanto 2008, p. 9; Lane 2008). These theorists argue that almost all local traditions in Indonesia have a long history of change and interaction with one another, with their environment, and with elements from other cultures around the globe. The cultural practices described in this thesis are produced betwixt and between tensions that encircle the idea of 'local'. These cultural practices drive what is site specific, temporary and unique about each of the collectives and festivals discussed while the practices themselves continue to be remixed and redefined.

The idea of studying the 'local' also raises many contradictions inherent in the notion of decolonisation. In this thesis, I use the idea of decolonisation in the sense of destabilising colonial cultural discourse, which is as evident in the political elites of post-colonial Java as it was during Dutch rule. These are the subtle impacts of colonialism that remain, not only in the power structures within Indonesia, but in how the cultural dimensions of Java are understood.

This problematic relationship between Indonesia and Java as a subject of study is a common one that has already been addressed by a number of scholars. Benedict Anderson, for example, explores how the boundaries of the Indonesian nation were imagined as the 'Indies' well before its proclamation in 1945 (Anderson 1991). Many scholars responded to Anderson's writing with concerns around how Indonesia can be studied at different historical periods. John Pemberton's work, amongst others, demonstrates that the concept of 'Javanese' existed in colonial history in contradistinction to 'Dutch' as well as other ethnicities (Pemberton 1995). Thomas Boellstorf coined the term 'ethnolocality', to denote 'a spatial scale where "ethnicity" and "locality" presume each other to the extent that they are, in essence, a single concept' (Boellstorff 2002, p. 25). Defending Indonesia as an important unit of analysis, Boellstorff warns of the danger of using ethnolocality as the default mode of representation for culture and of 'not taking Indonesia seriously as a unit of ethnographic analysis, no more or less problematic than any other spatial scale' (Boellstorff 2002, p. 38).

I certainly do not intend, by focusing on Java, to represent it as more important than other scales. Nor do I intend to claim that this thesis focuses on the entire island of Java, where a much wider range of cultures actually exists than those under study here. As the case studies in this thesis show, Java is a place of cultural invention and change, defined by many more borders than just those of its landmass. In fact, while they reside in Java, many of the activists under study are not Javanese at all. As such, the locational scope of this thesis, Central Java, is defined by the sites of struggle under study, the sources of cultural activism. Yet, as the scales of this activism shift, so too does the scope of the research.

Cultural Activism

Broadly, this thesis is about cultural activism, a slippery English term without a precise equivalent in Indonesian, that covers a range of specific cultural practices. The usefulness of the term is in its combination of two contentious ideas, 'culture' and 'activism' and the space that this combination gives for local interpretation. In an interview, one member of anakseribupulau insisted that their work was 'a *pacaran* (romantic relationship) between culture and activism' and used any tools available to avoid a 'break up'. In an article following the Forest Art Festival, *Suara Merdeka* newspaper continued the metaphor with the headline 'Forest Art Festival di Blora, Tak Ubahnya Perkawinan Seni dan Lingkungan' (Blora Forest Art Festival, Much like the Marriage of Art and the Environment' (Kisawa 2005, p. 2). But what is produced by a relationship between art and culture, or between art and environmentalism, may look different from what we, as theorists located in the West, expect. We may also find this relationship is not always out in the open, operating discreetly in different places than where we previously thought to look.

Referring to the word itself, art theorist W. J. T. Mitchell states that '"culture" is so mystified and loaded with honorific connotations that it instantly paralyses the faculties' (Mitchell 1994, p. 423). Historian and cultural theorist Arjun Appardurai, whose work is cited throughout this thesis, argues that the use of the adjective 'cultural' is far more useful and revealing than 'culture' as a noun. Culture, as a noun, claims Appadurai, conceals more than it reveals, whereas, 'cultural the adjective moves one into a realm of differences, contrasts, and comparisons that is more helpful' (Appadurai 1996, p. 12).

Another reason this thesis focuses on 'cultural' (cultural practices and cultural activism) rather than culture itself is because of the controversy surrounding the application of the concept of culture to local contexts. In understanding local Javanese concepts of culture, as well as Indonesian translations of European concepts of culture, the use of and distinction between the terms *kebudayaan* (culture) and *kesenian* (art) take on significance in this research, but neither term quite describes the work under study. The fields of research on cultural expression in Indonesia, in visual arts (Ingham 2009; Supangkat 1979; Supangkat 2005; Turner 2004), performing arts (Hatley 1993; Conroy 2007), popular culture (Heryanto 2008) as well as on culture's relationships to institutions (Jones 2005), are essential secondary sources relevant to this thesis. But this thesis argues that the carnivalesque collectives that developed in Java after the New Order are made possible by the way activists redirect and remix the very concepts of art and culture in their festivals and in the expression of their collective identities.

This thesis distinguishes cultural activism from 'culture' in general and from political activism. Cultural theorist Stephen Muecke describes the difference like this:

> Political activism consists of non-governmental political tactics such as lobbying and demonstrations which operate within a public domain to change general opinion, electoral opinion and eventually government strategy and the law … Cultural activism can have the same result as political activism, but it does not look the same. It has the feature of mobilising cultural representations as performances. It is a tactical 'bringing out' of culture as a valuable and scarce 'statement'... (Muecke 1998, p. 269).

Muecke argues that Aboriginal politics in Australia has for a long time been characterised by aspects of this kind of cultural activism that often 'looks' very different to political activism, making it more difficult to recognise and describe. This relates to the correlation between cultural activism and 'tactics', which I highlight in this thesis, drawing from the work of French theorist Michel de Certeau. The subjects of this thesis in fact tactically identify as both artists and activists. With very little access to what is considered the legitimate art world, and little impact on the 'political activism' Muecke describes, they insert themselves between these categories, mobilising new languages that describe new political imaginaries, inventing their own form of carnivalesque culture. This kind of activism is continually changing, mobilising images, performances, places, fashions, and technologies, and is therefore sometimes hard to recognise as activism or as art.

The distinction between political activism and culture is important to this study given the way the definitions of the two were shaped during the New Order and its demise. The relationships between artists and political groups energised the rallies in the late 1990s that called for reform of the New Order. The dictator General Suharto stepped down under immense public pressure in 1998. However, many artists were harshly criticised for their involvement (Supangkat 2005, p. 226) as their works became objects of demonstrations, and performance art in Indonesia became synonymous with violent street demonstrations. In a climate of 'rent a crowd', media stunts, colourful artistic expression was invaluable to politicians, trade unions, and even religious groups. Artists found themselves in the middle of a regenerating political spectacle. The protest movements were an opportunity for artists to experiment publicly with political ideas, as well as new cultural forms, including ones that flowed in from outside Indonesia, an opportunity that had been denied to Indonesian artists under Suharto's rule.

Artists in Java borrowed the term 'happening' from the fluxus movement that emerged in New York in the late 1950s (Kaprow 2006, p. 102) and applied it to a very local form of what they also called 'spontan' (spontaneous) [7] art. 'Happening art' was a way to identify artistic events that addressed specific political issues without allowing the art to be 'coopted'

7. 'Spontaneous' is not an exact English translation of the invented Indonesian word 'spontan'. For a rich discussion of the meaning of 'spontan' in relation to organising within kampungs during the New Order in Java, and reflections on the way spontan actually works in opposition to planned, written, hierarchical culture, see (Siegel 1993, pp. 73-5). For a discussion of the application of spontan to artistic practices during the Gang Festival, see (Crosby 2008, p. 54).

by the politics. Happening art quickly became widespread and the term began to be used in the media to describe cultural activism.[8] These protests and happenings were the precursor of the festivals discussed in this thesis.

Post New Order Activism

The time period under study is 2005-2010, when I was engaged in fieldwork for the explicit purpose of this thesis. Much of the analysis, however, takes a genealogical approach to this period, drawing on the relationships activists identified with cultural practices that developed in opposition to the exploitation of natural resources during the colonial period (1816-1945)[9] as well as practices of cultural resistance that developed under the oppression of the New Order.

But the accounts of this genealogy also throw into question what has previously been defined as activism in Indonesia, particularly those definitions inherited from the New Order. How activism has been defined in the past has sometimes been at odds with how it is defined by activists themselves. As activists remix the genealogies of their own movement, expressing it in new forms such as the festivals explored in this thesis, they dislodge the way activism was positioned within the drama of New Order politics. In this way, they continually redefine what activism is and what it responds to, producing forms that can adapt readily and spaces that are more fluid than previous political expressions. This examination is genealogical.

The research for this thesis included a concerted effort to explore some of the genealogies, towards which contemporary concepts of activism in Central Java gesture. Specifically, local environmentalisms are read as expressions of new relationships between globally articulated politics and anti-colonial movements, and as expressions of the residual effect of the New Order national environmentalist framework on current iterations. More generally, this thesis considers the current turn towards the kampung as a site of activism and the ways in which this turn reframes the roles of activists and artists to represent others.

This thesis makes new examinations of the cultural changes that occurred in Indonesia with the end of the New Order, reconsidering the way the period has been historicised and the significance of the label 'post-authoritarian' to contemporary cultural practices in Java. The end of the New Order brought a focus on the dramatic political changes that occurred. Now, more than a decade after Suharto stepped down, the smoke has cleared, and it is possible to reconceptualise some of the political and cultural transformations that occurred and continue to occur, transformations that, in fact, were also responding to global changes

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8. For an example of the use of 'happening art' in the media, see *Suara Merdeka* 'Tolak kenaikan harga BBM lewat happening art' (Protest against increase in fuel price by happening art') (28 September 2005, p.8).
9. These dates refer to the period of state rule by the Dutch, after the collapse of the Dutch East Indies Company (VOC) until the proclamation of Independence.

in political consciousness, to new technologies, and to renewed interest in local stories, as well as to the end of an authoritarian era.

Friction as a Decolonising Approach

This thesis joins the field of study that views recovery from colonisation as an ongoing process of undoing rather than a set historical period (Appadurai 1996; Said 1978; Spivak 2000). As part of combating the residual effects of colonialism on cultures, decolonisation aims to clear spaces in academia and general discourse for multiple voices. The work of this thesis lies, firstly, in carving out the necessary intellectual space to listen to multiple voices and secondly, in creating the necessary theoretical tools to understand and discuss them. This process differs from what is typically thought of as translation. While sections of this thesis are devoted to translating words and concepts (Chapter 1 is devoted to teasing out translations of nongkrong and kampung; Chapter 4 problemitises the translation of festival artworks into texts which are accessible to interpretation by Western art theory), my approach to cultural activism in Java is designed to avoid forcing it into previously defined categories, in particular, those categories applied through the processes of colonialism and imperialism.

Localising the concept of the carnivalesque, through an approach that enters the translation process from multiple starting points, makes it possible to grapple with some of the contradictions of decolonisation. The carnivalesque is, after all, a concept which was developed in Europe to analyse European literature and is based on the medieval concept of the carnival. The carnivalesque in Java, in many ways that this thesis explores, is something quite different, quite local and quite particular to the period of time under study. This section outlines the approaches I have taken to building and applying the concept of the carnivalesque in Java, drawing on the decolonising concept of friction as it is used in the work of anthropologist Anna Tsing (2005).

Tsing's concept of friction has helped demonstrate the carnivalesque in Java as having local, national and global dimensions. Tsing uses the model of friction to show how the spatial, discursive, and metaphoric sites that have come to be known as the 'local' and the 'global' are, in fact, made by each other (West 2005). I use Tsing's concept of friction throughout this thesis to hone in on local–global tensions in a manner that allows for critical consideration of global environmentalism. The carnivalesque in Java demonstrates that environmentalism, while often considered to be a form of humanism (i.e. universal), it is not restricted to any one ordering of reality produced through institutions and the global flows of culture. Tsing argues that meaning is made at the actual site of encounter when words, images and meanings from different contexts collide. This evokes the tensions between different scales of environmentalism produced as culture becomes both increasingly distributed and increasingly located; activists in Central Java are localising their

movement as they globalise it.

In this way, deciphering the origins and methods of local environmentalisms helps to untangle what is really meant by global environmentalism. Local interpretations of environmentalism, in this sense, have the potential for subversion that goes beyond what they articulate because they throw into question what is often taken for granted when environmentalism is viewed as a global movement. The movements discussed in this thesis contest existing ideas of environmentalism by moulding the scales of their activism to produce new political languages. Friction, in this sense, does the work of translating the festivals in Java into a Western idea of carnivalesque by opening up the festival as a form of activism.

Friction has allowed an approach to the translation of festivals in Java via the idea of the carnivalesque and the translation of the local terms nongkrong, kampung and jalan-jalan to build a conceptual framework. Friction is a way of translating that points to necessity of the local in interpreting universals, what Tsing calls its 'grip' on the encounter with the global (Tsing 2005, p. 5). The universals I deal with relate to art, subversion and environmentalism, in the context of globalisation, and the global influence that the festival form brings. Using friction to tease out the multiple scales of cultural activism occurring at Festival Mata Air and the Forest Art Festival produces a remix rather than a translation of a Western idea. In this sense, as the carnivalesque is localised it is also decolonised.

Methods

As this research has progressed, so have its subjects, changing in terms of scale of operation, budget, duration and repeatability. My methods have been flexible but have generally involved rigorous and intensive small-scale qualitative studies that have responded to these changes. Understandings of the case studies, and of a range of other groups and individuals, have been based on observation, extended focus groups, one-on-one interviews, image-based research, and collaborative working relationships.

This research has not involved beginning at a distance and working in. Rather, as already mentioned, I have begun with existing relationships to activists. I have interviewed individuals involved in environmental organisations and activities, read and analysed printed and online materials, and all the while, I have focused on action in particular localities. None of the stories represented here has been completed. The work of these collectives is in 'progress', and as such the methodologies have been flexible.

I visited Central Java eight times at regular intervals during my candidature. I stayed for different lengths of time, the longest of which was six months. These fieldwork periods provided the opportunity, through the methods outlined below, to understand

the immediate nature of collective practices. However, for this research, what was more important than an extended period in a single place, was maintaining contact with the collectives in their various formations over the five-year research period, in order to analyse how those practices changed. This section outlines the methods used to achieve that aim.

Localised Participant Observation

My primary research has employed participant observation methods. This involved contacting groups through existing relationships and networks and requesting the opportunity to spend time working, playing, and in some cases living in their collective spaces. In the Javanese context, it is important to allow enough time for hanging out or *nongkrong*, in order to socialise and develop trust. It is often in the informal cultural space of nongkrong that valuable information is divulged. The role of nongkrong in developing localised methodologies and theoretical frameworks is discussed at length in Chapter 1.

The focus on nongkrong as a localised form of participant observation is an important foundation for one of the central arguments of this thesis, that is, that there need to be localised theories of culture that make possible understandings of phenomena as messy and contradictory as the carnivalesque in Java. The application of nongkrong as a research methodology demonstrates what happens when bearers of different types and sets of knowledge interact. How these interactions produce new knowledge, new cultural practices and spaces, and new ways of studying them are some of the concerns of this thesis. As such, the kind of participant observation undertaken in this research is better thought of as 'participant nongkrong', relying less on direct observation than on the multiple sensory experiences and the physical movement inherent in the notion of carnivalesque in Java.

Interview Methods

Although participants were always made aware of my research and provided with consent forms, the interviews that make up the majority of the research for this thesis were conducted as casual conversations. Most of the interviews were recorded digitally. They were then transcribed and translated. The transcriptions (both the Indonesian and English versions) were then sent to the interviewees for clarification whenever possible. Many times, interviews were conducted as group discussions. Some interviews used visual cues such as photographs and video. A complete list of interviews can be found as an appendix of this thesis.

Survey

Understandings of the audience of Festival Mata Air have been also reached through some quantitative methods, including an audience survey during the third Festival Mata Air in October 2008 at Kalimangkak, Central Java. At the request of Tanam Untuk Kehidupan, I worked with Jimmy Siregar, an independent researcher based in Yogyakarta, to design and

complete this survey so that Tanam Untuk Kehidupan could undertake a more complete evaluation process than had been possible at previous festivals. The survey evaluated the attendance and publicity at the parade, the audience sizes over the three days of the festival, the effectiveness of the event's publicity, the audience responses to the content of the festival, and the context of the festival relative to other events. The results of this survey are included as an appendix to this thesis.

Textual Analyses

Textual analysis has also been used extensively through this research process as a way to gather information about how activists make sense of the texts they produce as well as those produced about them. For this purpose, I have analysed artworks, blogs, films, newspaper articles, magazines, advertisements, websites, logos, clothes, and songs.

Online Research

Online social networking has come into use within the communities discussed in the course of writing this thesis. Anakseribupulau and Tanam Untuk Kehidupan have each developed a significant online presence, but only over the last few years. The emergence of Facebook has had a particularly dramatic impact, and both anakseribulau and Tanam Untuk Kehidupan have established groups with hundreds of members. Festival Mata Air is now promoted through the event function of Facebook and members discuss attendance, concerns, and preparation prior to the events, as well as present documentation afterwards.

While the internet has provided easy access to certain aspects of the festivals and collectives, making certain aspects of research easier, it has also changed the way activists have interacted with global flows of culture, as well as how they have thought of key terms in this thesis; kampung, nongkrong and jalan-jalan.

A Note on the Researcher as Cultural Producer

Because this research involves the analysis of creative processes and relationships of which I am part, it aims to advance knowledge partly by means of practice. The aim of this methodology is to enter conversations about theory, not only through intellectual activity, but also particular creative collaborations, which I will detail here.

I have taken on various roles within the groups under study. One of the most valuable to my research has been assisting with the planning and design of websites for the Forest Art Festival and Festival Mata Air. A particular feature of this process was that it involved discussions around the visual identity of the groups. In the case of Festival Mata Air, the identity was simultaneously being developed as Tanam Untuk Kehidupan planned the festival (see Chapter 4). The concept on which this identity was based was the evocation of 'mata air', the term for ' fresh water spring' in Indonesian. 'Mata air' was seen as the source of activism as well as an actual spring. In the case of the Forest Art Festival, the website was

produced retrospectively and involved retrieving festival publicity and documentation in a range of formats.

Because these particular processes involved sourcing material from disparate participants, developing visual identities and written language to describe the collectives, and cataloguing hundreds of photographs and documents, they have given me particular insights into the social relations within and between groups. I have used visual materials to aid my interviewing process, as explained above, sometimes as these sites were being made. Also, the quantity and quality of material has greatly informed my general understandings of how these collectives see themselves and, in particular, how they relate to their tools of production. For example, collecting photographic documentation and discussing its presentation and attribution has given me deeper understandings of the collective ownership of material culture. Photographs of festivals, for example, are generally considered collective property. They are rarely attributed to individual photographers, and how they are collected and archived is rarely explicit.

During the course of this research, I co-directed the second Gang Festival with Rebecca Conroy. As part of the Gang Festival, I was curator of the exhibition 'Sisa: re-use, collaboration and cultural activism from Indonesia' at UTS Gallery from November 6 to December 6, 2007. 'Sisa' is the Indonesian word for 'remains' or 'leftovers' and the exhibition focused on the issues associated with artistic output in the collaborative settings of contemporary Indonesian environmental activism. The collectives represented in the exhibition included Tanam Untuk Kehidupan, Taring Padi, and anakseribupulau, and therefore the project was very valuable in my research process. The Gang Festival also included another exhibition devoted to Tanam Untuk Kehidupan, called 'Art for the Environment, Seni Lingkungan' at Pine Street Gallery, Chippendale from January 8th to January 29th, 2008. The Gang Festival allowed me to work very closely with the subjects of this thesis on a creative project. The project received funding to bring three artists from Java to Australia, one from Tanam Untuk Kehidupan and two from anakseribupulau. They each spent several months in Australia which gave me the opportunity to conduct further interviews with them and gave them the opportunity to reflect on the specificities of their activities in Central Java by engaging with the context of Sydney's artist run spaces.

During my candidature, I also co-edited *gang re:Publik, an anthology of creative exchange from Indonesia and Australia* that archived the Gang Festival process and included interviews with many of the activists featured in this thesis. The book was launched at the 2008 Festival Mata Air.

A Note on Language and Translation

My interviews with Indonesians were conducted almost exclusively in the Indonesian

Figure 1: Senjoyo, 2006.

Figure 2: Senjoyo, 2006.

Figure 3: Kalitaman, 2007.

Figure 4: Kalitaman, 2007.

Figure 5 (top): Kalimangkak kampung, 2008.

Figure 6 (bottom right): Kalimangkak spring, 2008.

Figure 7 (bottom left): Kalimangkak second spring, 2008.

language. Clarifications have sometimes been made in English. Australians have been interviewed directly in English. On a practical level, one of the greatest limitations of this study was not knowing the Javanese language, particularly for interviews conducted in more rural areas such as those with members of the Samin communities in South Pati and with residents of the outer kampungs of Randublatung. In these cases, informal translation was used, which relied heavily on the cooperation of other research participants, in particular Exi Wijaya and Djuadi.

It is worth noting that the resulting information has been filtered through at least four differing interpretive frames. Firstly, live recording devices have mediated the documentation of our conversations. Secondly, the translations of people's words have undoubtedly resulted in slight shifts of meaning. Thirdly, my interpretations of the interviews have usually been based on a knowledge of the interviewees that is far more broad and deep than what could have been gained just in these interview contexts. I have ongoing friendships and working relationships with many of the interviewees, some of which began long before this research did. Fourthly, the academic discourse that has shaped the broader concerns of this thesis has undoubtedly led to a process of selection that has left some interpretations of subjects with gaps and others with imposed meanings. The arguments made throughout this thesis have not shied away from the possibilities of mistranslation. Rather, I have considered the opening up in possible meanings that occurs with each interpretative frame as a point of departure for discussions around cultural change and the friction between local and global languages.

Case Studies

The following section introduces the two case studies of this thesis by providing, firstly, brief descriptions of the collectives, secondly, the locations that they formed, and, thirdly, an outline of the festivals they produced.

Tanam Untuk Kehidupan

The collective Tanam Untuk Kehidupan formed in 2005 when the artist Rudy Ardianto and his family returned to Salatiga after living in Australia for ten years. Rudy spent time with other artists in the area, some of them old friends, and some from a new generation frustrated by the lack of exhibition, study, and work prospects. Some didn't have the funds to move to the city to study and exhibit, and some just wanted the opportunity to remain in Salatiga, where they could stay connected to their local communities. Rudy and his wife Vanessa Hyde provided a venue in their home, from which these artists began to conceptualise Tanam Untuk Kehidupan. The initial idea was to form a collective that freely mixed artistic ambitions with growing environmentalist ideologies.

Tanam Untuk Kehidupan became embroiled in the battles to protect water sources

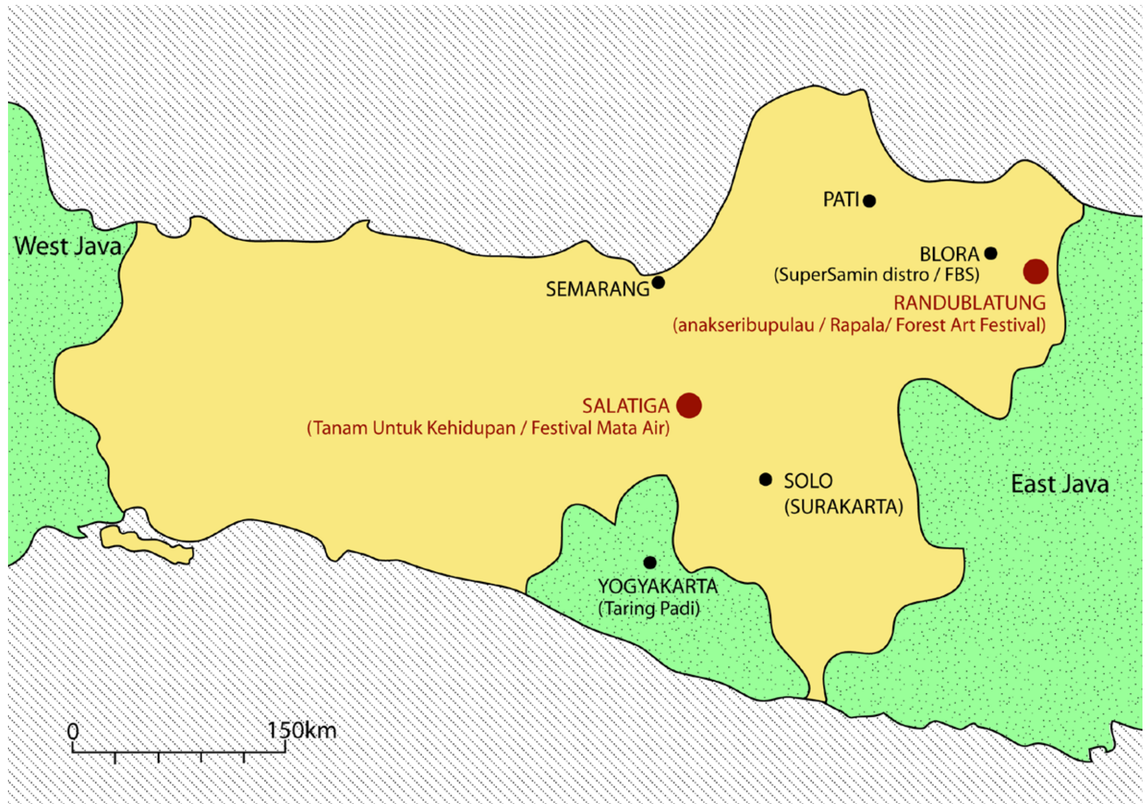


Figure 8 (top): Map of Central Java showing relative positions of festival sites.

Figure 9 (bottom): Senjoyo during Festival Mata Air, 2006.

in a number of kampungs of Salatiga. The collective was never exclusively for artists and it quickly attracted activists, environmental scientists, and 'craftspeople', highly skilled in carving and painting. Several active members were also skilled in design and printing, and also had contacts and clients in the corporate sector. These young people were instrumental in developing and implementing Tanam Untuk Kehidupan's strong visual identity. They were also involved in securing sponsorship and in prioritising the branding of the Festival Mata Air events.

The name of the collective has several levels of meaning. The group looked for a name whose acronym also had meaning in Indonesian, and came up with Tanam Untuk Kehidupan, which translates literally as 'planting for life', referring to the planting of ideas as well as to reforestation.[10] Tanam Untuk Kehidupan is more commonly referred to as '*tuk*', which means water source in Javanese. By 2005, water had become an urgent environmental and social issue for many residents of Salatiga. Ancient water sources were facing depletion and contamination as populations in the cities of Central Java soared, and water rates were raised.

By early 2007, there were about twenty people that made up Tanam Untuk Kehidupan, working in a range of roles on several projects at once. It was enough to keep a steady workflow going even when people had to leave for other (paid) work or family business. At that time, the organisation had no operational funding. From 2008 to 2009, the group received funding from AusAid, through the Australian Volunteers International (AVI) program (two full time positions funded) and in 2008, Tanam Untuk Kehidupan received funding from the cultural branch of the Australia Indonesia Institute to produce Festival Mata Air 2008. At the time of writing, Tanam Untuk Kehidupan is staffed by a full time Australian volunteer through the AVI program.

From August, 2006 to June, 2009, Salatiga became my most regular and sustained site of research. I attended the first, second and third Festival Mata Air and participated in planning and evaluation processes for each.

Festival Mata Air

Festival Mata Air can be viewed as a series of events that map the water sources and streams in Salatiga. Each incarnation of the festival has focused not only on a particular kampung but also on a particular spring. In this sense, Tanam Untuk Kehidupan has followed the natural paths of the water sources and passageways throughout the city, generating organic networks of artistic collaboration.

Festival Mata Air began in July 2006 when Tanam Untuk Kehidupan negotiated to

10. Tanam Untuk Kehidupan is not to be confused with Tanam Utan Kayu, a media community, or the associated Teater Utan Kayu, located on Jalan Utan Kayu in Jakarta. Both these also use the acronym TUK.

borrow a disused council building in the centre of Salatiga to use as their headquarters for an ambitious program of events over the next few months, culminating in a three-day art, music and education event themed around water. Tanam Untuk Kehidupan secured sponsorship from the cigarette company Djarum and funding from local government. The festival has since become an annual event in the kampungs of Salatiga, growing steadily in size. Typically, the festival programs include a range of musicians on a number of stages (from the local high school choir to nationally famous punk bands), a parade, outdoor sculptures, games, traditional performances, a marketplace for independent producers, workshops, and children's activities.

Senjoyo, a natural spring in the hills surrounding Salatiga, was the site of the first (2006) and fourth (2009) festivals (Figure 1 and Figure 2). It is the main source for the municipal water supply and for the two textile factories in the city. It is also used for irrigation downstream of Senjoyo river. There is a public swimming pool at the site of the source, which is crowded every day with locals and tourists due to its free admission, beautiful forest setting, and spiritual significance.[11] Although most of them are regular visitors, the people that use Senjoyo do not for the most part reside there. Participants camped at the site during both festivals. During the festivals, the spring played an important role as a gathering point and performance site, and it was often referenced in artworks and performances.

The second Festival Mata Air was staged at a kampung in Salatiga's central business district called Kalitaman ('river park' in Javanese) (Figure 3 and Figure 4). Kalitaman is located below both a large shopping centre and the 'main drag' of Salatiga, where many residents work, and from which large quantities of waste makes their way through the kampung waterways. One of Kalitaman's springs, traditionally used as a public bath for men only, has dried up completely. Two springs remain, one of which has been converted to a public swimming pool with an entrance fee, owned and run by the city council. The other spring, as at Senjoyo, is used by men, women and children for a range of purposes such as bathing, laundry, washing dishes, and relaxation.

The 2008 festival was held at Kalimangkak, (which ironically translates as 'dirty creek'). On one side of the creek are privately-owned rice fields, irrigated by the creek itself, and a TPSS (*Tempat Pembuangan Sampah Sementara*), council-run temporary rubbish tip that is used to sort and store rubbish that is then transported to the main city tip. There is also a hotel and café (Hotel Kalimang & Café Kelinci) as well as many homes. Three springs are connected to the creek and are used by kampung residents for bathing and washing. (Figure 5, Figure 6, and Figure 7)

11. Although the pool was built in colonial times, the spring itself is ancient, and bathing in it is believed to secure long life.

Anakseribupulau[12]

Randublatung is a small town located at the border of the provinces of Central and East Java. It is part of the regency (*Kabupaten)* of Blora, but Blora is also the name of a larger town approximately thirty kilometers away by road (Figure 8).

Anakseribupulau describes an amorphous collection of groups and collectives working in that area, much less clearly defined than Tanam Untuk Kehidupan. Anakseribupulau emerged in Randublatung in 1999. Several members of anakseribupulau had been university students in Yogyakarta during the crisis of 1998 and had become involved in campus nature-lovers collectives, in Taring Padi, and in the PRD–Partai Rakyat Demokrasi.[13] These activists felt that some of the energy and experiences of this period could be harnessed to bring about change at a local village level. The aim was explicitly to use art and culture (*seni dan budaya*) to conserve existing forests as well as regenerate once forested areas.

The name anakseribupulau, literally 'child of a thousand islands' refers to the idea of being a citizen of the vast archipelago that is called 'Indonesia' with its cultural and ecological diversity, rather than to the nation itself. But activists describe the concept as one that could be applied to the entire globe. They express a desire to be connected to unlimited numbers of people and localities in the world despite the tight control of borders. The idea of being children represents a desire for freedom, a refusal to grow up into the expected conventions of adulthood, as well as disrespect for authority. They present this as a contrast to the way the Indonesian government patronises its citizens, treating them as children with no agency. 'We are not obedient children. We will not be told what to do,' says Exi Wijaya, a founder of anakseribupulau.

Anakseribupulau acts as an umbrella network for many smaller groups in the Blora area such as SuperSamin Inc., Rapala, Masberto and Front Blora Selatan, explored more fully in Chapter 4. These groups were closely involved in the organising for the Forest Art Festival, as were many others. While they are points of departure for this research, some of these groups, namely SuperSamin Inc. and Front Blora Selatan became inactive during the writing of this thesis. Anakseribupulau is a broad yet consistent collective identity that has endured the micro politics of the movement over the time of writing. I visited Randublatung a number of times in the period of 2005 to 2010, including visits in 2006 and 2007 for the celebrations of *Idul Fitri*, the end of the fasting month. As the many young people who have moved to Jakarta return home to Randublatung at this time, I was able to interview the organisers as well as several residents on their participation in the

12. Not connected with TV series of the same name by Garin Nugroho.
13. The PRD (People's Democratic Party) was the socialist organisation formed by students in the last few years of the Suharto regime. Since leading the street protests that forced Suharto from power, the PRD has splintered and fragmented several times over.

Forest Art Festival. I later visited these migrants to Jakarta in their Jakarta home at Klender, discussed at length in Chapter 2.

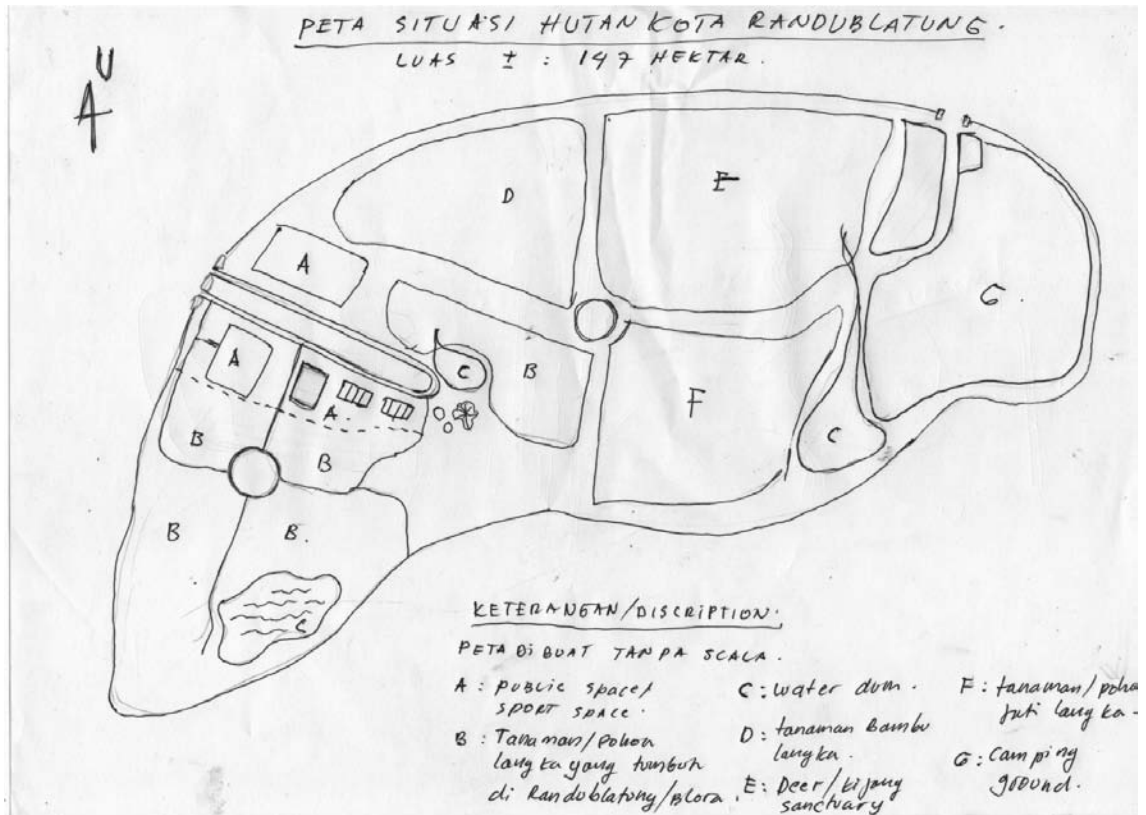
In September 2006, I travelled to Padang, West Sumatra, to meet the cultural activist collective Belanak. Belanak formed in 2002, producing performance and installation projects primarily related to local environmental issues in West Sumatra. My guide at this time was Dodi Irwandi. Born in West Sumatra, Dodi had moved to Yogyakarta to attend art school in his early twenties. He then became an active member of Taring Padi, anakseribupulau, and Tanam Untuk Kehidupan, in that order. Therefore, he provided an excellent source of information that bridged the groups. In Padang, we planned a week of events for early December, under the banner of *Hari Ini Adalah Hari Seni* (Art Day Is Today), which then became the theme of the Gang festival in 2008. I returned to Padang for *Hari Ini Adalah Hari Seni* with the co-director of the Gang Festival, Rebecca Conroy, and a team of artists from Central Java and Australia. This was an important period of research as it involved collaboration with a number of anakseribupulau activists outside the context of Central Java as well as workshops and discussions on collectives, networks and festivals. Belanak is used particularly as a case study in relation to my analysis of the reception of the Forest Art Festival video within the networks outside Java (Chapter 5).

The Forest Art Festival

Discussions around the production of a festival-type event in Randublatung had been evolving for many years before it happened, encouraged by increasing interest in the area from activists in Yogyakarta, Jakarta and Surabaya. While I did not attend the 2005 Forest Art Festival in person (it occurred six months before the commencement of this research degree), I communicated with the organisers during the conception and production stage and followed its progress through Indonesian and Australian friends who participated. I also thoroughly analysed all the available documentation of the festival, in particular the video 'Forest Art Festival', which is discussed extensively in Chapter 5. During the period from July to November 2006, I worked with organisers to produce a small website documenting the festival, as well as its associated events and organisations.[14]

The original idea of the Forest Art Festival was to expose corruption in the local government by staging an event that drew people to a contested piece of land on the edge of Randublatung. For years, the site had been ignored by government, reforested by activists, and finally converted into a 'town forest', apparently to appease activist demands for transparency in the granting of foresting licences (Kisawa 2005). Around four hectares was allocated as a 'town forest' by the local government, approximately one kilometre from the centre of Randublatung, bordered on one side by a kampung, on another by a road,

14. This website is now archived at my own website at http://www.alimander.com/anakseribupulau/projek/fafblora. Accessed 3 November, 2011.



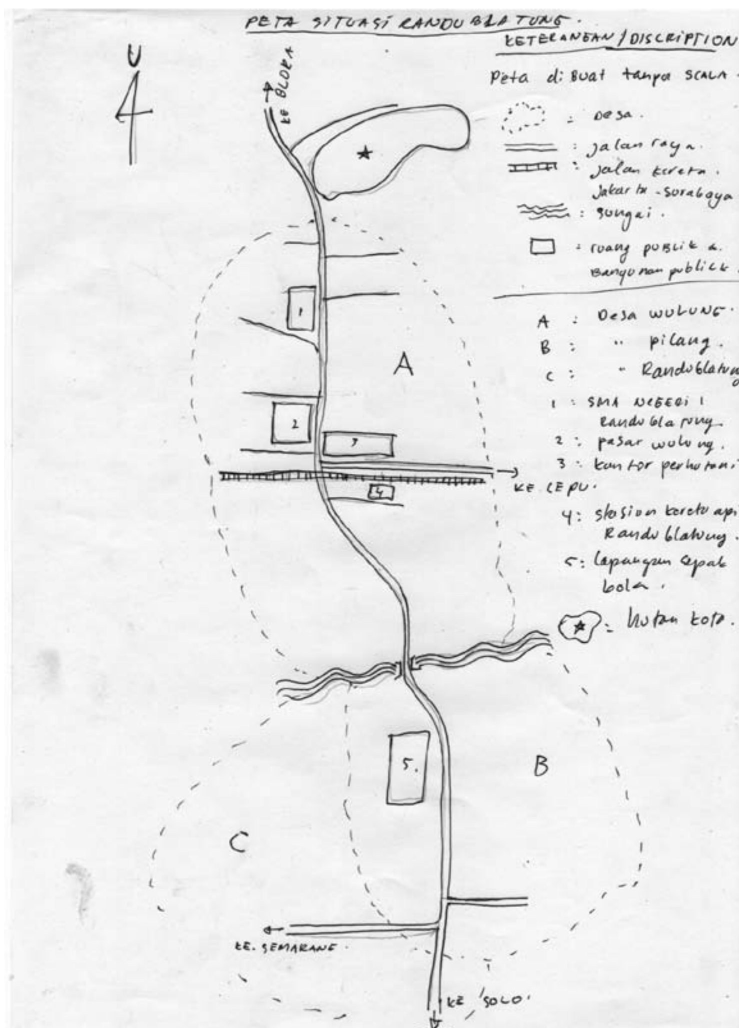


Figure 10 (top): Map of Town Forest, Randublatung, not to scale. By Djuadi, 2008.

Figure 11 (left): Map of position of Town Forest, Randublatung, relative to surrounding area, not to scale. By Djuadi, 2008

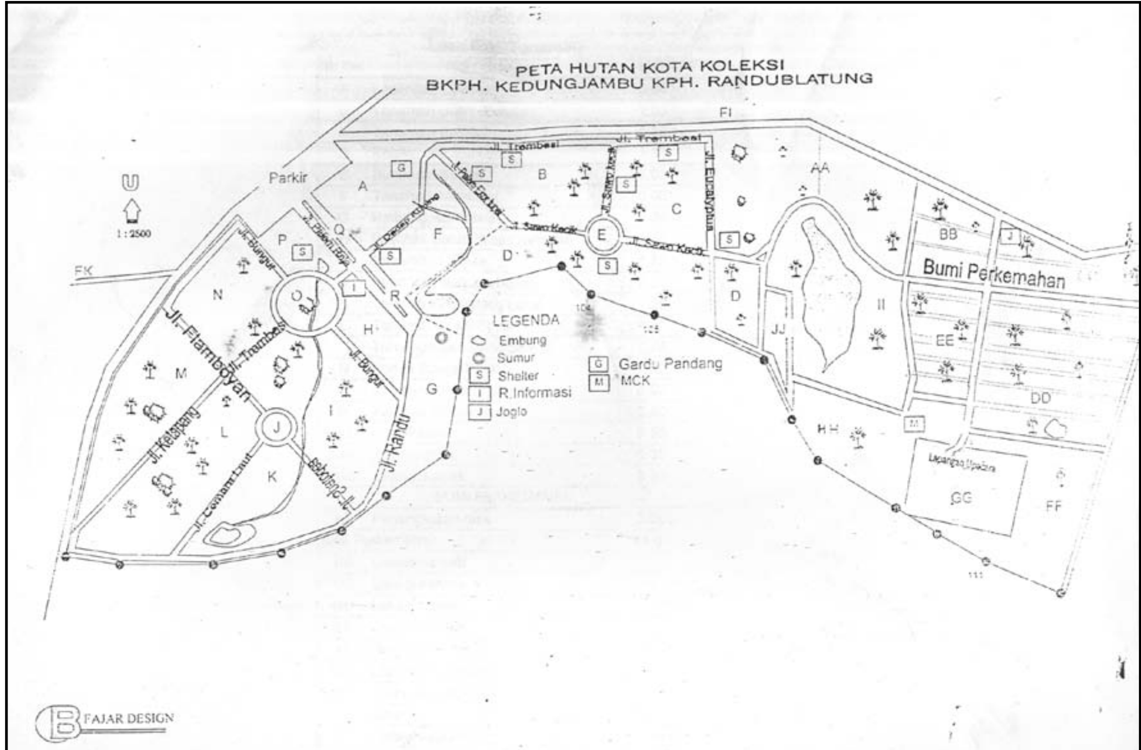


Figure 12 (top): Official map of Town Forest, Randublatung. By Regional Agency for Forest Cultivation (*BKPH-Badan Kawasan Pengusahaan Hutan*), Kedungkambu, and Regional Forest Cultivation *(KPH-Kawasan Pengusahaan Hutan),* Randublatung (Kedungkambu is a village East of Randublatung), 2005.

Figure 13 (bottom): Forest Art Festival, 2005, from the anakseribupulau archives.

and on the third side by a teak plantation (Figure 10, Figure 11, Figure 12). The purpose of this park is conservation and thousands of varieties of threatened species have been planted there. Under pressure from activists, council had agreed to allow a degree of co-management of this 'town forest'. This agreement included its use for the festival.

Organisers claim that more than one thousand people attended the Forest Art Festival, which was held over a number of days and peaking on 19 November 2005. Participants travelled from all over Indonesia, including Sulawesi, Sumatra, and Madura and there were also a handful of international participants, from Australia, New Zealand, Europe and America. The presence of foreigners had an unexpected positive side effect. At a time when many governments, including Australia's, had issued travel warnings to Indonesia because of terrorist alerts, local authorities were keen to show the national police force that they could handle any security issues and make foreigners feel not only safe, but welcome. Despite a chequered history with local police forces, organisers were amazed to experience cooperation and protection from *preman*, local milita groups. All festival participants camped on site at the town forest.

The performance program was an odd combination of local traditions, such as *reog* (a complex dance narrative performed in groups of up to twenty dancers in costume), spoken word and electronic music. Many well-known visual artists came from cities (Yogyakarta, Jakarta, and Surabaya) and produced site-specific work in collaboration with local residents. Many well-known punk bands also performed. There was a sculpture garden and a display of two-dimensional paintings and other works on paper hung from bamboo. There were reforestation workshops to plant teak seedlings and a printmaking workshop run by the Yogyakarta art collective Taring Padi. And there was a workshop conducted by an Australian woman on how to separate rubbish into recyclables.[15] There was also a makeshift tattoo parlour where one individual got the name and dates of the event tattooed across his back.

The Forest Art Festival has been held only once to date, but its significance to the environment movement in Central Java generally was evident in the interviews I conducted. Since it occurred, in 2005, a number of other events in Randublatung and Blora have been labelled 'festivals'. These include Festival Kali Lusi, which was held over five days in Blora in early 2009 to celebrate the river and draw attention to its contamination. Also in 2009, anakseribupulau and other Blora activists worked with the family of Pramoedya Ananta Toer to organise a six-day event to commemorate one thousand days since the author's death. While this remembrance is a tradition of Javanese Islam, this iteration was called 'Festival Pramoedya Ananta Toer' and included many unconventional elements such as

15. While some large Indonesian cities have recycling programs, Randublatung does not. Javanese culture has a strong tradition of reuse but the concept of council-sponsored recycling, or even rubbish collection, is an importation of a Western practice. Nevertheless, this workshop was enthusiastically attended.

Figure 14, Figure 15: Communal Kitchen at Forest Art Festival, Randublatung, 2005. Photographs from the anakseribupulau archives.

film screenings and performance art. Anakseribupulau also collaborated with a farmers' union to produce *Festival Petani* (The Farmers' Festival), in March, 2007 in Pati. These two events, while not explored extensively in this thesis, also demonstrate the occurrence of carnivalesque expressions in Java.

As anarchic as it appeared, the Forest Art Festival was officially a legitimate event; to avoid trouble, organisers gained all the correct permissions from local authorities. However, quite contrary to custom, no government officials appeared at the event and no reference was made to its legitimacy by the MCs or in the event publicity. There was also no commercial sponsorship of the Forest Art Festival. Activists claim that it was made possible by the sharing of resources between a broad network of activists, farmers and fisherman. For example, catering was free and communal. Some small stalls were set up by local villagers to sell food, but most festival participants ate at a free kitchen set up by festival organisers (Figure 14, Figure 15). The tasks of food preparation were shared, as was the food. A large truckload of fresh fish was donated by a community of fisherman in Jepara, and brought to Randublatung with a group of performance artists. This donation was not made because the Jepara fishermen had a surplus. Like most traditional fishing communities in Java they are struggling and their catches are becoming smaller and smaller. The fishermen link their own struggle to the struggle over forests in Blora, and to the right of ordinary people to have access to natural resources. They expect anakseribupulau activists, in return, to support their struggles to stand up to the expansion of large-scale commercial fishery.

More generally, anakseribupulau operates with very little in the way of organised finances. Unlike Tanam Untuk Kehidupan, they do not have a collective bank account and nor do they have strategies for becoming financially independent and sustainable. They refuse to work with most non-government organisations or to accept commissions for particular projects. (This is explored more fully in Chapter 4). On the occasions that the group has generated money through the sale of artworks and through fees for performances, there has sometimes been some contention within the collective around what to do with it, and it has, for the most part, been spent immediately on celebrations. Members contribute individually to activities as they can, but they also claim that anakseribupulau activities usually require little or no money. Exi, an anakseribupulau founder, says 'sometimes we have no money between us. We have to borrow from friends, sell our phones, and we play music and busk in buses and on the street.'

Introduction to Chapters and Thesis Structure

Following this introduction, Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 provide the conceptual framework to the thesis by bringing two local terms, kampung (our place) and nongkrong (hanging out) into the definition of carnivalesque in Java. I argue that, largely because of their

'untranslatability', these terms must take a central place in deciphering what is uniquely Javanese about the case studies and what they contribute to cultural studies in general. This chapter has its foundations in post-colonial theory (Appadurai 1996; Chakrabarty 2000; Said 1978; Spivak 2000) and also draws on a number of scholars of Indonesian language and culture (Anderson 1991; Barker 1999; Heryanto 1999; Lane 2008; Pemberton 1995; Tsing 2003) as well as critical understandings of community and cultural exchange (Gee 2005; Rose 1997).

The next chapter has the aim of approaching a working definition of festival, drawing on traditions in Java as well as the globalisation of the festival form. It further examines Mikhail Bakhtin's notion of the carnivalesque (Bakhtin 1984) and argues for the consideration of a 'Javanese Carnivalesque' in framing festivals as the localisation of a set of cultural practices by activists in Java. My theorising of reog here, as an example of a remixed ritual, draws heavily on previous research of Javanese folk traditions (Anderson 1972; Murray 1991a; Wilson 1999).[16]

Having used these two chapters to provide a conceptual framework, I then look at the specifics of cultural activism in Central Java. Arguing that the activist festival needs to be examined from several different angles, the remainder of the thesis is devoted to a journey deep into the workings of the case studies, travelling from artworks and artists (Chapter 3), to the process of remixing environmentalism and performing collective identities (Chapter 4), to the collaborative uses of new technologies (Chapter 4). While there is crossover in all these realms, the structure of the chapters is as much an effort to find a methodological path that can make sense of the interdisciplinary nature of the carnivalesque in Java as it is to 'divide and conquer' the subject matter. Approaching the subject from multiple directions demonstrates the way that, ultimately, the carnivalesque in Java is complex, messy and overlapping, and also unitary, multi-dimensional and fun.

In Chapter 3, I elaborate on ideas of kampung and nongkrong with specific reference to how they are engaged by artists. Two artworks are examined in order to evaluate the relevance of global critical discourses and how these discourses can be replaced or complemented by local methods and approaches. I employ the theory of relational aesthetics, developed by the French theorist Nicolas Bourriaud (Bourriaud 2002) to read these artworks. However, I also draw from the writings of art critics Miwon Kwon and Claire Bishop that speak specifically to the limitations of relational aesthetics (Bishop 2004; Kwon 1997) in order to argue for the decolonisation of art discourses. I also expand Tsing's

16. Reog is a cultural practice including dance, trance, and gamelan music that dates back to the Hindu period in East Java. It is usually played in open terrain, such as in a square, street etc. Because of its expressions of power, spirituality and sexuality, Reog has had a controversial history, particularly concerning the traditional relationship between the two central figures, the powerful ascetic warok, and the androgynous-like young boy who plays the *gemblak* and also fulfils the role of 'substitute wife' for the warok. Today, there are many variations on the performance. (Wilson, 1999)

idea of friction in order to politicise the question of ‘dialogue’ within participatory art (Tsing 2005).

Chapter 4 goes beyond the boundaries of the art discourse in Chapter 3 by discussing the festivals in terms of producing and reproducing a local environment movement. This chapter asks how visual identities both form and are formed by localities, and specifically, how local struggles define place. I pay particular attention to the ways collective identities are mythologised and the messy influence of corporate sponsorship on artistic endeavours. In this chapter, I draw on theories of remix (Knobel & Lankshear 2008; Lessig 2008) and combine them with the work of French theorist Michel de Certeau on strategies and tactics (Certeau & Rendall 1988).

Chapter 5 then looks at how technologies of digital video and the internet have been localised as forms of tactical media in Java. I begin with the history of technological development in Indonesia with particular reference to how communication technologies influenced activist practices, resulting in what is now a range of practices that incorporate video with storytelling and the internet with offline social relations. This chapter shows that the carnivalesque in Java generates not only local movements, but also shifting and virtual networks that exemplify the interconnectedness characteristic of the globalised world. It describes networked production and viewing contexts, taking the idea of collaboration as the necessary activity of creating such networks, and friction as their necessary condition.

The final chapter synthesises the above analyses into a model for understanding the carnivalesque in Java. While they are ephemeral and fluid, I point out the enduring strengths of local cultural practices and their potential for bringing about social change. I raise some of the questions that organisers and participants of such festivals will have to face in the future. And I also demonstrate the way the analyses of the previous chapters defend an approach to these kinds of cultural practices that incorporates all and more of the discussions raised in this thesis, supporting the core of my argument, that the research of environmental politics in Central Java since the end of the New Order requires localised definitions of cultural activism that decolonise concepts of art, community, and technology.

CHAPTER 1:
LOCAL TERMS: *KAMPUNG* (OUR PLACE) AND *NONGKRONG* (HANGING OUT)

This chapter focuses on two interrelated, untranslatable and slippery terms, each of which has rich, local meanings and each of which is crucial to the conceptual framework of this thesis: nongkrong *(hanging out) and* kampung *(our place). By beginning to unravel how activists generate place (kampung) and create social practices (nonkrong) I show how the carnivalesque in Java is shaped by local terms.*

Introduction

The glossary at the end of this thesis provides a short notation of some Indonesian terms used throughout. Kampung and nongkrong, however, require more extensive exploration. The following translations of 'kampung' and its derivatives are from *Kamus Indonesia-Inggris*. (Echols et al. 1997, p. 258)

> ***Kampung***: ***1*** village. ***2*** quarter. ***3*** residential area for lower classes in town or city
>
> ***Perkampungan: 1*** settlement. ***2*** gathering place
>
> ***Mengampungkan***: gather, collect, assemble something
>
> ***Kampungan***: countrified, boorish

The following translations of 'nongkrong' and its derivatives are from *Kamus Indonesia-Inggris*. (Echols et al. 1997, p. 584)

> ***See Tongkrong***
>
> ***Tongkrong (n)***: ***1*** (coll.) squat. ***2*** (coll.) sit around doing nothing ***3*** idle, not in use

The Untranslatable

The problems with translating and defining kampung and nongkrong are part of their appeal as tools for analysis. The linguistic tension within and between each term, and their inadequacy, even in Indonesian, for describing the constantly changing ways people relate to each other and their localities give both terms a certain richness that is impossible to convey in translation. However the process of untangling the meanings of kampung and nongkrong brings us closer to a theory of practice that can be applied to the concept of the carnivalesque in Java. For it is these problems that also face activists as they use the kampung as a festival site and nongkrong as a form of festival organising.

As part of a process of decolonising the language we use to discuss cultural activism, this chapter is an exercise in listening to some of the multiple ways culture and activism are defined in Indonesia by exploring more deeply local articulations of cultural practices—kampung and nongkrong. These articulations will, in turn, demonstrate that the activist art festivals that have emerged in post colonial and post authoritarian Java also combat the lingering effects of imperial power structures. They do so by creating their own languages, spaces and politics of cultural expression within the tensions between global and local cultural frameworks. I argue in this chapter that these two words are important in developing a global understanding of cultural activism in Java. Neither of these words could be said to be globally recognisable, but nor are they local in the sense of being part

of regional dialects. These terms are everyday Indonesian words, understood generally across Java.[17] Yet their ubiquity does not bring with it precision. These words are slippery and generative, the kinds of words that are grown in the fertile ground between the official national language, regional dialects and slang (*prokem*).

One of the evolving dimensions of the festivals described in this thesis is the meaning of these words and their relationship to globally understood practices. Unlike many foreign words that are used in cultural theory to describe cultural practices such as 'remix', 'hybrid', 'cut and paste', or even 'festival', nongkrong and kampung have local histories. As will be explained, the stories of their use are integrated with the stories of resistance throughout colonialism and the New Order. In this way, the use of these words by activists is tactical in the de Certeau sense. Activists make use of the language tools they have available, global and local, sorting through multiple connotations and moulding them to their own purposes. They localise words; '*kut kopy*', '*alternatif*', '*horizontal*', '*spontan*', '*anarkis*', and 'jender' (gender) are just a few clear examples. The way activists work, where they work, and the people with whom they work are grouped together into something called a festival (or 'festifal'). But how these festivals are different to those in other parts of the world, and how they are able to affect social change, are locked into the tactical integration of local practices with global cultural models. The point is not to attribute these practices as particularly Indonesian, nor to find exact synonyms from other parts of the world, but to identify and employ, as part of an integrated methodology specific to Central Java, local practices that produce the forms of cultural resistance emerging in the cases studied.

So what kind of translation is necessary to come to terms with these ideas? Translation is sometimes viewed as an exact mathematical procedure rather than a process of ongoing collaboration. Such a view can leave a lot unsaid about the adaptation of language to rapidly changing societies. One of the aims of this chapter is a shift away from exact static translation, towards a deeper comparison of meaning that allows and even encourages constantly changing definitions. While I have chosen 'best-fit' English translations for kampung (our place) and nongkrong (hanging out), neither translation is adequate to convey the richness of the meanings associated with these two words. Rather than provide concise and accurate translations, this chapter aims to develop a sense of their meaning in ways that are messy and unexpected, drawing on multiple possible conversions and considering contradictory interpretations.

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17. As discussed in the Introduction, the scope of this thesis does not cover all of Indonesia. As the word 'Kampung' has its origins in Malay, the root language of Indonesian, it is probably understood across most of Indonesia. 'Nongkrong', on the other hand, is more of a colloquialism, and there would be a number of places in Indonesia where it would probably not be understood. A Javanese word for nongkrong may also be '*jagongan*'.

Empty Space and Wasted Time

A significant part of this chapter is devoted to arguing that kampung and nongkrong cannot be viewed as modern. Neither are they particularly pre-modern in the sense of being 'traditional'.[18] Exploring their value and meaning points to a kind of cultural activity that can be viewed as progressive, in the sense that it encourages and creates forms of social change, and yet does not necessarily appear on the same path of cultural development generally thought necessary for a society to *become* modern. This exploration presents a number of paradoxes. Firstly, the colonial roots of progress become glaringly apparent. At the same time, this progress seems necessary in order to break from those roots, which, after all, produced the conditions of Suharto's dictatorship (Anderson 2001; Heryanto 1999; Lane 2008) and the environmental destruction today, to which the activists in this thesis respond.

Kampung is a word that describes a practised sense of place, a sense of place that goes beyond colonially rooted views of Javanese society as simply 'more communal' or 'closer to nature' than Western society. Kampung encapsulates a more complex sense of space than 'private' and 'public', showing that the way space is delineated in Java is, in fact, both developed and developing. Nongkrong is a practice that occurs within or between the spaces of the kampung. The act of nongkrong might be viewed as a 'waste of time' in the sense that it does not produce anything measurable and cannot be commodified. In terms of financial gain, it is unproductive, but nongkrong does, in fact, produce many ideas and social relations, including those that define the kampung. Nongkrong can be seen as productive in the sense that it generates, defines, and secures social relations, through which the kampung manages itself and its place in the world.

Nongkrong's production, however, is primitive. It requires no technological mediation (although it does not exclude it) and it often occurs in undeveloped economic conditions, where purpose-built social spaces do not exist. But economic development does not extinguish nongkrong and examples of nongkrong exist in the most developed societies. Even as people's lives are made increasingly individual by the demands of employment, office workers still chat over the water cooler. Even as private property takes over any sense of communal space, neighbours still chat over their back fences. And extended further, economic development can ignite the need for nongkrong. With high levels of unemployment in many countries of the world, including Indonesia, 'spare' time and resulting nongkrong are also caused by developed capitalism and large-scale agriculture. When some people lose their jobs they become more isolated. Others engage in more idle creativity; they tune their guitars and hang out near subway stations.

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18. For a more detailed discussion of the distinctions made between modern and traditional culture for the purposes of colonialism and nationalism, see the discussion 'Festival in Indonesia' in Chapter 2.

In this way, nongkrong becomes a way to maintain public space when it is needed most. In Indonesia, this forms and reforms the kampung, delineating between the physical paths of transnational commerce and those of human interaction. To further complicate this issue, the way nongkrong secures public space is not necessarily by proclaiming one space for nongkrong and another for more 'legitimate' acts of modern capitalism (shopping or commuting or working in an office, for example). Nongkrong is not restricted to the kampung. On the contrary, nongkrong can be practised in any space at any time. For example, spending time in large shopping malls, in either Indonesia or Australia, can be a form of nongkrong, if it is done collectively and without a set agenda.[19]

The social practice of nongkrong and the sense of place of kampung may seem somewhat romanticised as unmodern in this chapter. But in the activist communities that produce festivals, both terms are used frequently, and, as this chapter argues, they are entirely necessary to the broader struggle of defining cultural activism. This necessity and ubiquity, even as Indonesia becomes more 'modern', may present some possible answers to what Chakrabarty refers to as an unresolved question for much of the world: 'how to be at home in a globalized capitalism now' (Chakrabarty 2000, p. 213). For nongkrong and kampung work hard to help Indonesian activists find their own ways to participate in global cultural flows.

Chapter Structure

The two parts of this chapter simultaneously unpack and assemble the meanings of kampung and nongkrong respectively. I begin by identifying relevant theoretical discourses using the closest counterparts of the two terms, as there are very few analyses of the terms themselves in the relevant context. For this purpose, I identify kampung with 'our place' and nongkrong with 'hanging out'. Two other correlating terms are also brought into the discussions. The first is the Bengali word 'adda', my understandings of which are drawn from the writing of Dipesh Chakrabarty. The second is the English word 'community', which raises important questions for the meaning of kampung.

Next, I examine how these terms are currently used, and I identify some of the problems that might arise in extending their meanings by applying them to activist contexts. Firstly, I reveal their general use within the Javanese activist art world, and secondly, their specific use by the case studies. These discussions reveal multiple meanings for each word, both positive and negative. For kampung, contemporary activists focus on the term's more positive connotations, which, in general society, are often shadowed by those associated with control

19. For an in-depth discussion of nongkrong in shopping malls in Bali, see the introduction to (Baulch 2007) Baulch points to different styles of nongkrong, such as *'mejeng'*, which occurs in the shopping malls, and which girls are more likely to practise. Mejeng is less active and more exhibitionist in nature. Shopping malls can become more 'safe' nongkrong environments than the street, and as such, encourage more equitable social interaction between boys and girls.

and surveillance. Nongkrong, which is celebrated by activists as being inclusive, is shown to be potentially exclusive, particularly of women. This presents a challenge to activists who wish to include women as producers and participants of festivals. While nongkrong itself is not patriarchal, it can reveal deep seated prejudices that exist in its participants. At each point in these discussions, I show that the terms are essential in describing situations that are particularly Javanese in ways that have global relevance. I also discuss how these terms describe my research methodologies.

Throughout this chapter, I use a number of stories to show how the festivals in this thesis are created through the implementation of ideas of nongkrong and kampung. For kampung, I focus, firstly, on the transportation of local ideas of the kampung from Randublatung to Jakarta. I look at how this new kampung keeps working remotely to define and redefine Randublatung as a place of struggle. For nongkrong, I use an example of a musical collaboration produced through a process of people hanging out together. They had no predetermined purpose, but a purpose evolved organically. This collaboration illustrates how nongkrong also defines place-based identities and how these identities form and reform through a remix process. This process is not uncommon in other cultures; remix culture has been the topic of much cultural analysis. In the festivals in this thesis, however, nongkrong-style remix is the primary mode of cultural production. Its multiple expressions—in installations, performances, collective branding, and video documentations—will be explored in later chapters.

The tension between activists and their practices manifests itself here in a linguistic tension. Nongkrong and kampung are useful and flexible terms to describe the way activists generate social ties, sense of place and collaborative creativity. An exploration of this tension shows what can be done with local words that can describe cultural activism occurring at multiple scales. This exploration reveals a new toolbox to work with local ideas of place, creative exchange and community. Inside are tools that both fit together and can also be used separately. Kampung is a local way of describing place and community in Java. Nongkrong can be thought of as the creative practice that occurs within a kampung when there are no pre-determined activities. The remainder of the thesis relies on the framework set up in Chapter 1 that positions nongkrong and kampung at the essence of the carnivalesque in Java.

PART 1: Our Place, Kampung

Welcome to the Kampung

Kampung has always been conflicted, in various ways. Its slippery meanings— village, neighbourhood, slum, home—are all important because of the layered complexity they evoke. In the national languages of both Indonesia and Malaysia, kampung generally refers to a group of houses, the people who live in them, and the common land they share.[20] But kampung is also a political term and has been used as a building block of the Indonesian nation. It was used by the New Order to divide and control the vast and diverse population that made up the republic, and it is still used as part of transmigration programs, as a way to order new settlements.

In this way the concept of the kampung is significant to the ongoing dialogue between people and nation. The most important contributor to this dialogue has been Benedict Anderson, whose work triggered a new discourse around the idea of rhetorical community as it applies to nationalism. Anderson points to the development of state language as one of the ways 'imagined communities' of nationality were created and spread globally in the Twentieth Century (Anderson 1991). In Indonesia, the interplay between the national language and regional languages defined what is thought of as local in a national context.[21] In a similar way, the space of the kampung, how it is created and how it creates itself, became a building block of this multi-scaled development of the nation. This presents a paradox. While the role of a kampung can be imposed at a national level, the kampung itself can also become a unit for organising dissent. How to use the idea of kampung tactically continues to be a challenge for activists. This challenge is discussed in this chapter and throughout the thesis.

As activists use the space of the kampung as the physical site of their festivals and the concept of kampung as the conceptual framework for their activism, its shifting meanings become an inherent part of their practice. This thesis examines the term kampung because

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20. In his essay 'Forest Discourses in South and Southeast Asia', Michael Dove (2003) points to the intriguing relationship of the word 'kampung' to the word *'rumah'*. In most parts of Indonesia, and indeed in the parts with which my research is primarily concerned, 'kampung' and 'rumah' (in Javanese *humah, omah*, and *umah*) are used to mean 'village' and 'house' respectively. In other parts (namely in Borneo in the Ibanic dialects) umai, means 'field' and 'kampung' means "forest." (Dove 2003). These pairings have intriguing implications for the relationship between humans and nature in these cultures.
    Dove writes: 'The classificatory system involved here–with its association between "house" and "village" on the one hand and "field" and "forest" on the other–addresses the most basic relations of social production and reproduction. The elements in each of the terminological pairs, rumah/kampung (house/village) and umai/kampung (field/forest), are related through dialectical processes of ecological transformation. Fields are cut out of, but ultimately return to, the forest in upland systems of swidden agriculture. In a similar fashion, households are created by, but ultimately dissolve into, the village in the lowland peasant societies of Indonesia and Malaysia (Dove 2003, p. 111).'
    In what he calls 'the cultural-ecological history' of Indonesia and Malaysia, Dove concludes that the relationship between the household and the village is like the relationship between the field and the forest. The parallels between these two relationships are based on the structures of production and reproduction, namely the exploitation of labour or forested land. (Tsing 2003)
21. See discussion in Chapter 2 of the Bali Arts Festival as an example of the government's 'Unity in Diversity' cultural policy.

it is the term that is used by the case studies to describe the scale of the work they do. In explaining how they chose a location for Festival Mata Air, for example, Tanam Untuk Kehidupan members describe a process of simultaneously identifying a natural spring and a sympathetic kampung. With a lead-up time of less than one year for each festival, Tanam Untuk Kehidupan forms relationships to kampungs in Salatiga very quickly, working with existing organisational structures, local businesses, and through existing contacts and friendships. Anakseribupulau has more permanent relationships with the kampungs of Randublatung and Blora. These are the neighbourhoods where these activists were raised. Anakseribupulau is in constant negotiation with the kampung around the town forest, challenging the culture of illegal logging and rallying support for their activities, but there are no strangers in these negotiations. These activists think of the kampung as 'our place', with all the support and comfort it provides as well as all the conflict and intimidation it can present.

There are reasons that the term kampung, rather than alternative terms, is used by activists to describe and position their work. Many of these reasons are explored by Yoshi Fajar Kresnomurti in the art project Babad Kampung (Kampung Tales)[22] and its accompanying texts. Kresnomurti explains that kampung

> could not be accurately defined. Yet, it was always presents [sic] in the modern vocabulary as a very flexible word that could be used by any party to construct his/her identity, interest and 'the other' within the contestation of modern urban space (Kresnomurti 2010).

The flexibility of the kampung as a site makes it possible for projects such as Babad Kampung to activate local responses to urban issues that would be impossible if framed in terms of 'community' or other similar terms. The Indonesian derivative of the English 'community', for example, komunitas, is selectively used but more often for initiatives that are 'community-based,' rather than for the community itself. For example, *radio komunitas* (community radio) is a standard term as is *televisi komunitas* (community television). One possible reason that the word *komunitas* has not been taken up in general circulation while many other English words have, is that it could be mistaken for *komunis,* (communist) which, in most circles, is still considered a 'dirty word' more than forty years after the trauma of 1965.[23] Kampung, on the other hand, is widely used in general society as well as activist circles. Having both Malay and Javanese origins, it is seen as having immense potential for describing cultural practices that bring together local concepts of place and human relations.

22. Babad Kampung was a program that used video to document the history of nine kampungs in Yogyakarta in 2008.
23. Between 300,000 and one million Indonesians were killed in the mass anti-communist sweepings of 1965. Communism, Marxism and Leninism were banned in 1966, as was the use of Chinese characters. To this day, former PKI members remain blacklisted from many occupations including government jobs. Communism also remains illegal. During his presidency, Abdurrahman Wahid attempted to lift the ban on communism and was met by opposition, particularly from conservative Islamic groups.

Community

Kampung implies not only a neighbourhood with a sense of place, but also a set of social relations. Because of these social relations, kampung has some correlations to the concept of community. Community, however, does not have a geographical sense of place quite like that of kampung, which is grounded in specific locations, such as an urban setting or a rural rice-growing setting. Attempts at a definition of community have also always proved problematic (Gee 2005). Yet in the disciplines of anthropology, human geography, art criticism and cultural studies, communities themselves, as well as the conceptual framework of community, continue to be the subject of fascination and study.

The concept of community brings its own set of ambiguities, some of which help to answer questions around the concept of kampung. In her study of site-specific art, for example, Miwon Kwon points to the way community can describe very different groups. 'On the one hand, the term "community" is associated with disenfranchised social groups that have been systematically excluded from the political and cultural processes that affect, if not determine, their lives' (Kwon 1997, p. 112). When we speak of 'the gay and lesbian community', for example, or 'refugee communities', we are referring to a group that is bound together by their common experience of oppression. On the other hand, community is also used to refer to the groups that carry out this oppression, for example 'the business community'.

Because it represents a specific place, kampung does not bring with it the same ambiguities as community. Whether referred to by its own residents (to define neighbours), by government officials (as in a census) or by a grocery store (to define a customer base), a kampung points to the same place, defined by the same physical borders, except for some possible minor variations.

One of the problems with translating kampung as community is that community is often upheld as an unexamined good, hiding the politics that define the word. Many people point to a strong sense of community as a marker for quality of life. For these people, community implies a sense of belonging to place and a connection between people. But community is never simply a group of people and rarely has fixed boundaries. Gillian Rose argues that there must be a move away from the search for some pure concept of community based on 'territorialized and territorializing boundaries' (Rose 1997, p. 185) because of the exclusion those boundaries create.

The concept of community can be used as a means of control, maintained by a sense of fear. This is in contrast to those warm fuzzy notions described above. These contradictions, which are explored later in this chapter, also have resonance for the notion of kampung. For example, communities can exclude or control women. Frazer and Lacey (1993) provide a

feminist critique of community, focusing on the exclusion of women in conservative and romanticised notions of community. These critiques of community are useful in analysing how kampung is often produced by male-dominated practices of nongkrong and are important in understanding how kampung, like community, is neither inherently good nor inherently bad, despite its 'warm and fuzzy' connotations.

More specifically, kampung as it is used in this thesis relates to the idea of community-based artwork, '*seni kampung*'. One of the main aims of using the notion of kampung to describe (and validate) the cultural practices that make up festivals in Java is to point to how the carnivalesque in Java can also dramatise the very mechanics of community by opening the political workings of the kampung to reconsiderations and repurposing by a variety of actors. These kinds of examinations may be able to expose, not only how community is romanticised in the West, but also what it really means when used in regards to other, more 'community-oriented' cultures. In other words, the kampung can decolonise the concept of community.

In the discussion of kampung in this chapter, I build on some of the existing studies of community. But I also grapple with many of the differences between notions of kampung and community. What is lacking from many studies of community is consideration of how community is experienced in sensory ways. As well as the people within them, kampung boundaries also define the nature of the soil, the houses, the plants, and the quality of the air and water. For this reason, the notion of kampung has much more potential for framing the carnivalesque in Java than the notion of community. As they agitate to improve local environments, both in rural and urban contexts, activists use the kampung as a way to manoeuvre through the complex relationships between people and where they live.

The Commons: Free Range Kampung

Indonesia has been built on the concept of kampung as a way people relate to each other and to their land. In part, a kampung is defined by its borders with other kampungs or surrounding lands. But it is also created by the diffusion of physical boundaries between individual households within the kampung. Children, for example, may be allowed to play only with others from their own kampung or only within the borders of their own kampung. In this way, households use the kampung to extend kinship relations beyond the immediate family and the boundaries of home beyond the physical borders of the single house.

Colloquial connotations of the word 'kampung' shed light on the way the idea of a kampung forms territory. 'Kampung' is often used to refer to the habitat of domesticated or semi-domesticated animals, meaning belonging to a particular area or community, rather than to a particular person, as in 'anjing kampung' (neighbourhood dog). Usually anjing

kampung have no collar and no registration, and there is no particular resident who is responsible for providing them with medical attention or food. However, unlike the idea of a 'stray' dog in Western societies, an anjing kampung does belong. It is generally fed by residents of the kampung and reciprocally, often acts as a guard dog for the kampung.[24] 'Ayam kampung' (free-range chicken) is another example.[25] Like anjing kampung, ayam kampung tend to wander freely around a particular kampung but, unlike anjing, are usually owned by a particular household. A kampung may also have shared fruit trees, a shared well, shared storage spaces (for example for food vendor carts, kaki lima, or for cooking fuel in the form of wood or coal) and a shared social space.

In these ways, the idea of the kampung relates to other models of the collective ownership and usage rights of land and resources. The most commonly referenced of these models from the West is the common land system in England from the medieval period onwards, where certain areas of land were available for use by 'commoners', to glean and gather, cultivate, hunt, and traverse. But the same concept underlies

> the clachan, the sept, the rundale, the West African village, and the indigenous tradition of long-fallow agriculture of Native Americans — in other words, it encompassed all those parts of the Earth that remained unprivatised, unenclosed, a noncommodity, a support for the manifold human values of mutuality' (Linebaugh & Rediker 2000, p. 26).

The concept of the commons is now understood within a number of spheres, including literature, music, arts, design, film, video, television, radio, information, and software. In the same way that the idea of the commons has evolved from referring to available and shared land, kampung is also evolving to refer to a range of cultural practices. This thesis raises some questions associated with applying the idea of kampung to such spheres. Historically, Indonesia has had very little arts infrastructure that has been commonly owned in an official sense. Without strong government funding or philanthropic cultural institutions, private ownership of arts venues and cultural products tends to be the pattern. One reaction to this situation has been 'seni kampung' (kampung art), which encompasses the festivals presented in this thesis and is closely related to the idea of the carnivalesque and the notion of a cultural commons. Kampung in this sense has come to represent a kind of Javanese cultural commons that exists in strong contrast to the commercial art world.

Who controls the Kampung?

Kampung is inextricably tied to how many Indonesians think of themselves and those with

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24. It bodes well to mention that this is not the universal fate of anjing kampung, who in many places in Java, are also regularly captured and eaten. Although dog meat is not halal, it is considered by many to increase virility.
25. 'Ayam kampung' also has another colloquial meaning that refers to woman who is sexually promiscuous, as in belonging to the kampung, rather than to a particular man. The English equivalent could be 'woman of the streets'.

whom they live, but kampung is also the smallest official unit of the population. It has been used since Indonesia's independence as a way for the national government to organise its constituents; a political term with clearly designated boundaries. The extent to which the kampung is the construct of the state and to what extent kampung residents can manoeuvre within that construct is the focus of this section.

Patrick Guinness and Alison Murray each write about the importance of the kampung to the informal economy of Indonesia during the New Order, pointing to the enormous contribution of kampung labour—traders, workers and prostitutes—to the development that bolstered Suharto's regime (Guinness 2009; Murray 1991b). The contribution of the kampung to the economic stability that ensured the New Order's power was undocumented but certainly not unnoticed by the government, which gave each kampung leader an annual grant. In addition, the kampung leaders got all sorts of extra payments from villagers, not always of money, in exchange for signing letters, speaking to someone, or granting permissions. In fact a number of provinces created new kampung in order to increase the amount of money coming from the central government.

In her online guide to Javanese culture, writer and critic Nina Wilhemina (Nin) explains the general process of administration of the kampung, in her typical playful style:

> A Javanese and Indonesian neighborhood is usually called 'kampung' (some hybrid English term for it is written the Malaysian way: 'kampong').
>
> It is the basis (i.e. lowest in the hierarchy) of the sociopolitical management of the country. Its official name for the bureaucracy to mind as a territorial unit is 'Rukun Tetangga', usually abbreviated into 'RT', and literally means 'gemeinschaft'. Oh, well. There is no English word for it so far.[26]
>
> A neighborhood is led by an unpaid and overworked headman (Ketua RT). He (sometimes she) is directly elected by the families in the area, which usually comprise of 10 to 30 houses in all.
>
> Since no money is to be gotten in this supposedly voluntary job (some headmen are actually forced to be by their neighbors), the compensation is social luxury – at least you'd know whose wife runs with whom last Thursday, whose husband got locked up in a German mental hospital, whose goats trampled whose crops, which kid is it that broke whose windows in a football play, and so forth.
>
> So it is a great job.
>
> (Wilhelmina 2005)

Nin pokes fun at the kampung system, for the corruption and gossip mongering that is somehow made legitimate by a national system. The security provided by the kampung

26. Literally, 'rukun' means harmonious, 'tetangga' means neighbour.

Figure 16: Typical kampung entrance, stating the 'Panca Sila' principles of the nation, Malang, 2010. Photograph by Nova Ruth.

Figure 17: 'Dua Cukup' at kampung entrance, Malang, 2010. Photograph by Nova Ruth.

system may seem similar to community policing such as the neighbourhood watch systems in the United States and Australia. Such systems have a specific purpose, as a way of making the village or suburb safe, so that lawlessness is immediately evident.

But there is a more sinister side to the way kampung has been used to order, watch and control households in Indonesia.

In her thesis on the development of internet practices in Indonesia, Merlyna Lim draws on Foucault's term the 'Panopticon of surveillance' to describe how the kampung system operated during the New Order. Lim points out that security measures including the culture of reporting guests (outsiders) to kampung authorities were imposed by the state after the anti-communist sweepings of 1965. During that time, Lim argues, the kampung system performed much the same role as the high-tech surveillance systems of major world cities today, albeit much more simply and cheaply. People generally accepted unquestioningly that the state had the right to monitor the comings and goings within their kampung, thus relinquishing any notion of civic space, and they were also encouraged to be suspicious of strangers. The RT system along with the *Siskamling–Sistem Keamanan Lingkungan* (neighbourhood community watch) were part of the territorialising project of the New Order regime which sought to bring existing social divisions into the service of the state as well as developing new mechanisms for control (Barker 1999). Besides as a system of surveillance, the kampung also provided a way to quantify groups of people, to conduct censuses, and to keep track of dissidents, in short, to control the population. [27]

However, the kampung was not simply an imposition by the State on the population. Paradoxes emerged in the symbolic visual language at the end of the New Order when the role of the kampung as a building block of nationalism was challenged by the rising dissent within the kampung. Under Suharto, and for that matter before and after Suharto, the *gapura* (entrance way) to the kampung was usually decorated to reflect the ideology of the nation (Anderson 1978; Pemberton 1994): cast or sculpted statues of revolutionary heroes; images of ethnic unity; maps of Indonesia; the two-finger symbol of the national family planning campaign 'dua anak cukup' (two is enough)[28]. These are evident in many kampungs across Java as illustrated in Figure 16 and Figure 17. While on the streets and gangs (alleyways) of the kampungs, very different sentiments about the regime were

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27. While it is correct to attribute these systems of surveillance and control to the New Order, they were in fact adopted from Japanese security systems during the short Japanese occupation (1942-1945). However, it would be short sighted to view the use of the kampung for security purposes as a recent phenomenon. In his elaborate ethnography of neighbourhood security systems, Barker points out that the system of *ronda* (night watch or guard that patrols a kampung), which was the precursor to Siskamling, is quite likely 'a precolonial institution', although the word itself comes from Portuguese. (Barker 1999, p. 98) The Siskamling is yet another example of the localisation of an imported idea.
28. The motto 'dua anak cukup' was part of Suharto's population control program that was launched in 1974. The campaign included billboards and songs. It also subsidised family planning programs and, even today, is well entrenched across most of Indonesia. (Dalton 1995)

Figure 18: Dendang Kampungan at Forest Art Festival, Salatiga, 2006.

Figure 19: Dendang Kampungan in Yogyakarta, 2010.

Figure 20: Dendang Kampungan hand drawn CD cover, 2009. 'Still Working, like usual. And the result doesn't have to be unusual.'

Figure 21 (top): Wayang Kampung Sebelah at Festival Mata Air, Salatiga, 2008.

Figure 22(middle): Wayang Kampung Sebelah figures, 'Inul' is second from the left, courtesy of the artists.

Figure 23 (bottom): Wayang Kampung Sebelah at Festival Mata Air, Salatiga, 2006.

reflected in posters, banners, T-shirts and graffiti (Berman 1999). These expressions of kampung operated in two directions, from the state about citizens and from citizens about the state.

Kampung as a Site of Resistance

So, like 'community', 'kampung' has also come to have important connotations of resistance for activists. This can be found in the way activists identify themselves with the adjective 'kampungan', drawing on a positive image of the kampung as a site of egalitarian collective identity. The roots of this image are part of a genealogy of activism that preceded the ways the New Order controlled kampungs and needs to be considered along with the negative picture of the kampung as a tool of surveillance presented above. Some of these roots can be traced back to collective opposition to colonialism, and they are celebrated today in the names of music and theatre groups that form the carnivalesque in Java.

Take, for example, the Yogyakarta protest band 'Dendang Kampungan' who performed at each Festival Mata Air as well as the Forest Art Festival. Dendang Kampungan *or* DK (*dendang* means 'happy chants or songs') prides itself on being able to perform protest songs in any situation with any number of members, with or without rehearsals (Figure 18, Figure 19, Figure 20). The band uses the term 'kampungan' defiantly to express their inclusiveness and non-professionalism. The number of participants is not fixed throughout a performance or even throughout a single song. Everyone has the right to a creative role in Dendang Kampungan's process, which includes making the songs—writing the lyrics, composing the rhythm and melodies, and choosing the instruments used—as well as making albums—recording, designing and printing (by hand) the album artwork. There is no individual authorship of songs acknowledged on stage or on the album covers. Skills are shared in a similar way to how they might be in an actual kampung, through a process of nongkrong. One of the aims of Dendang Kampungan is to encourage women to participate in activist musical performance. DK members identified the reluctance of women to perform in rock, reggae and punk bands, and explained in interviews that 'downplaying the performance aspect by calling it "kampungan" would encourage participation'. At each of the festival performances, Dendang Kampungan has included several female members. These women stated that, within Dendang Kampungan, there was much less pressure to be musically precise than other bands, so it took less courage to join. They also said that encouraging others to join them on stage was as enjoyable as being there themselves.

The Solo-based performance troupe 'Wayang Kampung Sebelah' (the Wayang from the next neighbourhood) also employs the idea of a kampung in their title and as a point of resistance (Figure 21, Figure 22, Figure 23). This contemporary version of the Javanese puppet uses Indonesian language, rather than Javanese, so as not to be exclusive. Unlike 'traditional' Wayang (shadow puppet theatre), the performance uses modern musical

instruments and puppets made from cardboard with appropriate traditional wayang characters and also figures from contemporary popular culture such as the infamous dangdut singer Inul Daratista.[29] The shows tackle issues of prostitution; government corruption; environmental destruction; and globalisation with stories set in a common kampung full of gossiping residents. The performance developed for Festival Mata Air in 2008 told the story of a natural water source exploited by corporate interests and a corrupt local council. Another example is the participatory media group 'Kampung Halaman', which also refers to the concept of the kampung to mean 'grassroots'.

Besides the above examples, in the arts generally, 'kampung' is often interchanged with 'community' in discussions around cultural participation. In some ways, this slippage has occurred as the idea of *Seni Kerakyatan* (People's Art) from the Sukarno era has evolved with global trends in visual arts that prioritise participation. These trends take into consideration social contexts and relations, what French critic Nicolas Bourriaud calls 'relational aesthetics' (Bourriaud 2002), a concept which is explored in Chapter 4 of this thesis. In many arts projects in Java, well before Festival Mata Air or the Forest Art Festival, 'seni kampung' was used by artists and arts writers to refer to participatory art that either engaged a community or was produced directly by a community.

Shifting Notions of Kampungan

Kampungan is the adjective meaning 'of the kampung'. As I have explained, kampung can be employed by authorities to determine how people use space (as the kampung surveillance systems described above) and, simultaneously, it can become a site of resistance itself. In the same way, kampungan can be used by outsiders as a form of condescension, keeping people 'in their place' metaphorically. This is a more psychological way that kampung has been used to control the population and build the idea of the nation. But it can also be reclaimed and remixed by those whom it describes.

During the New Order period, many terms such as *massa rakyat* (mass society), *marhaen* (the peasantry), *masyarakat umum* (the public), and *orang kecil* (the little people), were manipulated to objectify and depoliticise the population (Lane 2008). Kampung also played a part in this project, stereotyping those who lived in kampung as 'unmodern'. Kampung settlement sometimes refers to places where indigenous people live maintaining traditional land holding, *tanah adat*. This implies that, by remaining remote, kampung has remained 'untouched' by urbanism and the flows of national and global culture. But kampung is used much too generally to be reserved for any kind of 'other' set up by the delineations of traditional and modern culture. Although there are kampung in Jakarta, kampungan, like *desa* (village), inferred a position of marginality to

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29. For an overview of 'Inulmania' see Heryanto's introductory chapter 'Pop Culture and Competing Identities' (Heryanto 2008) and (Weintraub 2008)

the city, to development, and to elite notions of culture.[30] Kampungan indicated a lack of development: an inability to modernise. Writer and arts worker Yossy Kresnomurti writes that as Indonesia urbanises, kampung becomes 'the shadow of modern city, as it is defined as a "non-city", "not part of the city"' (Kresnomurti 2010). But in its position of marginality, kampungan quickly became a style, particularly of popular performance. In one of her astute observations of the lower and underclass under the New Order, Alison Murray wrote, in 1991, 'the *kampungan* style, used as a term to suggest crudeness and mindlessness … [was] recently taken up by *kampung* performers themselves as a source of pride' (Murray 1991a, p. 3).

Today, 'orang kampung' is still often meant as derogatory, and kampungan can mean backwards, uneducated or unrefined. Or it may carry with it a sense of identity and place, which the person can choose to wear with pride. As Frederick writes in his analysis of dangdut,

> For a few it [kampungan] simply means 'bad'; for a much larger group of elite and would be elite, the sense of 'substandard' or 'low quality' probably suffices; others may be, genuinely or otherwise, more sympathetic but still convey a judgement of vague inferiority or poor taste when they use the term; and for a few the word is uttered with a defiant sort of pride …(Frederick 1982, p. 125).

This works in the same way as many derogatory labels that are used worldwide to denote lower and under classes. One example is 'redneck' in the United States. Redneck originally referred to the poor rural white Southerners during the late 1800s, derived from individuals having red necks from working outdoors in the sun. The meaning of the term was expanded in more recent times to mean bigoted, loutish, and opposed to modern ways.

But redneck evolved to have its own political expression. By 1900, 'redneck' was in common use to designate the political coalitions of the poor white farmers in the South (Albert D. Kirwan 1951). Like redneck, kampungan has been reclaimed by those it described. Mainstream examples of this reclamation exist in popular culture.[31] The well-known rock band Slank titled one of their albums *Kampungan,* and included songs such as 'Bali Bagus' which could be said to highlight the centre–periphery relationship between Java and the other islands through the band's 'Jakartanese experience of Bali' (Baulch 2007, p. 84). The well-known television show *Empat Mata* host by Tukul Arwana,

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30. 'Desa' refers more to a rural village, whereas kampung can be a village anywhere in Indonesia, including the city. The marginality of the kampung refers to a contrast to *'gedongan'*, meaning multi-storey concrete building, but also to other 'more modern' forms of housing, such as *'perumahan'* (housing estates) or apartments.

31. Another example of this kind of reclamation can be found in the word 'ghetto', which was first used to describe an area of the city where Jews were compelled to live in Europe, particularly during WWII, and now refers to an overcrowded, poor urban area, particularly of American cities. African-Americans transformed ghetto to 'ghetto fabulous' in the 1990s through rap music and other forms of popular culture, using it to describe to a style that celebrates a combination of the rough edges of the street with flashy designer style (Frederick 1982).

who is represented as very 'kampungan' by his language and humour, is funny to many Indonesians because he is entirely lacking in any kind of cosmopolitanism. Many of the jokes are drawn from the misunderstandings of the provincial Tukul as he goes through increasingly globalised experiences of everyday life, knowing very little Indonesian or English language and being very 'unwordly'.

As Indonesian society changes, becoming increasingly urbanised, the meaning of kampungan also shifts. Particularly in the megalopolis of Jakarta, 'kampungan' can have the meaning of being 'Jawa', i.e. rooted in Javanese culture, provincial, and lacking fluency in Jakarta-style Indonesian and urban cultural references. A common accusation, particularly from Javanese people who have been in Jakarta longer than others, is '*Jawa banget sih lo*!' (You are so 'Java'!). The implication is that while Jakarta of course is located on the island of Java, it is backwards to cling to Javanese customs and language. Jakarta is imagined as a separate cosmopolitan space within the island of Java.[32] Jakarta identities are imagined in terms of mobility and a plurality of origins. In reality, as explored further in the second part of this chapter, these identities are actually themselves often rooted in very local ideas of kampung.

A Jakarta-based performer at Festival Mata Air, of mixed Javanese-Sundanese heritage, gave me the following rundown of what is considered 'kampungan' in the cosmopolitan space of Jakarta:

- rubber thongs (flip-flops)
- girls whose skin is not white33
- 'artists' (musicians) who ride trains or other forms of public transport
- taking 'average' taxis as opposed to exclusive ones
- being poor
- appearing poor.

In the kampung itself, she said, the meaning can be reversed. Dressing up too much or wearing bright lipstick can be considered 'kampungan', flaunting your wealth, taking taxis at all instead of a *becak* (rickshaw), bicycle, or horse and cart.

As these definitions of kampung shift, activists shift with them, using general understandings of the word to work with ideas of commons, public space and community, as well as power and control. In this constant process of language remix, they also challenge these definitions, pushing and altering meanings to form new relationships with globally circulating ideas such as festival and other local terms, such as nongkrong, examined in the

32. I refer here to Jakarta as it exists today, rather than to its own cultural and linguistic histories. Jakarta in fact has its own language group called Betawi, although the language is no longer used often except in 'traditional' performance and musical forms such as Gambang Kromong. For a wonderful documentary about Gambang Kromong and the steady disappearance of Betawi culture see the 2006 film *Anak Naga Beranak Naga* (Dragons Beget Dragons) by Ariani Darmawan. The area of Jabotek is actually surrounded on all sides by the province of Sunda, which has the regional language of Sundanese, similar yet separate to Javanese.

33. Dark skin is considered 'kampungan' as, like the American term 'redneck', it implies outdoor labour.

second part of this chapter.

Klender is a kampung that is the Jakarta base of anakseribupulau activists and their extended anakseribupulau family, as well as the home of around thirty working class migrants, from the village of Randublatung.[34] These people had come to Jakarta over a period of about ten years. Their kinship connections had ensured accommodation and the possibility of employment in retail outlets, factories and offices, or as drivers, or even in the police force. New arrivals shared rooms, sleeping on the floor or up to three people in a bed, until they were able to rent cheap rooms near one another. Over time, they had formed their own kampung.

These people had geographically relocated from village to city. Their lives had transformed in many ways: from living with parents to living with friends, siblings and cousins; from adolescence to adulthood; and from dependent child to independent earner. They were encouraged to send money back to Randublatung whenever possible. However, in the transition, much of their kampung identity is maintained. Away from their workplaces they speak in Randublatung dialect; drink rice wine fermented in Randublatung and smuggled to Jakarta on train trips; cook Randublatung *sambal* (chili sauce); and sleep in communal bedrooms, in the same way they would in Randublatung, moving freely between houses within their kampung.[35] They pool mobile phones and SIM cards in order to get the best rates to communicate with each other and their friends and families in Central Java. They explore the city. They work. But they return home to Klender to nongkrong together each and every day. Klender is a remix of Randublatung kampungs, reproducing itself in the midst of it its own opposite, Jakarta.

This practice of being kampungan in the city epitomises the contradictions at play in the strategies rural migrants adopt to feel 'at home' in Jakarta or any other megalopolis. Expressing an 'elsewhere' is how many people all over the world practise 'belonging', whether they are Vietnamese migrants on the outskirts of Sydney or Moroccan migrants on the outskirts of Paris. In his interpretation of everyday practices as forms of resistance, de Certeau describes a North African living in Paris whose styles of action–ways of living–intervene in the imposed French system by turning it to his advantage, finding ways of using place and language to his advantage:

> Without leaving the place where he has no choice but to live and which lays down its law for him, he establishes within it a degree of plurality and creativity. By an art of being in between, he draws unexpected results from his situation (Certeau & Rendall 1988, p. 30).

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34. See Chapter 4 for further discussion of how perentau build local identities.
35. This Jakarta kampung was structurally a set of about thirty boarding rooms around a central shared outside space. There were several kitchens, and two bathrooms shared by around fifty people.

Referring to the tactics within urban kampungs in New Order Indonesia, Murray writes 'Kampung is not an entity that can plan "strategy" but a community of individuals that adjust themselves to urban situation.' (Murray 1991b, p. 61)

What is unique in Klender is the role of activists in shaping this practice to include belonging to a movement. All the Klender residents I spoke to strongly identify with anakseribupulau and the local environmental struggles in Randublatung. The Jakarta branch of the Randublatung diaspora (there are also similar kampungs in other industrial and commercial centers such as Surabaya) view Jakarta as a stage, as well as a place to earn a living. They use train stations, street corners, and malls as places to *nongkrong* and express their political concerns (particularly related to the forests in their homeland) through music, performance and publications. In this way, while their political intention remains the transformation of the environmental situation in Central Java, their practices also transform Jakarta, bringing their own concept of kampung life to the city and in the process, creating another activist dimension to Jakarta.

The Forest Art Festival provided a moment of intense connection between Klender and Randublatung. During the festival, most of the kampung of Klender came home, as they do at Ramadan or for births and funerals. Klender also provides a safe haven in the transit zone of Jakarta for activists as they flow between Randublatung and the rest of the country and the world. In this way, the carnivalesque brings different iterations of kampung into contact.

Klender shows that a kampung can be remotely attached to its local identity, remixing ideas of kampungan with the conditions of urban living. Kampung are formed temporarily, but draw on more permanent attachments to place. These ideas open up the possibilities for what geographer Doreen Massey calls a 'progressive sense of place' (Massey 1991), not only in remote kampung, but online, a possibility that will be discussed in Chapter 5.

PART 2: Do you Nongkrong?

My discussion of nongkrong begins with an introduction to two counterparts to the term that I have identified from other cultures. The first is the colloquialism 'hanging out' and the second is the Bengali practice 'adda'. The discussion of adda draws on the work of two Indian born theorists Dipesh Chakrabarty and Arjun Appadurai. I use adda as a parallel path to argue that the practice of nongkrong could be considered neither modern, nor aspiring to modernity. Two threads sew this argument together. One explores nongkrong as an antithesis to modern ideas of work and the second relates directly to the notion of kampung and explores how nongkrong generates public space in a personal, intimate and physical way rather than by officially designating spaces as 'public', the 'modern' way. These threads exist both in the contextualisation of nongkrong in general Indonesian society as well as in cultural activism in Central Java. I also expand on the work of the anthropologist James C. Scott, whose theories on the everyday resistance of peasants in Malaysia lays the foundation for understanding nongkrong as a political practice. Lastly, I explore nongkrong as a research methodology. I show how it joins the field of study that uses sensory methodologies to understand the world.

Hanging Out

Nongkrong is usually translated into English as 'hanging out' and can roughly be described as the practice of long, informal conversation between friends. Nongkrong is usually practised seated or squatting in a loose group formation, where participants come and go freely. It is a place of sharing; food, drink, peanuts and cigarettes are usually positioned in the middle (Figure 24, Figure 25, Figure 26).

Nongkrong often involves music; guitars and other musical instruments are passed around the group. This musical activity is shaped by the terms of jamming, rather than performance; everyone is considered a participant even if they are just clapping or humming. It can be a space for a group to develop lyrics and melodies, as well as certain mannerisms, gestures, dress styles, habits of speech and new vocabularies, and to promulgate these. Nongkrong does not generally have a predetermined agenda or outcome. Neither is it *omong kosong* (empty talk), the negative connotations of which refer more to individual political rhetoric rather than to collective discussion. Yet, in the carnivalesque spheres of Central Java, nongkrong is often a refined political process. Nongkrong produces what Benedict Anderson calls 'direct speech', made up of 'gossip, rumors, discussions, arguments, interrogations, and intrigues'. This kind of political communication and expression, says Anderson, has been neglected in scholarship of Indonesia, and 'if analysed, would throw a different light on Indonesians' conceptions of their politics' (Anderson 1978, p. 284).

While it is very significant to activist groups, nongkrong is by no means exclusively

an activist practice. Rather, because nongkrong is such a natural (*wajah*) part of social interaction in Java, activists are able to use it as a method of social change. In a discussion on transnational activism, one Blora forest campaigner noted that activists from outside Indonesia sometimes have trouble achieving their goals in Java because of '*kurang nongkrong*', not enough hanging out. They suggested that groups or individuals wishing to collaborate with activists in Java should allow time for nongkrong in their programs. While there was an understanding that this might be difficult to account for in budgets and schedules of overseas organisations, nongkrong was much more important to developing trust than phone meetings or email exchanges.

Nongkrong is practised across all sections of Indonesian society and in both commercial and non-commercial spaces. *Becak* (rickshaw) drivers nongkrong on the street between fares, policemen nongkrong at the station, hip Jakarta teenagers nongkrong at Starbucks, women nongkrong with babies slung in their sarongs, and elders nongkrong loudly as their hearing fades. Places of nongkrong, *tongkrongan* (*tempat nongkronan*) include *angkringan* and *warkop* (*warung kopi*- coffee shop), street corners, mosques, markets, schools, as well as chat rooms and *warnets*. Nongkrong also happens in rural settings such as rice paddies, for example, when farmers take a break in their planting over thick black sweet coffee.

Adda

A translation for nongkrong very much worth exploring comes not from English, but from the Bengali word, *adda* (pronounced 'uddah'). My discussions of adda are meant as a comparison of a similar practice that has already received meaningful analysis in terms of modernity and indigenous practice. While very different in style, like nongkrong, adda describes a practice and a place. The Bengali linguist Sunitikumar Chattopadhyay translates it as '"a place" for "careless talk with boon companions" or "the chats of intimate friends"' (cited in (Chakrabarty 1999, p. 110).

> The adda, thematically, is a site where several of the classic and endless debates of modernity are played out–discipline versus laziness, women's confinement in the domestic sphere versus their participation in the public sphere, separation of male and female domains versus a shared public life for both groups, leisure classes versus the laboring classes, an openness to the world versus the responsibilities of domestic life, and other related issues. (Chakrabarty 2000, p. 212)

Great insight into nongkrong as an unmodern practice can be gained from Dipesh Chakrabarty's studies of adda. As Chakrabarty points out, by standards of modernity, adda is 'a flawed social practice: It is predominantly male in its modern form in public life; it is oblivious of the materiality of labour in capitalism; and middle-class *addas* are usually forgetful of the working classes' (Chakrabarty 1999, p. 111). It is even viewed by some as laziness on the part of the Bengali people, in the way that nongkrong is sometimes

Figure 24, 25, 26:
Nongkrong, 2006.

pointed to as one of the cultural causes of underdevelopment in Indonesia (Barley 2009), as an activity without real aims and as symptomatic of an emphasis on communality over individuality.

Laziness in the Unmodern Public Sphere

Nongkrong has been, for the most part, overlooked in studies of Indonesian culture, most likely because it is difficult to find evidence of what it *does*. In this section, I look at nongkrong in terms of cultural production. This production is somewhat invisible when measured by standards of modernity, but I show that it is indeed significant to the activists in this study. Like adda, nongkrong produces a public sphere where 'political participation is enacted through the medium of talk' (Fraser 1990). Nongkrong does not prescribe a type of participation and also involves active listening; engagement if one feels like it and permission to tune out if one is not interested. It is an idle activity that is productive and creative. This section shows how nongkrong reveals the ways space and work are defined in Indonesian society. While modern thinking divides public and private space and work and leisure into separate categories, nongkrong reveals many shades of grey between each of these.

Public Space

Like adda, nongkrong often occurs in the undefined area between public and private spaces, neither inside the home nor exactly on the street. One example of this is the somewhat classic image of becak (rickshaw) drivers, (almost always male) perched in their carriages, if not sleeping, then engaged in nongkrong. As they wait for a potential fare, they are not exactly idle, but neither are they working. Under their sunshades, they are not entirely exposed, yet they are out in the open, visible to traffic and passersby. Each wheeled chair becomes a mobile and modular 'tempat nongkrong', creating social spaces on the streets. In this way, the becak drivers blur the line between the public street and their private property and between their work and leisure time. The more functional aspect of this nongkrong is that, for becak drivers, nongkrong is a way to discuss and regulate fares, independent of any external regulating body. It is also a way of filling in the time, given the paucity of fares and the growing number of regulations that forbid the use of becaks. Technology increasingly intervenes into these nongkrong spaces as mobile phones are used to coordinate the picking up of passengers and drivers are able to nongkrong from different street corners.

More generally, people's bodies form the political space of nongkrong. This has been important in times when safe spaces to gather and organise have been scarce. Nongkrong is both out in the open and enclosed. I argue that through the practice of nongkrong, political discourse has been physically propagated in the everyday life of workers, students and artists, despite every attempt of the New Order to depoliticise the population. This is certainly evident in the nongkrong circles in which I participated to conduct this research,

through conversation, orality, and the injection of humour, the critical discussion of politics was not only made lively and engaging, but normalised.

What Nongkrong Produces

Nongkrong is inextricably tied to a cultural identity that is based on the spending (wasting) of time rather than any sense of duty to be productive in the capitalist sense.[36] Nongkrong works as a type of 'play', in opposition to work in the Modernist sense. Cultural historian Johan Huizinga points out that play 'is an activity connected with no material interest, and no profit can be gained by it' (Huizinga 1955, p. 13). The value that many Indonesians place on nongkrong as a way of organising and maintaining social relations shows a defiant resistance to the commoditisation of time demanded by the conditions of hypercapitalism. To engage in nongkrong is not the same as being busy (*sibuk*) and yet it is active.

Like play, if nongkrong is viewed in terms of what it achieves rather than the time it consumes, its value to society generally, and to the kampung become apparent. Always practised in the company of others, nongkrong also involves downplaying certain tensions. Considered as work, this is very important in maintaining social relations. Appadurai calls this the 'production of peace' and explains that this work is going on all the time, and

> not only in public spaces and spheres like the street and the train and buses and the schools, but also in the neighbourhood, where particularly women can and do play a very big role in not allowing a quarrel between two small households to become a major thing (Appadurai 2004, p. 125).

Extending this idea to the kampung, we can see how remarkable it is that the festivals discussed here can operate, for the most part, smoothly, creating new social relations in parallel with the ones that already exist. When asked about the impact of the Forest Art Festival on her household one Randublatung mother, Bu Endang, replied that within the kampung of Randublatung, there are very strong collaborative systems. So even an event as unusual as the Forest Art Festival doesn't disturb neighbourly relations.

> When they were organising (the festival), there were many activists who nongkrong in front of my house, making a lot of noise late at night. If it disturbs a neighbour, if [she] has a baby, for example, she will tell me and I will ask them to stop. Otherwise, there is no problem. That is because we are friends. If a person was not like that, they couldn't really live in this kampung easily.

In this way, nongkrong can be a kind of tactical activism where work is done in a

36 An example of the association of nongkrong with the wasting of time and laziness can be found in the Malaysian film *Nongkrong* (2012), in which three men try to obtain riches through lazy means, by buying lottery numbers. While the scope of this thesis is limited to Indonesian culture, and the use of the term varies slightly between Indonesia and Malaysia, it is interesting to note the negative ways nongkrong can be portrayed.

way that is immeasurable and invisible. This is along the lines of the 'everyday forms of resistance' anthropologist James C. Scott defends in his study of resistance among Malay peasants. Scott points to types of resistance that may not look political, and rarely make headlines; 'grumbling and gossip, laughter and laziness, stupidity and sabotage'. (Duncombe 2002, p. 89) This type of activism is important, says Scott, because it is continuous, slowly wearing down 'the power of the powerful', and because it can serve as a rehearsal. Scott's second point is certainly also true of nongkrong. One of the purposes of nongkrong for activists is rehearsing politics and learning how to articulate political ideas. This was evident in my participant observation of nongkrong spaces, during which I was often prompted to contribute ideas from my studies. Activists take turns to challenge each other in the safe environment of nongkrong, in order to build up a discourse around the issues that matter to them.

This raises parallels with Bakhtin's ideas of carnivalesque. Nongkrong creates a space, protected from the outside world, where social conventions and political stereotypes are loosened or even reversed; a space for taboos to be aired. For example, an activist may make a joke about another's sexual orientation that could be read as homophobic. In the space of nongkrong, such a comment may become a spark. Jokes and stories ensue freely but underlying the banter is a real discussion of sexuality in which activists teach other about the issues and how to respond to homophobia responsibly in other social settings. With limited informational resources on human rights, and very conservative attitudes towards sexuality across much of Java, these rehearsals during nongkrong are essential to building up a toolbox for resisting oppression.

Global Networks

Nongkrong can also be understood as producing global networks within which information and ideas flow. While some such global networks are formally fostered in the cultural sphere, for example through artist in residency programs such as those offered by Asialink, nongkrong generates a different global network of artists because it is based on shared time rather than institutional frameworks. Less focus is placed on the achievement of individual artists than on the collective benefits of exchange. The tradition of the *sanggar* (collective studios) in Indonesia, designed with a large open entrance space, demonstrates through its architecture the way tempat nongkrong is prioritised over private studios (Figure 27).[37]

Here nongkrong has another parallel with adda. In his chapter titled '*Adda*: A History of Sociality' Chakrabarty points to the way literature infused male Bengali society in the nineteenth century through adda. 'Debates in *addas* between young men were critical

37. Sanggars have been popular, particularly for groups of painters and sculptors, since Indonesia's independence. The sanggar ethic, characterised by mutual reciprocity and self-learning, became the most common way aspiring artists learned their practice and gained entry into nationalist art circles. For research on sanggars see Harsono 2009, p. 129–31; Holt 1967, p. 218; Wright 1994, p 21.

to this propagation of literature into middle class lives' (Chakrabarty 2000, p. 197). Chakrabarty identifies the important role adda played in the exposure and dissemination of international ideas as particular groups mediated the influx of cosmopolitan taste (p. 200). Likewise, activist nongkrong mediates the flow of images and information to a broader audience. For instance, a DVD, a book, a CD, a cassette tape or a magazine brought by an outsider will typically be passed around and even critiqued during nongkrong, rather than in private. Developing from a more oral culture than we are used to in the West, nongkrong makes these forms of media into objects. Activists scan new books, looking for known names and pictures, and elements of the text they can sample. The value is in the collective interpretation of the whole text and how it relates to existing knowledge, rather than analyses of the specific arguments within. In the setting of nongkrong, individuals can air questions and observations and sometimes develop group consensus on the item before it leaves the circle, laying the groundwork for remixed versions later on.

This practice is evidenced by my research methodology, wherein the concepts that frame this thesis—such as collectivism, site-specificity, the production of place, and networked consumption—have usually been more appropriate for me to introduce in a collective nongkrong space before requesting recorded one-on-one interviews. A printed version of this thesis is likely to be thumbed through in a collective nongkrong setting, rather than read word for word by individuals who contributed to the research.

Audience

Nongkrong is very useful for thinking about the role of audiences in performance practices in Indonesia, at festivals and more broadly. Theatre in the Western sense, often called 'conventional theatre' (Goldbard & Adams 2006) tends to have a non-participatory focus: actors' performances are directed to a clearly defined audience. In contrast, the way Indonesians experience performance is often through an exchange that could be termed nongkrong. For example, Javanese *wayang* (shadow puppet theatre) does not have a set duration (it can last for days) and is watched in groups who are often socialising concurrently. The relationship between the audience and the *dalang* (puppeteer) determines the pace and often the content of the performance. Audience members may leave and rejoin the performance, comment directly and chat audibly to each other. Such audience interaction is also instrumental to other local performance practices, such as reog, which featured in Festival Mata Air and the Forest Art Festival, and is explored extensively in the next chapter.

Interestingly, this looser sense of audience is sometimes associated with performance outside the city, and as such is considered kampungan. This reinforces the argument that kampungan is used to describe the unmodern, made in the previous part of this chapter. In urban centres a growing Indonesian middle class consumes conventional theatre.

Figure 27: Taring Padi sanggar, Yogyakarta, 2006.

At these performances, the stillness and quiet of the audience can be a benchmark of relative 'Westerness'.[38] Understanding what is valuable about different modes of audience interaction, such as those that are based on nongkrong, contributes to understanding what is in fact left out of the Western theatre model and amounts to what Chakrabarty calls the provincialisation of Europe (Chakrabarty 2000). What has for a long time been taken for granted as the conventional model of theatre starts to look a little limited in terms of potential for innovation.

Festival Mata Air and the Forest Art Festival feature very little theatre in the Western sense. The more common mode of performance is much more akin to the responsive, spontaneous style of Wayang Kulit, where performers and audience are engaged in a kind of public nongkrong. Needless to say, this does not make for a clean distinction between modern and traditional audiences. Examples of fluid audiences also exist in some of the most contemporary performance events in the West. Take, for example, music festivals such as the Peats Ridge Festival, the Woodford Folk Festival, or the Big Day Out in Australia. At this type of event, there may be a set program, but audiences wander in and out of performance spaces at their leisure and also engage in a kind of watching that includes nongkrong.

Much of the theatre found at Forest Art Festival and Festival Mata Air could be thought of as participatory theatre, led by a 'community' but facilitated by development workers. This kind of theatre practice also distinguishes itself from conventional theatre in that it is designed to empower both performers and audiences in processes that explore relevant issues. For example, scripts are developed collaboratively and discussions are encouraged during or after performances (Sloman 2011). In discourses on participatory theatre, this kind of practice is viewed as part of a global shift, influenced by the work done in Brazil in the 1960s and 70s by Paulo Friere and Augusto Boal. While there are many useful techniques and theories that have entered theatre practices in Indonesia this way, the audience interaction evident at festivals demonstrates the coming together of a number of threads rather than simply a breaking down of conventional theatre.

Performers at Festival Mata Air and Forest Art Festival work in a nongkrong relationship with the audience. This dynamic resembles the relationships Bakhtin notes as part of the Carnivalesque. In *Rabelais and his World*, Bakhtin argues that carnival had 'no separation of participants and spectators. Everybody participates' (265). While there are stages at both festivals, the boundary they create is more often than not transgressed in a carnivalesque model of participation.

38. For a comprehensive discussion on how the consumption of different types of performance indicates class in Indonesia see Rebecca Conroy's thesis 'Performing Resistance: Oppositional Performance Practices in Contemporary Indonesia' (Conroy 2007)

Figure 28, 29: Unggun Rembulan Jepara at Forest Art Festival, Randublatung, 2005. (Dodi Irwandi is on the left in the top image). From the anakseribupulau archives.

Rather than trying to place nongkrong on the historical trajectory of participatory theatre, I consider it to be a driving force in the development of visual, collective, community-based means of working in Central Java. In other words, nongkrong can help to demonstrate that the participatory theatre found as part of the carnivalesque in Java builds on, not only what is called conventional theatre and international development practices, but local practices as well.

Dangdut and Live Remix Nongkrong

Nongkrong produces the live remix typical of the carnivalesque performances at festivals. It is spontaneous generation of meaning where content is neither recorded nor attributed. At the Forest Art Festival and Festival Mata Air a remix culture is evident in the way performers may join the festival as part of one group and organically collaborate with others. In one example, during the Forest Art Festival, Dendang Kampungan percussionist Dodi Irwandi joined the performance group, Unggun Rembulan Jepara, although they had never met before the festival (Figure 28, Figure 29). This collaboration happened through nongkrong before the performance. The result is a performance that appears somehow both spontaneous and rehearsed.

In this section, I focus on an example from Festival Mata Air that demonstrates the way performers engage in nongkrong to generate new collaborative relationships as well as new content: the dangdut song 'Arek Malang Must Be Happy,' (the complete lyrics can be found as an appendix) was performed along with a list of rehearsed and unrehearsed rap and dangdut songs at Festival Mata Air 2008 in Salatiga.

Dangdut is an example of a musical form that can be adapted to play a role in identity formations at many scales. Known as a kampungan form of music, dangdut is incredibly flexible and often dominates spontaneous musical collaborations that occur in the festivals discussed here. One example is a particular musical relationship between Exi, who describes his own style of performance as 'mostly punk' and firmly 'kampungan' and MC Sista Nova, a Jakarta-based rapper and the daughter of a well known Indonesian musician. Nova was born in Malang, lives in Jakarta, does most of her recording in Yogyakarta, and, like many young Indonesians, spends a large portion of her year travelling between these places. During an artist residency in Sydney[39], Exi and Nova collaborated with Sydney musician Sven Simulacrum to produce a track called 'Arek Malang Must Be Happy.'

In the lyrics, Nova describes her relationship with the stereotyped elements of Malang youth culture*, arema,* an abbreviation of '*arek*' (guys) and 'Malang':

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39. Exi and Nova were both exchange artists for the 2005–2006 Gang Festival, (see www.gangfestival.com, accessed 1 November, 2010) during which they spent one week at a music studio at Bundanoon artist retreat doing what Exi describes as 'pretty much what we do anyway, just far away from our homes.'

> One afternoon in Sydney, whilst I was lightly chatting about my father, Toto Tewel, suddenly Sven wanted to take a guitar riff from one of the works of my dad, who happens to be a musician. Essentially it was about making something new. Once the rough track had been laid down by Sven, the idea came to use Malang-style Javanese to fill it. Malang-style Javanese is known for being coarse and not following the rules set by Javanese speakers to the west with their distinct language strata. Yet I chose not to use the style of Malang slang where all the words are reversed. I just used every day Javanese. [40]

Nova's lyrics urge her peers to celebrate Malang's locally brewed coffee, *'Kopi Klojen'*, through nongkrong, creativity, innovation, and by not succumbing to violent tendencies.[41] Like Nova Exi is fluent in multiple dialects, and also constantly travels between where he was born (Randublatung), where he is working (a range of paid and unpaid contracts with trade and farmer unions, NGOs and artist communities across Indonesia), and where he grew up (Surabaya). For this song, he assumes his Surabaya identity, and the stage name MC SBY; SBY is short for 'Surabaya' and they are also the initials by which President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono is known. Exi's fast-paced slang is markedly different from Nova's complex Malang dialect, although the cities are both in East Java, only ninety kilometers apart. The resulting song is a play fight typical of a nongkrong setting. It is nongkrong that brings Surabaya and Malang together in a new creative expression of place that articulates both individual and collective identities.

The point of the above story is that Nova and Exi not only embody multiple and changing local identities, but create a new sense of place in a process of remix that occurs through nongkrong. This process of creating locational identities through language is akin to the complicated processes of representation and replication described by Judith Butler as the 'performativity' of the subject. In an interaction between identification and disidentification (in this case with a particular city), identity is less about what a person *is* than it is a process of *becoming*, a flowing interaction between 'self' and place (Ross 2008, p. 5). In the context of cultural activism in Central Java, nongkrong is the setting in which this process of 'becoming' takes place.

The Challenge of Inclusive Nongkrong

Despite all the positive aspects of nongkrong, like bringing people together, developing political discourse and fostering creative collaboration, it can be used to exclude as much as include. As I have explained, nongkrong forms ties between people as they spend time together in a shared space. This section looks at how this space can be exclusive, specifically to women, problemitising the practice of nongrong as an activist tool. By extension,

40. Malang dialect is known for not following the rules of syntax of formal Javanese. One version of Malang slang even reverses all the words.
41. Arema are also known for their soccer team of the same name. This is documented in the short film 'Arema tidak kemana-mana' (Arema don't go anywhere) directed by Akbar Yumni and screened as part of the Ok.Video Festival in 2007.

nongkrong becomes a way of understanding how cultural activism in Java generally can be exclusive.

Emma Baulch, in her introduction to *Making scenes: reggae, punk, and death metal in 1990s Bali* (2007), argues that it is the practices of street-side nongkrong—of drinking, acoustic jamming, and essentially of territorialising public space—that produced the particular Indonesian masculinity of the late 1990s (Baulch 2007, p. 8). Baulch identifies this masculinity in Balinese underground music communities, but it is also evident in the kind of macho environmentalism that appeared in the 1990s in Central Java and elsewhere in Indonesia.

Baulch argues that in Bali, while music communities innovated, producing their own forms of nongkrong, such innovations did not 'extend to including women' because it was not a priority and because the stable discourses of masculinity from which they were borrowing contained domination (Baulch 2007, p.9). Baulch characterises the othering of women in the Balinese reggae, punk and death metal scenes as 'ambivalence rather than an intent to subjugate women.'

Many of the scenes discussed in this thesis, however, build their identities around ideas of resistance, which often include opposition to patriarchy. Unlike the musicians in Baulch's study, these activists proclaim, as part of their identity, a rejection of the power dynamics of Indonesian masculinity along with those of the nation-state and global capitalism. My research indicates that women's participation became a complex issue for many environmental activists in Central Java as they began to include feminist politics into their discussions at the end of the 1990s.

Yet all the activists interviewed in this research acknowledge that women's participation is still lacking in their organisations, raising questions around the ways that nongkrong actually prevents women from being involved in political discussion and organising. The answers to these questions are tied to the way the kampung also creates boundaries of exclusion, touched on above. Firstly, the nongkrong observed in this thesis often takes place in the kampung, and often at night; at times that go well beyond the curfew of the vast majority of young, single Javanese girls. Also, nongkrong often involves alcohol, cigarettes or marijuana, all deemed inappropriate for consumption by women. This limits women's participation because of feelings of discomfort associated with the labels of *cewek nakal* (literally 'bad girls' but implying sexual activity) or *perek, perempuan experimental* (experimental girls).

Activists from anakseribupulau indicated that they do make an effort to make their spaces and practices open and inclusive. They prefer to see the maleness of their practices as an *absence* of women, rather than an *exclusion* (Certeau, Giard & Mayol 1998, p. 25).

But the lack of formal structures, for example meetings with scheduled start and finish times, in well-lit, protected, familiar spaces, keeps young women away. Within Tanam Untuk Kehidupan, on the other hand, two women, Vanessa Hyde and Titi Permata, play major organising roles. As they are both also mothers, caring for their children full time, their participation has been restricted to scheduled meeting times, when they can organise alternative care for their children, rather than informal nongkrong. While they see nongkrong as a necessary part of building the festival and the environment movement more broadly, they explained that it could also inhibit some types of participation. 'Lots of brainstorming about performances and design happens during nongkrong', says Titi, 'but the budgeting, the letter writing, the concrete organising necessary for the festival to go ahead happens in meetings.' For Tanam Untuk Kehidupan there have been conscious attempts to include more women in their organising, but increased participation by women has also occurred as the culture of the collective has shifted further away from a 'scene' towards formalised activities with the programming of meetings and events as '*acara*' (a scheduled appointment) rather than being '*spontan*' (spontaneous).[42]

That is not to say that women do not nongkrong, or that these organisations do not encourage nongkrong. Women in Java have their own nongkrong at different sites, and most likely, at different times, which are also exclusive of males. These have not been explored in this thesis but deserve further study. To argue that nongkrong is irrelevant because it is sexist is to miss the point. Rather, there is evidence, within Tanam Untuk Kehidupan and at Festival Mata Air in particular, of innovations of nongkrong that are more inclusive of women. As activists remix local practices with globally circulating ideas such as feminism and environmentalism, those practices change. As one female activist from Tanam Untuk Kehidupan put it:

> I personally like a 50%, 50% ratio of nongkrong and active making/exploring. I like forms of nongkrong that are a little more active and less alcohol and cigarettes based, brainstorming and workshopping for example. I reckon, from my experience, it tends to be 80% nongkrong and 20% active 'doing' in Central Java. I'm not saying either is better, it's just that my own art making style is different from that.

Nongkrong as Methodology

In his introduction to *Habitations of Modernity* (2002), Homi K. Bhabha makes an important point about the author, his friend and adda partner, Dipesh Chakrabarty. He argues that Chakrabarty's methodology is actually deeply embedded in the practice of adda, and that an intellectual untangling such as that offered in his book would be impossible without the free wondering of thoughts within the parameters of conversation. It is a mode

42. For reasons similar to those outlined here, I found many more female activists working in more formalised environmental organizations such as WAHLI (*Wahan Lingkungan Hidup Indonesia*) and Greenpeace, where roles and schedules are more clearly defined, than I did in loose collectives such as anakseribupulau.

of conversation that, Bhabha says:

> …chooses to follow the improvisational over the instrumental. Wandering away from the 'gravitational pull of any explicit purpose,' the conversation transforms what is contingent, turning what comes up in the course of conversation into the sufficient grounds of a common, collaborative dialogue of interests and affiliations (2002, p. ix) .

Nongkrong works in a similar way. In Indonesian activist circles, nongkrong becomes a place where ideas are brought up and discussions raised without the need to judge, praise or blame, serving the function that 'brainstorming' might serve in a classroom or boardroom environment. Nongkrong is an educational space, where younger or newer activists, as well as researchers such as myself, have the opportunity to learn about the genealogy of movements, the relationships between collectives, and the stories of successes and failures from more experienced peers.

But nongkrong is not reserved for Indonesians. Like speaking Indonesian or becoming used to certain foods, nongkrong can be learned. For a non-Indonesian researching these activist circles, participating in this kind of communication, and particularly the kind of listening it involves, is essential for understanding group dynamics in a way that may not emerge in one-on-one interviews. A methodology that builds on nongkrong is one that acknowledges the kind of collective thinking that occurs in such spaces. A one-hour interview with an outspoken collective member may be more efficient than six hours spent in nongkrong; it may even result in more detail. But participant nongkrong is the only way to understand how ideas are transformed into political action on a collective level. In nongkrong, activists refuses to attribute roles such as 'leader' for the sake of convenience. Rather, they negotiate other ways of seeing and listening than colonial ones.

The Privilege of Cross Cultural Nongkrong

I must briefly mention here my privileged position as a Western woman. The practice of nongkrong has been well infiltrated by many foreign female activists, academics, and arts workers on their visits to Indonesia, and has particularly been interpreted, extended, and celebrated in Gang Festival activities (Piper 2008a, p. 105). The reasons this has been possible are complex, but one of the main ones is that the social rules around being in public at night, consuming cigarettes and alcohol, and being in the company of men are different for Western women, who are presumed to be less chaste than Indonesian women to begin with. The repercussions of a 'bad' reputation are less dire for foreign women, who are often designated as honorary males. On the other hand, many groups feel that having a Western woman present enhances their own reputations. For activists, participation by foreigners can legitimise nongkrong. This leaves us relatively free to nongkrong in more spheres than most Indonesian women. But the rules of nongkrong are not fixed. Participating in male nongkrong can also exclude one from women's spaces. And while

participation in one conversation may be invited, participation in another, in a seemingly similar nongkrong space might be considered an intrusion.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has been divided into two parts, arguing separately for kampung and nongkrong to be recognised as cultural practices significant to the case studies and essential to their analyses. But the evidence presented also shows how the two terms intersect. The stories in this chapter have focused on showing how the kampung and nongkrong are used and changed by activists.

In the first section, I showed how kampung relates to ideas of community, the commons, and national development. As well as the problems associated with valorising community and community development, I also showed how kampung brings with it some problems of its own, specific to its local and national context. Used as a unit of social change, kampung can be exploited, both by the state—to define and control the population—and by activists—to organise action and inspire self-determination. To conclude the discussion of kampung, I describe the remote kampung of Klender, to introduce the argument that the formation of kampung can be an act of tactical resistance, a mobile collective identity. Klender residents create a space that provides an antidote to the anonymity and placeless longing many migrants feel in Jakarta. The connection maintained by this kampung with Randublatung gives its residents a sense of purpose and a constant link to the political struggles of their homeland. This connection is extremely important for the production of the carnivalesque in Java, as will be explored in the following chapters. The social ties that bind this kampung, formed and maintained through nongkrong, are no less secure than those in Randublatung proper. This shows that kampung need not be a specific physical site, although it remains tied to one, but can actually move and re-form.

A large part of the way that activists use kampung for such purposes is through the practice of nongkrong, which is explored in the second part of the chapter. Nongkrong, I liken to hanging out, and also to the Bengali practice of adda, showing how both practices produce a culture that could be viewed as unmodern. This culture includes a self-made public sphere, alternative global networks, and fertile ground for musical remix. But nongkrong is also not without its issues for activists and brings with it the serious challenge of being adaptable enough to counter the exclusions of women. The story of Nova and Exi's musical collaboration in the second part of the chapter details the way nongkrong can generate particular musical styles such as dangdut. I show how nongkrong becomes a stage for a kind of remix culture that is the foundation of the carnivalesque in Java.

This chapter has also shown how kampung and nongkrong have become a methodology for my research. In some senses both terms, kampung and nongkrong, invite ways of seeing

the world—how people relate to place and to each other—other than the colonial way. These ways of seeing can help undo impressions of Indonesian culture as 'less developed' than those of the Western world. Just as an understanding of the practice of 'adda' is necessary to gaining insight into life in Calcutta (Chakrabarty 2000; Appadurai 1996), 'nongkrong' must be part of the methodology of understanding kampung in the Indonesian context.

Conclusion

I have explained here the cultural and social dimensions of 'nongkrong' and 'kampung' in order to argue that an understanding of these terms is an essential element of the methodology used for this research. This chapter does not intend to valorise kampung and nongkrong as models of practice. Both words are layered, messy and contradictory. As we begin to grip one, the other seems to slip in and dislodge our logic. Or activists change the way they are used and what we thought we had discovered no longer makes sense. We could applaud kampung and nongkrong as the only way to think of cultural activism, forcing them into all analyses. But this would be as dangerous as embracing the amorphous idea of community as the solution to all social woes. Rather, using these words is about developing new vocabularies for cultural activism. The problems with translating and defining each word echo problems that also face activists as they use the kampung as a festival site and nongkrong as a form of festival organising. It is only by recognising, respecting, exploring and building on local practices such as these that there is any possibility of supporting change. This chapter has been an exercise in the first step of this process: the recognition of two concepts that shape local practices.

This chapter has demonstrated that it is imperative to foreground the significance of local expression when examining global phenomena, and to look through this like a lens to detect signs of how the global is being altered through this process of interpretation and translation. A new model for understanding is located precisely in the tension between and within these local expressions. This has necessitated a multidisciplinary approach, which is exemplified in my analysis of each of the festivals in later chapters.

By showing the necessity of these local terms, this chapter has also shown that festival is the process of drawing together elements from multiple spheres in a process of remix. It is this process that makes festivals important as new cultural spaces in Indonesia. If we focus on just the concept of festival, without endeavouring to understand the practices that inform that concept, how will we recognise other new cultural forms as they emerge? When asked, 'when is the next festival in Randublatung?', Djuadi said

> It isn't really important whether we have a festival or not. One way or another, we will always work with the kampung and we will always nongkrong. This is how we explore new places, people, and ideas. This is how we make change.

CHAPTER 2:
FESTIVAL AND CARNIVALESQUE

Chapter 2 introduces the carnivalesque into a Javanese context. In doing so, it examines the history of festival in Indonesia and begins the process of defining the particular type of festival produced by Tanam Untuk Kehidupan and anakseribupulau.

Figure 30 (top): Audience watching reog at the International Festival of Performing Arts, Yogyakarta, 2006.

Figure 31 (bottom): Reog at the International Festival of Performing Arts, Yogyakarta, 2006.

I wake early and ride my bicycle to the kampung seamstress. She has made a special kebaya to fit my tall bule *(white person's) body. 'It is expensive', she tells me, 'because I had to use so much fabric'. She wraps a* kain panjang *(sarong) tightly around my waist, finishing it with a* selandang *(sash). She is displeased that the sarong doesn't reach the ground, but 'what can I do?' she mutters, 'you are very tall.' I have arranged to be picked up from here, at 7am, by the shiny black government car that will escort me to the opening of the International Festival of Performance Art (*Festival Seni Pertunjukan Internasional*) at the National Centre for Art Teacher Training, PPPG-Kes* (Pusat Pengembangan Penataran Guru-Kesenian). *Riding a bicycle would have been impossible in this getup.*

The car is five minutes early, which, in retrospect, is appropriate as the day is scheduled into five-minute increments. Everything is accounted for, including the three minutes it will take to drive the VIPs five hundred meters from the performance site to the dining hall (this detail was tested before the schedule was finalised). I arrive in time to see the last of the kampung residents scurry out of the field. They have been working for two weeks, weeding, setting up shelters, laying down red carpets.

Official welcomes and acknowledgements by various dignitaries, including the National Minister for Education, espouse the importance of a festival like this as a national exhibition of cultural diversity and engagement with global culture. This festival, they say, has the aim of bringing traditional art to the future.

By midmorning the sun is beating down. From the shade of our marquee, we watch a long reog performance in an otherwise empty field. People from the kampung watch through a chain link fence around the field, spent peanut shells dropping on the dirt at their feet. They can see and hear the performance well, for reog is not performed on a stage looking out to an audience. It is designed for a kampung audience that encircles the performance. The unnecessarily powerful sound system carries the music well beyond the boundaries of this kampung. Everyone on my side of the fence remains in their seats, which are covered in a white synthetic fabric, and adorned with gigantic red satin bows. I cannot hear the kampung folk, but I can see that they are laughing, making jokes, enjoying themselves, moving freely behind their border. Finally (my kebaya *is too tight and my skin is hot and itchy), the dancers act out the release from their trance and the performance is over. There is no applause from the audience, just a few solemn nods. Nobody speaks to the performers as they carefully pack up their masks, boxed meals and instruments and file out to eat in the shelter of their truck, parked in the kampung on the other side of the fence.*

The next day, less than one hundred kilometres away at Senjoyo, I am at another performance of reog on the first day of Festival Mata Air. There is a loose schedule for the festival, but for the most part the crowds are drawn to performances when the music starts. The troupe has chosen a spot shaded by an enormous banyan tree. The performance is wild and fast paced. There is no sound system and the audience is loud and rowdy but I can still hear every word of the performers, in between the cracking of whips and the shrieks of the audience. Children cower behind the legs of parents, aunts, uncles, neighbours and grandparents as the giant lions raise their heads. Others watch from the safety of a nearby tree. I am pressed between a group of

teenage punks and an old lady is gripping my arm. We are in this together with the rising dust and the beating drums. The audience seems to be channelling its energy, willing the dancers to lose consciousness and enter their altered state. In a moment, the dancers' eyes have glazed over and their movements have become quicker. They seem completely unaware as they snarl at each other and grovel in the dirt. They are tearing at wood with their teeth. It is hard to determine how long they are out; the time seems to become more elastic as they become more bestial. They are kept on close leashes by their minders, for these beast-people are fierce and irresponsible. They are brought back to reality with a shake, a prayer, and a splash of water from the spring, which has been cleaned by volunteers in the lead up to the festival. One of the waroks is circling the audience now, his arms outstretched, his voice booming: 'This water is now pure! Nobody wants to see our grandchildren suffer as a result of our stupidity and carelessness about the environment. Let's help save Salatiga from unnatural disasters that are a result of the irresponsible actions of humans!'

Deciphering the differences between events, each calling themselves 'festival', is a complex process. Clearly, any analysis must go well beyond identifying the core elements of a festival, which, as shown by this example, can be the same. The two festivals mentioned above also shared many other elements such as wayang kulit, *barongsai* (lion dance), a children's art program, and dangdut, but the intentions of these inclusions are vastly different and so are the ways in which these elements are incorporated into the rest of the program, and the ways they are performed and received. For example, the kinds of separation between the audience and the performance, as argued in the previous chapter, must be read with a consideration of the terms of nongkrong and kampung. How can one ritual be made part of both a festival that is politically controlling and a festival that is politically liberating? This chapter aims to answer this question by exploring the way festivals generate cultural contexts, using the carnivalesque to edge towards a sharper definition of the particularity of Festival Mata Air and the Forest Art Festival.

Introduction

In the previous chapter, I argued that nongkrong and kampung help to make clear the relationships between performers and audiences at festivals. I showed how nongkrong is based on a voluntary participation that is fluid, allowing participants to constantly slip in and out of 'performer' and 'audience' roles and how kampung can be used by activists as a site in which to experiment with different social relations. I showed how these practices could be read as unmodern. This chapter extends these ideas by exploring how nongkrong and kampung relate to Bakhtin's analyses of carnivalesque rituals and how this relationship can help to define particular types of festival. This chapter shows how activists draw the concepts of nongkrong and kampung into their own interpretations of local rituals and the globally circulating idea of the festival as a cultural form. In what can be read as another unmodern mode of expression, they recontextualise rituals as forms of protest, rejecting the

idea of static traditions and bringing local and global forms right up against each other in a constant state of friction.

Towards a Definition of Festival

The term 'festival' was first recorded as a noun in English in 1589. It is derived from the latin *festum*, meaning to feast, as the festival was originally a period of rejoicing and eating, marking a particular event in a particular culture's community life, for example the commencement of harvest, or the coming of spring (Seffrin 2006). Today, the meaning of festival has been augmented to include many more variations. A small number of scholars have considered the ambiguity of the festival and attempted to define it more clearly for contemporary applications. One definition that appears in much of the existing literature on contemporary festival (Getz 1991; Seffrin 2006; Waterman 1998) comes from the Italian cultural anthropologist Alessandro Falassi, who, in his introduction to the anthology *Time Out of Time: Essays on the festival* (1987), states that:

> [A festival is a] periodically recurrent, social occasion in which, through a multiplicity of forms and a series of coordinated events, [and through either direct or indirect participation] all members of a whole community [are] united by ethnic, linguistic, religious, historical bonds, and share a world view (Falassi 1987, p. 2).

While the book itself identifies a great range of festivals around the world, Falassi's introduction has been criticised for being narrow in its definition, neglecting to come to terms with the ways, in contemporary society, the word 'festival' has come to mean very different things for different groups, based on 'a dated European humanist scholarship' (Manning 1989, p. 26). Falassi's definition comes from his own research into a precise cultural context (he bases much of his writing on the *Palio di Siena*, a horse race that is held twice each year). The widespread usage of the word festival today, and its combination with other local cultural forms, shows that there is no definitive meaning of 'festival' that can be translated into all contexts.

In much of Indonesia, for example, 'festival' is in common usage, and appears as an entry in dictionaries of modern Indonesian (Echols et al. 1997, p. 163). Even in the Indonesian context, however, festival refers to events with many distinct cultural origins and outcomes. In many parts of Java, for instance, there have always been rituals to mark significant times such as births, deaths, marriages, harvest, and changes in seasons, some of which are now referred to as festivals. '*Upacara*' (ceremony), '*adat*' (tradition), '*keagaman*' (religious ritual) are all related terms. In Bali, '*galungan*' is a holiday that occurs every 210 days and lasts for ten days, and in the Dayak areas of Kalimantan, '*Gawai Dayak*' is an annual thanksgiving celebration drawing many rituals together. 'Festival' did not enter the Indonesian language by replacing one of these words. Rather, these rituals have been incorporated into a localised interpretation of the festival concept.

The festivals discussed in this thesis show that preconceived definitions of festivals or generalisations that come from broad surveys require stretching and massaging to fit the particular kind of festival that emerged in Java after the demise of the New Order. The Forest Art Festival, for example, occurred only once, as did the International Festival of Performing Arts cited in the above passage. People participate for a variety of reasons and religion often has very little or no significance to the form and content of activist festivals. [43]

The goal here is neither to provide a single etymology of the word festival nor to provide a single definition that fits all cases. To do so would be to misunderstand the interplay of the English word 'festival' with local practices. Rather, the way activists use the concept of festival to describe their own practices, reworking local ideas such as kampung and nongkrong into a globally recognisable format, is tactical; they poach the idea of festival to fit their own understanding of how cultural production can be used to localise environmental production; production which has global significance.

This chapter does two things. Firstly, it identifies what is particularly Indonesian about the festivals in these studies by exploring the way festival was manipulated by the New Order government and how activists have responded with their own manipulations. Secondly, it identifies what is particularly 'activist' about these festivals by exploring the carnivalesque elements. In her thesis 'Emerging trends in contemporary festival practice', Georgia Seffrin attempts to distinguish activist festivals from their broader family, describing a subversive 'subset' of festival, 'captured in notions of the carnival and carnivalesque, in which notions of order and power relationships are subverted' (Seffrin 2006, p. 11). While I agree that the presence of carnivalesque language and symbolism is a good way to differentiate activist festivals, I argue in this chapter that my research and the festivals presented within it are much more than 'a subset' of the broader genre of festivals. While these are a particular type of festival, they are also a particular type of activism. Activists use the broad and somewhat inadequate description 'festival' to be able to include a wide variety of complex practices. Labelling these practices as 'festival' means that they are universally understood as having global cultural dimensions. Festival becomes one of the spaces within which activists work. In this way, festival also becomes a subset of activism, or one cultural space within which activists work.

Finally, given the vagueness of festival as a form of cultural production, another aim of this chapter is to establish a conceptual framework for the particular kind of activist festival discussed; what I have identified as 'Javanese Carnivalesque'.

43. The results of a survey of audience members conducted at Festival Mata Air in 2008 show that participants were of many religions and that religion, or previous cultural affiliations, actually had very little effect on their attendance. (See Appendix VI)

Chapter Structure

This chapter begins with short survey of global usages of the festival form in order to begin a process of 'provincialising' festivals that limit participation and experimentation. The next section gives a background to the idea of carnivalesque as it was meant by Mikhail Bakhtin and extended by the work of cultural theorists Ella Shohat and Robert Stam, who interpret the carnivalesque as a minoritarian aesthetic. It continues by defining some of the terms used here, specifically festival and carnival. This chapter then looks at how festival has been used in Indonesia during and after the New Order. In some instances, it has been adopted by the Indonesian state as a controlled model for the presentation of culture within a clearly defined space and time. I use the example of the Bali Arts Festival to demonstrate this. In other instances, such as the case studies of this thesis, festival has been adopted by Indonesians to describe experimental spaces. In these cases, I argue that, while it is not the only approach, it is useful to frame these spaces as Javanese Carnivalesque. This argument also considers the idea of the parade, and, in particular, the way the parade has been understood by Susan Davis as a form of communication that can be used by both the 'respectable' and the 'rowdy' (Davis 1986). A Western understanding of the expressions of the festival form in Java, one that draws on scholarship of festival and ritual in Europe and America, as well as Asia, is made possible here via the concept of the carnivalesque.

The next section of this chapter uses the idea of the carnivalesque to explain how language and imagery work at activist festivals. First, I look at *plesetan* (slipping up) as a carnivalesque linguistic practice. Then I show how festival spaces draw on Javanese rituals to represent the 'world upside down', demonstrating some commonalities with the carnivalesque of the Middle Ages that Bakhtin used to explore the power of carnivalesque.[44] Specifically, I focus on the ritual of reog. Through an exploration of reog at Festival Mata Air and the Forest Art Festival, I show how kampung as a site and nongkrong as a practice are used by activists to ensure that their executions of the festival concept are neither elitist nor reductive of other cultural forms.

Types of Festivals

The first step in making clearer the characteristics of the carnivalesque in Java is defining what kinds of festivals cannot be considered as carnivalesque and how they differ from those that can.

44. As is also clarified in *Rebelais and His World*, not all carnivals are carnivalesque. Many carnivals, Bakhtin explains, are more a spectacle than they are a direct expression of the people(Bakhtin 1984, p. 7). The idea of carnivalesque, while stemming from the politics and aesthetics of carnival, can be applied to many cultural forms as Bakhtin shows with his literature criticism. It is important to clarify that this chapter does not equate festivals with carnivals. Although festivals may have elements of carnival, they are a much broader cultural form. For example festivals might, but do not necessarily involve using public space. A writer's festival (The Sydney Writer's Festival for example) or a film festival (The Sydney Film Festival) occur in the intimate spaces of cinemas and theatres. There is some confusion in the fact that the festivals in this thesis all occur in public spaces, and can, to some extent, also be considered carnivals.

Provincialising the Megafestival

Festival as a cultural form has been embraced by governments all over the world, in a variety of manifestations. Along with art biennales, festivals can be an efficient way for funding bodies (governments and corporate) to consolidate divergent cultural streams under one event banner, systematically planning, developing and marketing culture (Getz 1991). Festivals that celebrate a city's cultural life, such as the Sydney Festival, bring a large program of events into a few months—a season, encouraging visitors to come to the city at that time, and encouraging locals to experience all their 'culture' at that time, formalising the relationship between culture and tourism. This relationship is not always celebrated by the artists and performers themselves, however, and they often complain that such concentration can make survival difficult outside the festival season. It can also mean that ongoing spaces and initiatives, which are also often more experimental, are ignored by funding bodies, whose aim is to attract large audiences. Many fringe festivals around the world begin as artist responses to this situation.

Other globally known festivals (The Big Day Out: Australia, Lollapalooza: USA, The Great Escape: Australia, Donauinselfest: Austria etc.) are more commercially motivated, and follow the increasingly prevalent model of the large-scale music concert. In Australia for instance, festivals celebrate anything from flowers (Canberra's Floriade), to trees (Grafton's Jacaranda festival) to marijuana (Nimbin MardiGrass Festival).

Large-scale festivals can also have profound ideological motivations. Mega events such as the Olympics (considered here as a festival of sport), the Venice Biennale, and the European Culture Capital, are all born in the context of Eurocentric concerns for common global goals and visions of democracy, art appreciation, and trans-national peace (even if it takes the form of competition between nations, as in the Olympics). Festivals in this context do a lot to form and reform nationalism. The Venice Biennale, for example, is the most prominent international survey of new art and the idea of the nation in the twentieth century is the foundation of its organisational structure. Arjun Appardurai argues that the Olympics, perhaps the largest global festival, represents 'the most spectacular among a series of sites and formations on which the uncertain future of the nation-state will turn' (Appadurai 1996, p. 167). At the Olympics and at the Venice Biennale, nations are represented side by side in a spectacular presentation (a festival) of peaceful difference and competition.

Smaller festivals of multicultural harmony which are also designed to reinforce national identity exist all over the world. In Australia, for example, the federal government's Diversity and Social Cohesion Program includes a number of small-scale community

festivals, many of which are part of Harmony Day.[45] These are purported to celebrate cohesion and diversity in Australian society rather than to challenge real prejudice or to question policy decisions that incite unrest. In short, they are simplifications of the complex problems of citizenship and belonging. This use of festival continues to be part of life in Indonesia, taking the form of parades for Independence Day, Armed Forces Day, anniversaries of the founding of cities, and festivals of regional culture, all of which contribute to the national identity.

Given these multiple purposes of festival across the world, it seems timely and necessary to define more clearly how the idea of festival is used in different places. The examples above show that festivals are closely tied to many ideas that are generally considered universal. Borrowing Chakrabarty's idea of the provincialisation of European universals, one could say that festivals, by presenting set modes of audience participation, help to represent certain ideas of culture as 'obvious far beyond the ground where they originated' (Chakrabarty 2002, p. 43). The cultural diversity represented by the Olympics or the Venice Biennale, for example, is far from a complete map of the world (Indonesia is hardly represented at either); yet audiences experience both as globally representative. Chakrabarty responds to the situation by calling for the 'provincialisation of Europe', arguing that it is time to start asking questions about these liberalist universalities. He suggests that, under the structure of historicism, the end-goal of every society is to develop towards nationalism. Taking up Chakrabarty's challenge is a major current throughout this thesis. In this chapter, I focus on the assumed universality, and the potential for subversion, inherent in the notion of 'festival' as a cultural space.

Background to Carnivalesque

Bakhtin valorises the carnival, identifying it as the source of new forms of resistance that can be found in other cultural sites such as the novel. These new forms, which he calls 'carnivalesque' continue to reveal a contrast and interconnection between high and low culture. Bakhtin's work has had a profound effect on many festival cultures around the world, particularly those that articulate the carnival and festival as a valuable form of resistance that merges the political and the aesthetic.

In 1968, the year that the artistic avant-garde group the Situationist International rose to prominence in France, Bakhtin's work was, coincidentally, first translated into English (Grindon 2004). Bakhtin and the Situationists had a similar vision of carnival, characterised by the inversion of hierarchical relationships, and the collapse of the divisions between life and art, as well as between performer and spectator.

While Situationist International politics and aesthetics continue to be remixed into

45. For more on Harmony Day, see <http://www.harmony.gov.au> Accessed 1 November, 2011.

contemporary festivals, one of the most widely used interpretations of the carnivalesque, at least amongst activist circles in the English speaking world, is what American anarchist Hakim Bey coined 'temporary autonomous zones', or TAZ. In his essay 'TAZ: The Temporary Autonomous Zone, Ontological Anarchy, Poetic Terrorism', originally published in 1985, Bey references both Bakhtin and the Situationists, describing the formation of an impermanent collective territory as the means for empowerment through creativity:

> The TAZ is like an uprising which does not engage directly with the State, a guerrilla operation which liberates an area (of land, of time, of imagination) and then dissolves itself to re-form elsewhere/elsewhere, before the State can crush it. (Bey 1985, p. 3)

While it has received very little in the way of academic analysis, the concept of the TAZ has had a great influence on festival practice. The Burning Man Festival, in Nevada, for example, grew out of the large-scale interpretation of TAZ by the Cacophony Society in what they called Trips to the Zone, or Zone Trips. The Burning Man festival also has clear roots in rock concerts such as Woodstock as well as pagan rituals.[46]

The significance of carnivalesque, the Situationist International, and the Temporary Autonomous Zone to festival culture in Central Java can be found in an expansion of the concept of kampung discussed in the previous chapter. The everyday space of the kampung, rather than the concert hall or the art gallery, is celebrated through these festivals as a fertile creative site. Bakhtin's work explored the ecclesiastical and feudal political culture of the Middle Ages through 'low' or popular cultural practices showing the significance of forms of popular humour and folk culture to the symbolic destruction of authority (Wolfreys 2004). According to Anderson, Javanese folk culture also represents power as the ability to combine opposites, and 'the iconographic symbol of this is the combination of male and female', demonstrated by the presence of transvestites in kampung theatre as well as in Javanese courts (Anderson 1972, p. 14). The kampung brings forms of high and low culture together and blends them in a festival context.

As explained by Exi, a founder of anakseribupulau, the blending of low and high cultural practices was a primary goal of the Forest Art Festival:

> This was different [from New Order activism] because we brought art right into the movement. We wanted to make a new public space, open for anyone to do music, performance, installation, or art of any kind. We saw a very exclusive 'art' culture in the cities, so the idea of a public space was very important. We wanted to open up possibilities for art, to live art, to be art. This was not formal art, this was art in the open

46. TAZ had opponents within activist circles when it was espoused. Some argued that the tactics of TAZ imply that activists make revelry 'waiting for the revolution' and that its popularity, in the late 80s, through street parties, squats, and pirate radio, indicates the weakness of the political movements at that time. However, TAZ has endured and in contemporary movements, such as the 'carnival against capital' and the 'Occupy movement', TAZ is often used as a way to categorise the type of protest that is celebratory.

> …. It was 'living' art even if only for a moment. There were no curators at Forest Art Festival, we would have to say it was the public who curated the art there.

This chapter identifies some of the elements of carnivalesque in local genealogies, demonstrating that the carnivalesque, unlike many aesthetic systems, is able to move in and out of Eurocentric cultural frameworks. In their essay 'Narrativizing visual culture: Towards a polycentric aesthetics', cultural theorists Ella Shohat and Robert Stam interrogate some of the assumptions of the Eurocentric art canon by examining cases of alternative aesthetics found in what they call 'Third World, postcolonial, and minoritarian cultural practices'. These practices, they argue, are in dialogue with Western art movements but 'also critique them and in some ways go beyond them' (Shohat & Stam 1998, p. 41). As the activist festivals produced in Java are themselves an interpretation of a global form, listening carefully to their dialogue is essential to their appreciation. The terms of nongkrong and kampung make possible carnivalesque paradigms of participation that are different from those in Western art and the global festival forms described in the previous section.

The idea of the carnivalesque has been raised to describe many forms of contemporary political cultural production in a way that considers the origins of rituals. According to Shohat and Stam, many carnivalesque forms from non-European contexts are stronger than those from Europe. Brazilian cinema is their example, which, they argue, does more than reflect hybridity; it 'actively hybridizes, it stages and performs hybridity, counterpointing cultural forces through surprising, even disconcerting juxtapositions' (Shohat & Stam 1998, p. 45). The festivals in this thesis certainly present similar tensions. Rather than cultural resolutions, they are expressions of complicated cultures interpreting one another, providing powerful examples of how the carnivalesque can be a decolonising force. Bakthin wrote about the carnivalesque by reinterpreting the history of the Middle Ages, and so, carnivalesque provides a great framework to begin unpacking the multiple origins of festival in Java so as to better understand its contemporary expressions.

Carnivalesque is one way of thinking about the genealogies of contemporary expressions. The carnivalesque rearranges the popular and the elite, bringing less valued kinds of cultural production into the spotlight. However, in the Indonesian case, as is evident by the above example of the exhibition of reog, this rearrangement occurs for all kinds of purposes, for nation building and for local empowerment. A reframing of the carnivalesque that considers the goals of these new contexts as well as the languages within which they are framed is important for defining the type of festival under study. This reframing brings alternative histories into global canons. In the cases discussed here, this reframing requires a shift in focus to the kampung.

Symbols of the destruction of authority can also be found in the festivals explored here. These are often local symbols, remixed through a process of nongkrong and expressed in

the space of the kampung. Primarily, the ways that activists generate new and conflicting definitions for festival is in contrast to the way festival is used by the Indonesian state. The commonality is lived through concrete sensual experience (nongkrong) rather than through the imagined communities described by Anderson. It is fluid, dirty, smelly and, like the Medieval carnival, absolutely temporary. This is a cultural production owned by the people and performed in their own definitions of kampung.

Festival in Indonesia

The festival described in the opening passage of this chapter gives an example of a government funded festival in Indonesia, which may appear to have some of the same elements as the activist festivals, reog, for example. The results of the two festivals, however, are vastly different. The most palpable distinction for a participant is that government festivals are essentially stages, places designed to organise, present, monitor and control cultural participation, where the roles of participant and audience are strictly defined.

In his historical account of the medieval carnival, Bakthin suggests that the separation of participants and audience was detrimental to the potency of carnival. As will be explored later in this chapter, the activists in this thesis identify the same kind of separation as having occurred under New Order cultural policy. The New Order regime placed culture within the boundaries of performance and consumption and made cultural resistance and experimentation very difficult. The local forms of carnivalesque that I analyse in this thesis attempt to undo this separation, reigniting the subversions of local rituals. They emphasise nongkrong and kampung in the processes of cultural production in order to include as many people as possible in the remixing of pre-New Order participatory rituals.

It could be argued that during the New Order, when many artists, writers and musicians were imprisoned, the tight boundaries on cultural production in fact created the conditions for greater creative energy aimed at political change. Indeed, the visual and performing arts were very dynamic scenes during the New Order as many scholars have pointed out (Supangkat 1969; Conroy 2007; Ingham 2007) and they became imbued with a kind of political contestation lacking in many other places. While the cultural boundaries of the New Order fuelled the need for subversiveness for many activists, they meant that cultural expression took the form of metaphor and humour rather than carnivalesque outburst. In short, there were no activist festivals of the kind discussed in this thesis during the New Order. These may have been the seeds of the carnivalesque, but in Java, carnivalesque festivals only became possible after 1998.

Festivals occurred, but they were used by the government to bolster these boundaries, reinforcing the framework of New Order nationalism through notions of peace, harmony and unity. In a process of the nationalisation of indigenous culture, where diverse cultural

forms were brought under the banner of 'Unity in Diversity'[47], festivals were employed by the state. Before the New Order, in the formation of the 'modern' nationalist project of Indonesia under Sukarno (and continuing after his presidency), traditional art was promulgated by the state as a representation of a politically unified, yet culturally diverse nation. In this promotion of an extreme form of multiculturalism, the government, including most importantly educational institutions and the media, depicted a 'modern' nation proud of tradition. But in doing so, distinct and evolving cultures were manipulated and reduced to mere building blocks of the national identity. Artists or groups of artists were not supported or promoted. Rather, the objects, songs, architecture, and costumes, of provincial traditions were emphasised, and often packaged for presentation in festivals.

These were examples of a demonstrative cultural cohesion, in which the government allowed for, and encouraged, cultural diversity through festivals (Hatley 1993). One of the most interesting examples, because it began during the New Order and continues today and because it is so well-known, is the long-running Bali Arts Festival.

Pesta Kesenian Bali: The Bali Arts Festivals (1979–2011)

The Bali Arts Festival is a government-endorsed arts festival, offering a 'unique cultural experience' (Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia 2008). Tourists pay to attend, often in package deals with a hotel and local transport included.

But government funded festivals such as the Bali Arts Festival are usually attended by government officials (the 2008 Bali Festival was opened by President Yudhoyono) and continue to serve the double purpose of promoting cultural tourism and reinforcing notions of state identity. The tourism section of the website of the Indonesian Embassy in Washington DC promoted the 2008 Bali Arts Festival like this:

> It would become a good moment for developing and building art and culture as well as economy development because the annual event will be along with commemoration of 50 years anniversary of Bali Government and 100 years anniversary of Indonesia National Identity and also to succeed the Visit Indonesia Year 2008 (Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia 2008)

It is no coincidence that the Bali Festival provides a most dramatic example of the sanctioning of regional culture for the benefit of Indonesian national identity. During the New Order, of all Indonesia's islands, Bali experienced the most calculated transformation from an agricultural to tourist-based economy (Vickers 1989). And, in some ways, Bali is perhaps one of the success stories of the multicultural vision of Indonesian nationalism.

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47. The national motto of Indonesia is *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* which is Old Javanese and is often loosely translated as 'Unity in Diversity' but literally it means '(Although) in pieces, yet One'. Interestingly, whilst the government professes to support diversity it uses Old Javanese to name it, a language very few Indonesians know, indicating a Javanese colonialism.

Despite many tensions, the island has retained its language and cultural identity, and its own capacity to change, through all the turmoil of the history of modern Indonesia.

The festival formula, as employed at the Bali Arts Festival, has multiple effects. Some writers, such as Kathy Foley have pointed to the introduction of state-sponsored arts festivals as an example of one of the positive effects of official cultural policy in New Order Indonesia. While it certainly cannot lessen the immense negative effects, Foley writes that state-sponsored cultural institutions such as festivals can encourage the participation of otherwise excluded members of society, such as women, in cultural practices.

Foley also points to the way immersion in broader cultural events allows for experimentation in the arts. As 'traditional' forms change context, from having a ritualistic function in a community to portraying 'Indonesianess' in a festival, for example, they are given the opportunity to be modified:

> Arts festivals expand the horizon of the arts. In traditional Southeast Asian society the arts were often used to enhance life-cycle ceremonies, aristocratic endeavors, or religious festivals. The tables are turned when the arts themselves become the festival. Admittedly Bali has been more successful than many places in demarcating the lines between sacred and secular arts … removing [arts] from a religious festival setting emphasizes their secular proclivity. Clearly the majority of the presentations are in the 'secular entertainment' category, and all are juxtaposed against performances from abroad. The time, place, and context of the Bali Arts Festival have allowed it, by virtue of its emphasis on secular arts, to become a significant forum for modern experimentation and development (Foley & Sumandhi 1994, pp. 276-7).

Anthropologist Brett Hough disagrees. He says that the expectations and 'mundane routines' that define the Bali Arts Festival have made it difficult for the event to move beyond being an 'annual repetition of previous years' ones in terms of format, performance and associated activities (Hough 2010).' The festival, Hough says, despite being immensely popular, is devoted to the 'artistic status quo … without providing much creative leadership or a space for the avant-garde'.

While experimentation may sometimes be a by-product, the Bali Arts Festival, and for that matter, the International Festival of Performing Arts, are presented as collections of 'traditional arts' rather than as spaces of cultural experimentation, reinforcing Indonesian nationalism through the celebration of peaceful (and secular) ritual. Today, in a new climate of perceived openness and transnational cooperation, festivals are still used by the Indonesian state to express a constructed global connection, a confidence in the nation's place in the global sphere and a sense of 'keeping up' with global trends. This is evident in the effort of festival directors to include foreign content in their programs. Festivals claiming to be 'The International Festival of (insert any art form here)' because they

have one or two participants from outside Indonesia are commonplace, particularly in government sponsored festivals.

Carnivalesque During the New Order

Despite the clear links between all types of festivals in Indonesia, the genealogy of the carnivalesque in Java has more to do with oppositional cultural practices than with state-sanctioned festivals. Festival Mata Air and the Forest Art Festival owe much of their style to the political revelry during the latter period of the New Order, a fact not only evident in the language and forms within the festivals, but also asserted in interviews by many of the activists themselves. Media theorists Krishna Sen and David Hill write that, during the New Order, the indigenisation of foreign musical codes and icons into 'conscious political opposition' and disorganised carnivalesque forms of protest were reminiscent of the carnivalesque forms of protest that Bakhtin illustrates (Sen & Hill 2000, p. 164). Their primary argument is that such practices, which can be extended to include the highly political visual language of many artists of the time, were a direct inversion of the New Order regime's obsession with order and a reaction to the strong anti-globalisation position of the military. My thesis extends these observations of carnivalesque forms of protest to the post-Suharto period, during which activists have inverted cultural forces other than the New Order and have worked at multiple political scales, including the global.

Cultural theorist Emma Baulch argues that, while alluring in their imagery, the theories of Sen and Hill on New Order revelry need to be thoroughly questioned. According to Baulch it cannot be assumed that just because cultural practices are formed during a repressive period they automatically invert that repression. In her thesis, Baulch argues that because there were many discourses at odds with the official (dominant) national identity during the New Order, which was in fact 'contradictory, conflated, and disorderly', notions such as 'prevailing truth', 'established order' and, by inference, 'carnivalesque' are difficult to apply to the period (Baulch 2003, p. 163). Baulch claims that to assume that during the New Order such subcultural forms were chaotic reactions to existing order, or defiant transnationalism in the face of the state's anti-globalisation policies, is to simplify their complexity. Baulch argues that both the origins and the outcomes of such practices are far less clear-cut and rather than being carnivalesque, they indicate what she terms a 'messy decay'.

Baulch's point, that the carnivalesque cannot be applied to cultural forms just because they appear in times of repression, is important to keep in mind, particularly in relation to the way in which the trope of carnival might may facilitate 'containment rather than subversion' (Casey 2007, p.69) and act as 'a licensed enclave' (Eagleton 1987, p.149) rather than a possibility for change. Baulch's case study of the Jakarta Alternatif Pop Festival shows that festivals and their representations, even if they have subcultural origins, can actually

create their own orders that limit participation. In this case the Jakarta Alternatif Pop Festival restricts 'change and liberty to the capacity to consume,' by ignoring real issues of poverty and depicting 'alternative fandom' through fashion and music taste as an exclusive and international identity. In Java, as elsewhere, what constitutes the carnivalesque needs to be localised and clarified.

The great scholar of Java, John Pemberton, also writes of the slipperiness of words associated with festival during the New Order (Pemberton 1995). He notes that when Suharto's government, at the height of its reign, declared the 1982 election a 'Pesta Demokrasi' (Democracy party), they meant that it was an important national event, more like a ritual performance of democracy than a party, one where everyone acts according to etiquette and nothing unexpected occurs. Pemberton writes that the phrase Pesta Demokrasi was

> translated in the foreign press as 'Festival of Democracy'. Although this translation might suggest Bakhtinian possibilities of the carnivalesque, the special ambience conveyed by the Indonesian/Javanese term pesta was much closer to that of formal receptions associated with public ceremonies and domestic rituals (Pemberton 1995, p. 5).

The arguments of both Baulch and Pemberton can help us move towards this chapter's goal of defining the carnivalesque in Java. Baulch's example of the Jakarta Alternatif Pop Festival raises more questions about the definition of 'alternative' than it does about the limitations of festival framework.[48] The mistranslation of 'pesta', the manipulation of the Bali Arts Festival, and the music festivals that serve as Baulch's examples, show that the idea of the festival, and for that matter, the idea of a carnivalesque, are not universal. Rather, every use of these terms is embroiled within specific social contexts. 'Alternative' is not the same as 'carnivalesque', which is not the same as 'pesta', and in translation, each definition inches even further apart. Whereas the Jakarta Alternatif Pop Festival self-consciously exploits the concept of 'alternative', and the Pesta Demokrasi attempts to impose universal rituals, Festival Mata Air and the Forest Art Festival are transformative spaces without formulas and, as such, are somewhat 'untranslatable'.

Kampung Carnivalesque after the New Order

One feature that distinguishes carnivalesque festivals from the examples outlined above is their relationship to the kampung. Like the spectacular festivals such as the Bali Arts Festival, which showcase a particular region, the 'pesta kampung' is also a residue from New Order nationalism that promotes small-scale celebrations of nationalist ideals. This is the model that has been reinterpreted by Festival Mata Air and the Forest Art Festival. The

48. For a full discussion of the use of the category 'alternative' in contemporary visual arts in Indonesia see Sue Ingham's thesis (2007) *Powerlines, Alternative art and infrastructure in Indonesia in the 1990s.*

small-scale festival model, with the kampung as its site, has gained appeal as artists and arts organisers have begun to participate in the global and national funding circuits, coming to terms with the way interest from audiences and funders is bound up in this cultural form. The renewed interest in kampung as a festival site all over Java is an indication of emerging niche cultural markets with the possibilities opened up by *Reformasi*.[49] Kampung festivals can also be read as a move towards recreating the intimacy of local rituals, an intimacy that is often lost in renditions of performances motivated by nationalism or in Indonesian versions of Western theatre.

Besides Festival Mata Air and the Forest Art Festival, hundreds of festivals have popped up in Java since the time this thesis was begun. Hellarfest, 2007–2010 (Bandung), Greenfest, 2008–2010 (Bandung), Kickfest, 2009–2010 (Bandung), Jatiwangi Arts Festival, 2009 (Jatiwangi), Balikpapan Arts Festival, 2008 (Balikpapan), Festival Salihara 2009-2010 (Jakarta), Festival Merti Bumi 2007–2010 (Grobogan), Yogyakarta International Videowork Festival 2009–2010 (Yogyakarta), and the Yogyakarta International Festival of Performing Arts, 2006 (Yogyakarta) are just a few. But the types of events defined as festivals vary greatly as do their stakeholders. The involvement of private enterprise in cultural activity, in particular, sponsorship by tobacco companies over the last decade, has created a new political economy in Indonesia in which festivals have become part of mass marketing campaigns.

While this chapter considers the concept of a 'festival', very broadly, as a mode of cultural production in which different cultural practices are selected, recombined and rearranged, the focus of this thesis is festivals in Java that operate as activist spaces. Activist festivals invite participants, rather than audiences, to attend; they operate with very little funding or sponsorship; they rely on community support; and they focus on political issues. Besides the two environmental festivals discussed in this thesis, activist festivals address all kinds of issues from gay and lesbian rights to land ownership and have sprouted up all over Indonesia since the end of the New Order. Many of these activist festivals are carnivalesque in style and purpose.

Elements of carnivalesque have always existed in Javanese culture, even throughout colonialism and the New Order, but a festival in the carnivalesque sense was only possible after the New Order, when the fear of imprisonment for political activism began to subside. In the post-authoritarian context of the first decade of this century, activists in Indonesia also had a new sense of confidence in what they could achieve, a renewed interaction with globally circulating cultural forms, and a looser sense of what they opposed and what they were building. Activist festivals began to develop a new sense of utopia, a new political

49. Reformasi is the Post-Suharto era in Indonesia that began immediately after the downfall of Suharto as president in 1998

imaginary so desperately needed after the dialogic conflict that brought Suharto down.

Baulch's analysis of carnivalesque during the New Order discussed above, in fact, shows a great degree of foresight. More than ten years after the end of the New Order, an even greater range of subcultural forms in Indonesia demonstrate that the origins and outcomes of punk, metal and reggae (to use Baulch's example), must have been more than a reaction to the oppression of the time. However, in the current climate, without the singular enemy of Suharto's regime, the forms and channels of cultural resistance are much more open and prolific than before. There is no single, authoritarian force for cultural activists to demonise and rally against. The broad-based opposition movement that formed to bring down the New Order has splintered. Increased government power at the local level, through the regional autonomy systems of the new governments, shines a spotlight on these splinters and their global interaction. The current proliferation of festivals in Java could be attributed to this situation, as festivals become more major sites of contemporary performance in Indonesia.

Of course, although the number of festivals has increased dramatically, one cannot assume they are all carnivalesque, just as not all novels cannot be considered carnivalesque. This section has shown how the particular type of festival produced by the case studies came to exist in Indonesia. This has required tracing the ways that the state has polarised cultural forms, as well as how activists have embraced the possibilities of carnivalesque during times of intense protest. These situations presented new possibilities for artists and activists following the end of the New Order and it begs the question of whether this particular type of festival could exist elsewhere. While there are possible parallels in other postcolonial and indigenous contexts, the next section explores the idea that there is a particularly Javanese form of carnivalesque.

The Language of Javanese Carnivalesque

Carnivalesque ideas can help to determine whether cultural practices can be considered a form of activism, and how they relate to what might be called traditional forms, in particular rituals. In the cases discussed here, the answers depend largely on how the festival is tied to its site, the kampung, how its producers interpret the idea of the kampung, and how they employ nongkrong as a production practice. Taking these ideas into consideration when defining the origins and the contemporary expressions of festival begins to build a spectrum of types of festival and reveals the extent to which they hold the potential to make social or environmental change.

Mikhail Bakhtin coined the word carnivalesque to describe a genre of literature that subverts and liberates the assumptions of the dominant style or atmosphere through elements such as fire, ritualistic crowning and decrowning, humour and chaos. Bakhtin

Figure 32 (top): Dodi Irwandi adjusts his sculpture at Festival Mata Air, 2006

Figure 33 (bottom): Annie Sloman (left) and kampung resident during the parade at Festival Mata Air, 2007.

also identifies the grotesque as a recurring feature of carnivalesque. Pam Morris argues that the grotesque, in its exaggeration of the human body's materiality, is the link between all carnivalesque forms:

> The grotesque exaggeration of the body and genitals mocks Medieval religious repudiation of the flesh ... The grotesque body [is] at the heart of all carnival meaning .... it is the body of all people and as such cannot die (Morris 1994, p. 26).

Grotesque humour features strongly at Festival Mata Air and the Forest Art Festival, subverting the atmosphere of entertainment with visual parody. Many 'grotesque' elements of humanity are explored in the visual language of the festivals, which also draw on the exaggerated features of Javanese wayang characters. Figures are identifiable as human, but their features are exaggerated. At Festival Mata Air, 2006, a sculpture by Taring Padi artist Dodi Irwandi morphs the features of a pig into those of a businessman, his faucet penis urinating the 'people's water' back into the earth. Both the symbolism of the sculpture's subject and the use of rubbish as an artistic material can be read as grotesque (Figure 32) During the festival, participants played with the sculpture, sat in its lap, had photographs taken with it, and caressed its genitalia.

Representations of the female grotesque can also be read in many performances at Forest Art Festival and Festival Mata Air, in particular, those by a number of women who appear as the kind of 'senile hag' that Bakhtin identifies as inhabiting the carnival in seventeenth century England (Bakhtin 1984, p. 240). These performances draw on gender codes particular to Java, using costumes associated with the kampung, such as the *daster* (a house dress worn mostly in the home and around the kampung) and tools associated with 'women's work' such as cooking implements, as musical instruments and theatre props (Figure 33). Brought into the parades of Festival Mata Air, these grotesque exaggerations of the female have significant disruptive potential.[50]

Carnivalesque also brings together high and low culture through parody. However, what is being parodied in carnivalesque enactments is not always clear. During the parade at Festival Mata Air 2008, a lively faction of Javanese teenagers 'blacked out' their faces, wore homemade grass skirts and carried comical spears made from recycled materials. Their performance both symbolised and celebrated the primitive, but it also parodied the idea of the primitive, represented particularly in painting, photography and literature during the colonial era. When asked who or what they were appropriating, they responded that they were 'a new primitive', and were not meant to be a specific ethnic group (Figure 34, Figure 35, Figure 36).

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50. For a Feminist reading of Bakhtin's image of the senile pregnant hag, see Kathleen Rowe (1995), which describes how the image of the pregnant hag is loaded with all the connotations of fear and loathing associated with the biological processes of reproduction and aging (Rowe 1995).

Figure 34, 35, 36: 'New primitive' performance at Festival Mata Air, 2008.

This performance can be read in a number of ways. The 'new primitive' parodies colonial generalisations of Indonesia as a place where savages defend their territory with spears; where the peripheral primitives (Papuans) exist in isolation from the civilised centre (Europe). As a carnivalesque act, this primitive performance at Festival Mata Air was an attempt to reclaim colonial versions of ethnic difference. As Shohat and Stam explain, this kind of visual language can act as an inversion of 'what had formerly been seen as negative, especially within colonialist discourse':

> Thus ritual cannibalism, for centuries the very name of the savage, abject other, becomes with the Brazilian modernists an anti-colonialist trope and a term of value. (Even 'magic realism' inverts the colonial view of magic as irrational superstition.) At the same time, these aesthetics share the ju-jitsu trait of turning strategic weakness into tactical strength. By appropriating an existing discourse for their own ends, they deploy the force of the dominant against domination (Shohat & Stam 1998, p. 41).

But there are other, sometimes more subtle, colonial relationships in Indonesia. Many Javanese see themselves as culturally superior to fellow Indonesians from the outer islands, such as the highland people of West Papua, and would see no issues in parodying their culture directly.[51] Their centre is Java, and the dichotomy between its civilisation and the 'outer' islands of the archipelago is as strong as any other colonial relationship. Many romanticised versions of ethnic identities are also ubiquitous in Java, represented by ' traditional' weapons and 'primitive' forest clothing that can be found in the souvenir shops of Java's tourist strips and the beaches of Bali. Many urban Indonesians selectively identify with these cultures, claiming a kind of 'primitivism' to explain, for example, a nostalgic affinity with nature. Affinity with nature is, indeed, a classic primitivist trope that has been used around the world to place non-European cultures in a time outside history and as cultures outside civilisation. Mariana Torgovnick explores extensively the way primitives have been imagined in the West, as being 'in tune with nature' (p. 3), an imaginary that has served to define a dichotomy between the culture of European origin and the culture of its colonial subjects (Torgovnick 1990).

In further confusion, another rendition of the 'primitive' also occurred at Festival Mata Air 2008, entirely independently of the parade primitives. Festival Mata Air was officially opened on the evening before the first public performance at a private meeting of festival organisers and government officials including the Minister of the Environment. This formal opening was by invitation only. Attendees wore batik and the event had a specific start and end time. Tea and cakes were served and a locally formed West Papuan dance troupe

51. The mainstream opinion that Papua is primitive is evident in many forms of popular culture. A recent example is the 2011 feature film *Lost In Papua*. The film depicts the troubled relationship of a Javanese boy and girl, lost in the deep jungles of Papua. The characters constantly reference the beauty of the natural surroundings in contrast to the mysterious and violent culture of the natives. (Irhamachobahtiar 2011)

performed, with no apparent irony, after being introduced by an official with a short speech praising Indonesian ethnic diversity.[52]

The organisers of Festival Mata Air recognised the sensitivities that could be offended by using a West Papuan performance to represent their version of environmentalism, but explained that the opening was a mere formality. This kind of ceremony is very typical of a government-sanctioned event and they reasoned that adhering to the formula gave them more leeway in other aspects of their festival as well as potential for funding in the future.[53] They also said the decision to include the Papuan performance in this ceremony and not the parade was practical. Firstly, this performance was arranged at the last minute, and, as the dancers were accustomed to official ceremonies, they were ready to perform. Also, they may not have been comfortable during the general festival (the dancers attended the festival on the following days in plain clothes and did not repeat this performance). Secondly, the government officials were used to these cultural representations; it was familiar language and meant that they were placated in preparation for the 'wildness' of the next few days.

The two representations of Papuans here, and the way they are both positioned as part of Indonesia relative to Java, are messy versions of the same cultural form, and they each appear in Festival Mata Air for different reasons. This situation is reminiscent of the two forms of parade analysed by Susan Davis. Using parades in nineteenth century Philadelphia as her case study, Davis points to two styles of parade, one a respectable ceremony, imposed from above and the other a rowdy ritual of the working class that included 'maskings, burlesques and memmeries' (Davis 1986, p. 20). The former was orderly and self-restrained, a strategic spectacle of power that set standards of patriotism and the latter was disorderly and frequently violent as participants used it to tactically define their own subversive identity. At Festival Mata Air, these two versions of parade seem to be combined in one event. The representation of Papua at the official opening, in the context of a formal Javanese ritual, is one possible subject of the parody by the 'new primitives' in the festival parade. In this sense the parade can be read as an attack on Javanese colonialism, and, yet, it is performed by more Javanese, again exemplifying the plight of Papuans and recolonising their culture. Such contradiction, as will be detailed throughout the thesis, is one feature of the carnivalesque in Java, and one of the reasons local terms must be employed for its analysis.

As well as symbolism, Bakhtin also focuses on carnivalesque uses of language. In his own example, the work of the French Renaissance writer François Rabelais, the form of

52. Because Salatiga has a Christian university, Satya Wacana Christian University, there is a modest community of West Papuan students.

53. This logic was a point of contention. Some activists viewed this as compromising to the New Order culture of placating hierarchies. Several refused their invitation to the ceremony.

the novel is subverted to celebrate low and vulgar culture. This subversion is made possible through the language of heteroglossia, that is the coexistence of, and conflict between, different types of speech (Bakhtin 1935). Bakhtin saw the linguistic energy of the novel (in contrast to poetry, for example) as an expression of this conflict, made possible by the multiple voices, including the author's own voice, mixed in one form.

Bakhtin's identification and appreciation of linguistic complexity has great relevance for understanding festivals in Java, firstly because so many languages interplay in all cultural practices there. The way different languages are intermingled in nongkrong circles, described in the previous chapter, is the clearest example. The ways that Bakhtin identifies separate languages are often identified with separate circumstances. For instance, in the scene described above, at the official opening of Festival Mata Air, the Minister of the Environment is welcomed in formal Indonesian, chats to the festival director over tea in high Javanese (*kromo*), watches West Papuan dancers who speak in a dialect he cannot understand, listens to a dangdut band singing in low Javanese, and then turns to me, evoking his best high school English 'Is this your first time to Indonesia?'[54]

As with the inner workings of the novel, Festival Mata Air and the Forest Art Festival incorporate all these languages into their work. Participants are simultaneously at ease with multiple registers, augmenting the linguistic acrobatics of nongkrong (described in the previous chapter) into the cultural space of the festival. These festivals are verbal performances, requiring each participant who speaks to take a position at every moment, even if only by choosing the dialect in which they will speak.

Plesetan: Heteroglossia and the Hybrid Utterance

Bakhtin's heteroglossia has many parallels to *plesetan*, the Javanese tradition of 'word play', or 'punning.' Plesetan comes from the Javanese root word, *kepleset*, which means 'to slip up,' and as a linguistic practice is used for 'stressing and celebrating the arbitrary and unstable relationships between signifiers and signified, and between both and referents in the world' (Heryanto 1999, p. 163).

It was during Suharto's New Order that plesetan became an essential skill—particularly for artists and writers for whom it was dangerous to speak one's mind frankly. Besides bans on protests, student organisations, communism, Chinese literature, and political parties other than Golkar[55], under the New Order any direct reference to sensitive issues, known

54. In his essay 'Discourse in the Novel', in which he introduces the concept of heteroglossia, Bakhtin gives the example of an illiterate peasant, who speaks Church Slavonic to God, speaks to his family in their own peculiar dialect, sings songs in yet a third, and attempts to emulate an officious high-class dialect when he dictates petitions to the local government. The prose writer, Bakhtin argues, must welcome and incorporate these many languages into his work (Bakhtin 1935, p. 506).

55. The Party of the Functional Groups (Indonesian: *Partai Golongan Karya*) was the ruling party during Suharto's regime (1966-1998), and is the biggest party in today's ruling coalition in Indonesia.

by their Indonesian acronym SARA–*suku* (ethnicity), *agama* (religion), *ras* (race), and *antar golongan* (ideology/class)–was banned. These restrictions were wide-reaching and often broadly interpreted by authorities. Because it was potentially fatal to do otherwise, Indonesians developed their flair for communicating in finely nuanced ways, producing and reading meaning 'between the lines', creating slippage and inter-textuality within and between the conventions of both Indonesian and Javanese language, particularly in the setting of nongkrong.

Plesetan has come to be an important practice of cultural activists, often taking the form of wordplay in song lyrics and poetry. In her research on social protest in Indonesian popular music, Sue Piper refers to plesetan in the songs of the Bandung group Trio Bimbo. Titles such as 'Madame Ten Per Cent' comment on the corruption of the Suharto family without directly referring to any individuals or policies. The 'ten' is pronounced 'Tien', the popular nickname of the first lady, who was notorious for skimming approximately ten per cent off development projects for her own private wealth accumulation (Piper, Jabo & Goodfellow 2003). Indonesian visual arts scholar Dwi Marianto (1999) also analyses the use of plesetan, by observing the way visual artists in Yogyakarta at the end of the New Order, such as Henri Dono translate puns and verbal games into paintings.

However, plesetan is not always linguistic. In her thesis on the art collective Taring Padi, Heidi Arbuckle points to a less literal form of plesetan in which the very structure of an activist organisation mimics the power structure it sets out to critique, an apparent political 'slippage' of interpretations and expressions of democracy. In 1998, as the regime was brought down, the Taring Padi collective presented itself in a hierarchical structure, even appointing a `President', who was essentially divested of any real power, and thus parodied, as a plesetan, the long-standing reign of President Suharto himself (Arbuckle 2009).[56]

Taring Padi appeared both to its members and to most outsiders as a horizontally-organised, inclusive, progressive, somewhat loose collection of musicians and artists, far from what it may have looked like on paper with its defined roles and responsibilities and official rubber stamp. The reasons the structure was formalised were not bureaucratic (the collective has never been an official cultural organisation, unlike TUK), but to play with the ideas of organisation itself, with linguistic and visual collective identity and the space between. Taring Padi, if thought of as a single speaker, can be said to be making what Bakhtin describes as a 'hybrid utterance', juxtaposing types of speech (or expression) to articulate contradicting belief systems and using concealed languages to create humour through the practice of plesetan.

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56. By 2002, the collective had given up on this somewhat confusing allegory of power, and, declaring themselves outright anarchists, abandoned the appointment of a president and the membership process they had had in place..

The origin of plesetan can most likely be traced back to ancient times when the old Javanese language was used as a tool for maintaining distinct social castes.[57] Wayang Kulit is probably the most well known example of an art form that uses complex wordplay to comment on power dynamics between such castes. During a wayang performance, the *dalang* (puppet master) fluidly moves between linguistic registers, playing the role of many characters as well as the narrator, akin to what Bakhtin calls 'hybrid utterance' within the novel.

More contemporary wayang troupes also rely heavily on plesetan. Wayang Kampung Sebelah, raised in the previous chapter as an example of the reclaiming of kampungan, takes a traditional form of performance and injects contemporary popular culture and language. In this way, plesetan is taken to a new level of carnivalesque, incorporating almost all forms of language recognisable to audience members (high and low Javanese, formal and colloquial Indonesian, SMS Indonesian, global English) as well as images from traditional Javanese wayang and from global and local popular culture and mashing them into one performance. What holds such a performance together in one narrative, and makes the parody possible, is the dalang, who, like Bakhtin's narrator of the novel, switches seamlessly between multiple codes.

Reading Javanese Carnivalesque in the Reog Ritual

In explaining the carnivalesque, Bakhtin declares that the rituals of medieval carnival have been misunderstood for centuries. So too, many Javanese rituals, and for that matter rituals all over Indonesia, have been misunderstood because of their misrepresentation by the State, such as in the case of the awkwardly presented West Papuan dance described above. These rituals have not been ignored. Rather, they have been suppressed by a process of formalisation that denies their close links to place (kampung) and social relations (nongkrong). The remainder of this chapter is devoted to reading the Javanese tradition of reog as a carnivalesque performance.

The inclusion of reog at the Forest Art Festival, Festival Mata Air, and many other activist festivals not included in this study, indicates a return to ritual and 'folk' traditions that opens these rituals to transformation rather than boxing them into nationalistic purposes (Figure 37 - Figure 43). By juxtaposing opposite elements—culture with bestiality, civilisation with savagery and earthly with spiritual forces, through intense physical interaction with the audience, and by operating within both high and low culture, reog represents a kind of Javanese Carnivalesque.

57. Although they are not adhered to as rigorously as they were historically, the Javanese language still maintains registers: *Ngoko* is informal speech, *Madya* is the intermediary form, and *Krama* is the most polite and formal style.

Reog: A Subversive Genealogy

Reog is a drama danced by a team of between twenty and forty dancers. As in the paired images typical of carnivalesque (Bakhtin 1998), the drama is structured around two seemingly opposite central figures: the powerful and magical *warok* and the effeminate *gemblak*. There are many variations of reog in Java, the most well known of which is Reog Ponorogo, originating in the regency of Ponorogo in East Java. The region has a long history of radical politics, with which activists from Randublatung also identify.

The origins of reog are unwritten and unclear. The dance seems to have absorbed different legends as it has been practised. One belief popular with activists is that it comes from a story of rebellion against Bra Kertabumi, the last Majapahit king in the fifteenth century. This story has many parallels with what Bakhtin describes as a ritualistic crowning and decrowning that symbolically overturns authority in carnivalesque settings (Bakhtin 1998, p. 254). The king's royal servant, Ki Ageng Kutu, deserted the kingdom because of endemic corruption. He set up a school where he trained young men in martial arts, magic and Tantrayana Buddhism. These students came to be called *warok*.[58] In his thorough analysis of the links between spirituality, sexuality, and power in reog, Ian Wilson, who is one of the few scholars to have done extensive research on reog, relays the remainder of the story:

> Realising, however, that his small band of warok could never defeat the forces of Kertabumi in an armed struggle, Ki Ageng Kutu used performing arts to propagate his political message amongst the local population and thus build a movement of popular resistance. The dance drama that he created, known as reog, satirised king Bra Kertabumi and his court. A spectacular tiger mask known as a singabarong, the lord of the jungle, symbolised Kertabumi, whilst the fan-like peacock perched on its head represented his Chinese consort and the influence that she wielded over him. The effeminate jatilan [hobby-horse] dancers known as gemblak satirised the weakness of Majapahit's army, which contrasted dramatically with the very real strength of the warok who wielded the singobarong mask, weighing over 50kg, by a wooden strut held between his teeth. The hideous red faced clown Bujannganong represented Ki Ageng Kutu himself, his sexually provocative and acrobatic dance movements making a mockery of the affected refinement of royalty (Wilson 1999, para. 2).

Renditions of reog were woven into the programs at Festival Mata Air and Forest Art Festival, firstly because they attract large audiences, and secondly because activists identify with this story of rebellion. Rather than speculating on what its philological explanation might be, these activists absorb the texts relevant to their own practices. This is not dissimilar to the way they absorb globally circulating styles, such as punk; they shed the

58. In another possible example of plesetan, Hardjomartono (1962) writes that the term warok originates from the Javanese words *'uwal'* and *'rokan'* meaning to be free from forced labour. (cited in Wilson 1999).

political details of Thatcher's Britain, recognising themselves and their own practices in the social interactions and language of punk. They see themselves in reog, building political movements through the creative arts. However, this is not the end of reog's genealogy of subversion. Reog, like so many Indonesian traditions, has survived being identified as a political cultural form. It has been banned, diluted, and misrepresented.

Hardjomartono (1962) states that the history of the suppression of reog began with the Dutch colonial government, which banned reog performances from 1912 until 1932, officially because of its association with supernatural power. Warok were also known to question hierarchy, and to have shallow loyalties and a 'volatile sense of honour' which the administration saw as a threat to security (Wilson 1999, para. 12).

The newly formed Indonesian state, in its effort to be modern, adopted this suspicion of reog as a cultural form associated with primitive witchcraft. This suspicion was violently confirmed in September 1948 when an alleged communist revolt against the Republican forces, in a situation where reog was associated with communism, was crushed violently by the Republican army. Wilson writes that this conflict, which was followed by violence between Muslim and communist villagers, resulted in the 'virtual elimination of village based reog troupes' (Wilson 1999, para.5). However, the dangerous relationship between reog and the Communist Party continued into the 1950s. The communists opposed orthodox Islam, a stance which also appealed to many warok, and they also recruited 'local strongmen' who readily gave the waroks a place in the party. Reog could attract large audiences, which meant it could always be used for campaigning.

By the time the New Order's cultural policy was in full swing, reog had been uprooted from the kampung and diluted into a nationalist performance as an example of the government's ambitious project of cultural engineering. It was marginalised, sanitised and reinvented as a display of ethnic diversity for presentation in state sponsored festivals such as the Bali Arts Festival. The government condemned the spiritual aspects of reog by associating it with criminality, rural radicalism, and the outlawed Indonesian Communist Party. Reog in its unbound form was at odds with the way the New Order typified the identity of the 'traditional Javanese peasant' as being 'emotionally self-restrained, regulated and orderly' (Wilson 1999, para.8). For the most part, like many traditions, reog was reshaped further by school textbooks and censored performances. But, again, there was also targeted violence. Wilson (1999) writes that several prominent warok were victims of the 1983 Petrus 'mysterious shootings'.

By maintaining a place in the kampung, as well as its exhibition form, reog has managed to maintain threads of rebellion. Wilson suggests that the 'integrity of the tradition is maintained through a kind of occultation, by refusing to engage in the spectacle

Figure 37, 38: Reog Ponogoro at Festival Mata Air, 2006.

Figure 39: Reog troupe at Forest Art Festival, 2005. Photograph by Mickie Quick.
Figure 40: Reog troupe arriving at Festival Mata Air, 2008.

Figure 41, 42, 43: Reog Ponorogo performance at Festival Mata Air, 2007.

of “traditional culture”’ (Wilson 1999, para.16). Like Bakhtin’s carnival, as reog is labelled ‘traditional’, made official, organised, represented, and mediated (through State-sponsored festivals as well as other means) it loses its potency. And, like the carnival, reog can be resurrected in new cultural forms such as within the activist festivals examined here. In this resurrection, activists recognise that the kampung is the home of rituals such as reog and other folk forms. They are given a new place, within the kampung, under the banner of cultural activism and outside the restrictions of colonial and New Order cultural policy.

Reclaiming Reog

Because of its genealogy of subversion, reog has a special appeal to activists who wish to, on one hand, localise the festival form with their own traditions, and on the other hand, resurrect reog from its oppressed history. To achieve these goals, activists focus on the carnivalesque aspects of reog.

Firstly, reog represents a dichotomy between what are considered in histories of Indonesian art to be two separate Javanese artistic traditions: the *kesenian leluhur* (high art) of the royal courts and the *kesenian rakyat* (people’s art) of the rural and urban poor. The work of Wayang Kampung Sebelah, explored in the previous chapter, also does this by mixing ‘high’ and ‘low’ forms of language in their wayang performances and peppering it with references to popular culture.

The reog found at the festivals in this study embrace the kampungan arts that local communities are assumed to practice, reclaiming reog from the government purveyors of high culture. They do so by staging reog in the kampung or the forest, on dirt ground rather than stages, and by focusing on the individual troupes’ interpretations of reog, rather than the government’s. The emphasis is not on the authenticity of the rendition of a tradition, but on the way artists identify with and interpret that tradition.

An organiser explains the way local reog is performed at the Forest Art Festival:

> We have local traditions here that are very place-specific … local people performing in their own environment or at a festival in the kampung, well that’s different from travelling to the city and performing in a gallery or government building, but, you know, it is actually the same performance. For example, reog is different in every area; it is always interpreted. There are differences in dialects, but also, the interpretation of the story and the way it is danced is different. What’s more, at our festival, it is ok to be spontaneous. How the performance proceeds can depend on the audience … Do they believe it? Are they bored? … This is how reog is meant to be; interactive. It is not scripted.

Reog at activist festivals also emphasises the physical sensations of the performance. Bakhtin describes the impermanent world of the carnival as a ritual that draws meaning

Figure 44 (top): Reog performer in trance state, eating a live snake at Festival Mata Air, 2006.

Figure 45 (bottom): 'Plastic Man' at Festival Mata Air, 2006.

from the materiality of physical interaction. Reog dancers usually fall into trance in the third stage of the performance. While many official trance performances are clearly staged, at the activist festivals I witnessed, there was a refocus on this supernatural element. The dancers, other troupe members explained, were 'temporarily possessed'. Oblivious to all social conventions, they became unable to control their own desires, or even to identify themselves as human (Figure 44).

There is a comic dimension to this transformation; audience members laugh at the contortion and at people behaving like wild animals. But there is also an element of fear, which parodies the idea of performance itself. These performers are no longer able to independently respect the boundaries between audience and actor, rushing at audience members with blood and dirt dripping from their mouths.

It is this inversion of the performance element of reog that is the most visceral demonstration of carnivalesque. And it is undoubtedly the most talked about part of the performance. It means that, for the remainder of the festival (reog is usually early on in the program), the audience is more able to suspend disbelief. Reog performances become a kind of stepping stone to the carnivalesque atmosphere. At Festival Mata Air, 2007, the reog performance had no clear conclusion. After the trance dancers were released, the 'pressing throng' moved together towards the performance of the activist band Dendang Kampungan. Despite its 'vulgarity', the accompanying dance by a naked man wrapped in plastic, in the persona of 'Plastic Man', seemed to neither frighten nor surprise anybody in the audience (Figure 45). Seemingly, through reog, 'people become aware of their sensual, material bodily unity and community' (Bakhtin 1984, p.255).

> With no clear distinction between the audience and the band, people were swinging from the rigging, kids were holding the microphones and the whole environment was one of collective solidarity (Festival Mata Air internal report, 2009).

Remixing Reog

Reog has already shown itself to be an art form that can change, surviving prohibition during colonisation, sanitisation during the New Order, and finally, surviving the Reformasi in an economic climate where troupes must market and organise themselves for scheduled performances such as the one at the International Festival of Performing Arts described at the beginning of this chapter.[59] Activist festivals do more than provide a space for the inclusion of reog. At Festival Mata Air and Forest Art Festival, reog is combined with other kinds of contemporary performance in a demonstration of uniquely Javanese forms of carnivalesque. In this festival context, the art form is freed from the constraints historically

59. For a thorough exploration of the financial marginalisation of traditional artforms after the end of the New Order, see Ariani Darmawan's documentary *Anak Naga Beranak Naga* (Dragons Beget Dragons), independently released in 2006.

Figure 46 (top): Warok at Festival Mata Air, 2008. Photograph by Daniel Mackinlay.

Figure 47 (bottom): Reog variation with costumes made from rubbish at Festival Mata Air, 2008.

placed on it and can be extended and adapted. By the time of the 2008 Festival Mata Air, while reog Ponorogo was still being performed (Figure 46), many new versions of reog had also emerged as part of the program (Figure 47).

At the Forest Art Festival, a small number of vegan punks were horrified to hear that 'traditional' reog might be performed, including the Kuda Lumping dance, which leads the dancers into a trance state. As outlined above, in their trance, dancers can be self-destructive, chewing glass, slashing themselves with knives and machetes, setting fire to their clothing, and eating dirt. But they are also often given live animals by their warok, snakes or chickens in particular, which they tear the heads off with their teeth. This act is a demonstration of spiritual power, but it also inverts the strict social conventions of halal animal slaughter required by Islam. The punks negotiated with the reog troupe to adjust their performance to ensure there was no cruelty to animals. These negotiations were, needless to say, framed in terms of the warok controlling the dancers who were understood to have no awareness of their acts. These negotiations took place in a nongkrong setting at the festival site. Festival organisers sat with the troupe's waroks to discuss this friction between a traditional performance and global animal rights ideologies, making jokes, telling anecdotes and moving between several language codes from the contexts of both punk and reog.

More recently, anakseribupulau formed its own reog troupe called 'Punk's Barong'. One of its main aims is to open reog to collaboration with other performance traditions, particularly from outside Indonesia. It claims to mix local culture with the punk aesthetic. Performances are often multimedia, using speakers, projectors, and what the artists call 'noise music'. There is no cruelty to animals in their performances and women are also encouraged to join the troupe (Ariyanto 2011). Like punk, reog is a medium that activists recognise—they localise punk and make reog contemporary, shifting the carnivalesque spatially and temporally.

Reog is certainly not the only example of a local carnivalesque tradition being remixed into the festivals. Fire ceremonies also featured prominently at both Festival Mata Air and the Forest Art Festival, in ways that could be interpreted as carnivalesque acts of renewal. However, reog provides a clear example of activists drawing carnivalesque elements out of a well-known tradition, adapting them to a new political context, and in the process, defining a particular type of festival in Java.

Summary

This chapter shows how carnivalesque is a useful framework for understanding what is at work within the process of indigenising global concepts of festival. It begins by broadly categorising globally circulating ideas of festival. This is necessary because, for

the activists who produce Festival Mata Air and Forest Art Festival, festival is also used as a generalisation, a way to describe to a global audience the way they mix rituals and contemporary politics and the untranslatable concepts of kampung and nongkrong. I then explored the expression of carnivalesque during the repressive New Order period and then identify carnivelesque elements of post-New Order festivals in this study. One of the most distinctive features of New Order rule was the extent to which the rhetoric of culture, especially 'traditional culture,' came to epitomise order (Wilson 1999). Thus, in reframing traditional culture to represent 'politics', activists after the overthrow of the New Order had to engage with disorder. The carnivalesque festival became a vehicle to do this. The way rituals are contextualised by activists today, within ongoing environmental movements, bolsters these movements with a locality that is impossible in the forms of festival employed by the government, such as the Bali Arts Festival and the types of parades that portray discrete identities as part of the Indonesian national identity.

Throughout this chapter, in focusing on the way festival has been made and remade in Java, it has been shown that carnivalesque provides a way to extend the local terms of engagement from the previous chapter, nongkrong and kampungan into the global cultural form of festival to approach an understanding of the carnivalesque in Java.

Conclusion

The popularity of festivals in many parts of the world could be seen as a revival of ancient cultural forms. However in Java, festivals, while incorporating many local rituals, also reflect an interest in experimenting with new global forms, in poaching them and localising them. For activists after the end of the New Order, festivals present an opportunity for a carnivalesque outburst: one moment in a long process of struggle. Festival Mata Air and the Forest Art Festival show that, while temporary, these festivals generate a new language of protest, marking a turning point in how activists in Java view their own culture.

Speaking of their experiences of Festival Mata Air, foreign visitors (mostly Australians) I interviewed used words like 'unique', 'unusual', and 'surprising', despite having attended innumerable music festivals, art festivals, community festivals, activist festivals, fringe festivals, fairs, fetes, protests and exhibitions all over the world. One of the aims of this chapter has been to decipher what makes the festivals discussed here so distinct from other events given the same label. It has done so by bringing the local terms of nongkrong, kampung and kampungan into contact with the concept of the carnivalesque. By celebrating the low and everyday nature of the kampung through carnivalesque symbolism, and the creative friction of nongkrong through the carnivalesque interplay of languages, this particular type of festival shows that, not only is carnivalesque a subversive aesthetic, but there is a local version of carnivalesque in Java.

CHAPTER 3:
TROPICAL IGLOO AND *RUBBISH JASMINE*: DECOLONISING ART THEORY

Chapter 3 decolonises relational aesthetics by using Anna Tsing's notion of friction as a model for analysing artworks produced at the Forest Art Festival and Festival Mata Air. I argue that imported frameworks such as relational aesthetics, that try to make sense of the intersections between art and activism, must be localised. Read in the context of the Javanese Carnivalesque, the artworks discussed here are shown to use locally specific models of participation that cannot be fully explained without a framework that incorporates the terms of nongkrong and jalan-jalan.

Imagine it is 2013.

Entering the 'Gallery of Nongkrong', in Central Java, you are invited to sit down on a straw mat on the floor of the foyer. Here, four artists pour you tea and politely ask you to help them make their artworks, '… so that you will understand them,' they explain. You hesitate; you never studied art at school, you can't draw much more than a stick figure, you only came here because it was suggested in the guidebook and it was on the way to the ancient Buddhist temple you wanted to visit. Furthermore, you are quite sure this is a scam. You have been diverted to many 'art galleries' in Yogyakarta by smiling men who then coerce you into buying some poor quality batik painting before allowing you to leave.

The artists laugh knowingly. They guessed you might have such suspicions, but they reassure you with a few guidelines. These collaborations are free; they do not require any previously attained artistic talent; and, depending on your inclination, there are quick artworks, as well as longer ones better suited to viewers with more patience and time.

Erected in the outdoor garden of the gallery, where the smell of moist soil from last night's rains almost overcomes the pollution from the city outside, is Tropical Igloo*, a walk-in installation by the most outspoken of the four artists, Tedi. Upon following Tedi inside, you are shown how to attach fresh jati (teak) leaves to the ceiling of the giant dome, where the rain has damaged the roof. As you are both working, Tedi describes his career as an artist and how he has negotiated issues with his patrons, curators, sponsors, critics and dealers, but never, he says, has he compromised his political beliefs: his commitment to freedom and ecology. 'What about this gallery?' you ask, 'Is it not also a compromise?'*

'We would be extremely idealistic not to understand that it is also an institution,' says Tedi. 'But we do not try to camouflage that. The work here was not produced for this gallery, and we only have short residencies here, every now and again. Think of this place like a part time job for artworks that are actually employed out in broader society, in specific environments.'

Young people wander in and out of the igloo, nod acknowledgements to you and Tedi but are careful not to interrupt your conversation. They are busy meeting for discussions of which you only hear fragments: organising the printing of T-shirts against the government's plans for a nuclear power plant in Jepara, arranging a tattoo appointment, swapping a photocopied book on workers' rights in South America, discussing an idea for a festival in Lombok.

When the roof is repaired, Tedi leads you to the next exhibit, which is also outside, at the entrance to the museum. After shaking your hand warmly, Tedi leaves you with Djuadi, who urges you to sit beside him, moving aside a box of safety pins and a pair of scissors. Djuadi is sorting through what appears to be a pile of rubbish, folding it into delicate flower brooches that he then offers to passers-by. He shows you how to sort the wrappers into colours, so he can match them to people's T-shirts, kebayas, or batik shirts.

'It's all clean,' says Djuadi, 'no chance of typhoid.'[60]

While he works, Djuadi asks about what kind of community you come from and what interests you. He describes his own upbringing, his working life, his ongoing links to the citizen media movement in Indonesia and the shifts in thinking that have led him to creating work that 'makes statements rather than money'. Djuadi also patiently explains a little more about the museum.

'It was established in 2011, after the final collapse of the commercial art market in Yogya and Bali. Artists who had invested everything in promises from collectors and curators lost everything with the global economic crisis that began in 2008.' But this happened in many Third World places that had been 'trendy' and exotic for Westerners, and by that time, the groups Djuadi worked with had links (facilitated by increased internet access in the first decade of the twenty-first century) to collectives in Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, China, Africa, and South America, as well as Indigenous arts communities in Australia and America. In 2013 a global movement of artists–led by such collectives, but supported by a group of successful European, American and Australian 'darlings' of contemporary art–temporarily shut down the Venice Biennale and the European Capital of Culture, demanding that part of the budgets for large survey cultural projects and blockbuster exhibitions be immediately funnelled into a range of grassroots artist initiatives in under-represented countries around the world. 'But there are several versions of that story,' he laughs, 'of which this gallery is but one.'

Making sure you are well stocked with rubbish flowers, 'for souvenirs', Djuadi brings you to the mezzanine level of the gallery where there are bricolage computer stations set up for viewing locally-archived video art and documentation of festivals, performances, exhibitions and protests. The computers look as if they have been salvaged and reassembled from multiple machines. Nothing is new, but as you sit down at one of the viewing stations and scroll through a database of videos produced for a range of activist initiatives, everything seems to be working just fine. There is fast internet connection for online browsing of very current items. You notice a video about the original installation of Tropical Igloo *at the Forest Art Festival, and another about the Festival Mata Air, where Djuadi began the* Rubbish Jasmine *project. Shortly, a young man approaches you with a smile and open hand. Agus introduces himself and explains that he is producing a radio story about audience responses to the gallery. Agus also manages this documentation lab, making sure equipment is working, constantly archiving new material, and answering visitors' questions. You ask if there is a catalogue and discover that many of these videos and documentation of the artworks are online, but as far as the gallery itself, it is the conversations between artists and audience members, such as this one, that serve as documentation. As you are speaking, he plugs his mobile phone into a USB port and begins transferring a folder of previously selected audio files.*

60. Several festival artists have become sick with typhoid from working with rubbish, including Djuadi and Indra Yanti.

Thanking the artists, and feeling a little sheepish over your initial doubts, you bid your farewell and leave wondering if you will ever again visit such a strange gallery.

Later, at a warung close-by, someone comments on the rubbish flower pinned to your shirt. Explaining where you have been, they ask who was there today. There is frequent rotation of artworks and artists, they explain, and visitors usually describe different and sometimes contradictory experiences of the exhibitions. An elderly patron drinking tea overhears. 'So, they call that rubbish 'art' now,' she cackles in friendly disbelief, 'give me a night of wayang kulit anytime!' [61]

This gallery is a figment of my imagination. While artist-run galleries in Java may one day have the resources to carry out such projects, in the meantime, festivals are one way artists can produce work on their own terms. I invented this gallery as an experiment in the possibilities of the Javanese Carnivalesque, as a way to think about the potential of open discussions that can extend beyond the brief exhibition of art. Even as imagined scenarios, these discussions create new modes of discourse around the relationships between artists and audience, object and subject, community and culture, theory and practice, as well as place and its representation. Such discussions are essential to developing critical theories that can be applied to work that is both included and excluded by museums and galleries and the existing global discourses surrounding art.

61. The fictional Gallery of Nongkrong is based on interviews with the artists and inspired by the even more farfetched Museum of Human Welfare, invented by Paul Greenough and Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing in the introduction to *Nature in the Global South* (2003). The Museum of Human Welfare, established in 2057, is an attempt to 'imagine a state of human-environmental relations in which nature isn't solely a resource for corporations and state bureaucracies and livelihood struggles actually meet human needs and protect non-human life forms. Some such imagining is required if we are to mobilise against the elite development that grinds down the poor and the rural, against majoritarian ploys that squeeze out minorities, and against a myopic growth ethic that dooms "junk" species to extinction (p.4).'

Figure 48, 49: *Rubbish Jasmine (Melati Sampah)*, by Djuadi, 2007.

Figure 50, 51: *Tropical Igloo (Igloo Tropis)*, by S. Tedi D., Forest Art Festival, 2005. Photographs by S. Tedi D.

Introduction

The previous chapter showed that environmental art festivals in Java are a local form of carnivalesque, pointing out the way that the festival form can transform practices that are thought of as traditional culture, such as reog, and draw them into a contemporary political movement. This chapter turns to the 'art' part of this festival form, in order to demonstrate that art in the context of Javanese Carnivalesque is, in fact, inseparable from the politics of the kampungs, the social relations of nongkrong and local environmentalism. I use one example from each of the festivals, both produced specifically for these festivals, and look at how these works can be thought of as both affirming and contesting global trends in art criticism.

In this chapter, I engage with a particular text by French art critic Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, that explores these trends in order to build a theoretical discourse around art in the 1990s. I use Bourriaud's writing as a starting point for the translation of carnivalesque artworks in Java into Western art theory, in order to point out that such a translation requires remix with local discourses on social relations and place. I propose extensions of the discourse around relational aesthetics in previously uncharted directions to give it more potential in the analysis of new cultural spaces in Java. My intention is to show that any theory of art that is globalising in its approach can be useful only if considered in combination with more local discourses on participation and collaboration. This combination of local and global frameworks can be thought of as what Anna Tsing calls 'friction'. Friction can help to reveal how artworks such as these generate meaning at multiple scales, how they have relevance to those who make them, those who experience them, and those who analyse them. When brought in direct contact with very local situations and social relations through a model of friction, relational aesthetics can help to show the myriad of ways that art is produced and understood all over the world.

As such, one of the challenges of this chapter is to address the way Indonesian art is currently understood both inside and outside Indonesia.[62] For instance, the representation of Indonesia in biennales and global art surveys is through a few 'art stars', whose identity as Indonesians is meant to contribute to cultural diversity. While this cultural diversity is indeed often given an important place in contemporary arts in the West, the messiness of this identity (for example the different versions of 'Indonesia' that exist for different people and the often conflicting regional identities that form Indonesia) are rarely considered. Neither are the ways this identity interacts with a Eurocentric canon nor the 'friction' this interaction produces. This situation is unique neither to Indonesians nor to visual artists.

62. I refer to 'Indonesian art' here rather than 'Javanese' because regional distinctions are rarely made in curatorial decisions of contemporary art. For example 'Closing the Gap; Contemporary Indonesian Art' at Melbourne International Fine Art, January 20-March 20, 2011, and 'Awas; Recent Art from Indonesia', Pruss & Ochs Gallery, Asian Fine Arts, Berlin, Germany, 2002.

Rather, it is typical of the limitations inherent in the way colonial relations have determined how local cultural practices, including cultural activism, have been interpreted in the West.

The creation of carnivalesque spaces at festivals in Java is part of a decolonisation of boundaries by local artists who are frustrated with the lack of access to the galleries, critics and curators that define what Indonesian or Javanese art is. They see their festivals as part of a necessary distancing from the global art world centred in Europe. In this sense, the creation of a festival as an art space is one version of what Chakrabarty (2000) calls a 'provincialisation' of Europe, discussed at length in Chapter 1. I take this decolonisation a step further here by also unpacking the art discourses that produce exclusions and misinterpretations, even when they claim to do otherwise. Rather than further classifying activist art in Java as 'alternative' (Ingham 2007) or 'relational', this chapter uses the concept of friction to localise understandings of the practices that produce cultural activism. I consider the ways that festival art can push the definitions of relational aesthetics, and by exploring the inherent friction in art production in the kampung, I shows that the art canon can indeed be provincialised by local artists determining their own engagements with audiences.

Chapter Structure

This chapter begins with a background to the concepts of relational aesthetics and friction. This background is followed by descriptions of two artworks, already evoked in the opening passage of this chapter, and their presentation at the festivals. I focus on the sensory experience of the works and their meaning in terms of plesetan, nongkrong and ideas of the kampung. Next, I look at the life narratives of the artists who produced the works. The broad trajectory of becoming an artist in a post colonial context such as Java can involve several paths flowing in sometimes opposite directions, placing each individual artist in a very different position from which to 'relate' to their audiences, in particular to the kampung. Next I look at the production of these artworks and how, when viewed as commodities, the inherent friction in their production takes on a new resonance. Here, I also examine the role of the kampung in such productions, extending Miwon Kwon's work on site-specificity to the very local context of Javanese social relations.

Theoretical Background

Relational Aesthetics

Rubbish Jasmine by Djuadi and *Tropical Igloo* by S. Teddy D., as well as other artworks exhibited at environment festivals in Central Java, can be viewed on one level as typical of encounters produced in 'relational art', as defined by French theorist Nicolas Bourriaud. In his book, *Relational Aesthetics*, Bourriaud argues for a different set of criteria to those that have been historically used to analyse art—one that includes the audience as a participant of the artwork. When confronted by a relational artwork, Bourriaud suggests that we ask

the following questions: 'Does this work permit me to enter into dialogue? Could I exist, and how, in the space it defines?' (Bourriaud 2002, p. 109). He refers to these questions, which he in fact states that we should ask in front of any aesthetic product, as 'criteria of co-existence'.

Bourriaud's ideas have been useful to theorists, curators and artists wishing to frame art in terms of participation, but they have also faced criticism for their sometimes homogenising effects and for the 'ethical turn' in art criticism they have caused (Bishop 2006b). British art critic Claire Bishop elaborates on Bourriaud's theories, describing relational art as 'what avant-garde we have today; artists using social situations to produce dematerialised, anti-market, politically engaged projects that carry on the modernist call to blur art and life (Bishop 2006a, p. 38).' But, in her article 'Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics' (2004), Bishop urges critics and audiences to also question the nature of such relationships, pointing out that they are 'not intrinsically democratic, as Bourriaud suggests,' in the same way that 'public space' is not intrinsically public.

> Bourriaud wants to equate aesthetic judgment with an ethicopolitical judgment of the relationships produced by a work of art. But how do we measure or compare these relationships? The quality of the relationships in 'relational aesthetics' are never examined or called into question. When Bourriaud argues, 'encounters are more important than the individuals who compose them', I sense that this question is (for him) unnecessary; all relations that permit 'dialogue' are automatically assumed to be democratic and therefore good. But what does 'democracy' really mean in this context? If relational art produces human relations, then the next logical question to ask is what types of relations are being produced, for whom, and why? (Bishop 2004, p. 37)

I quote Bishop at length because her criticism of the theories of relational aesthetics have done much to examine the assumptions made about participatory art and highlight the need for the critique of concepts that generalise unique local cultural practices. Bishop's work has resulted in relational aesthetics becoming more than just a new term coined from the writings of one (male, European) theorist and framed around a small handful of (mostly European artists. Bourriaud's concept of relational aesthetics is written as if to valorise the brave artists who challenge the elitism of the art world with open and transparent practices of collaboration with the community. For Bourriaud, as a curator writing from Europe, this approach may indeed have seemed novel. However, as explained in Chapter 2, the local terms of kampung and nongkrong already problemitise concepts of collaboration in Java, and have been doing so since long before the term relational aesthetics was coined. It is the specificity of these cultural practices, rather than the relationship itself–as implied by Bourriaud–that makes these artworks valuable texts to analyse.

Bishop's criticism is important to this thesis because it begins to shed light on some of

the assumptions Bourriaud makes around what is universal. The idea that there are relations that are more or less democratic, for example, does not take into account other modes of social interaction, particularly those that may not look at all democratic. Nongkrong, explored in Chapter 1, is one example, where being democratic is not necessarily the goal, and yet nongkrong is essential to locally specific participation. By applying the concept of the carnivalesque to collective cultural practices in Java, I am working to question these and other universals, particularly those of art, environmentalism, festivals and traditions. Bishop points out many of the over-simplifications present in Bourriaud's writing and in doing so, canvasses the possibilities for more complex frameworks to understand the range of work 'relational' may cover. In this way, Bishop's contribution to the debate around participatory art also contributes to decolonising art theory.

Bishop continues this line of argument by raising the role of art criticism within a relational framework. The shift towards Bourriaud's model of evaluating art is problematic for Bishop because it marks 'an ethical turn in art criticism' (Bishop 2006b).

> This is manifest in a heightened attention to how a given collaboration is undertaken. In other words, artists are increasingly judged by their working process—the degree to which they supply good or bad models of collaboration—and criticized for any hint of potential exploitation that fails to 'fully' represent their subjects, as if such a thing were possible. This emphasis on process over product (i.e., means over ends) is justified as oppositional to capitalism's predilection for the contrary.
> (Bishop 2006b)

Bishop argues that this in turn leads to polarised models of collaboration that render art criticism somewhat incapable of making a contribution to the debate. The stories of production told in this chapter, those processes that form what I call the Javanese Carnivalesque, do illuminate some of the problems in applying such an analysis to local situations. However my aim here is not to judge them as models of collaboration that oppose the processes or products of capitalism. Rather, by employing relational aesthetics as a starting point, I mean to contribute to an understanding of the complexity of local cultural practices in which the processes and products of capitalism are part of the collaborations that form between artists and the kampungs in which they work.

What are missing from Bishop's analysis of relational aesthetics are the conversations around such artworks that go beyond those of the artist and the critic. Like Bishop, I am not interested in creating a discourse where judging collaborations as 'good' or 'bad' is the goal. Rather, I argue that perhaps if this ethical turn was to be followed to its logical conclusion, and understood to be in fact driven by friction, relational aesthetics would make much more sense because it would take the analysis beyond Eurocentric models of criticism. The audience comments in the hypothetical *warung* after a visit to the 'Gallery

of Nongkrong', for example, may even begin to look like art criticism. Through a festival, 'new' spaces of criticism emerge (or perhaps old spaces re-emerge) for works such as *Rubbish Jasmine* and *The Tropical Igloo*. These conversations, through the practice of nongkrong, can contribute to art criticism, for these works are judged in more broad social spaces than those produced at the festivals. And, while they are casual in their setting, this kampung criticism is not necessarily gentle—a fact confirmed by interviews with kampung residents months after each festival. In a largely oral culture such as Java's, critical discourse between the artist and the audience is arguably already more embedded in the artistic process than it is in the West, where artworks need to be considered deliberately and self-consciously 'conversational' or 'relational' if they are to undergo the same audience rigour as in the kampung. In Central Java, images and objects are catalysts for spoken word reactions rather than the reverse. A universal emphasis on the written word as a necessary facilitator of the relationship between artworks and their reception is, in part, what leads to the appearance that art history and criticism in places like Indonesia are impoverished. (Africa and South America experience the same situation.) Festival Mata Air and the Forest Art Festival, and more generally the concept of the Javanese carnivalesque, can help to question the use of seemingly universal frameworks for evaluating art.

The work of American art theorist Miwon Kwon is important in interpreting how relational aesthetics can be localised. In her book *One Place After Another,* Kwon points out that the idea of a 'relational aesthetic' represents 'neither a new movement in the field nor a newly politicised aesthetic sensibility, but rather a moment of arrival in which a well-developed mode of practice that had been undervalued in mainstream art finally receives cultural acceptance' (Kwon 2002, p. 107). Kwon's seminal theories on site-specificity, while they critically confront the tendency of the art world to seize the latest trend (i.e. nomadism, temporality etc.), do not urge artists, critics or audiences to take sides regarding models of what is 'good art.' Instead, Kwon argues, 'we need to be able to think of the range of these seeming contradictions and our contradictory desires for them together, at once. To understand seeming oppositions as sustaining relations' (Kwon 2000, p. 37).

This acceptance and appreciation of inherent conflict has strong similarities with Anna Tsing's models of 'friction' in collaborative exchanges. Placed together, the two perspectives–one from art criticism (Kwon) and the other from anthropology (Tsing)–throw light on the practices of the groups presented in this thesis. It is this interdisciplinary approach that is indeed necessary to contextualise such practices which are themselves multidisciplinary. As new cultural spaces such as environmental festivals emerge in Indonesia and elsewhere, permutations of theoretical frameworks that can move outside the boundaries of visual arts discourse become increasingly necessary.

Friction

Kwon's arguments have many parallels with those of American anthropologist Anna Tsing. Both point to the friction inherent in collaborations, and explore contradictions and oppositions as the most important dimension of relations. In this chapter, I use Tsing's concept of friction, which I have also raised in previous chapters, as a model for understanding the politics of the artistic collaborations of the carnivalesque in Java. Friction draws on local and global contexts and politicises dialogues in a way relational aesthetics alone cannot. Tsing argues that 'Cultures are continually co-produced in the interactions I call "friction": the awkward, unequal, unstable, and creative qualities of interconnection across difference' (Tsing 2005, p. 4). If friction is taken as a given in the collaborations presented in this chapter, then we can begin to think about the forces that drive and are driven by this friction, rather than just analyse the relationship itself. From there we can begin to answer some of Bishop's questions around relational art, delving deeper into the nature of the collaborations rather than merely accepting that relations are characteristics of contemporary art.

Tsing not only applies her model of friction to the production of place, ideas of the 'village' and 'kampung', and notions of environmentalism. She also applies them to commodities (coal and rubber in particular) referring to all the relationships along the stages of production and distribution–even the most invisible–as separate yet interlinked arenas of cultural production (Tsing 2005, p. 51). She argues that 'To look for friction (in global commodity chains) is to refuse to see value as something predetermined and fixed rather than shaped and contested' (Tsing 2008, p. 246).

How this model of commodity production can be applied to artworks, as they travel along the path of conception, design, production, exhibition, documentation and criticism, is indeed a very important question to ask. Many have argued that the trend in participative art practices seen in contemporary art in the Western world today, the trend that Bourriaud calls relational, has emerged from criticism of an increased commoditisation of art (Bourriaud, Bishop, Kwon). If this is indeed the case, a model of friction, that acknowledges art making as the production of a commodity, can bring any artwork, including those made at Festival Mata Air and the Forest Art Festival into a framework of relational aesthetics that is deeper and more local in its approach.

Two Artworks in the Kampung

***Igloo Tropis (Tropical Igloo)*, by S. Teddy D., Forest Art Festival, 2005**

Tropical Igloo is an impressive igloo-shaped structure made from strong young teak branches layered with woven teak leaves. Two igloos were actually built, a small and large-sized one, but only the larger one survived the first day of heavy rain. Viewed from a distance, its installation at the Forest Art Festival presented a striking and unusual form for the rural

landscape of Central Java. With a single low entrance and exit leading to a corridor and a round 'room,' it created an enclosed space within the festival site. It was approximately five metres in diameter at its widest point and just high enough for most festival participants to stand. It was erected near the main site of the park and was then used throughout the event as a social centre and a shelter from the rain and sun.

Tropical Igloo referenced local tradition in a number of ways, firstly by drawing on architectural conventions to shape its use. In domestic spaces in Java, doorways are made low so upon entering and exiting, users are forced to dip their heads as a sign of respect. The entrance of the igloo was a low tunnel, forcing a bowed entrance to reference the convention. But *Tropical Igloo* also parodied this etiquette, as it became a nongkrong space for young people to hang out and drink, invisible to broader Javanese society. Like a child's cubby house, it simultaneously delineated social inclusion and exclusion. One of these delineations occurred along the boundaries of gender. Social spaces in Java that are designed for men and women to gather together, are generally well lit open structures, where any deviant behaviour would be clearly visible. The dim sense of enclosure created by *Tropical Igloo,* and its single passageway serving as an escape route, made it a male space from early on. Women at the festival, interviewed afterwards, said they would not have felt comfortable inside. These meanings were not built into the installation. They were activated by the festival audience and relied on a social grammar shared by those inside and outside the igloo.

Tropical Igloo is an event as much as an art object, depending on the presence of participants. Most important during the Forest Art Festival was the sensory experience involved in the occupation of the igloo. It was touched and felt. It enclosed its occupants. It shaded and dappled the light outside. The work decomposed over the festival; the leaves dried in the sunny periods and rotted in the rainy periods, changing the smell, the tactility of its walls, the light conditions within and the temperature within the igloo. As mud was brought into the space during the rainy periods, and the structure of the work was softened by the elements, the space of the igloo slowly became more integrated with the space around it.

Sometimes during the festival, the sitters crowded in on each other, the igloo reassigned the definitions of private space as arms and legs are pressed against each other in the small circular room. The scent of sweaty bodies, *kretek* and decomposing teak leaves intermingled to form a kind of augmented sauna experience, perhaps what could be expected of an igloo in the tropics. These sensory connotations went beyond the already commonly held relations to space described above and formed a shared code between participants, reintegrating human experience with the transformations of the natural world. This became an expression of how carnivalesque produces a licensed exemption from normal social

codes, in this case Javanese etiquette, and a sense of a collectively shared bodily experience.

For Tedi, the meaning of *Tropical Igloo* is tied to the leaf of the ubiquitous teak tree, a foundation of the identity of Randublatung. Many performances and installations at both Festival Mata Air and the Forest Art Festival used teak leaves as their basis (Figure 52, Figure 53). Tedi describes his relationship to teak leaves as part of an emotional connection to Randublatung. In his own words:

> When you buy even things like nails from the hardware store in Randu (Randublatung), they're wrapped up in a teak leaf. Here (in the city), they are wrapped in paper. Nasi pecel, sate ayam, meat from the butcher, everything there is wrapped in teak leaves. It is a saying around Randu, 'if its not wrapped in teak leaves it doesn't taste good.'
>
> I wanted to wrap our community, our utopia, so that it would taste (rasa) good in the kampung. So, of course, my work was site specific and contextual to that area and how it related to the kampung was important. When I went there, my feelings were woken up again about Blora, sentimental and nostalgic. I went to high school there, but after I came to Yogya, I changed communities, and for a while, I forgot about Blora.
>
> Those emotions and memories were important. It was about the place. But of course, it (the artwork) was temporary; it was durational, as are all such attachments.

Tedi is right to identify his work as sentimental. For his sentiments around teak leaves are not the same as those of the public for which he claims his work is made. While for Tedi the leaves used for the roof of *Tropical Igloo* had symbolic and emotional meaning, the value of the leaves to the residents of the kampung was described to me in terms of price per kilo. Tedi, in fact, bought the leaves he used for *Tropical Igloo* at Randublatung market. Tedi's interpretation of local meaning already begins to reveal friction between the way different people view the forest and its assets. While for a successful contemporary artist such as Tedi, who usually exhibits in a range of urban galleries both in Indonesia and overseas, the experience of creating a 'public' artwork may have provided some novelty, for villagers who live and work in the site he used and with the materials he employs on a daily basis, the engagement was very different.

Tedi's work is relational in the Bourriaud sense but also problematises the idea of all relations 'being fluid and unconstrained by exposing how all our interactions are, like public space, riven with social and legal exclusions' (Bishop 2004, p. 74). This dilemma is made blatantly clear by the distinction between who *made* and who *used* the igloo. The creative friction of this dilemma will be explored throughout this chapter.

***Melati Sampah (Rubbish Jasmine)*, by Djuadi, Festival Mata Air, 2007**

The work *Rubbish Jasmine* is a performance and a distributed jewellery project that began during the opening parade of the second Festival Mata Air at Kalitaman, in 2007.

Figure 52 (top): Motorbike adorned with leaves of teak and other local trees, Forest Art Festival, 2005.

Figure 53 (left): Teak leaves used in costume, Festival Mata Air, 2008.

It involves the collecting of materials as well as the production, sharing and wearing of hundreds of folded flowers.[63] The title is inherently ironic, evoking the sweet smell of jasmine, used throughout Java as a floral adornment for the hair on occasions of celebration coupled with the negative connotations of rubbish.

By the time the festival began, Djuadi had been living in a tent at the site of the festival, the kampung of Kalitaman, for a month. This meant that, as well as being a committee member of Tanam Untuk Kehidupan, he was known and accepted in the local community; he was washing in the public bath, eating with the local *tukang ojek* (motorbike taxi drivers), and listening to stories of the kampung. In the lead up to the festival, Djuadi had also been working with neighbourhood children to make costumes from discarded materials. This collaborative process was initiated by Djuadi, but finds its roots in the kampung. Its open-endedness shares some of the characteristics ascribed in contemporary art theory to relational aesthetics. In relational aesthetics, it is the idea of art as a set of relations that is new, rather than the relations themselves. Djuadi makes this clear, as he explained there was nothing new in what he was doing except calling the process an 'artist residency'. While the concept of relational aesthetics might hint at a shift in the way contemporary art is conceptualised within the Western art system from a product to a set of relations, in Java, these relations have their own genealogy in the kampung and in the practice of nongkrong.

On the day of the opening of Festival Mata Air, after helping the children dress and prepare their instruments and costumes for the opening parade, Djuadi began collecting rubbish and attaching it to his clothing with safety pins until he was entirely covered with snack packets, cigarette boxes, and candy wrappers (Figure 54, Figure 55). This performance fitted in very well with other performances in the parade, which included a rubbish-collecting clown and a cheerleading troupe with pom-poms made of plastic bags (see Figure 56). Over the following days of the festival, Djuadi developed the idea and experimented with different packaging materials, folding them into different shapes. He narrowed his rubbish down to a few brands of snack packaging, which were easy to clean, cut and fold, and of which there was no shortage on the streets and settled his design on an easily constructed jasmine flower. Over the six days of the festival, he made hundreds of flowers, pinning them to himself and to people he met in the street, carefully choosing colours and patterns appropriate to people's outfits. In this sense, like *Tropical Igloo*, the work depends entirely on the engagement and meanings drawn from the audience, or, in

63. *Rubbish Jasmine* has also been shown in Australia, at the 'Live and Let DIY Festival' in Brisbane in February, 2008, and the 'Nighttimes night markets' produced by Performance Space at the Newtown Hub in February 2008, in Melbourne as part of artist talks at Forepaw on the 16 February, and at the Imanpa Art Gallery, outside Alice Springs as part of skill-sharing workshops. It was again performed at the Sepik River Crocodile Festival in Ambunti, East Sepik, Papua New Guinea.

Figure 54 (left): Djuadi collecting rubbish during parade, Festival Mata Air, 2007.

Figure 55: Children's costumes made from rubbish, Festival Mata Air, 2007.

Figure 56: Rubbish cheerleaders, Festival Mata Air, 2007.

Figure 57: Rubbish collected at Festival Mata Air, 2006

this case, the wearer. The jewellery acts as an invitation to converse, a point of common engagement. It speaks to the de-territorialisation of the site and the possibilities that emerge from chance encounters.[64]

In *Rubbish Jasmine,* certain levels of meaning are created through the relationship between words and images. Like *Tropical Igloo*, *Rubbish Jasmine* relies on plesetan and the slippage of specific cultural grammars to decipher. There are over two hundred species of 'melati' or jasmine in Indonesia, with names such as *melati rajah* (king jasmine), *melati putih* (white jasmine), *melati hutan* (forest jasmine), *melati Italia* (Italian jasmine). With *Rubbish Jasmine*, Djuadi adds another species, juxtaposing the natural and romantic with plastic, human-made, post-consumer waste. The title of the piece works on a symbolic and specifically 'Indonesian' level. In Indonesia, jasmine has been adopted as an official national symbol, one of three flowers, because of its use by so many different ethnic groups on celebratory occasions such as marriage ceremonies (ProFaunaIndonesia 2003). So, along with the red and white flag, and the smell of kretek, *melati* is instantly recognisable to Indonesians. The flower does have genuine cultural significance, and this significance is employed by ubiquitous national identity campaigns, from national education to television advertising, forcing the symbol into the imagined identity of being 'Indonesian'.

The irony here is that the rubbish employed in the work is also generically Indonesian. With products like 'Indomie' (two-minute noodles), 'Sasa' (monosodium glutamate) and 'Nescafe 3 in 1' (instant coffee, sugar and powdered milk in one packet) distributed all over the archipelago, accompanied by aggressive advertising campaigns, instant food has been manufactured as the 'national cuisine' in a process parallel to the building of official national symbols. As one of the country's biggest exporters, the processed food giant Indofoods, is praised as one of Indonesia's commercial success stories. Along with the associated health problems (malnutrition and obesity are both major national health concerns in Indonesia) and the impact on local food producers, this trend has delivered the identities of such products into the 'national psyche', in turn ensuring that Djuadi's flowers

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64. It is important to note here some significant differences in attitudes to rubbish between environmentalists in Indonesia and most of the West. Firstly, planting practices in Indonesia mean that reproduction of certain fruits, such as durian, actually rely on human interaction with their reproduction processes in the form of 'rubbish disposal'. In the forest of Kalimantan, for example, durians grow in semi-cultivated plantations around human settlements, where seeds have been thrown outside of the houses (Tsing 2005, pp. 176-82). Secondly, the practice of food being wrapped *(bungkus)* in Java is ancient but traditionally used leaves of jati (as discussed previously), banana, or coconut. These were simply thrown to the ground when the food was finished and biodegraded into soil. Plastic packaging has largely replaced leaves, but disposal practices have not always changed. Thirdly, economic factors greatly affect the use of packaging. To serve households with low disposable incomes, many products, such as shampoo, mosquito repellent, monosodium glutamate, coffee, and sugar, are available from warungs in single-serve packages, which cost very little. This of course increases packaging compared to buying in bulk. Fourthly, the lack of centralised government services in many residential areas of Indonesia means that there are neither recycling nor rubbish services available as there is in most of the Western world, so kampungs dispose of waste themselves, often through incineration. Finally, there are different conceptions of public space in Indonesia. People tend to look after private space very carefully, but have no compunction about messing up public space and just dropping wrappers and papers of all kinds. Picking up rubbish from a public space, as Djuadi did, is something very unusual.

are instantly recognisable, not just for their form but the origin of their materials.

These two signifiers of national identity, melati and the Indofoods brand, are folded in on themselves, literally and symbolically. In a carnivalesque combination of opposites, the sacred symbol of the jasmine physically merges with the universally recognised grotesque of garbage. Djuadi collapses the cultural objects of contemporary capitalism and nation building into a simple corsage.

Being an Indonesian Artist

This section looks at the life narratives of Djuadi and Tedi but begins by introducing Heri Dono as an example of an internationally known Indonesian artist caught in the contradictions of local and global conceptions of art. Dono's career provides a counterpoint to the kampung art described above and demonstrates the limitations globally accepted Indonesian artists face. Further, I show that festivals become the nexus, not only of different kinds of art, but also of different kinds of artists. While the global art institutions may not be able to cope with difference very well, artists reclaim this difference as friction and express it in new sites of production.

Both the artworks described above demonstrate genuine attempts to produce art that has meaning to local audiences within a kampung context. While the framework of relational aesthetics helps, these attempts are difficult to translate to a global art context, raising important questions around the confrontation between local, national and global ideas of art. Artists like Djuadi and Tedi can find themselves swimming against very strong currents of expectation from the global art world (curators, galleries, audiences and critics); currents that carve out somewhat impenetrable spaces within which artists are expected to operate. What could be revealed through a deeper understanding of truly local art outside the West could be unpopular, or even politically incorrect.

Nigerian artist and public intellectual Olu Oguibe argues that these are the 'peculiar rules' of the culture game when artists from post-colonial contexts enter the global art circuit. In a catalogue essay for the West African artist Yinka Shonibare, who gained global visibility in the mid-nineteen-nineties, Oguibe writes that, more often than not, it is up to artists themselves to push for their own representation, which can become an act of self-exoticism rather than a strategy to critically subvert the art system (Oguibe 2001). Many artists are in a position which demands self-exoticism if they are to succeed financially. To choose otherwise, says Oguibe, is to choose exclusion.

Describing the demands England makes on its 'outsiders', Oguibe (2004) points out in his book *The Culture Game* that 'The door may be narrow and fraught with risks for in order to defy and subvert the illogic of difference, the outsider must begin with an exaggeration of his own difference' (Oguibe 2004, p. 35). While this 'game' becomes

common knowledge for outsider citizens in the metropolis, for cultural practitioners who arrive in England, and more generally the West, from postcolonial destinations, there are 'peculiar rules'. Oguibe writes:

> Paying rigorous attention to the critical discourses of the day, especially postmodernism and its minority discourses, Shonibare understood that in order to break into the culture game of the metropolis he had but few cards, few choices, few avenues or guises all of which, inevitably, required of him to submit to a test of difference, and worse still, to pass that test (Oguibe 2004, p. 34).

This card of difference to which Oguibe refers is also familiar to those Indonesian artists who have made themselves (or who have been made) visible in the global circuit. Heri Dono's career also reveals a set of 'peculiar rules', which can be used to explore the limitations of representing Indonesia in the global circuit. I draw on Oguibe's work as an example of friction in the sense that it shows how pushing from both sides generates the exoticism of artists.

For artists like Heri Dono, living outside Indonesia, it is necessary to reiterate a sense of 'Indonesianness'. Working with international curators and critics, who recognise their styles as potentially global in appeal, these artists engage in a complex process of collaborative exoticisation.[65] Such an arrangement can be both mutually beneficial and mutually limiting. Since the early 1990s, Dono has been available as the selected artist when a representative from Indonesia was required in survey exhibitions, and he has been able to travel the world in a way completely beyond the reach of most of his Indonesian peers.[66] However, in return, galleries, museums, and curators expect direct references to his Indonesian identity in his work. In becoming a globally recognised artist, Dono's identity is constructed as (and limited to being) 'typically Indonesian.'

Of course, this situation also throws up questions of the relevance and limitations of globally travelling curators who are not locally engaged but claim to represent particular localities. The point here is, firstly, that there are plenty of artists and artworks that could be explored rather than relying on a small handful, if the aim was to really expand knowledge of Indonesian or Javanese cultural practices. And secondly, that there are much more significant considerations about how art is produced and consumed in local contexts than what is being revealed by the current surveys. Contrasting the global and local identities of

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65. In the case of the career of Heri Dono, the American curator and writer Astri Wright played an essential role in his establishment on the international art circuit. After Wright curated him into the exhibition 'Modern Indonesian Art, Three Generations of Tradition and Change' in the US in 1990, Dono undertook a series of overseas residencies that ranged from the first in Basel, Switzerland, then Oxford UK, a number of residencies in Australia including ones in Canberra, Townsville, Melbourne and Brisbane; Vermont, USA, Vancouver, Canada and Singapore. In the case of Dadang Christanto, another very well-known Indonesian artist based in Australia, Australian curator Caroline Turner was instrumental in establishing his international career (Ingham 2007).
66. For an extensive analysis of Heri Dono's career in the context of the global art scene, see Chapter 7 of (Ingham 2007).

Figure 58: *Bimo Tarung* (2007), AAo Season

Figure 59: *General Kill More* (2007), Aris Prabawa

Figure 60: *Insect (2007),* Tanam Untuk Kehidupan.

a few 'art stars' can only say so much.

> 'At the very least, if postcolonial art critics are serious in attempting to extend the reach of art history they should be willing to consider not just progressive diasporic art, reiterating the identity politics of the 1980s and 1990s, but also practices that many Western observers might regard as offensive, kitsch, dull, hackneyed, or simply incomprehensible' (Rampley 2006, p. 188).

Artists such as Heri Dono have introduced international audiences to issues of Indonesian politics and society; his work references Indonesian mythology such as in wayang stories as well as employing (like anakseribupulau and TUK artists) typically 'Third World' recycling and analogue aesthetics. And Dono's work is undoubtedly also informed both by specific and local cultural heritage and by responses to national and global flows of culture. However, it remains a fact that many artists and collectives in Indonesia do the same. Most are unable (or unwilling) to establish the international artist persona that Dono shares with other international artists.

I bring up Dono's career not to question its legitimacy or his talent, but to provide a contrast of scale that illustrates the flows involved in forming artistic identities considered globally legitimate. These flows work in multiple and opposing directions between the kampung, concepts of national identity and the global art circuits. There are, of course, many circuits, of which European exposure forms just a part. The Chinese market and the Queensland Asia Pacific Triennial, for example, each source slightly different representations of Indonesian art. In other words, the global circuits, along with the local and national scenes, are all pluralised in some sense with a range of interpretations and perceptions.

Most of Dono's sculptural work deconstructs and reassembles contemporary objects (see *Glass vehicles*, 1995. Collection: Queensland Art Gallery or *Flying angels*, 2006. Collection: National Gallery of Australia). The artworks made at or for the activist festivals usually employ quite similar methods and aesthetics, as is evident in the exhibition 'Sisa: reuse, collaboration, and cultural activism from Indonesia' (UTS Gallery, 2007). The work, *Bimo Tarung* (2007), for example, by the TUK artist AAo Season (see Figure 58), is a figure created from scrap metal and dissected domestic appliances. The discarded materials have been transformed into a character from the wayang story *Barata Yudha.* Aris Prabawa's *General Kill More* (2007) from the same exhibition (see Figure 59), an office swivel chair transformed into a military figure, is another example. It is unlikely that AAo Season or Prabawa (or the collectives of which they are members) will reach the heights of Heri Dono, not because their work is less worthy, but because the canon of 'global' art has the need for only a limited number of individual Indonesian artists who can simultaneously be cosmopolitan nomads and remain 'Indonesian'. What Oguibe describes as 'the card of difference' can only be played so many times in the culture game that is contemporary

Western art (Oguibe 2001, p. 3). Until such parameters are changed, this is how the art world will continue to represent the tension between local and global artistic identities.

Given these limitations, what can the carnivalesque modes of cultural production raised in this research do to represent these tensions differently? To answer this question, I look at the lives of the artists who made *Tropical Igloo* and *Rubbish Jasmine*. Their very different identities as artists show that artist identities are also produced from friction and that the festival context can accommodate multiple approaches to art making impossible to present side-by-side within the global canon.

S. Tedi D.: from Artist to Activist

I begin with S. Tedi D., the most well known of a handful of artists who travelled (self-funded) from the urban centres of Yogyakarta, Semarang, Surabaya or Jakarta to produce site-specific work in collaboration with local residents at the Randublatung Forest Art Festival.

S. Tedi D. is a sculptor and painter who lives in Yogyakarta. Tedi is a renowned artist, indisputably prolific, and a notorious Yogyakarta personality. He is part of the generation of artists that trained in the Academy of Fine Art (ASRI) in Yogyakarta and then remained living and working after the campus was moved to Bantul (see discussion of Gampingan in introduction). Tedi has held a controversial place in the Yogyakarta arts community. The narrative around his adolescent and early adult life has been one of drunkenness and violent behaviour. In part, this has fitted predictably with both narratives of the 'unattached Indonesian male' and the idea in the West of the 'bohemian artist'.

However, Tedi has also been talented and/or fortunate enough to be one of a number of internationally recognised Yogyakarta artists. His paintings and sculptures have been in steady demand both in Indonesia and overseas (until the recent effects of the Global Financial Crisis) and he has often worked to prestigious commissions. His work appears in art publications, has received attention from a range of writers and critics, and is also usually included in surveys of Indonesian 'political' art (particularly as he is represented by Cemeti gallery).

This professional success has met with a mixed reception within activist communities such as Taring Padi, TUK and anakseribupulau. On the one hand, Tedi is often able to offer paid work to his assistants who mostly come from his large pool of friends within these communities, and the financial assistance is welcomed. His semi-celebrity status and strong connections in the commercial art world also bring attention to small or remote events and

Figure 61 (top): S. Tedi D. (right) and some of the ‘Art Merdeka’ (Freedom Art), team.

Figure 62 (bottom): S. Tedi D. (left) and Plonco (right) inside Tropical Igloo, 2005. Photograph from the Taring Padi archives.

projects such as the Forest Art Festival as well as to many young, 'undiscovered' artists.[67] On the other hand, Tedi works mostly as a solo artist in apparent contrast to the collective ideology of such groups, which claim individual artistic authorship is elitist.[68]

It is Tedi's lifestyle, however, rather than his professional success, that expresses the creative spontaneity that for many young unmarried Javanese males is the ultimate freedom to which they aspire, the antithesis of the 'responsible' Indonesian citizen. He values experimentation and experience above all else. In his twenties, as he rose to artistic success, he rarely kept appointments.[69] He was chronically nomadic and seemed desperately uncommitted to his career. According to collaborators and the coordinators of both Festival Mata Air and the Forest Art Festival (as well as other events), the process of working with Tedi was often very difficult, dominated by chaos rather than compromise.

At the same time, Tedi is also highly respected for what might be termed his 'networking' abilities–in other words, his powers of nongkrong. He has relationships with artists, curators and collectors within the Yogyakarta art scene, as well as at national, regional, and international levels. While some of his characteristics undoubtedly create organisational difficulties on some levels, his social skills have a different set of values from those of formal art administration.

He has also built a brand around his artistic endeavours, 'Art Merdeka' (Freedom Art), which he uses to define his artistic identity and also to sell T-shirts, showing that he indeed operates on many scales (Figure 61). For Tedi, the ability to simultaneously navigate the scenes of cultural activists as well as those of international curators and buyers, has led to his success.

While Tedi also participated in the 2006 Festival Mata Air at Salatiga, discussed here is his site-specific work at the Randublatung Forest Art Festival, where his connection to the region of Blora is significant. Although Tedi himself was actually born and schooled in Padang, his father was from Blora and he speaks fluent Javanese and can keep up with the Blora dialect. This gives him legitimate claims to being '*wong Blora*' (a Blora person) as well as 'orang Padang' (a Padang person) and also to being known as a 'Yogya artist', having been trained and now living in Yogyakarta. In her discussion on the narrative of origin in site-

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67. Tedi runs what many friends affectionately refer to as an 'art factory' (*pabrik seni*). He works mostly from his home in South Yogyakarta, where he is constantly visited by curators, artisans, assistants, and admirers. He is an astute negotiator and unlike many artists, has strong business skills. For young, ambitious artists, spending time at Tedi's house will–if Tedi recognises their potential–invariably lead to valuable introductions to curators and collectors.
68. In fact the idea of collective authorship is sometimes also a contentious issue for Taring Padi, particularly with regards to distribution of payment for artworks sold.
69. This made the process of conducting interviews for this research at times quite difficult, as it required the navigation of muddled conversations with Tedi in inebriated states in order to gain an understanding of his practice–an example of the necessity of the 'nongkrong' research methodology discussed in Chapter 1.

Figure 63: Woodworking studio outside Randublatung, 2006.

Figure 64: Agus (left) and Djuadi (right) whittle jati pieces, 2008.

Figure 65: *Just Take It, Ambil Aja* (ongoing artwork), 2007.

specific art, Kwon argues that connections between an artist and place can actually confuse aspects of site-specificity by setting up a discourse of legitimacy–a discourse that is evident in the context of Tedi's work presented at a village festival.

> On the one hand, this 'return of the author' results from the thematization of discursive sites, which engenders a misrecognition of them as 'natural' extensions of the artist's identity, and the legitimacy of the critique is measured by the proximity of the artist's personal association (converted to expertise) with a particular place, history, discourse, identity, etc. (converted to thematic content).
> (Kwon 1997, p. 103)

To those outside of Central Java, Tedi can be seen to be from Blora, but to those living in the kampungs of Randublatung, this is not a living connection, and he is viewed as an outsider. The multiple identities of artists such as Tedi do indeed confuse the issue, making the question of why his legitimate connection is of such significance to him an ambiguous one. Tedi named his daughter 'Blora' and speaks passionately and nostalgically about the magic and significance of the place as well as his commitment to the fight for the conservation of the Blora forests, although he has never, in fact, lived there. This narrative of origin inspires both his art and his politics, but it also represents the trajectory from the kampung to the city, a trajectory that carries Djuadi in quite the opposite direction.

Djuadi: from Activist to Artist

While this section is given the shorthand title above, the trajectory of Djuadi's career is, in his own words, from 'Woodworker (*tukang kayu*) to artsworker.' As well as being loyal to an identity associated with Randublatung, Djuadi also positions himself more generally as a village person (*orang desa* or *orang kampung*). He also identifies in his work a motive of wanting to shift preconceptions of that identity, to assert that being from a kampung does not preclude him from being a creative producer, an intelligent activist, a 'cosmopolitan citizen.'

Djuadi was born and raised in Randublatung and moved to Jakarta as an adolescent in search of work. He returned to Randublatung when his parents had both passed away to take care of his youngest sister, who was still at middle school. When she was at an age that she could be left alone for months at a time, he began travelling and joining the activities of a number of activist and performance collectives. For a number of years, Djuadi became a *gembel* (wanderer).

Djuadi describes himself as an 'art worker'. He refuses to adhere to any scale of hierarchy that should set artists above craftspeople or painters above weavers or

woodcarvers. [70] He has no formal art training, but like many of Randublatung's young men, he learned to do woodcarving for furniture commissions in the workshops on the outskirts of the village (Figure 53). The development of his skills is irrefutably linked to the timber industry of Central Java. With the scraps of wood and spare time left over from their commissioned work, wood workers in the workshops around Randublatung play with new forms and techniques. Many of these workers are talented and hardworking but very few aspire to being part of the 'art world'.

It has been Djuadi's connections to activist communities in the cities that have introduced him to such possibilities: to the idea of exhibiting, to performance art, and even to the notion of being an 'artist', which Djuadi articulates as an opportunity to build an audience for his environmentalism. This is indeed an opposite trajectory to that of Tedi, or other 'professional' artists, who come to activism from art, and to his place of origin from a variety of other places. Like Exi, who speaks of the *pacaran* (romantic relationship) between culture and activism that drive his work, Djuadi says that the relationship between the two must be maintained to have the power to make change.

Djuadi's work is varied and project-based, but always has the same general aim of education about issues of environment and social justice. Djuadi presents himself as a kind of shaman, declaring solidarity between the artist and the oppressed. As an artist, Djuadi often works individually, producing works such as *Rubbish Jasmine*. But he says that the intentions of these are the same as the work he does as an activist, such as organising campaigns and educational hiking trips, and lobbying industry and government. He doesn't generally differentiate between art and non-art or between collective and individual activities.

While Djuadi travels often, he usually carries, at most, his wood carving tools, a sewing kit, paper and pens and a few changes of clothing. However, during the period of researching this thesis, I saw him also acquire a mobile phone and a second-hand digital camera. He has joined Facebook because, he says:

> I think every tool has power, no matter how small it is. Every tool can be used. I don't think too ambitiously about what tools I use for my artworks or what they can actually change. I just look at what's available and make sure I am using them with purpose, that they fit in with my life's work.

This ability to adapt to different social contexts and to nongkrong in the new online

70. It is worth noting that, while Djuadi and his peers tend to use the English 'art worker' to refer to themselves and each other– borrowed from the prolific use of the term in the West in the 1960s and 70s (see for example The Art Workers' Coalition (AWC) that formed in New York City in January 1969)– the concept also comes from the Indonesian word *tukang* (worker) as in *tukang kayu* (wood worker/carpenter), *tukang rumah* (house builder) or *tukang batu* (stone worker).

spaces of social networking platforms demonstrates Djuadi's awareness of the mediation of his own creative production. Like Tedi's igloo, his work also shows a familiarity with contemporary arts practices. By bringing traditional carving tools and practices that may not exactly be considered 'art' in their village context together with new tools, Djuadi articulates the Javanese Carnivalesque as a different form of 'contemporary' art from one that has existed historically in Java, one that is not stuck in the definitions of 'traditional' and 'contemporary' and one that can flex with the flows of technological mediation.

Production of Artworks: Collaboration with Friction at its Heart

This section describes the different production processes employed for *Tropical Igloo* and *Rubbish Jasmine*. The former was a finished artwork; the latter is an ongoing production, where the process is the artwork. Both are valuable for exploring how the terms of kampung and nongkrong can intersect with artistic endeavours, and how the art produced at festivals challenges more mainstream ideas of art's value.

These works, as has been argued above, are both relational and site-specific. But perhaps more importantly, as they were made they produced sites of friction between different perceptions of what art does and its role in the kampung. Friction makes more sense in these instances as a model of collaboration than relational aesthetics alone, as a conclusion that these works are relational does little to unpack the reciprocal interventions at play in their production. The many actors who are involved in these collaborations apply pressures to the collaborations in different directions, pressures that are aesthetic and otherwise, resulting in artworks that are asymmetrical, layered and somewhat incomplete.

Extending Relational Aesthetics

Bourriaud himself has continued to grapple with the tensions of relational aesthetics since coining the term. Notably, the natural extension of relational aesthetics for Bourriaud is a model of art making that combines different sides of a relationship, 'starting from a globalised state of culture' rather than from the assumptions of Modernism. In his 'Altermodern Manifesto', which he launched at the 2009 Tate Triennial, Bourriaud identifies a 'new universalism', one that is based on 'creolisation', 'translations, subtitling, and general dubbing' (Bourriaud 2009, p. 23).

Bourriaud opens his explanation of the concept of the altermodern with the proposition that '…the period defined by postmodernism has come to an end and what can be called "altermodernity" has taken its place' (Bourriaud 2009, p. 11). The art he identifies as 'altermodern' is characterised by 'artists' cross-border, cross-cultural negotiations' (Bourriaud 2009, p. 11). Judging by the Tate Triennial 2009 and accompanying catalogue, the application of the concept of the altermodern to situations outside Europe, like relational aesthetics raises some cause for scepticism. There are, predictably, no Indonesian artists in

Figure 66: Tita Rubi’s sculptures for the Forest Art Festival, installed by activists on site, Randublatung, 2005. Photograph from the anakseribupulau archive.

the exhibition or writers in the catalogue. Jim Supangkat, often considered the grandfather of Indonesian Modernism, does get a mention in Okwui Enwezor's essay 'Modernity and Postcolonial Ambivalence'. In a generalising statment, Supangkat is identified as sharing similar objectives with the work of other postcolonial artists from different parts of the world (Enwezor 2009, p. 28).[71] Beyond including some new names, one is left wondering what exactly is universal about the altermodern. I propose that one reason relational aesthetics and the altermodern can do so little to open the global art canon is because they fail to include friction in their analysis of production practices. Friction allows us to see that globalisation always has many sides and many paths. Rather than the shared state of global placelessness that Bourriaud seems to see as characterising contemporary art, artists all over the world determine their own engagements with universal concepts. The friction of artworks can be found in these engagements. A deeper sense of relational art is reached from the perspective of relational production, rather than relational aesthetics, what Tsing calls 'the sticky materiality of practical encounters'.

Drawing on research into the emergence of digital video art in Asia, Australian writer and curator David Teh also rejects Bourriaud's conclusion that altermodernism 'constitutes some kind of "universal" project' (Teh 2011, p. 175). Teh argues that while language is an important part of all the video art he surveys, the medium of video is not homogenising in its effect on language. 'For if digital media are facilitating translation and understanding,' writes Teh, 'they are just as often used to *thwart* communication and foreground its failures' (Teh 2011, p. 175). This echoes Tsing's sentiment in focusing her studies on the friction present at every point of globalisation rather than on the lubricated paths of mediated intercultural exchange.

Commodity and Collaboration

> Commodities seem so familiar we imagine them ready made for us throughout every stage of production and distribution, as they pass from hand to hand until they arrive at the consumer. Yet the closer we look at the commodity chain, the more every step – even transportation – can be seen as an area of cultural production' (Tsing 2005, p. 51).

The production of art at all scales involves commodity chains. Artworks produced at carnivalesque festivals are unique because not only do they expose, but they celebrate this friction. Well-known Indonesian artist Tita Rubi contributed a ceramic sculpture to the Forest Art Festival. Several years later (2008), Rubi was commissioned to make an enormous artwork for the National Museum of Singapore, titled *Surrounding David.* She

71. Jim Supangkat, who is referenced several times in this thesis and whose writing invariably is part of any review of literature on modern Indonesian art, is widely considered the first Indonesian independent curator. He is the founder of the Jakarta Biennale and while he is now in his sixties, is still one of the only Indonesian art writers quoted outside of Indonesia.

explained to me in an interview the difference between producing work for each. For a large gallery, arrangements are made at every step, to make sure the commodity chain is invisible to the audience; to ensure that all that is viewed is the final product on opening night. But for a festival, artworks are carried with participants, thrown on the back of trucks, installed by anyone who is around to help and with whatever tools are available. Tita Rubi's sculpture for the Forest Art Festival arrived at the festival site shattered. In pieces, it was laid out in the dirt, telling its own story of being freighted across Central Java (Figure 66). Tedi's choice with *Igloo Tropis*, to make the work on site, may have been a safer choice, but as I will outline in the following section, it still tells a story of friction; no artwork emerges from such a context shiny and new.

Anna Tsing argues that the presence of friction in commodity chains shows that value, rather than being pre-existing, is produced along with the commodities these chains represent. Tsing uses the metaphor of friction to describe common 'collaborative' projects that need to allow parties to maintain different agendas. Far from representing a failure, she explains that such difference is actually essential to progress:

> Difference with a common cause: Perhaps this is more important than we ordinarily think … I propose this kind of overlapping, linking difference as a model of the most culturally productive kinds of collaboration. This is not the most common connotation of collaboration; this is collaboration with a difference: collaboration with friction at its heart. (Tsing 2005, p. 246)

This friction can help us work out exactly how the collaboration operates for *Tropical Igloo* and *Rubbish Jasmine*. There is an interesting pair of trajectories occurring in opposite directions if we consider the production of *Rubbish Jasmine* and *Tropical Igloo* as commodity chains. Through *Tropical Igloo*, materials that hold a specific monetary value to the kampung (jati leaves) are devalued before they are re-valued in their new form as a work of art. In *Rubbish Jasmine*, discarded materials, which are considered valueless, are reassigned a value.

The metaphor of friction is also useful in understanding how the value of art is also produced by the context of its production and presentation. In the cases of *Rubbish Jasmine* and *Tropical Igloo* existing commodity chains are disrupted by the artists who capitalise on this friction, inserting new social relations between artist and audience members. The 'community' that used *Tropical Igloo* in the end was the transient community of punks who gathered from all over Indonesia (and the world) to take part in the event. There are several possible reasons for this. *Tropical Igloo* created a space that was closed to the outside; the activities within were invisible. For a kampung with its own systems of regulating social relations, this new spatial division could have appeared somewhat threatening.

This point relates to the connotations of the materials used and how they relate to predetermined ideas of waste. As with the town forest project, which allocates a specific area of land for conservation, the creation of the Igloo could have been viewed by the kampung as a waste of resources. While activists agitate for a protected forest area, villagers themselves do not distinguish one part of the forest from another. In this way, the imposed boundaries of a protected area have little meaning to them if they are unenforced. The town forest and *Tropical Igloo* both make claims for an environmentalism that does not easily place human use within imaginings of the forest. Rather, it separates the struggle for resources from the struggle for wilderness. Many villagers, who use the forest for gathering products that can be sold (firewood and leaves from the teak tree mostly), did not see the value in his project of creating a conservation area purely for leisure and education. *Tropical Igloo* raises the issue of the forest's functionality by introducing a purely artistic expression for the branches and leaves. This raises, again, the question of to whom this expression is accessible.

The kampungs of Randublatung are thus a necessary part of both the production processes of *Tropical Igloo* and the re-imaginings of the forest by cultural activists. The extent of participation, however, is ambiguous as kampung values become secondary to artistic and political aims, a process Anna Tsing might describe as 'productive confusion' (Tsing 2005, p. 247). The confusion over this collaboration is productive because it creates a friction that causes both sides to reconsider their preconceptions of art, illustrated by the different perspectives of the artist and artisan who made *Tropical Igloo*.

Djuadi's work, on the other hand, employs what Ella Shohat and Robert Stam call an 'aesthetic of garbage' (Shohat & Stam 1998).

> As a diasporized, heterotopic site, the point of promiscuous mingling of rich and poor, center and periphery, the industrial and the artisanal, the organic and the inorganic, the national and the international, the local and the global; as a mixed, syncretic, radically decentered social text, garbage provides an ideal postmodern and postcolonial metaphor (Shohat & Stam 1998, p. 54).

In her catalogue essay for the 2007 exhibition 'Sisa: re-use, collaboration and cultural activism from Indonesia', which featured two of Djuadi's works *Sisa Kayu, Ambil Aja; Wood Scraps, Just Take Them* (2007) and *Rubbish Jasmine*, Kirsten Seale writes that 'The artists in this exhibition use the rejects of consumer culture, its refuse, to *refuse* the imperatives of consumer culture and the attendant fetishism of commodities.' Djuadi's rejection of consumer culture operates at two levels, by making play (and nongkrong) productive and by refusing to accept rubbish as the end of the commodity chain. The point of friction most significant to *Rubbish Jasmine* is thus the point at which Djuadi reinserts garbage into the chain of production. He is immediately at odds with his audience, for the garbage is found on the street where they have discarded it. Gently but surely, *Rubbish Jasmine* exploits this

point of difference and produces something else entirely.

In *Melati Sampah,* Djuadi makes jewellery, that can simply be worn, but he also makes a pattern for the reproduction of similar pieces. He takes the idea of global standardisation and uniformity and, twisting it, creates only slightly varied, yet unique pieces that then also assume the character of the individual wearer. This is another intervention into the commodity chain, where an assumed universal is shown to in fact have the potential for individuality. Thinking in terms of Tsing's model of friction, rubbish is produced by both corporations and consumers. We reject it and yet we make it. *Rubbish Jasmine* spotlights the point at which this occurs; this is a 'sticky engagement' indeed. But Djaudi does not claim this engagement as his own. There is no consideration of intellectual property here, either of corrupting the original purpose of the packaging or of an artistic process that has a beginning and an end; this is the pure propagation of an idea. This is the open source movement in its most material form.

In bodily terms, the way the artwork negotiates its meaning with its wearer is another point of friction. For rubbish is not meant for touching, treasuring, or wearing. It is abject and meant to be devoid of sensory pleasures. Yet these materials, in Djuadi's hands rustle softly when they are folded and sparkle when they are worn. 'Jewellery touches, gets lost, belongs, is made, gets destroyed, loses its value, weighs and breaks, as part of what it means as a material body. Jewellery is not a passive but an active agent of communication' (Brown 1997, p. 16). Jewellery usually transforms valuable materials into something wearable. Here, garbage is imbued with this value. By being worn, *Rubbish Jasmine* relies entirely on audience. But in this case, the audience infiltrates the production process. After a period of collecting and folding the flowers during the festival, people began bringing Djuadi the wrappers they had used themselves or picked up off the street. These participants were unsolicited; they drew themselves into the process because Djuadi's production was an extension of nongkrong, performed on the kampung street rather than the studio or gallery. In this sense, participation in the production of *Rubbish Jasmine*, is invited, rather than commissioned. It requires much less investment of time and energy than Plonco gave to *Tropical Igloo;* each corsage is completed in just a few minutes. Unlike *Tropical Igloo* it has no deadline for completion; in fact, it did not even begin until Festival Mata Air was well and truly opened.

Djuadi's previous works also demonstrates that *Rubbish Jasmine* is part of a broader artistic ideology based on participation that stems from existing nongkrong relations rather than new paradigms of artist and audience. *Sisa Kayu, Ambil Aja; Wood Scraps, Just Take Them* (2007), exhibited in the Sisa exhibition at UTS Gallery, is an ongoing work made from pieces of wood left over from the timber industry in Randublatung. Djuadi whittles

these scraps into delicate shapes.[72] Like *Tropical Igloo*, it draws on the significance of teak to people's lives and their struggle for land and resources. By using scraps, rather than an otherwise valued commodity, it does not isolate the artist from the community through acess to that commodity.

By extending an existing practice into a distributed artwork, giving it a title, talking about it as an artwork, Djuadi makes a statement about the material itself as well as the activity. Djuadi uses the opportunities opened up by being an artist as a tactic for further activism. 'If it means I can talk to more people about the environment,' he says, 'then I call what I do "art".' The title has several layers of meaning. It refers to the nature of the work (Djuadi simply carries the work around with him and offers pieces to people he meets or leaves them anonymously on seats of buses and shops) and it also refers to the attitude to the forests around his home, where teak is taken whether it is mature or not.

> The wood that I use for my woodcraft is usually left over from the furniture industry. There are a lot of scraps and I use those to express ideas about the wood itself and the way we value it. I give it form but it already carries a certain weight because there is a story of the material itself. That story often makes me angry but I can whittle away at that wood and think about it, and that is one process. Then I give it to someone as a piece of art and something else happens, another whole process, one that I actually know a lot less about.

Not knowing the final outcome of his work means that Djuadi's relationship to art is quite different to those artists who make work for sale in galleries, or for selection in curated exhibitions. Many artists, critics, dealers and curators view commercial galleries as endpoints where artworks stop, ready for final sale and interpretation. This is undoubtedly related to the problems raised above of representing Indonesia, Java, or other localities through the work of a few chosen artists. Djuadi's works, both *Rubbish Jasmine* and *Ambil Aja,* subvert the finality expected of such a representation, and are defined instead by friction that occurs all along the commodity chain.

Commissioning Collaboration

In the art circles of Yogyakarta, and other cities of Indonesia, including Semarang, Jakarta, Bandung, and even Padang, Sumatra, Tedi's reputation for making large-scale works precedes him. His works involve a vast array of materials and skills and labour, often taking months or years to complete. A network of galleries, artist run spaces, artisan kampungs and art schools all over Java provide the necessary human and material resources for their completion.

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72. Randublatung has many teak show rooms where one can buy and order in bulk handmade furniture and objects. These showrooms are not well advertised. They are often large front rooms of houses, but they are in the centre of town. Further from the centre of the village, towards the boundaries of the forests, are the wood working studios where one can find the woodworkers. In these open studios, there are many individual pieces, made with spare time and spare wood.

Figure 67 (top left): Plonco assembling Igloo Tropis, Randublatung, 2005, photograph by S. Tedi D.

Figure 68 (top right): Plonco, Randublatung, 2005, photograph by S. Tedi D.

Figure 69 (bottom): Cerita dari Blora, an exhibition at Kedai Kebun Forum, Yogyakarta, 2005, photograph from the anakseribupulau archives.

Particularly for his sculptural and installation work, Tedi commissions production from the skilled metal and ceramic artisan communities around Yogyakarta. These workers receive payment as they would for other commissions (for resorts, hotels and restaurants for example), but they are rarely credited in the artworks; this collaboration is purely a business transaction.[73] In more ambiguous relationships, many of the canvases attributed to Tedi are actually painted by others. These painters consider themselves both friends and employees, often living in Tedi's home while the paintings are completed. Tedi signs the paintings before they are exhibited, but as one painter told me, he would not actually have been able to make them: 'Tedi is very talented but he really has no eye for detail, we all know that.'

The cooperative production of Tedi's work, including *Tropical Igloo* is hardly extraordinary. Most large-scale contemporary installation all over the world is made collectively (the works of Jeff Koons and Damien Hirst are just a few examples) even if authorship rests with the individual artist (Bishop 2006, p.11).[74] And the realisation of creative visions by manual labourers is not only a narrative of Western art. In Java, such collaborations are evident in the hundreds of ancient temples built by low paid or unpaid workers.

Bourriaud's ideas of relational art, however, reflect on practices that bring these collaborations to light by naming both sides of the collaboration. The important part of discussing these collaborations is not to dwell on collaboration as a fact, but to find out how the friction of these collaborations drives the art making. This friction is site specific and it also engages with global ideas; it causes movement. Viewed as friction, relational art, and I include *Rubbish Jasmine* and *Tropical Igloo*, can enter a dialogue, not only with its audience, but with the entire canon of Western art.

When he came to Randublatung to take part in the Forest Art Festival, with a sketch of an installation concept and a broken arm in a plaster cast, Tedi approached Plonco, a labourer from the outskirts of Randublatung to source the leaves and bamboo and then assemble the igloo. As outlined above, Tedi had nostalgic associations with Blora and 'village life', and hoped the production of *Tropical Igloo* would help him to reconnect with what he thought of as a more authentic Java than what was in the cities. What Tedi found, by working with Plonco in the kampung, was indeed a different set of production parameters from those he was used to and from those he had imagined as being typical of the village, as well as very different ideas of the role of art and culture.

Like many men in Randublatung, Plonco is neither permanently nor regularly

73. Discussions around the 'fairness' of such arrangements are particularly prevalent in Taring Padi, who make no distinction between artist and artisan. Such practice is not, however, uncommon in Yogyakarta.

74. Relational aesthetics is often said to be inspired by a reaction to the shift in thinking since the 1980s of the artwork as a social process to the artwork as product.

employed. He gets contract work sometimes, building houses or logging, both of which are dependent on the teak harvest, which is seasonal and often unreliable. Plonco also farms on the land surrounding his home, including the town forest, but as he owns no land of his own, this work is also uncertain. When I interviewed him in his simple family home (no running water, intermittent electricity), surrounded by curious neighbours and family members, he explained that he was indeed used to the precarious nature of his income, but that when he begun the project for Tedi, he had an expectation he would be paid for his work. He saw it like any of the other work he did, bound by a verbal agreement of reciprocity. Plonco explained that to ask a labourer like him who has a family to support, to work on a project for that amount of time, without providing payment of either money or rice is unthinkable. 'That's just how it works here.'

Tedi saw the situation otherwise. Tedi neither paid Plonco for his work assembling the igloo, which took four full days, and a high degree of skill and innovation, nor for posing in the photographs that later became part of Tedi's documentation of *Tropical Igloo* (see Figure 67 and Figure 68). In fact, Plonco never even saw the photographs after they were taken. Tedi claims, in retrospect, that he wasn't being deliberately exploitative, and had assumed that Plonco's labour was voluntary because the work was, in his words '*seni kerakyatan*', (art for the people)[75] and an example of *gotong-royong* (working together).[76] As distinct from the works that are sold, from which he makes a profit, Tedi claims that *Tropical Igloo* was made *for* the community of Randublatung. Tedi also sees the work as an act of generosity. He did, after all, pay for the materials and also worked unpaid himself for the week leading up to the festival.

Tedi and Plonco have not spoken again since the Forest Art Festival. In fact, it was Djuadi, not Tedi, who helped me to find and interview Plonco. Plonco speaks only Javanese and his house, on the edge of the forest, has no written address that could be found without a guide. Djuadi explains that to be more ethical, relations around artistic collaboration need to be based around the needs of both sides. This does not necessarily mean clear financial transactions, but it does mean that gifts and 'favours' are reciprocated, regardless of who is the 'artist' and who is the 'audience'. Perhaps, as Bishop warns, this would not make for 'better' art under the criteria of relational aesthetics or other frameworks. More important, according to Djuadi, is that artists, particularly those who are seen as coming from outside,

75. The manifesto of LEKRA–*Lembaga Kebudayaan Rakyat* (The Organisation of People's Culture), the cultural organisation of the PKI–Parti Komunis Indonesia (Indonesian Communist Party) declared 'Seni Kerakyatan' part of a wider nationalist and anti-imperialist cultural struggle that emerged with Indonesia's declaration of independence in 1945. This was followed by a period of ideological polarisation between liberal humanist values that encouraged *'Seni untuk Seni'* on one hand, and an anti-imperialist class-consciousness that was the basis of 'Seni Kerakyatan' practice on the other (Foulcher 1986, p. 1).

76. Under Sukarno, *gotong royong* (mutual assistance) was a concept aimed at facilitating popular participation, but under the New Order it became a way of legitimising top-down programs such as the Green Revolution through an imagined indigenous life style. (Jones 2005, p.152). In many examples of appropriations of gotong-royong culture in Indonesia, where everyone is ready to lend a hand, the working class falls short of obtaining a fair share of the benefits of collaboration.

have relationships with their collaborators and subjects that are based on local terms, that is, on the social relations and cultural practices that already exist in the kampung.

Plonco doesn't hold a grudge, although he says he will be more assertive in the future. He describes the whole experience of working on *Tropical Igloo* as a 'misunderstanding', humbly blaming himself for not being aware of who Tedi was when he arrived or how such transactions are usually negotiated.[77] This apparent ignorance, Plonco explained, came from not having the opportunity to go to the city much, and so not being familiar with 'all those famous artists'. The importance of the concept of 'kampungan' as a dimension of Javanese Carnivalesque is clear here. Kampungan is something Djuadi (and others) can celebrate and invert in the context of a festival, but it can also limit Plonco's participation.

Although he didn't spend time in the igloo during the festival, Plonco assured me that the experience of making *Tropical Igloo* did broaden his ideas of art. He said that now he knows how to build an igloo from teak leaves, he could do it anytime. Plonco almost had the opportunity to use this newly learned skill for an exhibition in Yogyakarta several months after the Forest Art Festival, but he says, he couldn't join, as 'the car was already full'.[78] From discussions I had with Plonco and other residents of the kampung, their experience of art (seni) was, up until the Forest Art Festival, in the traditional sphere of Javanese performance. The value they first recognised in the Forest Art Festival was in the inclusion of such performance in the program, and in showing off the local talents to a regional and international audience. Reog and *ketoprak*[79], for example, said Plonco, were performances he understood as art, with which he could identify, but he could not perform. 'I watch them and enjoy them, but I am not skilled or talented in them.' Plonco explained that to be included in an artistic process such as building the igloo, for the sake of art, was just too big a step. He found it interesting but he always expected payment. 'I'm pretty open about what art is, but I am not an artist,' he reiterated, 'I am a labourer.'

These very negotiations, over what is local, what is participation, and what is art, are at essence of the carnivalesque in Java. For Tedi, *Tropical Igloo* was an opportunity to engage in more intimate production processes than those allowed by the demands of the Yogyakarta gallery world, where the norms of professional production determine the roles of artist and

77. For me, a Westerner who speaks hardly any Javanese, 'misunderstandings' such as this are common in everyday dealings in Java. Most tourists who have walked around the bird market or *kraton* (Sultan's palace) of Yogyakarta have found themselves accompanied by a friendly but unsolicited local guide pointing out historical and cultural nuances, only to make the delayed realisation after the 'tour' that this is a paid service. It is somewhat reassuring that the indirect and hypersensitive elements of Javanese culture can lead to similar scenarios between fellow Javanese.

78. Cerita dari Blora was an exhibition at Kedai Kebun Forum in Yogyakarta in November 2005. It was in part a documentation of Forest Art Festival and in part a presentation of the ongoing campaigns and projects of anakseribupulau. The exhibition program also included a '*Carnival Sepeda*' (bike carnival).

79. Ketoprak is a theatrical genre of performance in Java. Actors often sing to the accompaniment of the gamelan. Its stories are drawn from Javanese contemporary culture as well as folklore and it is considered 'kampungan' as discussed in Chapter 1.

artisan. What is interesting in the case of *Tropical Igloo* is the friction that existed between the artist, the artisans and by extension, between the temporary community of the festival and the more permanent kampung (for whom it was apparently designed). These dialogues are particular to the carnivalesque in Java, which, by bringing artist and audience into one messy, temporary sphere, allows the production itself to become an exhibition and performance. As much as the artist, the kampung decides what is good practice in artistic production, what is fair, and perhaps most importantly, what is valuable art.

The observations I have made of the fraught production processes in Tedi's work, along with the shift towards these processes becoming part of the artwork itself, corroborate the existence of what Bishop calls 'an ethical turn in art criticism' (Bishop 2006b). This may not be an appropriate way to discuss a work of art when these processes are indeed invisible to the audience, for example in the festival's follow-up exhibition *Cerita dari Blora* (see Figure 69). But in the case of the festival itself, a primary aim of the event was to integrate the audience—the activists with the local kampung. In cases like this the discussion becomes essential and is not so much an ethical turn in art criticism as it is a turn away from art criticism itself.

Bishop warns that a focus on relational aesthetics will lead to polarised models of collaboration. Plonco's story broadly supports this, for these *are* polarised models of collaboration, and, while they may not have relevance to the aesthetic value of *Tropical Igloo*, they certainly have relevance to the process of understandings what festivals do and how they open up spaces between the kampung and global culture through art. Perhaps exploring these sorts of collaborations further would give art critics another job entirely, that of understanding global art from local perspectives rather than local art from global perspectives.

Summary

This chapter has used relational aesthetics in combination with the concept of friction to explore the application of Javanese Carnivalesque to the artworks produced at Festival Mata Air and the Forest Art Festival. In the first section, I built on Claire Bishop's criticisms of Nicolas Bourriaud's theories of relational aesthetics to point out how some of the over-simplifications present in Bourriaud's writing could not do justice to the specific frictions involved in the local production of these artworks. In doing so, I canvassed the possibilities for more complex frameworks to understand the range of work 'relational aesthetics' may cover, frameworks that could apply Anna Tsing's model of the friction in commodity chains to the production of collaborative art.

The next section explored the multiple life narratives of the two artists at work here. These stories formed a necessary part of the framework of this chapter because they showed

how being an artist per se does not necessarily carry with it particular relations to place, to audience, or indeed to art itself. Rather, these are created at every step of the artist's life and the artwork's production. This section drew from the work of Nigerian artist Oguibe to consider the decolonisation necessary to understand the relationships between Javanese artists and the global art world.

The next section tested how relational aesthetics can be extended by Tsing's ideas of friction. The stories of how the artworks were made helped to unpack the friction that emerged, firstly, in the production of *Tropical Igloo* and, secondly, in the revaluing of materials that occurred in both the artworks. From the details of both examples it becomes clear that decolonising art theory is necessary to reassess assumptions made about the nature of collaboration.

Conclusion

Tropical Igloo and *Rubbish Jasmine* demonstrate a type of practice that is largely invisible, both in international surveys of Indonesian art, and in mainstream media coverage of Indonesian activism. Despite these exclusions, they seem to fit, to some extent anyway, within current discourses on contemporary art, namely those around relational aesthetics, participation, site-specificity and the tension between the local and global identities of artists. This chapter has tried to clarify why this is so and how these discourses can be made more relevant to the cultural space of activist festivals and the conceptual framework of the Javanese Carnivalesque.

This clarification has required the decolonisation of global art discourse from the perspective of local forms of artistic production in Java. Neither of the activists presented in this chapter reject the notion of framing their work as art. Both the Forest Art Festival and Festival Mata Air claim to be 'arts' festivals and both Djuadi and Tedi call themselves artists. Yet neither do they absorb everything that goes along with these terms. While they may show an interest in discussion of art theories, it is very unlikely that theories such as relational aesthetics direct or limit their practice in any way. Rather, as they have shown a penchant for doing, they take from such theories what they can make use of. They are less interested in art and its history as a discipline rife with the anxiety of contradiction, than they are in the possibilities of its practice as they simultaneously work with global and local (kampung) interpretations of what art is and what it does. Interpretive methods from elsewhere are constantly indigenised and localised, while existing practices are maintained and developed. While the labeling of their practices has not been the most pressing issue for festival artists, their constant adaptation to rapidly changing contexts has been crucial. It is this adaptation that produces the Javanese Carnivalesque.

The Javanese Carnivalesque, in fact, would have much in common with Bourriaud's

‘relational art’, if the latter were to consider more deeply the origins and complexities of local relations. If relational art is considered as a category of the many local forms of cultural activism that exist in the world, rather than viewing cultural activism as a type of relational art, it begins to make more sense as a way to understand participation and collaboration. In Central Java, the direct engagement of artists with specific kampungs has not emerged in parallel with the appearance of relational aesthetics or with an accompanying surge of socially collaborative work in the international art scene. Viewing these practices only through frameworks developed in the West, without an analysis of how these frameworks are generated by friction between ideas of the local and global, will always result in discussions limited to the ways that art influences communities and forms of activism. Such discussions allow little space for considering the reciprocal interventions of communities into art, that is, the impact of the kampung on art.

By its inclusion, this chapter also makes the point that the Javanese Carnivalesque as a framework for understanding cultural activism needs to integrate an analysis of artworks into a broader critique; it does not treat aesthetic concerns as secondary. The artworks here were made outside of art institutions, but that does not mean that the festivals are ‘non-art’ spaces. Djuadi and Tedi refer to themselves as activists, but this does not exclude them from also being artists. However, viewing these practices solely as artworks, distinct from the other cultural activities that shape them, does not allow certain complex cultural questions to even appear, let alone be tackled. The aim of the festivals, and of this chapter, is not in fact to blur the division between art and non-art, but to support art practices that claim to be activism with thorough analyses that identify the gaps in available theories.

The possibilities to exhibit, transport and curate the Javanese Carnivalesque may for now only exist in imagined galleries of the future, but they are developing through exchange, experience, and the conversations they create, as was evident at the Forest Art Festival and Festival Mata Air.

CHAPTER 4:
REMIXING ENVIRONMENTALISM

Chapter 4 uses the concept of remix to frame how carnivalesque forms of environmentalists in Central Java sample local genealogies, national mythologies and globally circulating ideas of environmentalism in order to brand their festivals and generate their own movements. It draws on de Certeau's distinction between strategies and tactics to consider how local environmentalism operates at multiple scales.

To reach Senjoyo from Salatiga, you must travel along winding, undulating roads through the forested outskirts of the city, past an ancient well being mined for stones, past several contested plots of land and sacred sites, and past a large textile factory …. Steadily you climb in altitude and the air becomes cleaner and cooler. You eventually arrive at a calm communal park, dense foliage covering the hills that overlook the river and man-made pools surrounding the springs. The scents of frying palm oil and corrosive laundry detergent mix with the lush tropical forest. Women wash and chat as children run between the piles of clean clothes and carpets baking in the sun. Men sip coffee and smoke kretek in a waterside warung.

Roll up your jeans and climb into the cool knee-deep water of the river and your feet squelch on the decomposing leaves… aah…nature. But press a little harder, and you find the leaves feel strange. They are not disintegrating with your touch. Reaching down, below the silt, you find a thick layer of plastic lining the entire riverbed... shopping bags, chip wrappers, shampoo packets, this is not the nature you imagined. You bravely dig into the plastic mulch and pull out a long strip of plastic. You realise it is a banner that must have once been hung above the spring. It is torn but you can make out most of the letters: 'Festival Mata Air: Sponsored by Djarum.'

You are brought to the village of Randublatung by local activists who have described it as a beautiful little place tucked away between sprawling hills of lush teak forest. You are visiting in the dry season, however, and you wonder how even idealistic environmentalists could call this 'forest'. As in much of Java, one kampung connects to the next. While the houses do become more dispersed in the land between kampungs, every patch of land is used for something. You are guided to the site of the 2005 Forest Art Festival, the town forest, about three kilometres from the centre of Randublatung, demarcated by a tall fence and a large sign labelling the area as a parkland. A few small thirsty teak trees, many of which seem unlikely to survive to the next monsoon, are interspersed with cassava and corn, evidence that this land is still farmed. Awkward young couples sit under the desperate shade of thin saplings, engaged in more intimate public courting than is usual in Java.

You sit in a pagoda the activists explain was built for park information, but became a space for hanging out when no official rangers were hired. As more people arrive, you are offered locally made rice wine from an appropriated Smirnoff bottle and hot food wrapped in teak leaves. 'Dog meat' one of the hosts says proudly, 'hunted here.' 'It's not halal,' laughs another. He explains that there used to be wild boar and deer here too, as well as many other animals that are now extinct from the area. But rehabilitating this area is not so much about the animals as the trees, they explain. There are hundreds of species here, which are 'useful' for different things. By thirty years of age, they explain, the wood from many species of teak is not only very strong, but it has developed a natural resistance to termites. In the tough economic times that have dominated these boys' lives, trees are felled at fifteen and sometimes even ten years old. Later on, back in the village, they take you for tea at an old Javanese joglo house, made with teak hardwood grown here hundreds of years ago.

Introduction

The passages above evoke some of the contradictions of local environment movements in Central Java and how they differ from Western assumptions of conservation as the end goal of environmentalism. This chapter focuses on the ways anakseribupulau and Tanam Untuk Kehidupan draw on multiple sources to articulate local environmentalisms. These practices raise the question of how meaning is transformed when circulating discourses are deployed through a process of remix, addressing one of the aims of the overall thesis: to understand the local nuances of the global environment movement. As environmentalism becomes more accepted (and expected) all over the world, it is more difficult to decipher its many local origins, forms and expressions. Tsing has pointed out, in her ethnography of global connection, that the analysis of environmentalism on a global scale presents the challenge of addressing both 'the spreading interconnectedness and the locatedness of culture' (Tsing 2005, p. 122). In Indonesia alone, environmentalism has not been one single movement. Its multiple threads are also woven into the local identities expressed in the carnivalesque moments discussed here.

This chapter delves into the visual identities produced by Tanam Untuk Kehidupan and anakseribupulau in order to understand how seemingly contradictory elements can tactically engage with global environmentalism. Festivals play an important role in this production as they both create new identities and build on existing ones, translating politics into visual representations. These representations can be transported and reformed, which is how the politics of the festival are recreated in different spaces producing meaning beyond their few days' duration and the physical boundaries of the site of each event. This movement of politics is an important part of the festivals, as they occur so briefly and in relatively remote areas.

While these groups are constantly at work addressing environmental crises and concerns in their local area, they are largely under the radar of what is thought of as a global environment movement. This work, however, marks a distinct growth of environmental activism in the post-Suharto era. It also shows how the environmental movement in Indonesia lends itself to new cultural frames more readily than other movements. This is partly due to the fact that the politics of environmentalism are not as fixed as those of other movements, those associated with human rights, for example. The movements discussed here draw from long and rich genealogies of resistance showing that, in Java, environmentalism is a much more complex process than simply joining the momentum of an existing global movement. I argue that this post-New Order environmentalism forms part of an active remix culture, where groups continually redefine themselves within a constant global flow of images and ideologies, producing forms and spaces that are more fluid than previous political expressions such as those that formed during and at the end of the New Order.

This chapter is about what Anna Tsing calls the friction between the local and the global. It is no coincidence that Tsing's model of friction emerges from her own study of environmentalism, framed as an ethnography of the global located in the conflict ridden locale of Kalimantan's rainforests. Perhaps more than any other political movement, environmentalism is difficult to define with its host of ideologies and cross-currents, and their competing classifications that overlap and produce confusion (Pepper, Perkins & Youngs 1984, p. 13). Any study of environmentalism must aim to disentangle some of the threads connecting local expressions with global discourses, and, in the cases presented here, recognition of the national dimension to environmentalism is also necessary. While my readings of the carnvalesque in Java have thus far focused on local and global scales, the 'Indonesianness' of the expressions of environmentalism discussed here are certainly very important. Tsing, in describing how dramatic environmental activism moved from Jakarta to the provinces after 1998, refers to '"charismatic packages," allegorical modules that speak to the possibilities of making a cause heard on a national scale. These packages feature images, songs, morals, organizational plans, or stories… (Tsing 2005, p. 227)' Given the feelings of national solidarity in Indonesia and the endurance of its 'imagined community' (Anderson 1991) discussed in Chapter 1, the charisma of these packages indeed had to work on a national scale. The activism described here also defines aesthetic boundaries of the group (the brand) that can work on a national scale, and as such, Indonesia as a nation is one scale of this analysis. Images are central to this process because, in these cases, they deploy contradictory elements and can be remixed readily.

The requirements of these multiple scales, local, global and national, define the type of activist tactics employed in Salatiga and Randublatung between 2005 and 2010. Illustrating the dynamic between the visual identities produced in these places and the political tactics is an important aim of this chapter and an exploration that will continue in the discussions of the digital dimensions of these identities in the next chapter.

To describe the way anakseribupulau and Tanam Untuk Kehidupan each form their own environmentalisms, I use the term remix, referring to the practice of taking cultural content and manipulating it into new creative blends (Knobel & Lankshear 2008).[80] These groups exist within the tensions of local cultural production, national mythologies and global environment initiatives, constantly negotiating their identities within these spheres in a messy and unconfined process that draws on multiple samples of content, some quite stable and others in constant flux themselves.

80. The term remix derives from the music remix, which is an alternative version of a recorded song, made by recombining parts of the original version.

Chapter Structure

I begin this chapter by explaining the concepts of tactics and remix. I then give an overview of local interpretations of global environmentalism in order to begin to outline some points of difference in how activists from Salatiga and Randublatung represent themselves. This chapter is comparative in approach and as such is divided into two sections by location. The first section takes three expressions of environmentalism evident in the carnivalesque culture in Randublatung and Blora. These are the groups Rapala, SuperSamin Inc., and anakseribupulau. While the people involved in each may be the same, the approaches taken by each are very different. This section is titled 'Performing the Environmentalis Identities' drawing from the work of Judith Butler (1990) who, in speaking about the performance of gender in her much referenced text *Gender Trouble*, emphasises the agency of the body in the construction of gender and, by extension, of other facets of social identity. Amongst other things, Butler asks, how can identities be viewed as 'persisting through time as the same, unified and coherent?' (Butler 1990, p. 22). Similarly, one Randublatung activist describes the feeling of working in multiple collectives as 'just wearing clothes that have different styles and colours.'

The second section focuses on Salatiga. Here, activists show signs of taking refuge from local politics in the global dimensions of environmentalism and the coherence of their singular collective identity. Members of Tanam Untuk Kehidupan wear the collective like a uniform, agreeing to keep it 'clean' of their own sometimes illegal and often disorganised individual actions. I look at the conflicts the collective has faced with local kampung authorities and also the confrontation with corporate environmentalist interests.

For each case, I unpack the collective identities built on activist histories, which in many cases existed before and during the New Order. I then show that each has produced new forms of activism, adapting to the new political scene produced by the end of the New Order and incorporating their remixed activism into the carnivalesque in Java.

Why a Remix framework?

In early 2009, I picked up a book in the Indonesian chain Gramedia[81] titled *Menjadi Environmentalis Itu Gampang! (Becoming an Environmentalist is Easy!)* (Munggoro & Armansyah 2008) (Figure 70 and Figure 71). The umbrella group WAHLI publishes the book.[82] Presented as a guide for young Indonesians wishing to become environmentalists, the publication is loud, hip, and richly illustrated with recognisable images, such as the face of Mahatma Gandhi and Ernesto Che Guevara. Large, bold, colourful text blocks are arranged into chapters. These include quotes from a remarkable number of sources; the words of global celebrities such as Leonardo Di Caprio and John Denver sit beside those

81. Gramedia bookstores are owned by Kompas Gramedia Group, the largest media conglomerate in Indonesia.

82. *Wahana Lingkungan Hidup Indonesia* is the Indonesian branch of the International organisation Friends of the Earth.

Figure 70 (top left): Cover of *Menjadi Environmentalis Itu Gampang! (Becoming an Environmentalist is Easy!), 2008*

Figure 71 (middle): Spread of *Menjadi Environmentalis Itu Gampang! (Becoming an Environmentalist is Easy!), 2008*

Figure 72 (bottom): logo of anakseribupulau, 2010.

Green Movement menjaga prinsip *Deep Ecology*

PADA tataran praktis, kaum *Deep Ecologist* mendukung desentralisasi, ekoregion, reformasi industri dari bentuk yang sekarang serta menolak pemerintahan otoriter.

Deep Ecology tidak didudukan sebagai gerakan yang berbeda, melainkan bagian dari *Green Movement*. Gerakan *Deep Ecology* bisa dipetakan sebagai *Green Movement* yang menjaga prinsip-prinsip *Deep Ecology*. Ia sering dilabel sebagai "*Gaian*" dan "*Green*" (sebuah terminologi politik yang lebih luas berkenaan dengan komitmennya pada perdamaian).

Deep Ecology **berpengaruh pada** ***Green Movement*** **dengan mempersembahan** ***platform*** **etika independen bagi Partai Hijau,** ***Political Ecologist*** **dan Kaum Environmentalis.**

Filsafat ***Deep Ecology*** **membantu mengubah roh gerakan ekologi modern dengan dekonstruksi istilah "*environment*" yang cenderung antroposentrik dan tegas-tegas menolak gagasan manusia sebagai penjaga lingkungan.**

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of Pope John Paul II, and Koffi Anan. The words of Soekarno (Indonesia's first president), Iwan Falls (Indonesia's answer to Bob Dylan) and Pramoedya Ananta Toer (Indonesia's most famous author) converse across facing pages. All of these quotes are reproduced in Indonesian language, although there is no mention of translation. The sources are credited with names, but not the place or date the words were spoken or written, and no context is given to their mantras. Evidently, these samples all contribute to what WAHLI sees as the meaning of environmentalism in Indonesia.

The book bares no copyright, it simply states on the opening page (in Indonesian):

> Quoting, distributing and translating all or part of this book in the interest of general society is allowed without permission of the authors and without listing sources.
> (Wahyu & Armansyah 2008)

This invitation has certainly been taken up in Central Java. I saw many versions of this book, not only in its complete format, but also as single pages copied into zines, and as photographs lifted and inserted into flyers or stuck to walls. It seems that the best way to describe this text, and the way it is employed by activists, is remix; it is assembled from a range of divergent sources and expresses a new collective ownership, also open to further reinterpretation and localisation.

The multiple expressions of environmentalism in Central Java, specifically those enacted in Festival Mata Air and the Forest Art Festival, can also be framed as processes of remix. Remix culture is certainly not unique to these groups. Intellectual property theorist Lawrence Lessig argues that all contemporary culture can be thought of as remix (Lessig 2008) and several writers have pointed out that Indonesia in general is particularly fertile ground for remix culture because of the large local audiences keen for altered versions of global culture (Luvaas 2008). Certainly the Indonesian musical form of Dangdut described in Chapter 1, with its natural mixing of languages and styles, provides a perfect example of how remix works through the social relations created by nongkrong in Indonesia.

Dangdut emerges from the sense that musical innovation is open to general participation and constant updating. These are the conditions that remix requires. As described by Lawrence Lessig, 'free' refers to 'the sense that the culture and its growth would no longer be controlled by a small group of [entities]' (Lessig 2004, p. 94). My application of the idea of remix to local environmentalisms in Java has the objective of showing how activists also refuse to accept a global environmentalism controlled or invented by a small group. Rather, they create a 'free' culture where environmentalism is remixed at multiple scales to create a local carnivalesque movement.

Other writers have identified the need for theoretical models that consider more deeply

the agency of local subjects in producing their own movements, some of which are very relevant to the remix model I present here. In their analysis of the way Indian women make use of seemingly universal discourses on women's rights, Merry and Levitt identify many instances in which new 'local' subjectivities are formed from globally circulating identities. They call this process 'vernacularization' (Levitt & Merry 2009). Interestingly, they draw on two ethnographies of Indonesia, those of Anna Tsing and Thomas Boellstorff, to support their argument. They point out that Tsing's notion of friction (Tsing 2005), often cited in this thesis, illustrates that meaning is made at the actual site of encounter when words, images and meanings from different contexts collide; that is, meaning is made in the spaces of the vernacular.

Boellstorf uses the idea of 'dubbing culture' (Boellstorff 2003) to describe the way that some Western concepts are not only borrowed by Indonesians, but embraced as new identities that, in some way, are also associated with the nation. Boellstorff focuses on the ways that sexualities form in Indonesia, looking, in particular, to gay and lesbian identities:

> Construct is the wrong word; it connotes a self who plans and consciously shapes something. Better to say that these Indonesians 'come to' *lesbi* and *gay* subjectivity through these entanglements with mass media; their constructive agency, and the *lesbi* and *gay* subject positions themselves, are constructed through the encounter. … (Boellstorff 2003, p. 236)

I use the framework of remix to discuss environmentalism in Java for reasons similar to those that led Boellstorff to use dubbing culture, namely, because it allows for a conceptualisation of the production of local subjectivities through globalisation that does not rely on 'biogenetic (and, arguably, heteronormative) metaphors like hybridity, creolization, and diaspora, which imply prior unities and originary points of dispersion' (Boellstorff 2003, p. 226). Boellstorff uses the idea of dubbing to underscore his point that:

> Gay and lesbi subjectivities do not originate in the 'West' (they are not perceived as diasporic), nor are they a hybrid of 'West' and 'East'; they are distinctively Indonesian phenomena, formed through discourses of nation and sexual desire as well as a sense of linkage to distant but familiar Others' (Boellstorff 2003, p. 225).

The metaphor of dubbing culture could also describe environmentalism in Java but the processes apparent in my research seem to be even more fragmented than the term dubbing implies and also work in multiple directions, simultaneously splicing, inserting and reordering other sources.

All three models—dubbing, vernacularization and remix—try to capture the agency of the actors who adopt these subjectivities as well as the institutional power of those who produce and disseminate the messages on which they are based. However,

there are differences between the models of dubbing and remix. Like *'gay'* and *'lesbi'*, environmentalism in Indonesia borrows a globally legitimate label and transforms it. 'Environmentalist' becomes *'environmentalis'* and sometimes *'enviromentalis'*. But activists in Java also use the less derivative *'gerakan lingkungan'* (environment movement) to express their politics. The activists themselves define what constitutes environmentalism on a global scale, as well as on local and national scales.

Dubbing and remix both acknowledge the agency of local subjects in relation to globally circulating identity discourses. But there are significant differences between them. Dubbing cannot explain the creative fervour of environmentalism in Central Java in an era characterised by emerging digital literacies, as activists slip in and out of multiple identities, take up the latest software and hardware, and stretch their campaigns to fit multiple political scales. There is a sense of linkage akin to that Boellstorff describes, but here it is multi-dimensional. Blora activists not only link to the many fragments of global environmentalism, they also reach out to and draw in local and national histories. Such multi-dimensionality, I contend, is made possible by the flows of information brought by new technologies, as well as by the redefinitions of activism occurring in a post-authoritarian context.

The book *Menjadi Environmentalis* helps to differentiate between dubbing and remix models. The book does not state that environmentalism is many things to many people. Rather, it carefully selects samples of global environmentalism and remixes them into a movement it calls 'Indonesian environmentalism'. Rather than being dubbed, global environmentalism is considered a creative commons, to be mined, and then reconstructed in Java, where it is remixed into multiple tactical expressions and, as this chapter shows, localised, and reclaimed entirely. And remix as a model implies multiple sources, as opposed to 'dubbing' that implies one narrative transformed.

The significance of remix as a framework for this analysis lies in its ability to describe how a robust political movement draws on local and national content as well as global ideas in a festival context. In branding themselves, each collective discussed here, Tanam Untuk Kehidupan, SuperSamin Inc., anakseribupulau, Rapala, and akumassa-Randublatung, takes samples from pre-existing materials, combining them into new forms of the same movement and producing new visual vocabularies. These appropriations may seem playful, but they also serve a vital purpose in communicating the concerns of activists in multiple languages in order to gain legitimacy at multiple scales.

Festival as a Site of Remix

The way that activism reproduces the idea of festival, discussed at length in Chapter 2, is itself a remix, and carnivalesque festivals are also prolific remix sites. The kinds of

environmentalisms that activists draw from in creating Festival Mata Air and the Forest Art Festival are complex movements in progress, operating at many scales. Yet, their expression, in the festival context, is brief, often spontaneous, and sometimes contradictory.

Festivals have become an important way to deal with multiple, seemingly conflicted belief systems. In essence, festivals are one way to harness what Anna Tsing calls friction. An excellent contemporary example of this friction outside Randublatung and Salatiga is the Maulid Hijau Festival (2006), held in the village of Tegalrandu, also in Central Java. The Maulid Hijau Festival remixed Islamic worship with environmentalism. The Maulid Hijau festival, supported monetarily by the Lumajang district government, was held on the shore of Lake Klakah in April, 2006, and again the following year. It was enjoyed by thousands of participants including a large influx of tourists to the village. The name of the festival, Maulid Hijau, was a conflation of Maulid Nabi (the name for the anniversary of the Prophet Muhammad's birthday) and *hijau* (green), which symbolises conservation and is also used as the colour of Islam. By incorporating multiple meanings of green, Maulid Hijau problemitises universalised expressions of environmentalism.

The festival had multiple stated objectives: to remember the birth of the Prophet Muhammad, to maintain local tradition, and to encourage people to protect the forest and other natural resources. There were many religious elements including the recitation of 'good religious words' (*barjanzi*), religious speeches, congregational prayer and collegial prayer by different Islamic teaching groups. But the event was also in many ways much like Festival Mata Air and the Forest Art Festival, offering a space for local people to perform and experience a combination of traditional and experimental cultural forms through a program of performance, art installations, and workshops. Like Festival Mata Air and the Forest Art Festival, the Maulid Hijau Festival was an attempt to remix a new kind of environmentalism.

But according to Islamic fundamentalists, this remix went too far. The Maulid Hijau festival was issued a fatwā in 2008 by a local branch of the Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI)[83] (Rumadi 2008). Other recurring events, such as the Grebeg Maulid ceremony or Sekaten in Yogyakarta are also celebrations of Islam that incorporate local tradition and contemporary environmentalism. Given these precedents, organisers of Maulid Hijau did not expect to face any challenge from religious extremists. However, Islamic authorities deemed the combination of different cultural and religious elements unlawful (Rumadi 2008). Organisers faced long lawsuits and by the time they finally won the right to hold

83. Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI), the Indonesian Ulema Council, is Indonesia's top Muslim clerical body. The council comprises a broad range of Muslim groups including Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah. It was founded by the Suharto government in 1975 as the body to produce fatwā and to advise the Muslim community on contemporary issues. http://www.mui.or.id. Accessed 10 June, 2010.

their festival again, energy and money were depleted. The stories of Festival Mata Air and the Forest Art Festival also have elements of conflict, some of which will be explored in this chapter. For remix, even in the celebratory context of the carnivalesque, is a bumpy and uneven process; Tsing's idea of friction helps to keep that in mind.

Tactics

This analysis considers remix as a tactic of resistance, drawing from French philosopher Michel de Certeau's concept (1984) of tactics, which distinguishes between strategic and tactical actions in everyday life. The distinction emphasises the different practices of privileged subjects who can 'strategically' signify, develop and master the informational fields, and 'the weak', who are able to execute performative, creative, and rebellious action by making use of the images, texts, and tools of everyday life. Certeau's most quoted example demonstrating the categories of tactics and strategies relates to spatial practices within the city. Governments and corporations use strategies such as official maps, signage, and the city's road grid. These strategies are not 'bad'; they are designed to help people navigate through the city, but they cannot be reorganised, they are not flexible, and they come from a 'voyeur's' view. The ways individuals actually move through the city, strolling, taking shortcuts, and forming their own routes, are tactical. It is in this way that individuals create the city, through what de Certeau calls the practices of everyday life. Like the city, what is recognised as global environmentalism is made up of strategies and tactics; environmentalists create local movements through the practice of remix. They poach what they read, hear and see, converting it to suit their own purposes.

There are three main sources of content that are tactically remixed into the group identities I examine. Firstly, the local mythology of Samin culture builds a genealogy of protest into the contemporary movements in Randublatung. Secondly, the global punk movement offers methods, which are adopted and localised in the form of tattoo culture, DIY publications and recordings, distros and festivals.[84] Thirdly, in the case of Tanam Untuk Kehidupan, activists draw from the shared imaginary of a global environment movement, based on popular images of environmentalism circulated by advertising and the campaigns of large-scale environmental advocacy groups such as Greenpeace.

Strategies of Global Environmentalism

Broadly speaking, environmentalism is a general philosophy and social movement concerned with improving the state of the environment. Over the last thirty years or so, it has come to be considered a global movement. This is clearly in part due to the increasingly important planetary dimension of many environmental problems and issues (Harvey 1989), the human impact on climate change being the most obvious example.

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84. Distros are temporary commercial spaces that mushroomed after the New Order. They often blur the line between gift economies, barter trade and legitimate business models.

Global environmentalism, however, is a social movement with unprecedented diversity, for it includes, just to name a few examples, those 'lifestyle greenies' who bring their own bags shopping, members of 'Green' political parties running for office all over the world, as well as direct action blockaders who live atop tripods in the canopies of old growth forests scheduled for logging. And these groups rub up against each other constantly. In Australia, foreign exchange students dressed in koala suits shake donation buckets for the Wilderness Society at the 'lifestyle greenies' dashing into multinational supermarket chains to buy organic produce.

The global environment movement includes those who use strategies, those who use tactics, and those who remix both strategies and tactics. A transnational organisation such as Greenpeace provides a good illustration of strategic actions, but many activists in Indonesia and elsewhere have also used Greenpeace tactically. The history of Greenpeace is beyond the scope of this thesis. Suffice to say that from early on Greenpeace defined itself as a legitimate institute of global environmentalism by differentiating itself from the loose alliances of the 1960s peace movement.[85] With national and regional offices all over the world, Greenpeace has carved out its own role in defining and ordering global environmentalism. Greenpeace offices carry out 'jointly agreed global campaign strategies within the local context they operate within' (Greenpeace). The ways these strategies interact with local and national environmentalisms in Indonesia provide an example of the interplay of global strategies and local tactics in environmentalism in Java.

However, the interpretations of the strategies of organisations such as Greenpeace and their effect on local situations are also diverse. Anthropologist Paul Little, observing the ways problems such as climate change have galvanised local movements in particular ways, writes that the 'increasing relevance of global-level phenomena to human groups changes the very meaning of the local … (and) the manner in which social actors behave and conduct local politics changes when global influences are present' (Little 1999, p. 260). Tsing's observations of Greenpeace in Indonesia during the 1990s support this argument, pointing out that Greenpeace acted as a strong foreign presence in Indonesia when activists were desperate for support and influence from outside the oppression of late New Order politics. Tsing points out that 'Young Indonesians were attracted to Greenpeace precisely because of the allure of the foreign … Greenpeace materials were available only in English' (Tsing 2005, p. 290).

In the current era of environmentalism in Indonesia, however, that 'allure' of the

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85. This definition is evident in the well-documented split from Greenpeace of Earth First! in 1969. In his account of the period, activist George McKay describes Earth First! as 'just a force of devoted, unpaid, grassroots activists occupying a niche they had created for themselves in the environmental movement–in short, an anarchy. [...] The closest thing to membership cards are T-shirts with [the] clenched-fist logo and the motto "No Compromise in Defense of Mother Earth"' (McKay 1996, p. 153). Clearly this kind of activist did not fit with the Greenpeace image.

cosmopolitan seems to have faded for many activists. Rather than wishing to work with Greenpeace, many activists see its strategies as outdated and counterproductive because its approach is too rigid, closed to the remix processes anakseribupualu and Tanam Untuk Kehidupan say are necessary for the production of local movements.

Djuadi, anakseribupulau cofounder says:

> Having global connections is very important in our campaigns, but we are sceptical about organisations like Greenpeace and other NGOs. We just don't trust them to work with our communities. Often NGOs arrive during a conflict (between a multinational corporation and a local community, for example) because they think they have the strategies to deal with global business culture. They don't really get results though. They just claim the work we were already doing—to protect the environment—as their own work. This working model sustains only the NGO itself, so more funding can be secured. It doesn't help our local communities to be independent and strong in such conflicts. That's why Greenpeace wasn't at the Forest Art Festival.

Tanam Untuk Kehidupan was more open to working with international NGOs. They did, in fact, request a partnership with Greenpeace in 2007 by writing a letter to Greenpeace's Jakarta Office requesting that Greenpeace donate an educational prize (books or posters were suggested) for the winner of their children's art competition themed 'Your Local Environment'. Tanam Untuk Kehidupan offered, in exchange, to acknowledge the support of Greenpeace in all their promotional material and links to their website as well as an information stall at Festival Mata Air. They received no response.

Greenpeace faces criticism for engaging in 'Green' imperialism (Sihaloho & Osman 2010) and for not localising its campaigns. But it also faces more broad criticism. In the article 'Officials and Analysts Say Greenpeace's "Lies" About Indonesia Are Imperialistic' in the *Jakarta Globe*, Greenpeace is accused of exaggerating its data and lying in its reports. My purpose here is not to join these accusations. Rather, I point out the language of criticism. Greenpeace is accused of being colonial and imperialistic. Its Indonesian campaigns are described as 'pro-poverty initiatives', implying that Greenpeace uses sinister strategies to achieve its mission of global environmentalism. While some attacks of Greenpeace methodology seem to originate with pro-business lobby groups, some criticisms are clearly founded in activist circles. Anti-colonial sentiments amongst activists are still very real in Indonesia, particularly around issues of conservation.

In my own research, several activists identified feelings of suspicion for organisations that imposed a strategy of global environmentalism. Such suspicions are rooted in the perception that these organisations have mismanaged the relationship between local, national and global politics. One activist said of Greenpeace:

> Greenpeace does lots of great work (in Indonesia). However, the downside is their attitude towards other organisations—they always act like they know it all. They are arrogant. Even their communication with other big groups like WAHLI was pretty good during their first Jakarta establishment but it has simply gone downhill since then.
>
> Now they are being attacked by even groups like Jatam [Mining Advocacy Network] which claimed Greenpeace has misused their data. The problem is they [Greenpeace Indonesia] are being dictated more by Greenpeace International. Previously they campaigned hard on the Papuan and Riau forest, but nowadays they are heavily dictated by international issues, and they follow campaigns that are likely to be popular, such as those that involve whales.

In contrast to Greenpeace, the activists involved in Festival Mata Air and the Forest Art Festival lack a global strategy as such. One Tanam Untuk Kehidupan member concedes: 'We're tiny. We're definitely not going to change anything on our own.' But their work represents an engagement with global environmentalism that is self-determined. This view of environmentalism as a movement that needs to be created at a local, collective level parallels the emphasis on artist-run initiatives that is also characteristic of the festivals. Festival Mata Air and the Forest Art Festival produce cultural spaces that are run by artists themselves rather than curators (see Chapter 3) and environmentalisms that respond directly to issues within kampungs rather than fitting in with global campaigns. In short, these movements decolonise global environmentalism as well as global art discourse.

The remix tactics used to do so re-signify and disrupt the strategies of the global environment movement set up by Greenpeace and other non-government organisations and aid agencies. These parallel the way the artworks produced at the festivals re-signify and disrupt the galleries, institutions and circuits of the global art canon. The practices discussed in this thesis, which are considered by activists to be part of everyday life in the kampung, show that environmentalism is not restricted to the ordering of reality produced through institutions and the global flows of culture. These groups have no permanent physical spaces and no institution. They use existing spaces to which they have access: the kampung, the forest, the internet, as well as the urban spaces of train stations and shopping malls.

Tactical remix is the way these activists locate their work in different scales of politics. By performing multiple identities they shift their concerns seamlessly between different cultural spheres. This work is skilful; the building of so many identities and the ways individuals shift between them is a complex process of cultural production. For example, as Djuadi and Exi showed me, collective emails are used for a number of purposes. Those who can access them respond to a journalist from a regional newspaper as a member of Rapala and to a query from a California punk band as a member of SuperSamin Inc..

While the forming of multiple identities within the movement may seem confusing

and conflicted, this chapter argues that it was, and still is, in fact, tactical. This multiplicity is not at all unusual in Java. Many middle-class Indonesians have multiple identity cards, multiple jobs and multiple ways of relating to the world. But for activists, creating multiple collective forms is a way of opening up new cultural spaces with the possibility for a diverse range of voices to express relationships between nature and society and between the local and the global. Without these spaces, they may be destined to a parochial environmentalism, indeed, one that cannot grasp the friction between local, national and global cultural flows.

Remix tactics, in turn, provincialise global environmentalism as a Eurocentric movement. As suggested by Chakrabarty and raised elsewhere in this thesis, such a process of provincialisation is necessary to get beyond the relationships produced by colonialism and the reactions to it. Like the idea of festival, with its assumed universals, local interpretations of environmentalism have the potential for subversion because they throw into question what is taken for granted by global movements. Anna Tsing's work deepens the questions around these movements, arguing that, through a process of friction, generalisations about the global have in turn generated universals around nature. 'Nature and the globe have helped make each other.' The global environment movement has principally proposed the moral responsibilities of people, based on 'a spiritual and aesthetic unity for Nature' (Tsing 2005, p. 88).

The way that different environmentalisms place humans within the environment in ways that are not necessarily spiritual or aesthetic helps to clarify the point that, as well as remixing global environmentalism, activists in Central Java produce movements that are very site specific and cannot be used as models for environmentalism elsewhere; the carnivalesque cannot generate universals. As raised in the opening passage to this chapter, environmentalists in Java see the primary goal of forest conservation as extending the growth time of teak trees to thirty years because of the human benefits when the trees are felled. The timber industry in Randublatung thus needs to be reformed rather than abolished. In Salatiga, activists are not proposing that the springs be converted to pristine national parks. Rather, they are fighting to ensure that local communities have a voice in how these water sources are used and preserved. Contrasted with other environmental activists around the world, the eco-warriors of Tasmania, for example, who campaign for the complete conservation of old-growth forests, these visions are anthropogenic and very useful for understanding the friction between global and local perceptions of nature and culture.

Performing the *Environmentalis* Identities

Randublatung

This section looks closely at the work of three groups that formed in Randublatung and the surrounding area of Blora after the end of the New Order in 1998 and leading up to the Forest Art Festival. The analysis is structured to move from the very self-consciously local articulations of environmentalism presented by SuperSamin Inc., to Rapala and anakseribupulau, who both remix national mythologies.

For many activists located outside the major cities, the campaign which led to the end of the New Order was their first experience of a national movement. Regional areas saw a mushrooming of environmental groups. As new freedoms opened up, activists could draw on many sources to invent new discussions of local environmental issues—in order to be understood in many spheres. What was unleashed was a free-for-all in terms of style and form from which the carnivalesque in Java emerged. There was not necessarily more activism, but there were many more labels for it. As new alliances were being formed, and old ones were being tested, groups popped up, often only momentarily; if they had a cause, activists formed a group.

The area of Randublatung and Blora was no exception. Group identities formed around all sorts of issues from the exploitation of natural gas by ExxonMobil to corruption in the local administration.[86] A recent example is the campaign against a new cement factory in South Pati, Central Java (Crosby 2009). The campaign included many of the groups involved in the Forest Art Festival, as well as a long list of other acronyms.[87] Each group had its own name and logo, which had been worked up in a collective remix process. While the number of groups was not indicative of the size of the campaign, and most groups were fleeting, not lasting more than a few months, this campaign shows the diversity of approaches and the micro-politics occurring as local activists and farmers use their own voices to raise concerns. How to understand this diversity, as a tactical response to local environmental crisis and a characteristic of local carnivalesque, is one of the main concerns of this chapter.

Anakseribupulau: Children of a Thousand Islands

As explained in the introductory chapter, anakseribupulau has been used throughout this

86. It is worth noting that the environmental movements that formed in Central Java after the New Order were quite different from many of the more famous environmental movements of Indonesia. For example, the struggle of the Dayak people of the Meratus Mountains, which is the subject of Anna Tsing's Friction, involves the conservation of old growth forest. All of Central Java has been logged at some stage since colonialism and so the idea of 'conservation' there has different connotations.

87. ATOS (*Aliansi Rakyat Tolak Semen*/ Alliance of People Against Cement), JM-PPK (*Jaringan Masyarakat Peduli Pegunungan Kendeng*/ Network of People Who Care for Kendeng Mountain), SPP (*Serikat Petani Pati*/ Union of Pati Farmers), FMPL (*Forum Masyarakat Peduli Lingkungan*/ Forum of People Who Care About the Environment), JP2L (*Jaringan Perempuan Peduli Lingkungan*/Network of Women who Care about the Environment), *Komunitas Simbar Wareh* (Community at Wareh Water Source), and KOPLINK (*Komunitas Peduli Lingkungan*/ Community Who Cares About the Environment).

thesis as shorthand for the many groups involved in producing the Forest Art Festival. This chapter unpacks the identity of this umbrella group to find out how it engages with local, national and global environmentalisms.

This section looks at how anakseribupulau imagines itself as transnational and transcultural, remixing elements of global punk to connect to other movements on a global scale. The anakseribupulau identity, which is characterised by unstifled and unbounded creativity, expresses a reluctance of members to see either their own 'selves' as fixed in terms of what type of activists they are or their political affiliations. The name of the group is reproduced in multiple variations: anakseribupulau; Anakseribupulau; Anak Seribupulau. The group has multiple logos, which members use interchangeably. The most recent is a crude black and white drawing of a goat framed in a red cog (see Figure 72).[88] For anakseribupulau, branding is an opportunity to build a shared mythology, but this mythology need not be fixed, or serious. In interviews, anakseribupulau members describe the activist alliances that formed at the end of the New Order as limiting creativity. These led to a categorising and labelling of activism in the mainstream media and by onlookers that implied all political resistance was only about aggressive street protests and rent-a-mobs. The idea of anakseribupulau was an attempt to evade the fixed collective identity that painted activism in a certain light. Exi says:

> (In '98) … you had to be a member of this group, or aligned with that one. We are open. You want to be in anakseribupulau, you are welcome. Let's save the Earth.

This looseness, by extension, also characterised the branding of the Forest Art Festival. As there were no blocks by organisers on participants using derivatives of the anakseribupulau identity, participants were invited to represent the event however they wished, to the extent that one punter received a full back tattoo of one version of the event's publicity. Despite its relatively open and permissive visual identity, there was strictly no sponsorship allowed at the event. This was in contrast to the first Festival Mata Air, evoked in the opening passage of this chapter, where the primary sponsor was the cigarette company Djarum. Political authenticity is extremely important to anakseribupulau activists, as measured by commitment of individuals to the rejection of corporatism, consumerism and government control, rather than by any form of consistent 'branding'. The issue of sponsorship is extrapolated later in this chapter.

SuperSamin Inc.

The word 'Samin' refers to a group in Central Java ethnically indistinguishable from other Javanese people who follow a unique communalism movement. SuperSamin Inc. was

88. Many inside jokes and visual puns exist in the branding of anakseribupulau; when asked how a goat had come to be the mascot of anakseribupulau, members replied, jokingly, that they may as well be goat herders as they couldn't make a living as artists.

a remix of Samin philosophies, lifestyles and aesthetics in the form of a small business, a music band and an activist collective that formed in Blora in 2003. SuperSamin Inc. aimed to involve young people in the local politics of Blora by revitalising the genealogy of resistance specific to the area. This included remixing historical images, interpreting local sayings from the Samin movement and representing them in forms that were accessible to a young audience. Members produced zines that were widely circulated nationally, and ran a 'distro' for many years, where cassette tapes, T-shirts, and publications were sold. SuperSamin Inc. also produced and distributed a DVD of interviews with the dissident author Pramoedya Ananta Toer in his house shortly before he passed away in 2006.[89]

The interest in building mythologies, such as those around Pramoedya, is an important dimension of contemporary environmental activism in Randublatung. The New Order relied on tightly controlled constructions of history, the most important of which, the 'Communist threat' took the form of what Ariel Heryanto describes as a 'master narrative'. 'The master narrative secured the regime's legitimacy, and served an indispensable function in the protracted political 'stability and order' and impressive economic growth' (Heryanto, 1999, p. 153). As Suharto's oligarchy lost control, multiple narratives began to emerge and contradict the singularity of New Order history (Conroy, 2007, p. 41). Many young people developed renewed interest in their own genealogies; artists found inspiration in uncovering the real stories of both the atrocities and the heroism of Indonesia's past, and people became much more open to speaking about their own experiences of oppression and those of their communities and families. It is this journey inward, into the genealogy of their own locality, that has inspired these activists. SuperSamin Inc. was a tactic that re-localised the movement by reframing Samin philosophies into contemporary struggles. In an eloquent visual dialogue, SuperSamin Inc. remixed Saminism into contemporary environmentalism.

Wong Sikep

The genealogy of forms of resistance attributed to the Samin people shows that tactics have been part of struggles in Central Java for a much longer period than this thesis has the scope to describe. With very few resources, no legitimate political clout, and not much in the way of a strategy, Samin people have managed to defend their land and culture; firstly against colonialism, secondly against Indonesian nationalism, thirdly in resistance to New Order edicts, and finally to the corporate exploitation of land and resources occurring today.

The story of the Samin people began with Samin Surontika, a villager who lived in the area of Randublatung during the latter period of Dutch occupation. Samin Surontika preached peaceful resistance to Dutch colonialism. His tactics included ignoring Dutch

89. Blora is the birthplace of the dissident author Pramoedya Ananta Toer. Members of SuperSamin Inc. are close with Pram's family and are usually involved in events to commemorate the author's death and birthday as well as a range of other literary events of the area.

land ownership laws, refusing to pay taxes to the colonial authority, and confusing Dutch scouts with false or misleading information and convoluted language. He soon had a following of people who formed their communities and system of land ownership based on pre-colonial cultivation (Benda, H. J., and Castles, L. 1969).

Samin people do not participate in any form of census but activists estimate that there are now around five hundred Samin people living in the regency of Blora. While more commonly know as 'Samin', these communities describe themselves as *wong sikep* meaning 'those who are alert' or 'those who embrace' (Widodo 1997, p. 264). Samin people maintain radically egalitarian customs that contrast strongly with the social hierarchy that pervades many areas of Javanese life. For example, Samin people speak only low-level Javanese, *Ngoko*[90], to everyone, whatever their social position. They recognise no external authority, only their own customs.

When Indonesia declared independence, Samin people resisted the new Indonesian state, refusing conditions of citizenship such as adherence to one of the five recognised religions, state education, and use of Indonesian language. Instead, they remained loyal to the self-determination of their own communities and their spiritual connection to the land, carrying on with organic farming methods, educating their children with their own curricula, and refusing to use the Indonesian language.

Saminisme

The significance of Samin people to the context I am writing about can be found, not so much in their endurance, but in their effect on contemporary activism. This effect goes beyond SuperSamin Inc., which was in fact short lived, lasting officially as a collective no more than two years. The remixing of Samin culture has become widespread since the end of the New Order. Activists who practise this remix have labelled themselves as 'Saminisme'. Saminisme refers to an activist movement that not only appropriates the philosophies of Samin people but also builds the mythology surrounding Samin Surosentiko as a local hero by reproducing his image. Before Saminisme, Samin Surosentiko was already referenced beyond Samin communities. His portrait was often made into a symbol and reproduced in public places, such as in the branding of neighbourhood shops (*warung*) or painted on the back of trucks. But Saminisme takes these appropriations to another level, remixing them with elements of punk, which activists consider their own culture and activating them through digital media.

Saminisme remixes two dimensions of Samin culture. The first comes from Samin proverbs, which have a huge potential for remix, because they are expressed in

90. In Javanese, Ngoko is informal speech, used between friends and close relatives. It is also used by persons of higher status to persons of lower status, such as elders to younger people or bosses to subordinates.

Figure 73 (top left): Samin Surosentiko, photographer and date unknown.

Figure 74 (top right): Imam Bucah wears a SuperSamin Inc. T-shirt at Festival Mata Air, 2007.

Figure 75 (bottom): A Super Samin T-shirt worn at a protest against a new cement factory in South Pati, 2007. ‘Kulo Ndiko Sami’ means in ‘I am the same/ We are the same’.

Figure 76 (top): Saminista Indonesia, Facebook page.
< http://www.facebook.com/pages/SAMINISTA-INDONESIA/289154676770?ref=ts>
Accessed November 10, 2011.

Figure 77 (bottom): Saminista Blora City [football] supporters, Facebook page.
< http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=129054820428>
Accessed November 10, 2011.

straightforward language and yet, they often work on multiple levels. Samin people are famous for their proverbs, which often offer wisdom in the form of word play. One example is 'yo kang ngongkon yo kang nglakoni' which, like most Samin expressions has many meanings, one of which roughly translates to 'whoever orders also must be able to do what is ordered'.[91] Activists in Blora have reworked this proverb into their own anarchist philosophies reproducing it alongside the motto in English 'No Gods, No Masters'. One activist said 'meeting the Samin community is like learning a new language where words like "anarchist", "communist" and even "activist" do not exist, yet, somehow, these ideas are still expressed.'

This comment on language is an important one because it shows that it is not exact translations at work here, nor is it a dubbing process, as described by Boellstorf. By sewing local languages of resistance together with seemingly alien activist ideas, Saminisme creates something new entirely. As Levitt and Merry explain, 'activists draw on international "vocabularies of motive" when they define problems, using information, discourses, and models available to them across borders. They deploy globally legitimated vocabularies, like "human rights" and "environmentalism," to refocus and jump-start their movements' (Levitt & Merry 2009, p. 8). What they generate is a movement that remixes local, national and global elements.

The advent of digital technologies, in particular the internet, has opened the possibility for new kinds of visuality and multiplicity which allow for these ideas to travel and morph more freely. A popular term for describing the rapid uptake and spread of a particular idea or piece of cultural information on the internet is a 'meme' (Knobel & Lankshear 2005, p. 1). The second identifiable element of the Saminisme remix, the image of Samin Surosentiko himself, is considered here a meme because of the way it shapes environmentalism in Blora as it spreads. One photograph in particular has entered the visual vocabularies of environmentalists all over Indonesia, mythologising Samin Surosentiko well beyond the Samin communities themselves (Figure 73). This particular photograph, the origin of which I have been unable to discover, seems to be the only one that remains from his life. This image has been reproduced countless times by Samin people themselves and, in recent years, by the Saminisme movement and SuperSamin Inc.. In its most raw format, it is a blurry black and white group portrait of an unblinking and fairly nondescript Javanese male. Reproduced, for example on T-shirts, the face of Samin Surosentiko has been isolated and enlarged from the group photograph almost beyond recognition (Figure 74). And yet it is not beyond recognition, for this image has become an internet meme, propagated through social networking sites and blogs and taking on a life of its own.

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91. Seen on a T-shirt worn by a young man from Blora at a Samin community in Pati. Translated to the Indonesian *'Siapa yang menyuruh ya juga harus bisa melakukan'* by another participant and to English by myself.

Over time, the meme spread, finding paths way beyond the control of Samin people or Super Samin Inc., and coming to also represent fandom for the Blora soccer team, named Saminista. At the time of writing, there were two facebook groups representing these fans (Figure 76, Figure 77). This remix is reminiscent of the globalisation of the image of other freedom fighters; Che Guevara and Bob Marley come to mind as faces that have become detached from their original contexts as they travel and are reframed for different audiences. The adoption of the Samin image may not represent a turn away from these 'universal' images (Bob Marley is as popular as ever in activist circles) but it does represent a complicating of how local environmentalism is produced, drawing from and generating multiple scales simultaneously.

The work of SuperSamin Inc. shows the potential of remix culture to revitalise local ideologies and incorporate them into contemporary movements. SuperSamin borrows images and sayings from Sikep communities, to celebrate the localness of their identity, while at the same time circulating this identity through zines, musical recordings, performance, clothing, and the internet.

This is the same type of dynamic Anna Tsing describes as the grip that specific knowledges and global connections give to universal aspirations (Tsing 2005, p. 1). In her ethnography of the environment movement in Kalimantan, Tsing identifies 'activist packages' as a way of understanding how local movements intervene in global flows and vice versa. She writes of the stories of environmental heroes that have become detached from their original contexts as they travel and are reframed for different audiences. Powerful institutions and actors determine their paths. But without these local myths, nothing is universally understood; there is no global environment movement. This model is clearly very relevant to the idea of a circulating Samin image. The mythology around the man and his ideology is mediated by multiple sources.

I am not arguing that the Sikep movement is modernised or updated in any way through these remix processes. These communities are clear about their independence, and having survived New Order oppression, they themselves will determine their future directions, the battles they choose and the changes they make to their social structures and local environment. But the participation of Wong Sikep in the remix of its own culture is also tactical.

Everybody involved in this meme—Wong Sikep, SuperSamin Inc. and its customers, young soccer enthusiasts—all use the remix as an iteration of a geographically located genealogy. In this way, activist identities creep into the language of everyday life by using the internet and image manipulation software for open ended experimentation with words and images; in other words, they remix locality. Lankshear and Knobel explain this kind of

remix, that results in memes, as a way for ordinary people to create new forms of expression and communication 'on a scale never seen before and in ways scarcely imagined prior to digital technologies' (Knobel and Lankshear 2005, p.2). They point out the potential for memes to enact 'active/activist literacies' as they are replicated, providing a 'fruitful and accessible practice for bringing about positive social changes in the ways people think and, perhaps, act towards others' (Knobel and Lankshear 2005: 20). These methods echo the original tactics of the Samin people, of evading exploitation through word play and producing contagious ideas other than those of the state. The fact that the methods of Saminisme focus on visual rather than verbal language reflects an extension of, rather than a departure from, 'true' Samin forms of activism.

SuperSamin Inc. activists are not directly descended from Samin people. However, by assuming collective ownership over the image of Samin Surontika they demonstrate an emotional connection to Samin, embracing a connected genealogy based on a common sense of place. The work of SuperSamin Inc. shows the potential of remix culture to revitalise local ideologies and incorporate them into contemporary movements, bringing a new era for environmentalism in Blora marked by a collaboration between seemingly disparate groups, Tsing's 'sticky engagements' (Tsing, 2005, p.6). Saminisme and the unboundedness of its interpretation demonstrate the possibilities of digital remix as new technologies are embraced by activists in Blora as a way to localise their movement while simultaneously engaging with other scales of environmentalism.

Rapala: Randublatung Nature Lovers

Randublatung activists also sample elements of the Indonesian environment movement to expresses themselves in language that operates on a national scale. Making sense of this remix requires a background to the idea of 'nature lovers' in the development of the Indonesian environment movement. This background demonstrates two dimensions to the figuration of the national environmental activist—dimensions that made it ripe to be parodied by the remix tactics of post-New Order activists.

The first dimension is the image of the student nature lover, the most well known form of environmentalism in Indonesia: *Mapala–Mahasiswa Pencinta Alam* (Students Who Love Nature). Mapala groups exist at most university campuses in Indonesia although there is no real equivalent elsewhere in the world as they emerged out of the particular conditions of the Indonesian Independence movement and the New Order regime. They organise mountaineering, rafting, and climbing trips and often produce small publications that serve as guides to the natural environment. Individual Mapala groups operate according a national code of ethics and form an important national network, which is often activated to help in natural disaster zones.

The Mapala groups appeared at the national universities at the time of Indonesian independence. Their rise in popularity during Sukarno's presidency is usually explained historically as a calm antidote to the tension of national politics. The paradox this image presents is illustrated beautifully in Riri Riza's 2005 film *Gie* (Riza 2005), in which the central character, Soe Hok Gie (based on the diaries of the real person) and his friends insist that they are politically neutral as the violent conflict between the military and the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) builds. These earnest youngsters spend their leisure time hiking with the Nature-Loving Students of the University of Indonesia (Mapala UI), but as the overthrow of Sukarno gives way to the horror of the Suharto regime, disappearances make it clear that friendships can be viewed as political alliances, and Gie's patriotically-motivated love of nature is no longer an easy escape from social contention. While Soe Hok Gie and many other founders of Indonesia's original Mapala groups later became critics of the New Order, student nature lovers groups seemed to elevate nature above national politics, in general remaining 'self-consciously politically trivial' (Tsing 2005, p. 130).

While this national environmentalist form was growing, corporate interests were also manufacturing another dimension to the image of nature loving in Indonesia, transforming an identity around environmentalist concern into national sales campaigns. Anna Tsing details the way Gudang Garam and Phillip Morris, in the vein of America's 'Marlborough man', adopted in the 1980s and 90s the virile risk-taking image of nature loving adventurers in their advertising in Indonesia. But the campaigns went further than putting manly models conquering mountaintops on their billboards. In 1997, Marlboro 'organised a new confluence of nature loving concerns' by sponsoring Mapala groups, setting up exhibitions displaying products and coordinating trips (Tsing 2000, p. 145). The close association between tobacco companies and what they view as a national environment movement continues to this day: the DVD release of the film *Gie* is sponsored by Sampoerna, the Indonesian subsidiary of Phillip Morris (Figure 78); Djarum uses images of young men conquering nature in its advertising (Figure 79 and Figure 80) and sponsors Mapala social networks; and for Tanam Untuk Kehidupan in Salatiga, Djarum was involved in the development of Festival Mata Air from its inception, as discussed later in this chapter.

Rapala activists objected to the romanticism of the Mapala identity, and what they read as a firm masculinity intertwined with corporate interests. Using the English word, they identified the 'sexism' of nature lovers, referring to the way many students boasted about mountains they had climbed, adventures they had completed and territory they had marked in terms of virility. And they were frustrated by the lack of women in most groups, including their own Rapala. This was not the movement they had wanted to be part of, yet they used it tactically, to gain legitimacy, and to gain access to a national network.

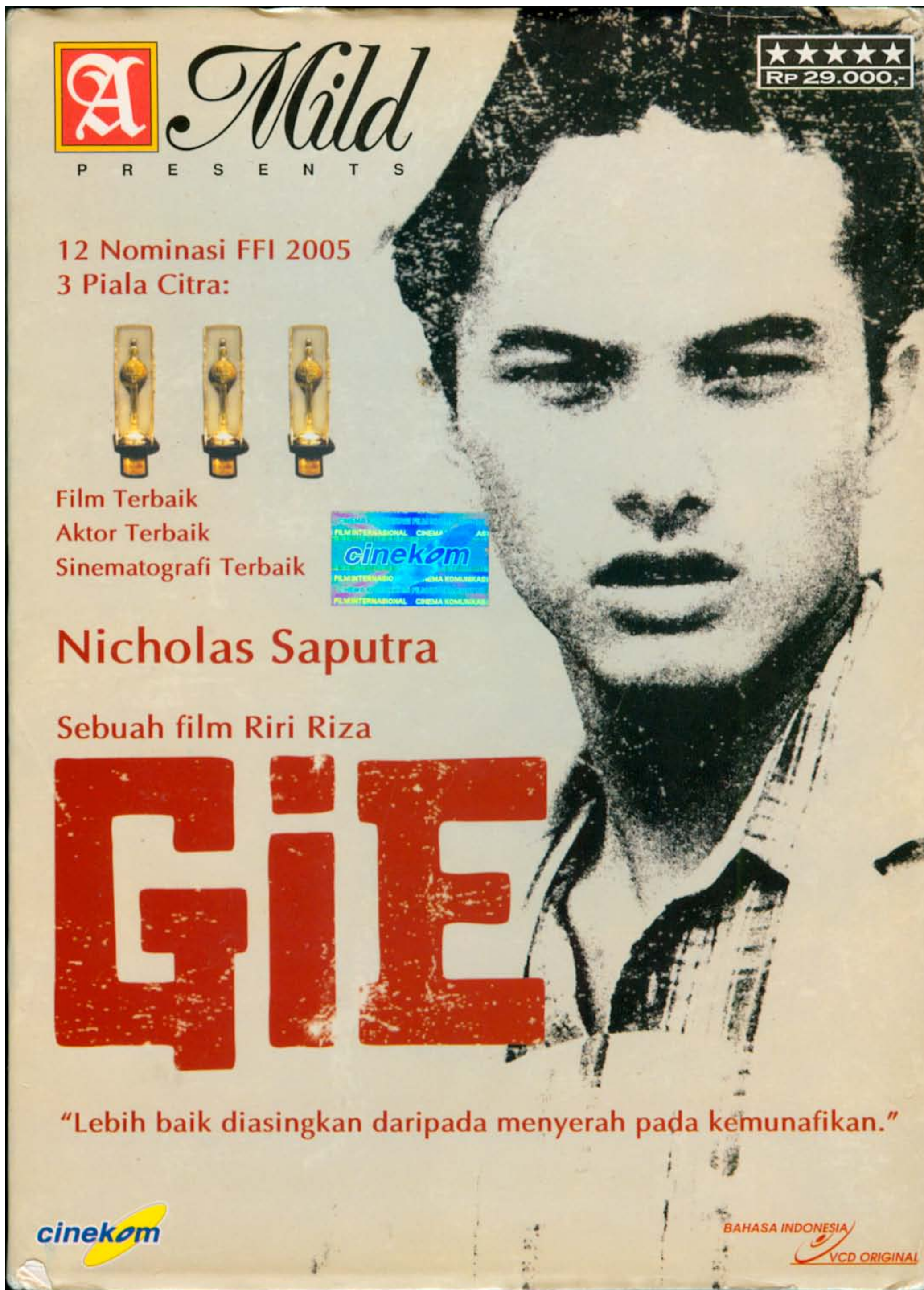

Figure 78: DVD cover of Riri Riza's 2005 film *Gie,* sponsored by Sampoerna, whose logo is in the top left.

Figure 79 and Figure 80: Advertisements for Djarum, available for download at http://www.djarum-super.com/adventure (Accessed November 10, 2011) as part of the 'My Life, My Adventure' campaign.

In some ways, Rapala was created as a counterpoint to the identities of anakseribupulau and SuperSamin Inc., which both strongly identify with punk. While Rapala is made up of almost all the same people as the other groups, by being a nature lover's group, it avoids what the Indonesian musician and writer Hikmawan describes as 'narrow' understandings of punk in Indonesia. This view, which is often portrayed in mainstream media, says Saefullah, positions 'punk as a type of aggressive and entertaining music enjoyed only by a minority of angry and frustrated kids from urban streets (Saefullah 2011, p. 4).' Saefullah argues that there are many more sides to punk in Indonesia, some of which seem to be represented in Randublatung as punks remix environmentalism. Rapala's identity tactically steers away from typically punk imagery and language. It becomes a safe costume for activists wishing to speak about environmental issues in more gentle voices, less easily dismissed by mainstream media.

Like SuperSamin Inc., Rapala is also an act of wordplay to form a new identity. By replacing 'Mahasiswa' (student) with Randublatung, Rapala firstly mocks the student movement. [92] Unlike most Mapala groups, Rapala is not reliant on an educational institution for its 'base camp'. Rapala members are not restricted to students, which is an essential adaptation as most activists in Randublatung have not received a higher education and there is no campus in Randublatung. Rapala is unmistakably recognisable as a 'Mapala' but it locates the movement in a village rather than a campus, rejecting a generic national framework of environmentalism and remixing it into a local form.

This rejection of institutional learning is represented in the lyrics of a song that has often used as an anthem of the Randublatung movement. The song and its English translation were created collectively and multiple versions can be rendered (punk, reggae, folk etc.):

BELAJAR SAMA-SAMA
Belajar sama-sama
Bertanya sama-sama
Kerja bersama-sama
Semua orang itu guru
Alam Raya sekolahku
Kita bangkit bersama

LEARNING TOGETHER
We are learning together
We are asking together
We are working together

92. Mapala and Rapala use the common technique of '*singkatan*', the practice of joining parts of existing words to create new words. For an in depth discussion of singkatan, see (Cohn 2006).

Every person is a teacher
All of nature is a classroom
We will rise up together

The song is a confirmation of positive human relationships with nature, but it is also wistful. Randublatung activists do not have access to the higher education that is a prerequisite of becoming a member of a Mapala group. Rapala's activities are not unlike those of a typical Mapala group. For instance, semi regular camps with local high school students are organised in the forests surrounding Randublatung. Activities at these camps include bird watching, identifying tree varieties, and mountaineering, and tree planting. Yet Rapala programs rarely turn out as innocent as they seem, always managing to twist local politics into the view that nature is for leisure. On a group trip to the forest in 2005, for example, Rapala stated they were learning how to build a shelter from teak leaves and branches. The spot they chose to practice, however, was a disputed piece of land where illegal felling and hunting were taking place. Their workshop inflamed a conflict between official authorities and local militia, and their 'practice hut' was torched, allegedly by illegal loggers.

In 2003, Rapala organised a tour to Mount Lawu, one of Java's most often climbed mountains, to ceremoniously pull out the hundreds of plaques from various Mapala groups across the country, attached to trees with nails as climbers reached challenging points of the hike. 'It wasn't about claiming the mountain. The mountain is not ours,' one Rapala member said. In protest against the practice of 'conquering' nature, the group did not even attempt to complete the climb of Lawu. Half an hour from the summit, they stopped, had a meeting, and turned around to begin their descent.

Rapala shows that the way activists in Blora address a national culture of environmentalism is also tactical. By modelling themselves in the image of Mapala, Rapala gains access to a national movement, which they see as being given opportunities to which they do not have access, a movement that they understand as based on strategies, not tactics in the de Certeau sense. Rapala activists have a shared identity with other Mapala groups, which they use across Indonesia as an inroad to other local movements. Rapala legitimises itself by remixing the name of Mapala and the formula for Mapala activities. But in that process it creates something new and exposes the real politics of a local environmentalism.

Salatiga: A Mobile Local

This section moves to Salatiga, again looking at the three scales of environmental politics analysed above. Firstly, I look at how Tanam Untuk Kehidupan engaged with global ideas of environmentalism. Secondly, I consider the local conflicts in the kampungs that have become the sites of each Festival Mata Air. Thirdly, I examine the roots and outcomes of

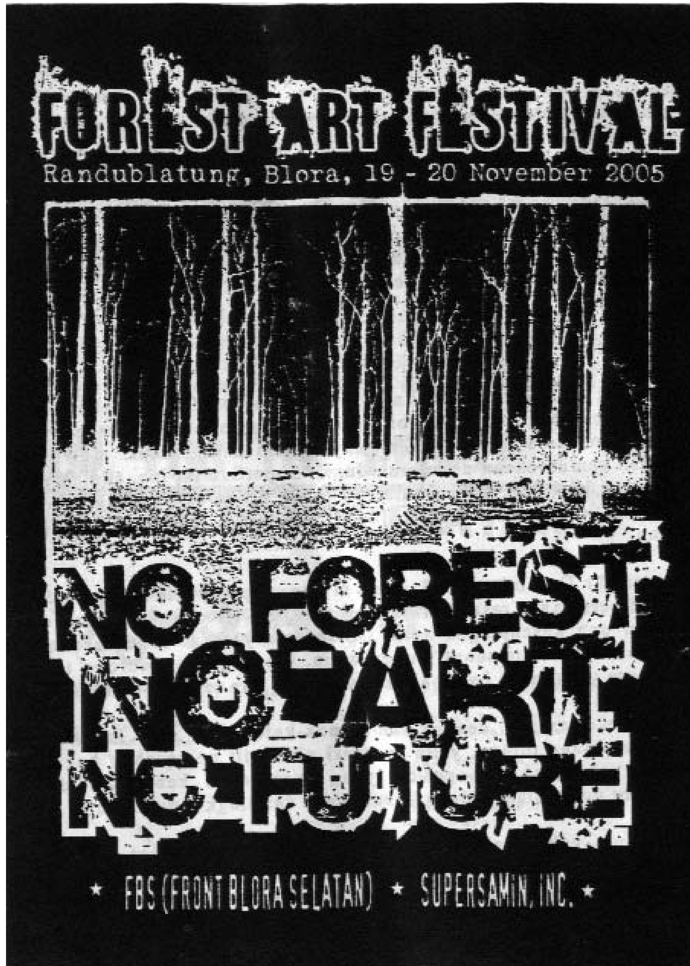

Figure 81 (top): Tattoo made at the Forest Art Festival, 2005. Photograph by Mickie Quick.

Figure 82 (bottom): Cover of the Forest Art Festival program.

the corporate interests that have emerged on a national scale to be major players in how environmentalism is defined in the new cultural spaces of post New Order Indonesia.

The environmentalism of Salatiga differs from Randublatung in a number of significant ways even though the scales of these works are the same. Firstly, Tanam Untuk Kehidupan employed what I will call a mobile sense of the local. Rather than being attached to a particular kampung in Salatiga, Festival Mata Air has aimed for a remix of environmentalism that is applicable to multiple sites. Using the concept of kampung as a general space to work within, as well as a specific place with unique issues, it has used 'safe' elements of environmentalism to create a festival formula that can bypass the friction of local politics. This differs from the transportation of Randublatung to Klender, discussed in Chapter 1, because in that case a permanent kampung was established. Here, Festival Mata Air creates a remix of their concept of kampung, which travels with each iteration of the festival. Paradoxically, as the festival has travelled and been challenged by different perceptions of local at each site, the branding of the event has been remixed into a more generally appealing (for a wider audience) and less overtly defiant event. Tanam Untuk Kehidupan has opted for a more licensed version of the carnivalesque. In contrast with the Forest Art Festival, Festival Mata Air has been able to be held four times, a significant outcome of this compromise. Also, Tanam Untuk Kehidupan has made very different decisions about sponsorship to anakseribupulau, which will be explored in terms of engagement with corporate environmentalism on a national scale.

Taking Refuge in the Global

This section compares and contrasts the development of local environmentalism in Salatiga and Randublatung, because, in some senses Festival Mata Air can be considered as an extension of the Forest Art Festival. It developed afterwards, drawing on the work of anakseribupulau, yet consciously defining itself as a different kind of movement. In the words of Tikun, co-founder of Tanam Untuk Kehidupan, anakseribupulau activists were there at the right moment and 'pushed us to start, to jump in, by helping us feel part of a bigger movement.' But, Salatiga has a different history from Randublatung and Blora. Because of its elevation, like Bandung, Salatiga was a refuge for Dutch colonists and missionaries before Indonesian Independence. Residents still consider it a gentle place, largely free from the political conflicts of Jakarta and Solo. Tikun says that as yet, the environmental problems in Salatiga have not been considered as part of wider political issues as in Randublatung, where activists have been quick to point to local corruption and global capitalism. Tanam Untuk Kehidupan decided to make the most of public perceptions of environmentalism as 'neutral', distancing itself from illegal activities that might isolate members of the kampungs within which they were working. Tikun describes the compromise like this:

Figure 83 (top left): Festival Mata Air poster, 2006, handprinted woodcut on paper.

Figure 84 (middle left): Festival Mata Air poster, 2008.

Figure 85 (bottom left): Festival Mata Air poster, 2009.

Figure 86 (top right): Festival Mata Air logo, 2006, 'Think Local, Act Global'.

Figure 87 (middle right): Tanam Untuk Kehidupan logo, 2007, 'community for water, water for community'.

Figure 88 (bottom right): Festival Mata Air logo, 2008, 'water for all'.

> It's not that we're against those methods, its just that we are clear about the identity of our organisation. We are careful about what we do in the name of TUK, because now it represents a lot more than who we are as individuals. … For example, some of us joined a protest on the streets last month about the rises in the price of water, but that was as individual activists, not TUK. We want to be free to go anywhere as TUK, we don't want to be stopped because we are too political.

The reservations of Tanam Untuk Kehidupan members about appearing too political have led to the branding of Festival Mata Air with a kind of environmentalism that relies increasingly on a global movement. This global connection is a way of taking refuge from the messiness of local politics. While the concepts for Festival Mata Air and Forest Art Festival emerged from very similar sets of goals, what is evident in the development of the visual representations of each is a deliberate positioning along the spectrum of environmental politics, in other words, they are two quite different remixes of environmentalism.

The mottos of Festival Mata Air provide a good example of the cautious attitude of Tanam Untuk Kehidupan to localising environmental politics, as they have always been general and have always been in English, but seem to have become more broad over time: 'Community for Water, Water for Community' (2006), 'Think Local, Act Global' (2007), 'Water for All' (2008) (Figure 86, Figure 87, Figure 88). 'Think Global, Act Local,' to take one example, is derivative of innumerable campaigns that began with the popularised environmental consciousness of the 1970s and 1980s.[93] It has become a cliché in global English, short hand for a particular type of environmentalism that focuses on community and the imperative to work on a small scale. TUK argues through its visual language–its choice of internationally used fonts[94], friendly motto, colourful logos and harmonious compositions–that we each have a role and responsibility in changing the world, on an individual, community, and corporate level, as opposed to the more hardline approach taken by anakseribupulau to attack the power systems that control it. Such words do little to orient the festival in any political direction beyond being 'environmental', which, organisers explain, is an attempt to appeal to a very broad audience, to 'welcome' all people into the movement.

In contrast to this kind of positive campaign, the motto of the Forest Art Festival, also in English, 'No Forest, No Art, No Future,' (Figure 82) calls us to imagine the worst-case scenario. The possibility of an alternative vision of the future is left to the event itself. It is clear that at Forest Art Festival, politics and culture were viewed as one and the same. The

93. The origin of the slogan, 'Think Globally, Act Locally' is unclear but and probably emerged simultaneously in a number of places. Friends of the Earth claims that it was coined by their founder David Brower in 1969 (Earth 2000).

94. TUK uses Helvetica for its logo and much of its publicity material. Because of its functionality and perceived neutrality, Helvetica is one of the most widely used sans-serif typefaces in the world (Müller et al. 2009).

implications of the doomsday attitude are twofold. 'Forest' and 'art' are interdependent, and if we are unable to realise their importance and their relationship, we are faced with an ultimatum: there is 'No future'.

The methods of publicity of the two events are also a point of difference. Anakseribupulau brought together innumerable hand-generated clips, drawings and scribblings to publicise the Forest Art Festival. They hired a truck with a sound system rigged to the back and rode around the kampungs that surrounded the festival site in the weeks leading up to the festival, singing, chanting and building the hype.[95] The publicity of Festival Mata Air had the same kampungan feel in the first year, but increasingly its publicity material was digitally produced and systematically distributed.

The posters produced for Festival Mata Air also changed from hand printed wood cut prints designed and printed in collaboration with Taring Padi artists to very slick computer generated imagery (Figure 83, Figure 84, Figure 85). The festival, in essence, has been branded in a way that connects it more directly with global styles of activist culture. But there is a paradox in the way the visual identity of Festival Mata Air has developed; as it has become more 'universal', it has also become more general, losing some of the markers of the kampung that are part of the carnivalesque in Java. Within this paradox lies the friction between the global and the local. Tanam Untuk Kehidupan has faced intense opposition from within the kampung and has responded with changes to how it identifies with the idea of a global movement. It has weighted its remix towards the global, aiming for neutrality that echoes, in some senses, the safe politics of Mapala.

Through its self-branding, Tanam Untuk Kehidupan generalises a set of ideas that are in fact, all contentious in themselves. Tanam Untuk Kehidupan's program in 2007 included multiple screenings of an un-subtitled version of *An Inconvenient Truth* (Guggenheim 2006), a serious documentary on the global implications of climate change presented by former US Vice President Al Gore. Why would this film be relevant to a largely non-English speaking community in Salatiga? The answer lies in the imagined connection between local problems and global solutions (and vice versa). Festival is shown here to be a way of embodying this imaginary.

This choice is a clear identification of the strategies of global environmentalism. After all, 'green' groups all over the world have taken very similar approaches, used similar language, and associated themselves with similar texts, read by some activists as a hijacking of local movements. There is some contention within Tanam Untuk Kehidupan about this, but most see it as part of the natural progression from a small, informal local community

95. This is a common method of publicity within kampungs across Indonesia. It was also used to publicise 'Hari Ini Adalah Hari Seni' (Art Day is Today) in Padang.

group to an NGO working at a broader scale. Many also take the global dimension to its identity as a given because of its intercultural origins (founded by an Australian, Vanessa Hyde, and an Indonesian, Rudy Ardianto). Tanam Untuk Kehidupan members see it as a collective commitment to a particular visual language and strategy, in this case, an inoffensive approach to 'grassroots' change. But, for some, this commitment also requires an ability to slip in and out of multiple identities:

> We decided to make this community [Tanam Untuk Kehidupan] politically safe. It's not that we don't hate the government as much as other activists. It's that we have decided to be strategic. Sometimes, I have to go to the district offices and, no joke, they start karaoke at 10 am. They are not doing much work in those places. I went to the mayor's office on behalf of TUK last week, to get a signature, and the next day I was at a protest outside his office over water prices. It sounds crazy, but it has to be like that. I needed his signature for permission for the festival, and we think that is an important form of activism too.

Another way that Tanam Untuk Kehidupan has used global connections to take refuge from the conflicts of local politics is through the participation of international activists. The intercultural genesis of Tanam Untuk Kehidupan means that a global dimension was not consciously brought into the identity of the collective; it was always there. Tanam Untuk Kehidupan was initially formed as an organisation around the marital partnership of an Australian student (Vanessa Hyde) and a Javanese artist (Rudy Ardianto). Vanessa's citizenship meant the organisation had access to Australian funding bodies (Australia Indonesian Institute and Australian Volunteers International). But also, as the couple had lived in Australia with their children for ten years before returning to Salatiga, they were already part of artistic and environment movements that arguably shaped the 'global' nature of Tanam Untuk Kehidupan. In contrast, when anakseribupulau formed in Randublatung, no members had ever travelled outside Indonesia.[96]

In contrast, when anakseribupulau members were invited to the Gang Festival in Sydney, in 2006, each of them had to obtain a passport, as they had never travelled outside of Indonesia. While this global dimension to Tanam Untuk Kehidupan's identity helped secure resources, it led to high level of distrust within the kampungs it worked in, stemming from the same sentiments faced by Greenpeace and other global organisations. It also meant that international participants played a very particular role in the way the festival integrated with local and national politics.

In the words of Daniel McKinlay, an Australian artist and electronic musician who attended Festival Mata Air in 2007:

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96. This dimension of Tanam Untuk Kihudpan's history is comparable to that of Cemeti art gallery, which became a more formal international art space than a local artist run space through the involvement of its international partner (Ingham 2007).

> In the eyes of the TUK folks I felt like my presence as a bule [white person], even the dubious kind of 'arts bum bule', was seen to be some way useful; dropping into the nice clothes and being paraded about as a foreigner who had made the journey to Salatiga felt like maybe it performed some kind of prestige/validation role for the festival, something along the lines of 'look, our festival about littering is a big enough detail that it attracts international artists'.

The presence of foreigners at the Forest Art Festival, on the other hand, was not particularly emphasised. All the organisers were from Randublatung and while the presence of foreigners had some unexpected positive side effects, it was not instrumental to the organising of the event. At a time when many governments, including Australia, had issued travel warnings to Indonesia because of terrorist alerts, local authorities were keen to show the national police force that they could handle any security issues and make foreigners feel not only safe, but welcome. Despite a chequered history with local police forces, organisers were amazed to experience cooperation and protection from *preman*, local security groups, during the Forest Art Festival.

Festival Mata Air: Testing the Kampung Commons

The journey of Festival Mata Air to three neighbourhoods, Senjoyo, Kalitaman and Kalimangkak, is a story of multiple tensions between activists and kampungs but also of tensions within kampungs, complicated by the need to determine who was best situated to represent local groups. These conflicts are important in viewing Festival Mata Air as part of a broader effort to build the commons from which local environmentalisms can be created, open to creative remix, rather than closed by assumptions around what constitutes the global.

Tanam Untuk Kehidupan had every intention of combining local kampung genealogies of resistance with their own environmental politics, similar to the practices of SuperSamin Inc. However, the story of their conflicts with kampung authorities demonstrates how messy the remix process can become. While Tanam Untuk Kehidupan members made the decision to be politically safe, this did not grant them immunity from the conflicts within the kampungs where they worked. As explored in Chapter 1, many environmental activists in Java view the kampung as a kind of commons, a site of shared struggle. Tanam Untuk Kehidupan viewed the identity of Kalitaman, the second kampung involved with Festival Mata Air, as part of the commons. Like SuperSamin Inc. in Blora, they felt that sampling the dimensions of resistance in the genealogy of the kampung would strengthen their movement and their relations with the kampung. This was not the case. The kampung turned out to be a very unstable source of remix and the global connections of Tanam Untuk Kehidupan created an unforseen friction with local identities.

Tanam Untuk Kehidupan's strategy during each festival has been to draw kampung

residents together around their common water source. But the relationship between a kampung and its water is not necessarily simple. There are those who use the springs every day, for washing, swimming and bathing, and there are those with the power to make decisions about the springs as resources. The most revealing of these relationships is between Tanam Untuk Kehidupan and Kalitaman, the kampung that hosted Festival Mata Air 2007. The internal politics at Kalitaman forced a redefinition of Tanam Untuk Kehidupan's collective identity, challenging the way they imagined themselves as a 'local' organisation.

Tanam Untuk Kehidupan's desire to work at Kalitaman for the 2007 Festival Mata Air was in part because of the activist history of the kampung, particularly the resistance to the sale of the spring in 1994. While the story of the protest to protect the spring at Kalitaman is publicly known, it does not mean the springs are forever safe from privatisation. The *Ketua Rukun Warga* (kampung leader) had clearly changed since 1994, as had the nature of their relationship with their constituents. Like the local environmentalists who have voiced concerns with Greenpeace, the kampung authorities imagined Festival Mata Air as an external threat because of their global connections. They also saw the festival as a source of potential profit. They clearly felt that they had legitimate ownership over the identity of their kampung. They may have even been convinced that they had the community's best interests at heart. What had also changed, however, was the way that local and global activist identities are remixed by activists.

Festival Mata Air 2007 was generally felt within Tanam Untuk Kehidupan to have been a success. Grievances from residents were limited, media reports (newspaper and radio) had been all positive, and several of Kalitaman's youth had subsequently joined Tanam Untuk Kehidupan, attending and organising meetings, and signing up for workshops, exhibitions and other events outside Kalitaman, and organising and documenting their activities on social networking sites online. There was excitement and enthusiasm about working at Kalitaman again on the 2008 festival. There were also continuing discussions around an idea raised during workshops of Festival Mata Air 2007, that Kalitaman become an 'eco-kampung.' As activists imagined it, the kampung would take responsibility for various collective practices such as water filtering, waste reuse, composting, and biodegradable packaging so their neighbourhood could serve as a model of sustainability, and in turn, attract attention, funding, and tourism.

In April 2008, Tanam Untuk Kehidupan organised a community forum to discuss the 'eco-kampung' concept and the upcoming festival which was to be held in November 2008. As with other community meetings, the time, agenda, and invitations were organised through the kampung leaders, who also secured the Kalitaman community hall as a venue. This was the same process that had been used on many occasions leading up to Festival Mata Air 2007. But only a handful of people attended, and those who did raised several

concerns based on gossip that was circulating in Kalitaman, the most damning being that TUK was exploiting the kampung of Kalitaman for the profit of its members.[97]

The rumours were, firstly, that Tanam Untuk Kehidupan had made huge profits from Festival Mata Air 2007 by selling photographs of the kampung in Australia and, secondly, that Tanam Untuk Kehidupan had received overseas funding, and had not shared with the Kalitaman community. These rumours began with confusion around information on social networking sites, announcing and documenting Tanam Untuk Kehidupan's activities in Australia. In fact, photographs of the festival had been used to raise awareness in Australia but none of these photographs were sold, and they were exhibited only in a small council-funded Community Arts Centre in Sydney.[98] Secondly, Tanam Untuk Kehidupan, at that stage, had not received any funding from overseas sources except for personal donations from fellow activists and a measly amount from a small 'Sponsor a Tree' program it had tried to establish in Australia.

The accusations were difficult to deny for Tanam Untuk Kehidupan, because of the global scale at which they had been working. Tanam Untuk Kehidupan attempted to organise a second forum but was not granted permission to use the community hall. Taking a different tack, they organised a youth (*pemuda*) meeting. The twenty or so young people who attended expressed surprise that there had been grievances raised by their elders and they expressed general enthusiasm to be involved in more Tanam Untuk Kehidupan activities and programs. Creative brainstorming and planning began for future campaigns.

Shortly after this meeting, Tanam Untuk Kehidupan received four formal letters, from each of the four kampung leaders that form Kalitaman, stating that Kalitaman would not host another festival. The letters raised several complaints; that children's learning had been disrupted during the week-long activities; that there was not enough security on site; that there was drunkenness; and that there was a general disturbance of the peace. Secondly, they accused Tanam Untuk Kehidupan organisers of going 'behind their backs' by organising the youth meeting, and not respecting the kampung's established code of conduct. The letters were sent by post, not email, and were officially laid out with the signatures, letterheads and stamps typical of New Order style, what Virginia Hooker (1996) calls the 'formal perfection' of Suharto's presidential speeches and the regime's extensive bureaucracy (cited in (Baulch 2007, p. 147)). This formal culture is a good example of what de Certeau calls 'strategic' in the sense that it is a system of cultural control that is inaccessible to those tactical actors. Many activists (from Randublatung and Salatiga) expressed dismay and

97. My own interviews with Kalitaman residents during the festival had revealed that, even at that time, there was confusion around what 'kind' of organisation Tanam Untuk Kehidupan actually was ('semacam apa'). Residents had not experienced or heard about a group like that before they came to the kampung.

98. An exhibition titled 'Art for Earth's Sake' was held at Pine Street Community Arts Centre January 8-29, 2008 as part of the Gang Festival,.

frustration at having to work within the bureaucracies of local government to organise their festivals, because these bureaucracies have little connection to the ways that activists actually operate. These strategies are systems for organising culture, space and public engagement by exclusion; they are inflexible, or their flexibility is determined by a powerful few, in the case of Kalitaman, by the kampung leaders.

While Tanam Untuk Kehidupan had relied on informal mutuality within the kampung residents, the official kampung leaders had clung to the strategies of a nationalist sense of locality, where kampungs were defined by their physical boundaries and kampung affairs were determined by the hierarchal structures within them, according to predefined systems of etiquette. This was a very different vision to the kampung as a site of social change that activists had been nurturing. Significant to this discussion is the contrast between the ways two generations within the kampung viewed Tanam Untuk Kehidupan. In other words, it may not have been just the kampung leader's opposition, but also possibly reflected the views of a number of older residents, who, used to the cultural controls of the New Order, were not supportive of the carnivalesque nature of the festival.

The young people had more realistic ideas of how Tanam Untuk Kehidupan's work operated on a global scale; just because it was global, it was not necessarily large. They had a good sense of how so many of the elements of the identity of Tanam Untuk Kehidupan, such as the logos and the mottos, remixed global environmentalism into a local form. They had seen photographs of Tanam Untuk Kehidupan's activities in Australia and they had joined group discussions and posted comments to shared sites. Their elders, on the other hand, relied on hearsay, and saw the global dimension of Tanam Untuk Kehidupan as a threat. They were resistant to the idea of a well-resourced, global institution taking advantage of kampung resources. More importantly, they were unwilling to yield their own movement into a creative commons. They did not share the belief that the kampung's history of resistance remixed, with global and national environmentalisms, could become a robust movement in itself.

The real reasons for the degraded relationship between the kampung authorities and Tanam Untuk Kehidupan are a matter of conjecture. Around the time of Festival Mata Air 2007, plans were made to convert the large spring at Kalitaman (*Pemandian Kalitaman*), to a bottling source for the Salatiga branch of the national government water company, PDAM (*Perusahan Daerah Air Minum*). While there has been some media coverage of the deal (SuaraMerdeka 2007), there has been very little actual community consultation regarding the change of use or its impact on residents. Tanam Untuk Kehidupan considers it unlikely that the sale of the spring and the refusal of the kampung authorities to host Festival Mata Air 2008 are coincidental.

Other reasons may be more obvious. Tanam Untuk Kehidupan did not offer money to the kampung council to continue their activities. From the beginning of the process, this had been a point of contention. It had been hinted on several occasions, by members of the council, that money was expected, that this was the *budaya* 'local custom' for staging such events.[99] Tanam Untuk Kehidupan, as a young, small non-profit organisation was both unable and unwilling to comply. They preferred a model based on mutual (non-monetary) reciprocation, and argued that this was the culture for community events elsewhere, ironically probably further building the resentment to foreign influence. They pointed out that the kampung benefited from the profits of paid parking during the event and an increase in local business revenue, but more emphatically, they pointed out that they were all on one side, that the kampung was commons.

The expectation of the RWs (*Rukun Warga* / kampung leaders) for an unspecified payment is also a custom which has its roots in the New Order strategies of control, but the relationship between genuine political problems with the event and the lack of financial appeasement is, as ever, unclear, making dialogue that can move beyond the dichotomies of New Order cultural control difficult for activists. Breakdowns in chains of corruption meant that unexplained cancellations of performances occurred frequently under Suharto's rule. For example, Alison Murray writes that several incidents involving the Bengkel Teater Rendra and Teater Koma in 1989 made it clear that 'an intricate system of bribery was more critical than political decisions about performances' (Murray 1991a, p. 5).

With no concession from kampung authorities, Tanam Untuk Kehidupan packed up its festival and moved on to another kampung. The third festival, in 2008, was held at Kalimangkak, in 2008. Interestingly, a number of young residents of Kalitaman (the very same people who had facilitated the youth meeting) joined the collective and kept working on the project. They still lived at Kalitaman, where they always had, but they worked now in a greater sphere; they began to define their own territories, expanding their sense of the kampung. Through a process of remix, these young people began to expand the scales of activism, and, like those activists in Randublatung who are members of multiple collectives, they realised that they could participate in multiple environmentalisms.

What the experience of Kalitaman did for Tanam Untuk Kehidupan, by forcing the collective to relocate, was to challenge the idea of the kampung as a static, rooted community. The way Festival Mata Air occurs at multiple sites shows that part of the work done in creating a festival is to develop representations of place that can be transported and reformed, that not only a festival, but its identity and the very idea of a kampung, can be moved. This meant that another outcome of this local conflict generated at Kalitaman

99. It is in fact 'customary' for kampung leaders to be compensated for any use of the 'public space' in their jursdiction, i.e. closing the street down for a wedding or religious ceremony

was that Tanam Untuk Kehidupan began to draw more heavily on the global to remix its environmentalism. This mobile sense of kampung has much more potential than the state-imagined kampung and is greatly facilitated by technological tools, which is the subject of the next chapter.

Remixing Corporate Green

In this section, I continue the focus on Tanam Untuk Kehidupan and consider its relationship with various sponsors in order to show that their environmentalism can also remix corporate interests. Anakseribupulau, in contrast, has always rejected all forms of sponsorship. When asked if this was a difficult decision, one activist said 'Of course not, we are fighting companies like Exxon Mobil, if they offer us money, they must want something from us. Randublatung would be better without them; we believe that.'

The remixing of corporate identities in Salatiga draws largely on a national scale. It is ongoing, resulting in a relationship between divergent actors, what Anna Tsing calls 'a sticky engagement' rather than a fixed identity. Since the first festival, Festival Mata Air has been sponsored by the cigarette company Djarum, and over the three festivals, the collective has developed its boundaries in terms of the allowances it makes for Djarum to brand the festival space. Outraged, firstly by the amount of rubbish generated by the hundreds of banners publicising Djarum at Festival Mata Air 2006, and secondly by the generally commercial feel that the publicity generated, Tanam Untuk Kehidupan's subsequent sponsorship deals first of all limited, and then halted altogether, any advertising around the festival site.

How Smoking Can Be Good for the Environment

But how does Indonesia's biggest cigarette company come to be sponsoring a small community environment festival anyway? By 2006, with a worldwide spotlight on global warming and increasing public pressure for corporate responsibility, many companies were rebranding themselves with a 'greener' image. These included not only major multinationals, but smaller Indonesian companies as well, such as the tobacco company Djarum.

Djarum quickly became the most aggressively 'sustainable' tobacco company in Indonesia. Most visibly, the images used in advertising were made synonymous with 'nature lovers' and the masculine dimension of the Indonesian environment movement to which anakseribupulau had so strongly objected. It also pledged money to 'local environmental education', which was administered through small grants, of which TUK was a recipient in 2006. The deal was that they could advertise at the event, and, needless to say, that none of the 'environmental education' included information on the environmental destruction of

cash crops like tobacco.[100]

For the 2007 festival, Tanam Untuk Kehidupan focused on small local businesses for funding partnerships, which it offered publicity in exchange for cash or material donations (Figure 89). In 2008, Tanam Untuk Kehidupan also received sponsorship from the national alcohol producer Orang Tua as well as the state oil company Pertamina. Most Tanam Untuk Kehidupan members interviewed after that 2008 festival were in agreement that corporate sponsorship is generally a good idea wherever it comes from. While they expressed some concern about being associated with companies that are environmentally destructive, they seemed to believe that these companies 'owe' the environment something and thus, Tanam Untuk Kehidupan should accept corporate sponsorship. The results of the survey carried out at Festival Mata Air 2008 (see Appendix) show that most audience members also do not view sponsorship as being in conflict with the goals of the festival. In fact, the presence of corporate sponsors seems to be, not only accepted, but *expected* at such events, even adding to its credibility as a legitimate event.

For Tanam Untuk Kehidupan generally, one point of contention with Djarum was the hiring of a *dukun* (medicine man) as a rain man at Festival Mata Air 2008, to conduct the ritual to ensure good weather for the festival. This was a remix of a local ritual, but directed by Djarum. Organisers were quoted rp700,000 per night[101] by the rain man that Djarum uses for all their major events, and who travels all over Indonesia. This fee was not only out of their budget, but they also received advice from the kampung that the rain man should be local. They ended up using a local man who asked for a festival T-shirt instead of payment. This question of local authenticity echoes the controversies around Indigenous welcome to country ceremonies in Australia. Who has the right to represent a place and to facilitate the participation of outsiders with or within a place is not a question that is always easy to answer.

Summary

In this chapter I show that the environmentalisms generated in the production of Festival Mata Air and the Forest Art Festival remix existing identities and discourses to generate new local movements. I have analysed the identities of three overlapping and intertwined activist collectives in Randublatung and contrasted this ensemble with the formation of Tanam Untuk Kehidupan in Salatiga. I have shown that all these identities are formed through a complex process of remix, which challenges many of the strategies and assumptions from other movements. On a global scale, these strategies include those of organisations such as

100. With its wet climate, Salatiga is not a tobacco-growing region. So Djarum can support local environmental concerns without criticising its own land-clearing practices.

101. Around AUS$80 at the time

Figure 89: Local businesses sponsor the parade at Festival Mata Air, 2007.

Figure 90: Djarum sponsor Festival Mata Air, 2007.

Greenpeace International. Suspicion about Greenpeace because it is a global organisation feeds into problems faced by Tanam Untuk Kehidupan. On a national scale, these strategies can be found in the safe politics of the Mapala network and the way it has been branded by Djarum. Randublatung and Blora activists imagine themselves to be both as part of and in opposition to these strategies, and they use a range of sources to tactically remix their own versions of environmentalism.

The emergence of a movement around Saminisme shows the degree to which local mythology has became a point of reference for contemporary activists, a way to pay homage to the long lines of resistance of which they were part, while grabbing what media they could to express their new political imaginaries. In Salatiga, attempts to remix these local references failed when their sources refused to see them as part of a shared heritage. As Arjun Appardurai argues, 'locality itself is a historical product and that the histories through which localities emerge are eventually subject to the dynamics of the global' (Appadurai 1996, p. 18). This argument brings us deeper into stories of the festivals themselves and the identities they produce.

These groups, in concert, produce a differential and tactical sense of belonging, where different collective identities are suited to different political goals or issues. These practices occur in stark contrast to the strategies of their opponents or transnational dimensions of the environment movement. But these are tactics that come from a distinct genealogy of resistance and demonstrate an undeniable resilience. Each of these identities, SuperSamin Inc., Rapala, and anakseribupulau, are real responses to the crisis in the local environment of Randublatung and Blora. The groups collaborate and intertwine as activists work across political scales, imagining a movement where all these identities could coexist. Djuadi describes the remixes as 'trends':

> They are a way to make some variation, and give some local style to our movement. There's more than one way for us to defend the environment. The government and companies stay the same, but we express our concern in so many different ways. We have a lot to use without making up new things all the time, because our birthplace has already spawned so many local cultures, and, of course, these grow and develop.
>
> So, [our work] is different from NGOs who come. We want to use our local culture and so activism has become our local culture. It is life for us.

These remixes demonstrate that environmentalism is neither universal nor homogenising. In this way, the arguments of this chapter support the overall argument of this thesis–that only by looking at collective activist production in Indonesia from a multi-disciplinary perspective can we understand its real significance as a form of cultural friction.

Conclusion

In order to make the arguments in this thesis thus far, I have looked in on festivals from multiple viewpoints, from the local terms of kampung and nongkrong in Chapter 1, to the local interpretations of festival in Chapter 2, to the local conflicts present in relational art practices in Chapter 3, to the environmental movements of this chapter. Each angle has brought us closer to identifying meaningful patterns in the way different scales of cultural activism interact in the environment movements of Central Java.

These patterns can seem fleeting and fractured as activists tactically remix their identities. Perhaps the convoluted language of the expressions of environmentalisms described in this chapter is another form of Samin-style resistance. Whereas Samin tactics confused the colonial authorities, these multiple sides of a movement confuse those who are responsible for the global management of natural resources. For, like the Samin farmers who refused to be recognised as citizens, if their enemies cannot consistently identify them, these activists cannot be stopped. One group forms as another disappears. Perhaps after seeing the plinth of the New Order crumble and the united forces of anti-Suharto activism recede, these activists understand that multiple forms of opposition are more resilient that trying to stick to just one. Individuals remain inconspicuous in the constant remix of group identities.

This inconspicuousness is evident both in the way Randublatung activists 'change outfits' and the way that Salatiga activists protect their collective identity from the tinges of individual political activity. While individual activists have tactically developed their sense of belonging to multiple collectives and kampungs in both places, in Salatiga, the committed identity of Tanam Untuk Kehidupan has been used as leverage in conflicts with the kampung and with its negotiations concerning corporate sponsorship. TUK has worked on a single collective identity, which it threads through the local, national and global scales of environmentalism. This collective sense of identity also allows the activists to drop out from time to time to make money, after which they can resume their activism.

The emergence of a movement around Saminisme shows the degree to which local mythology has become a point of reference for contemporary activists, a way to pay homage to the long lines of resistance of which they were part. Saminisme is a way to grab new forms of media to express new political imaginaries. In Salatiga, attempts to remix these local references failed when their sources refused to see them as part of a shared heritage. As Arjun Appardurai has argued '…locality itself is a historical product and that the histories through which localities emerge are eventually subject to the dynamics of the global' (Appadurai 1996, p. 18). This argument brings us deeper into stories of the festivals themselves and the identities they produce.

How these threads will be woven into an increasingly technological future and a rising global environmental consciousness depends largely on the tools we use to describe these changing cultural practices. Remix is a process of expressing a new voice. As Anna Tsing writes, such voices are 'built through intercultural practices, including translation' (Tsing 2005, p. 215). For translation plays a part in these engagements, as does dubbing, as does the transportation and remaking of these ideas and relationships, the focus of the next chapter. For, as important as the origins of these remixes are, their effectiveness depends on where the voices are heard as new technologies open up new spaces for nongkrong and new possibilities for the making of globally heard, local remixes.

Figure 91: Festival Mata Air, 2006, Senjoyo.

CHAPTER 5: *JALAN-JALAN:* NEW TECHNOLOGIES

Chapter 5 explores the ways anakseribupulau and Tanam Untuk Kehidupan engage with new technologies to expand the impacts of Forest Art Festival and Festival Mata Air beyond the duration and physical sites of the events. This chapter applies the concept of tactical media to the very local terms of kampung and nongkrong to show how activists integrate new technologies into their own resilient spaces, channels and platforms. I argue that the resulting practices are as much consequences of the localisation of these new technologies as they are of the impact of the post-authoritarian political conditions. This chapter explores how the politics and practices of Festival Mata Air and the Forest Art Festival move through digital channels.

It is 2006, one year after Forest Art Festival, through various conversations, I hear that a film has been made about the event. I begin trying to procure a copy. I survey the communities that had been involved and find that the film has already been viewed widely, yet an actual disc or file remains elusive. There are also no records of any public screenings. People mention Nana Tinatar, as the one to speak with, but she has also seemingly disappeared. An extensive internet search yields no trace of Nana or the film and my regular band of informants remain vague.

After a few weeks of inquiries, I am visited by a friend from Randublatung on his way to Jakarta. He reaches into his backpack and pulls out a dirty, scratched compact disc, coverless and obviously well used. He blows off some loose, home-grown tobacco leaves and wipes the disc on his shorts before handing it to me. 'No forest, no art, no future' is scrawled across it in permanent marker. 'I heard you were looking for this,' he says cheerfully. 'Can you download it to your computer so I can take it with me again?'

Later that year, I join a screening of the video at the headquarters of Belanak art community in Padang. Within minutes, dozens of kids from the kampung are gathered around a twelve inch monitor, asking questions and telling stories. One year later, the same group organises its own festival, 'Art Day is Today', pointing to the Forest Art Festival as an inspiration. In 2007, a similar screening takes place in Salatiga and Festival Mata Air is born. This is technologically-facilitated nongkrong and it seems to be driving new forms of environmentalism in Java and elsewhere.

Introduction

As early as the 1960s, Marshall MacLuhan popularised the term 'global village', using it to describe how the globe has been contracted into a village by technology that allows the instantaneous movement of information. By the 1990s, the term 'information superhighway' was also in popular usage, referring to digital communication systems within the global village. Along with these visions came a degree of scepticism and a consideration of what came to be called the 'digital divide', the chasm between those with access to these 'new' technologies and those without.

These metaphors have been useful in expanding the ways we imagine digital networks, but their relevance to the specific cultural practices studied in this thesis is difficult to decipher. The digital networks produced by Festival Mata Air and the Forest Art Festival emerge organically, more from the practice of nongkrong and the site of the kampung than from an abstract network of globally connected nodes. These networks, while employing new technologies, evolved from the way that activists already participated in flows of information, in the ways that they create and consume content. Digital cultural practices, like other forms of culture, have local genealogies, with which different individuals and collectives interact at different levels. As raised in previous chapters, the right vocabulary for a critical discussion of these practices seems to be lacking. Again, I turn to the local concepts of kampung and nongkrong to explain what lies at the core of the localisation

of new technologies by activists in Central Java. I also introduce the concept of 'jalan-jalan' to describe a specific sense of movement achieved by incorporating new technologies into festival practices; a movement that, while enabled by mobile video devices and high speed communication technologies, is also characterised by directionless wandering and uncoordinated stumbling. Rather than a global village or an information superhighway, 'friction' again emerges as a better model to describe the way these technologies bring together the currents of local and global culture.

Jalan-Jalan

Jalan-jalan means to go for a stroll, to walk without a destination. Like nongkrong, jalan-jalan is often used to describe an activity without an explicable purpose or outcome; jalan-jalan is 'wasting time' and is therefore un-modern. But, like nongkrong, jalan-jalan is productive in the sense that it generates place and social relations. 'Jalan-jalan' is used rhetorically in Java, as it is in the rest of Indonesia, to describe the practice of occupying space while moving. As an assertion, it also conveys to others that one does not want to stop and chat, but that one is engaged in the practice of moving. The pace and style of jalan-jalan, in contrast to what might occur on a superhighway, is determined by the walker. In this sense, jalan-jalan is tactical, echoing the way many have argued walking can be an everyday act of resistance.

My interpretation of jalan-jalan is drawn partly from the meanings of *flâneur,* a person who experiences the city by walking through it, as derived from the work of the French poet Charles Baudelaire. The theorising by Baudelaire and numerous writers in economic, cultural, literary and historical fields has given the idea of the flâneur significance as a referent for understanding the city and modernity. Walter Benjamin, in particular, describes the flâneur as a product of modern life, bourgeois and uninvolved, a parallel to the advent of the tourist (Benjamin 1969). But, as discussed extensively in Chapter 1 with reference to nongkrong and kampung, the aim, when investigating the meaning of jalan-jalan, cannot be direct translation. In some ways, jalan-jalan may be able to cover slightly different theoretical ground than either Baudelaire's or Benjamin's flâneaur. Firstly, there is no word for 'adventure' or 'adventurous' in Indonesian (Piper 2008b, p. 81),[102] so 'jalan-jalan' is used to refer to undefined travels, to learning through experiencing the world, as well as to the very natural and everyday practice of entering and exiting one's own kampung in order to contextualise it. Secondly, jalan-jalan can be, and is, practised collectively and so it opens up a more complex set of relationships to place.

Those who jalan-jalan in the kampungs of Java, like the flâneur of Paris, produce the dynamics of public space. They define its borders by transgressing them and they are the

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102. The most direct translation of 'adventure' is *'petualangan'* but it is used more for exciting, (often oragnised) physical experiences, such as white water rafting, rather open ended travelling with the possibility of chance encounters.

subject of its surveillance. 'Jalan-jalan' can be a legitimate answer to those charged with protecting the kampung (the poskamling discussed in Chapter 1) enquiring after strangers from outside the area. Jalan-jalan implies 'passing by' as opposed to loitering, diffusing the threat of outsiders in a territory.[103] Likewise, Jakarta is not supposed to be a city for lingering, for determining your own velocity or spatial practices. While Indonesians are legally permitted, and usually encouraged, to migrate anywhere in the country, Jakarta is one of the few places where official permission to work and live is required (Smith 2008, p. 3); simply occupying space is illegal. For the unemployed or informally employed (street traders, domestic workers etc.), for the homeless, and for those without identity cards, this permission is rarely obtained. A standard excuse for being in the capital without a purpose is jalan-jalan, implying that transience makes the transgression temporary.

The metaphor of jalan-jalan is extended in this chapter to describe an engagement with technology that works at entirely its own pace, a messy, rambling, collective engagement; a localised tactical media. De Certeau describes walking as a practice that works in opposition to the structures of the city. Likewise, jalan-jalan often creates movement in opposite directions and incongruent speeds to those intended for spaces. The focus of this chapter is jalan-jalan in a digital sense, exploring how the ideas of Festival Mata Air and the Forest Art Festival move beyond the space of the site and the duration of the event. As new communities are built around the memory of the events, the festivals are validated and nurtured through online and offline networks. But these networks also build new cultural spaces. They generate new definitions of kampung and kampungan, and new ways to nongkrong, and they localise new tools, challenging universal ideas about the use and impact of these tools.

Jalan-jalan implies the engagement of multiple senses. While much discussion of digital networks focuses on what is seen, heard and watched, the way activists in this research engage with technologies seems to retain a sense of touch, smell and taste. As videos are watched, bodies rub up against each other, jostling for a view of the screen. Files are carried back and forth by hand, lost and recovered in the real-world sense as well as the digital. Jalan-jalan helps to show that it is these experiences of technologies, more than the technologies themselves, that create meaning.

Jalan-jalan also brings with it a more complex sense of place than one that can be represented or replicated through mediation. At first glance, the Forest Art Festival and

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103. The typical conversation being
KAMPUNG CITIZEN: *'Mau ke mana?'* (Where are you going?)
OUTSIDER: 'Jalan-jalan' (just walking).
Jalan-jalan can be a very useful euphemism, not unlike saying 'fine' asked 'how are you?'. Of course, there are limitations to this 'excuse' for being in a kampung. For example, 'jalan-jalan' is generally an unacceptable activity for women alone at night. There are also many tones with which the question can be infused, and it is as often a genuinely friendly greeting as it is a warning.

Festival Mata Air may seem to represent places, Randublatung and Salatiga respectively, but they also extend senses of these places. This has already been explored in previous chapters with discussions of the way Tanam Untuk Kehidupan adapted to different kampung in Salatiga, the way Tedi brings multiple local allegiances into his artwork, and the way dangdut and hip hop can remix multiple local languages. As activists engage with new technologies, they also explore the friction between multiple senses of belonging. Their use of video and blogging software is clumsy and raw, and if viewed alongside more 'professional' documentaries and online publications may not seem to 'belong'. Like those who jalan-jalan in Jakarta to evade eviction, the digital passers-by discussed here inhabit mediated spaces by hanging out; by walking; by moving in opposite directions and at incongruent speeds to those for whom these technologies may have been intended.

What emerges from these practices echoes geographer Doreen Massey's arguments for a 'progressive sense of place' (Massey 1991). Massey calls for an alternative interpretation of place based on particular constellations of social relations. A place, she says, is better thought of as the point of intersection of multiple networks. This works well for imagining the way festivals begin to jalan-jalan, and then, for imagining how these paths are connected to global flows, to other places, not just during the moment that the festival occurs, but over multiple moments at multiple scales, using multiple tools. Massey argues that such a definition of place 'allows a sense of place which is extroverted, which includes a consciousness of its links with the wider world, which integrates in a positive way the global and the local (Massey 1991, p. 7).'

The idea of a digital jalan-jalan also raises questions around media literacy. The concept of media literacy is hotly contested because of the ways literacy is constructed in particular contexts. Unlike traditional literacy, which is measured according to whether a person can read or not, media literacy has many possibilities. For those theorists working in the field of New Literacy Studies, it represents an opportunity to extend the definition of literacy, 'focusing not so much on acquisition of skills, as in dominant approaches, but rather on what it means to think of literacy as a social practice' (Street 2003, p. 77). In cultures that have historically emphasised other fluencies than written ones, such as Javanese culture, this is indeed an important consideration to how people learn and then apply the skills, the value, and most importantly, the application of new technologies to their everyday lives. Users may become literate in media through an unstructured process of jalan-jalan, rather than through formal education. While in the West there is a relatively new academic interest in digital storytelling as a method of valuing more deeply literacies other than those narrative forms from a Western literature tradition, in Indonesia, formal tertiary education does little to include new technologies into curricula. In Java, it is those playing with new technologies, usually outside of institutions, that are contributing to the process of provincialising seemingly universal ideas about how stories should and can be told.

In this chapter, I return to the terms of nongkrong and kampung presented in Chapter 1, to further show that these terms are fluid, flexible and open to a digital interpretation. Focusing on how technologies are localised and integrated into existing practices, I look at two relatively new tools: digital video and blogging on the internet. This chapter also returns us to the idea of the Javanese Carnivalesque raised in Chapter 2. The notions encapsulated in the term 'jalan-jalan' can show how technologies activate festivals beyond the licensed carnival, allowing the carnivalesque moments to move or jalan-jalan into the digital realm. By drawing on the idea of jalan-jalan, this chapter aims to move beyond claims that new technologies result in globalisation and that this globalisation can be considered universal. Rather, festival activists use technologies to open up new spaces for nongkrong and new definitions for kampung. In this sense, I view technologically mediated spaces as sites of further friction between global and local. Jalan-jalan, when it is enacted using new technologies, is a loose, organic, local use of technology, based on kampung and nongkrong and created by a friction with the intended use of such tools.

Jalan-jalan is what occurs between kampungs as well as within them. It is a way to explore the spaces between where one is coming from and where one is going as well, and in doing so, to produce new spaces. This extension of jalan-jalan is reminiscent of Tom Boellstorff's 'gay archipelago'. Boellstorff uses the metaphor of widely dispersed islands (so apt to the geography of Indonesia) to explain how gay and lesbi identities in Indonesia can challenge the dominant imagining of modern life, that of starting 'at one place and [moving] forward in time and place to the finish line'. Boelstorff focuses our attention on the water between islands, rather than the islands themselves, to describe a sense of selfhood that, by 'lapping up on multiple shores at the same time', is both linked and distant to 'familiar Others' across the globe (Boellstorff 2005, p. 211). The name of the anakseribupulau (child of a thousand islands) collective evokes a similar sense of multiple connections. For, in their own imaginings, such a 'child' moves freely through the confines of an anchored locality, resisting the demands of 'growing up' and the anchoring demanded by modern life. This particular sense of jalan-jalan through the archipelago also incorporates the possibilities of new technologies.

Djuadi says:

> The name (anakseribupulau) is about the possibility of living without borders, but we actually began using it at the same time we began using the internet, when we realized that we live in a very big world with so many islands. We want to be free to be part of that world however we choose, without being limited by which island we come from and which island we might be going to.

Like the archipelago metaphor, jalan-jalan focuses our study on the way movement produces new spaces and practices. These appear in many forms—in the way activists

perform multiple identities discussed in Chapter 4, as well as on facebook and other social networking sites, as video compilations on YouTube and compact discs, as collective computers, as email lists and as blogs. Jalan-jalan becomes a way to travel into the territory of others, in a way that proposes dialogue not confrontation, to knock on doors, to perform multiple identities, and to inhabit and build new kampungs. In this sense, these spaces present the beginnings of an intercultural festival practice as the concept jalan-jalan incorporates difference and raises the possibilities of collaboration. But it also raises many questions: How can kampung be adapted to such shifting scales of interaction and remain part of the village, the nation, the region? For activists with the goal of social change, how jalan-jalan shapes the kampung is of the utmost importance, defined by friction between the infrastructure of the world and the self-determination of their own activities.

The fact that festivals have a digital dimension points to another friction between local and global. In the previous chapters, I argue that festival is localised, that contemporary art is localised, and that environmentalism is localised through these festivals. Similarly, this chapter argues that technologies are also localised, and used to expand and change existing ideas of nongkrong and the kampung through the potential of digital jalan-jalan.

Chapter Structure

This chapter focuses on a number of technologies employed by activists at Festival Mata Air and the Forest Art Festival. I begin with a background to the concepts of tactical media and how they relate to jalan-jalan. I then introduce interpretations of the way these technologies have been used by activists in Java, focusing on the time at the end of the New Order, which coincided with a number of significant technological developments.

I then explore several examples of how practices at these festivals have localised technologies, focusing firstly on digital video and secondly on uses of the internet. The first section takes as an example the video produced to document the Forest Art Festival, raised in the opening passage to this chapter. I explore two cases of its presentation, outdoor screenings (*layar tancap*), such as those at Festival Mata Air, and a kampung screening at Padang. The second section looks at an online initiative, a collective blog called akumassa-Randublatung, produced as part of a broader localising web project. The activists described in this thesis switch between all available forms to find new communication spaces. They jalan-jalan through the new paths these technologies open up, and in doing so, they build new collective spaces and practices. In this context we see the value of experiments with digital video and the internet and how they can be used to understand how local cultural practices change and adapt to new technologies and how their presentation creates new perceptions. Javanese Carnivalesque festivals become re-created by the new viewers as well as by the media, as they jalan-jalan in space and time.

Background

In moving from the previous chapter, which focused on the performance of multiple activist identities as tactical expressions of environmentalism, in this chapter I introduce the idea of tactical media. In examining how these identities form and reform with digital technologies, I extend the tactics–strategies dichotomy and, in the process, refresh and localise the idea of tactical media.

Tactical Media

The term 'tactical media' is an extension of Michel De Certeau's concept of tactics discussed in Chapter 4, which distinguishes strategic and tactical actions in the domain of popular culture. David Garcia and Geert Lovink applied de Certeau's concept of tactics to the field of media activism in their manifesto of tactical media, identifying a class of producers who amplify temporary reversals in the flow of power by exploiting the 'spaces, channels and platforms' necessary for their practices (Garcia & Lovink 1997). The idea of digital jalan-jalan draws on this idea of the 'flows' that occur through media; that these flows are not inevitable or universal but can be reversed, redirected, slowed and halted. This interpretation has much in common with Tsing's model of 'friction', which describes how both the local and the global are generated through the flows of their interaction, rather than through predetermined power relations.

Tactical media has been used since the late nineties to help explain a range of open source practices that appropriate technological tools for political purposes. The fact that the term has been adopted by media activists themselves, engaged in a range of practices all over the world, shows that it is still useful in thinking about how technologies are localised. Examples include the many Indymedia networks set up for citizen journalism, including Indymedia Jakarta, temporary media labs installed at protest sites such as the Woomera blockade, Sarai media lab, as well as many Indonesian projects such as the Common Room (Bandung) and the House of Natural Fibre (Yoygyakarta), Forum Lenteng (Jakarta) and Air Putih (Jakarta). The concept was significantly expanded and updated in the book *Tactical Media,* edited by Rita Ralay (2009) to cover a range of contemporary media arts projects that engaged with the 'micropolitics of disruption, intervention and education' (p.1).

Tactical media is useful in understanding the ways activists in Java adapt to specific technologies. Broadly speaking, the development that has resulted in practices such as ubiquitous mobile phone use, widespread internet access, and social network mania has been uneven and somewhat unpredictable, and yet, this development has been shaped by the social relations produced by nongkrong and the kampung. In fact, the general character of technological development in Indonesia, activist or not, has been largely tactical, following paths of necessity rather than predefined development models that might seem more strategic or logical. These particularities throw into question ideas about the

universality of technology, showing that technological development does not happen in the same way everywhere and, unlike other forms of development, can lead to the emergence of more variegated forms of culture. In concert with the strong communication practices that already existed in Java before the arrival of these technologies, these adaptations produce specific cultural forms.

One example is the way video technology skipped the VHS era. By the time video technology was affordable in Indonesia, it was VCDs and DVDs that were the most appropriate recording mediums because they were low cost, light-weight and disposable. The ease of exchange of VCDs and DVDs is one reason that a stronger culture of video sharing (and pirating) has developed as Indonesian society has gained access to the technology. Another example is the way mobile phone networks, using satellite technology, were able to reach most of Indonesia, when phone lines were never possible in much of the mountainous terrain. Also, the family use of phone lines in much of the West (each household shares a phone line) differs from the kampung model in Java, where one phone line often reaches the entire kampung through a 'wartel' (*warung telephone* or telephone kiosk). Understandably, much of the mobile phone use in Java reflects the wartel model, where communities share a mobile phone and often use one phone for multiple SIM cards (Nugroho 2011). Similarly, the development of internet culture in Indonesia followed the path of existing pre-net social communication networks. This too replicated the wartel and the way kampungs organised access to communication networks. The development of communications networks after the end of the New Order was largely driven by the private sector, but it was kampung culture, rather than the state or big business 'that ultimately left its imprint on the evolving network' (Barker 2008, p. 135).

Another example of the influence of kampung culture on the adoption of new technologies can be found in the organisation Angkringan. Angkringan, named after the Javanese word for 'outdoor food vendor', was set up in 2000 by the residents of Timbulharjo, a village in Bantul, Central Java, to develop media infrastructure at a kampung scale, in a kampungan style. They started with a printed bulletin and then expanded into community radio broadcasts. In 2007, Angkringan established a local internet network, called AngkringanNet, converging community radio broadcasting with wireless internet technology. Using a community radio antenna and a WiFi USB stick placed on a rooftop, tree or other elevated point, AngkringanNet transmits an internet signal, free of charge, which can be accessed by anyone in Timbulharjo with a computer and a 'wajanbolic' antenna. The wajanbolic antenna is a modified *wajan* (frying pan) wrapped in aluminium foil and connected to a short tube (Figure 92).[104] Users do not

104. Angkringan's wajanbolic antenna is based on alternative internet technology pioneered by the Indonesian cyber activist Onno Purbo and students from Muhammadiyah University in Malang.

Figure 92 (top): The wajanbolic antenna, photograph by Edwin Jurriens, 2008.

Figure 93 and 94 (left): Stills from the Forest Art Festival video, 2005.

have to pay individual internet connection fees, but can share the costs with the rest of the kampung (Jurriens 2009).

My own observations of internet use by activists also reveal an emphasis on collectivity. By 2005, when the research for this thesis began, many activists in Java were already using email addresses. But the trend was to open collective accounts, for which up to twenty people held the password. While this may seem unnecessarily open to those of us in the West who have quickly become accustomed to the privacy, immediacy and security of email communication, for these activists, who only had intermittent internet access which was often far from their homes (and often intermittent electricity), it meant that accounts were not closed for inactivity and that the responsibility for checking mail was shared. Also, the possibility of forgetting passwords was diminished, as they were stored in a collective memory. Now, six years later, many activists have given up their email addresses and use Facebook, which has more flexibility for collective use, exclusively for their online communication.

New Technologies at the End of the New Order

As digital video and the internet are the focus of this chapter, it is essential to give a brief outline of how they arrived fairly simultaneously to activism in Java. In 1995, digital video was introduced to the Indonesian market. The new digital camcorders were small, required less accessories and most importantly, were much cheaper to produce than previous models. There was a huge market across diverse sectors of Indonesian society, from human rights activists funded by international NGOs to wedding planners running their own businesses in villages. As digital video cameras were becoming cheaper, so to, self-built computers and pirated software were enabling home edit suites, and wide networks for VCD distribution were also developing.

The introduction of digital video to Indonesia was significant for many reasons, not the least of which was the alternative it provided to the way history had been created by the New Order regime's cinematic documentation of life. [105] In their book *Videobase - Video. Sosial . Historia* (2009) Jakarta video collective Forum Lenteng argues that the transition from analogue to digital technologies in Indonesia can be traced alongside the regime

105. There is in Indonesia, as there is anywhere in the world, a history of the moving image that gives context to the arrival of video. It is particularly important to mention the huge role film played in the New Order's meta-narrative of a unified nation. Krishna Sen demonstrates the importance of the New Order regime's regulation of cinema to its regulation of Indonesians (Sen 1994, pp. 78-104). Many films played important roles in the nation-building exercise, but none as clearly as the four-hour film by Arifin C Noor *Pengkhianatan G30S/PKI* (The Treason of the September 30 Movement and the Indonesian Communist Party). The film was produced in 1983, to describe the state-sanctioned version of the events that led to Suharto's takeover in 1965. This propaganda film was shown in theatres, on television, and in classrooms across the nation at least every year on September 30th. An epic production for its time, the film reinforced in visual form the official damnation of the communist party, and by extension, the necessity of the New Order. Other depictions of the events, such as *The Year of Living Dangerously*, the 1983 Peter Weir film based on the novel by Christopher Koch, were banned by the regime, along with any dissenting media, literature, art, and music.

transition. The shift allowed by digital video, which put the means of documentation in the hands of citizens, changed everything. Some activists argue that the presence of the humble camcorder was instrumental in the downfall of Suharto. The incident at Trisakti University, in 1998, during which four students were shot, was recorded by amateur bystanders and broadcast nationally. This, along with other increases in violence across the nation, sparked the sentiments of national solidarity that led to mass student protests in several cities. Whether the advent of this technology coincided with or caused the end of the New Order, these images undoubtedly served as a catalyst to Suharto's downfall.

I do not wish to imply that the video production in Indonesia sprang out of nowhere thanks to the technological innovations of multinational corporations such as Sony. Rather, I argue that activists quickly learned to use digital video tactically, in ways that incorporated existing storytelling practices, to build and expand their existing networks, to define and localise their movements. In fact, the way that digital video practices developed in activist collectives closely resembles the way that small, underground, photocopied, publications, or 'zines' had been produced and distributed for decades, as widely as possible on campuses, at bus terminals and train stations, and on the streets throughout Java.[106] This process generally involved small groups working intensively over a short period with glue, scissors and scalpels and then carrying photocopied bundles around Java. Distribution occurred as activists traversed the country, generating irregular yet effective networks. The distribution of digital video also resembles the way buskers (*ngamen)*, carrying not much more than their instruments on the buses and trains of Indonesia, spread political messages during the New Order, constantly engaging in the remix of repertoires. In the cases of both zines and political music during and immediately following the end of the New Order, production was largely a process of remix, enabled through the practices of nongkrong and jalan-jalan.

When video arrived, many activists quickly began sharing necessary resources, pirating software and building bricolage computers that could render video at reasonable speeds. At that time, the internet-dependent support that bolstered tactical media in many parts of the world, such as bulletin boards and online forums, were difficult to use in Indonesia, where there was not yet a reliable and robust internet network. To trouble shoot problems with the new technologies, people gathered and talked through possibilities, working together to share footage, tools, and knowledge.

These methods of production and distribution may not be particular to Java.

106. Many zines, put together by groups such as Taring Padi, AFRA (Anti Fasis Anti Rasis), Serikat Pengamen Indonesia-SPI (The Organisation of street musicians), and anakseribupulau criticised the government and military, announced actions, and presented the creative work (karya) of members in the form of easily photocopied images, comics, and articles. The krismon affected many young people well beyond the time it had been declared over, and cheaply produced zines were the most common independent media choice of punk and activist communities in Indonesia for many years, even as their counterparts in Singapore, Malaysia and Australia began experimenting with websites and blogs.

Increasingly, such scenarios are found all over the world. And yet, in making use of new technologies activists draw on existing practices, reclaiming traditions and rituals into contemporary carnivalesque expression. Also, how people adapt technologies to their own cultural contexts depends on the sociopolitical context. In her thesis on the internet and political activism in Indonesia, Merlyna Lim describes the characteristics and practices that developed with the internet in the 1990s as 'unique' to Indonesia.[107] Likewise, some of the specific practices that developed around the usage of the internet explored later in this chapter, were in part due to the limitations of the network in Indonesia, but also in part due to the emphasis cultural activists placed on the kampung and on nongkrong that has been discussed throughout this thesis. The physical, terrestrial, sensory, organic and social experience of festivals rubs up against the abstract, mechanical and individual experience often expected of technologies. This becomes another example of what Anna Tsing calls the 'grip' that the local has on the global. In this case, the local experience gives meaning to globally commodified technologies.

The way most people in Indonesia accessed the internet until the availability of mobile devices in the last few years (Nugroho 2011) was through internet cafés or kiosks, locally referred to as *warnet* (warung internet). The warnet, claims Merlyna Lim, because it is rooted in the tradition of 'warung' (a shop or café), is 'not only a point of Internet access, it is also the result of a transformation and localisation of Internet technology' (Lim 2005, p. 79). Understanding the genealogy of collective internet practice in Indonesia is important in untangling the ways technologies are used by Tanam Untuk Kehidupan and anakseribupulau. The example of the warnet reminds us that technologies are always localised and that the nodes of global access were points in the kampung, collectively accessed. In this way, warnets are a wonderful historical example of tactical media, localised technology resulting in technologically mediated, yet shared social spaces.

Warnets emerged across Java in the 1990s, in the cities, around campuses, and in villages, and have remained a part of the Javanese landscape ever since, proving to be the most resilient of access methods. As the economic crisis of 1997 hit both commercial initiatives and the World Bank-supported government projects to expand internet use, what had appeared as an internet boom in Indonesia quickly collapsed. The warnet was an alternative form of commercial internet use that survived the crisis (Lim 2005, p. 74).

The new conditions presented by digital video and the internet meant that by the late 90s many previously repressed voices were heard in Indonesia. Society was making

107. Lim writes: 'As the Internet became part of the New Order's development program in the 1990s, using services provided by Telcom (the state-owned telephone company) was the only way to have access to dial-up Internet. Indosat (the state-owned satellite company) guarded the monopoly on international connections, and so, controlled all Internet-service providers.' She goes on to describe a group of cyber activists who managed to secure access by bypassing the national corporations. (Lim 2005, p. 68)

increasing demands for rights and services. The internet could not be manipulated as traditional media (press, radio, television) had been, and so the state could not force the internet to push the government's agenda and nothing else. As Arjun Appardurai has argued, 'electronic mass mediation' played a major role in breaking 'the monopoly of autonomous nation-states over the project of modernization' (Appadurai 1996, p. 10). The sites of the technological transformations were embedded in the power relations between state, and corporate and civil societies; power relations which at that historical moment (the end of the New Order) were highly contested. (Lim 2003, p. 234)

The transitional period towards the end of the New Order in Indonesia offers a particularly stark example of the departure of electronic media development from the patterns of nationalism mediated by the state through traditional media and communications technologies, dominated by repressive state control and surveillance. After the demise of the New Order, opportunities were opened up for activists to engage with globally available technologies in ways that asserted local practices, politics and environments. These new technologies were an opportunity, not only for new forms of nongkrong and new expressions of the kampung, but also for these activists to jalan-jalan well beyond previously trodden paths.

These technologies are about global circulation but the activists discussed here also use them to build very local networks, tactically working at the scales most relevant to the work they do, that is, the scales of jalan-jalan. The resulting networks are short circuits, operating at great speeds but at local scales, rubbing against universals, and challenging what is generally thought of as globalisation. Ethan Zuckerman, researcher and founder of the multilingual blogging site Global Voices, makes a similar case about Facebook. It is assumed, he says, to have globalised us, but there is better evidence that it has strengthened local networks (Zuckerman 2010).

Kampung and Nongkrong Revisited

Throughout this thesis, I have shown that activist festivals are events during which the concepts of nongkrong and kampung work in concert. This is extended in this chapter as I explore the use of digital technologies by festival organisers. In Chapter 1 I argued that nongkrong produces a public sphere that emphasises talking and listening, raising possible correlations between the cultural global commons and the kampung. Like the concept of cultural commons, the concept of kampung is evolving to refer to a range of cultural practices. This chapter proposes the idea of a cultural kampung. As activists transfer the idea of the kampung into the digital realm, they bring their own associations of resistance to authority, participation and collectivity. These are evident in the new online spaces discussed in this chapter.

In Chapter 2, I argued that considering the kampung as an idea as well as a physical space opened up the potential for a carnivalesque specific to Java. Many carnivalesque elements apparent at Festival Mata Air and the Forest Art Festival—the combinaton of high and low culture, the reinterpretation of tradition and ritual, the mixing of voices and language levels, and the symbolic toppling of authority—are transposed into a new arena when a festival kampung is technologically mediated. But in the digital world another element of the carnivalesque is added: sensory and textual experiences of activism are thrown together. In organising campaigns, activists have to deal with the fact that people live in different places, have complex relationships and inhabit different digital spaces. The digital kampung helps them negotiate these obstacles as they create campaigns and events grounded in particular localities and yet relating to not only other localities, but other types of localities. As activists use new technologies their understandings and reinterpretations of kampung become increasingly important.

Collective Video

By the time digital video and the internet were taking root as cultural practices in Java, video had already been espoused by many artists in the West as the way get art out of the galleries and into the streets and neighbourhoods. By decolonising restrictive notions of the arts in Chapter 3, and pointing out the centrality of the kampung to political culture in Chapter 2, this thesis has demonstrated that many of the most significant aspects of visual culture were already at home in the streets and kampung of Java by the time video entered the art scene. In Java, video provided an opportunity for a reverse of the flow of meaning assumed to be necessary to encourage participation; it was a way to get art out of the kampung and into the world, or, put another way, to expand the kampung beyond its physical site.

In his work on post-authoritarian media in Indonesia, Edwin Jurriëns outlines video art and community video as two distinct yet intertwined strands that have emerged since the late 1990s (Jurriëns 2011). Much of the focus of critiques of video in Indonesia since the end of the New Order has been on how community video can present local alternatives to globalisation. This chapter argues that these tactical uses of technology are less about alternatives to global uses and mainstream media than they are about the friction local practices create with these global ideas of what video does and can do.

This section looks at the forty-five minute documentation video of the Forest Art Festival, made in 2006. Of prime significance is the fact that this video was collaboratively produced to the extent that most contributions to the process remain unattributed. This collaboration draws on a sense of the kampung commons and contributes to its function as a collectively owned story. Like much of Javanese mythology, but unlike most art, literature

and film from the West, the video is seen as created by, distributed by, enjoyed by, and belonging to society in general, to the commons. The video tells the story of the festival by drawing from multiple styles, gleaning footage from multiple cameras and poaching music from multiple sources. Through this process, it extends the boundaries of the festival, connecting it to other events and movements and building, in the process, a new concept of kampung that can be circulated.

The scale of this circulation can indeed be attributed to technologies. In its digital format, burned onto cheap and light compact discs, this story can jalan-jalan well beyond its origins in Central Java. But its production and presentation, and ultimately, the way it generates meaning to those who made it and those who are in it and those who watch it, relies on existing social practices. In this way, the main purpose of the video is to create a mythology that defines the environment movement and the activist art scene in Central Java.

Production Value

The video begins with the title *Forest Art Festival: FAF*, followed by a silent description of the geographical place of Randublatung, in simple white text on a black background; latitude, longitude, governance, industries, climate, forested areas. We are then taken down the road to the site of the festival, the entranceway of the festival site being constructed alongside the entrance to the kampung. We see a band jamming but it is unclear whether they are rehearsing, performing or both; punks sleep on every available surface; the stage is being assembled; Taring Padi members are printing and then stringing up woodcut banners and posters; seedlings are being organised for the reforestation workshops. Through these glimpses, we get a sense of the way the event is organised, almost exclusively by men, in a drawn out process that includes sleeping, hanging out, meeting, working, smoking and drinking. These images are intermingled with shots of regular kampung folk using the forest, collecting grass for animal feed, carrying baskets of leaves on their backs.

Aside from the geographical data presented in the opening sequence, there is nothing formal about this video. It is itself an act of nongkrong: an exchange of experience. The image quality is very low, and the editing is rough, unprofessional and lacks consistency. There are spelling errors in the titles, which seem to use a random selection of fonts. Nana, who edited the film, explained that she lost access to the computer she was using partway through the editing process. The resulting file in circulation, although incomplete, was all that it was possible to recover. The video feels unfinished but it tells a story thoroughly, and it has served–and continues to do so–a definitive purpose since the 2005 festival.

The footage itself is a reflection of the network that was involved in producing the Forest Art Festival and also the wider network that connects the event to other movements.

Different cameras and camera operators are brought together—not strategically; there was no storyboarding and very little planning at all—tactically. Using the network to assemble footage and create a narrative means that the video also expresses the uneven network itself. The video is basically a collage of music and images lasting forty minutes. Some shots are carefully composed, steady, well-lit, and others look as if a bystander has picked up the camera and turned it on, with shaky and unpractised pans and zooms. This video does not define itself as amateur or professional; rather, it expresses the necessary patchiness of collective production.

We can't hear most of the dialogue in the video as no external microphones are used to record it, but visual clues help the viewer understand the carnivalesque culture of the event. There is a focus on a meeting of the organisers where the hand-printed committee IDs are distributed and the camera zooms in on a Samin T-shirt. Tedi approaches the group, apparently drunk and ranting. The others tease him and continue with their business. There is no clear connection made between Tedi and his artwork, *Igloo Tropis*, which features strongly in the setting of the festival. Such an explanation would be required for a general audience, but those who were there, or who make up the activist scene in Indonesia more broadly, would know that one fits with the other; artist with artwork. In this way, the video is supplemented by the common knowledge circulated by rumours and gossip.

In the carnivalesque spirit of the festival, this video does not single out artists or organisers from other festival participants. No under titles are used to name people. Nor is there any indication of when the preparations end and the event itself begins. Compositions rarely isolate individuals from the rest of the picture. Instead, the characters emerge organically, drifting in and out of frame, as they might in a nongkrong setting, creating intimacy between festival participants, the camera operators, and the video's audience. For many of the artworks made specifically for the Forest Art Festival, , for example the intricate kinetic wood sculptures by Imam Bucah, this video footage is the only documentation. But shots of this work linger on the artists at work and the final video shows no 'finished products'. Even for the *Igloo Tropis* centrepiece, the video makers seem more interested in capturing the building process than with impressing anyone with depictions of the actual work.

The final video seems hardly edited, gleaning and composting scenes from multiple angles. The decisions made may have produced a somewhat unclear narrative, and overall, a documentation that could be considered of lesser quality than if it had been more coordinated and organised. But, in this video, nongkrong is the determining methodology and kampungan is the style expressed. This kind of video production is another expression of Javanese carnivalesque, for the only overarching narrative is the passing of daylight into night rather than a voice over narration. The soundtrack sounds like of a cacophony of

voices, including those of the camera operators, as well as a remix of music from multiple styles. The techniques made possible by digital video allow a new level of remix, further revealing the contrasts and interconnections at the festival between local and global culture, and between high and low culture. An earnest, spiritual Javanese fire ceremony is cut and composited into a single sequence alongside a dreadlocked Canadian fire twirler. The result is both absurd and logical, for these are both rituals, and both gesture towards carnivalesque regeneration through fire, and yet there is little besides the fire itself that they share aesthetically or genealogically.

When asked about how she went about the editing process, Nana said:

> Mostly, everything is included in the final cut … we didn't want to leave anything out. I suppose we could have made a short video but it would not have represented all the bits and pieces that were the festival. We wanted everyone to feel included.

Nana's concern for how participants would feel watching the video is a significant point and shows that the production decisions are based on emotional rather than practical outcomes. The video builds a reservoir of mythologies about the event for the viewer, hardly considering the point of view of the video maker. The video is not about giving accurate information, or about being a great production or a work of art, or about authoring a work. It is about sharing common stories and celebrating a DIY culture (now more commonly referred to as DIT, 'do it together' in punk circles in Java) in a kampung-specific way, hiding nothing and baring all its contradictions. In one rainy scene, kampung folk huddle under a tarp watching a group of muddy teenagers dance in a style clearly borrowing from punk's 'pogo' and dangdut's 'joget'. By documenting in the style of the event itself; that is, by borrowing and localising all relevant cultural forms, this video strengthens group solidarity.

Bakhtin insists that 'Carnival is not a spectacle seen by the people: they live in it, and everyone participates because its idea embraces all people' (Bakhtin 1984, p. 7). The idea that such an embracing form of participation can be recorded at all is somewhat contradictory. By its nature, video, to be seen, must have an audience. How can the festival avoid becoming a spectacle? But in this video, activists recognise themselves as participants, whether they were physically present or not, as the carnivalesque imaginary emerges. It is made for a particular audience and ignores conventions of good production. With its scenes of drunkenness, exhaustion, and euphoria, this is a grotesque realism, part of the 'festive laughter' that guarantees freedom for all people. In this way, the freedom of the festival is extended beyond the kampung in which it took place to include those who watch the video.

Kampungan: an Amateur Aesthetic, Not Amateur Storytelling

At first sight, the Forest Art Festival video seems to have an amateur 'good enough' aesthetic; the camera work is shaky, the sound is inconsistent and there are spelling mistakes in the titles. But this aesthetic requires further interrogation, based on the understanding of kampungan as a style in itself.

As discussed at length in Chapter 1, kampung is a decentralising concept because it challenges the assumption that a single centre of culture is possible by focusing on what is considered peripheral to modern development. Its paradox lies in the way it is both the building block of nationalism in Indonesia and yet unmodern in the sense of being the antithesis of urbanity. By being kampungan and remixing global elements, this video challenges the idea that there is a central point where global interaction occurs.

By being able to jalan-jalan and maintain relevance at multiple scales, it also produces an activist commons. Kampungan video thus challenges the notion that locality works in opposition to globality and that there is a universal style of subversion. It gives space to the multiple, sometimes conflicting identities discussed in the previous chapter and it draws out the conflicts present between different actors. One example is the soundtrack, which includes recordings of local musicians alongside 'universal' songs of subversion by global superstars such as Marilyn Manson and Asian Dub Foundation.[108] This selection identifies with multiple musical communities, poaching in a similar way to the fan cultures described by Henry Jenkins (1992) in his seminal book *Textual Poaching*. 'If there is an art of "making do" as opposed to simply a vocabulary of tactics or a configuration of local practices,' writes Jenkins, 'that art lies in transforming "borrowed materials" from mass culture into new texts (p. 228-229).'

The final scene of the video is shot in almost pitch-black darkness. Activists gather around a guitar and sing a rendition of a Jabiluka protest song.[109] Songs from the campaign to stop the Jabiluka uranium mine have been part of the repertoire of these activists since 1999. The struggle at Kakadu was placed comfortably together with songs celebrating East Timorese independence, demanding land rights in Aceh, and, of course, expressing international socialist solidarity—the *Internationale*. On video, however, the scene seems somewhat incongruent. This culture borrows from a global culture of resistance and yet, this culture is localised into a site-specific story. Downloaded tracks rub up against live recordings of a collective repertoire; a mythology of transnational resistance is enabled by the ease of file sharing and digital video documentation.

108. Soundtrack songs include '(Can't you) Trip Like I Do' by Filter and the Crystal Method, 'Black White' by Asian Dub Foundation, and 'Use Your Fist and Not Your Mouth' by Marilyn Manson.

109. The lyrics of the song are: 'At Jabiluka we come together/ With the Mirrar people on their land/ We are singing the song for Jabiluka/ No more uranium, keep it in the ground.'

This may not yet point to anything new except the emphasis on the modern that the use of new technologies implies. The friction here, between local and global circulations, may be highlighted by the possibilities of recording, but they have existed over many years. Cultural historian Stephen Duncombe argues that zines also offer 'a model of participatory cultural production and organization to be acted upon … what is unique, and uniquely valuable, about the politics of zines and underground culture is their emphasis on the practice of doing it yourself' (Duncombe 1997, p. 129). So, the ways that video activism has developed aesthetically in Indonesia, following the paths of zines, buskers, performance art and festivals, has meant that activists have taken kampungan seriously.

Tactical media happens when the sentiment of these cultural products can be extended to the cheap 'do it yourself media' made possible by the revolution in consumer electronics. The practices associated with the making of the Forest Art Festival draw heavily on the political consciousness that emerged with zines and other aspects of the political culture at the end of the New Order and also on the oral storytelling traditions and communal (rather than individual) creative processes associated with nongkrong and the kampung.

Videos that Jalan-Jalan: Extending the Kampung

The Forest Art Festival video is about producing a sense of place that can be transported, that can jalan-jalan. The activists who carry the video with them remix it into other forms of storytelling that continue long after the event. The tactical methods follow the paths of human movement and social relations rather than planned strategies and may seem to lack efficiency but they also produce networks based on the quality rather than the quantity of connections. This distribution is hard to document, and impossible to follow up, because it relies on people and their physical movement and uses the infrastructure of nonkrong. The file is handed between people, copied, reformatted, and lost. Like a protest song, nobody sits down and learns this video, or even watches it carefully from start to finish; yet everyone involved seems to know it.

An important point to make about the distribution of the video is that, in the eyes of the activists themselves, it is effective. In my interviews with kampung residents in Randublatung around the site of the festival, it was revealed that very few had seen photographic documentation of the festival, even of the artworks they had helped make. They had, however, seen the Forest Art Festival video. It had been screened multiple times in lounge rooms on VCD players. The Samin family I stayed with in Pati in 2007 had also seen it. It was the content of this video, and subsequent discussions with Randublatung activists, that had, they said, inspired the Pati Farmers' Festival (2007). It was also screened at several communities in Jakarta including the Klender kampung of the Randublatung diaspora, discussed at length in Chapter 1.

When I suggested other, wider distribution avenues, such as uploading the video online or submitting it to festivals, Nana expressed very little interest. 'Lots of people have seen it', she said, despite the difficulty I experienced in procuring a copy, 'there are already copies in many places. If people want it, they can find it'. To Nana, the internet didn't seem to be the home for this video, or perhaps, in 2005, when the video was made, there were not yet homes for it online that were felt to belong to this movement. Rather than being seen as an indication of limited thinking, Nana's sentiment can be read as a confidence in the existing network and how it relates to the political goals of the festival. 'Don't believe the hype', Nana seems to be saying, 'the video will be seen', and it has been. Unlike television broadcasts, these tactical distribution methods are independent and as such are not subject to policies, budgetary constraints and networks that are regulated by the state and corporate interests. As with other forms of tactical media, video distribution based on networks of people and collectives, rather than databases, works at its own pace. Understanding these methods more deeply gets us beyond what Geert Lovink calls the 'high expectations around the liberating potential of all technologies, both old and new, while not falling into the trap of cultural pessimism' (Lovink 2008, p. 177).' Digital video is not really a useful tool when used in isolation; it is activated by jalan-jalan. The video of Forest Art Festival is an example of this activation as it revises offline culture and remixes kampungan styles of storytelling with new technologies.

Collective Watching

The video described above was made collectively and is watched collectively. The watching, like the video itself, is characterised by laughter, interruptions, technical glitches, and may seem to lack concentration and focus, and yet it helps create a specific activist culture. To explore how it is watched and to understand how meaning is exchanged, I will focus on some of my own experiences of watching this video and how this specific kind of collective viewing adds strength to activist cultures. As I have argued in previous chapters, nongkrong produces a remix culture. Here I focus on how nongkrong also generates particular viewing practices. Local forms of watching generate discussion and shared mythologies that continue to define not only the collectives in question, but also the movement as it is described in Chapter 4, a movement that is tactical and wears many costumes.

To my knowledge, the Forest Art Festival video is watched mostly in groups. One way is on a *layar tancap* (literally, 'freestanding screen'), as it was screened at Festival Mata Air (Figure 95, Figure 96). This kind of viewing of videos is not uncommon in Indonesia. Kampung Halaman, for example, does monthly community video screenings called '*Nonton Bareng di Kampung*' ('Let's Watch Together in the Kampung'). These screenings focus on exchanges within and between kampung rather than the potential of global audiences. These kinds of communal viewing practices contribute to the strength of community television networks in Indonesia (Figure 97, Figure 98). They also echo the way printed

Figure 95 and Figure 96: Audience at a film screening on a layar tancap, (freestanding screen), at Festival Mata Air, 2007.

Figure 97: Watching a collective kampung television, West Java, 2008.

Figure 98: Poster found in Padang, 2006: ‘Watch a film for free’.

media is often consumed communally, for example, the way newspapers are posted on kampung notice boards to be read collectively as well as in the privacy of homes, and the common practice of deconstructing and reconstructing printed material found *outside* of newsagencies and bookshops (such as *Menjadi Environmentalis*, discussed in the previous chapter).

The second way groups watch the video is huddled around a monitor. In 2006 I travelled to Padang in West Sumatra with a team from anakseribupulau to work with the group Belanak. On the day of our arrival, anakseribupulau members brought out their copy of the video of the Forest Art Festival. Most members of the group had not yet met each other and the video was integrated into the kind of nongkrong typical of activists from different locations, telling stories (in Indonesian) about activities, playing music and sharing songs, and sharing regional particularities; language, food, music, art. The video was loaded from a flash disc onto the Belanak collective computer and the group of about fourteen people sat on a mat on the floor to watch it. The screening was glitchy as the file was slightly damaged, the sound from the computer's inbuilt speakers was terrible, and people spoke and joked over the video, sitting, standing and walking in and out of the room, answering phones, playing guitar. When the video ended, it was immediately replayed. The excitement was palpable and seemed to have very little to do with the technology that had enabled this story to be reproduced with sound and image and more to do with the people who had physically brought this story to Padang. In other words, the excitement was generated by the jalan-jalan. The discussion that followed, which was about the potential of festivals to change social conditions, continued well into that night and the following days.

In Padang, the Forest Art Festival video was not viewed as material from outside. Rather, Belanak members immediately claimed this video as their own and it was watched as if it was produced from inside their own movement. Mistakes and inconsistencies were not considered as shortcomings because the video was simply absorbed into nongkrong, as a process that was unfinished and ongoing. The language of the video, which is mostly Javanese and was, therefore, not understood fully by most of Belanak, is secondary to the gist of the festival. Subtitles are unnecessary because this communication is about nongkrong, about opening up the limitations of direct translation and letting in the many languages of the Javanese carnivalesque.

Shortly after this trip, anakseribupulau was invited back to Padang to participate in a festival that Belanak was producing titled *Hari Ini Adalah Hari Seni* ('Today is Art Day'). The emergence of this new festival in Padang, along with the fact that Festival Mata Air was also inspired by the Forest Art Festival, demonstrated that the festival itself managed to propagate as an idea. In the case of this video, how far this propogation can go will be determined by the activists who carry it with them. Access to the internet undoubtedly

widens this web, as will be explored in the following section, but relationships between collectives are formed through the offline social interaction of nongkrong.

The video technologies offer new opportunities for expanding the activist commons, but they draw on existing notions of nongkrong and kampung to activate those opportunities. Unlike the way that film has (for the most part) been viewed since its inception, that is in quiet, dark, seated cinemas, the Forest Art Festival video requires physical interaction in an open, shared space. This also deviates from the private, individual viewing of most online digital videos—that is, in the seated cinema space of the personal computer. Arjun Appadurai points to the 'tension between the public spaces of cinema and the more exclusive spaces of video watching' as one of the factors that make it possible for electronic media to 'interrupt, subvert, and transform other contextual literacies (Appadurai 1996, p. 3).' In the spaces created around a video such as the Forest Art Festival video, collective media practices are developed which do seem to subvert other contextual literacies. This is a kind of storytelling that primarily forms new activist mythologies. The allure of the video technology is secondary; its power lies in how it is used collectively and tactically. These uses emerge from innovative interpretations of nongkrong and kampung that can shift and expand with new technologies, interpretations that can jalan-jalan with video files and continue to form and reform in different cultural contexts.

The way those watching this video interject and drift in and out during the viewing is reminiscent of the nongkrong audiences described in Chapter 1 gathering around wayang kulit performances, and of the carnivalesque festival audiences described in Chapter 2, gathering around contemporary reog rituals. It seems that here the technology of digital video can be absorbed into the everyday practices of nongkrong easily and elegantly, while also generating new collective practices. As Jean Burgess writes, if viewed from the perspective of cultural participation, videos can be seen as 'the mediating mechanisms via which cultural *practices* are originated, adopted and (sometimes) retained *within* social networks' (Burgess 2008).

This kind of watching also shows that the digital divide is not really an apt description for who does and not have access to these technologies. There are digital frictions at work here, where stories are told in different ways to different people. For example, there is now evidence that the Forest Art Festival video has been distributed outside of Indonesia. I spoke with one enthusiastic American performer who attended the festival who had been given a copy of the film on disc and organised a public screening at his hometown in California. To consider how this reception may have played out, in contrast to the 'local' screenings in Java sheds light on the fact that literacy in a media context is far from black and white. To say that there is a digital divide implies that there are those with and those without technology whereas, in fact, there are many practices in between. People without

internet access, and without personal computers, still experience these mediated stories. In these cases, audience must be considered in terms of a kampung and mediation in terms of nongkrong, generating a more complex picture of the culture of technologies, where global technologies rub up against local social relations generating new languages of resistance. The kind of storytelling described in this section relies on existing social relations, extended, rather than invented, by the possibilities of digital video.

Judged by its impact on the network in which it has been circulated, this video is, indeed, remarkably successful. New festivals have been inspired across Indonesia and the movement in Randublatung itself has grown and been strengthened by a newfound confidence. The ways the video is made and watched does much to challenge the two assumptions around digital video. Firstly, that video is a kind of product and its effectiveness lies in the number of times it is watched. And secondly, that video is a simple message where a direct transition of meaning takes place. It also raises questions about the necessity of global circulation to ensure the political impact of a medium. There is evidence of multiple networks operating at multiple scales here, that seem to be far more significant than YouTube, or, for this particular video, any online networks. Henry Jenkins argues that the value of digital media is primarily generated via 'spreadability'. That is, through reuse, reworking and redistribution, spreadable media content, such as video, 'gains greater resonance in the culture, taking on new meanings, finding new audiences, attracting new markets, and generating new values' (Jenkins 2007). This is certainly true of the Forest Art Festival video, for which 'spreadability' is difficult to measure, yet evident in the formation of the Javanese Carnivalesque in other places by other communities.

By this logic, Burgess argues that 'any particular video produces cultural value to the extent that it acts as a hub for further creative activity by a wide range of participants in this social network' (Burgess 2008, p. 101). In local terms, better measures of the cultural value of videos like the Forest Art Festival video are: how they are integrated into nongkrong, how they form new nongkrong settings and how they generate new conceptualisations of the kampung as a technologically mediated common space. Not surprisingly, Burgess here is referring to online networks. Understanding the generative qualities of the Forest Art video requires a side step—offline—into the hybrid, stop-start, messy networks of activists who jalan-jalan, or, in Boelstorff's archipelago metaphor, into the water between the islands.

There is clearly much work to be done on what video does and what kinds of sense of place and identity are generated in the spaces created by its production and distribution, particularly when it remains offline. The case of the Forest Art Festival video highlights the messiness of technologically mediated collective mythologies. In the next section I explore some of the activist spaces occurring online where social connection between participants and the conversations around video and other cultural forms are primary.

Kampung and Nongkrong Online

Akumassa-Randublatung (I Am the Masses-Randublatung)

In a recent collaboration with the South Jakarta collective Forum Lenteng, environmental activists in Randublatung produced an online space called akumassa-Randublatung (Figure 99). The idea of empowering communities to use video to tell their stories has been implemented in a number of places besides Randublatung. Forum Lenteng provides the necessary tools, expertise, and a dedicated blog to embed the videos. The activists involved in akumassa-Randublatung are the very individuals that form the groups described in Chapter 4 (SuperSamin Inc., anakseribupulau, Rapala), but here, they seem to be localising new technologies and merging them with their existing practices.

At akumassa.org, new remixes are made possible by the digital technologies of blogging, which now include the possibility to not only publish text, but also to upload music and video files. To mention just a few, the akumassa-Randublatung pages include a fan page for the 'Anarcho Punk' band Masberto (*Masyarakat Bertato* or Tattooed Society), a tribute to the great dissident author *'Pramoedya Ananta Toer dan Aku'* (Pramoedya Ananta Toer and Me'), a collective review of the local sate vendor, and an interactive comic book titled 'Teakwood fight and Clandestine in Blora' (Figure 100).[110] This comic is a series of staged photographs shot in the teak forests around Randublatung cut and pasted into a narrative around what it means to be 'green'.

Scroll down a little further, and we find the face of our old friend Samin Surontika, discussed in the previous chapter, with a story by an activist about visiting a Samin house. It ends with this statement:

> Yeah, Samin is still Samin. And we are still we. Every 'I' in the 'masses' has a history that can be written individually, and Samin can now at least be counted and written into my history at this moment.[111]

From 'Art for the People' to 'I Am the People'

There are two tensions expressed in the formation and maintenance of akumassa-Randublatung that extend the remixing of local genealogies, national histories and global technologies discussed in the previous chapter in order to express a local movement online. The first is around individual and collective production, an issue that also emerged in the discussions of the artworks produced at the festivals. The second is around how the physical locality associated with kampung and nongkrong is translated to an online context.

110. *The ClanDestine* (also known simply as ClanDestine) is a comic book series about the Destines, a secret family of long-lived superhuman beings, published in the United States by Marvel Comics. It was created by artist/writer Alan Davis, and first appeared in *Marvel Comics Presents #158*, July 1994 (2005).

111. Translated by myself. Original Indonesian text: *Ya, Samin tetap Samin. Dan kita tetap kita. Setiap 'aku' dalam 'massa' mempunyai sejarah yang bisa ditulis sendiri, dan Samin sudah masuk setidaknya dalam hitungan jam dan tercatat dalam sejarahku saat ini.*

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DISOKONG OLEH

Sempu

(Randublatung - Blora, Jawa Tengah)

Oleh Pethek | Pada Kamis, 3 November 2011

* * *

Perjalanan ke Pulau Sempu, menikmati gelap malam dan suara bising dari roda kereta kelas ekonomi "Mata Remaja" yang menuju Stasiun Kota Lama, Malang. Malam itu kami menunggu kereta di Stasiun Solo Jebres seharga Rp.37.000 per tiket, kereta datang sekitar pukul 00.30 wib. Aku menaikinya sampai tempat tujuan, yakni kota Malang. Di dalam kereta kami berkenalan dengan orang-orang, mulai dari pemusik, mahasiswa pencinta alam, bahkan para seniman tato dan para pekerja dari Malang.

Tebing di Pulau Sempu

[Lanjutkan membaca Sempu]

Punk's Barong

(Randublatung - Blora, Jawa Tengah)

Oleh Ariyanto | Pada Sabtu, 8 Januari 2011

* * *

Punk's Barong adalah kelompok pemuda punk di Randublatung, sebuah kota kecil yang peduli pada kesenian Tari Barongan dan bertekat mengangkat kesenian Barongan ke publik yang luas dan juga kepada generasi muda. Kelompok seniman

ACARA

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Siang hari Depok yan panas aku menyerupu es teh man pada sebua warung makan di Terminal Depok. Berada di tempat ini

1,428 people like akumassa.

Figure 99: Akumassa-Randublatung blog page,
< http://akumassa.org/kategori/program/randublatung-blora-jawa-tengah> accessed 3 December, 2011

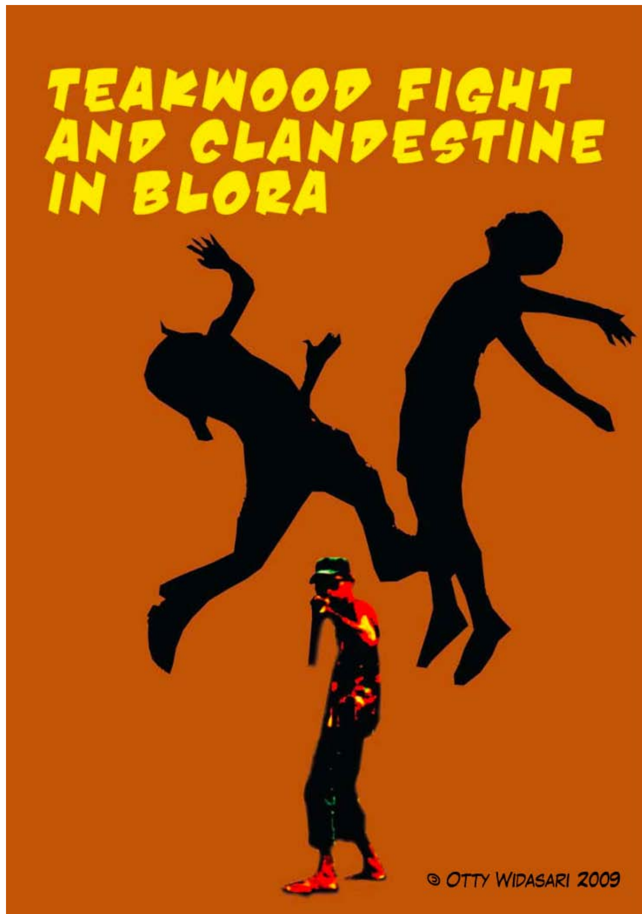

Figure 100: Pages from an interactive online comic book titled ‘Teakwood fight and Clandestine in Blora’, Otto Widasar, 2009.
< http://akumassa.org/kategori/program/randublatung-blora-jawa-tengah> accessed 3 December, 2011

Firstly, akumassa-Randublatung expresses a tension between the individual (aku means 'I') and collective voice (massa means 'the masses'), and the blog serves as an online space to explore this tension. The conflation of aku and massa encourages activists to both produce stories about themselves and to collectively claim ownership over the idea of the 'massa'. Like 'kampung', massa has been used as a manipulative label for the general population in Indonesia. The stories produced by corporations and government often represent the 'massa' as a challenge to be overcome in the course of development, or in many cases in the mainstream media, as victims of development.

But akumassa's authors identify as the massa and this voice is clearly different from previous representations. The idea that the massa must be represented, also implied by the concept of 'seni kerakyatan', explored in Chapter 1, is problemitised by the possibilities of participatory technology. In the space of akumassa-Randublatung, the massa is reclaimed, remixed, and begins to write its own story as activists generate paths for the circulation of their own voices by exploiting existing spaces and channels.

This shift is in line with early observations of the participatory potential of blogging culture. Henry Jenkins wrote in 2004: 'We need to move from a politics based on culture-jamming – that is, disrupting the flow of media from an outside position – towards one based on blogging – that is, actively shaping the flow of media' (Jenkins 2004, p. 36). Indonesians in general have been quick to take up the participatory model of the blog. As of October 2010, Indonesia had approximately 3.2 million bloggers who posted on over 4.1 million blogs (Siregar 2010). Many of these emphasise the marginality of their voices or explicitly claim to be 'alternatives' to mainstream media.

But the case of akumassa-Randublatung is about more than participation in a global, or even national blogosphere. The cultural shift outlined by Jenkins seems to be in some ways taken for granted by Randublatung bloggers who have perhaps already become blasé about the rush of independent media that has flourished since the end of the New Order. The focus, as with digital video, is on localising the blog to include and extend existing practices. One indicator of this is the collective nature of the akumassa blog. Although blogs can be run either by individuals or groups, in most blogs worldwide, each post is written by a single author. One reason is that, unlike wikis[112], standard blog software does nothing to facilitate the joint composition of either posts or comments, and in some ways actively discourages it (Quiggin 2006, p. 483).

Another reason for the individual authorship of most blogs is that, at least in the West, it was arguably the tradition of keeping a personal journal or diary that made

112. A wiki, such as Wikipedia, is a website that allows the creation and editing of any number of interlinked web pages. Wikis are typically powered by wiki software and are often used collaboratively by multiple users.

the mainstream adoption of the personal weblog possible. While it was undeniably the innovations around web 2.0 that resulted in radically accessible and powerful content management systems, these simply brought the diaries out of the bedrooms and into the online, networked public. Blogging, as a cultural form, is still largely a mode of reflection on one's own life.[113]

Geert Lovink, in one of the first major texts to appear on blogging culture, *Zero Comments*, states that a blog is

> commonly defined as a frequently updated web-based chronological publication, a log of personal thoughts and Web links, a mixture of diary forms around what is happening in a person's life and reports and comments on what is happening on the Web and the world out there (Lovink 2008, p. 22).

Blogs written in Indonesian often serve as a contrast to this definition. While there are plenty of Indonesian blogs that adhere to the dominant model,[114] many, such as the ones that have developed from Javanese carnivalesque culture, emphasise nongkrong, rather than private reflection as a way of expressing emotions and experimenting with language. Working online, in many cases, changes many aspects of nongkrong. For instance, unlike offline nongkrong, hanging out in online spaces is recorded, traceable, and structured, by definition of the digital infrastructure. Despite such differences, here I focus on the similar ways that people socialise online as they do in a festival context, by drifting freely in and out and engaging in non linear narratives. Nongkrong online occurs more clearly in synchronous online environments, such as Twitter, Yahoo Messenger and Facebook, but here I explore it in relation to a space that is clearly associated with the anakseribupulau collective and therefore, the Forest Art Festival.

The akumassa-Randublatung blog, not surprisingly, explicitly deviates from the norm of the personal weblog described above. It is clearly a collective space where multiple users author posts and comments, but also, one pseudonym does not necessarily represent one individual. Activists log in and author separate entries, but these logins are shared, so the resulting pages are collaborative and the voices usually indistinguishable. This fluidity of online identities is in line with the remix of environmentalism discussed in the previous chapter, where activists define themselves simultaneously through multiple identities, drawing from a range of sources and the carnivalesque mix of voices and language registers characteristic of festivals. The akumassa form of blogging is both personal and communal,

113. Which is not to say that blogging is not collaborative, as demonstrated by the use of hypertext-linking and commenting. Individual bloggers are writing in context created through collective, but often unorganised effort. In this sense, the context is often clearly collective, but the actual texts are not.

114. I do not mean to imply that there are not personal weblogs in the Indonesian language. Self-promotion, as everywhere, is a common purpose of many of the thousands of blogs maintained by Indonesians. Nor do I mean to suggest that there are not multiple forms of blogs everywhere—business, academic, journalistic blogs all also exist, many of which are authored collectively.

pushing the current definitions of blogging to include more culturally specific, kampung-based scenarios. This collective authorship is important, as it is with the Forest Art Festival, for it gives no preference to a single voice, continuing the heteroglossia of the Festival itself. One voice, in one language register (the conventional format of blogs), might make akumassa-Randublatung easier to follow, but it would not be enough to create an online carnivalesque.

Furthermore, the online space of akumassa-Randublatung expresses a tension between what Anna Tsing calls the 'the spreading interconnectedness and the locatedness of culture' (Tsing 2005, p. 122). Akumassa-Randublatung is, in many ways, modelled on offline activist spaces. This is evident in the casual style of writing and imagery and the banter that can be found in the 'comments' section of the blog. The conversations that are initiated here represent the 'nongkrong' settings in which activists work offline, where remix is fostered and participants freely drift in and out. These spaces of nongkrong online and offline do more than represent themselves to a networked global audience; they encourage collaboration, house the formation of new mythologies and foster new languages. They do this in the same ways as other expressions of the movement such as the festivals themselves, the video of the Forest Art Festival discussed above and the satellite kampung of Klender discussed in Chapter 1.

It has been said before that blogging is a digital extension of oral traditions more than a new form of writing. Blogs are more like 'conversations' than letters. What has not yet been explored is what particular oral traditions are extended and how they change. The ways that activists nongkrong online, and the reasons they do so, need to be brought into a discussion of how and why they blog.

Blogs do more than overcome spatial and temporal boundaries. In fact, they can further define these boundaries. Akumassa-Randublatung, after all, is an online space dedicated to a particular geographical place, and restricted to media about the place. What akumassa.org does is bring local activism into a context that is circulated globally but that remains grounded in the physical conditions of its physical environment. This newly mediated sense of the local can be performed online as well as at festivals and can build new histories of Randublatung as it rubs up against global flows of information. As Arjun Appadurai argues 'locality itself is a historical product and that the histories through which localities emerge are eventually subject to the dynamics of the global' (Appadurai 1996, p. 18). Akumassa-Randublatung continues to be an online space to document and discuss Randublatung tactics with the advantage of being able to be constantly updated. At the time of writing, the most recent post (January, 2011) was a story about a punk group that reworks reog. Clearly, the space of akumassa celebrates the same carnivalesque reconstructions of rituals evident in Forest Art Festival and Festival Mata Air.

Akumassa amplifies the voice of protest in Randublatung and extends the scope of the movement by engaging with different public spheres online. While akumassa-Randublatung extends previous activist practices, its digital and networked form demonstrates a convergence of the advent of new technologies with post-authoritarianism that also changes the ways activists envisage the public sphere. These changes indicate distinct differences between the present environment and how activist practices evolved under the New Order. During and at the end of the New Order, there was an emphasis on 'turun ke jalan', which means 'taking to the streets' but literally 'going down to the streets'. This movement was a definite trajectory of bodies, in one direction, downwards to the people. The more directionless jalan-jalan opens up exciting possibilities for how cultural activism may evolve in the future, with an emphasis on wandering, mingling and discovering.

The attitudes expressed to new technology in this blog—the collective ownership of the tools and the spaces they produce and the continuation of offline social relations—emphasise the same democratisation of creative production found in previous work discussed in this thesis. This emphasis shows that blogging is most definitely shaped by cultural contexts, an argument by no means made for the first time here. But it also shows that in order to understand what is really at work within a blog such as akumassa-Randublatung, a deeper understanding of the terms of nongkrong and the kampung is required, an argument that has been made throughout this thesis.

Cerita Dari Blora (Stories From Blora) at Kedai Kebun Forum

Another representation of the Forest Art Festival was made shortly after the event in the form of an exhibition and I raise it to provide a contrast to the way the Randublatung activists were represented by the Forest Art Festival video and by the akumassa-Randublatung site. This exhibition was an attempt to bring the politics of the Forest Art Festival to the city of Yogyakarta through an exhibition the following year titled, 'Cerita Dari Blora' (Stories From Blora) at Kedai Kebun Forum. The exhibition featured documentation of the activities as well as new work by artists who had been involved. The name of the exhibition comes directly from the book of the same title by Pramoedya Ananta Toer. It was meant to be a presentation of what happened at the Forest Art Festival, and thus the literary reference to another place and time seemed appropriate. It 'represents' a Randublatung locality to an art-savvy Yogyakarta audience, rather than creating a locality in the context of the village itself.

While the exhibition documented the event, many activists felt disappointed with the result. 'It didn't *do* anything' some said. Exi, who initiated the exhibition said it was partly to 'show off' about what could be achieved in a small kampung. But, he says, it failed on some levels: 'We couldn't explain enough (in the gallery) so we couldn't give people enough of an idea about what the Forest Art Festival was really about. We wanted the exhibition to

start conversations and we were a bit disappointed.'

While a sense of deflation is not uncommon with attempts to bring politics into a gallery space, the failure of this exhibition for activists involved represented a turning point in how they saw their own work. The spaces opened up by the video and the blog meant that their network was able to grow in many directions. This expansion indicates a particular interpretation of kampungan that contrasts with the aspirations of people who live in cities or who want to live in the cities. The conventional trajectory associated with kampungan is of upward mobility, from periphery (kampung) to centre (kota/city), as attempted by the exhibition. The fact that the video and akumassa blog were considered much more successful representations of the festival indicates that digital technologies can short-circuit this trajectory. They produce networks that flow in multiple directions ignoring the dichotomies between kampungan and cosmopolitan. The Forest Art Festival video and the akumassa blog encourage a particular kind of kampungan that works both offline and online and continues to generate located identities, rather than replace them. Blogging and social networking bypass the exhibition circuit and go directly to the conversations that Exi emphasises. In this sense, kampungan can be seen as the awkward encounter between globally designed technology and its local appropriation, producing practices that straddle the infinite possibilities of the digital and the dusty reality of the kampung.

Summary

This chapter has moved through two extensions of the Forest Art Festival made possible by technologies new to the activists involved, that of digital video and blogging. Both the Forest Art Festival video and the akumassa-Randublatung blog are collectively produced, stylistically kampungan, and could be considered tactical media. The way the technologies are used challenges universals about their design and about what is the most effective way to use them to do cultural activism on a local level that engages with global information flows. These examples show that while many technologies may seem to be homogenising storytelling, when examined closely, their uses are, in fact, specific and responsive.

The introduction raised a number of possibilities for making sense of local uses of technology. It outlined some of the impacts of the arrival of new communication technologies to Indonesia in order to give context to the reception they received from the activists discussed here. These possibilities incorporate localised ideas of media literacy and tactical media, an interpretation of digital culture as carnivalesque and an extension of Anna Tsing's model of friction into the realms of local and global technological interaction.

The first part of the chapter explored the production and distribution of the documentary video of the Forest Art Festival. The production of the video reflects an

uneven network of activists with varied skills. Its distribution, which occurs through these networks as activists travel, relies on the casual settings of nongkrong rather than on formal screenings.

The next part of the chapter analysed the akumassa-Randublatung blog as a collectively produced text that defines and expands the political consciousness of activists in Randublatung. Finally, by contrasting the video and the blog with the 'Cerita Dari Blora' exhibition that also documented the Forest Art Festival, I show that the video and the blog generate different kinds of spaces which may be able to get closer to activist interpretations of kampungan and nongkrong than conventional art spaces ever can.

Conclusion

This chapter has used the idea of jalan-jalan to consider how the politics of the Forest Art Festival have been impacted by new technologies and begun to inhabit digital channels, while incorporating existing practices. The production and distribution of digital video as well as the creation of a collective blog have followed the paths already carved out by social networks, as activists meander through the opportunities provided by software and devices. Rather than using new technologies to 'take up arms', activists have explored them organically, developing their own literacies according to their collective needs and tactically exploiting the channels most relevant to their collective aims.

While these new forms of activism have only appeared in Randublatung since the end of the New Order, the simultaneous arrival of digital video, blogging software and reliable internet access throw into question the focus on the historical moment of Suharto's downfall as the singular point of a major shift in cultural sensibilities for activists in Java. I don't mean to argue that the end of the New Order was in any way insignificant. Certainly the repressive nature of the New Order meant that activism occurred in very restricted forms, and alternative media was produced only in small quantities, and many lives were endangered or lost by speaking out. Rather, I argue that the arrival of the possibilities of digital media at the same time as this newfound freedom created conditions that inspired activists to localise these technologies in ways that strengthened their existing practices of performing multiple identities, of networking through physical travel and of articulating local, collectively voiced environmentalisms that are carnivalesque in character. In short, while the freedom to collectively express ideas of resistance and opposition is a prerequisite to the carnivalesque, the media practices discussed in this chapter seemed to emerge from a process of jalan-jalan rather than from a moment of post-authoritarian euphoria.

In this chapter, I have thrown open the concept of jalan-jalan to include a new interpretation, as a walk through a globally designed technological environment conducted by globally oriented local subjectivities. The process of jalan-jalan changes both the

environment and the subjectivities involved. This idea has much potential which cannot be fully explored within the scope of this chapter. As activists in Java shift to using more mobile devices, accessing the internet through mobile phones rather than desktop computers, the idea of a roaming sense of global connection takes on another significance.

The discussion of video in this chapter has focused on Randublatung activists because their response to new technologies has been so enthusiastic and can be read as a form of carnivalesque activism. Tanam Untuk Kehidupan, in Salatiga, has concentrated on the annual enactment of Festival Mata Air and perhaps for this reason, and because of the amount of energy and resources such a festival requires, they have not made videos about themselves and nor have they experimented with blogging tools. Tanam Untuk Kehidupan does have a website, but keeping it up-to-date was identified by festival organisers as a major challenge and not the main priority in terms of publicity or connection with a wider network. That said, a handful of members of Tanam Untuk Kehidupan recently launched an online shop called 'Sapu' (broom) where they sell a wide range of products, locally made from recycled materials, to a global audience. The appearance of the Sapu site shows the range of approaches to new technologies that can be adapted to multiple purposes. It also shows the multiple (and tactical) sense of identity enabled by these technologies as Sapu makes no reference to Tanam Untuk Kehidupan but has clearly formed from the reconceptualisations of rubbish that have been such a focus of Festival Mata Air.

Predictably, not everyone sees the carnivalesque culture emerging in digital channels as an overall positive. Being a tactical rather than strategic way to engage with technologies, jalan-jalan has both intended and unintended consequences, which raises fears for some. In a report that maps the use of new social media in Indonesia for the University of Manchester's Institute of Innovation Research, Yanuar Nugroho concludes '…it is imperative for civil society to strategise their networking endeavour, in order to extend their network deliberately, rather than as an ad hoc activity' (Nugroho 2011, p. 62).

The activists presented in this thesis seem to be already extending their network, but in a way that may be deliberately ad hoc. The new technologies described in this chapter do many of the same things as the festivals described in Chapter 2: they reinvent rituals, they perform multiple identities, and they localise environmental politics. As activist collectives in Java become more distributed through the use of these technologies, they don't seem to become less collective. Rather, they further challenge the idea that there is a centre of art and culture, a challenge that has particular resonance in Indonesia where centre–periphery politics is part of the process of recovering from the New Order.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion points out the main findings of each chapter and how these connect to the research questions and central argument of the thesis. It makes clear the contribution this thesis has made to cultural studies, Indonesian studies and interdisciplinary academia.

In the introductory chapter I explained that this research was motivated by the desire to better understand cultural activism in Indonesia. I have focused on two environmental arts festivals that occurred in Central Java between 2005 and 2010 as sets of activist practices and volatile cultural spaces. This thesis has wandered through multiple disciplines, prodding and pulling at the concept of the carnivalesque in Java in order to map the development of forms of cultural activism. This development occurs as local practices remix with global discourses, thus decolonising the idea that activism can be understood as universal.

I have used Bakhtin's notion of the carnivalesque to decipher the multiple scales of cultural activism as they occurred. Literature on cultural activism has highlighted the relevance of the concept of carnivalesque in relation to the analysis of contemporary activist modes of politics. My use of the concept is three fold:

The concept of carnivalesque has been used because, firstly, as it originated in Bakhtin's analysis of medieval carnival, it offers immense potential for understanding the festival form. Festival Mata Air and the Forest Art Festival, like 'the world turned upside down' that Bakhtin analyses, encourage an overturning of normal social relations: men and women camp together; artists and artisans collaborate; and punks provide music for 'traditional' dance performances.

Secondly, the carnivalesque is a concept for understanding the way cultural forms can negotiate politics. Bakhtin describes features of the carnivalesque that disrupt serious, 'official' thought and behaviour. This is a particularly important element of carnivalesque as it has allowed me to demonstrate the way activists in Central Java challenge the expectations placed on them by their government and by global environmentalism; and it has enabled me to demonstrate the way that local meaning can unsettle identities constructed at other scales.

Thirdly, I have explored the terms kampung, nongkrong and jalan-jalan as a way of localising the idea of the carnivalesque and ensuring that the festivals are not seen as derivative of larger festival forms. My own permutations and adaptations of these terms, as well as the ways they are used by activists, as I have observed in my field work, have provided the conceptual framework needed to apply the idea of the carnivalesque to the two case studies in ways that provide local roots to the analysis.

While many individuals, collectives and events play roles in telling the story of cultural activism in Indonesia, these two case studies have defined the scope of this research and each has introduced a different set of parameters and problems. As site-specific responses to environmental crisis that emerged in different social contexts, the style, tone, and modes of organising these festivals are different. Each has taken different approaches to engaging with politics in the post-New Order Indonesia, and each has locally specific

forms of nongkrong and jalan-jalan and different relationships to their kampung (and the very idea of kampung), as well as to Java, Indonesia, and their global networks. Yet both festivals have radical cultural intent: to challenge the class order in Indonesia, as well as raise awareness of environmental degradation in ways that have high degrees of local agency. I have explained the intricacies of these intentions and practices in ways that attend to both what is specifically local and what is globally influenced about them, all the while cautiously remembering the unique position of the 'national' in Indonesia.

I began by posing a number of questions, which have served as guides:

- How can understandings of cultural activism and the politics that produce it be localised?
  - What is the significance of environmental festivals in Central Java?
  - as sites of protest?
  - as sites of cultural production?
  - what, in fact, is new about festivals?
- How do global, local, and national flows of culture intersect at the sites of environmental activism in Central Java?
- How can the idea of the carnivalesque be applied to activism in Central Java?

In this conclusion, I can now summarise my answers to these questions and demonstrate the implications of these answers by identifying the scholarly debates to which they contribute. This conclusion presents, firstly, the main findings of my research as presented in each chapter. Secondly, it outlines the original theoretical, methodological, and empirical contributions made. Finally it raises the possible areas for future research that clearly emerge from this thesis.

Summary of Findings

The methods used in this thesis have been drawn from a combination of tools from different disciplines. It is an unusual approach but has been a necessary way to look at the local, national and global dimensions of the carnivalesque in Java. The activists under study do not define themselves strictly as artists, or as environmentalists, and nor do they claim to work only in local settings or with only particular tools. For these reasons, previous literature has been dealt with throughout the thesis, rather than in a concise literature review. The intersection of the carnivalesque with many disciplines makes this the logical approach and to do otherwise would have resulted in a much weaker research project.

This multi-pronged approach has allowed links to emerge across chapters through the writing process. However, each chapter has presented specific findings that I will outline here. Chapter 1 examines two concepts, nongkrong (hanging out) and kampung (our place), which each have rich local meanings in Java. These terms, untranslatable and slippery, shaped the theoretical context of this thesis by beginning the process of unraveling how activists combine concepts that have origins in Javanese practices predating colonialism

with contemporary discourses, generating meanings that remain in continual flux.

Chapter 2 introduces the carnivalesque into a Javanese context by exploring the applications of festival as a cultural form. In doing so, it examines the history of festival in Indonesia and begins the process of defining the particular type of festivals produced by Tanam Untuk Kehidupan and anakseribupulau. In this chapter, I discuss the implications of producing a festival with kampung as its site.

Chapter 3 accesses the messiness of the cultural production during these festivals through two artworks Tropical Igloo and Rubbish Jasmine. Both works demonstrate a local version of participatory art practice that is largely invisible in international surveys of Indonesian art. I employ Nicolas Bourriaud's text Relational Aesthetics (2002) to test how current discourses on contemporary art can help to explore local artmaking situations. I demonstrate that such discourses, like the notion of carnivalesque, require combination with more local discourses on participation and collaboration.

Chapter 4 uses the concept of remix to frame how environmentalists in Central Java sample local genealogies, national mythologies and globally circulating ideas of environmentalism in order to brand their festivals and generate their own movements. I draw on de Certeau's distinction between strategies and tactics to consider how environmentalism can operate at multiple scales.

Chapter 5 explores the ways anakseribupulau and Tanam Untuk Kehidupan engage with new technologies to expand the impacts of Forest Art Festival and Festival Mata Air beyond the duration and physical sites of the events. This chapter applies the concept of tactical media to the very local terms of kampung and nongkrong to show how activists integrate new technologies into their own resilient spaces, channels and platforms. I argue that the resulting practices are as much consequences of the localisation of these new technologies as they are of the impact of the post-authoritarian political conditions. This chapter explores how the politics and practices of Festival Mata Air and the Forest Art Festival move through digital channels by creating local carnivalesque spaces online.

Methodological Contributions

I opened this thesis by explaining how the tales of my own journeys to Java and activism formed the foundation for my field research. I explained how I took advantage of existing relationships with cultural activists to choose and frame my case studies, turning these relationships into a set of deep collaborations between researcher and research subjects that allowed me to understand festivals as I was taking part in their production. This localised participant observation, is, in a way, different from the more usual model of joining a community without prior relationship. While it made maintaining objectivity

particularly challenging, without this situation, I could not have explored the intricacies of the activists' intentions and how they relate to local collectives, national movements, and global networks. I was able to collect the cultural memory of participants and activists by documenting forms of ephemeral cultural production through interviews, and visual analysis, all the while investigating how cultural forms become a discursive arena for political action.

I have worked to localise my analyses of cultural activism by applying local terminology (kampung, nongkrong and jalan-jalan) to the intersections of political scales (kampung, national and global) that occur at the sites of environmental activism in Central Java. These terms have allowed me to explore the linguistic features of the carnivalesque, such as heteroglossia and the hybrid utterance, identifiable in the language of activists. Beyond this specific use of these terms, my exploration of their meaning and possible translations also contributes to Indonesian studies, especially in the study of space, place, and everyday culture and politics.

The process of combining the carnivalesque with local terms has much in common with the model for understanding globalisation that Anna Tsing calls 'friction'. Tsing offers friction as a method for understanding global connection. I take up her challenge in this thesis by applying friction to cultural activism. Friction has helped throughout the thesis to reveal how festivals generate meaning at multiple scales, and how they have relevance to those who make them, those who experience them, and those who analyse them. Friction has guided the concept of the carnivalesque through the sticky terrain of Indonesian activism; only when brought in direct contact with very local situations (kampung) and models of analysing social relations (nongkrong) can the carnivalesque help to show the myriad of ways that cultural activism is produced and understood all over the world.

Empirical Contributions

This thesis has presented original ethnographic work on cultural activism in Java. It provides first hand narratives and uncovers previously unpublished materials to demonstrate the significance of these groups and festivals as new cultural spaces building momentum since the end of the New Order. These festivals have generated fresh cultures of protest and opened up new spaces of public engagement, but have operated for the most part under the radar of both the international art circuit and global environment initiatives.

I realise that in a sense I have through this research 're-written' the stories of the activists who produce environmental art festivals in Java. I have done so in an effort to contribute to a new language of cultural activism, knowing that this language is not their 'new language' but a remix of several languages, a foundation for collaborative creativity between those in Java and those outside. This thesis does not, by representing it, historicise

a movement; while they change constantly, the groups discussed in this thesis are all alive and well. I hope, instead, that this thesis serves as a contribution to the future directions of environmentalism in Java by providing a conceptual framework in which local activists have a high degree of agency. It also provides information that can open up possibilities for richer collaborations between cultural activists in Java and those elsewhere.

Theoretical Contributions

This section reminds readers of the theoretical contribution of this research to the disciplines of cultural studies, Indonesian studies, global studies, and environmental studies.

This thesis has provided new examinations of the cultural changes that occurred in Indonesia with the end of the New Order, re-conceptualising the way the period has been historicised, including how activism has been defined, which has sometimes been in contrast to how it is defined by activists themselves. As activists remix the genealogies of their own movement, expressing it in new forms, they dislodge the way activism was positioned within the drama of New Order politics. In this way, they continually redefine what activism is and what it responds to, producing forms that can adapt readily and spaces that are more fluid than was the case in previous political expressions. One of the main achievements of this thesis has been to carve out an intellectual space for studying these new forms of activism by pointing to what they signify at multiple scales: in the kampung, in Central Java, in Indonesia, and in a global context. By moving within and between these scales in my research, I question and provincialise the idea of a centre, pointing to the geographical centres of Europe and Jakarta that produce the conceptual centres of modernism and capitalist development.

More broadly, this thesis joins a field of study that seeks to understand the local nuances of the global environment movement as it adapts to circulating images, ideologies, and forms. As environmentalism becomes more mainstream on a global scale, it is increasingly difficult to decipher its many origins, forms and expressions. In Central Java, I have argued, this challenge may be met by enquiring into how the cultural activism of local environment can be understood as Carnivalesque. By relocating the Carnivalesque away from Europe and the Americas, and reframing it by the local terms of nongkrong, kampung and jalan-jalan, I have contributed to a decolonising of the idea of carnival and provided an example of the way language can localise theory.

Furthermore, one of the main findings of this thesis is that a thorough analysis of cultural activism in Java, in fact, requires the use of local language. For instance, in order to decolonise the existing categories and concepts that define the relationships between art and activism inherited from the West, participation must be understood in Javanese terms, with nongkrong as a fundamental social practice, and kampung as the site of

engagement. Carnivalesque has been the vehicle for bringing these local terms into the discourse of global environmentalism. Once they have been shifted, cultural practices and environmental politics begin to look different: punks change the ritualistic use of animals during an ancient performance practice; a teenage adventure camp challenges illegal logging. Within movements that are locally grounded emerge links to previously invisible national and international networks. Collectives begin to reveal different relationships to technology than previously understood, and artists are understood to be defining art rather than struggling to be defined by it. The idea of the carnivalesque in Java, that is, of localizing carnivalesque, begins a process of valuing cultural activism in previously unexplored ways.

APPENDICES

Appendix I

Glossary of Indonesian Words and Acronyms

adat	customary practice including ritual, art or law
anakseribupulau	children of a thousand islands
arak	palm wine, of which there are many local varieties made from the fermentation
budaya	culture
bule	white person or Westerner
dalang	puppet master
dangdut	onomatopoeic name for a widely popular genre of music
desa	village
distro	independent shop selling (often by consignment) clothing, jewelery, music, videos, publication.
Djarum	popular brand of cigarette
dukun	Shaman, medicine man, healer
FAF	Forest Art Festival
FMA	Festival Mata Air
gapura	entrance to kampung
gotong royong	working together, mutual cooperation
Gudang Garam	popular brand of cigarette
Idul fitri	also known as 'Lebaran'. Muslim celebration at the end of Ramadan, the fasting month
Jabotek	Jakarta, Bogor, Tangerang, and Bekasi
jalan-jalan	to wander or stroll
jati	any variety of teak tree and the wood it produces
kabupaten	A political subdivision of a province in. Usually translated as a 'regency', and sometimes translated as 'district' or 'municipality'. Regencies are divided into kecamatan (subdistricts) which are then divided into kampungs.

kampung	'our place', village, residential area
kecamatan	subdistrict (see kabupaten)
Krama	high level Javanese
merantau	migrating for employment. A 'perantau' is an economic migrant
Mapala	Mahasiswa Pencinta Alam: students who love nature
mata air	the source of a fresh water spring
merdeka	political independence, can also mean freedom and liberation
ngamen	busking
nongkrong	hanging out
ojek	motorbike taxi and common form of transport in most parts of Java
penitia	committee member
PRD	Partai Rakyat Demokrasi: People's Democratic Party
PKI	Partai Kommunis Indonesia: Indonesian Communist Party
pemuda	young person, well-educated youth
perumahan	housing estate
plesetan	from the Javanese root, kepleset, 'to slip up' – a kind of parody/pun
poskamling	Pos Keamanan Lingkungan: Post for the safety of the surroundings.
preman	thugs/ gangsters/ toughs
prokem	slang
Rapala	Randublatung Pencinta Alam (Randublatung nature lovers)
reog	Javanese dance, I use generally to refer to reog Ponorogo and Kuda Lumping
RT	Rukun Tetangga: Neighbourhood / Community Association. Led by the Ketua RT.
RW	Rukun Warga: Large Neighbourhood / Community Association: next highest admin level above RT. Led by the Ketua RW.
SARA	Suku, Agama, Ras: Ethnicity, Religion, Race
seni	art
seni rupa	fine art
Taring Padi (TP)	art collective that began in Yogyakarta in 1998 during the general

	upheaval following the fall of Suharto
TUK	Tanam Untuk Kehidupan (Planting for Life)
sanggar	collective studio for art or theatre characterised by mutual reciprocity and self-learning.
Sukarno	the leader of Indonesia's struggle for independence from the Dutch and Indonesia's first President (1945 to 1967)
Suharto	the second President of Indonesia having held the office for 32 years from 1967 following Sukarno's removal until his resignation in 1998
Sampoerna	popular brand of cigarette and Indonesian subsidiary of Phillip Morris
warung	roadside stall with a place to sit
warkop	warung kopi, warung that sells coffee
warnet	warung internet, internet café
zine	self-published, often photocopied publication

Appendix II

Arek Malang Must Be Happy (I Rap Malang)

Javanese lyrics by Sista Nova featuring MC SBY and Sven Simulacrum. According to the authors, these are impossible to translate, but an explanation of their meaning follows, which was first published in *gang re:Publik indonesia-australia creative adventures* (Crosby et al. 2008).

Rungokno rek, ayo rek podo melek
iki musik rock campur Hiphop ojo dinyek
tak jamin kon kabeh gak bakal rugi
sepisan ngrungokno mesti bakale ndadi

dengarkan coy, ayo coy sama2 melek-(mata tidak tidur)
ini musik rock campur hiphop jangan dihina
aku jamin kamu semua tidak bakal rugi
...sekali mendengarkan pasti akan kecanduan....

sing gitaran, iku AREMA
sing ngerap, yo AREMA pisan
arek-arek Malang, Malang kutone musisi
jarene ndeso tapi pekoro musik ojok diremehno

tak kandani yo rek iki temenan
lek ancen Singo Edan, ojok mandeg edan
gak usah wedi-wedi lek duwe kepinginan
sing penting gak nggarai pecah seduluran

gak usah dipikir omongane tonggo
lek ancen gak salah yo kate diapakno
kate dadi musisi dadi rapper, opo wes sebutno
sing penting siji rek, gak ngrepoti wong tuwo

arek Malang gak kenek ditantang
wonge mokong-mokong ati-atio lek ngomong
ketoke meneng, gak katik nggremeng
tapi ati-ati iso-iso digibeng

lha iyo masi adoh tekan omah
atiku iki pancet ae Arema
dijuju omben tekan Australi sampe Amerika latin
pancet kepinginane yo kopi Klojen

ojok diguyu rek, temenan iki
Kutone Arema ancen ngangeni
rasakno a lek gak percoyo
sepisan ngidek Malang mesti pengen mbaleni

Reflections by Nova

I tend to write more about what I see and feel. When I lived in Malang, I also felt proud about that city. But when I moved to another city that knew of Malang by its *Arema* (Malang youth) that tend to be troublemakers, frankly I felt ashamed and sad to explain why this sort of behaviour happens. *Arema* is how we refer to ourselves 'Arek Malang' or Malang guys–and girls.

When soccer began to get popular, precisely on 11 August 1987, the Arema Malang Soccer Association was founded. So Aremania appeared on the scene, a group of supporters that are now infamous for their violent actions at every Arema Malang match. Whether this is because that's just how they are, or perhaps because the soccer arena has powerful energy able to ignite the emotion of its supporters.

Apart from this, Arema folk have achieved prestige in other fields. As far as I know, Malang has a suite of famous Indonesian musicians: Ian Antono, Toto Tewel, Abadi Susman, Syaharani, Bertha, just to mention a few and there are still many others. And music fans in Malang are also not merely 'listeners' either. In fact some people believe that if Malang people are not responsive and interested in a music concert put on by musicians from the capital, then the conclusion to be drawn that they are not 'yet successful'. Malang has indeed for a long time been a barometer for Indonesian music.

When I realised that actually Arema are quite energetic, both physically and mentally, then I thought it would be good to make a track discussing their positive and negative sides in the one song. It all began with the desire to make something new. One afternoon in Sydney, whilst I was lightly chatting about my father, Toto Tewel, suddenly Sven wanted to take a guitar riff from one of the works of my dad, who happens to be a musician. Essentially it was about making something new. Once the rough track had been laid down by Sven, the idea came to use Malang-style Javanese to fill it. Malang-style Javanese is known for being coarse and not following the rules set by Javanese speakers to the west with their distinct language strata. Yet I chose not to use the style of Malang slang where all the words are reversed. I just used every day Javanese.

In this track I wanted to invite the young people of Malang to better use their great energy in more positive directions. Not *okol* (muscles), but *akal* (brains). To sharpen their practical abilities more intelligently, I deliberately invited MC SBY who actually was not at all a 'rapper' to let fly his ridicule at me. The aim was to open wide the eyes of the Arema to outsiders' critical perception of our tendency towards 'okol'. This track also invites Arema in particular and Indonesia in general to be freer creatively and to dare to decide their own lives. Provided other parties are not harmed, why be afraid of being more expressive?

I also talk a little about the Arema coffee culture. I mention 'Kopi Klojen' here. Klojen is a Malang suburb where you can find the Klojen Market. The market has shops selling basic foodstuffs including a brand of coffee that is well-known in Malang with its various different grades. The culture of coffee drinking and hanging out by the roadside still flourishes till now. Arema always make the time to spend one or two hours 'hanging out' with friends and chatting about anything. Coffee is our best friend during such discussions.

Appendix III

Interviews and Correspondences

Name	Date	Type of communication
Ade Darmawan	7/04/08	email
Ade Darmawan and Reza Afisina	20/7/07	in person, Jakarta
Amity Lynch	21/10/07	in person, Sydney
Anang	18/6/08	in person, Yogyakarta
Andan	18/6/08	email
Andrew Lowenthall	20/9/07	phone
Annie Sloman	18/6/08 2009-10	in person, Yogyakarta email and online interview
Aris Prabawa	21/10/07	in person, Sydney
Ayok	18/12/07	in person, Sydney
Dan MacKinlay	6/4/09	email
Djuadi	1/09/06 2007-11 26/10/06 18/12/07 20/7/07	in person, Yogyakarta email and online interviews in person, Randublatung in person, Sydney in person, Jakarta
Dodi	21/6/08	in person, Yogyakarta
Endang	29/10/06	in person, Randublatung
Enrico Adidtjondro	2008-11	in person, Jakarta
Exi Wijaya	3/09/06 2007-11 23/10/06 18/12/07 25/7/07	in person, Yogyakarta email and online interviews in person, Randublatung in person, Sydney in person, Jakarta
Hafiz Rancajale	28/3/08	email
Imam Bucah	4/3/11 20/9/08	online in person, Salatiga
Indra	18/1/07	in person, Yogyakarta
Jade Trapp	21/10/07	in person, Sydney
Koko	30/10/06	in person, Blora email
Nana Tinatari	2010-11	email and online interview

Nova Ruth	18/12/07 2008-11	in person, Sydney email and online interview
Pak Por	26/10/06	in person, Randublatung
Plonco	27/10/06	in person, Randublatung, with Djuadi as translator of Javanese to Indonesian
Reza Afisina	18/6/08	in person, Sydney
S. Tedi D.	22/10/06	in person, Yogyakarta
Susannah Day Sam Icklow	30/10/06	focus group, Salatiga
S. Tedi D. Toni Volunteero Exi Wijaya	22/10/06	focus group, Yogyakarta
Titi	19/9/08	in person, Salatiga
Vanessa Hyde	3/3/2007 19/9/08 12/6/11	email and online interview in person, Salatiga in person, Sydney

Appendix IV

Letter of rejection from the Government of the City of Salatiga, Subdistrict of Sidorejo to Tanam Untuk Kehidupan

(translation on following page)

PEMERINTAH KOTA SALATIGA
KECAMATAN SIDOREJO – KELURAHAN SALATIGA
RW.IV KALITAMAN
Jalan Kalitaman No.20 RT.03 Salatiga ☎ 7100530

No : 09/RW.IV.Kltm/VII/'08
Lamp. : 1 berkas
H a l : **FMA TUK 2008**

Salatiga, 02 Juli 2008

Kepada
Ketua Panitia FMA TUK 2008
di-
Salatiga

Dengan hormat,

Menanggapi surat saudara tertanggal 14 Juni 2008 perihal Permohonan dukungan untuk pelaksanaan Festival Mata Air TUK 2008 di Wilayah Kalitaman Kelurahan Salatiga, maka melalui surat ini kami beritahukan sebagai berikut :

Berdasarkan hasil Musyawarah warga di masing-masing RT. (RT 01 s/d RT 06), maka telah disepakati untuk **MENOLAK** kegiatan FMA TUK 2008 di wilayah Kalitaman Salatiga.

Demikian surat pemberitahuan ini kami sampaikan, atas perhatiannya disampaikan banyak terima kasih.

Hormat kami
RW.IV Kalitaman – Kel. Salatiga

Ketua — Sekretaris

KECAMATAN SIDOREJO KOTA RW-IV SALATIGA KELURAHAN SALATIGA

Drs. Koermen — Bambang Ismoyo

000/616/VII/2008

Mengetahui
Lurah Salatiga

PEMERINTAH KOTA SALATIGA KELURAHAN SALATIGA KECAMATAN SIDOREJO

Suwarno, SE
Penata Tk.I
NIP. 010 156 786

Tembusan :
1. Walikota Salatiga
2. Ka.Din. Parsenibud & OR
3. Camat Sidorejo
4. Lurah Salatiga
5. Arsip

Government of the City of Salatiga, Subdistrict of Sidorejo, Village of Salatiga
RW.IV Kalitaman
Kalitaman Street No. 20 RT.03 Salatiga, 7100530

No: 09/RWIV.Kltm/VII/'08
1 file
Issue: FMA TUK 2008

Salatiga, 2 July, 2008

To The head of the Committee of FMA TUK 2008
in Salatiga

With respect,

We respond to your letter on 14 July, 2008, requesting permission for Festival Mata Air TUK 2008 in the region of Kalitaman in Salatiga, and through this letter we convey the following:

Through the results of the discussion of residents in each of the RT [kampung] (RT 01 through to and including RT 06), the agreement has been made to REJECT the activities of FMA TUK 2008 in the area of Kalitaman, Salatiga.

So, through this letter we are informing you, and we express gratitude.

Respectfully,

RW.IV Kalitaman- Kel. Salatiga

Copied to:

1. Mayor of Salatiga
2. Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Art and Culture
3. Sidorejo Sub District head
4. Headman of Salatiga
5. Archives

Appendix V

Letter of rejection from the leader of RT01, Kalitaman, to Tanam Untuk Kehidupan

SURAT PERNYATAAN

Yang bertanda tangan dibawah ini ketua RT.01., atas nama warga RT.01. menyatakan bahwa dengan rencana akan diadakannya FMA TUK 2008 di wilayah Kalitaman, maka kami seluruh warga RT.01 Menyatakan :

MENOLAK

Dengan alasan :

1. Mengundang berkumpulnya para pemabuk
2. Lebih banyak kegiatan "hura-hura"
3. Mengganggu ketenangan masyarakat
4. Hanya menguntungkan kelompok tertentu.
5. dll.

Demikian pernyataan ini kami buat dengan sebenarnya atas kesepakatan seluruh warga RT….. dengan tanpa ada paksaan dari pihak manapun.

Salatiga, 1 Juli 2008

Ketua RT…..

Letter of Statement

The signatory below, the leader of RT 01, on behalf of the residents of RT 01, states that the requested plan for FMA TUK 2008 [Festival Mata Air Tanam Untuk Kehidupan 2008] in the area of Kalitaman has the following outcome:

REJECTED

With the reasons:
1. It brings groups of drunkards
2. There are too many 'hoorah-hoorah' activities
3. It disturbs the peace
4. It only involves certain groups
5. etc.

So we make this statement with the agreement of the residents of RT… without force from any party.
Signed: Kampung leader.

Appendix VI

Summary of Results of Survey at Festival Mata Air, Kalimangkak, 2008

37 questionnaires were collected over the three days of the festival by a team of volunteers, including myself. This is a summary of the results compiled for a report to Tanam Untuk Kehidupan on the success of the fesival by Jimmy Siregar, an independent Yogyakarta-based researcher. I have translated the results to English.

Religion:	
Muslim	23
Christian	7
Catholic	2
left blank	5

Gender:	
male	20
female	17

Place of Residence:	
Salatiga	30
outside Salatiga	7

Occupation:	
student	7
farmer	3
artist	4
entrepreneur	3
teacher	2
unemployed	3

Role in festival:	
TUK Committee member	3
spectator	26
volunteer	1
artist	5
storeholder	2

Was made aware of the festival by:	
friends or word of mouth	21
newspapers	5
email	2
billboards and flags	8
sms	2

Previous participation at Festival Mata Air:	
attended FMA 2006	12
attended FMA 2007	14
Have not attended a previous festival	7

Sponsorship:	
know that the festival has sponsors	20
didn't know the festival has sponsors	17
could identify two or more sponsors	7

Perception of the festival content:

View the content as 'international' in nature	28
View the content as 'national' (Indonesian) in nature	13
View the content as Javanese in nature	5
View the content as 'local' in nature	6

Other comments:

'That the festival represents the third-world urban culture that is very confusing'
'The festival represents "Pop culture".'

Format of festival:

Said Festival Mata Air is different from festivals/events that they have attended before	24
Gave reasons: 'theme and location', 'non-commercial "feel"'.	
Said that Festival Mata Air is similar to festivals they have attended before	12
Named as similar: Festival of Yogya, Siem Solo, 5 Mountain, Sanctuary Festival	

Responses to the question: 'What is a festival?':

- a celebration;
- a gathering / meeting;
- an exhibition of creativity;
- an annual event that shows something unique;
- creativity and performances with the message of community;
- a means to express ourselves and relate to the area around us;
- feast of culture and / or celebration that involves the community and also has themes and special missions;
- happiness for all;
- campaigns;
- entertainment;
- education that is combined with entertainment;
- an activity that combines arts, culture and music- that has a message;
- a positive activity for the audience;
- a place for artforms that otherwise have 'no stage'.
- environmental campaigns that work directly (face-to-face).

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