

HEALTH, HEALING AND THE QUEST FOR WELLBEING IN PONOROGO REGENCY, EAST JAVA

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Caroline Campbell

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ABSTRACT

HEALTH, HEALING AND THE QUEST FOR WELLBEING IN PONOROGO REGENCY, EAST JAVA

This thesis draws on diverse documentary sources and ethnographic research to look at the importance of place and ethos in the constitution of historical processes and contemporary cultural practices concerned with health and healing. Through an analysis of the interrelationships of morbidity, conceptual frameworks, behaviour, morality, therapeutic modalities, and socioeconomic and religious transformation, the thesis elucidates how people in Ponorogo deal with illness and misfortune in their quest for wellbeing.

The regency of Ponorogo is located in the southwest corner of the province of East Java. Its most identifiable symbol is the barong tiger mask which is the main character in Reog Ponorogo performances. An exploration of the area's extensive archaeological, historical and narrative resources reveals the ongoing dialogue with wider Java, and how the celebration of strength and physical prowess in the performance of *reog* enacts a distinctive rural ethos and local identity. *Reog*, therefore, lends itself to de Certeau's everyday practices of arts of "operating" and "practice".

Strength and stamina are important for the livelihoods of people in Ponorogo, the majority of whom depend on physical labour. A somatic culture and skilful aesthetic inform the search for wellbeing and the use of therapeutic resources. In rural Java biomedical services predominantly dispense pharmaceuticals. Their reputation for fast relief, together with the coincidence of patterns of morbidity, constrained economic resources, problems of access, and the historical and contemporary use of other therapeutic agents forms a local ecology of care in which the use of pharmaceuticals has been incorporated into existing regimens of prevention, protection, cure and maintenance. This local ecology also includes folk practitioners who offer a diverse range of services which are encompassed by the dynamic concept of *slamet* (wellbeing). While socioeconomic change has enabled them to take advantage of

changing aspirations, the moral framework of religious transformation has meant that practitioners have had to modify their services to maintain their legitimacy.

In contemporary Ponorogo topography plays a significant role in the exacerbation of socioeconomic difference and health inequalities. The latter part of the thesis focuses on the dry limestone highlands of the regency's borders. Lack of infrastructure, difficult terrain, and resource-poor environments characterise the chronic poverty of these regions. Ecology and the realities of living in small, geographically-isolated communities contribute to a distinctive ethos which places emphasis on social harmony and conflict avoidance. Extended analysis of a community killing of suspected sorcerers not only illustrates the multidimensional and contextual understanding of wellbeing, but also articulates with the increasing importance placed on the morality of folk practitioners in contemporary Java.

The final chapter revisits and integrates the main themes of the thesis in a concluding discussion of lowland and highland contrasts and connections, and how the dynamic concept of *slamet* is able to adapt to and incorporate change.

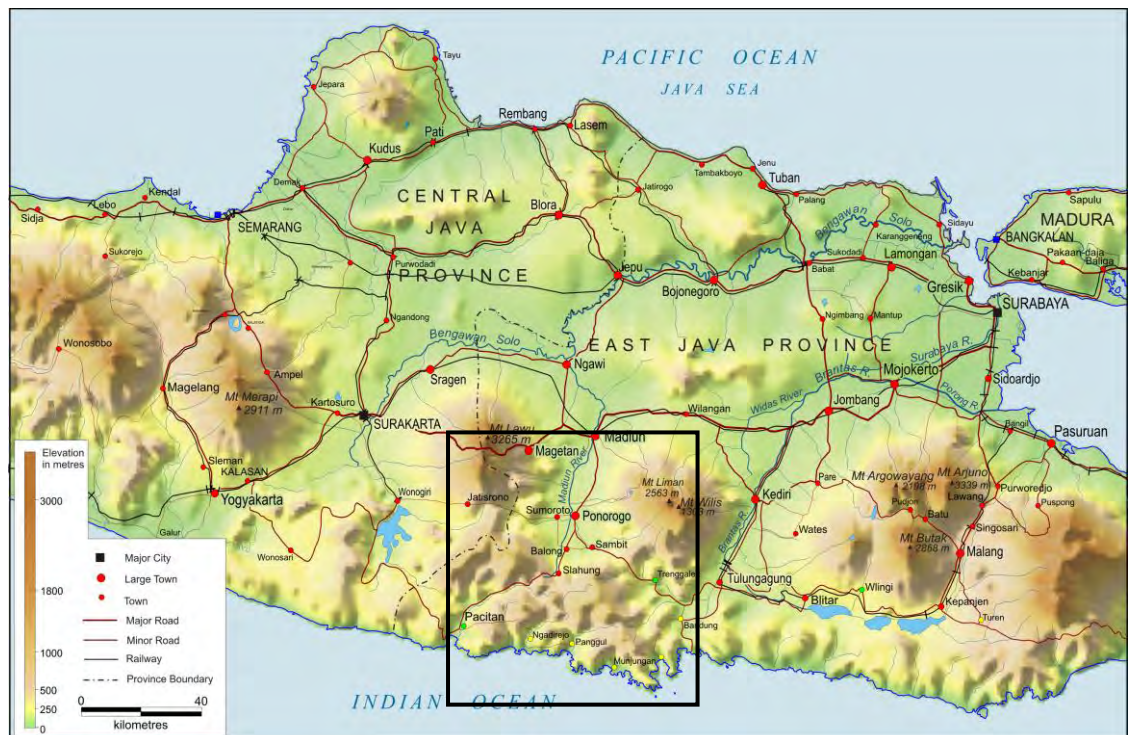
GLOSSARY

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| <i>adat</i> | customary law and practices. |
| <i>aloon aloon</i> | town square |
| <i>angker</i> | wild, unusual, marginal, or luminal place, haunted |
| <i>babad</i> | historical chronicle |
| <i>batin</i> | related to one's inner spiritual and moral self, |
| <i>bidan</i> | nurse midwife |
| <i>Buda</i> | Hindu-Buddhist, religion of pre-Islamic Java |
| BPOM | <i>Badan Pengawasan Obat dan Makanan</i> (Indonesian Food and Drug Administration) |
| <i>camat</i> | sub-district head |
| <i>cocog</i> | to fit, match, be compatible, align oneself with |
| <i>dangdut</i> | an eclectic form of Indonesian popular music which incorporates Arabic, Indian, and Malay folk music genres |
| <i>desa</i> | administrative village unit |
| <i>dhanyang</i> | guardian or tutelary spirit |
| <i>dukun</i> | generic name for a Javanese healer |
| <i>dusun</i> | hamlet |
| GAKY | <i>Gangguan akibat kekurangan yodium</i> (disorders resulting from iodine deficiency) |
| <i>gaplek</i> | cassava |
| GPJI | <i>Gabungan Pengusaha Jamu Indonesia</i> (Federation of Indonesian <i>Jamu</i> Manufacturers) |
| Golkar | Golongan Karya (functional groups) |
| <i>gotong royong</i> | mutual cooperation |
| <i>halus</i> | refined |
| <i>ilmu</i> | individual mystical or therapeutic knowledge or potency |
| <i>jamu</i> | herbal mixture |
| <i>jaranan</i> | masked trance performances |
| JPS | <i>Jaring Pengaman Sosial</i> (Social Safety Net) |
| <i>juru kunci</i> | guardian of a place of significance |
| <i>kabupaten</i> | regency |
| <i>kader</i> | cadre, voluntary health worker |
| <i>kartu sehat</i> | health card |
| <i>kasar</i> | coarse, vulgar |
| <i>kebetulan</i> | coincidence |
| <i>kebal</i> | invulnerable |
| <i>kejawen</i> | Javanism |
| <i>kramat</i> | sacred |
| <i>kraton</i> | court |
| <i>kyai</i> | traditional Muslim leader, head of a <i>pesantren</i> , religious healer |
| <i>madrasah</i> | Islamic primary level day school |
| <i>mantri</i> | Low ranking government employee, assistant |
| Muhammadiyah | Indonesia's largest Islamic "modernist" organisation |

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| <i>nomer</i> | lottery number |
| NU | Nahdlatul Ulama, Indonesia's largest Islamic "traditionalist" organisation |
| <i>obat</i> | medicine |
| <i>orang pintar</i> | person possessing a special skill |
| <i>paranormal</i> | equivalent of a general aetiological folk practitioner, previously called a <i>dukun</i> |
| <i>pekarangan</i> | home garden |
| <i>perdikan</i> | tax free area |
| <i>pesantren</i> | Islamic boarding school |
| <i>pijet</i> | massage |
| <i>priyayi</i> | member of nobility or elite |
| <i>puasa</i> | fast |
| Posyandu | <i>Pos pelayanan terpadu</i> – a package of mother-and-child care programs which include nutrition, family planning, vaccination and maternal care |
| Puskesmas | <i>Pusat kesehatan masyarakat</i> (community health centre) |
| <i>rasa</i> | feeling, intuition, an aesthetic sensual complex which links the outer physical senses and the inner emotional senses to higher consciousness |
| <i>reog</i> | Javanese cultural performance featuring masked dance, humour and satire |
| RT | <i>kepala rumah tangga</i> (neighbourhood head) |
| <i>rukun</i> | social harmony |
| <i>sakti</i> | magical knowledge |
| <i>santet</i> | sorcery; also called <i>tenung</i> , <i>sihir</i> , <i>guna-guna</i> |
| <i>sawah</i> | wet-rice field |
| <i>sepuh</i> | elder |
| <i>setan</i> | troubling spirit, demon |
| <i>slamet</i> | multidimensional concept of wellbeing |
| <i>suntik</i> | injection |
| <i>suro</i> | Javanese new year |
| <i>susuk</i> | placing a slither of a precious substance, usually gold or diamond, underneath the skin to make one especially attractive |
| <i>tiban</i> | fallen, miraculously come down from the heavens |
| TKI | <i>tenaga kerja Indonesia</i> (Indonesian workforce) applied to overseas workers |
| <i>toko gelap</i> | blackmarket lottery vendor |
| <i>tukang</i> | labourer, craftsmen, dealer, operator |
| <i>warok</i> | charismatic figure noted for his strength, agility, magical and spiritual powers |
| <i>warung</i> | small trader's stall |
| <i>wong cilik</i> | commoner |



Indonesia





CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Of Ponorogo and Reyog

Ponorogo, which gives its name to both a regency (*kabupaten*) and a town, is located right in the corner of the province of East Java. With a population of approximately 900,000, and an area of 1,371.78 square kilometres, it is landlocked and borders the East Javanese regencies of Magetan and Madiun to the north; Nganjuk, Tulungagung and Trenggalek to the east; Pacitan to the south and west; and the Central Javanese regency of Wonogiri to the northwest.

Its most identifiable symbol is the barong tiger mask which is the main character in a Reog Ponorogo performance. This barong mask, featuring a fierce-looking life-size tiger head with bulging eyes and exaggerated fangs, surrounded by hundreds of peacock feathers attached to a large bamboo frame, is a spectacular construction. Although the accompaniment to a performance belongs to the genre of Javanese trance music, Reog Ponorogo is not a trance form. The mask, weighing around 40 kg, 2 – 3 metres in height, and 2 metres wide, is held up entirely by the strength of a single performer biting a bamboo bar, fixed to the inside of the mask behind the tiger's jaw. The brilliance of the blue-green feathers caught by the sunlight, and the way they move in response to the actions of the performer, explain why it is most commonly called the peacock fan (*dhadhak merak*).

Reog, pronounced „réok“, is a generic term given to a wide variety of public entertainments featuring masked dance, humour and satire, performed throughout Java. Within the main area of its performance - the southwest of East Java - a place name is used to define its particular style, such as *reog* Madiun or *reog* Kediri, but only in Ponorogo “does a Javanese barong appear as a character in a full-scale „historical’ drama” (Mahmudi, Pigeaud in Beatty, 1999:60). This „history’, relating the origin of

reog, is based on various legends which attribute its founding to a number people, and take place at various periods in Ponorogo's past, dating from the Kediri kingdom in the twelfth century to the Islamisation of the area at the turn of the sixteenth century. But, as ethnomusicologist, Margaret Kartomi explains, although the characters in a performance are loosely associated with legend, the legend itself is not an integral part of a performance, nor does it provide it with a dramatic base (1976:111). This interpretive versatility, together with what we know of *reog*'s more recent past, illustrate its malleability to changing social, artistic, and political influences.

The connection between *reog* and Ponorogo certainly strikes any visitor to the town. Travelling south down the long straight road from Madiun, the entrance to the regency is marked by a massive concrete archway which is adorned with a complete set of *reog* characters on either side. At its apex the word 'Ponorogo' appears between the regency's emblem – two peacocks facing one another. On the outskirts of the town a sign announces “*Selamat Datang ke Bumi Reog*” (Welcome to the Land of Reog). Major intersections in the town centre feature large roundabouts with enormous *reog* figures at their centre, while, at the heart of the town, the usual green space, the *aloon-aloon*, faces an equally large rectangular area of public parkland, which is flanked by local government offices with the main *pendopo* (reception hall) at its apex.¹ A number of ancient stone statues, reminders of an Indic past, which have been unearthed in the regency, flank the entrance to the *pendopo*. In the *aloon-aloon* a large permanent stage has been constructed, and both areas feature concrete massifs of lions. The parkland has a fountain with a soaring statue of Dewi Songgolanggit, another figure from one of the legends. *Reog* characters also feature in the smaller concrete monuments that mark the entrance to most villages in the town and, during my fieldwork, many houses also displayed stickers bearing the word 'REOG' on their windows.²

The whole town, therefore, is a space which constructs and proclaims *reog* as an integral part of the identity of Ponorogo. It is not surprising then that this art form has

¹ All Javanese towns have a green space known as the *alun-alun*, which is conventionally translated as 'town square'. As far as I am aware, Ponorogo is unique in its spelling of *aloon-aloon*.

² 'REOG' was devised in 1995 by the bupati as a slogan for the town, where R = *resik* (Jv. clean); E = *elok* (Jv. beautiful); O = *omber* (Jv. spacious); and G = *girang-gumirang* (exuberantly jubilant, from *girang* Ind. & Jv. jubilant; *gumirang* Jv. loud, noisy).

been the almost exclusive subject of significant research on the area, beginning with Pigeaud, Kunst, and then Kartomi (1976) who focussed on what makes the Ponorogo style so distinctive. More recent research (see Fauzanafi, 2002; Grunden, 1999; Simatupang, 2002; Wilson, 16/06/1999) has turned to the cultural politics and meaning of the performance since this monumental environment, along with moves to standardise *reog* performances, largely date from the term of an ambitious *bupati* (regent), Dr H M Markum Singodimedjo (1994 – 2004).

Research Objectives

I came to Ponorogo in 2002 to research a quite different topic. This was in response to a study I had completed as part of my master's degree on a spate of killings of suspected sorcerers (*dukun santet*) that began in Banyuwangi in the last months of 1998 and had then spread to many parts of Java (see Campbell & Connor, 2000). Political analysis at the time, given Indonesia's spirited political history and the struggle for power in the late 1990s, attributed the killings to an orchestrated campaign to cause destabilisation. While this seemed highly likely in some cases, on reading detailed reports of the killings (which by a fortunate coincidence were all readily accessible on *Jawa Pos*' website), many were mass actions carried out by a community against one of their own whom they had accused of causing illness and even the death of community members.³ These attacks also both predated and continued after the height of the killings. I sensed a more complex situation which revolved around the role of the non-specialist healer in Java, known simply as a *dukun*. This healer is consulted for a broad spectrum of problems, including those which could be attributed to sorcery, such as intractable illness, personal difficulties, or other peculiar circumstances. In order to treat such conditions a *dukun* must also have the power to cause them. Consequently, because of the personal nature of their clients' problems and the ambiguous nature of the power they control, there has long been widespread ambivalence toward *dukun*. As healers are dependent on community recognition *dukun* have therefore had to tread a very fine line to maintain their integrity and credibility. This precarious balance would seem to have

³ *Jawa Pos* is the largest newspaper in East Java, and has collaborative arrangements with more than 20 smaller regional papers in the province. Its proximity to area of study meant that reporters were able to travel to the scene of the attacks, and articles often included detailed interviews with victims' families and neighbours. My primary data came from 33 articles spanning a two-and-half-year period, from August, 1997 to April, 2000.

been exacerbated by the socio-economic changes which occurred under the New Order government (1965-1998).⁴ Sven Cederroth, for example, in a study carried out in 1986 near Malang, found that while the availability of biomedical services had decreased the demand for the curative powers of *dukun*, there had been a rise in demand for their services as black magicians. He concluded that this was a symptom of a shift from a community-oriented to a more “market-oriented individualistic society” where *dukun* were now an asset in an atmosphere of increased economic and social competition. Their ability to cause harm to a competitor had been transformed into a negotiable asset (1990:179-180).

I chose Ponorogo for its very ordinariness. It was in East Java where most of the violence had occurred, but there had been no reports of killings in Ponorogo. I wanted to look at contemporary healing practices from the perspective of both patients and practitioners. Previous studies, which have been based overwhelmingly in Central Java, especially in Yogyakarta, have focussed on specific aspects of the medical field, such as the symbolic basis of healing (Kasniyah, 1985; Slamet-Velsink, 1996; Suparlan, 1991; Woodward, 1985; Yitno, 1985); the practice of health centre nurses (Sciortino, 1995); and, more recently, the treatment of chronic degenerative conditions (Ferzacca, 2001). I decided to take a more integrated approach and to look at the medical field as a whole through a number of questions. What is the relationship between various therapeutic modalities and how do they interact with one another? What strategies do people employ to ensure health and wellbeing within the complexity of socio-economic and political forces impacting on their lives? Previous studies had been carried out during the New Order government, a period of increasing social and economic differentiation. How had these processes of differentiation impacted on a regional area such as Ponorogo?

There was also a practical reason for choosing Ponorogo. I had family there - a network of relations living in various areas throughout the regency. My brother-in-law had long been active in various NGOs and had a good command of English. I knew that in outlying areas interviews would have to be conducted in Javanese. Although my

⁴ New Order refers to the government of President Suharto. It was termed „New Order’ to distinguish it from the Old Order government of the previous President Sukarno.

Indonesian skills were good, my Javanese left much to be desired. I needed someone who would be able to give me a nuanced understanding of Javanese. This family relationship was certainly to prove crucial. Indonesia had, and was still experiencing a catastrophic financial crisis, which had triggered the resignation of President Suharto in May 1998 after more than thirty years in power. In the intervening period there had been three presidents and diplomatic relations with Australia, always a precarious balancing act, had reached their nadir after the vote for independence in East Timor and the deployment of Australian troops to the area. On the strength of DFAT travel warnings all university travel to Indonesia had been suspended at my university.⁵ Having family connections enabled me to obtain special permission to do my research.

I had never spent more than a few days at a time in Ponorogo, and had not been there for ten years, so the material changes in that time came as a surprise. When I first started visiting in the mid 1980s there was no grand arch announcing one's entry into Ponorogo. The narrow road from Madiun was lined with enormous Poinciana trees which, apart from the display of brilliant red blossoms in season, offered cool relief from the hot open plain. Ponorogo looked like any other nondescript town in Java. While the town looked basically the same, there were indicators of improved economic circumstances. Apart from the noticeable link to *reog*, there were some new housing estates scattered around its outskirts and a large multistorey government office block was under construction. There were still none of the large shopping malls which have mushroomed in Java's cities, but there were shops selling a large range of consumer goods, especially electrical and household appliances, and showrooms displaying shiny new motorbikes. Out in the villages large numbers of similar-looking gable-roofed brick houses, finished with expensive ceramic wall and floor tiles, were being constructed. This distinctive style I found out identified their owners as TKI (*tenaga kerja Indonesia*), workers who had returned from employment overseas. There seemed to be a recruitment agency advertising for workers for destinations as diverse as Singapore, Malaysia, Taiwan, Saudi Arabia, and Korea on every street corner.

⁵ DFAT is the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

I soon gleaned there was some resentment toward these workers. Widespread gossip complained that, instead of using the money they had earned productively to start a business, they wasted it on conspicuous consumption – on building a large house and buying items, such as cars, motorbikes, or other expensive consumer goods. They were then consequently caught in a cycle of continuing circular migration. An example of this attitude appeared in an article in the local paper which cited the example of Sarni, who had worked in Hong Kong for four years. On his return he had bought his father a mobile phone, an item obviously totally inappropriate for parents living in a poor village:

“Sarni didn’t take into account whether or not in his village there was actually a transmission signal which the phone could receive. Including whether his father, who is only a farm labourer, would be able to use what he would certainly see as such a foreign item. ‘It’s true that it can’t be used yet because I have to buy a SIM card first,’ he said implausibly.”⁶

The role of overseas migrant labour then seemed to provide an explanation for this apparent increase in affluence. To get a more complete picture of the processes of transformation occurring throughout the regency, however, it is necessary to move outside the town.

Socioeconomic Differentiation in Ponorogo

Ponorogo is an area of contrasts bounded by a conveniently-drawn line on the map. The first, and the most evident, contrast is the regency’s physical topography. Travelling on the long straight roads outside of the main town you notice that Ponorogo is shaped like an open amphitheatre. The central flat plain, with its neat agricultural fields, is surrounded by arcs of rugged peaks on its western, eastern and southern borders. This altitudinal variation, ranging from 92 to 2,563 metres above sea level, means that the regency is differentiated into two ecological sub-areas – highland and lowland. The

⁶ *Sarni tidak memperhitungkan apakah di desanya sinyal handphone dapat diterima atau tidak. Termasuk apakah ayahnya yang hanya buruh tani itu dapat menggunakan benda yang tentunya dianggap asing. ‘Saat ini memang belum dapat dipakai karena harus beli kartu perdananya dulu,’ kilahnya (Setyawan, 21/12/2001).*

lowland area is an important food producer. Approximately 25% of its land (35,000 hectares) is under wet-rice cultivation, of which approximately 90% is irrigated (BPSKP, 2001:107). In the dry season rice cropping is alternated with other food staples, such as corn, peanuts, mung beans, and soybeans. Apart from this, the regency also produces various other horticultural products, including coffee and tobacco, as well as a variety of fruit, such as mangos, coconuts, bananas, oranges, mangosteen, and durian. In contrast, the southern and western highland regions are part of the southern mountain chain, the *Gunung Sewu* (Thousand Mountains), a large karst area internally composed of hundreds of networked caves, which runs along the central part of Java's southern coast. As such the area is unfavourable for agriculture, but its limestone soils are particularly suited to teak production. From a distance the slopes appear to be heavily de-forested, but there are still substantial areas of forest land, mainly montane pine plantations, under the control of the State Forestry Corporation (*Perum Perhutani*) and local farmers obtain some income by collecting the resin which is sold back to the Corporation at a fixed price. The main crop in this area is cassava. In the highest areas households have planted clove trees and, apart from the sale of cloves, there are also some small home industries producing clove oil. The largest industry in the regency is a tapioca factory, which buys some of the local cassava crop.

This ecological differentiation is associated with a distinct socioeconomic differentiation. As you drive towards the hill regions roads rapidly deteriorate into pot-holed tracks, a consequence of the heavy forestry vehicles and trucks which are the main means of transport. The residents of these highland regions are chronically poor; seemingly forgotten, even by local politicians, most of whom have never even ventured this far from the town. There is little in the way of public infrastructure, such as health services or schools. Roads have been built by the residents themselves who give up their Sundays to break rocks in an attempt lay some type of road surface capable of being used in the wet season. The terrain these roads traverse, twisting around the mountains, means that in frictional distance (distance expressed as journey time) these areas are remote from the lowlands and face many of the disadvantages of remote rural areas (see Bird *et al.*, 2002). Houses are mostly of woven bamboo (*gedhek*) with dirt floors, no sanitation, windows, or running water; in the highest areas perched on any

available piece of flat ground. Here even the diet is different. Whereas the staple food of lowlanders is rice, highlanders make a rice substitute from powdered cassava, called *nasi tiwul* or *gaplek*, or from corn (*jagung*). *Gaplek* is their staple food, not only because cassava is the common crop, and therefore cheaper, but also because it is much heavier than ordinary rice and so fills the stomach for longer.

Although, even with its abundant agricultural production, Ponorogo is not an affluent area, it is probably these highland regions which largely contribute to its classification among the poorest regencies in the province. At the end of 2001 it was ranked as the third poorest regency in East Java with a third of the population classified as “very poor”.⁷

It is here that the importance of TKI becomes apparent. At the time of my fieldwork, Ponorogo had the third highest official number of workers entering the overseas labour market every year.⁸ The East Javanese regencies ranked first and second – Tulungagung and Blitar – are also located on the poor limestone soils of the southern mountains directly east of Ponorogo. TKI remittances contributed approximately Rp 30 billion (\approx A\$5 million) to the local economy every month (*Kompas*, 31/05/2001).⁹ Equivalent to approximately Rp 360 billion a year, the magnitude of this contribution becomes apparent when it is compared with the total regency budget of Rp 278.5 billion.¹⁰

⁷ Official statistics from the East Javanese Provincial Government, quoted in *Kompas* (4/01/2002), cited regencies with highest percentage of the population classified as very poor (*sangat miskin*) as Bondowoso (45%), Sampang (43%), Ponorogo (33.6%), Pacitan (33%), Bojonegoro (30.26%), and Nganjuk (28%).

⁸ I refer to official figures here, but the number of illegal workers is much higher. During my stay in Ponorogo I asked the local Department of Labour (Dinas Tenaga Kerja) for a breakdown of the number of migrant workers by region, but unfortunately they were unable to provide it. In the year 2004 Ponorogo sent the highest number of workers into the foreign labour market.

⁹ International money transfers of 119 billion rupiah for the first four months of 2001 were recorded through three government banks – BNI Ponorogo, BRI Ponorogo, and Bank Mandiri Madiun. This does not include transfers which were sent through the large private banks, such as BCA, Bank Lippo and Bank Jatim (*Kompas*, 31/05/2001). All banks are asked to submit a report on the amount of overseas transfers to the local regency department each month. The exchange rate is calculated at Rp 6,000 = A\$1.00.

¹⁰ I obtained this figure from the head of the local Dept. of Labour. The APBD (*anggaran pendapatan dan belanja daerah* = local income and expenditure budget) for Ponorogo for the year 2002 was Rp.278,512,194,850 (\approx \$Aus 46.42 million).

As Breman has documented, labour migration is not a new phenomenon. Factors, such as the imposition of land taxes and the increasing commercialisation of the rural economy in the nineteenth century, meant that villagers needed a cash income and so sought work outside their villages (1990:39). This trend increased dramatically from the 1970s in response to the complex interrelationships of the Green Revolution, increasing standards of education, and rapid economic growth. Since this time a changing pattern of employment has emerged in which non-agricultural waged labour, especially in construction, has progressively provided the primary source of livelihood for young village males (Breman, 2000:11; Hyung-Jun, 2002:437-440).¹¹ Economic transition in Indonesia, unlike that of most of the Atlantic countries in the Northern hemisphere, did not produce a „genuine’ urbanisation, but an ongoing circulation between various work centres and the home village (Breman, 2000:8).¹² While work outside agriculture and away from the village became increasingly significant the existence of working class households always remained precarious; a precariousness which became immediately evident under the impact of the Asian Economic Crisis in 1997. Workers who had originally sought employment outside the village, either because they were a redundant part of the rural labour force or found the type of work available demeaning, could only at best find intermittent casual jobs once they were laid off and returned to their villages. Compounding the crisis has been the collapse of real wages in all sectors and rises in the cost of basic goods imposed by IMF loan conditionalities (Breman, 2000:13-23).¹³

In concert with this pattern of work migration, global economic restructuring, which began in the 1960s, has led to a new division of labour in which research and management functions were located in developed countries, while their manufacturing

¹¹ Hyung-Jun, who conducted research in Central Java in the mid 1990s, found that non-agricultural work provided the primary source of livelihood for two-thirds of male villagers. Breman, working in West Java, found that half or more households depended on earnings from work outside the village.

¹² Breman defines „genuine’ urbanisation as a process in which the whole household moves and takes up residence in the work centre (2000:8).

¹³ Given adjustments for the variable rates of inflation real wages for workers in industry and agriculture and all other economic sectors may still have been 40% lower than pre-crisis levels in mid 1999 (Ahmed & Dhanani in Breman, 2000:21). The price of rice has stabilised at 2100-2200 rupiah per kilogram, which is still two-and-a-half time higher than before the crisis (Breman, 2000:21). Apart from this, continuing increases in the price of electricity, telecommunications, and fuel also need to be taken into account.

assembly line operations were relegated to the newly industrialising countries (NICs) of Asia. In recent years many of these NICs have themselves undergone a process of labour market restructuring, where increased standards of living and education have resulted in a declining labour supply as well as an increasing reluctance of local labour to do menial jobs.¹⁴ They now look to their poorer regional neighbours to provide temporary unskilled, low-paid, and low-status productive labour. While men are required for work on construction sites and in heavy industrial manufacturing, women also play a particularly important role. Their perceived “feminine” qualities of docility, dexterity, patience, non-subversiveness and willingness to work long hours (Huang & Yeoh, 1996:479) seem especially applicable for work in textile and garment manufacturing, and the assembly of electronic components. But in Ponorogo women are recruited for the so-called “reproductive” labour market where they are employed as domestic workers.¹⁵ In Indonesia overseas labour migration to the Middle East began in the nineteenth century with the pilgrimage to Mecca but, in recent years, the rise in the exchange rates of these richer regional neighbours has now made them equally favourable destinations.¹⁶

In Ponorogo this labour migration is also a differentiating factor because it falls into two distinct categories – contract migration, according to Jones and Pardthaisong’s definition, “in which individual migrants, unaccompanied by family, are hired for a specific job for a fixed period of time” (1999:35), and labour migration which is sought informally or illegally. While job-seekers from the lowlands have greater access to

¹⁴ Rise in per capita income gives greater access to education with consequent decreases in population growth and fertility rates. In addition, labour supply was also affected by rising wages and reduction in working hours. For example, in Taiwan growth in the labour force fell from 2.4 per cent in the 1980s to less than 1 per cent between 1990-95 (Athukorala & Manning 1999:80).

¹⁵ “Reproductive” labour is used in the literature to refer to paid domestic work. It has its roots in Victorian England where the distinction between men’s paid labour and women’s unpaid labour, and between the feudal homestead economy and the industrial wage economy, embodied both a gender and a class difference (McClintock in Pratt, 1999:217). Historically movements of women of different ethnicities to do paid domestic labour in foreign countries has not been uncommon. Since the 1980s the nature of paid reproductive labour has become a major topic of academic research. Most studies have identified it as a site of multiple exploitation by race, class, nationality, and gender (Huang & Yeoh, 1996:480-481).

¹⁶ The more favourable exchange rate of the regional Asian economies was the reason given by my informants for choosing these locations instead of Middle Eastern countries. According to the Dept of Labour and Transmigration the number of migrants going from Indonesia to these two regions is now approximately the same. In 2002 the number going to the Middle East and Africa was 232,614. Most workers went to Saudi Arabia (206,036), followed by Kuwait (15,506), United Arab Emirates, Oman, Jordan, Qatar, Bahrain, Cyprus and Yemen. The number going to the Asia Pacific region was 232,770. Most of these (155,399) went to Malaysia (*Kompas*, 19/12/2002).

contract labour, which is obtained through government-registered recruitment agencies, those from the highlands, because of their poverty and low education levels, become illegal workers making use of the informal networks existing in their immediate area. This then follows the pattern of contract labour migrants in Thailand where, although most come “from its poorest regions, they are not from their poorest people” (Jones & Pardthaisong, 1999:41).¹⁷

What is new is that this labour migration is now overwhelmingly female. Women were steadily marginalised by the Green Revolution. The labour-saving mechanisms adopted after the 1970s had most effect on their labour which was largely involved in harvesting and hulling (Hyung-Jun, 2002:437). More than 75% of registered labour migrants are women who are mainly employed as low-paid domestic workers. Contract migrants work as maids in Singapore, Malaysia, Taiwan, and Hong Kong.¹⁸ Young women from the poorer hill regions mostly go to Java’s largest cities, such as Jakarta and Surabaya, or to Malaysia, as *pembantu* (housemaids).¹⁹ Many of these women have now become their family’s main breadwinner. The money that they earn gives them more independence and the power to make choices on how it is spent. Work migration has therefore led to a change in family dynamics resulting from both a generational and a gender differentiation. Younger males and females with higher educational standards are more externally oriented. Women who traditionally have managed household finances now have even more influence on family resources. While it seems studies of labour migrants have focussed on men, the migration of women creates quite different conditions because of its potential for greater social transformation.

Ponorogo is therefore illustrative of rural Java’s incorporation into the national and global economy, and how economic transition exacerbates pre-existing socio-economic differences. As Breman points out circular migrants do not renounce their rural identity,

¹⁷ While Jones and Pardthaisong’s conclusion was based on the inability of poorer people to raise the necessary funds to meet recruitment costs (1999:41), in Ponorogo levels of education are also a factor in restricting their options.

¹⁸ In Ponorogo official figures in 2000 were 4,781 men; 12,023 women (BPSKP, 2001:xxxviii).

¹⁹ This information was obtained from a household survey carried out in a poor hill village by an Indonesian NGO, Yayasan Dhita Bhaskara, working under the auspices of PLAN International. Their data revealed the large number of people who worked outside of the village. Whereas most of the young women and girls, some as young as 13, got work as *pembantu* in Javanese cities, men sought work illegally in Malaysia.

but their existence has changed the social fabric within the local community making it both looser and more contractual (Bremar, 2000:23). This is partly because labour migrants do not have a choice – their overseas destinations do not allow them to permanently settle – but also Javanese cultural ties mean that many prefer to return to their home village. This proclivity in itself has led to steep increases in the price of land; thereby also influencing the cost effectiveness of agricultural production.

These differences also influence health outcomes and the resources people have to deal with crisis. Within this context the nature of health and wellbeing are constantly being redefined to integrate new knowledge which, not only comes from secondary media sources, but also from first-hand experiences gained in an international context. One aspect of these changes is the greater mobility of health-seeking behaviour in an attempt to counter economic constraints as well as the limited availability of effective basic health services. These complex interrelationships between belief, behaviour, economics, social structures and physical health are the subject of this thesis.



Barong Mask (from <http://indonesiacultural.blogspot.com/2008/03/east-java-cultural-art.html>)



Ponorogo Arch at entrance to the regency



Warok statue at one the town's roundabouts
(from <http://meylya.files.wordpress.com/2008/12/patung-di-perempatan-ponorogo1.jpg>)



Ponorogo's *aloon aloon* and surrounding highlands



TKI (overseas worker) Recruitment Agency



Bank queue to withdraw remittances



TKI-style house



Traditional-style house

Being in Fieldwork

By the time one reaches a research site in Indonesia one is acutely aware of the overarching burden the bureaucracy places on individuals as they go about their daily lives. Of course the number of permits one must obtain was not really surprising. I had lived in Yogyakarta and been involved in the continual processes of negotiating a residence visa all those years ago, but the fact that, in spite of the end of the Suharto era and a couple of changes of government, these processes remained unchanged raised my awareness all over again. My previous residence also meant that I was not a complete novice when it came to Javanese cultural practices. As so many writers have pointed out research on Java has focussed on its court centres. After living in one of these - a landscape literally dotted with magnificent temple complexes, a royal walled city of palaces, museums, and artisans; teeming with tourists; and a centre of regal ceremonies and stunning cultural arts – it was not hard to understand why this should be the case. Ponorogo, a town which one must make a detour off the main transport routes to reach, paled in comparison. But, apart from my scholarly purpose, I was looking forward to getting to know my extended family and finding out more about this place where I had, until now, spent so little time.

Even though I had a network of family connections and didn't exactly feel like a foreigner, I was the only *landa* (white person) in the area so I stood out like the proverbial sore thumb.²⁰ This in itself had advantages for an ethnographer. Quetzil Castañeda compares the scripted, yet improvisational, practices of ethnographic fieldwork to invisible theatre where the ethnographer, as “spect-actor”, armed with a script (the research objective or “thought in the back of the head”), engages an emergent audience who also involve themselves as “participant spect-actors” (2006:80-83).²¹ This analysis takes account of the “necessarily improvisational, mobile, fluid, flexible, and transformative” (Castañeda, 2006:82) nature of fieldwork, as well as its

²⁰ *Landa*, derived from *belanda* (Dutch), is one of the most common names for a Caucasian foreigner in Java. It is a reflection of Java's long colonial history.

²¹ Castañeda compares the immersive practices of participant observation (“being in fieldwork”) to Augusto Boal's invisible theatre in which a troupe of actors, posing as everyday persons, enact a drama to provoke debate on a highly polemical community issue. Here the theatre is invisible because the audience is unaware “that they are witnessing a scripted drama, which is nonetheless primarily improvisational” (2006:76-78).

subjectivity, or “the ways in which fieldwork relies upon the interactions, relations and situatedness of the researcher and the researched” (Coffey, 1999:7). My thought in the back of the head, given my research objective, was that in order to understand the web of contemporary therapeutic interrelationships I needed to gather as diverse a range of views as possible from doctors, nurses, health workers, healers, patients, local health office employees, guardians (*juru kunci*) of places of special significance (*kramat*), and village officials. The correspondence of my identity as a researcher and a member of a local family established a context for my interest, while my very foreignness raised the curiosity of many to engage in various ways. As Castañeda points out “the dynamic of participant observation” means that fieldworkers not only collect data by engaging “purposefully in quotidian activities”, and staging “events and encounters”, such as interviews, but also quite mundanely from an emergent audience, who may simply be a friend or an onlooker who just happens to be passing by (2006:84-85).

As the following chapters will show serendipity is also important in Javanese culture because it often points to what is meaningful in personal lives, and one of the best ways to facilitate its emergence is to mingle and socialise widely. My process of engagement began when my brother-in-law introduced me to a local reporter, Brewok, who seemed to know everyone in Ponorogo. In his unreliable and leaky Colt we did the rounds of village head elections and inauguration ceremonies, graves of both renowned and less reputable local figures, remains of old temples, and well-known geographic locations with magical significance. My brother-in-law also introduced to me to Tulus who was to become my research assistant. With a background working for NGOs in many areas of Indonesia he was of invaluable support, especially in sensitive areas of my research. I found out that it was essential to be accompanied by someone, preferably from Ponorogo, when conducting interviews. The most important reason is that much time will be first spent establishing a personal connection before the interviewee feels comfortable in proceeding with a discussion. Fortunately, there is a great respect for scholars and, after Tulus had explained my interest in learning about Javanese culture, people were usually very happy to participate. Another reason is language skills. While Ponorogans speak mostly standard Javanese there are some differences in vocabulary, especially in outlying areas. Another research source was the aid agency, PLAN

International, which had a large presence in Ponorogo. They had a central office in the town from which they coordinated a number of projects, especially in the remote highland areas of the regency. Their programs are carried out by numerous small NGOs who live and work in these outlying hamlets and who I was able to contact to get an understanding of very specific circumstances. Just as health-seeking behaviour is not geographically confined I followed some of the paths that patients and healers from Ponorogo tread to other neighbouring regencies - in this case Pacitan, Wonogiri, and Madiun. In addition, there were of course numerous neighbours, relatives, and others who become teachers, mentors, and friends.

An extensive body of literature and research exists on Java, as well as on Southeast Asia as a whole. I have made use of this, especially in regard to historical background. I also made use of official regency reports and publications on demographics, economics, and health statistics.

Thesis Structure

The nature of differentiation in Ponorogo leads naturally to dealing with the lowland and highland areas separately. In accordance with this Chapter 2 gives an in-depth account of the historical background of the Ponorogo area and the factors which have led to the development of a distinctive ethos and local identity. This is intended to provide a basic understanding of the context within which the contemporary situation can be understood. Chapter 3 deals with the regency's health profile, the provision and use of biomedical services, and the use of therapeutic agents, and Chapter 4 looks at the practice and use of folk practitioners. Chapter 5 focuses on the highlands and the particular difficulties faced by these areas. Chapter 6 then attempts to draw the themes of the thesis together in an overview of the variables which both motivate and constrain the choices that are available to Ponorogans in their quest for wellbeing.

CHAPTER 2

PONOROGO AS PLACE AND ETHOS

“The mystery of the origin of the Ponorogo people is yet to be unveiled. Although they have not lived in isolation, their type and character differ from the people of the surrounding regencies. Ponorogans are more independent and more self-confident, but also rougher, bolder, more reckless, hot-tempered and more fond of travelling than the ordinary central Javanese.” (Adam, 1938b:288)

Dr L. Adam, one of the last Dutch residents of Madiun (1934-1939), took a keen interest in the culture and early beginnings of his residency which, at that time, included the present-day regencies of Madiun, Ngawi, Magetan, Ponorogo, and Pacitan. He read and travelled widely collecting local legends and origin stories, and documenting the area’s numerous archaeological remains and places of reverence; accounts of which were then published in a series of articles in the journal *Djawa*. In all of these articles he only ventures into the subject of character traits when he discusses the people of Ponorogo.

Adam was not alone in his impressions. As a part of the Surakarta court’s eastern *mancanegara* (outlying regions) Ponorogo came under direct Dutch control after the Java War (1825-1830) at the time of the introduction of widespread forced cultivation and delivery of allocated cash crops, known as the Cultivation System. Dutch officials frequently remarked that the “natives” of Ponorogo were more individualistic and rough than other parts of Java (Onghokham, 1975:206), and they appointed regents with charismatic local reputations to control this “difficult” area (Sutherland, 1974:12). The colonial period radically changed the structure of Javanese society. In Ponorogo the crippling burden of corvée labour obligations required for the cultivation of coffee, indigo, and sugar, along with the imposition of land and head taxes, redistributed land from the previous complex pattern of individual rights to that of smaller and smaller shares in village communal lands. The changes wrought by the Cultivation System,

which aimed to transform Javanese peasants into disciplined and productive sharecroppers, provoked recurrent unrest. Resistance ranged from the passive, such as migration, the most common response of the poor to hardship, outright neglect of crops, and, at the other end of the spectrum, to violence in the frequent acts of arson in the sugar plantations, and a number of armed rebellions which had the express purpose of the overthrow and murder of Dutch citizens (Onghokham, 1975:185-270). Within a Dutch discourse which viewed “the role of culture or „national character’ as an obstacle to economic reform” (Schrauwers, 2001:299) Ponorogo, with its violent *reog* culture centred around magically-powerful and morally transgressive strong men (*warok*), must have been seen as particularly threatening.

Resistance to social change and increasing colonial domination was, of course, widespread throughout rural Java in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and, as Kartodirdjo has shown, the forms protest took were remarkably consistent over diverse sub-cultural regions (1973:1). Nor was Ponorogo the only area with a notorious reputation. Banten, for example, was also noted for its “unruly population”, and its propensity for rebellion which was attributed to both “the popular superstition of its peasantry” and the particular “strength of its religious orthodoxy” (Kartodirdjo, 1973:136). But what is interesting about Ponorogo is its long tradition of militant opposition to, and inevitable defeat by, successive centres of extralocal power. This heroic resilience finds expression in the performance and culture of *reog*. As a compilation of these past encounters *reog* lends itself to de Certeau’s analysis of an “art of practice” (1988:24). Through repetition, reinterpretation, feats of acrobatic dexterity and physical mastery, and composite gender-animal-human oppositions, *reog* articulates a “living museum of these tactics” (1988:23) with which to “escape from the battlefield of defeat” and “subvert the fatality of the established order (1988:17).”

This chapter will look at Ponorogo and its engagement with successive periods of the Javanese and Indonesian past, followed by an exploration of *reog* as an expression of ethos and local identity.

Culture as Place in Java

“Places are made through their connections with each other, not their isolation” (Tsing, 2000:330).

The island of Java is the central link in the archipelagic chain of the Greater Sunda Islands that begins with Sumatra and ends with a scattering of small islands east of Bali. Today, one of the most densely populated areas on earth, Java contains nearly sixty percent of the population of Indonesia, as well as the nation’s capital, the megalopolis of Jakarta, which is located in the northwest of the island. But Jakarta is not Javanese, in a cultural sense. Although radically outnumbered it is the home of the Betawi.

As Escobar reminds us, “Culture sits in places” (2001:139). This is certainly true of Java. I came to understand this many years ago on a journey from Purwakarta, a town in West Java, to Yogyakarta, a city in Central Java, when a bus driver asked, “*Pulang ke Jawa* (Are you returning to Java)?” I found this question a bit perplexing at the time because, as far as I was concerned, I was already in Java. What he was referring to, of course, was not the island of Java which appears in any standard atlas, but to a cultural location. This “Java” roughly begins as you cross the provincial border into Central Java.²² But, even this more defined area is not culturally uniform. Koentjaraningrat broadly classifies it as consisting of several regional variants; each of which has several sub-variants (1994:25-29), but, as a number of regional ethnographies demonstrate (e.g., Beatty, 1999; Hefner, 1985; Suwandi, 2000), as well as the seminal *Religion of Java* (Geertz, 1976), this schema is also an over-simplification. Cultural diversity in Java is normally characterised by the distinctive interrelation of Buddhist, Hindu, and Islamic traditions, which have been reworked and incorporated into a pre-existing indigenous culture. It is this dialectical process, the result of a conscious and dynamic local social compromise dependent on specific social and historical circumstances that gives Javanese culture its simultaneous consistency, as well as its distinctive local variation (Beatty, 1999:47; Kumar, 1997:178).

²² Koentjaraningrat places the approximate western border of Javanese culture at a line which runs between Cijulang in the south to Indramayu in the north (1994:4). Purwakarta is part of the Sundanese cultural region.

Since the beginning of the 1990s the processes of globalisation, with their transnational flows of capital, goods, people, and information, have challenged the relevance of the anthropology of place and place making. For Tsing the charismatic force of “globalization” has come to define an “era”, heralding a future “of linkage and circulation as the overcoming of boundaries and restrictions” (2000:331-332), while for Escobar a “sense of atopia seems to have settled in” with the privileging of the superior mobility offered by space over the seeming fixity of place (2001:140-141). Both Escobar and Tsing, in their respective review articles, caution against the seductive allure of globalocentrism. Tsing argues that the present enthusiasm for “the new global landscape” lacks perspective. With much globalist analysis modelled on the characteristics of capital markets it is important to understand, not only the associated material and social restraints, but also that all accounts are situated. Rather than representing an abstract homogenised global future anthropologists are ideally placed to attend to “global heterogeneity” and the “somewhat unpredictable interactions [which occur] among specific cultural legacies” (2000:334-349). Escobar, drawing on the work of geographers and studies of environmental social movements, also argues for plurality, for restoring some measure of symmetry between the global and the local, because “We are, in short, placelings” (2001:143). He continues:

“The anthropology of place is the other necessary side of the anthropology of non-place and deterritorialized cultures. It is important to keep in mind the power of place even in studies of placelessness (and vice versa). To make this assertion does not mean that place is ‘the other’ of space – place as pure and local and in opposition to a dominating and global space – since place is certainly connected to, and to a significant extent produced by, spatial logics.” (2001:147)

Another thinker about place and space, especially in regard to everyday practices, was Michel de Certeau. I have found his ideas particularly fruitful when thinking about Ponorogo, a place of the *wong cilik* (Jv. common people), which self-confidently distinguishes itself from the *wong gedhé* (Jv. important people), of an aristocratic Javanese culture. I will refer to some of his work on storytelling, and his characterisation of the appropriation of place and space through strategies and tactics,

in the first part of this chapter. Because I feel his perspectives are more closely related to those dealing with ethos, I will look at de Certeau's work in more detail in the second part of the chapter on *reog* as ethos in Ponorogo.

The characterisation of Java as static, limited, and bound could not be further from the case. Its cultural legacy is the result of numerous encounters and engagements with regional networks, colonial projects, and a seemingly overlooked past era of globalisation which, like the contemporary one, not only involved the movement of commodities and people, but also the exchange of traditions and ideas. It is this past that is especially relevant in understanding how people in Java think about and address illness and misfortune. As a part of Java, my focus will of course be on Ponorogo's particular place and relationship to these encounters and engagements.

Sources and Methods on Early Ponorogo

From the not insubstantial volumes of historical materials concerning Java there is consistent, albeit fragmentary, mention of the Ponorogo area. Mostly mentioned in regard to its relative economic importance to a series of Javanese kingdoms, because of its population and agricultural production, these references are unfortunately indexical and give us very little insight into daily life. There are, however, a few primary archaeological remains in the form of stone and bronze statues, temple footings, and a number of inscriptions, some of which, due to the paucity of epigraphic scholars, have deteriorated past the point of decipherability. Fortunately there are two valuable sources of the everyday: Adam's articles (1938a; 1938b) which are filled with accounts of local stories and ancient remains that are no longer accessible today, and the historian Onghokham's (1975) thesis about the impact of the Cultivation System on the former Madiun residency, which he based on research of the Dutch colonial archives and Javanese chronicles. More recently a number of studies have dealt directly with *reog* and the effect of New Order cultural politics (Fauzanafi, 2002; Grunden, 1999; Sarkowi, 1999; Simatupang, 2002; Wilson, 1997), while ethnomusicologist, Margaret Kartomi's (1976) description of a performance in 1971 provides a comparative reference point for these changes. In addition, there are a number of recently published

local histories and chronicles commissioned by the regency government (Moelyadi, 1986; PKDP, 1994, 1996; Purwowijoyo, 1984, 1990).

If contemporary debates about the writing and interpretation of history arouse heated contestation and discussion in the European context, they become even more complex for postcolonial societies with radically different cultural heritages. In the case of Java this is further compounded by the lack of necessary linguistic knowledge. Not a philologist, my purpose in this chapter is not to attempt a history. The fractured nature of the sources for Ponorogo call for a much broader and eclectic methodology – a bringing together of documents, ideas, myths, objects, and the people who produced and used them – with the hope of gaining new insights into how people dealt with and negotiated shifting sets of relationships and, in the process, contributed to the pluralism which constitutes this particular place of Javanese culture.

Spelling, Names, Language and Translation

Ponorogo is the modern Indonesian spelling of the Javanese ‚Panaraga’, the name by which it was previously known. This name, said to be derived from the Sanskrit words ‚*pramana raga*’, is attributed to Bathara Katong who became the area’s first Islamic ruler in the late fifteenth century. Previous to this, dating back to the time of Airlangga in the eleventh century, the area was known by the name of Wengker. During the time of the Majapahit empire, from the fourteenth century, both the name of Wengker and Pamotan seem to have been interchangeable.

People in Ponorogo, like those throughout Indonesia, are mostly bilingual. Indonesian, the national language, is overwhelmingly used in education, publications, broadcasts, and when dealing with government business, while Javanese is used at home and in everyday conversation. Although there are a few dialectal variations, people in Ponorogo speak standard Javanese. Located in a rural area in East Java the Javanese they speak is characterised as more *kasar* (coarse, vulgar) and straight-talking (*terus terang*) than that of Central Java which, with its oblique etiquette of politeness (*basa basi*), or circumlocution, is characterised as refined (*halus*). Throughout this thesis most translation will be from Indonesian. I will use the abbreviation “Jv.” to indicate that the language used is Javanese.

Javanese also has a long and venerable history and has undergone several incarnations. Old Javanese, the language of the earliest Javanese *kakawin* literature, appears in works composed on Java between the 9th and 14th centuries and was then preserved on Bali, while the middle Javanese of the *kidung* literature mostly appears to have been composed on Bali. This picture is further complicated by the fact that all three forms of Javanese – old, middle, and modern – were often in use at the same time (Fox, 1986:315-316). The abbreviation “*ltry.*” denotes this literary context.

Tracing Margins and Borders: The Complexity of Ponorogo’s Past

Although the regency of Ponorogo owes its present-day borders to its colonial heritage, these are also largely formed by the topography.²³ To the west the natural fortress of Mount Lawu (3,265 metres) joins the southern mountain chain to divide it from the regencies of Wonogiri and Pacitan, while to the east Mount Wilis (2,169 metres) forms a barrier to the regencies of Nganjuk, Trenggalek, Tulungagung and Kediri. The best access to the provincial capital, Surabaya, approximately 200 km to the northeast, and the Central Javanese city of Solo, approximately 120 km to the west, is via the north through the expanse of the flat Madiun plain. Today there is a good road to Madiun, but previously even this northern access was difficult. Forming the flood plain of the Madiun river and only 63 metres above sea level, Adam tells us that this area was once a large swamp (1938b:288). Roads followed high ground, but in the wet season these would be virtually impassable.²⁴ Most trade in the early days was carried by river, which in turn was hampered by low river levels in the driest months. Natural barriers have therefore provided a measure of relative isolation and protection; a factor probably contributing to the making and persistence of strong local traditions, but these barriers did not impede the area’s participation in the larger dynamic processes in which the island of Java played a part.

²³ Ponorogo was amalgamated, along with twenty-one other regencies, into the Residency of Madiun after the Java War. At that time the area was actually divided into four smaller regencies – Kutha Wetan (the old capital to the east of today’s town centre), Pedanten, Sumoroto, and Polorejo (Purwotijoyo, 1990:41). The Dutch administration set out on a process of consolidation and by 1877 the Madiun residency had been reduced to the five present-day regencies of Madiun, Magetan, Ngawi, Pacitan, and Ponorogo (Onghokham, 1975:111).

²⁴ Shrieke notes mention in inscriptions of very old roads from Ponorogo over the mountains to Kaduwang in the west and Tulungagung in the east, while later roads to Madiun skirted the foothills of Mt Lawu (1959:110). Settlement in Madiun dates from 1568 (PKDM, 1980:14).

Java's regions never attracted the early research devoted to its illustrious court centres which came to denote Javanese civilisation as a whole. This earlier aristocratic bias has been partly addressed by a number of local anthropological studies (e.g. for East Java see Beatty, 1999; Geertz, 1976; Hefner, 1985; Suwandi, 2000) which illustrate the dialogic nature of the Javanese cultural world, its capacity for individual innovation and interpretation, and how the particularities of local environments influence practice. One of the reasons for this fluidity is the dynamic and complex interrelationship of past traditions which varies from place to place and "is closely tied to the exigencies of Javanese village life" (Beatty, 1999:239). For the Ponorogo area evidence of the layering of these past traditions, although not continuous, span a long timeframe. Despite this discontinuity the fragments we have, like de Certeau's bricolage, tease out a picture of how, within the circumstances of social change, resilience came to define Ponorogo as both place and ethos. Apart from Javanese materials I have also drawn on the increasing body of research concerned with the cultural development of Southeast Asia as a region. Obviously the picture I present is speculative, but I have tried everywhere to place Ponorogo within a wider context and hope in this way to gain a deeper insight into its particular character. I have arranged the following material under three sub-headings: prehistory, East Javanese kingdoms, and Islamisation.

I. Prehistory

Java was very much a part of the regional exchange networks which developed in Southeast Asia over thousands of years. Sources for Ponorogo begin when it was a part of this prehistoric regional network, at a time when barriers to the mainland of Java were less important because global geologic change had given the area easy access to the southern sea.

In 1926 L. J. C. van Es, a geologist with the Bureau of Mining, on a visit to the southern mountains near Ponorogo was told that employees of the Patogan sugar factory had found animal bones while digging for phosphates in the large rock shelter of Gua Lawa (Bat Cave) located in the district of Sampung. In the wake of excavations at Trinil which had unearthed various fossils, including those of the hominid *Pithecanthropus erectus* (Java Man), several of the bones, sent to Bandung for examination, "appeared to have been worked and artificially polished" (van Heekeren,

1957:75). This “Sampung Industry”, the first prehistoric bone tool industry to be reported in the region, now gives its name to similar sites found throughout Southeast Asia. Revisiting the context in which these bone tools occurred Rabett has hypothesised that they are connected with the exploitation of coastal marine resources made accessible to previously inland groups by environmental change.²⁵

The artefact-bearing deposits of Gua Lawa, however, were more than three metres thick and contained a number of cultural layers. Excavated at a time when archaeology had not reached its present technical sophistication, remains indicate that the shelter’s successive inhabitants made the transition from hunter/gatherers to a greater reliance on plant materials.²⁶ More recent excavations in Kalimantan and Sulawesi suggest that comparable caves in karstic outcrops with several layers of occupation were used successively in different ways at different times, and that “it would not be surprising if specific cultural traditions linked the people using these caves” (Chazine, 2005:228).

Gua Lawa was also used as a burial site. Several human skeletons and various funerary ornaments were recovered. From the size of the teeth and the burial position these remains are pre-Austronesian and have been classified as Australo-Melanesian (Bellwood, 1997:197; van Heekeren, 1957:76-79), whereas today genetic studies show that populations in Southeast Asia are Austronesian representing a mixture between Austro-Melanesian and Mongoloid populations.²⁷

²⁵ Although the earliest bone implements date from ca. 40,000 BP they become more widespread at specific sites for the period of the Pleistocene to Holocene transition (11,000-4,000 BP). The Sampung site is dated at 3264 ± 55 BP (Rabett, 2005:154-155). Forestier suggests a dating of around 4000 ± 5000 BP (in Bulbeck *et al.*, 2001:98). During this period rising sea levels, reduced land areas, and drier conditions disrupted rainforest and lake resources and expanded coastal mangrove swamps (Rabett, 2005:159-160). Underlying sediments at Gua Lawa indicating that it was once a small lake which had become completely silted up (van Heekeren, 1957:76) are consistent with Rabett’s hypothesis.

²⁶ Systematic excavations at Gua Lawa were carried out by van Stein Callenfels between 1928 and 1931. Although the thickness of the deposits, a phenomenon not encountered before in Java, offered a good opportunity to obtain a stratigraphical view of the various cultural elements, the method of projection used was unsuitable. There were apparently three layers: the bottom layer containing Neolithic arrowheads and fragments of cord-marked pottery; the middle layer containing bone daggers, fishing hooks and sticks for digging up edible yams and roots; and the top layer containing iron and bronze objects, as well as pestles and mortars, but van Heekeren notes that he finds this stratigraphy unconvincing (1957:76-78).

²⁷ The question of gene heritage is extremely complex and contentious. Some hypotheses have posited replacement of an original Australo-Melanesian population by large migrations of Austronesians of Southern Mongoloid origins. Bellwood and others dispute these hypotheses for one of intermixing of the two populations as “many of the present Southern Mongoloid populations of Indonesia and Malaysia also have a high degree of Australo-

Austronesian migration

Austronesian settlers are thought to have expanded in a series of migrations from a homeland in Taiwan, south and eastward through Island Southeast Asia, then to Island Melanesia – where they find expression in the Lapita cultural complex – and on to Polynesia. They probably came by sea from the Philippines entering from the north coast of Java during the second millennium BP, but evidence of this is likely to be buried with the former northern coastlines under many metres of alluvium (Bellwood, 1997:231). According to Bellwood these migrants grew rice and millet, and carried with them domestic pigs and dogs, pottery, and a repertoire of tools (in Szabó & O'Connor, 2004:621-622). Where previously it was assumed that the more sophisticated agricultural capacity of the Austronesians allowed them to simply supplant the indigenous hunter/gatherers, recent research is opting for a more complex set of interactions dependent on local conditions. Archaeological evidence from Toalean rock shelters in Sulawesi indicates abundant interaction in the form of reciprocal exchange.²⁸ The *Toale'* or “forest people” were Bugis exiles who were socially, but not ethnically distinct from their Bugis neighbours. Immigrant farmers would have gained vital knowledge about the distribution of wild food resources, potable water, and sources of flakeable stone, while the early Toaleans were able to trade a wide variety of plants for rice, pottery, and animals; and may even have adopted swidden agriculture from their neighbours (Bulbeck *et al.*, 2001:101-102). Research from Melanesia also disputes the model of linear change and the dichotomy that has been placed between farmer and hunter/gather, in favour of an arboreal-based subsistence economy which relies on the long-term management of forest resources to maximise biodiversity.²⁹ In this sense horticulture, agriculture, hunting, and foraging are part of the same complex. Kyle Latinis, drawing on this material and his own ethnographic study in Maluku, argues that this diversification was already underway in lowland forests during the late Pleistocene and that the Austronesian immigrants may

Melanesian genetic heritage.” This genetic heritage is obviously dependent on the scale and penetration of migration from more northerly latitudes (Bellwood, 1997:83-92).

²⁸ The term Toalean is applied to microlithic assemblages in South Sulawesi with an age range c. 8000 -1500 BP. These sites share much in common with others in Island Southeast Asia, such as Gua Lawa, albeit with some variability attributable to local adaptation (Bulbeck *et al.*, 2001:71-98).

²⁹ Arboreal resources include forest understorey, gap and fringe plants and animals that provide food, medicines, building materials, and economically important products (Latinis, 2000:43).

have even adopted some aspects of this subsistence economy from the indigenes. “The prehistoric and traditional economies are thus related in the sense of sharing a continuous evolutionary history (2000:48).”

For Java the influence of these Austronesian immigrants is found in the kinship system which, Fox notes, “is thoroughly Austronesian” (1986:316), but support for an integrated continuity of traditions along the lines of that proposed by Latinis becomes evident in the Javanese home garden (*pekarangan*).³⁰ One of the oldest forms of agroecosystems, these dense clumps of vegetation, sometimes completely concealing houses in the Javanese countryside, supply an enormous variety of resources from building materials, food, fodder, and medicines (Soemarwoto & Conway, 1992). Just like the *Toale'*, Java also had its own socially-distinct forest people. Known as the *Kalang* they were reputed to have been forest dwellers and swidden cultivators, and to have led a nomadic lifestyle in the forests of Java.³¹ They are mentioned in Javanese inscriptions dating from the ninth century. Skilled woodcutters, carpenters, and woodworkers, in 1640 Sultan Agung ordered a number of Kalang to settle in his royal compound where they were obliged to supply enough teak to build the king's warships and palaces, as well as ceremonial or sacred pieces of teak specifically required by the king (Altona in Peluso, 1992:31-32). Sultan Agung decreed that they were not allowed to mix with ordinary people and had to live apart in walled villages (Moertono, 1968:149). According to Raffles they were held in contempt by the Javanese who thought the word „Kalang’ an “epithet of reproach and disgrace” (in Wieringa, 1998:19). Reasons for this negative image have been variously attributed to their association with the forest, their wandering lifestyle, or origin stories which describe their descent from a dog and a sow.³² While Winter sees this dubious heritage as the reason for Javanese disdain, Wieringa, who conducted an extensive overview of both

³⁰ Fox found that, “Although there are four terms of Sanskrit derivation in the vocabulary of kinship, these terms are alternate words for recognisable Austronesian kinship categories. The surprising feature of the kinship system, thus, is its evident lack of Sanskrit influence (Fox, 1986:316).”

³¹ Kalang were not the only differentiated minority group. There were also the Gajah Mati and the Pinggir who were said to be from Blambangan (see Kumar, 1997:178-179).

³² This wandering lifestyle puts them in touch with the dangerous forces (*angker*) that exist in uncivilised places (Peluso, 1992:32-33; Wieringa, 1998:27-28). Places that are *angker* fall into the categories of wild, unusual, marginal, or liminal and include forests, bodies of water, unusual geologic formations, banyan trees, crossroads and bridges, as well as places where unusual events have occurred.

current and past research on the subject, dismisses the legend as having no functional explanation other than as a justification of superior status over an inferior neighbour (1998:26-27). The Dutch Resident Adam collected many stories of Kalangs during the 1930s in the former Madiun residency. An example is an origin story from the Ngawi forest, north of Madiun:

“A nobleman (sinatriya) roaming in the forest urinated in a coconut shell, the contents of which were swallowed by a wild sow, called Srenggi, who then became pregnant and gave birth to a princess, called Dewi Rayung Wulan. When the princess grew up and was weaving in a house built on piles she dropped her weaving shuttle which was retrieved by a dog, called Belangjungjang, who then married the princess. From this marriage a youth, Jaka Sona, was born who had the power to cut down sacred trees and clear sacred places without anything untoward happening to him. When the sow [Srenggi] destroyed his work in the forest out of revenge over the princess who had failed to recognise her wild mother, Jaka Sona killed the dog [Belangjungjang] because he failed to attack the sow. Jaka Sona was so grieved and disillusioned when he discovered he had in fact killed his own father that he buried the dog and then in loneliness wandered the forest. His descendants were called Kalangs.” (Adam, 1938a:103)³³

In contrast to other writers on the subject, Adam does not seem to have encountered, or does not mention, expressions of disdain. On the contrary, Kalangs seemed to have been honoured because of their ability to enter and even cultivate magically-dangerous places. He found people who either claimed to be Kalang or claimed descent from Kalang, as well as villages which were said to have been settled by Kalangs. In many of these villages graves, reputed to be those of the dog and/or the weaving princess, were still honoured. For example, in the village where the above story comes from, Adam was told that on the dog’s grave, known as Bulak Candi (Lonely Temple), local

³³ Adam relates numerous variations of the story specific to the villages in which they were told. He noted that the story from the village of Candi, Mlarak, in Ponorogo was very similar and that the dog was buried in Candi Asu (Dog Temple) where residents still sacrificed (1938a:104-107).

residents always sacrificed *emplek-emplek* (bananas wrapped in crushed rice flour and cooked on a fire) after planting (1938a:103-107).³⁴

Due to space constraints I can only note a few points which may account for this difference in attitude. Previous academic analysis of Kalang origin stories privileged an Islamic, court-centred interpretation over possible alternative interpretations relevant to a different time and place. In the relatively remote forest villages which Adam visited in the 1930s, for example, utilisation and management of the natural environment, and rituals associated with it, was an essential part of everyday life. Stories of *satria lelana* (“knights-errant”) and of general *lelana* (wandering) in search of spiritual knowledge (*ilmu*) has a venerable tradition in Java and, although less common, *lelana* is still practised today; as are trance dances incorporating animal masks, which have their origins in rituals of transformation from the shamanic tradition of these early settlers. The pig and the dog, the domesticated animals carried by the Austronesians, were valuable commodities in Southeast Asian villages and, as Wieringa notes, the origin myth was widespread throughout “Java, Lombok, South Sulawesi, Sumatra, Borneo, etc.” (1998:26). That the wild pig (*celeng*) was once associated with wealth is still evident in night markets throughout Java which sell a fascinating variety of money boxes. Made of clay in endless shapes and sizes they are known as *celengan* (piggy banks). It is interesting then to speculate whether the story speaks of ancient encounters and integration; whether its mythic character functions as an “art of operating” which by guile and surprise transforms the established order (de Certeau, 1988:86-90).³⁵ The need to demonstrate continuity in times of dislocation and social transformation is a feature of Austronesian societies, and is a recurring theme in Javanese history. This

³⁴ Adam also relates that on the death of a Kalang held in high regard because of her ability to cultivate sacred ground, the residents burnt an effigy, a Kalang death ritual shared by the Tenggerese. The ashes were then spread on the ground and after some time, when no dog tracks were apparent, the ashes were thrown away. The woman was considered a *Kalang ngobong* (“burning Kalang”), a pure Kalang (Adam, 1938a:104; see also Kumar, 1997:179).

³⁵ For his discussion of storytelling de Certeau refers to D  tienne & Vernant’s work on the Greek *m  tis*, a wisdom that is always ‘immersed in practice’ and which combines ‘flair, sagacity, foresight, intellectual flexibility, deception, resourcefulness, vigilant watchfulness, a sense for opportunities, diverse sorts of cleverness, and a great deal of acquired experience’ (in 1988:81).

continuity, like de Certeau's discussion, often achieved through the use of creative techniques, is open to constant rearrangement and continuous renegotiation.³⁶

From these archaeological remnants and stories of mixed Austronesian and Melanesian motifs the next section deals with the development of political power in East Java in the form of successive kingdoms. It is during this long period that the first textual references to the Ponorogo area occur. Although fleeting in nature they record a pattern of opportunistic resistance to the increasing consolidation of power.

³⁶ For two views on this trait see Bellwood's discussion of "foundership" (1997:146), and Thomas Reuter who sees this Austronesian heritage in the primary organisational principle of „precedence' (2002:23-24).



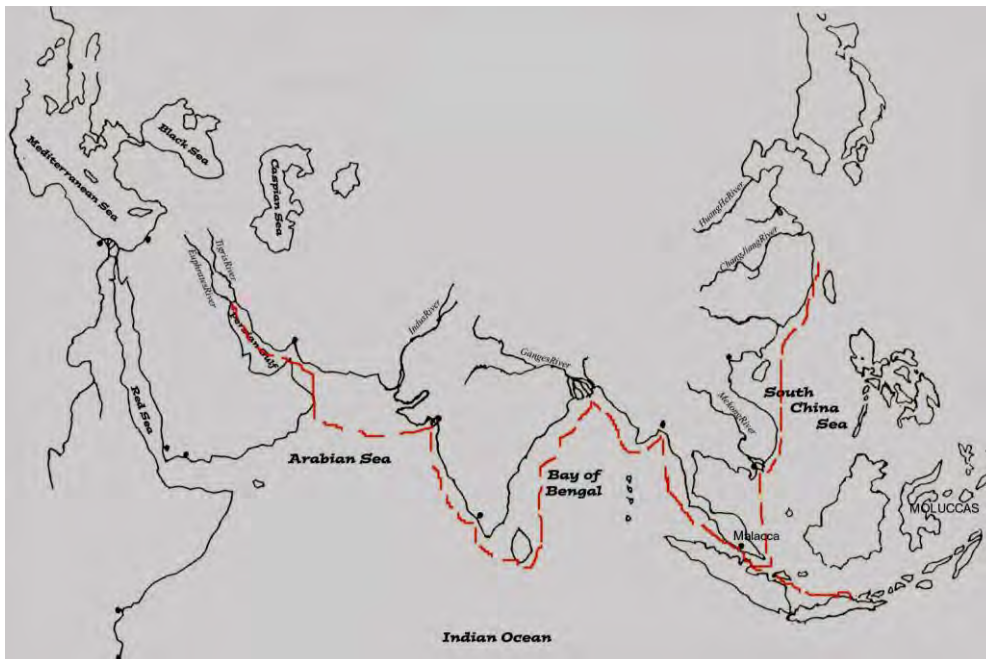
Gua Lawa



Archaeological excavation trench



Javanese clay money boxes (*celengan*)
[from <http://www.beritacarbon.com/contentimg/files/celengan.jpg>]



Seaborne spice trade routes

II. East Javanese Kingdoms

To understand the influential effect Java's proximity to the spice islands of the Moluccas had on its historical development and integration into international trade, one need only look to present-day geopolitics driven by access to oil. Since the Roman Empire, and probably well before, the trade in spices had been extremely lucrative.³⁷ After the closure of the overland caravan route in the early fifth century trade became increasingly seaborne. The accessibility and direction of this trade, which stretched from the Middle East, via the Indian Ocean, the Java and South China Seas, to China, was determined by the alternating monsoon winds. Ships had to wait for some months before they could undertake return journeys, and so ports which had access to large surpluses of food were therefore at an advantage. Areas throughout Southeast Asia embarked on vast water management projects in order to produce sufficient rice surpluses. Coastal entrepôts emerged in the Straits of Malacca and the western edge of the Java Sea. By the seventh century they were under the authority of the Sumatran kingdom of Srivijaya. With a tropical and riverine environment, however, Srivijaya was at a disadvantage, and its control of trade decreased with the rise of the empires of Angkor and Pagan, and the increase in the number of Indian and Chinese traders who sought more direct access to the source of spices. By the tenth century ports on the northeast coast of Java had become the chief emporium in the exchange of spices, and the Javanese the main intermediaries gaining the enormous prosperity that ensued from trade.

Apart from its proximity to spices, Java (from the centre of the island eastwards) also had another advantage – a superior capacity to produce rice through *sawah* (wet-rice) cultivation.³⁸ Irrigation agriculture leads to different relations of production than that of

³⁷ The earliest recorded Indonesian trade comes from Pliny, in the 1st century CE, who described how cinnamon was brought by outrigger canoes across the Indian Ocean to Madagascar. From there it passed through the ports of East Africa and was then carried overland to the spice market of the Roman Empire (Brissenden, 1976:66). The cinnamon trade, however, dates back to the Egyptians who imported it, along with cumin and cassia, to embalm the dead (Milton, 1999:20).

³⁸ Bellwood explains that the Sunda islands from central Java eastwards fall within the intermediate tropical zone which is characterised by a clearly differentiated wet and dry season. The dry season and occasional severe droughts result in more open partially deciduous forests. Its volcanic activity, formed by subduction of the Indo-Australian Plate beneath the southern boundary of Indonesia, influences the fertility and structure of the soil; enriching it and reversing the normal tropical trend of leaching and nutrient loss. In sharp contrast the equatorial regions of Peninsular Malaysia, Sumatra, and western Java with their constant rainfall, infertile acidic soils, and rapid vegetation growth are only suited to shifting agricultural methods (1997:3-12).

dry-field farming. A rice terrace, as ‘an artificial, maximally specialized, continuous-cultivation, open-field structure’, demands a substantial labour force working as an integrated team to construct terraces, regulate the supply and control of water, and meet demands at peak times of the year, such as planting, harvesting, and processing the crop (Geertz in King & Wilder, 2003:254-255).

Political power was organised to control people not boundaries. To maintain the social integration required for cultivation, therefore, as Adrian Vickers points out in his review article of research on social structures in ancient Java, “sawah agriculture is not a purely economic activity, but one which has an ideological dimension” (1986:162). In Java, as in the rest of Southeast Asia, this ideological dimension was provided by the adoption of Indic religious symbols. In central Java autonomous administrative regions (*watek*), based on sawah cultivation, and ruled by lords, known as *rakryan*, were integrated through extensive intra- and inter-regional trade networks which linked them to court hierarchies and international trade. The position of the king, who was simply a “*primus inter pares*” among *rakryan*, was a precarious one. The basis of power was “ritual sovereignty” and monumental temple complexes, the most striking examples of which are the ninth century Buddhist temple of Borobudur and the Hindu temple complex of Prambanan in present day Yogyakarta, “functioned as focal points in a hierarchy of temples unifying regions” (Vickers, 1986:164-172).

In 929 CE the central Javanese kingdom of Medang relocated to Watugaluh, near present-day Jombang, in east Java. This was not the first time a Javanese polity had moved, and explanations for it have been much discussed in the literature.³⁹ In considering the nature of the change involved, however, it was certainly a radical one. Rather than a simple repositioning it required an adaptation to very different social, cultural and ecological conditions which was to transform the polity in the process (Vickers, 1986:160). It appears to have been motivated by economic considerations. East Java, which contained the fertile flood plains of the Solo and Brantas river basins,

³⁹ Schrieke suggested population flight due to the burden imposed by the building of large temple complexes in central Java. Boechari suggested it may have been cyclic change in which every fourth king changed the location of his *kraton* and notes that Pu Sindok called himself Isana, meaning a new dynasty (1979:475 & 487-491). There is also the suggestion of an eruption of Mt Merapi which, because of the difficulty in geological accuracy, may

offered a more productive rice growing area, and, in an era when the most efficient transport was waterborne, easier access to international trade.

Consolidation of Power in East Java

Stone or copperplate inscriptions are the main source of information on ancient Java. Most of them record the establishment of *sima* rights which meant the revenues from *sawah* production of a certain area were now to be devoted to a specified temple or religious foundation. *Sima* rights were inscribed on durable materials because they were legal documents, often issued by royal edict, and as such could be kept as proof by villagers and produced on necessary occasions.⁴⁰ From a careful study of the inscriptions issued by the last five kings based in Central Java, Antoinette Barrett Jones found that the polity's move to east Java was "a gradual and not a sudden one; about twenty-eight years elapsed between the first claim of Balitung [a central Javanese king] to jurisdiction over territories in East Java and the clustering of inscriptions exclusively in the East (1984:6-9)."

East Java was very different to central Java. Dry-field and swidden cultivators, turbulent rivers, mountainous and forested terrain, meant that both power and people were more dispersed. The king needed a more stable constituency. Although, as Dove argues swidden agriculture is not necessarily less "profitable", one way of achieving this was through the expansion of sawah cultivation which transforms the relations of production by drawing shifting cultivators into settled communities and "ultimately involves the producer in a form of state domination" (in Vickers, 1986:161-162). Rice is obviously also a better commodity. Where there was a surplus of land over labour kings had to offer villagers and cultivators inducements to incorporate them into kingdoms. Such inducements included a guarantee of protection from "the forces of nature and human threat" (de Casparis in Vickers, 1986:165), and access to an enhanced economy through the benefits of international trade. This is why various

have occurred a century before the previously assumed date. This would have necessitated a change of *kraton* because natural disasters were seen as a punishment by the gods (Boechari, 1965:70).

⁴⁰ In the Wintang Mas inscription, dated early 10th century, we read, "the copperplate was brought for the inspection to the Rakryan Mapatih i Hino, Pu Ketuwijaya, because they were asked by Samgat Mangulihi to pay dues for the temple". The temple had been exempted from these dues by a former king and the copperplate was produced to prove this (Barrett Jones, 1984:14n). In the Taji inscription the *raka* of Śri bhāru and all of her children were placed in charge of the temple "up to the remotest future" (Sarkar, 1972:11).

kings undertook the construction of dams, ferry systems, flood mitigation works, the regulation of trade and traders, and the institution of dispute resolution procedures. On rare occasions villagers themselves initiated requests for *sima* grants, for example, in the case of land deemed to be dangerous and for which repeated propitiatory offerings had to be made. Community solidarity and cohesion were provided by local religious institutions. In east Java, due to the importance of spirit and ancestor worship, “the tenth century saw a proliferation of deified ancestors relating not only to royal and lordly lineages, but also to descent groups below these levels” (Wisseman Christie in Vickers, 1986:174). By the tenth century trade had also become more diversified and traders were not as tied to territorial units. Kings, therefore, in order to demonstrate a degree of control over the activities of traders, especially higher level ones, excluded them from *sima* grants. The prestige products of this trade were then given as gifts to dignitaries and villagers at the inauguration ceremony. Transformations of land were thus linked to security, order, the circulation of prestige goods, and the sovereign authority of a king (Vickers, 1986:165-166).

Ponorogo, it seems, took part in this integration process. The Taji inscription, found in Ponorogo, is one of the earliest to link Balitung, a central Javanese ruler, with authority over an area in east Java.⁴¹ Consisting of four copperplates, it records that on 8 April, 901 CE, several residents of the *watek* of Taji willingly gave away their own garden land for the construction of the Buddhist foundation of Devasabhā (*kabikuan ing devasabhā*). In addition, sawah fields of Taji, measuring one *lamvit*, from then on to be named the ‘sawah-fields of Nyū’, were made the free-hold of the temple. The institution of this sacred domain (*sang hyang dharmma*) for an unnamed deified lord (*bhatāra*) was celebrated with gifts of large amounts of gold and cloth for the dignitaries, iron utensils for the villagers, and various entertainments and feasting. Over two days 57 sacks of rice, 6 buffaloes, 100 chickens, all kinds of salted fish and meat, eggs in heaps, and intoxicating drinks were consumed (Sarkar, 1972:4-10). The

⁴¹ Evidently Brandes, who translated the copperplates, doubted they were from Ponorogo, but Adam states he does not know the basis for this opinion (1938a:109). It could even have been because Brandes doubted Ponorogo, then an out-of-the-way backwater, could have been part of this consolidation. Obviously copperplates are highly transportable, their inscription occurred a long time ago, and Taji is a common name. There is, however, a hamlet named Taji located in the northwest district of Sukorejo near the confluence of two rivers. It is also near *Suko Sewu*, a site overgrown with *Suko* trees, which contains the footings a very old temple. The resin of these trees is commonly burnt as incense.

inscription lists an assortment of tax collectors, local artisans, such as carpenters and metal smiths, various livestock traders, and *banyaga bantal* who were intermediary merchants linking the area to international trade. The Palēbuhan inscription (927 CE) from Gorang Gareng, which is north of Ponorogo in the neighbouring regency of Madiun, lists various foreign traders from Ceylon, India, and Khmer, and also mentions goods carried by ship (Barrett Jones, 1984:23-25, 37-39). All of these, except those of the smiths' class, were excluded from entering the *sima* at Taji (Sarkar, 1972:12).

Taji, it therefore seems, was already a centre of population and trading activity. But it differed from the general pattern of integration in that rice agriculture was already in evidence. As the inscription makes clear garden lands (*kbuan-kbuan*) were to be used for the building of the temple, while its upkeep was to be met by some of Taji's pre-existing sawah fields. The move to the flood plains of Java's great rivers could not have been made until more complex hydraulic techniques had been developed to deal with their capricious and turbulent flows.⁴² For the Ponorogo lowlands, fed by rivers which have their source in the surrounding highlands, and which in turn feed into tributaries of the Solo river, elementary irrigation techniques would have sufficed and rice agriculture could have developed much earlier.⁴³ This is certainly feasible in the light of the evidence of its early settlement discussed in the previous section. During this initial phase of expansion the central Javanese king would need to make alliances with existing autonomous local centres. These alliances were still fragile and Taji, located on the periphery of the great rivers, would have been able to exercise a shifting loyalty.⁴⁴

⁴² This is confirmed by East Javanese inscriptions which demonstrate that more complex techniques of water management were necessary to control the Solo and Brantas river plains than were required in central Java. The Brantas was a turbulent river which caused major destruction during flooding. The Kamalagyan inscription (1037 AD) of Airlangga reports that the Brantas had burst its dikes, flooding many local villages and making it difficult for trading vessels to reach the Javanese monarch's port. The *mahārāja*'s income was greatly diminished, and he intervened by having two dams constructed to re-establish the old course of the river. He then required local villages to settle by one of the dams, Waringin Sapta, to guard against its damage or destruction (K. R. Hall, 1985:129-130 & 301n).

⁴³ In relation to this point Stargadt (1986), who conducted extensive research on the Satingpra complex in South Thailand, posits that the earliest population centres were in fact located on tributary rivers. She states that this pattern also holds good for East Java.

⁴⁴ For the nature of overlapping centres and patchworks of power in early Southeast Asian kingdoms see Kulke (2001:262-293).

The longstanding hostility between Srivijaya and Java continued with a Srivijayan army landing in eastern Java in 929 and reaching as far as Nganjuk before being defeated. The relocated Medang kingdom cut its previous ties with central Java and focussed on both consolidating and expanding its power eastwards. After the death of king Sindok in 947 marriage alliances were made with local and Balinese kings. *Sima* grants were issued to coastal settlements in the Brantas Delta region, some of which were undoubtedly to reduce the power of local rulers who controlled the port areas by depriving them of revenue (Wisseman, 1977:206). Dharmawangsa, Sindok's great grandson, ordered a codification of Javanese law (D. G. E. Hall, 1987:76), and in the Mananjung charter the king outlines rules for quality control, standardisation of weights and measures, and apparently sets prices for the produce gathered and stored at the port (Wisseman, 1977:207). Dharmawangsa also continued the war with Srivijaya. In 990 Chinese sources talk of a serious attack on the Srivijayan coast which closed off the kingdom's centre from communication with the outside. An attack on Dharmawangsa during the celebration of the marriage of one of his daughters in 1006/7 destroyed the capital, killing the king and his court (D. G. E. Hall, 1987:66).⁴⁵ Only Airlangga, a Balinese prince and the king's nephew and son-in-law, escaped and sought refuge in a hermitage in the forests of Wonogiri with his servant Narottama, where he lived as an ascetic clad in the bark of trees (Chatterji, 1967:23).

Airlangga Defeats the Ruler of Wengker

Knowledge of Airlangga's life is based on the text of the 'Calcutta' Stone' of 1041.⁴⁶ The attack on Dharmawangsa was attributed not to Srivijaya, but to the Haji of Wurawari, the ruler of a neighbouring territory based in present-day Banyumas in central Java.⁴⁷ Airlangga remained in hiding until he received a delegation from the

⁴⁵ There still seems confusion surrounding this date with some texts quoting 1006 and others 1016. In an IAS article de Casparis explains that Kern originally translated the date of the capital's destruction as 928 Śaka (1006/7 CE). A curl below the figure, read as 2, by Kern led Damais to propose that the attack had in fact occurred in 938 Saka. Prof de Casparis and Drs Yulianto concluded that the 'curl' was in fact a scratch in the stone. Further confirmation of the 928 date comes from the translation of verse 10 describing the later delegation to Airlangga to restore the kingdom which occurs "in the year of the Saka king moon (lit. having a hare as its mark), i.e. one, three, nine or Saka 931 (1009/10 CE) (de Casparis, 1999:1).

⁴⁶ The inscription, referred to in the previous note, was originally from the Pucangan hermitage. It is known as the Calcutta Stone because it was sent to Bengal in 1813 during the British interregnum and is now in the Indian Museum in Calcutta.

⁴⁷ In this period the title 'haji' was that of a petty king.

ravaged capital requesting him to re-establish the kingdom which had been split among a number of rival principalities. He waited until after the Chola raid in 1025 had eliminated the threat of Srivijaya before embarking on a series of campaigns to regain the kingdom's former territory.⁴⁸ Campaigns subdued Wurawari and other local rulers, but it seems that Airlangga regarded Haji Wijaya, the ruler of Wengker, as his toughest enemy (Boechari, 1965:71). This is the first textual reference to Wengker, the name by which the Ponorogo area was to be known until the fifteenth century. Why Airlangga regarded Wijaya in this way is not mentioned, but de Casparis has speculated that Wengker was part of an alliance involved in the original attack against Dharmawangsa (in PKDP, 1996:15). If this was the case it gives us a rare glimpse of the precarious balance of power which existed between the early kingdom and surrounding local rulers, and an indication that Dharmawangsa's centralising ambitions were regarded with some resentment. Given Airlangga's aim to restore Dharmawangsa's kingdom, his motivation may simply have been because Wijaya had taken control over most of its former territory. It does seem that Wijaya was a worthy opponent because it took at least two campaigns to finally defeat him. Verse 28 of the Calcutta inscription relates:

"Thereafter imbued with ambition, when the year 954 [1032 CE] of the Śaka era had passed, in the month of Bhādra, on the thirteenth day of the bright fortnight on an auspicious Wednesday, this prince, who is honoured in the world, departed westwards with a vast army of heroic men who were ready for the fight and gained a complete victory over a prince named Wijaya." (Chatterji, 1967:183)

⁴⁸ The Chola dynasty, from the Coromandel Coast in south India, previously had strong trading connections with Srivijaya. These good relations did not last as a new Chola king began to expand his sea power. In 1025 he sent ships to raid several places on the east coast of Sumatra and the Malay Peninsula (D. G. E. Hall, 1987:66-68). The fact that Airlangga waited until the Chola raid removed the threat of Srivijaya before taking on the task of reuniting his kingdom would also seem to point to the fact that he must have had something to fear.

After his first defeat Wijaya regrouped his forces and rebelled again. Adam tells us:

“the independent king of Wengker, Wijaya, had withdrawn himself to his kraton Tapa. ... he was driven out of that place by Airlangga, he escaped to Kapang leaving behind his family and treasures and was overpowered in Sarasa in 1035. With this victory the wars of Airlangga finished.” (1938a:111-112)

At this time in Java the conquered king had basically two options: either to fight to the death or surrender unconditionally. In the latter case he was left on the throne provided he accepted a subordinated position as vassal and paid regular tributary visits to court (Jordaan, 2006:8). Presumably Wijaya's past record meant that he could no longer be trusted and so had to be killed. Verse 29 of the Calcutta inscription records:

“There in the Śaka year 957 [1035 CE] on the eighth day of the dark half of Kārtika on Thursday, the king Wijaya was seized by his own troops through the application of the means as taught by Vishnugupta [Airlangga] and died soon afterwards.” (Chatterji, 1967:183)

After this heroic defeat Wengker was absorbed into successive east Javanese kingdoms and there is no record of further incidents of armed resistance.

Successive Javanese Kingdoms 11th – 15th Centuries

Airlangga reputedly stepped down in 1041 to become a monk dividing his kingdom in two. The western part, which would have included Wengker, was called Kadiri, with its capital at Daha in present-day Kediri; and the eastern half, called Janggala and later known as Singasari, was located near present-day Malang. During the Kadiri period, which started with the conquest of Janggala in 1104, the structure of the kingdom remained little changed from that of Airlangga. Apart from a *reog* origin story relating a battle with troops from Kadiri and a failed marriage proposal, which could date from a later period, the only substantial archaeological remnant from this period in Ponorogo is in the form of a large *kala* head sitting on top of a pile of stones, the remains of a temple, in the village of Bedingin.⁴⁹ The inscription from this temple, dated 1104, is

⁴⁹ This demonic face, known in India as *kirttimukha* (face of glory), is intended to drive away evil. In Indonesia it is known as *kala*, meaning time or death (Pal, 1999:97).

now in the National Museum in Jakarta. It begins with a metrical speech in praise of a king of Kadiri, Jayawarsya, who has made himself an embodiment of Vishnu, and refers to the granting of *sima* and the building of an underground aqueduct (Adam, 1938a:112; Nastiti & Suhadi, 1996:44-47).

The Kadiri period was followed by the Singasari dynasty, beginning in 1222. Although Singasari was never able to completely annex Kadiri, it was the first kingdom to establish sovereignty over eastern Java, Sunda, Madura, Sumatra and a part of the Malay peninsula. This process was completed under the Majapahit empire which, although experiencing a number of serious revolts during its first decades, was finally able to replace tributary local rulers with members of the central dynasty (Kulke, 2001:320-321). The *Nāgarakṛtāgama*, composed at the height of Majapahit's power, during the reign of Hayam Wuruk (1350-1389), lists Wengker as a tax-exempt region (*perdikan*) because of the presence of a Buddhist monastery (*dharma kasogatan*). Whether this is still the one mentioned in the Taji inscription, described above, is unknown. The poem records that the most important region, Kahuripan (Janggala) was ruled by the king's immediate family. Wengker, a part of the second most important region, Daha, was ruled by Wijayarajasa, the consort of the king's maternal aunt, who was known as *bhre* Wengker, the prince of Wengker (Schrieke, 1959:26). These rulers, however, were domiciled in the royal compound of the Majapahit capital at Trowulan, and so actual political control remained fragmentary. They still depended on a chain of patron-client relationships which stretched from their respective provinces.

Majapahit presided over a period of increasing prosperity through the facilitation of marketing networks and came increasingly to rely on revenue from taxes levied on the profits from Java's north coast ports. After the death of Hayam Wuruk in 1389 the empire was racked by battles over succession. There was even a *bhre* Wengker on the throne for ten years from 1456-1466, but by this time royal power was already divided between competing lines of succession.

Java's Indic Period

In this second section I have focussed on the historical sources referring to Wengker, which came to be conventionally defined as the region between Mt Lawu and Mt Wilis

and south to the sea, to illustrate its involvement with transformations which occurred during the thousand years of Java's Indic period. As an agricultural region the ritual and religious framing of *sawah* cultivation was one of these influential transformations. It is probably this reverence for rice that is still apparent in its contemporary status; elevating it far above that of just a food staple. Most Javanese will tell you that a meal is not a meal without rice.⁵⁰ It is this conviction that lies behind contemporary government sensitivity around rice production and self-sufficiency, government subsidies and control of prices, and the moral panic and vulnerability which arises when the country needs to import rice.

An important transformation which occurred with the move to east Java arose from the polity's need to compromise in order to expand rice production. Whereas the great temple complexes of Central Java reveal a more orthodox Sanskrit-based Hindu and Buddhist worship, carried out by foreign priests, in East Java these predominantly Indic influences were indigenised within a world view that gave equal weight to spirit and ancestor worship (Wisseman Christie in Vickers, 1986:174). Old Javanese replaced Sanskrit, and there was an emphasis on the esoteric aspects of both Hinduism and Buddhism, commonly categorised as „Tantrism’. As these embodied, more vernacular Tantric traditions spread through India, Urban tells us, they often mixed in turn with local elements of alchemy, magic, and more popular „occult’ practices. As such, tantric traditions are deeply contextual and “intimately tied to the social, historical and political circumstances in which they emerge” (1999:126-139). From the literary and archaeological sources, Tantrism in Java was also transformed into a particular form – Javanism - in which Buddhism, Saivism, Vishnuism and Austronesian elements were very often blended together.⁵¹ In the particular instance of Ponorogo the *warok* tradition, which I will look at later in this chapter, seems a striking example of how this „blend’ took a peculiarly local form, but evidence of its more generic form is provided

⁵⁰ The common saying is, “*kalau belum makan nasi, belum makan* (if you haven't eaten rice, you haven't had a meal)”.

⁵¹ In Java, for example, the Sanskrit *śakti* was blended with the Polynesian/Melanesian *mana*, a general concept for any extraordinary agency (Zoetmulder, 1995:75). Kraemer in his 1921 thesis drew attention to the similarities between Javanism and Tantrism, “There the same insoluble confusion of magic and mysticism, the same substantial, naïve thinking, in which all words, names, concepts, shapes offered by religious and mythological tradition become an incomprehensible body of mystic powers and substances sympathetically intertwined in a mysterious way (in Zoetmulder, 1995:171n).

in the circle rites of the Taji inscription, and in collections of 11th bronzes recovered in the Ponorogo area.⁵²

A further insight into the nature of this embodied tradition is expressed in the poetic literature of East Java which emphasised the sensual and the sensory. From the Kadiri period „temples of language’ (*candi bhasa*) replaced „temples of stone’ (*candi sila*) in the form of *kakawin*, written in Old Javanese, which placed Indian heroes and places within evocative descriptions of a Javanese landscape (Creese, 1996; K. R. Hall, 2005). In a predominantly oral culture *kakawin* were written to be heard. Public readings, held in conjunction with other performative arts, made them accessible and explored Javanese themes and dilemmas (K. R. Hall, 2005:2-4). Day (1996), for example, discusses how the *Bharatayuddha*, written in 1157, was recast to reflect the importance of sexual politics of the time. Here tension is conveyed by the use of Javanese words, such as *leng leng* (a trance like feeling induced by beauty) and *langö* (poetic beauty), suggesting the erotic and aesthetic, in contrast to a Sanskritic *noblesse oblige* in words such as *duhkha* („misery’ for those who have lost loved ones in battle) and *anugraha* (benevolence). In temple architecture indigenous animals and plants were employed in a similar fashion to vocabulary; as a „visual fusion’ to embed layers of sub-stories and create an overall density of meaning and multiple levels of significance (Totton, 2003:20). In what Dutch academics saw as narrative disorder, stories were juxtaposed to represent not only the distinction, but also the interrelationships and combinations between nature and individual morality on the one hand, and social existence and social morality on the other (Worsley, 1986).

This long blending and layering of traditions was confronted with the arrival of an avowedly monotheistic Islam which was to cause a major disjunction. Although Java, true to its own virtuosity, was eventually able to indigenise even this arrival to a certain

⁵² Adam describes a collection of gold, silver and bronze images recovered from a ditch in the village of Kunti, Sumoroto (1938a:120). In 1992 seventy bronze statues were recovered from the village of Kunti, this time in Bungal, when farmers were digging clay to make bricks. Both of these collections are now in the Mpu Tantular Museum in Surabaya. The Museum curator told me they were from the eleventh century. Although it seems no research has been carried out on either of these collections I presume, in view of their similarity and date to the Nganjuk and Surocolo bronzes identified by Chandra & Singal, they form three-dimensional mandalas based on several yogini tantras (H. Woodward, 2004:343-345).

extent, the ramifications of the disjuncture it caused are still evident today; albeit exacerbated by more contemporary dynamics within the Islamic world.

III. Islamisation

Events leading up to the fall of Majapahit are unclear. The last remnants of imperial power were defeated by the Islamic forces of Demak in 1527, but this final defeat came after a long process of disintegration resulting from the prolonged dynastic dispute between competing lines of the royal family after the death of Hayam Wuruk in 1389, and the increasing wealth and independence of Java's north coast diasporic Islamic trading communities.

Early in the fifteenth century Java's north coast ports, similar to other ports along the main trade routes, contained sizeable communities of diasporic Arab, Indian and Chinese Muslim traders. The new Ming emperor in China dispatched a series of voyages (1405-1433) to Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean, under the command of Admiral Cheng Ho, himself a Hanafi Muslim, to reinforce the Imperial Court's tributary trade relationships. Cheng Ho's support of Chinese Muslim trading communities in Java's north coast ports of Semarang, Tuban, Gresik and Surabaya gave them a measure of independence. He was instrumental in setting up a system of "Chinese Captains" to govern these ports, and gained a place for a permanent Ming representative at the Majapahit court. Muslim traders displayed a clear preference for doing business with trading communities controlled by Islamic law, and soon Javanese converts began to emerge to take advantage of the prosperity and affluence offered through ship building, warehousing and international trade. Although now reliant on the taxes from international trade, Majapahit was an agrarian-based polity. Even its capital was inland. The increasing affluence and independence of its north coast ports deprived it of revenue, while the new political, religious and social order destabilised its authority (Fic, 2003:100-102). The loss of trade income forced the court to look inward and depend on revenue obtained from the land. This in turn brought a backlash from the regional landed elites, who were already suspicious of the growing concentration of royal power, and resentful of the increasing power of trading interests at court. These regional elites then sought to counter this by supporting the various contenders for the

throne, or by allying themselves with the coastal commercial centres that were willing to supply military assistance in return for a commitment to provision the coast (K. R. Hall, 1985:253-254).

Into this mix came the Portuguese conquest of Malacca, now the main trading entrepôt, in 1511. As the Portuguese had demonstrated in their attacks on ports in East Africa and India they had come to monopolise trade and were not tolerant of Muslims (see R. Hall, 1996:194-226). The remnants of the Muslim trading community were displaced to the north coast of Java, and Aceh in Sumatra.

While there is no formal record of widespread destruction and displacement during this period of dramatic change there are numerous accounts of Majapahit refugees fleeing to mountainous regions, the eastern salient of Java, and of large numbers crossing the strait to Bali.

Javanese chronicles, however, depict a much more peaceful transition. According to the *Babad Tanah Jawi* (The History of Java) Majapahit fell in the year 1400 Śaka (1478 CE).⁵³ In an Austronesian demonstration of continuity sovereignty passed from the last king of Majapahit, Brawijaya V, to his son by a Chinese concubine, Raden Patah, the first Islamic king of Demak. Brawijaya is not defeated on the battlefield, but vanishes (*moksa*)⁵⁴; and the visible sign of kingship, an *andaru* (falling star), falls on Bintara where the kingdom of Demak was located. The ascendancy of Demak was short-lived and power passed to Jaka Tingkir, a higher-ranked great-grandson of Brawijaya V and ruler of the Sultanate of Pajang, and then to the Mataram dynasty from which the Central Javanese courts trace their ancestry.

The Babad Jaka Tingkir

The *Babad Jaka Tingkir* was composed by the exiled Surakartan king Pakubuwana VI, in 1849, after the Java War, at a time when the house of Mataram no longer held political power.⁵⁵ Although the text is also concerned with the period of transition to

⁵³ *Babad* meaning “to clear the forest” is conventionally translated as “historical chronicle”.

⁵⁴ *Moksa* means “to ascend to heaven body and soul, often by vanishing in a blaze of light” (Florida, 1995:93).

⁵⁵ At this time Central Java was divided into two Sultanates Yogyakarta and Surakarta (present-day Solo), and two smaller estates – Mangkunegara and Pakualamanan. Surakartan rulers were known by the title Pakubuwana (Axis

Islam and the nature of the early kingdom of Demak, it “subverts” the dominant tradition by dwelling on a series of “characters who embody marginalized powers” and who, excluded from “mainstream power”, then serially “vanish” (Florida, 1995:270). The central story which holds the *babad*’s episodes together is not that of Jaka Tingkir, but of his father, Kebo Kenonga, who is a genealogically senior descendant of Brawijaya V, the last Majapahit king, and marks himself in opposition to the temporal and ecclesiastical elite by repeatedly refusing the summons to appear at the Demak court.⁵⁶ Taking the name of Ki Ageng Pengging, he turns away from nobility to become the humble *kyai* of a rural *pesantren* labouring in the fields with his followers, and a student of Javanese Islam’s most renowned radical mystic, Sèh Siti Jenar.⁵⁷ His resistance is finally put to an end when he is executed by Sunan Kudus, an emissary acting on the authority of Demak (Florida, 1995:283-286).

Pesantren have played a crucial role in the dissemination of Islam in rural areas. While we know little of their precise origins, the roots of religious education in Java can be found in the Indic period where informal communities, solitary wanderers, and hermits withdrew to mountains, forests, and caves in the quest for spiritual knowledge. In this respect, the description of Airlangga’s retreat (see previous section) to such a community of ascetics in the forests of Wonogiri is a good example. In Hindu-Buddhist times *sima* grants, later known as *desa perdikan* (free villages), formalised these practices. Temples, shrines, and monasteries served as sanctuaries and centres of learning not only for monks, but also for religious itinerants and pilgrims. *Pesantren* encompass both these older traditions, and the theological schools of classical Islam, the *madrasa*, of the Middle East and India (Geertz, 1960:231; van Bruinessen, 1994). The charismatic pre-Islamic spiritual teacher, the *guru*, was embodied in the master of

of the Cosmos). Pakubuwana VI was exiled to Ambon in 1830. Ostensibly supporting the Dutch during the war he was known to sympathise with the leader of the revolt, the Yogyakarta Prince Dipanagara, and thought to have secretly assisted him throughout the war. A few months after Dipanagara’s capture he was arrested on Java’s southern coast where he was almost certainly preparing for armed rebellion (Florida, 1995:53-56). Although the *babad* is anonymously authored, a number of factors point to the king as its composer (see Florida, 1995:401-403).

⁵⁶ Kebo Kenonga was the younger son of the king of Pajang-Pengging and Brawijaya V’s first-born daughter through his principal wife.

⁵⁷ The title Ki (or Kyai) Ageng is an honorific title for (usually) rural leaders and/or teachers. The honorific is often followed by a toponym, the name of the village in which the leader holds sway. *Kyai* is the title for leaders of (often) rural Moslem educational institutions, or *pesantren*. For a discussion of the teachings of Siti Jenar (see Zoetmulder, 1995:296-308).

the *pesantren*, the *kyai*, who instructed his students (*santri*) in classical Islamic texts and scriptures (*kitab kuning*), as well as ethics and mysticism.⁵⁸ *Kyai* were part of widespread familial networks and Sufi brotherhoods (*tarekat*), and were credited with spiritual powers, such as the ability to heal and the science of *kebal* (invulnerability); all of which increased their influence as well as the prestige of their *pesantren*. Students lived a spartan, egalitarian life in simple dormitories and worked in the *pesantren* lands, which were either endowed or privately owned by the *kyai*. Given this autonomy and community influence *pesantren* were often a focus of opposition to state authority, both indigenous and colonial (Florida, 1995:345-346; Soebardi, 1976:45-49).

Ki Ageng Pengging, Jaka Tingkir's father, is depicted in this light as a focus of opposition but, as Florida points out, relationships between *kraton* (court) and *pesantren* were often more complex and multilayered. This was true of the Tegalsari *pesantren* in Ponorogo and the Surakarta *kraton* (1995:347). The story of the *pesantren*'s foundation dates back to 1742 when a previous Surakartan king, Pakubuwana II, had fled his sacked *kraton* to take refuge in the forests of Ponorogo. There the king sought the help of a renowned holy man and teacher, *Kyai* Mohamad Besari, who had established the village of Tegalsari. After peace was restored through a prayer from the *kyai*, the king granted the village of Tegalsari *perdikan* (tax-free) status provided that Besari and his descendants teach Islam there (Ricklefs, 1998:285-286). By the middle of the eighteenth century the prestige and power of Tegalsari was considerable, and the *kyai* had been granted two additional *perdikan* villages - Sewulan and Banjarsari in Madiun – which also became important centres of religious instruction. Besari's prolific descendants became heads of *pesantren* throughout Java, as well as religious and government officials (see Poernomo, 1976:4-9). In the early nineteenth century Besari's grandson, Kasan Besari, known as a Muslim militant and the greatest Javanese specialist on *fiqh* (rules of law), attracted students from all over Java (Guillot, 1985:143-146), including virtually all of the Surakarta palace's court poets (*pujangga*) (Florida, 1995:348). Kasan Besari's status was further enhanced through his marriage alliances, especially his marriage to a niece of another king,

⁵⁸ The original meaning of 'kyai' was simply "old, respected man", or "charismatic religious teacher" of no definite persuasion. A student of the *pesantren*, *santri*, having a secondary meaning of "vagabond", became closely associated with traders (Geertz, 1960:232).

Pakubuwana IV, in somewhat controversial circumstances, which further increased his landholdings.⁵⁹ His simple *langgar* (prayer house) and large audience hall still stand beside the Tegalsari mosque, a testament to his renown.

With this background in mind it is pertinent to ask, given the close relationship between Surakarta and Tegalsari, whether the early 19th century Kasan Besari was not in fact the model for Ki Ageng Pengging and, by analogy, Pakubuwana VI himself. Like the exiled king, Kasan Besari's loyalty during the Java War was also under a cloud; a Dutch report concluding, "It seems that the complicity of Kyai Kasan Besari in these insurrectionist movements cannot be proven even though it has been implied." Later Tegalsari became a problem for the Dutch when, as a way of evading forced cultivation, its population swelled dramatically. In 1850 Hartman, the Resident of Madiun, demanded of Batavia (present-day Jakarta) "that measures should be taken to prevent Tegalsari from becoming an idle refuge for the surrounding areas", suggesting that "checks be made at strange hours of the day to verify that all the inhabitants and strangers in Tegalsari were in fact occupied in the study of the Muslim religion", but the colonial government was reluctant to act and decided to await Besari's death (Guillot, 1985:148-150). That the exiled Pakubuwana VI took Ponorogo as a model of the simplicity he admired comes from his correspondence. Together with the section of the *Babad Jaka Tingkir*, describing Pengging's farming activities and his turning away from the ways of nobility, is a verse letter to Pakubuwana's younger brother in Surakarta in which the ex-king relates his own labours in the fields and his own turn to rustic simplicity (Florida, 1995:380-381); a depiction which he may have seen while a student at Tegalsari and one which could just as aptly describes the life of a Ponorogo farmer today:

I am unfit for life in the capital

Fit for life in the forest

Growing corn and soybeans

⁵⁹ While the official story is that Murtosiyah, a daughter of Pakubuwana III and a concubine, married Kasan Besari because of his beautiful singing during the celebration of Garebeg Mulud, which commemorates Mohammad's birth, other sources say that she was previously married to Bupati Cakrawinata, then divorced, and then married by Pakubuwana IV to Kasan Besari, even though she was already pregnant (Guillot, 1985:147).

Peas, peanuts, and beans
Chillies and sweet potatoes
Is all I am good for
Want of feeling, a hapless man

You sent me a batik head-cloth
And a batik shirt, Brother
Yea, many are my thanks
But ,tis not fit I wear them
For me ,tis fit to wear
Skirts of black cloth and black head-cloths
Yea, Ponorogo cottons⁶⁰
Finished is this writing
Written in a rude hut in the fields

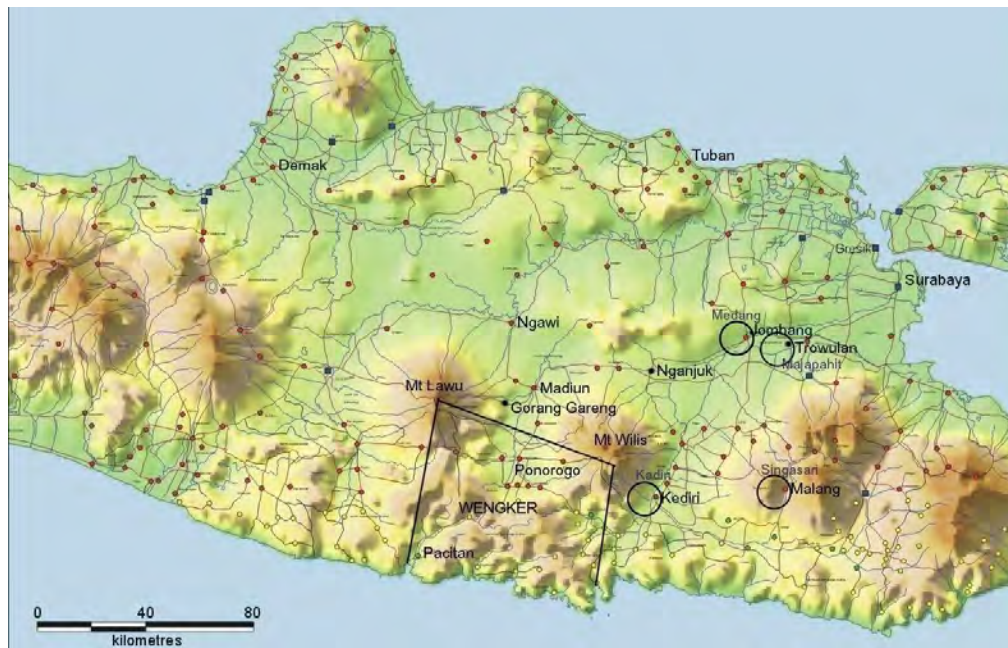
The *Babad Jaka Tingkir* ends abruptly after Ki Ageng Pengging's death and the revelation that that his new-born son, Jaka Tingkir, will be a king. Florida suggests that, by this abrupt end, the writer's intention for this revisionary writing of the past is that it will produce a different type of king; hopefully a „Jaka Tingkir' who will set Java on a “novel historical trajectory” which avoids its colonial present. While the poem cannot determine the shape of this future it “proclaims itself *pusaka*, an object of magic potency that would work to effect, with its readers, the kind of future it envisions.” (Florida, 1995:391)

This vision of the future in the *Babad Jaka Tingkir* is also a part of the *Babad Ponorogo*'s future. Both of these texts reference the dominant *babad* tradition, but also distinguish themselves from it. If the *Babad Jaka Tingkir* was the explicitly strategic writing of displaced royal power “bound together by a thematics of marginality and exclusion” (Florida, 1995:270), the *Babad Ponorogo* seems to be written in tactical

⁶⁰ This reference is to the coarse blue-black (*wulung*) cotton from Ponorogo which, according to Florida, was emblematic of the dress of itinerant *santri*, and of *kyai* and *dukun* (healer/sorcerer) (1995:381n), and today is the dress of another distinctive Ponorogo figure, the *warok*.

response; a remarkable reiteration of past patterns in a time of social transformation, its thematics is of marginality and eventual inclusion.⁶¹

⁶¹ In this context I am referring to de Certeau's distinction between strategies and tactics (1988:34-39) where a strategy is able to produce itself in and through a specific type of knowledge. "The space of a tactic is the space of the other. ... it must play on and with a terrain imposed on it" (1988:34-39).



Wengker in relation to the centres of former Javanese kingdoms



Remains of early 12th century temple in the village of Bedingin



Present-day Tegalsari mosque



Kasan Besari's *langgar* beside the mosque



Kasan Besari's audience seat in the old Tegalsari pesantren



Rude hut in the fields

Islamisation and Javanese Textual Traditions

As products of eighteenth and nineteenth century Central Javanese courts the extant corpus of texts which make up the *Babad Tanah Jawi* were primarily dynastic genealogies concerned with establishing the legitimacy of political power and its progression “in more or (oftentimes) less orderly dynastic succession” (Florida, 1995:270). They do, however, contain considerable variations in their depiction of the nature of the transition of power during this significant period in the Javanese past which need to be understood in relation to what it meant to ‘write history’ in traditional Java.⁶²

Rather than a quest for the scientific recuperation of the past, the “writing of history” in Java is not characterised by the forensic separation of pasts from presents and futures (Florida, 1995:398). The Javanese textual world is a deeply intertextual and heterogeneous one. All phenomena are connected through a complex web of coincidences, *kebetulan*’ (lit. a ‘truth’), which in this context means “the way things happen” (Becker in Ferzacca, 2001:21) a sense of correspondence, coming into alignment, or forming “an aesthetic pattern” (Geertz in Ferzacca, 2001:21).⁶³ Writers, acting either as scribes or composers, juxtaposed older textual fragments and contemporary circumstances in order to make their audience aware of these patterns of coincidence. “Juxtapositions work in many ways,” putting both text and contemporary experiences into a dialogue of mutual contextualisation and explication, thus causing “phenomena to enter history” (Vickers, 1990:176-177). Phenomena which “we would call ‘mythical’ or ‘legendary’” reference what is “significant in people’s lives through their relationship to larger patterns of significance” (Vickers, 1990:177-178). “In its most active sense”, Florida explains, “the ‘writing of history’ in Java prophesies its own future in ways that work to bring that future about” (1995:397). This historiographical tradition and the importance of commemoration as “a presence to the plurality of times ... not limited to the past” (1988:218n) shares much in common with de Certeau (see discussion 1988:77-90). The logic of the incorporation of certain fragments then points to both the writer’s intention and their contemporary context.

⁶² For a discussion of this major *babad* tradition and its variations see (Florida, 1995:265-268; Ricklefs, 1972).

⁶³ For discussions of the meaning of ‘coincidence’ see both Ferzacca (2001:21-24) and Vickers (1990:169-170).

The *Babad Ponorogo*, in contrast to the dominant accounts of the peaceful transition of the Javanese courts, describes Islamisation in terms of violent conflict over religion. This “(past) present” (Florida, 1995:403) character of its writing may provide an answer to the significance of the *Babad Ponorogo*’s particular depiction. But before turning to the account of Ponorogo’s Islamisation, I want to look at another aristocratic text - the *Babad Jaka Tingkir* - of which Nancy Florida provides an extended reading. This is because, in presenting a variant account to that of the dominant court tradition, this text mediates the *Babad Ponorogo* in two ways. Firstly, it illustrates the importance of the relationship between the writer’s intention and their particular circumstances, and secondly because it contains references to Bathara Katong, the man credited with Wengker’s Islamisation, as well as providing us with an outsider’s perception of the character of early nineteenth-century Ponorogo.

The Islamisation of Ponorogo

Conversion of the Javanese hinterland is conventionally attributed to nine Sufi masters, known as the *Wali Songo* (Nine Saints), who were sent to strategic provinces of Majapahit to propagate the faith by Sunan Nampeldenta, a nephew of the princess of Champa who was married to Majapahit’s last king, Brawijaya V. There is no mention of Wengker being included in this proselytising mission. The *Babad Ponorogo* attributes conversion to Bathara Katong, a descendent of Majapahit. While there are a number of divergent versions of this text (Moelyadi, 1986; PKDP, 1996; Purwowijoyo, 1984; Rachmat, 1969), they all have core episodes in common which I have summarised as follows:

Within the chaotic environment surrounding the disintegration of Majapahit a court official from the province of Wengker, Demang Suryangalam, also rebelled. Blaming the weakness of the government for the empire’s decline, he admonished the king and returned to Wengker, to the village of Kutu, where he became known as Ki Ageng Kutu. Kutu was a man of great sakti (magical power) and a strong adherent of the pre-Islamic religion, agama buda. He founded a school for mysticism and martial arts (paguron) where he taught his pupils, known as warok, martial arts and invulnerability (Jv. uleting kulit

atosing balung = to toughen one's body; to make oneself magically invulnerable). The source of Kutu's strength was a magically-empowered kris (dagger), Kyai Rawe Puspito.⁶⁴

Kutu's failure to appear at court led the king, Brawijaya V, to send his son, Bathara Katong, who did not yet have an appanage, to meet the rebel. In this task he was accompanied by a man named Seloaji ("as strong as a rock"). When they arrived in Wengker they met a man from the village of Mirah, Ki Ageng Mirah, who had already converted to Islam and who also had the aim of overthrowing Kutu because he still strongly held to the old religion. It was therefore natural that these three would join forces, but Ki Ageng Mirah wanted Bathara Katong first to embrace Islam and to accomplish this it was sufficient that he only recite the Kalimat Suci (syahadat = the Islamic profession of faith). Previously Ki Ageng Mirah had felt that he could not face Kutu because he could not equal his magic power, but now he was allied with Bathara Katong, a descendant of Majapahit, he felt that this was no longer the case.

Seeing Kutu's organised following of pupils Bathara Katong realised that he would not be able to achieve his goal. He decided to return to Majapahit to report on Kutu's strength and to discuss with his father the best method of overthrowing him. When Bathara Katong reached Majapahit he was advised by the king to go to Bintara (another name for Demak), where the Islamic wali had gathered.⁶⁵ At Bintara he took lessons in religious knowledge and then, with a force of Islamic soldiers, returned to Wengker.

Bathara Katong was at first unsuccessful in battles with Kutu and so withdrew to meditate. He was then given a sign that he should wed Kutu's daughter, Niken Gandini, so that she could steal her father's powerful kris. The final battle began at night on the eve of Jum'at Wage (Friday coinciding with the day Wage of the five-day Javanese week). Discovering that his kris was missing Kutu was forced to flee and was pursued by Bathara Katong's men.

⁶⁴ „Rawe’ is a plant whose hairy leaves cause itching and skin rash, „puspita’ is a flower. According to Moelyadi this *kris*, when used in battle, emitted a dazzling light temporarily blinding all who looked at it and also making the whole body itch. Those who were pierced by the blade would instantly be turned to dust (1986:132).

⁶⁵ Bintara is another name for Demak, the first Islamic sultanate in Java. It means “a sweet grass”. Florida says that Demak is also known by the name “Glagah-wangi” (fragrant sugarcane) (1995:158, 133n).

The battle is recorded in the names of villages through which the chase took place: desa Kepuh Gosong (Burnt Kepuh) is where Kutu hid behind a kepuh tree which was then burnt down by Katong's men; desa Mojomati (Dead Mojo) is where another refuge, a mojo tree, was chopped down; and desa Kebatan (Speed) was where Kutu was almost caught before he was able to gather speed and evade capture. Eventually Kutu disappeared up a hill, now known as Bukit Bacin (Putrid Hill), where the men heard a supernatural voice (suara pesan) saying that Kutu had surrendered and then shortly after a smell of putrefaction filled the air.

After this victory Bathara Katong became Adipati ("Prince-Regent") of Ponorogo, with Seloaji as his patih (vice Regent), and Ki Ageng Mirah as penghulu (head of religion), and the area was renamed Panaraga, said to be derived from the Sanskrit words ,pramana raga' (a complete awareness of oneself).⁶⁶

While versions differ on whether Bathara Katong was a Muslim before his initial journey to Wengker, and whether he was sent there by either the Majapahit king or the new Sultan of Demak, his descent from the last Majapahit king is a common factor.

Historically, his identity is unclear because, like Brawijaya V, the last king of Majapahit, Bathara Katong is also a title. ,*Katong*' is Old Javanese for ,king' and ,*bhatāra*' is a title given to a male deity.⁶⁷ The last king of Majapahit is credited with a prolific number of offspring. According to Rachmat the royal family tree (*serat darah inggih*), held by the head of the village of Setono (where Bathara Katong is buried) at the time of her research, shows that Brawijaya V had 117 children and his 22nd wife, *pangrémbre* from Bagelan, had a son, Raden Jaka Pituran or Raden Arak-Kali who then became the Adipati of Ponorogo under the name of Bathara Katong (1969:18). This is substantiated by other sources, albeit with minor variations.⁶⁸ Raffles, on the

⁶⁶ An adipati was a semiautonomous ruler. Florida translates it as "prince-regent" (1995:96n). According to Purwowijoyo ,*pramana*' means "a deep understanding of the inner and outer aspects of being" (*wis ngerti sakabehané, lahir lan batin*) and ,*raga*' means ,body' (1990:16). Adam says the name is derived from ,*pan*' and ,*raga*' meaning ,sacred endeavour' due to the deep impression a hermit monk made on Bathara Katong on one of his trips to Panaraga (1938b:277).

⁶⁷ Siva, for example, was variously known as Siva-Bhatāra, Bhatāra Kala, or Bhatāra Guru.

⁶⁸ *Garwa pangrémbre* is a wife of the second rank (Ricklefs 1993:179). Bathara Katong's descent from Brawijaya V also appears in the *Serat Centhini Volume III*, where the king is credited with around 101 offspring (Soehardji in

other hand, relates that Panji Diwírio was appointed chief of Ponorogo by the Majapahit king with the title of Bathara Katong (1830b:134), but he does not give us any further information.

Evidence that Bathara Katong did live in this time of transition is provided by his grave complex located in the village of Setono. A large stone slab (*watu gilang*) lying at the first gateway is thought to inscribe in *sangkala* (chronogram) form the year of Bathara Katong's investiture (*penobatan*) in 1496.⁶⁹ Umiati Rachmat, an archaeology student who conducted a detailed study of the site, concluded that the walls of the complex, built in the red brick of the Majapahit period, and the presence of a second stone slab, inscribed with Javanese characters, dated at 1396, indicate that the site was a previous seat of authority. Inside of these walls the foundations of a later building, thought to be the original mosque, indicate that the complex was built, as was the custom of the time, on a previous sacred site (Rachmat, 1969:49-65); thereby appropriating its authority. There is a reference to this effect in the *Serat Centhini*, a Javanese poem written in the 1820s:

...

"Kang liningan turira

inggi ing Kedaton lami

sapoenika karan Katongan kewala

213: Mangkya dadya pamakaman

pasareanipoen goesti

Betara Katong minoelya" (in Rachmat, 1969:54)

This can be translated as:

Putranto, 2003:231), and in the *Babad Jaka Tingkir II:26* (in Florida, 1995:102). According to Florida Brawijaya V was said to have 111 children (1995:300).

⁶⁹ *Sangkala* use a variety of codes to date events. Because the codes they employ have to be read they record not only numerical, but also meaningful time (Florida, 1995:68). This first *sangkala*, from left to right, consists of a man; a shrimp (or a tree)?, a garuda, and an elephant has been variously interpreted. As Ricklefs points out, "Interpreting such chronograms is indeed notoriously difficult (unless one knows in advance what the outcome must be, of course) (1998:132)." Dutch epigraphers deciphered the date as Śaka 1318 (1396 CE) (Rachmat, 1969:50), while local government research, using both Bratakésawa's *Katrangan Tjandrasangkala* and the example of other similar stones in Java interpret it as Śaka 1418 (1496 CE) (PKDP, 1996:39-43).

*“The one who is enshrouded
yes in the old palace
is simply because it was a kingdom
213: And now is a sepulchre
the burial place of a lord
no other than Bathara Katong”*

While the complex contains the graves of his wives and children, as well as that of Ki Ageng Mirah and Seloaji, Bathara Katong’s grave stands alone covered by a massive *cungkub*, built in the distinctive Ponorogo style, and enclosed by a carved timber structure which, Rachmat explains, can be likened to a medallion commonly found in temples.⁷⁰ This medallion features clouds in the shape of *cakra* (a wheel), snakes, and *garuda* (a mythical eagle-like bird) traditionally associated with Vishnu and liberation. Rachmat compares the artwork of the medallion to the themes of the Sukuh temple which was built in the mid fifteenth century on the slopes of Mt Lawu. The medallion is flanked on the left and right by Arabic lettering of the *syahadat* and the words ‘Allah’ and ‘Muhammad’ decorated with plant motifs (Rachmat, 1969:61-64). All of which is consistent with the cultural negotiation between Islam and indigenous Javanese religious cosmology which occurred in this transitional period, and which is a feature of much of its architecture, such as the Demak Mosque, the Kudus Tower, and the Tegalsari Mosque in Ponorogo.

At this stage it is important to point out that the particular period of Islamisation under discussion was not the first exposure of Java to Islamic traditions. The generally accepted hypothesis is that a gradual infiltration of a more culturally-inclusive Islam occurred much earlier through the Javanese courts via merchants from India, and that this Islam, filtered through Persian and Indian religious experiences, was imbued with a strong mystical Sufi element.⁷¹

⁷⁰ A *cungkub* is an open structure consisting of four poles and a tiled pitched roof. They are very common in old village graveyards in Java, but are not a part of Islamic graves which should be very simple. In Java there are indications that ‘charnel houses’ raised on posts were used for secondary burial prior to the period of Indianisation (Stutterheim in Bellwood, 1997:152).

⁷¹ Evidence for this early penetration comes from gravestones with Islamic inscriptions at Trowulan dated Śaka 1290 (1368 CE), and at Tralaya; the oldest of which is dated Śaka 1298 (1376 CE). Dating in the Śaka era indicates that

Cultural negotiation, however, is not a feature of the *Babad Ponorogo*. The account of Islamisation it portrays articulates with Javanese historiography to predict its own future, and, similarly to the Kalang origin stories in the first section (see page 37 above), the transformation it effects is a distinctively local and non-aristocratic one. Bathara Katong's victory places Ponorogo firmly within Java's and its own Islamic future. At the same time this victory, won through battle, so similar to that of Haji Wengker against Airlangga in the eleventh century, establishes Ponorogo's heroic and resilient ethos embodied in the culture of *reog*, which will be the subject of the next part of this chapter. In this context Bathara Katong's Majapahit heritage is crucial to crafting a uniquely local harmonisation of ideologically heterogeneous traditions necessary to the transition of power. Embodying potent pre-Islamic power Bathara Katong is able to muster the guile and charisma to steal Kutu's magic weapon through his marriage to Kutu's daughter, while his conversion to Islam contains and mediates this power, and his royal heritage legitimates his right to rule. The smelly vanishing of Ki Ageng Kutu, however, is a reminder that his victory was not a complete one.

The use of fragrance to attract spirits is well known. In Ponorogo *minyak wangi* (fragrant oil), incense, and flowers, especially rose petals and jasmine buds, form a standard part of many offerings. I had never thought about the significance of malodour until I read about the association of stench with a thief who robs his own neighbours in Sasak society (Telle, 2002). In the defeat of Kutu malodour is also vital. I was often told that those possessing great *ilmu* find it difficult to die. As a precautionary measure every corpse is bathed with *kelor* (*Moringa oleifera*) leaves to wash out (*melunturkan*) any *ilmu* that may still cling to the body. That Kutu, a powerful warok, a man of great *sakti* and possessing the power of invulnerability, proved an invincible foe is demonstrated in his ability to evade capture. Yet his refusal to convert required his elimination. He is not killed, but vanishes (*moksa*) in the tradition of so many of Java's icons. Possessing ambivalent power, and not of royal blood, or a Sufi saint, this vanishing is not signified by a blaze of light. Siti Jenar, for example, in the *Babad Jaka Tingkir*, "ascends to heaven in a flash of brilliant, fragrant light" (Florida, 1995:364).

the graves of those of Javanese, rather than foreign Muslims, while the gravestones at Tralaya, because of their location near the Majapahit court, may be evidence that they were members of the royal family (Ricklefs, 1985:36-37).

As Telle points out, given that invulnerability concentrates on fortifying the body by making it impermeable, the smell of putrefaction therefore symbolises the breaching of these boundaries (2002:77) and a purifying, in the sensuous sense, a deodorising of Kutu's power. Siegel also describes the odour of death, that of a decaying corpse, as being particularly disturbing for Javanese. The fact that smell cannot be avoided means that "odor has a closer connection to experience than sight or sound." Detachment is therefore disrupted, leaving the status of the corpse problematic (1983:9-10).

Today in the village of Bancangan, Sambit, a large rock in the tiled floor of a modern open *pendopo* marks the spot of Kutu's vanishing. Built beside a small pond, called Belik Bacin (Foul-Smelling Pool), said to have gained its unpleasant odour after this event, it signifies ongoing connection, power and purification. This structure was built in 1990 by a businessman from the neighbouring regency of Tulungagung who had gained commercial success after meditating on the spot. It is particularly popular on the eve of Javanese New Year (*Suro*) which is regarded as the most magically-charged night of the year when people frequent high, holy, or haunted places to seek good fortune.

If this were an historiographical review there would be a lot more to record of Ponorogo's involvement in opportunistic, ill-planned and ill-fated rebellions which formed the terrain of Java's, and later Indonesia's, historical trajectory. This involvement, however, only receives cursory mention in works concerned with larger power plays between political centres. Although, through details such as numbers of casualties, recurring raids and battles, disrupted agricultural production, famine, and disease, it is possible to glean a sense of the sometimes devastating consequences rebellion wrought on Ponorogo, these works provide very little insight into local interpretations. It is this local perspective I have attempted to distil from the preceding sections.



The site of Ki Ageng Kutu's vanishing



Government officials dressed as warok at Bathara Katong's grave on the eve of Suro

This long tradition of heroic defeat has become a defining ethos which is celebrated in the performance and culture of *reog*.

Reog as Ethos

“[Ponorogo] is noted all over Java for the violence of its inhabitants, for the radicalism of its politics, and for the great amount of male homosexuality which is said to occur there.” (Geertz, 1976:298)

This comment on the reputation of Ponorogo, written as an aside by Clifford Geertz in reference to the origin of wandering dance troupes which regularly visited Modjokuto during his fieldwork in the 1950s, is in a similar vein to the quote which began this chapter. In a sense we have come full circle because it is, in fact, difficult to find a quote about the character of Ponorogo that doesn't mention its association with violence, magic, criminality, or homosexuality. While for outsiders these traits are mostly seen in a negative light, for Ponorogans, on the other hand, they are part of a distinguishing identity; an identity which is underpinned by *reog* and the integral part it plays in the culture of Ponorogo.

Throughout his multidisciplinary career Gregory Bateson was searching for the complex interconnections between individual consciousness, and the cultural and biological systems of which they are a part. An important part of these patterns of connectedness, he concluded, was “*aesthetic*” (1978, emphasis in the original). From his earlier ethnography Bateson adopted the term “ethos” to describe the aesthetic patterns of a particular culture. In anthropology, ethos, “the moral (and aesthetic) aspects of a given culture” expressed in behaviour and feeling, is distinguished from “world view”, which denotes meaning, or the cognitive and existential aspects of reality (Geertz, 1957). According to Clifford Geertz, the fundamental and sacred dimensions of ethos and world view are mutually confirmed through ritual by demonstrating “a meaningful relation between the values a people holds and the general order of existence within which [they find themselves]” (1957).

As Geertz makes clear, however, the very dialectical and subtle nature of this fusion prevents the exposition of a rigorous theory. Geertz' characterisation, in the same

article, of the French ethic as “a logical legalism is a response to the notion that reality is rationally structured, that first principles are clear, precise, and unalterable and so need only be discerned, memorized, and deductively applied to concrete cases” (1957) may explain a French disposition for rigorous theories. A notable exception to this rule, and one who has been criticised for presenting us [in contrast to that of his compatriots Bourdieu and Foucault] with what is “much better described as a theology” rather than a coherent theory (Mitchell, 2007:91), is Michel de Certeau. While Mitchell was referring to the influence of his religious vocation on his ideas, de Certeau himself saw the “theological” as an expansive counter approach to the limiting “artificial techniques” of “scientific work” (1988:6). In this respect his approach, and his appreciation of the aesthetic as an instrument of contextual responsiveness, shares much with Bateson. In *The Practice of Everyday Life* de Certeau was interested in popular culture. His description of the creation of a “*utopian space*” which allows for “an *ethical* protest” where the miraculous overturns the injustice of an order in which “the powerful” always win, or at the very least where cunning and dexterity are able to create “a certain play in that order” (1988:16-18), very much encompasses ethos and world view.

The oft-quoted Javanese saying, although less common today, “*nagara mawa tata, desa mawa cara* (the realm has its order and the villages their customs)” is a reflection of this differentiation between aristocrat and countryside. The previous sections of this chapter have shown that Ponorogo belongs to this latter category. I will now examine how this experience has been embodied in an ethos.

A *Reyog* Performance

Reog, pronounced ,réok’, is the Indonesianised form of the Javanese ,*réyog*’, a generic term given to a wide variety of public entertainments featuring masked dance, humour and satire, which are performed throughout Java. I have used the word ,*reog*’ up to this point to avoid confusion, but as it only became current in the 1980s with the move towards the national homogenisation of cultural practices, a process I will describe later in this section, I will use the Javanese ,*reyog*’ to distinguish between performances predating this period.

Within the main area of performance, the southwest of East Java between Solo and Kediri (see Kartomi, 1976: Map 1), a place name is used to define its particular style, such as *reyog* Madiun or *reyog* Kediri or, in the case of *reyog thik*, to denote the type of barong mask used; but only “in the *réyog* of Ponorogo does a Javanese barong appear as a character in a full-scale ‘historical’ drama” (Mahmudi, Pigeaud in Beatty, 1999:60).⁷²

In Ponorogo a performance is composed of a series of scenes delineated from each other by musical silence. In the 1970s performances, although centred on core main characters, were also open to a great deal of variability. The following description, taken from ethnomusicologist Margaret Kartomi’s (1976) account of a performance in Ponorogo in 1971, is a good example.⁷³

It began with *jaran képang* (hobby-horse) performed by handsome boys dressed in costumes resembling those of “*satria* (knights) in the commercial *ketoprak* or *wayang wong* theatre”. Heavily made up, the masculine makeup sign ‘Λ’ drawn between their feminine “new moon” style eyebrows to emphasise their gender, they rode painted hobby-horses of plaited bamboo and danced with “impassive and downcast faces” accompanied by a gamelan ensemble in the Ponorogo style (1976:85-88).⁷⁴ The following scenes featured the other main characters. Bujang Ganong with his red ogre-like mask, also known as *gëndruwon*, from *gëndruwo* (malevolent spirit), who performed comic antics mocking and teasing the serious hobby-horse dancers, “sometimes provoking them and then retreating in an impressively gymnastic way” (1976:90).⁷⁵

⁷² *Reyog thik* is performed in Trenggalek where the barong mask’s jaw is moveable and creates a clicking sound (Jv. *thik*) (Simatupang, 2002:114).

⁷³ This performance included additional clown figures.

⁷⁴ Women would have the feminine makeup style ‘!’ drawn between the eyebrows (Kartomi 1976:86n).

⁷⁵ This character also features in other areas of Java, where he is known by various names, including Gendruwon, Bujang Anung (outstanding young man), Pujangga Anom (young scholar), and also Kedokan in Ponorogo. In Pacitan and Blora he is known as Wongwongan, and Jakalodra (wild man) in Yogyakarta and Blora. He is also known as *tjèpètan*, *tètèk mèlèk* or *–mèlèk*, *budjangganung*, or *–ganong*, and *budjangganom* or *–ganung* (Kartomi 1976:106). *Pujongga* (or sometimes *bhujangga*) was also a spiritual-literary office at Javanese courts dating from the time of Majapahit (Florida 1995:38n).

The dramatic highlight occurred with the *reyog keliling* (reyog parade) in which all the characters appear together with “the great pageant-figure Barong”, “that famous mythical animal of Javanese and Balinese tradition” who in this instance combines the peacock (*merak*), the mythical lion (*singa*), and the tiger (*macan*). The style of this barong is unique to Ponorogo. It is an enormous construction featuring a fierce-looking life-sized tiger head with exaggerated fangs, surrounded by hundreds of peacock feathers which are fastened on a large woven bamboo frame. “The blue-green mass of feathers shone brilliantly in the sunlight as it swayed about in graceful waves, high above the heads of the crowd” (1976:91); no doubt the reason it is commonly known as *dhadhak merak* (peacock fan). “[A] yet grander entry was made by the Barong’s chief foe” – Klana Sewandana. Also a red-masked character, but more finely-featured, similar to Central Javanese *Klana Topeng* and the East Javanese *Topeng Malang*, he wore a *kris* (Javanese dagger) and carried a *pusaka* (sacred heirloom), a whip, Pecut Samandiman. As befitting a king (Kelana Sewandana is the antagonist king from the Panji tales, the “ferocious king ,from overseas’ who desires Chandra Kirana” (Yousof, Kaeh in Simatupang, 2002:106) his dance movements, in contrast to those of Bujang Ganong, although “abrupt and kasar”, were “restrained and self-controlled, a satria [noble warrior]”.⁷⁶ In the battle between the *kasaktian* (magic power “attained through meditation and self-control) of the king ... and the chaotic, chthonic power of the Barong” the king was able to gain only a temporary victory (1976:94).

Origins

Although the meaning of *reyog*’ is unknown, most writers make reference to Pigeaud’s suggestion that “the modern Javanese reyog dancing performance, a sham fight, probably is to be connected with ancient military lore” (in Kartomi, 1976:105; Simatupang, 2002:25). This interpretation was based on its similarity to an Old Javanese word *ꦲꦒꦫꦺꦪꦺꦴꦏ꧀*, which appeared in a canto of the fourteenth century poem, *Nāgarakṛtāgama*, describing the gathering of various groups of soldiers in front of a palace gate. In a more recent thesis Lono Simatupang has challenged this long-held view. Citing other similar-sounding Old Javanese words, he suggests that *ꦲꦒꦫꦺꦪꦺꦴꦏ꧀*

⁷⁶ *Kasar*’ (coarse, unrefined) is the opposite of Javanese kings who are *alus*’ (refined) and indexes the king’s foreign origins.

may equally refer to the assortment of troops, rather than their military nature.⁷⁷ He goes on to explain that, in contrast to European classifications based on more formal characteristics, Javanese folk art forms are often grouped together according to their similar atmospheres, and so the name *reyog* may denote no more than its lively and festive atmosphere (2002:25-26).

According to Moelyadi, a local historian, the origin and evolution of *reyog* is intimately tied to that of Java itself; a history that is told in the merging of cultures and the rise and fall of kingdoms (1986:4). *Reyog* is indeed a combination of several separate elements which attest to this ancient heritage. The mutual artistic influences between court and village are evident in its musical characteristics which, in common with the more *alus* music associated with the courts, contain “strong elements of chthonic unruliness [combined] with a background of ... musical order”, while its rather unruly and unrestrained style locates *reyog* as “a distinctively rural artistic form” (Kartomi, 1976:97-105). From its structural elements it seems that the probable military origin of the *jaran képang* dance “became associated with various ancient magico-religious rituals, including eroticism and fertility beliefs ..., and the possession of entranced dancers by animal and ancestral spirits” (Kartomi, 1976:105). These in turn were overlaid by legends from the Panji cycle and the addition of several characters taken from Ponorogo folklore, namely Klana Séwandana and Dewi Songgolangit (Wilson, 1999:3).⁷⁸

There are two main stories, with numerous permutations, relating to the origin of *reyog* which identify it firmly with Ponorogo. The first, a tale of political rebellion in which *reyog* was used as a satirical art form to mock the Majapahit king, involves Ki Ageng Kutu from the *Babad Ponorogo*. Here the *barong* mask represented the king, while the crowning peacock feathers represented the king’s domination by his Chinese consort.

⁷⁷ Zoetmulder translated *ꦲꦶꦒꦺꦴꦏ꧀* as “a name of a corps of *kraton* (palace) troops” based on the context in which it appears in the *Nāgarakṛtāgama*. Simatupang states that, rather than a noun, *ꦲꦶꦒꦺꦴꦏ꧀* is most probably a verb because *ꦲꦶ* is a verb modifier. As modifiers can also be added to similar-sounding verbs, such as *ꦶꦏ꧀*, meaning “to mix, throw together, mix up (jumble), or make one, unite”; and *ꦶꦒ꧀*, which “suggests the notion of heterogeneity” as well as “disorder, disarray, or chaotic” this would equally fit the context in which the word was used (2002:25-26).

⁷⁸ Panji stories are widespread throughout Indonesia and the Malay peninsula. They probably originated in Java in the thirteenth or fourteenth centuries, and involve princes and kings who travelled around “acquiring wives and fighting wars” (Vickers, 1993:63). Klana Sewandana is a character in Panji tales from the southern mountains.

Pujangga Anom, who teased the king through his comic acrobatics, represented Kutu himself, and the weak and ineffectual Majapahit army was represented by the feminine-looking male hobbyhorse dancers.

The second is a group of stories set in the Kadiri period. They concern Klana Sewandana, the king of a past kingdom of Ponorogo, named Bantarangin.⁷⁹ On his way to make an official proposal for the hand of the princess of Daha (Kediri), Dewi Songgolanggit (Goddess of the Nine Heavens), the king, accompanied by cavalry troops and his chief minister, Pujangga Anom, are embroiled in battle with troops led by the magically powerful Singa Barong, who is able to transform himself into a tiger. In the bitter fighting that ensues Singa Barong is defeated by the king's magic whip. When the king eventually reaches Daha it seems that the princess is unwilling to marry him because she demands an extraordinary bride price. According to the particular version of the story, this is variously a set of gamelan instruments that have never been played in the world; an art form that has never been performed in the world; or the construction of an underground tunnel to link the two kingdoms. In the ending to the story a joint heir to both thrones never eventuates. This is variously because the princess flees, is found hiding in a cave, and is turned into stone; the king abandons his plan to marry the princess because his spiritual teacher tells him that the marriage will be barren; or the marriage takes place, but the princess, unable to bear a child, commits suicide. The enactment of *reyog* then, representing the procession to Daha and the defeat of Singa Barong, acted either to console the king, or to commemorate his sacrifice for the benefit of the kingdom.

These stories would seem to reinforce Ponorogo's warrior tradition and its marginal sociopolitical position, but, as Kartomi points out, they are neither an integral part of a performance, nor do they provide it with a dramatic base (1976:111).

Traditionally *reyog*, unlike many other Javanese entertainments, was a participatory medium. The audience contributed through "blood-curdling yells, sardonic ululations,

⁷⁹ "Bantarangin" (above the wind) normally refers to "lands north of the equator". In this story it was located in the hamlet of Sebata in Sumoroto, a village about 13 kilometres west of the town of Ponorogo. Sumoroto is an area known for its frequent high winds, and Bantarangin is said to be derived from *bantêr* (strong) and *angin* (wind) (Fauzanafi, 2002:56; Simatupang, 2002:97).

humorous comments” and “rhythmic chanting” (Kartomi 1976:86), and became part of the parade as it snaked its way through villages. Held on community occasions, such as village cleansing and rain-making ceremonies; or for private purposes, especially marriage, circumcision, life cycle rites, and as part of *slametan*, it took place during the daytime and, depending on circumstances, lasted anywhere from thirty minutes to several hours.

Political and Social Associations

Reyog’s resilience, however, lies in its extraordinary versatility and its ability to speak to changing social, artistic, and political conditions. This was especially evident in the highly-politicised atmosphere after Indonesian Independence when *reyog* was used extensively by political parties. (Geertz’ comment which began this section was probably made with this period in mind.) Villages were known for their *reyog* groups representing the Nationalist Party (PNI), Nahdatul Ulama (NU), and especially the Communist Party (PKI). Competition between troupes was intense and violent clashes were common. The prominent involvement of the Communist Party resulted in the widespread death and destruction of groups during the Madiun Affair in 1948, and again in the systematic killings which followed the Communist coup of 1965 (Fauzanafi, 2002:151-152; Wilson, 1997:23-25). One acquaintance expressed his great sadness at the sight of majestic *barong* masks burning at this later time. After this *reyog* disappeared for five years, although NU introduced an alternative form, known as *gagah-gagahan* (elephant dance), which featured a young boy riding an elephant accompanied by Arabic music (Fauzanafi, 2002:152). I did see one of these performances during my fieldwork, but they are rare. In the 1971 general election *reyog* reappeared, this time used by Golkar (the main government party of the time) to ensure a large vote among villagers. *Reyog*’s overt use in political campaigns came to end in 1972 when laws forbidding its affiliation with political parties were introduced.

However, *reyog*’s more controversial aspects stem from the social figures of the *warok* and the *gemblak*. *Warok* are indeed interesting characters; seeming to turn aristocratic values on their head. The *warok* tradition probably has its origins in a peculiarly local form of the vernacular Tantrism which came to the fore with the political move from central to East Java in the 10th century. *Warok* certainly bear striking similarities to

some of Java's most beloved heroes, such as Ken Angrok (1222-27), the founder of the Singasari dynasty, and the *wali* (Sufi master), Sunan Kalijaga, who were both thieves and gamblers before fulfilling their illustrious destinies. During the colonial period *warok* are most often mentioned as leaders of wandering performing troupes known for their great strength and agility as well as their magical and spiritual powers, known as *kanuragan* (martial and magical arts). They were skilled in *pencak silat*, the Malay form of martial art, invulnerable (*kebal*) to weapons, and often leaders of criminal bands. The Indonesian historian Onghokham, sees *warok* as a special type of *jago* (literally 'fighting cock') in the Ponorogo area who, in former times, played a key role in protecting his village and defending its possessions in battles with other villages (1975:66-67). Some have equated 'warok' with 'wêruk', meaning very big. This may be a reason why during the Mataram period Ponorogo was chosen to supply men for the royal games held on the Monday audiences at court (Onghokham, 1975:45). The *Sêrat Cênthini*⁸⁰ makes reference to *warok genggek*, wearing distinctive clothes - large triangular headscarfs and loose-fitting long-sleeved black shirts and trousers (in Simatupang, 2002:52-53).

The most notorious aspect of the *warok* was their association with beautiful young boys, between 12 and 16, known as *gemblak*, who often took the part of *jathil* (hobby-horse dancers) in *reyog* performances. The practice of keeping *gemblak* stemmed from the prohibition against sexual relations with women, which was said to lessen supernatural power. *Gemblak* were applied for in the same way as a wife; the parents of the boy receiving payment in the form of a cow for every year that the boy was with the *warok*. During this time he would be responsible for the boy's living expenses and education. *Warok* were fiercely possessive of their *gemblak* who were often the cause of violent and deadly conflicts (Wilson, 1999:5-6).

Because of their local status, somewhere between a bandit and a hero, and their questionable sexuality, the Dutch regarded *warok* as troublemakers and often pursued and captured them. *Reyog* was also viewed as dangerous because, in the words of one administrator, it "attracts large numbers of people seeking *adji djaja kewidjajan*

⁸⁰ The *Sêrat Cênthini*, composed in the early 19th century, is an encyclopaedia of Javanese culture. *Geng* is a literary variation of *ageng* (Jv. big).

(supernatural power), which undoubtedly poses a threat to security” (Wilson, 1997:23).⁸¹ Both *reyog* and the *warok* tradition were banned altogether in 1912 after the death of two renowned *warok* in a *bacokan* (knife fight). This ban did not stop performances, but forced them underground. It was finally lifted in 1936 with the provision that in Ponorogo only one performance at a time was to be held, and this was to be under the supervision of the colonial authorities (Fauzanafi, 2002:147-149). This rocky relationship with colonial authority continued during the Japanese occupation when *reyog* was labelled as a “prohibited movement” (*gerakan terlarang*) (Wilson, 1997:23).

Many older people I interviewed talked about the prevalence of *warok* when they were young. Their black clothes, they said, made others “fearful” (*seram*) because they gave the impression of “dangerous power” (*kelihatan angker*). At the end of the Muslim fasting month *warok* would parade in the *aloon-aloon* wearing necklaces of firecrackers which they would set alight to show off their powers of invulnerability. *Warok* became less evident in the period 1965 to 1970 when people were afraid that wearing black clothes would associate them with the Communist Party. Today *warok* outfits can be bought at markets in Ponorogo. They have, in fact, become something of a cultural symbol with male government employees dressing as *warok* during the annual *reog* festival.

National Incorporation and Reification

In 1985, under the auspices of the East Javanese Cultural Preservation Project, *reyog* was chosen as the official art form for the regency. Now branded as *Reog Ponorogo*, this heralded the beginning of a reification process. Performances were standardised and judged, according to fixed criteria by professionals, at a National Reog Festival held as part of Javanese New Year celebrations (*Grebeg Suro*).⁸² As a result *reog* now

⁸¹ This comment seems to bear similarities to the fear of colonial administrators in India in the 19th and 20th century of which Urban says, “the Tantras were an object of fear and intense anxiety among the colonial authorities, who suspected them of revolutionary agitation and subversive plots. ... it would seem the fear of violent, subversive political activities often went hand in hand with the fear of transgressive or immoral practices among the natives under their rule (1999:132).” This fear, however, is not only restricted to European colonial authorities. It was also a component of the Suharto government’s Petrus killings in the 1980s (Barker, 1998; Campbell & Connor, 2000:82-84).

⁸² Performances were based on the *Foundation Manual for Art Reog as National Cultural Performance (Pedoman Dasar Kesenian Reog dalam Pentas Budaya Bangsa)* which acts as a “*pakem*” (source, standard) to set down a

exists in two forms – as structured cultural performance, known as *Art Reog* or *Reog Festival*; and a participatory or village form, known as *Reog Obyogan* or *Reog Desa* – a process which has been well documented by Fauzanafi (2002), Grunden (1999), Simatupang (2002), and Wilson (1997). In keeping with the concept of “cultural preservation” (*pelestarian budaya*), and the predominant position of Islam, Art Reog, and the discourse that surrounds it, privileges the history of Ponorogo’s founding and Islamisation by Bathara Katong, and its past links to royalty.⁸³ Art Reog, mostly staged at night, takes place on official occasions, such as Indonesian Independence Day, the annual Reog Festival, official Regency programs, and on the night of the full moon (*bulan purnama*); and lasts around forty minutes. In keeping with its construction as a “cultural resource” Art Reog has been cleansed of the eroticism (*erotisme*), crudity (*kasar*) and spontaneity (*tidak teratur*) of the street form (Fauzanafi, 2002:187). Young women now perform the role of *jathil*; the practice of keeping *gemblak* and its overtones of homosexuality being regarded as at odds with “national identity (*kepribadian bangsa*)” (Fauzanafi, 2002:164-165). *Warok*, rather than shadowy and powerful unseen figures, now appear as characters at the beginning of a performance, dressed in warok outfits replete with artificial moustaches and beards, and hair drawn in black paste on their bared chests, to give the impression of formidable masculine strength and power.

There is also now an official version of the origin story - that of “Klana Wuyung” (*wuyung Jv. ltry. sad, bewildered*), a king, caught in the midst of romantic love (*tengah kasmaran*), who departs to propose to Dewi Songgolangit. But this story is also an historic, religious and educative one. Just like Sunan Kalijaga, Bathara Katong is reputed to have used the language of art as a proselytising medium to spread the religion of Islam.⁸⁴ In order to adapt it to the teaching of Islam he changed the name of

final fixed form (*bentuk yang sudah baku*) and establish uniformity (*keseragaman*) in order to preserve (*lestari*) and reflect Ponorogo’s identity and authentic values (*nilai-nilai asli*) as a national cultural resource (*kekayaan budaya bangsa*) (Fauzanafi, 2002:165-169). While there is a local representative, the majority of judges have an academic background in dance (Simatupang, 2002:119).

⁸³ Wilson explains that “reog Ponorogo classifies as a ‘traditional art’ worthy of preservation” because of its connections to aristocratic culture and its reinforcement of a cultural political order (1997:29).

⁸⁴ Sunan Kalijaga is probably the most renowned and loved of the nine *wali* who converted Java to Islam. He enjoys a privileged position in Javanese history and is credited with transforming the *wayang kulit* (shadow puppet) theatre into a medium for the proselytising of Islam to the villagers of Java.

the art form, previously known as “barongan”, to the Arabic “*riyyuq*” which, in the Javanese dialect, morphed into “*reyog*”. *Riyyuq* contains the meaning: *khusnul khatimah*, which roughly translated means ‘to die in good grace’ (*baik diakhir hayatnya*) (Fauzanafi, 2002:188).⁸⁵ In the context of Ponorogo this was transformative because it enabled *warok*, with their contentious past, to be reformed and integrated into society; both in the period of Islamisation and today (Sarkowi, 1999:43-44). An example of this was the formation of INTI (*Insan Takwa Ilahi*, Loyal Followers of God) in 1977 where prominent *warok* were given positions of authority, such as village heads, as well taking part in the maintenance of order and security. Since this time, although INTI has had an uneven relationship with government, it has given some *warok* a high profile. Mbah Wo Kucing, the leader of the Pujangga Anom *reog* troupe, for example, an acknowledged *warok* elder, has featured in several national newspaper articles (e.g., *Kompas*, 25/09/2002; Winarno, 11/07/2000). He seems generally the first point of call for students of *reog*, both Indonesian and foreign. Mbah Wo himself appears to be a good example of what Beatty describes as “the middle ground of Javanese religious belief ... as it is practised in ordinary villages” in rural Java (1999:115). He is also head of the Javanese spiritual (*kebatinan*) group Purwo Ayu Mardi Utomo.⁸⁶ While 99.5% of the population of Ponorogo is recorded as Muslim (BPSKP, 2001:86), there is also a substantial following of *kebatinan* groups.⁸⁷

In spite of this seeming emasculation the association of *reog* with political activism has not been diminished. When I attended the National Reog Festival in 2002 one of the winning groups from Semen Gresik (Gresik Cement) handed out a pamphlet which implored the audience not to allow the company, which was then 51% government-owned, to be sold to foreign interests. The buyer in this case was CEMEX from

⁸⁵ A quick search of the internet will reveal that *khusnul khatimah* is now an important concept in Java. It corresponds to the maxim “as you sow, so shall you reap”. It is redemptive in that it is important that one dies having made the conscious effort to reform, although one has transgressed in the past.

⁸⁶ In a personal communication Andrew Beatty explains that the hyper-reflexive doctrines of Purwo Ayu are actually quite subversive, “even if its leaders tend to be inclusive and ecumenical on practical level.”

⁸⁷ Hadi Suwito, the coordinator of Aliran Kebatinan Perjalanan for Madiun told me that his group had 1,500 members in Ponorogo. He said that “through its history and its name, Ponorogo was strongly connected to *kebatinan*”, and that there were approximately fifteen groups, including Aliran Kebatinan Perjalanan; Sapta Dharma, Sumarah, Purwa Ayu Mardi Utomo, Pangestu, Ilmu Sejati, Jawa Luku, Sapta Sila, Das Songa, Pelajar Karo Jiwa, Suci Rahayu, Marga Utomo. See also Paul Stang (1999) who carried out a study of Sumarah in Ponorogo.

Mexico. The pamphlet explained that the workers of Semen Gresik performed *reog*, itself born from disenchantment with an unjust and authoritarian government, with the hope that the country would not again fall under the influence of imperialism and colonialism.



A reog performance at the National Reog Festival in 2002



Bujang Ganong and Klana Sewandana



Two barong mask and warok in foreground
(from <http://www.kabarindonesia.com/fotoberita/200901310950103.jpg>)



Warok in a reog performance (from <http://files.myopera.com/REOG/operamini/1223808514.jpg>)

Village Reog

Meanwhile, village reog continues in parallel with much the same dynamic eclecticism as it has for centuries. With the higher profile of more prominent figures a number of writers have pointed to the recent differentiation between the *warok sejati* (true warok) and the *konco reog* (friends of reog), or *warok-warokan* (pseudo warok) which is used to describe marginal and unruly men associated with village reog.⁸⁸ Although now more formalised, this does not really seem to be a new phenomenon. Mbah Marsam, who was 95 at the time of my interview, said that during his youth there were many *warok*: there were those that were “*baik*” (good) and those that were “*nakal*” (bad). “Good *warok*”, he explained, “would protect the areas in which they lived, while bad *warok* would use their reputation to rob from people, or borrow things, such as cattle, with no intention of returning them. *Warok*, in fact, earned their reputation in prison. If you hadn’t been imprisoned you couldn’t be called a *warok* (*belum masuk penjara belum bisa disebut warok*).” Former warok I interviewed described how, as they searched for spiritual teachers, they gambled and robbed to pay for living costs. In what seems to contain Tantric elements they explained that this was a part of the ritual required for maintaining spiritual knowledge, and that not being caught was a sign that they had been given permission for their behaviour (*tidak ditangkap berarti diizini*).

Violence and criminality have been constant aspects of rural society and have not had the negative connotations given to them by aristocratic values. Simatupang sees the *warok* as a cultural model in Ponorogo, the ideal of “male personhood”. While pseudo *warok* are eager to demonstrate their physical strength, „real’ *warok* are distinguished by their superior inner control (2002:58). In this sense then the distinction between the two could be viewed from the inverse relationship between the subtle and the overt use of power that is so much a part of Javanese discourse.⁸⁹ Its translation here into the figure of the *warok* mirrors Onghokham’s contention that, in the context of rural

⁸⁸ This construction is very much a part of contemporary Indonesia and its expression will depend on local factors. In Jakarta, for example, *kampung-kampungan* describes a kitschy style and manner: a country bumpkin aspiring to be a sophisticated city-dweller, but somehow always getting it wrong.

⁸⁹ There is an extensive literature on the idea of power and its use in an aristocratic context in both Java and Bali, where the refined concealment of power is in reality the production of power.

leadership, invulnerability (*kekebalan*) arose as a counter-elite value to *wahyu* (the substance of kingship) (1975:64).⁹⁰

This emphasis on physicality is also evident in the changes that have occurred to the *barong* mask itself. While the musical accompaniment to *reog* places it within the genre of Javanese trance music, Reog Ponorogo distinguishes itself from other forms of *reog* in not being a trance form. The mask, weighing around 40 kg, 2 – 3 metres in height, and 2 metres wide, is held up entirely by the strength of a single performer biting a bamboo bar fixed to the inside of the mask behind the tiger's jaw. Simatupang tells us that today the mask is much larger than those of fifty years ago, and the *jégol*, the person who stood behind and held the end of long cloth attached to the mask to form the body of the tiger, has been lost (2002:70-71). Kartomi describes a scene in which the *barong*, stripped of his majestic peacock feathers and his magic power, was matched against the superior skill and agility of Bujang Ganong in a game of cat and mouse (*kucing-kucingan*) (1976:95-96); a scene which was introduced during the ban on performances in the early 20th century when they were held indoors (Fauzanafi, 2002:148). Today this scene is never performed. Gone also are the *barong*'s animal-like antics (Kartomi, 1976:94). Part of the changes to Reog Ponorogo is that now two *barong* appear; something which Kartomi describes as only rarely occurring to add an extra touch of glamorisation (1976:91). These performers demonstrate their extraordinary strength as they crawl, bow, lie on the stage, and shake the mask in mock battle. In an interview Mbah Wo explained that when he was younger the mask, apart from being much smaller – about half the size – was also lighter and fitted into the head so that not all of the weight rested with the teeth. He said that in those days “carrying the mask was based on inner strength (*kekuatan dalam*), whereas today more emphasis is placed on physical prowess (*kekuatan fisik*).”

⁹⁰ „*Wahyu*’ is derived from the Arabic „*wahy*’ which means divine “revelation”. In the context of temporal power Javanese visualised it as various forms of light, a visible indication of a king's legitimacy and rightful succession. It appeared most often in stories of usurpation (Moertono, 1968:56-57). This was not the only mirroring of elite traditions. The relationship between *warok* and *gemblak* was similar to the *magang* system where well-off families would apprentice their sons to a high dignitary. Here the boy would perform servant's duties, such as waiting tables, etc., as well as acquire professional skills, learn the intricacies of etiquette, and the cultured skills of literature, music, etc. in order to enter the bureaucracy, see (Moertono, 1968:95).

Conclusion

The codification and standardisation of *reog* performances has been the consequence of national policies, intensified during the government of the New Order (1965-1998), to subsume the individuality of local traditions and promote a homogeneous culture which reflects “the ‘high aesthetic values’ of the classical court dances of Bali and Central and Western Java” (Talamantes, 2006:366). Some have seen these policies as a triumph of New Order hegemony resulting in “the transformation of local arts into pure spectacle” (Acciaiolli, 1985; Wilson, 1997:59), but it is important to remember that “the concept of national culture has been a polemic since the early age of the nation-state” (Simatupang, 2002:183). A national culture was, in fact, regarded as so central to the project of nation building that the Indonesian Constitution explicitly charged government with its advancement (Hough, 1999:232-233), and successive governments have used cultural policies to achieve development and modernisation objectives, strengthen national unity in a geographically-scattered and multiethnic nation, and foster cultural tourism after the spectacular success of Bali (Talamantes, 2006:366). While official rhetoric considers regional cultures as the “source (*sumber*) from which national culture draws its diversity”, after the national motto “*Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*” (Unity in Diversity), “it is the unifying powers of this ideology which are given priority” and allow significant government intervention “through a process termed ‘upgrading’ (*perkembangan*) or ‘guidance’ (*pembinaan*)” (Hough, 1999:235-236).

Reog Ponorogo has been criticised for its compliance in its remaking, but as more recent performance studies have shown standardisation has not brought about homogenisation (Fauzanafi, 2002; Grunden, 1999; Simatupang, 2002). Simatupang, for example, concludes that the local government’s promotion of the standardised *Art Reog* format has in fact only added to the repertoire of performance practices, and that the two formats are now interrelated. In the participatory *Reog Obyogan*, in which eroticism and physical prowess are constantly foregrounded, both performers and spectators interact in “playful-display” to reinforce a sense of community identity, whereas the presentational *Art Reog* accentuates “the artistic elements of cultural expression” in a “display” which acts as a marker of the regional identity of Ponorogo to a “generalized other” (2002:187-192). This accommodative capacity accords with

the themes of this chapter which illustrate that recent cultural policies are just the latest in centuries of engagement and negotiation with provincial, national, and transnational processes – processes which, while shaping and transforming local practices, have also contributed to the forging of a strong local ethos. Rather than the focus in the social sciences on the less dynamic concept of ‘resistance’, I think that this longer term perspective is more appropriately described as ‘resilience’.

The concept of resilience is prominent in studies on human development, especially in reference to children and young adults and their ability to cope with adverse life circumstances and high risk situations. Apart from personal characteristics as potential modifiers of stressors, numerous studies have also identified the protective importance of supportive social networks and enculturation on well-being (Jarrett, 1997; LaFromboise *et al.*, 2006; Luthar *et al.*, 2000; Richardson, 2002). In the social sciences resilience has been linked to ecological perspectives which “focus on non-equilibrium dynamics, spatial and temporal variation, complexity, and uncertainty” (Scoones, 1999:479). It is a dynamic concept, dependent on local context, which is able to accommodate inconsistency over time. Although de Certeau also refers to resistance his characterisation of ‘art’, ‘skill’, “an esthetics of ‘tricks’ ... an ethics of *tenacity*” (1988:26, emphasis in the original) to take account of everyday practices, wily ‘ways of operating’ (1988:70), which fall between the cracks of theory, also fits with resilience. This resourcefulness, to make do with what is at hand, also characterises the use of therapeutic resources which will be the subject of the rest of this thesis.

Ponorogans have long been in conversation with the Javanese cultural world and have proved adept at reinterpreting its aristocratic language and values into local vernacular equivalents. Where the most significant social boundary between the *priyayi* (aristocracy) and the *wong cilik* (commoners) was, and still is, the carrying out of manual labour, this reinterpretation has always been intensely physical: be it in terms of combat, invulnerability, or demonstrations of physical prowess.⁹¹ As an “art of practice” (de Certeau, 1988:24) it is therefore no surprise that this physicality has come to the fore in the performance of *reog*. Even though Klana Sewandana may

⁹¹ *Priyayi*, from *para yayi* (“the younger siblings”) of the king became the administrative and bureaucratic elite.

demonstrate that victory lies in the hands of the “central seat of power” (*pusat kekuasaan*) (Fauzanafi, 2002:187-188), his victory is eclipsed by the spectacular display of the *barong*. It is this somatic aspect and its importance in therapy that I will explore in the following chapters.

CHAPTER 3

MORBIDITY, BIOMEDICAL SERVICES, AND THE USE OF THERAPEUTIC AGENTS

In the previous chapter's exploration of the historical forces and traditions which contributed to Ponorogo's distinctive cultural identity one of the most important factors which informed Ponorogan's sense of themselves was their day-to-day existence, their "*being-in-the-world*" (in Jackson, 1996:1). Where livelihood for the vast majority of the population has long depended on physical labour, cultural interpretation has reflected this existential reality. Today, with around two-thirds of the adult population engaged in agriculture, and a growing number of circular migrant workers who seek work both within Indonesia and increasingly through the global labour market in manual labour, this is still very much the case.

This phenomenological focus on „lifeworld’ is what Nancy Scheper-Hughes terms a „somatic culture’ whereby “people who live by and through their bodies in manual and wage labour – who live by their wits and by their guts” - privilege the body through “close attention to the physical senses and symptoms” (1992:185).⁹² In this context Scheper-Hughes is referring to life in a hillside shantytown in Brazil and *nervos* (nerves), “an expansive and polysemic folk concept”, which embodies the contradictions of everyday precariousness and social distress through a multitude of symptoms, such as trembling, fainting, seizures, intense emotions, paralysis, debility, wasting, and weakness (1992:185-189). “Nerves”, widely accepted throughout the Mediterranean and Latin America as both an aetiology and an illness, also has ramifications for the practice of biomedicine in these regions. Finkler, for example, found that Mexican outpatient physicians “were caught between their intuitive cultural knowledge and their medical training” which required them to reduce “cultural holistic

⁹² Jackson defines the lifeworld (*Lebenswelten*) as “that domain of everyday, immediate social existence and practical activity, with all its habituality, its crises, its vernacular and idiomatic character, its biographical particularities, its decisive events and indecisive strategies, which theoretical knowledge addresses but does not determine, from which conceptual understanding arises but on which it does not primarily depend (1996:7-8).”

notions of sickness to a diagnosis of physical disorders, reflecting biomedicine's mind/body duality". In this case, the expansive nature of "nerves" meant that its diagnosis could be reduced to conditions as various as neurological disorder, colitis, irritable colon and neurosis. As a result diagnosis, and subsequent treatment, was "totally idiosyncratic", being influenced by the physician's particular aetiological explanations, patient circumstances and expectations, and the hospital's own lack of economic resources (2004:2045-2047).

There is an extensive and diverse body of research which, as in the example above, details how factors, such as patterns of morbidity, practical realities, cultural knowledge, behaviour, environment, indigenous therapies, and micro and macro socioeconomic and political relations intersect in complex and unexpected ways to impact on the way biomedicine is practised in specific settings. In this chapter I will discuss how the practice and use of biomedicine both shapes and is shaped by the cultural context in this area of rural Java.

The term 'biomedicine' broadly describes a system of medicine which employs scientific technologies and attempts to explain pathological mechanisms in largely biological terms. Although this particular quest began in late 19th century Europe with the advent of cell theory, the term itself only came into widespread use after the Second World War (Keating & Cambrosio, 2004:361-364). At the same time the conceptual linking of health with economic and political development saw biomedicine's expansion, in the first instance through colonial aspirations, and later to newly independent developing nations through agencies, such as WHO and UNICEF, which exerted a unifying influence on international health policy and planning. This coincidence has meant that in many developing countries biomedicine has become synonymous with modernity. While this may be the case for the rest of Indonesia, and biomedicine is in a dominant position by virtue of its state sponsorship, in Java, as Boomgaard points out, it is in a more ambivalent position because colonisation preceded the genesis of modern medical science (1993:87).

The presence of such a powerful system of knowledge transforms other forms of therapy. The one most relevant to rural Java, given the predominant dispensing of

pharmaceuticals, is the use of herbal mixtures, known as *jamu*. Before considering the case of *jamu*, I will examine patterns of morbidity, drawing on the official data on treatment at public health facilities and an understanding gained through ethnographic field research. The use of public health facilities is also governed by problems of access. In Ponorogo access is particularly affected by the terrain. I will then move on to a brief history of western medical therapies in Java before turning to the practice of private biomedical practitioners. After discussing the interaction between pharmaceuticals and other pharmacological agents I will discuss the problems of co-morbidity and then the limits of care in the treatment of serious illness.

Burden of Disease

A recent analysis of major nutritional, environmental, and occupational risks to health across all age groups, which made use of the global burden of disease (GBD) database, placed Indonesia in the middle category of ‘lower-mortality developing’ regions.⁹³ The study concluded that, while the burden of disease in ‘high-mortality developing’ regions was characterised by “communicable, maternal, perinatal, and nutritional conditions” and that of the ‘demographic and economically developed’ regions was characterised by “non-communicable diseases and injuries”, it was the ‘lower-mortality developing’ regions which presented “possibly the most striking mixture of leading risk factors and diseases”. Populations in these regions were seemingly caught in the middle; suffering equally from both groups of risk factors (Ezzati *et al.*, 2002:10-11).

Official records on patterns of morbidity for Ponorogo are meagre. They are in the form of the Ponorogo Regency Health Profile (*Profil Kesehatan Kabupaten Ponorogo*), published annually by the local Health Department, which contains numerous statistical tables detailing treatment provided at public health facilities. Although there are tables which detail the number of patients and the type of ailments treated through outpatient visits (*rawat jalan*) to Puskesmas (*pusat kesehatan masyarakat* = community health centres); visits to hospital outpatient clinics; hospital admissions (*rawat inap*); and

⁹³ The authors assessed 26 risk factors under the headings of Childhood & maternal undernutrition; Other nutritional risk factors & physical activity; Sexual & reproductive health; Addictive substances; Environmental risks; Occupational risks; and Other selected risks (see Ezzati *et al.*, 2002:3-5).

cause of death (*pola kematian*) in a hospital, statistics are only collected for two age groups: the very young (≤ 4 years old), and the elderly (≥ 60 years old).⁹⁴ For the year 2001 the data demonstrate, through the ratio of 97.1% treated at Puskesmas, 2.2% treated at a hospital outpatient clinic, and 0.7% treated through hospital admissions, that biomedical treatment in Ponorogo is overwhelmingly at the primary health care (PHC) level.⁹⁵

The Puskesmas was Indonesia's distinctive approach to the World Health Organisation's PHC 'health for all' vision. It was originally envisaged as the core provider of a diverse range of both preventive and curative services at the primary care level to "the poor as well as the non-poor wherever they lived" (Lieberman & Marzoeke, 2002:2-3). However, the statistical focus on treatment for children under 5 years reveals that primary health care in Ponorogo follows the more restricted "Selective Primary Health Care" (SPHC) model specifically targeted at reducing child mortality (Hall & Taylor, 2003:18).⁹⁶ Treatments by disease group for the two specified age groups in community health centres are summarised in Table 3.1 below.

⁹⁴ Statistics for the very young are broken down into 0-28 days, 28 days – 1 year, and 1-4 years, but I have amalgamated these groups.

⁹⁵ The Alma Ata declaration on primary health care (PHC) was adopted by WHO in 1978. PHC envisaged an intersectoral and community approach focussing on universal coverage of basic services, such as education on prevention and control of prevailing local health problems; food security and proper nutrition; adequate safe water and basic sanitation; maternal and child health; appropriate treatment of common diseases and injuries; and provision of essential drugs prevention through community health care centres (Hall & Taylor, 2003:18).

⁹⁶ Hall & Taylor explain that the PHC strategy was regarded by policy makers as "too idealistic, expensive and unachievable in its goals of achieving total population coverage" and was modified to the lower cost SPHC model which "advocated providing only PHC interventions that contributed most to reducing child mortality in developing countries". With a focus on growth monitoring, oral rehydration, breastfeeding and immunisation SPHC took the decision-making power and control central to PHC away from the communities and delivered it to foreign consultants with technical expertise in these specific areas (Hall & Taylor, 2003:18). Age by population data is taken from the Ponorogo Bureau of Statistics (BPSKP, 2001:28).

Table 3.1: Number of Treatments at Community Health Centres by disease group for 2001

| Disease Group | <=4 yrs | >=60 yrs | |
|--|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| Diseases of the respiratory system | 16,927 | 15,161 | |
| Infectious & parasitic diseases | 3,916 | 2,944 | |
| Mental & behavioural disorders | 18 | 4,159 | |
| Diseases of the eye & adnexa | 449 | 1,309 | |
| Diseases of the ear & mastoid process | 340 | - | |
| Diseases of the circulatory system | - | 5,306 | |
| Diseases of the digestive system | 1,289 | 529 | |
| Diseases of the skin | 6,527 | 10,397 | |
| Musculoskeletal system & connective tissue | - | 16,678 | |
| Diseases of the genitourinary system | - | 598 | |
| Injury, poisoning & other external causes | 320 | 660 | |
| Unclassified disorders ⁹⁷ | 1,706 | 9,135 | |
| Total treatments | 31,492 | 66,876 | 98,368 |
| Total treatments for all age groups | | | 398,879 |

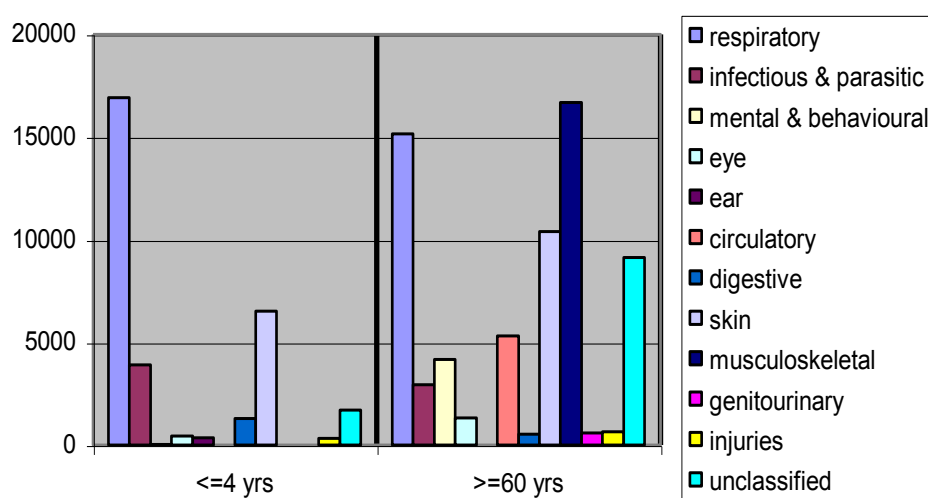
Compiled from *Profil Kesehatan Kabupaten Ponorogo Tahun 2001* (Dinas Kesehatan, 2002). Disease Groups are based on WHO International Classification of Diseases, 2003.

That these specified age groups comprise approximately 23% of the population (BPSKP, 2001:28), means that the statistics collected exclude not only most of the population, but also the vast majority of those in the labour force. Statistics detailing the total number of treatment events across all age groups at Puskesmas reveal that this

⁹⁷ „Unclassified disorders’ make up such a large proportion because the data gathered only lists the 20 most common disorders treated for each age category for each service provider. After this all remaining categories are amalgamated under „other disorders’ (*penyakit lainnya*).

latter proportion of the population were treated at three times the rate, 300,500 treatments, but there is no information on the categories of illness treated.⁹⁸

Figure 3.1: Treatments by Illness Categories at Community Health Centres for 2001



Statistics for the previous year, 2000, follow a very similar pattern to the year 2001. They both show that the principal causes of morbidity for the specified age groups were respiratory, infectious, and skin diseases, and that, in addition, patients 60 years and over were treated for conditions related to aging, such as diabetes, heart conditions, tumours, cataracts, hypertension, and musculoskeletal disorders.⁹⁹ While this statistical

⁹⁸ This figure does not include visits for family planning, mother-and-child health, and dentistry (Dinas Kesehatan, 2002:Table 15A).

⁹⁹ Respiratory infections included asthma (*asma*), bronchitis (*bronkhitis*), bronco pneumonia, pneumonia, acute upper respiratory tract infections (*penyakit akut saluran pernafasan atas*), and other infections of the upper respiratory tract (*penyakit lain pada saluran pernafasan atas*). Gastrointestinal conditions, in the 'Infectious & parasitic diseases' group, included diarrhoea including suspected cholera (*diare termasuk tersangka kolera*), dysentery (*disentri*), gastritis, gastroenteritis, and other infections of the intestinal tract (*infeksi penyakit usus yang lain*). Skin infections included fungal skin conditions, scabies, skin infections and skin allergies. Conditions associated with aging included acute myocardial infarction (*infark miocard akut*), benign tumours (*neoplasma jinak*), benign prostate hypertrophy, cardiomegaly, cataract (*katarak*), diabetes mellitus, glaucoma (*glaukoma*), hypertension (*penyakit darah tinggi*), and stroke or cerebrovascular accident.

information is limited it does point to the complex burden of disease found in the Ezzati *et al* (2002) study.

There are, of course, questions about the reliability of these data. As Finkler points out, through her observations in a Mexican hospital, where symptoms popularly attributed to the folk category of “nerves” were often reduced to a diagnosis of ‘neurological dysfunction’, this seemingly standard medical nomenclature not only affects epidemiological data but also subsequent treatment (2004:2045-2046). In an analogous way both Sciortino (1995:174-177), who has extensively described the hurried and public nature of Puskesmas consultations, and Ferzacca (2001:79) in the case of hospital consultations, have observed that health problems are expressed by patients and health professionals alike in terms of symptoms or *rasa*. Thus Sciortino explains that when *panas* (roughly translated as fever) and *batuk* (cough), both regarded as symptoms and diseases, occurred together they were later coded as one or another kind of acute respiratory disease. This diagnosis then decided treatment which invariably consisted of an injection and normally three different kinds of pills to be taken over three days (1995:176-183).

According to Steve Ferzacca, who conducted fieldwork in the early 1990s on the perceptions of what, at that time, were termed ‘western diseases’, in particular adult-onset (Type 2) diabetes and hypertension, there was increasing concern surrounding these degenerative conditions. In the late New Order era, with its ideology of development and modernisation, these “modern physical ailments” were perceived as one of the ironic costs of increasing prosperity, as “both cause and consequence”, a disturbing contagion attributed to the spread of a “western or modern lifestyle” exacerbated by “new, urban conditions of *stress* (stress)” and unhealthy eating patterns (2001:4). Working in the outpatient clinic of a large public teaching hospital in the central Javanese city of Yogyakarta Ferzacca found that, like other countries in which it is a relative newcomer, biomedical practice, modelled on that developed in Western industrialised societies, has a distinctly local flavour. Food is an important mediator of social relations and locality in Indonesia. In Yogyakarta, a city renowned for its sweet food and drink, a diagnosis of diabetes, which requires a careful monitoring of sugar

intake, presents a particular difficulty for the negotiation and maintenance of local identity (2001:85).

The connection between diet and degenerative conditions has also filtered down to rural areas. In a similar example of the mediation between food and identity one *camat* (subdistrict head) told me while I was observing a village head election that 30 people had been unable to vote because they had been paralysed by stroke. Commenting that “often people in the village did not know what had happened to them”, he felt that people’s eating patterns were at fault “because many people just ate for enjoyment, rather than thinking about their health.” He attributed the cause of their illness to eating a lot of meat, in this case goat meat (*kambing*), which is thought to cause high blood pressure, as well as salt and MSG.¹⁰⁰ Ponorogo is famous for its distinctive *sate kambing* (small pieces of goat meat roasted on skewers), and East Javanese, in contrast to Yogyakartaans, prefer their food to be salty.

While Ferzacca states that the patients he observed, many of whom were government civil servants (*pegawai negeri*), had access to outpatient diabetes and nutrition clinics and seemed “fairly well informed of the bio-scientific understandings of their diseases” (2001:68-73), the *camat*’s comment of the ignorance of villagers as to the cause of their condition indicates that access to this level of treatment has not yet penetrated rural areas; a point I will return to later. In this regard quite a few village officials thought that beginning a *posyandu lanjut usia* (older age health program), modelled on the lines of the monthly *posyandu* for mother-and child care, would be a good idea.¹⁰¹ This, they envisaged, would make use of village health workers (*kader*) who could take blood pressure and, no doubt, advise on diet.

There is now ample evidence that health is determined more by the scale of income inequality in a society rather than its per capita economic growth (Armelagos *et al.*, 2004; Krieger & Smith, 2004; Wilkinson, 2004), and that the epidemiological profile

¹⁰⁰ MSG (monosodium glutamate) is a flavour enhancer used heavily in many restaurants, warung and roadside stalls. It is a sign of people’s greater consciousness about food additives that it is now possible to request when ordering a meal that MSG not be used.

¹⁰¹ Posyandu (*pos pelayanan terpadu* = integrated services post) is usually held monthly in most villages and involves a package of mother-and-child care programs, such as advice on nutrition, diarrhoeal control, family planning, vaccination, and maternal care.

therefore, rather than taking a single route, is contingent on the specific risks which exist in each region (Carolina & Gustavo, 2003:541). To get an understanding of the range of illnesses which this region has to cope with, a section on monitored illnesses in the *Regency Health Profile* details treatment for conditions, such as dysentery, typhoid, poliomyelitis, dengue fever, leprosy, tuberculosis, and malaria. In respect to the latter two conditions Indonesia has the third highest rate of tuberculosis in the world, and a press report estimated that there were around 200 cases in Ponorogo (*Suara Pamburuan*, 29/03/2004), while the difficulty of accessing mountain areas around Mount Wilis means that malaria is a problem in Ponorogo and other mountain areas along the south coast of Java (Dinas Kesehatan Jawa Timur, 31/01/2005).¹⁰²

In an area where work is mainly comprised of manual and agricultural labour it would seem safe to assume that there would be a high incidence of injuries, such as musculoskeletal disorders, accidents, and other hazards associated with agricultural work. One indicator of this is that nearly a quarter of the treatment at Puskesmas for those 60 years and over was sought for musculoskeletal disorders (see Table 3.1). Studies on work-related injuries for farmers in developing countries are rare, but one study carried out among Chinese farmers found that they primarily affected the 15-44 age group, and the leading causes of injury were from farm tools, such as knives, sickles and hoes; falls and heavy falling objects; and, to a lesser extent, injuries sustained from large animals, such as buffalo. It also found that injuries were more likely to occur to those farmers who had low incomes, who had higher pesticide exposure, and were experiencing some form of stress (Xiang *et al.*, 2000:1271-1272). In Sri Lanka occupational illness from pesticide exposure is common for several reasons - it is impractical and expensive to use safety equipment in the humid tropics, safety instructions are written in unfamiliar languages, many farmers are illiterate, and the instructions themselves are difficult to follow (Eddleston *et al.*, 2002:1164). These conditions apply equally to Indonesia. A study undertaken in 1998 in nine regencies in East Java, including Ponorogo, reported that 42.6% of farmers suffered some form of pesticide poisoning with 73% suffering mild toxicity, 24.2% moderate toxicity, and

¹⁰² The 2001 health statistics record 712 treatments for TB at Puskesmas, and 4,838 patients suffering from clinical malaria.

2.5% severe toxicity. The explanation for this exposure was predominantly because workers did not know they had to wear protective clothing, such as gloves, masks, eye protection and boots, when using the equipment (Utomo *et al.*, 2000). In support of this it is not unusual when driving around the regency to see farmers, completely lacking any sort of protective clothing, spraying pesticide on crops from a tank strapped on their back. The *Regency Health Profile* also states that only 50% - 60% of spraying equipment used in the regency complied with health regulation standards (Dinas Kesehatan, 2002:9).

Symptoms of low level pesticide poisoning were reported as non-specific, including headaches, insomnia, dizziness, inability to concentrate, and nausea (Utomo *et al.*, 2000:3). Pesticide exposure can have profound effects on the nervous system. Symptoms reported by Javanese farmers agree with those of chronic exposure reported by farmers, farm workers and pesticide applicators in the United States, where more serious exposure can cause sensory abnormalities, muscle cramps, weakness, and even paralysis, as well as changes in heart rate, bronchospasm, convulsions and coma (Alavlanja *et al.*, 2004:175-177). Puskesmas treatment for neural disturbances (*gangguan neurotik*) and psychological disturbances (*gangguan psikotik*) for the 60 years and over age group amounted to 3,881 and 278 respectively (Dinas Kesehatan, 2002), a proportion of which may be attributable to pesticide exposure.

With this profile of risk factors in mind treatment sought at public health services for working age groups seems extremely low given the population and the type of labour carried out.¹⁰³ Apart from the use of non-public health services, such as private practitioners and other therapeutic modalities, one factor which obviously affects the use of health services is people's access to them.

Access to Health Services

A study carried out in the 1980s comparing the utilisation of health services across Indonesia found that the greater availability of biomedical services in Java had a distinct influence on who made use of what services, especially in rural areas. The

¹⁰³ Total regency population in 2000 was 894,095, the total for age groups 15-60 was 539,615 (BPSKP, 2001:28).

study found that income had a positive association with the incidence of self-reported illness and a qualitative effect on the type of treatment sought - the richest 20% travelled greater distances to use the services of a physician; the middle 40% made greater use of public services and travelled greater distances to consult both a physician or a traditional practitioner; and the poorest 40% made use of traditional practitioners as well public services that were close to home (Chernichovsky & Meesook, 1986:612-616). A comparable study carried out after the economic crisis in 1997 found that both self-reported morbidity and utilisation rates, particularly of public health services, declined in 1998 (Lanjouw *et al.*, 2001:16-17). Lanjouw *et al* speculated that this decline may have been due in part to the deterioration of public services resulting from a decrease in real government expenditure on health, but the introduction of the social safety net program in 1999 saw a partial recovery in utilisation rates (2001:17). This and other comparative data from previous studies have shown that while the richer sector of the population still have higher self-reported morbidity and make use of qualitatively better services, the expansion of Puskesmas during the 1980s and 1990s has meant that in Java the poor are now the most frequent users of health centre services in both urban and rural areas (Lanjouw *et al.*, 2001:42-44). While this expansion has given the poor better access to health services, cost is still a critical factor influencing utilisation. A separate study looking at this relationship found that “as a result of a fee increase the number of poor using public facilities not only falls proportionately more than other groups, but proportionately more of the poor do not obtain *any* formal medical care” (Gertler in Lanjouw *et al.*, 2001:24, emphasis in the original).

Effect of Cost and Proximity on Use of Public Health Services

The regency has three Class C hospitals – a government hospital, RSU Ponorogo; a Muhammadiyah hospital, RS Aisyiah; a private hospital, RSIA Darmayu – and another smaller hospital, Arrisalah, owned by a *pesantren*.¹⁰⁴ All of these hospitals are located either in or close to the town centre. According to the local Health Department the ratio of community health services to population in 2001 was 1:16,256, and health

¹⁰⁴ Government hospitals are classified into categories ranging from Class A, the largest and most technical, to Class D, the smallest and most basic. Class C hospitals average 190 beds and provide some specialist services.

professionals included 13 specialists, 43 doctors, 214 nurses, and 158 *bidan* (nurse-midwives) (Dinas Kesehatan, 2002:28-32).¹⁰⁵ These services radiate from the town centre and are more thinly spread approaching the highland areas as servicing them becomes more difficult because of the terrain. Interviews with health centre nurses, especially those located away from the town centre, said that their patients were drawn from an approximately 3 km radius, seeming to confirm previous studies of the importance of proximity of services. In explanation they said that the lack of public transport meant that people would have to use their own means of transport. In the case of the poor this would predominantly be bicycle or, less frequently, motor bike.

In 2002 the cost of treatment at a Puskesmas was Rp1,500 which included the consultation and any medicines. To obtain an injection, the aim of most patients, there was an additional cost of Rp500 to cover the cost of the needle. This was 40% of the average daily per capita income, but for poor agricultural labourers it may be as much as twice their daily income.¹⁰⁶ One of the social safety net programs (*Jaring Pengaman Sosial* = JPS), launched in response to the financial and social impacts of the Asian Economic Crisis, was the health card (*kartu sehat*) which entitled eligible households to obtain free treatment, primarily from Puskesmas, for medical and family planning purposes; ante-natal and childbirth services; as well as some services at a hospital (Pritchett & Sumarto, 2002:10). The process involved in gaining access to the health card is, however, extremely complex with the result that most people did not use it:

The program's administrator at the local health department told me that the process started with a village team made up of village officials in coordination with RT/RW.¹⁰⁷

This team carries out a survey of their village using predetermined criteria, such as, the type of house, income, and social status, to ascertain who qualifies to receive the card.

¹⁰⁵ The usual gloss for *bidan* is midwife, but she has an extensive range of responsibilities. In the health centre her focus is on pregnant women, assisting births, home visits, nursing mothers, and training traditional birth attendants. The *bidan desa* (village nurse-midwife) is the only health professional available in more remote villages. She has her own supply of pharmaceuticals which she dispenses to patients for common illnesses. I have therefore used the term 'nurse-midwife' to describe her role after Mesters (1996:55), as this role is an obvious continuation of early Dutch health policy.

¹⁰⁶ The average per capita income of the regency in 2000 was Rp 1,830,588 (BPSKP, 2001:207), but highland agricultural labourers earn between Rp 40,000 to 50,000 per month.

¹⁰⁷ The RT (*Ketua Rukun Tetangga*) is responsible for a neighbourhood, usually 10 households. The RW (*Ketua Rukun Warga*) is the head of a sub-hamlet.

When this is completed the team then visits each house to advise families that they have qualified. Figures on the number of poor families are then sent to the national Health Department in Jakarta via the provincial office, which in this case is Surabaya. The Health Department then works with a section of the Finance Department to ensure funds. Health cards are then sent to the Regency Health Department and, then to each Puskesmas, where they have to be stamped by the Puskesmas and the village head. Cards can then be collected by eligible households at the Puskesmas, *bidan desa* (village nurse-midwife), *posyandu* (see note 100), or the voluntary health worker (*kader*). Cards are printed in a different colour each year and have to be renewed annually by the same process. People who have not received a card can obtain a *surat keterangan tidak mampu* (a letter stating that they are unable to manage) from the *camat* (sub-district) office in order to receive treatment.



Ponorogo Government Hospital (RSU Ponorogo)



RSU Ponorogo emergency admissions



Sate Ayam Ponorogo

The administrator explained that the health card entitles the holder to free treatment at a Puskesmas, including drugs and any laboratory tests. If the patient has to be admitted to hospital they receive a transport subsidy of Rp 16,500 and free treatment at a public hospital as long as funds are available from the energy subsidy.¹⁰⁸ When I later asked a PLAN worker if people living in his village used the new health card I was told that most did not.¹⁰⁹ In addition to the complexity of the process of actually obtaining a card, he said that those living in remote hamlets would be easily intimidated on entering a hospital in the centre of town. Moreover, intending hospital patients, regardless of whether they had a card, were asked who would guarantee payment before they were given treatment. They were also under the impression that those with the health card, or the Askes card for government workers, were given low priority.¹¹⁰ I also heard later at PLAN headquarters in Ponorogo that health cards had been recalled as the government was printing new ones and that many people had torn them up because they were not recognised and were of no use. Staff at the office also told me that they only guaranteed part of treatment cost, such as the supply of generic drugs.¹¹¹

There is a copious literature on the method used within Indonesia to assess poverty. Criteria are normally based on asset ownership rather than consumption expenditure. The National Family Planning Coordinating Agency (BKKBN) classifies every household into one of four levels of “prosperity”.¹¹² Lists are compiled and updated

¹⁰⁸ In 2001 the program was subsidised with funds from the export of petroleum. It was called PKPS BBM Bidkes (*Program Penanggulangan Dampak Pengurangan Subsidi BBM Bidang Kesehatan*) or Program for dealing with the negative impact on the health sector through a subsidy from petroleum.

¹⁰⁹ The foreign aid agency, PLAN International, has a large presence in Ponorogo. In 2002 its headquarters in the town had around 13 full-time staff and it funded many projects in mountain hamlets. These projects are carried out by Indonesian NGOs who live in the hamlet, and are a good source of knowledge on living conditions in the hamlet in which they are based.

¹¹⁰ Askes, an abbreviation of Asuransi Kesehatan (Health Insurance), is issued to government civil servants, retirees, veterans and their families.

¹¹¹ Pritchett and Sumarto also comment that the health card only covered “*some* but not all services at a hospital” and that the “aspect of all services at some levels but only some services at others created a fair bit of confusion” (2002:10, emphasis in the original). During the year of my fieldwork I encountered quite a few people who had been told by the hospital that funding for the program had run out and that they would have to guarantee payment for all services.

¹¹² Pritchett & Sumarto (2002:7) explain that BKKBN classifies households as falling into the lowest welfare category (“pre-prosperous”) if any one of following statements are true:

1. the household cannot practice their daily religious principles;
2. all household members do not eat at least twice a day;

annually but, as Pritchett and Sumarto emphasise, this seems to be a fairly ad hoc process with considerable uncertainty as to how lists are actually compiled (2002:7). In Ponorogo I would doubt that remote areas are actually ever visited. The confusion and complexity of the process seems to be borne out by the statistics stating that, in 2001, 82.87% of treatment at Puskesmas was paid by the user (Dinas Kesehatan, 2002: Table 15B).

Reading Sciortino's account of large attendances, around 100 patients in three hours (1995:174), at health centres in the 1980s I was unprepared for their relative emptiness in 2002. More recent studies show that attendances have fallen steadily since 1995 (Lieberman & Marzoecki, 2002:4). Apart from the lack of government funds required to realise the ambitious aims of the Puskesmas, Lieberman & Marzoecki lay the blame for the health centre's indifferent success on "a prescriptive management approach coupled with perverse incentives" resulting in "a passive and ineffective labor force, which seems disconnected from outcomes ... and distracted by the lure of private practice" (2002:12). While this criticism is essentially valid given the structural constraints of ingrained corruption, meagre government salaries, a bureaucracy which deters personal initiative, inadequate training and resources, and the sheer complexity of the problems at hand, which Lieberman & Marzoecki mention, it also demonstrates the danger of looking at one sector in isolation. One simple factor which staff pointed out was the health centre's morning opening hours. The tropical heat means that everyone, including school children, has a very early start. Work for agricultural labourers is usually from 5.00 am to 2.00 pm, meaning, unless they are very ill, it is unlikely they will visit a health centre, especially in peak times, such as harvesting and planting. But is it purely "indifferent service" at health centres, as Lieberman and Marzoecki contend, "which has prompted clients and potential beneficiaries to resort to other alternatives, i.e., consulting private providers or self-treatment" (2002:14)? And what standards of service do private practitioners provide?

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3. not all household members have different sets of clothing for home, work, school, and visits;
 4. the household cannot seek modern medical assistance for sick children and family planning services for contraceptive users;
 5. the largest floor area of the house is made of earth.

Although there are numerous studies on access to and use of public health services in Indonesia, the very few studies on private practitioners have only been in relation to their inappropriate prescription of antibiotics. To address this issue the next section will look at the introduction of western therapies to Java and how this past still impacts on their contemporary use. I will then move from these secondary sources to an ethnographic analysis of private biomedical practitioners and their relationships with their patients.

A Brief History of Western Medical Therapies in Java

In her anthropological study of a Puskesmas in rural Central Java in 1989, Rosalia Sciortino (1995) was surprised to find that, in contrast to the caring roles assigned to nurses in the health systems of most developed countries, community nurses were responsible for a wide range of tasks, including the provision of curative services. Dissatisfied with the available literature, and its theoretical approach to the practice of community health nurses in developing countries, she decided to look for “connections between past and present in the development of the Indonesian biomedical system” (1995:9) to explain their actual contemporary role. Her research, which obviously focuses on the legacy of the past in the development, particularly of the role of the rural nurse, is also relevant to Ponorogo. She illustrates that the contemporary characteristics of rural health care, such as the use of auxiliary staff to carry out primary curative roles; the focus on the treatment of symptoms; and the pragmatic and predominant use of interventionist measures to treat especially the rural population can be explained by this legacy. Apart from this account I have found, as Peter Boomgaard laments, “The history of health, disease and medical care in Indonesia before independence is a sadly neglected field” (1993:77). Sciortino’s research, when supplemented with Boomgaard’s (1993; 1996), which traces the changing perceptions of Indigenous medicine vis-à-vis its European counterpart, provides an understanding of their present-day relationships.

Much in the provision of present-day health services can be traced back to the nature of therapies introduced by the expansion of the Dutch East Company (VOC). The first Dutch doctors were in fact surgeons trained by means of an apprenticeship through guilds. They were limited to external treatments and, as hospitals were built in the main

VOC settlements throughout Java in the 17th and 18th centuries, they combined the roles of doctor, pharmacist, and nurse. Their patients were predominantly Europeans and their unfamiliarity with the causes of tropical diseases meant that treatment, which made use of both western and indigenous therapies, was mainly directed at symptoms, often with poor results (Sciortino, 1996:24-25). As Boomgaard explains, “a knowledge of herbs was an important element in the training of Dutch doctors”. Studying Portuguese writings on tropical plants, they had not arrived in the Indies unprepared, and it was therefore no surprise that many turned botanist when they reached Asia. Because the conventional wisdom of the time was that the cure for ailments of a specific region could be found in that region, Dutch doctors often “acknowledged the expertise of indigenous healers in these matters” (1996:48-49).

After VOC bankruptcy in 1800 its territorial possessions were taken over by the Netherlands government. In 1808, the medical system became a subdivision of the military service, and “throughout the nineteenth century, Western medicine in the Dutch Indies was virtually synonymous with military medicine” (Kerkhoff in Sciortino, 1996:28).¹¹³ The first person to regard the health and welfare of the indigenous population was in fact Raffles, during the British interregnum (1811-1816). He advocated vaccinating the population against smallpox and treating those suffering from venereal diseases. This policy, however, was not out of a sense of philanthropy. It was primarily a concern for the health of the European population because it was these diseases they were most in danger of contracting. To encourage the acceptance of vaccination and the mercurial cure for sexually-transmitted diseases, both of which were totally alien therapies, Raffles decided to train indigenous leaders in the art of

¹¹³ Although two medical services, a military and a civil one, were established as part of the reorganisation in 1820, the health of the troops was the main priority. Civil hospitals to treat the indigenous population and poor Europeans were neglected and deteriorated (see Sciortino, 1995:60).

inoculating.¹¹⁴ They were given the title of *mantri-cacar* (smallpox vaccinator), but these early vaccines had sometimes disastrous consequences (Sciortino, 1996:27-33).¹¹⁵

By the late 19th century the microbial discoveries of Pasteur and Koch, together with the secularisation and professionalisation of doctors “turned medicine, up to then more a craft than anything else, into a science.” With “an increasingly strong reaction against lay opinions, including folk-medicine in Europe itself”, European doctors became more critical of Indigenous practitioners in Indonesia. The latter became “an appropriate subject of anthropological, not medical research”, and “the notion of ‘traditional’ medicine was born.” This reaction, however, was tempered by a lay interest in Javanese herbs and healing practices. Books on the subject, written in Malay and Dutch, became extremely popular; going through numerous editions. Even in the early decades of the 20th century both “the European and Eurasian population relied more on these books and on indigenous healers than on European physicians.” While this can be attributed, in part, to a shortage of European doctors, for “many families who had resided in Indonesia for generations, European medicine was as alien as Europe itself.” (in Boomgaard, 1993:84-85). This interest in Javanese herbs and therapies has certainly not diminished with numerous books, both new and reprinted editions, constantly becoming available in bookstores and local markets.

Extensive missionary work also began in the 19th century, and the first rural medical services were provided by Christian missions. They were staffed by clinically-experienced male nurses (*mantri verplegers*) who were able to treat common diseases. With the introduction of the Ethical Policy in 1901, and the accompanying perception that the Netherlands had a “moral duty” to improve the living conditions of its colonial populations, this mission system became the model for government policy. Although a medical school to educate indigenous doctors (*dokter jawa*) had been established in

¹¹⁴ Raffles suggested training a “certain number of eligible persons (Moslem leaders and other influential notables) among the natives themselves in each district” (Schoute in Sciortino, 1995:64). After the Dutch regained power a group of indigenous rural paramedics, and a special department for managing smallpox vaccination, was formed as part of the reorganisation of the medical system in 1820 (Sciortino, 1995:64).

¹¹⁵ Frequent deaths of inoculated children caused by spoiled vaccine, and erroneous inoculation led people to believe that it was ‘unhealthy’ and so they tried to avoid it (Schoute, Boomgaard in Sciortino, 1996:33). It is likely that smallpox had been present on Java for centuries. Before the 18th century it was mostly a children’s disease, seeming to account for around 10% mortality (Boomgaard, 1987:61-62). This may also have been a factor in the resentment towards vaccination.

1851, there was a desperate lack of medical personnel. A solution to this problem would have been to open new schools but, apart from the time required to train new doctors, it was decided that increasing the number of medical schools would cost the government too much. The reasoning behind this was that the poverty of the general population would mean that the capital expenditure involved could not later be recouped through fee-for-service consultations. In 1911 *mantri verplegers*, also called *dokter desa* (village doctors), were formally assigned a curative role in rural areas and “the promotion of Western therapy among the needy, mostly indigenous population became a specific task of the colonial government.” A network of government hospitals was established in regional and regency capitals with their own satellite polyclinics (in Sciortino, 1996:34-37). The establishment of the government hospital in Ponorogo in 1912 would have been part of this program.

By the 20th century treatment of tropical diseases shifted focus from curative to preventive medicine in the form of public health and prophylactic measures. Vaccines for cholera and smallpox, and the distribution of quinine for malaria contributed to bringing these diseases virtually under control. The improved effectiveness of injections (*obat suntik*) came to be especially appreciated by the indigenous population; an appreciation which still remains today.¹¹⁶ But, as Boomgaard points out, this success was tempered by the “coercive aspects” of its implementation. “The Public Health Service was almost a state within the state” and doctors were invested with powers far beyond those of their counterparts in Europe (1993:87). An example was the Plague Service, formed in response to the outbreak of plague in East Java in 1910, after a cargo ship transporting rice from Burma docked in Surabaya. Premised on the mistaken proposition that the plague was spread by the infected fleas of house rats, road blocks interrupted travel, people and houses were fumigated, “tens of thousands of people were put into isolation camps, property was confiscated, homes burned”, and the bodies

¹¹⁶ The popularity of injections is attributed to the visible effects of the Neo-Salvarsan injection in the treatment of yaws (Offringa, Winckel in Sciortino, 1996:37). Neo-Salvarsan, derived from an arsenical compound, first became available in Europe in 1914 and transformed the treatment of syphilis (Porter, 1997:452). One would think that it would have become available in the Indies in the 1920s. Gardiner & Oey also date the lowering of mortality as a result of the smallpox vaccine in the late 1920s (1987:19).

of victims “were outrageously defiled through post-mortem spleen punctures” to confirm the cause of death (T. H. Hull, 1987:210-212).¹¹⁷

The new Indonesian government inherited this colonial medical infrastructure, along with its interventionist approach, after independence. Through its participation in WHO and UNICEF the government embarked on a program to reform nursing practice and education. The position of *mantri verpleger* was abolished, and nurses, now an overwhelmingly female role, were formally returned to the care domain in line with the dominant conceptualization of nursing in the Western world”. Puskesmas, an integration of the polyclinic, mother and child welfare centres, and other disease prevention and control bodies, had been built in every subdistrict by 1979, but many lacked a physician. Nurses, strongly influenced by the WHO PHC strategy and its definition of nursing tasks in public health centres, were reassigned to preventive and promotive roles in the community health. Despite official government policies to the contrary, health centre nurses have continued to act as “curative specialists” in rural areas. A mitigating factor is the shortage of trained physicians, but nurses have resisted relinquishing their historical role because of the prestige it brings (Sciortino, 1995:75-81).

According to Sciortino nurses neglect their community health education responsibilities for many reasons, one of which is that they, along with the majority of the community, believe “that the power of biomedicine is contained in pills, injections, and medical instruments” (1995:158); an impression which is prevalent in most of the developing world. Jacob asserts the undue focus on the provision of curative services in developing countries is because the context of public health is markedly different from that in the west where public health measures, such as sanitation and clean drinking water, had become part of the culture and standard of living before the introduction of antibiotics (Jacob, 2007:562). It is true that tropical medicine emerged at the end of the 19th century, at a particular coincidence with the development of scientific disciplines related to germ theory and the birth of the pharmaceutical industry. It was also a time of

¹¹⁷ Plague was eventually brought under control in the late 1930s with the introduction of an effective vaccine. In the 1950s two researchers from WHO found the source host was in fact a field rat, and that almost all the measures applied were unnecessary (T. H. Hull, 1987:226-228).

intense rivalry between European nations, Britain, and the United States for colonial territories in Africa, Asia and the Caribbean.¹¹⁸ The technological and scientific advances in bacteriology and immunology were seen as an “indispensable part of the imperial mission”; a tool to control hostile environments, protect foreign nationals stationed there, as well as treat the colonial labour force (Bynum, 1994:146-148). Although many of the health problems, such as malaria, cholera, plague, were a product of, or exacerbated by, the economic and ecological impact of colonialism, disease became “a potent factor in the European conceptualisation of indigenous society”, and the “emergent discipline of ‘tropical medicine’ gave scientific credence to the idea of a tropical world as a primitive and dangerous environment in contradistinction to an increasingly safe and sanitised temperate world” (Arnold, 1988:3-7).

Biomedical Practitioners and the ‘Local Ecology’ of Care

To look at both public and private practice I conducted in-depth interviews with a range of health professionals – hospital doctors, health centre nurses and midwives, and village nurse-midwives – who also had their own private practices. Although this sample was not large (8 in all) it was geographically comprehensive ranging from highland areas to outlying lowland areas to the town centre. These interviews were conducted within the broader context of my ethnographic enquiry into the gamut of therapeutic alternatives which involved interviews, discussions, and participant observation with indigenous healers, patients, voluntary health workers, local government officials, and other Ponorogans. What practitioners told me was supported by what was learned from these multiple sources. Often I returned to ask about or clarify further issues which had arisen. As Nancy Vuckovic (2000:198) points out, “This type of in-depth ethnographic research is generally incompatible with large sample sizes, yet it offers richness of information that cannot usually be obtained by more surface inquiries, whether qualitative or quantitative in method.”

Although some general practitioners open early in the morning, most, especially those employed in health facilities, conduct their private practice in the early evening. Practitioners said they were predominantly consulted for respiratory illnesses and

¹¹⁸ This rivalry was a factor in Dutch resistance to cooperation with public health education and hygiene programs proposed by the Rockefeller Foundation in Java in the early 20th century (Mesters, 1996).

musculoskeletal conditions. All felt under pressure to prescribe a “quick fix” meaning that the drugs they used would have to work the first time they saw a patient, otherwise the patient would not return and would quickly tell their neighbours and friends if they were not satisfied. They all believed that a patient’s primary reason for consulting them was to get an injection, and that, if given antibiotics, the patient would not complete a full course and would only take the medication until the symptoms disappeared. One nurse-midwife said that this was especially the case with older patients. The usual request would be “*jangan banyak banyak*” (don’t give me a lot [of pills]). One doctor lamented that, rather than treating the cause of sickness, treatment was only symptomatic because this was what people wanted. He said, “Patients’ main aim was to get an injection, often asking outright for one because they thought they would then recover quickly.” This doctor said he normally acquiesced to their request and injected them with either analgesics or vitamins so they would “feel good” (*merasa enak*).

Confirmation of the perceptions of health professionals about injections often came out in interviews with healers, patients and voluntary health workers (*kader kesehatan*) where ‘getting an injection’ was used interchangeably with ‘seeking medical treatment’. For example, a health worker talking about people seeking medical treatment at the polyclinic used the term “*mau suntik ke Polindes*”, which actually means “wanting an injection at the polyclinic”, and a healer, describing a patient’s visits to doctors, told me that his patient “had been injected several times but did not get well” (*disuntik beberapa kali tapi tidak sembuh*). If doctors did prescribe antibiotics, most used high doses (750 – 1,000mg) and only gave the patient enough for two to three days. Another factor which increased pressure on health professionals was the ready availability of over-the-counter prescription drugs in pharmacies.¹¹⁹

Another confounding factor is the use of generic drugs in the public health sector; a policy which Indonesia adopted in 1983. In contrast to the Rp 2,000 charged at the Puskesmas private practitioners charge from Rp 8,000 to as much as Rp 30,000. When I questioned why patients were willing to pay this fee the standard answer was that

¹¹⁹ One doctor explained that drugs in Indonesia were classified by colour, so that those which have a red dot on the box were supposed to be sold only under prescription. Boxes displaying blue and green dots, on the other hand, were able to be sold freely.

patients considered the treatment they received was of better quality, particularly commenting that the drugs were more effective. This pattern of consultation has been increasingly the case since the growth in the demand for women migrant labourers employed as domestic servants. Apart from investing in better houses, returning women use the money they have earned on education for their children and on healthcare. One nurse-midwife commented that even patients entitled to use the health card often preferred to pay because they thought the subsidised medicines they would be given were cheap, and therefore less effective. Her comments were confirmed on several occasions when ordinary people said they preferred not to go to the Puskesmas because they thought that the medicines available there were *obat murahan* (cheap medicines) or *obat gaplek* (medicines which contained only cassava).¹²⁰

While commodity fetishism is on the increase in Indonesia in the reputation attached to certain brand names, for example Honda motorbikes, these perceptions may have some basis. In the last two decades studies on bioavailability have shown “that chemically equivalent generic drug formulations do not always deliver the expected amount of drug to the bloodstream”; a problem which may be widespread in developing countries where inexpensive generic antibiotics are usually not subject to bioavailability studies. Bioavailability is modulated by the conditions surrounding a drug’s administration. “Drug combinations used in the tropics but rarely elsewhere may not be optimally absorbed (Okeke *et al.*, 1999:5).” It would seem that scepticism about generic medicines is indeed a national issue. In 2002 the Minister for Health stated that Indonesia still had the most expensive drugs in the world, and that, even though the government had campaigned hard, it had failed to persuade people to use generic drugs which could be as much as four or five times cheaper. “The use of generic drugs”, he said, “was less than optimal, the main reason being that the public was yet to be really convinced of their quality” (Tempo, 5/01/2002).¹²¹

¹²⁰ Perceptions of the inferiority of drugs provided by public health centres is very much tied to perceptions of government neglect and ineptness. Mark Nichter has also commented on the perception that government medicine is of lower quality in the Philippines (2002:89).

¹²¹ “*Kurang optimalnya pemakaian obat generik ini, salah satunya adalah karena masyarakat belum terlalu yakin mengenai khasiat obat ini.*”

Indonesian studies support the levels of pharmaceutical use found in Ponorogo. They detail that, on average, patients receive 3.5 drugs per visit (Arustiyono, 1999:6), and 80-90% of patients receive injections, most commonly of antibiotics, vitamins, analgesics and antihistamines (Hardon & van Staa, 1997:15). Sciortino, for example, observed the “fixed habit” of health centre nurses who, irrespective of the disease, always gave patients an injection accompanied by three kinds of pills to be taken over three days. She concluded that the ritualised nature of this prescribing pattern reinforced their status as medical specialists, both vis-à-vis the lay public and the traditional healer, known as the *dukun* (1995:182-183). While this is certainly a factor, what my interviews with private practitioners point to is more closely aligned to what Mark Nichter terms a medical market dominated by “client demand”. His extensive research in South Asia has situated practitioner-patient relationships and prescription practice within the context of an eclectic popular health culture. In an environment, like Java, where multiple health ideologies exist and a wide array of medicines are marketed in similar ways to appeal to consumers, he found that practitioners are under pressure “to produce demonstrable effects” through the medicines they administer (1989:190-193). Biomedical practitioners, therefore, become merely brokers or facilitators for the commercial exchange of allopathic medicines.

Pressure to prescribe drugs is, of course, not only confined to developing countries. Numerous studies in Britain, for example, have found that factors influencing the decision to prescribe “are complex and are influenced by the context in which they are made”. Doctors were more likely to prescribe where there was no established practitioner-patient relationship and they were therefore unsure of the patient’s expectations (Stevenson *et al.*, 2002:100-101).

Das & Das describe “the intricate connections which exist between households and biomedical practitioners” as a ‘local ecology’ of care (2006:73). This large in-depth study conducted in urban Delhi found a pattern specific to low-income families who, although suffering repeated short-duration illnesses, only consulted a biomedical practitioner when they had access to small amounts of money. Thus “what constituted normality and pathology” was powerfully mediated by “poverty and precariousness of income flows, rather than in a standardized break in the continuum of health and

illness.” Although this pattern may actually indicate more serious illnesses, such as tuberculosis, or chronic conditions, practitioners, because of their poor diagnostic skills, dispensed medication on a symptomatic basis for short durations. This short-term therapeutic pattern blurs the boundaries between health and illness and sets in train “a certain temporal rhythm” where the patient feels ill – takes medication – feels better – feels sick again – goes back to practitioner – takes more medication, etc. (2006:75-78). What is interesting is their distinction between the “*dispensation* (rather than prescription) of medicines” (2006:73 emphasis in original) to poor families. As is the case in Ponorogo the cost of medication is included in the cost of consultations, therefore obviously determining the quantity given to the patient. Nichter describes this practice as “hidden consultation fees”, calculated by adding a “reasonable cost”, in patient estimations, on to medication costs. Only when required medications are expensive will practitioners write out a prescription in order to disassociate themselves from high costs (Nichter, 1996:247-248). This situation is also at work in Ponorogo, adding yet another differentiating layer of health care related to distance. Because all pharmacies are located in the town centre, outlying practitioners are more likely to dispense small packets of unlabelled pharmaceuticals. *Warung* (small shops or stalls) do stock a limited supply of medicines, some of which would require a prescription in Australia. Some town doctors, on the other hand, do write out prescriptions for patients they perceive can afford more expensive medications.

Whyte has termed the relatively weak position of physicians in many developing countries as the ‘social indigenisation of pharmaceuticals’ (1998:320). In countries which have a strong and competitive folk sector, and in which biomedicine was a relatively late arrival, therapeutic authority is derived from social authority. A folk practitioner’s legitimacy is not acknowledged through formal qualifications but through popular recognition of his/her particular expertise. Since most biomedical practitioners were trained to work in government or mission facilities their professional authority derives as much from their institutional position as from their formal qualifications. Once a biomedical practitioner practices outside of their institution they become more closely aligned to the folk sector (1998:322-323). As such they become a “non-professional, non-bureaucratic, specialist” (Kleinman in Whyte, 1998:323) who must

“respond to local needs and expectations rather than the standards in which they were trained”. Pharmaceutical practice is therefore intimately tied to the dynamics between the professional and popular sectors (Whyte, 1998:324).

The situation that Whyte describes is also relevant to Java which has a highly differentiated folk sector comprised mostly of part-time healers, and a popular (or lay) sector where health maintenance, prevention and cure are addressed on a personal and community level through a wide variety of practices, such as diet, local pharmacopoeia, healing rites and rituals, changes in life style habits, prayer, and the use of charms and amulets.¹²² Although popular aetiological concepts share many of Ayurveda’s diagnostic principles, such as concerns about hot-cold, a hydraulic model of the body, and concerns about blood and digestion (Nichter, 1989:190), there are none of the professional Ayurvedic practitioners akin to those of South Asia. However, folk healers, unlike those in many other countries, do not dispense pharmaceuticals, give injections, or provide other manufactured herbal remedies. One of the reasons for this is the widespread contemporary and historical use of pharmacological substances. It is the particular interrelationships between the logic of use these substances, patterns of morbidity, and intense competition with the pharmaceutical industry which has driven the demand for ever more potent pharmacological agents, and increases the pressure on biomedical practitioners to provide fast relief.

Pharmacological Agents in Everyday Health Maintenance

Much anthropological/ethnomedical research has been carried out into how the logic of local therapies provides an insight into the pattern of pharmaceutical use. For example, Saradamma *et al.* suggest that fear of potential long-term side effects is one of the reasons Indians cease medication when symptoms subside (in Das & Das, 2006:70). Nichter identifies certain “supplements and/or foods [which] are thought necessary to consume” to either enhance or reduce the effect of medications (1989:209). Etkin *et al.* (1999) detail how Hausa select pharmaceuticals according to locally important criteria for efficacy, such as taste, colour and texture.

¹²² My use of the terms „folk’ and „popular’ sectors are based on Kleinman’s more dynamic elaboration of Leslie’s original categorisation (see Kleinman, 1984).

One of the most distinctive aspects of personal health care in Java is the ubiquitous use of *jamu* (herbal mixtures). Numerous studies attest to its popularity, most citing that around 80 percent of the population use it on a regular basis to maintain health, and to prevent and cure illness (e.g., V.J. Hull, 1979; van Esterik, 1988).

Javanese Jamu

Although the origins of *jamu* are uncertain it seems fair to surmise that its development was strongly influenced by the traders plying the spice routes and therefore Chinese, Indian and Arabic humoral therapies. As the largest archipelago on earth with a wealth of tropical rainforest and unique ecological niches, Indonesia contains around 30,000 plant species, approximately one thousand of which have been used in traditional medicines (Swan & Sangat-Roemantyo, 2002:3). Europeans were drawn to the East Indies by the lure of spices, such as pepper, ginger, cinnamon, cloves, and especially nutmeg, which for centuries had been used in the treatment of all sorts of ailments. As mentioned previously one of the distinguishing features in Java was the early incorporation of medicinal plants into colonial medicine, and its continued folk use by Europeans and Eurasians which no doubt added a measure of legitimacy. Reliefs on Borobudur (800-900 AD) depict plants being ground for the preparation of *jamu*, while early manuscripts from the courts of Java, Bali, Sumatra and Sulawesi contain recipes along with other aspects of medical philosophy. Emphasising these aristocratic roots adds to the aura and authenticity of the products of modern *jamu* manufacturers. The biography of Mooryati Soedibyo, for example, the founder of the Mustika Ratu company, relates that she is a descendant of Sultan Pakubuwana X who grew up in the Central Javanese Surakarta Palace where her grandmother taught her how to choose and blend the best quality plant ingredients (Ensiklopedi Tokoh Indonesia, 2005).

Away from the courts, in Java the figure most synonymous with this tradition is the sole woman trader who mixes her own remedies at home from the bark, roots, seeds, leaves, fruit, or flowers of certain plants. She then rides through villages carrying the decoctions in a large bamboo basket tied on her back by the traditional long sash, the *sléndhang*. Known as *jamu gendong* (Jv. *jamu* carried in a sling), for this reason, my first encounter was when I lived in Yogyakarta for several years in the 1980s. The seller, riding the traditional black bicycle, came to my boarding house about three times

a week in the afternoons carrying the mostly murky yellow, bittersweet liquids. It was a social event with most of the women in the street turning out to buy, drink, and chat together. Although the remedies of this form of *jamu* take their names from their base ingredients which are always the same, sellers use their own recipes, some passed down through families, and secondary ingredients therefore vary.¹²³ Their names and efficacy are universally known and they are still the most popular today, such as:

- *beras kencur* (raw rice and lesser galangale), a tonic to strengthen the body and ease the aches of strenuous physical labour;
- *kunir asem* (turmeric & tamarind) to refresh and cool the body;
- *pahitan* (bitter *jamu*), based on bitter herbs, such as *sambiloto* and *brotowali* (indeed the bitterest thing I have ever tasted), to clean the blood and increase appetite;
- *kunci sirih* (*Curcuma alba* and betel leaf), for women's sexual health; and
- *cabe puyang* (chilli and *lemuyang*, a type of ginger) for all types of twinges, but especially for back pain.

In Ponorogo Bu Jamu (the *jamu* seller) came to the door of our house in the mornings.¹²⁴ Still carrying the bamboo basket and the large bottles of remedies she now rode a motorbike. Apart from the standard mixtures she specialised in remedies based on *temulawak* (*Curcuma xanthorrhiza* Roxb., Javanese turmeric), which was very popular at the time as a general tonic. Raffles even describes these tuberous roots, “grated and infused in water” ... [being] daily offered for sale along the roads and in the interior” (1830:Vol 1, 136), and several recent scientific papers attest to its extensive medicinal properties (e.g., Kim *et al.*, 2007; Rukayadi *et al.*, 2006; Wientarsih *et al.*, 2002).

¹²³ In a study of 20 sellers in Surabaya, secondary ingredients in *beras kencur* recipes, for example, could include *kedawung* seeds (a large forest tree, *Parkia roxburghii*), ginger root, cardamom seeds, tamarind, *Curcuma alba* root, cinnamon, turmeric, sour lime (*jeruk nipis*), and nutmeg (Suharmiati & Handayani, 2001).

¹²⁴ Women old enough to have children are called ‘Bu’, short for *ibu* (mother), which is the equivalent of Mrs.

Jamu gendong is also available in local markets or at popular spots where breakfast snacks are sold. In Ponorogo you could, in fact, buy some form of *jamu* almost anywhere and at almost any time. Commercially-manufactured *jamu* is sold at *toko obat* (medicine shops) where you will see a large range of brightly packaged tablets, pills, capsules, powders, and creams from several manufacturers which are used for cosmetic purposes, as regular tonics, or to treat a variety of ailments. The names on these packets utilise popular folk categories of illness, such as the all-encompassing *masuk angin* (penetrating wind), but the influence of biomedicine is increasingly apparent in labels, such as *asam urat* (acidic muscles = gout) or *kencing manis* (sweet urine = diabetes); and more recently *hyperten* for hypertension, and *losterin* to lower cholesterol.¹²⁵ On visiting any pharmacy to fill a prescription all manner of plant-based remedies fill the glass display counters. At night there are *jamu* kiosks where predominantly male customers gather to chat while they drink, much in the same way as at a *warung* (food stall). These kiosks normally stock one manufacturer's range and, after selecting your *jamu*, the seller will mix it for you in a blender with hot water, adding honey and an egg from a village chicken (*ayam kampung*), for an extra health benefit. The most popular varieties sold here are to treat aching muscles and stiff joints (*jamu pegal linu*) or to increase male stamina and sexual prowess (*jamu kuat laki-laki*). Customers often order for family members. These are packaged in plastic (*bungkus*) and taken home for the treatment of ailments, such as *sesak nafas* (constricted breathing = asthma); or for more aesthetic purposes, such as *galian singset* for women who want to regain a youthful figure. Apart from this some popular remedies, such as *beras kencur*, are now available in *warung* and restaurants; and then there is the single dose *jamu bubuk* (powdered *jamu*), which you mix yourself at home, and which is sold almost everywhere.¹²⁶

Because *jamu* is inexpensive most people elect to buy it readymade, although most households have a few easy standby recipes made from kitchen ingredients for simple

¹²⁵ As Ferzacca explains physical symptoms of *masuk angin* include, but are not limited to, combinations of chills and fever, listlessness, dizziness, throbbing head pain, bloated stomach, sneezing, achy joints or muscles, cold sweats, vomiting, general weariness, generally feeling out of sorts (2001:118).

¹²⁶ Afdhal & Welsch note that these packets contain 7 grams, which both the *jamu* industry and the Indonesian Dept of Health use as a standard dose (1988:168n).

complaints, such as diarrhoea, and coughs and colds. In previous times medicinal plants would have been grown in home gardens (*pekarangan*), but most town dwellers no longer have large enough yards. They can, however, buy the ingredients from the local market where popular mixes are often packaged in plastic. I did meet one man, Pak Carik, a village *carik* (secretary), who had quite an extensive medicinal garden.¹²⁷ He seemed extremely healthy and told us that he never went to the doctor, but always treated any illness at home using traditional remedies that he had learnt from his parents. For example, if he thought he might catch *masuk angin* he would drink *wedan jahé* (a hot ginger drink) as a precautionary measure, or for upset stomachs and diarrhoea he would mix together and drink the crushed leaves of the red guava tree, young banana leaves, and sawo fruit. When I commented that he was unusual in making his own *jamu* because many, even older, people seemed to have forgotten how, he said that people were “*wis aras-arasen*” (already lazy), or sometimes “*gengsi*” (proud, snobbish), in the sense of preferring to buy prepared medicines because they were more modern. A health volunteer who lived in a highland area told me she had learnt to make her own *jamu* by attending a three-day course in Yogyakarta. She made four types - *beras kencur*, *pahitan*, *kunir asem*, and *cabe puyang* – using local fresh ingredients, and buying the spices to mask the bitter flavours at the local market. She normally sold her *jamu* at the local market to supplement her income, but said she often sold out on the road well before reaching her destination.

The points to note from the above summary are that *jamu* is predominantly used as part of a regular and ongoing regime to ward off illness and maintain wellbeing, and that the market is highly segmented. Remedies are especially rich around important areas of life, such as pregnancy and post-partum, and to deal with everyday complaints and concerns.

A good example of these concerns is lack of appetite. Health and wellbeing in Java are associated with a well-built body; one that is not too thin (*kurus*) and not obese (*gendut*). For a discussion on the nuances of body shape (see Ferzacca, 2001:127-129). Lack of appetite was a concern for Pak Carik. To improve appetite when he felt listless

¹²⁷ Similarly to women, men are called ‘Pak’, short for *bapak* (father) which is equivalent to Mr.

he would crush *temulawak*; the roots, leaves and flowers of *cartes gantung* (a type of papaya tree that does not bear fruit), *temuireng* (a type of ginger), add salt and drink the mixture. There are several types of *jamu* which nominate an increase in appetite (*napsu makan*) as part of their desired effects, such as *jamu napsu makan*, *gemuk sehat* (fat and healthy), *pa'tani kuat* (strong farmer), and *jamu seger* (Jv. fresh). Nyonya Meneer's *Jamu Seger*, for example, states that it:

*“is for those who want a healthy, robust and strong body. This jamu brings about restful sleep, increased appetite, improved urine flow, enriched blood and results in renewed energy.”*¹²⁸

Seger is applied to food that is refreshing and tasty, and to describe “feeling like a new person”, “fit and refreshed”, especially expressed after an afternoon bath. In fact I gradually came to realise that one of the reasons many Ponorogans enjoyed outrageously spicy *sambal* (hot chilli) with their food was not from a sense pride in the amount of self-torture one could inflict, but because it made one want to eat more. *Warung* selling Ponorogo's regional dish, *pecel*, a mix of cultivated and wild greens with a spicy peanut sauce, which you can buy around the clock, are rated according to the spiciness (*pedas*) of their recipe. Seemingly at odds with the more usual portrayal of a slender (*ramping*) body as the Javanese aesthetic ideal, as Ferzacca explains, this is more an aristocratic attribute, a sign of intense asceticism, or for female performers of court dance. Ferzacca's discussion of body shape mentions the association of corpulence “with flourishing wealth and prosperity” (2001:128), which is also true in Ponorogo, but, from a practical point of view, particularly applicable to rural areas, strong bodies are an essential requirement to carry out strenuous physical labour. I well remember a man, since deceased, who occasionally did odd jobs for my mother-in-law, whose appetite was legendary. In this respect it attested to his strength and capacity for hard work.

¹²⁸ “Untuk yang ingin mempunyai badah sehat, gemuk dan kuat. Jamu ini menyebabkan tidur nyenyak, nafsu makan bertambah, melancarkan buang air, menambah darah dan mendatangkan tenaga baru.”

Mild Narcotics: Opium and Betel

This emphasis on physical labour provides another piece of the jigsaw in assembling the picture of the determinants of pharmaceutical use. Much like the chewing of coca leaves for their stimulant, anaesthetic and medicinal effects in Andean regions of South America the use of mild narcotics has a long history in Java. Joel Hanna's paper, on the biological and cultural context of coca chewing, tells us that "coca use is typically confined to lower classes who do most of the physical labour" and that habitual users claim that it "reduces hunger, enhances working ability, and promotes a feeling of warmth in the cold." These properties have given the leaves an important role in folk medicine, and in ceremonial and religious activities in contemporary Indian society (in 1974:281-283). The practice of coca chewing found its way to the United States in the 19th century where it was adopted by "agricultural laborers, mine workers, and other labouring groups that had long and difficult work requirements" (Spillane, 1999:91).¹²⁹

In Java this role of sustaining hard labour and dealing with adverse ecological conditions was filled by opium and betel.

Arab traders are generally credited with the introduction of opium to Java many centuries ago. When the VOC arrived it competed with the English, the Danes, and the Arabs to dominate what was then a substantial trade; finally securing a monopoly in 1677 which was to last until 1942. But even so clandestine opium smuggled through Java's long and vulnerable coastline far outweighed the official supply. The opium farms of Solo, Kediri, Semarang and Madiun yielded the highest opium revenues, and opium consumption was consistently higher in these regencies. Although the Chinese were among the heaviest users, Javanese comprised the majority of the opium-smoking population (Rush, 1985:549-551). Opium auctions were state spectacles. William d'Almeida describes one such auction for the annual government license for the Madiun residency which took place in the Ponorogo *aloon-aloon* in the mid 19th century (1864:Vol 2:13-22).

¹²⁹ It is interesting that in many developed countries in recent years economic deregulation linked to work intensification and precarious employment has again increased the use of stimulants, especially methamphetamine 'speed', to combat fatigue in workers, such as long-distance truck drivers (Quinlan *et al.*, 2001:521-523).

According to Rush, “Opium seems to have been especially attractive to Java’s ‘floating’ population: vagabonds, musicians, and theatre folk, peddlers and artisans, and the swelling contingent of laborers who worked for wages - laying rails, picking coffee, cutting cane, and hauling produce and supplies”, but Javanese peasants and petty labourers who smoked small amounts daily were at the heart of the market. Opium gave them energy and helped sustain manual labour. Plantation managers even provided it to their workers for this reason. In villages and plantations it was shared in celebrations marking the end of the rice harvest or the beginning of the coffee-picking season (1985:551-552). He relates a particularly vivid example of the value of opium:

“The harvesting of birds’ nests had a special relationship with opium. It required ascending rickety bamboo ladders to pluck the valuable nests from the walls and ceiling of the caves. Opium was considered so necessary to inducing courage to make the ascent that, even in areas where the government controlled nest collecting directly, nest pluckers were provided with free opium. Opium was also an essential part of the ritual offering to the cave spirits which preceded each harvest (1990:100).”

While the wealthy were able to smoke high-grade opium (*candu*) in finely crafted pipes, poorer smokers used cheap preparations like *tiké*, opium mixed with finely cut *awar-awar* (*figus septica*) leaves and sugar, or opium-soaked tobacco rolled up in a maize leaf. Opium was also added to coffee or mixed with the betel quid. Based on the average expenditure of unskilled labourers in 1890 opium smokers consumed between 15 and 60 milligrams of morphine daily. Even if, by some medical estimates, a smoker only absorbs one tenth of the morphine, Javanese were absorbing similar dosages to those administered today for pain.¹³⁰ Responses from seventy-nine opium users revealed that most used it as a remedy of last resort for conditions as various as severe headaches, fevers and chills (malaria), stomach aches, diarrhoea, dysentery, cholera, pains and swelling in the joints and other rheumatic symptoms, beriberi, asthma,

¹³⁰ Although the alkaloid morphine is its principal narcotic, opium also contains small amounts of codeine. “Today morphine continues to be clinically superior to newer drugs in relieving pain.” One of its characteristics is its universality as an analgesic. Morphine also “depresses the cough reflex, and provides unparalleled relief for diarrhea and dysentery.” (Jaffe & Martin in Rush 1985:553).

bloody coughing, fatigue, anxiety, symptoms of venereal disease, and for pain caused by injuries such as sprains, dislocations, and broken bones (Rush, 1985:551-554).¹³¹

For Javanese the combination of a tropical climate, natural disasters, and prevailing public health conditions meant that they were vulnerable to a complex range of endemic and epidemic diseases. As well as opium, the chewing of the betel quid addressed some of these conditions.¹³² Betel, like opium, was also used in a mixture. Known as the betel quid, it comprised the seed of the areca palm (*areca catechu*), lime from crushed shells, and the fresh leaf of the betel vine (*piper betle*), which formed the wrapper for the quid. Areca and betel appear to be native to the Indonesian archipelago because of the distinctive Indigenous names by which they are known in almost every Indonesian regional language. The earliest written descriptions of its use in 16th century record that the offering of betel to guests in either court or village was an indispensable mark of hospitality virtually everywhere in tropical Asia. It was also central to most rituals, such as those surrounding death, healing, courtship and marriage, and offerings to the spirits. By the end of the 18th century gambier and tobacco had become standard additions. Gambier, an extract of the climbing shrub *uncaria gambir*, also used medicinally for dysentery, was made by boiling down the leaves until they reached a rubbery consistency. This was then cut into one-inch cubes (*biji*) and sold throughout the Archipelago. Raffles estimated that most of Riau's annual production in 1815, amounting to 120 million *biji*, went to Java and that this amount, in a population of less than 6 million, would have been sufficient to keep every man, woman and child chewing constantly (Reid, 1985:529-537).

¹³¹ Opium was also the usual treatment for cholera for Europeans who drank a preparation known as Bleeker's Opium Drink (Groneman in Rush 1985:554).

¹³² In the Andes, coca chewing sustained physical labour by diminishing pain and fatigue, and was strongly correlated with altitude where it had a role in dealing with the environmental stresses of low oxygen tension and low temperatures. It appears that during cold exposure coca produces mild vasoconstriction, reducing heat loss from extremities and maintaining a higher core temperature (Hanna, 1974:286-289).

Indonesian literary sources suggest that the centrality of betel chewing in their ritual and social life was because of its relaxant properties. However, betel also has extensive medical benefits. The most universal claim is that it prevents dental decay and toothache, and sweetens the breath. Many Europeans adopted it for these reasons, but it also aids digestion and prevents intestinal and digestive disorders. Betel has been found to be effective against parasites, such as roundworm and tapeworm. The juice of betel leaves was used topically on wounds and infections as an antiseptic; its efficacy noted by numerous early European observers, “even in cases of the most appalling wounds”. Recent research in Vietnam has found it to be effective against a range of bacteria causing dysentery and typhoid (Reid, 1985:532-535).

Both opium and betel chewing declined in the 20th century due to a complex of reasons. There was a transformation of customs and manners, with opium and betel use associated with “being backward, or simply old-fashioned”. The spread of education, and condemnation by early Indonesian nationalist leaders and Dutch proponents of the Ethical Policy (Rush 1985:558) no doubt also contributed to the decline. Moreover, medical services were expanding and there was improved effectiveness of vaccines (see above). Although less common, the betel quid mixed with tobacco is still chewed today by older women in rural areas of Java. The demise of opium and betel also coincided with the introduction of the distinctive Indonesian *kretek* cigarette (named onomatopoeically after the crackling sound of the cloves as they explode and burn), which themselves were “marketed as a medicine for individuals suffering from asthma and other respiratory conditions” (Afdhal & Welsch :155). As Reid states cigarette smoking “is a social necessity in many circumstances” (1985:540) and, although in recent years there has been a growing awareness of the dangers of smoking, in rural areas there is still a nuanced social etiquette attached to the numerous brands of *kretek* cigarettes.

The regular use of *jamu*, opium and betel therefore formed part of a therapeutic routine to cope with the spectrum of disabilities related to occupation and the high pathological loads of a tropical environment; a situation which is little changed today. As patent medicines became more available, and sanctions on the use of opium and betel increased, they were substituted for these narcotic substances. The popularity and

convenience of patent medicines, however, gave rise to new manufactured *jamu* products.

The Jamu Industry and Pharmaceuticals

Afdhal & Welsch explain that the modern *jamu* industry, in contrast to the sole traders who characterise *jamu gendong*, has always been closely aligned with the pharmaceutical industry. It began in the early 20th century when mostly Indonesian-born Chinese entrepreneurs started producing *jamu bubuk* (powdered *jamu*) as a ‚patent’ *jamu* in response to the availability and convenience of imported pharmaceuticals, particularly patent medicines from Europe. It is not clear how these products were differentiated, but it seems that up to the Second World War the word ‚*jamu*’ may have had the more restricted meaning of a ‚tonic’ rather than a curative medicine.¹³³ They were, however, marketed in terms of their main competition – patent medicines. Through periods of war, namely the Japanese occupation (1942-45) and the Indonesian Revolution (1945-49), when there was no access to imported goods, the country was forced to rely on locally available herbal medicines of which few Dutch-trained Indonesian doctors had any real experience. As soon as the crisis passed physicians quickly returned to the use of imported medicines which, by the 1950s, were of considerably better quality. The difference between the two products became increasingly well defined and in 1963, with the passing of laws regulating pharmaceuticals, the distinction between *obat moderen* (modern medicines) and *jamu*, defined as *obat asli Indonesia* (authentic Indonesian medicines), was made legal (1988:154-159).¹³⁴ To illustrate “some of the complexities and paradoxes of pharmaceutical pluralism”, this meant “a legally-guaranteed continuing role within the larger pharmaceutical industry.” Since this time *jamu* manufacturers have continued to follow the industry’s lead by adding more modern forms of their products, such as pills,

¹³³ Afdhal & Welsch refer to Malay dictionaries at the time which define *jamu*’ as “Preparations which do not exactly serve as medicines, but have the object of maintaining health and excluding mischievous influences” and ‚ubat’ (Ind. *obat*) as “A medicinal drug; a magic simple; a medicine” (1988:169n).

¹³⁴ Indonesian laws regulating *jamu* are based on UU No. 7, 1963 where it is legally defined as “Obat asli Indonesia” [which] are medicines that are obtained directly from natural materials found in Indonesia, processed in a simple manner based on experience and used in ‚traditional therapies’ [“Obat asli Indonesia” ialah obat-obat yang diperoleh langsung dari bahan-bahan alam yang terdapat di Indonesia, terolah secara sederhana atas dasar pengalaman dan penggunaannya dalam “pengobatan tradisional”] (Afdhal & Welsch, 1988:168n).

capsules and tablets (Afdhal & Welsch, 1988:149 &158-159) to the original powdered form.

In 2000 the Federation of Indonesian *Jamu* Manufacturers (*Gabungan Pengusaha Jamu Indonesia* = GPJI) consisted of 686 registered companies, 607 of which were small-scale producers, and had annual sales of around two trillion rupiah (Kompas, 03/09/2000). Some of these companies are very large and market their products through sophisticated TV commercials featuring popular young actors. One especially vivid example I remember was of three slim young women dressed in gym gear. (Gyms had just opened in Jakarta at that time.) The women used the new capsules, manufactured to the latest laboratory standards, in concert with their workouts to keep their enviable figures.

To grasp the level of competition which exists in the pharmaceutical industry, in 2001 pharmaceutical turnover in Indonesia had risen to Rp. 12.63 trillion (WHO, 2004a:15). In 2003 there were an estimated 9,000 pharmaceutical formulations on the Indonesian market (Kompas, 8/04/2003), many of which were likely to be of little value.¹³⁵ There is also a thriving black market where a wide range of pharmaceuticals are available, including prescription-only medications, and even vaccines for polio, measles, and hepatitis B among others (Kompas, 25/09/2002). The Indonesian Association of Pharmacists warned that approximately 20 percent of these medications were counterfeit (Kompas, 03/09/2000).¹³⁶ In addition to this mix, there is the increasing popularity of energy-enhancing drinks. Products such as *Fit-up*, *Kratingdaeng*, *Hemaviton*, and especially *Extra Joss* which contain varying combinations of vitamins, glucose, amino acids, ginseng, royal jelly, and caffeine (Lyon, 2005) are also heavily marketed on TV. Featuring celebrated comedians these commercials are targeted towards lower socioeconomic groups.

¹³⁵ A study of the products of European multinational drug companies conducted in the early 1990s showed that 84% of pharmaceuticals marketed were non-essential and that 42% of these were likely to be of little value because they contained two or more active ingredients. According to Hartog, "A combination drug was classified as inappropriate if it offered no therapeutic advantage over monotherapy or if the dosage ratio between the active ingredients was incorrect." (1993:902)

¹³⁶ A counterfeit medicine is defined as "one which is deliberately and fraudulently mislabelled with respect to identity and/or source. Counterfeiting can apply to both branded and generic products and counterfeit products may

Adulteration

To take up Das & Das' (2006) point of a continually evolving 'local ecology', the convergence of easy dispensation of strong pharmaceutical medications, their reputation for fast relief, weak government regulation, intense competition, household economics, and the health maintenance logic of use has had disturbing consequences. My interest was first provoked when health professionals I had been interviewing told me that some of the *jamu* for sale was mixed with pharmaceuticals. One doctor said that it was the *jamu* sellers themselves who bought drugs over-the-counter, pounded them into a powder and then mixed them with their *jamu*. This practice was called *oplosen* (from the Dutch *oplossen*; to dissolve in solution). He said the most likely adulterated varieties were those for *reumatik* (a synonym for rheumatic symptoms), *kejelinu* (shooting pains), *panas* (fever), *mencret* (diarrhoea), and *pusing* (headache). Just the type of ailments for which injections would mostly be sought.

When I delved further I found that reports of adulterated *jamu* had begun to appear in the national press as early as 2001. The magazine Tempo reported that the Indonesian Food and Drug Administration (BPOM = *Badan Pengawasan Obat dan Makanan*) had found 14 brands of adulterated *jamu* in early 1999 and that the producers had been given a warning (Tempo, 6/02/2001). It finally acted in late 2001 withdrawing 35 *jamu* products from the market because they contained a variety of drugs, including phenylbutazone, paracetamol, anaprox, dexamethasone, furosemide, caffeine, and theophylline, most of which can have serious side-effects. The *jamu* in question was manufactured by eighteen medium-sized producers from Banyumas and Cilicap in Central Java. The Head of BPOM, Sampurno, admitted that this was not the first offence against Health and Consumer Protection regulations and referred to the adulterated products which had been detected in 1999 when formal requirements for registration and quality control were instituted (Kompas, 27/11/2001). It appears, however, that the adulteration of *jamu* has been occurring for at least 20 years (SCTV6, 19/11/2006). I later learned that the withdrawal of products had impacted on several night kiosks in Ponorogo. These sellers used products from Cilicap because of their

include products with the correct ingredients, wrong ingredients, without active ingredients, with incorrect quantity of active ingredient or with fake packaging." (WHO, 2004:35)

reputation for being especially effective (*mujarab*) and were now forced to look for alternative suppliers.

Manufactured *jamu* is also exported mostly to regional neighbours, such as Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei, Taiwan, and Hong Kong. With an already lucrative national and export market why had companies endangered their own reputation as well as the wellbeing, and even the lives, of their customers? The Tempo article speculated that *jamu* manufacturers may be tempted to add chemicals to their products because, compared to the rapid effects of modern drugs, herbal remedies take longer to work (Tempo, 6/02/2001). A spokesman for GPJI said that he was extremely concerned about the problem which had hit fellow businesses. As a *jamu* manufacturer himself he was aware of the intense competition in this sector, but surely any means couldn't be condoned for the sake of profits (Kompas, 27/11/2001).¹³⁷

It would seem therefore that the association of pharmaceuticals with "fast relief" has driven the demand for ever more potent pharmacological agents.¹³⁸ To illustrate how pervasive this association is the then President, Megawati Soekarnoputri, confessed at the opening of the 12th Indonesian Pharmaceutical Industry Conference that she had been a victim of counterfeit drugs. After taking the medicine given to her by the presidential team of doctors, "she felt she didn't recover quickly enough (*ia merasa tidak segera sembuh*)". A doctor friend, after examining the medication, told her it was "*obat aspal*" (appearing genuine but counterfeit) and "if she wanted to get better quickly (*kalau mau cepat sembuh*)" she should take the medicine he offered her (Kompas, 27/05/2003).¹³⁹

¹³⁷ "Terus terang, saya sangat prihatin dengan kejadian yang menimpa teman-teman. Sebagai pengusaha jamu, saya juga merasakan bahwa persaingan di bidang ini memang keras. Tapi uang kan bukan tujuan. Kami tidak bisa menghalalkan segala cara agar dagangan kami laku." ("Frankly I am very concerned about the incident which has hit [my] fellows. As a *jamu* manufacturer, I also feel that competition in this sector is indeed intense. But surely money is not the sole aim. We can't permit every means so that our trade is profitable.")

¹³⁸ This is not only the case in developing countries. Nancy Vuckovic's paper "Fast Relief: Buying Time with Medications" describes how the experience of "time famine" in the United States affects household decisions influences the use of pharmaceuticals (1999).

¹³⁹ "*Aspal*" is a neologism derived from *asli* (original) and *palsu* (false). For a discussion of its use see (Siegel, 1998:52-58).

The competitive dynamics, however, are a little more complex. Afdhal & Welsch see the attempts at the modernisation of *jamu* products as dating from the 1970s “to attract a more affluent and better educated consumer” (1988:160), but it is worth keeping in mind that, although Indonesia does indeed have a growing middle class, it is still overwhelmingly a nation of manual labourers. As my discussion of the pattern of *jamu* consumption in Ponorogo illustrated the *jamu* market is highly segmented. Manufacturers are very aware of their own market and the fact that, with 70 percent of sales coming from the inexpensive single dose *jamu bubuk*, “the industry survives largely on the basis of powdered *jamu*” (Afdhal & Welsch, 1988:161). This is also true of their best-selling products – tonics and elixirs for stiff muscles and aching joints, to increase stamina and strength, or to retain youthfulness and sex appeal - medicines to deal with the problems and preoccupations of everyday life. The “rogue” manufacturers were also not the large companies who have the resources to both produce and market an increasingly sophisticated range of products. Their products are targeted at a very specific market - those sold at *jamu* kiosks, and for which injections are mostly sought.

The adulteration of *jamu* continues at the time of writing in 2008. BPOM issued a public warning, based on laboratory tests carried out in December 2006, which listed 93 adulterated products (BPOM, 4/12/2006). In 2006 the *jamu* market turnover in Indonesia had risen to Rp. 7 trillion (*Suara Karya*, 22/11/2006), and there is general consensus that 4 trillion of this was in adulterated products. This is in part due to the difficulties entailed in monitoring and enforcing regulatory standards in countries, like Indonesia, which have weak governance, but there is also immense demand for adulterated products. While there are 686 registered *jamu* manufacturers, there are many thousands of cottage industries. Continued poor economic conditions, large pools of unemployment, and the demand for adulterated products means that many people turn to the *jamu* trade which operates in the informal sector. An example of the processes involved in this micro sector was related by a community health centre nurse, who I will call Rini:

Rini told me that she was called to a house in which an elderly man, around 65-70 years old, had collapsed. When she arrived his whole body was covered in an itchy rash which, she said, was urticaria, his blood pressure was extremely low (70/40), and he was hardly

conscious. In trying to discover the cause of the problem she asked if he had eaten anything unusual. Eventually he remembered that he had stopped at a *jamu* shop to buy a package of pills for *capai linu-linu* (weakness and rheumatic pain). He was taken to hospital and stayed there for a day and a night. Rini explained that what he had bought from the *jamu* seller consisted of four different types of pills, packaged in plastic, which cost around Rp. 1,000 and are taken together as a single does. She said that these are probably not made up by the *jamu* seller, but are usually bought from a smaller vendor who, in turn, buys the pills in bulk from another source. The small vendor then probably packages them at home and sells them to numerous shops in the area.¹⁴⁰ The patient told Rini that he often bought these. She thought that maybe the pills contained dexamethasone which often improved appetite.¹⁴¹

This incident occurred in Bungkal, a poor region in the foothills of Ponorogo's southern border region. Why did this man swallow four unlabelled pills of unknown origin? As the previous account of biomedical services illustrates people living in rural areas, or indeed poor urban areas, do not usually have the luxury of buying a whole box of medication. On visiting a community health centre, or even a private practitioner, one will come away with a plastic bag of variously coloured pills and no idea of their type or function. It is not surprising that customers do not find this strange when purchasing *jamu*. Rini's patient obviously suffered chronic musculoskeletal pain. Had he previously been to the community health centre and been given an injection which relieved the pain for a short time at a cost of Rp. 2,000, but could only afford to keep returning when personal finances allowed? Visiting a private doctor would cost at least Rp. 8,000 and would also involve repeated visits. How far away was the community health centre? Had he received some relief from the cheaper option offered by the *jamu* seller's pills and, after having consumed them over a period of time, finally succumbed to the long-term side effects?

The cost benefit problems associated with the repetitive treatment of chronic conditions resulting from work and environment will be a recurring theme in the next chapter, but

¹⁴⁰ This repackaging of larger quantities into smaller packets is a common way of earning some money. It also occurs for items, such as cigarettes and snacks.

¹⁴¹ A search of the internet reveals that dexamethasone is a synthetic adrenal corticosteroid used to treat a wide variety of inflammatory conditions, including arthritis. It is a prescription medication which can produce serious side effects and interacts with many other medications, including herbal products.

this chapter has also illustrated the negative consequences of an interventionist approach in the implementation of health programs which have as their focus undue reliance on pharmaceutical fixes. Apart from the fact that drug treatment can mask other symptoms, chronic illness itself requires a multidisciplinary approach to manage it effectively in the long-term. One important aspect of this is a strong practitioner-patient relationship. This aspect is especially important where there are multiple underlying causes of disease. It is also important where secondary and tertiary levels of treatment are required.



Jamu gendong (from <http://masakecildulu.files.wordpress.com/2009/08/tukang-jamu-007.jpg>)



Sidomuncul's *jamu* manufacturing complex near Semarang, Central Java
(from www.sidomuncul.com)



Single dose *jamu* for aching muscles

Vulnerability and Co-Morbidity

“The hot, wet tropics produced deadly miasmas on a scale, and of an intensity, unmatched in Europe. In the ‘torrid zone’ disease, put on a different aspect and character’: it ran its course rapidly and violently, and so called for exceptionally drastic and speedy remedies.”

From the mid-eighteenth century onwards European representations of ‘the tropics’ stressed its “fierce malevolence”, especially with regard to its “grievous effect on European constitutions” (Arnold, 1996:7). In the absence of adequate public health infrastructure it is this aspect of vulnerability which is still very much a part of people’s consciousness, their “being-in-the-world”; the thread which ran through the previous chapter and with which I began this chapter, which provides a rationale for what is often termed in various studies as the “irrational” use of allopathic drugs.

Steep health gradients between developed and developing countries mean that vulnerability to disease is of an entirely different magnitude in developing countries. Apart from the complex burden of illness outlined in a previous section of this chapter it is this degree of vulnerability to illness which needs to be emphasised. Prüss *et al.*, for example, conservatively estimated that the disease burden due to water, sanitation, and hygiene is 164 times higher in Southeast Asia when compared with a developed region (2002:41). Engels & Savioli suggest that many tropical infectious and parasitic diseases “have a more substantial impact on health than initially thought” because the range of morbidity they cause can extend to wider acute and chronic pathologies classically not attributed to them, as well as “considerable subtle and functional disability”, such as anaemia, impaired physical and cognitive development, decreased physical fitness and work capacity, and malnutrition (2006:363-366).¹⁴² In the absence of routine medical examinations characteristic of developed countries the real extent of co-morbidity, which “epidemiologists call the ‘iceberg’ of disease” (Johansson, 1991:45), is virtually unknown. I am sure co-morbidity is very common in rural Java,

¹⁴² In 2001 WHO estimated that 29% of infectious and parasitic diseases were “caused by a heterogeneous group of diseases that includes some tropical diseases (trypanosomiasis, Chagas disease, schistosomiasis, leishmaniasis, lymphatic filariasis, onchocerciasis, leprosy, dengue, Japanese encephalitis, trachoma and intestinal nematode infections), meningitis, hepatitis B and C, and a ‘residual’ range of rare diseases that cause high mortality (Engels & Savioli, 2006:363). See also Mascie-Taylor & Karim (2003).

not only of parasitic conditions, but also of other chronic and severe conditions. Then there is the rapid onset of common diseases, such as typhoid and dengue fever, and the energy-sapping heat and humidity. I well remember finishing an English class one afternoon and by the time I arrived home being completely immobilised by an illness from which I took two weeks to recover. Although I had already been immunised before leaving Australia, a doctor made an on-the-spot diagnosis of typhoid (evidently this was the season for typhoid and dengue fever) and dispensed a variety of pills to treat it.

To digress momentarily, this doctor had a large stock of medicines on hand. Apart from obtaining medicines from the public health facilities where they are also employed, I learned from a neighbour, who had worked as a pharmaceutical company representative, that doctors are given samples of medicines and receive incentives if they use certain amounts of them. Yet, another reason why health professionals may dispense medication. Like most Indonesians I did stop taking these after a few days. In my case it was due to the onset of unusual symptoms. This had also occurred many years ago when I contracted severe diarrhoea for which I finally visited a doctor. After a couple of days of taking the dispensed medications I started to experience disturbing burning and tingling in my legs and arms. I put this down to the fact that I rarely take allopathic drugs and this was probably a reaction to the high doses common in Indonesia. But there are also a number of other things to consider. According to Okeke *et al.* many drugs are heat- and moisture-labile and in temperatures greater than 25°C, harsh sunlight, and high humidity their active constituents start to degrade. Absorption can also be affected by the drug combinations in a particular formulation, as well as environmental conditions and diet (1999:4-5). In one highland region a couple of people I interviewed told me that they did not have a good impression of doctors because “they just made an assumption about your illness or had a standard prognosis.” To exemplify this they told me the name of one doctor who always diagnosed their patients as suffering from typhoid. This interview, which occurred after my illness, caused me to reflect on my own experience. Sometime after I returned to Australia I incidentally found out I had antibodies for dengue fever, which made me think that this

was the possible cause of my illness. There is of course no drug treatment for dengue fever.

Returning to the issue of co-morbidity Johansson, along with countless anthropological studies, reminds us health and morbidity exist along a continuum and “the precise breakpoint where ‘healthy’ ends and ‘sick’ begins” is culturally defined (1991:43). The poorer a community, especially where households must bear the cost of treatment, the more likely this breakpoint will move toward the onset of acute symptoms before the decision is made to consult a health professional. Even though extensive co-morbidity can actually accelerate the decline to serious illness, varying degrees of sub-optimal health states will be accepted as normal (Johansson, 1991:50).

This coincidence of vulnerability to illness and fast decline to serious illness is an ever-present focus in Ponorogo where pharmaceuticals and *jamu* are used preventively to keep marginal states of health from becoming worse (Nichter & Vuckovic, 1994:1512). One of the main reasons for this is that illness which cannot, or can no longer, be treated symptomatically with medicines presents both biomedical practitioners and patients with a dilemma because they have reached the limits of care. As Das & Das remind us deteriorating illness necessitates adopting a different trajectory; “a search for therapy outside the local”, outside that which is familiar (2006:79). An example of the kind of anxiety which arises is illustrated by one nurse who told me that, if she should refuse to give a patient an injection, they would immediately panic fearing their condition was already too serious to treat (*kalau tidak disuntik pikir kondisinya parah*).

A compounding dynamic is the general reticence and suspicion surrounding doctors’ suggestions, if they should occasionally do so, for diagnostic tests. The first of these suspicions is that the doctor is simply trying to draw more money from the patient. This is also applied to Indigenous healers, whom I will discuss in the next chapter, and is partly a reflection of people’s already stressed economic circumstances. The second is the association of more extensive medical treatment with negative outcomes. An example of this came out of a visit to a monthly *posyandu* when I asked one of the health volunteers, who I will call Titik, if people in the area shared the belief that the medications they received at the Puskesmas were inferior.

Titik explained that, although this belief had previously been the case, it was now changing.¹⁴³ She said that the impression was strong usually with families who could least afford private doctors. She cited the case of one family which she said was the poorest in the hamlet. Quite some time ago, in the 1980s, the grandmother of the family became ill and was taken to the nearest Puskesmas where she had been given some medicines, but had died. The impression had taken root that she had died because of the medicines given by the Puskesmas which were now thought to be dangerous. Titik did not know what illness the woman was suffering from, but speculated that it may have already been so serious that it was impossible to treat. “To this day”, she said, “this family will not go to the Puskesmas and, if a child becomes sick, they are taken very quickly to a private doctor.” She also told me that there was a general fear of operations, not only because of the cost, but also because people thought that operations would not make them well.

Negative outcomes are the end result of the dynamic set up by weak practitioner-patient relationships which are characteristic of areas like Ponorogo. Doctors understand the suspicion of patients; they also know their economic circumstances, but the only way to make a better diagnosis where presenting symptoms can be caused by many different illnesses is to order further tests. A medical professional also requires practise; lack of practise leads to lack of technique and skill which in turn contributes to negative outcomes.

Another reason is, of course, lack of adequate facilities. As discussed earlier biomedical treatment in Ponorogo is primarily at the primary health care level. Specialist services are extremely limited and, in 2001, hospital admissions accounted for only 0.7% of treatments.¹⁴⁴ Apart from their prohibitive cost, and their association with negative

¹⁴³ This area is particularly interesting because it demonstrates what can be achieved with community participation. Titik explained that the hamlet had started a health plan with an initial grant from PLAN International which they had deposited in the bank. Every household became a member by paying Rp. 300 per month, also deposited in the bank, which entitled them to get injections free from the Polindes. The Polindes was then reimbursed by the hamlet fund every month. One of the drawbacks, she explained, was that once PLAN became involved in health programs in an area the regency health dept. then wiped their hands (*angkat tangan*) and health services were unlikely to improve.

¹⁴⁴ While this figure refers to the government hospital, it is likely to be representative because the other two comparable hospitals – Aisyiah and Darmayu – will be more expensive, while the *pasantren* hospital, Arrisalah, is extremely small.

outcomes, there are other factors which limit the choices for secondary and tertiary care.

Serious Illness – The Limits of Biomedical Care

When making the decision to go to hospital a family must take into account not only the cost of the bed and medicines, but also the time, loss of income, and the cost of food at the hospital for the duration of the stay. Rural hospitals in Indonesia offer only the most basic of services. Attending to the physical needs of the patient, such as bathing, taking them to the toilet, and feeding must be provided by the family. Mostly carers will take a *tikar* (a plaited mat) which they use to sleep by the bed of the patient and attend to their needs. Rural hospitals are therefore very lively places. On entering you will see large numbers of people sitting by patients' beds. This is especially the case for those from more distant locations because this often necessitates an extended family group hiring a car to bring them to the hospital for the duration of the stay. Seeking care in the larger and better-equipped hospitals located in major city centres is normally out of the question unless one has established social networks there.

In Ponorogo serious illness states were usually signalled by silence; being sent home without treatment and told there was nothing wrong. This came out in many interviews with patients, and probably explains why refusing to give a patient an injection caused such panic. In general conversations about the silence of doctors on this issue some suggested it was cultural. In a hierarchical society, such as Java, admitting that you did not know would be shameful. One of the drawbacks of this approach may be that the patient would seek some other reason and suspect sorcery. On the other hand, suggesting further tests would make the patient suspicious that the doctor was trying to extract more money. Doctors said that when illness was serious they told the family rather than the patient. It would then be up to the family to decide what to do. With the limited nature of services in Ponorogo, advising an expensive operation or a course of treatment when the patient's prognosis was not good would mean seeking treatment in either Surabaya or Solo. (During my stay a modern multistorey Class B hospital was opened in the neighbouring regency of Madiun which should result in better treatment options and outcomes in future years.) One doctor explained that in Indonesia "*jiwa itu murah* (life is cheap)" so that when weighing up treatment for a serious illness, it was

thought that it was not worth spending a lot of money if the patient was going to die anyway.

Alternative Therapeutic Resources

In this chapter I have attempted to provide an understanding of how the burden of illness, household economics, health infrastructure, historical development, global and national health policies, and the cultural use of medicinal agents contribute to the use of biomedical services in Ponorogo. That this use is predominantly functional can be attributed to the limited nature of these services. It is also yet another demonstration of the active, rather than passive, tactics of “making do” employed by Ponorogans to cope with the contingencies of their everyday lifeworld; what Bruce Wilshire calls “the gritty and obscure drama of everyday life” (in Jackson, 1996:8).

Of course, as I have already discussed in this chapter, biomedicine is only one of the available therapeutic options. The next chapter will focus on other therapeutic resources, particularly the role of folk healers and the nature of the services they provide.

FOLK PRACTITIONERS: ADAPTATION AND TRANSFORMATION

Just as the terms “allopathic”, “cosmopolitan” and “bio-“ to describe a particular system of medicine have given rise to much debate in medical anthropology, the decision to label other forms of therapeutic knowledge as “traditional” and “folk” has been equally problematic. Although, as Chapter 2 illustrated in the case of Java, and many others have demonstrated in other contexts, traditions are dynamic over space and time, the term “traditional”, as a counterpoint to “modern”, has come to imply “a rigidity and resistance to change” (Connor, 2001:19n). “Folk health care” is usually defined by a diverse range of healing practices, both sacred and secular, carried out by individual, non-professional, non-bureaucratised “specialists” (Kleinman, 1984:148-149).¹⁴⁵ Therefore, while sharing some of the past-oriented connotations of “traditional”, “folk” has come to be viewed as a somewhat dismissive term in comparison to more formalised systems, such as biomedicine, Ayurveda, Chinese and Yunani medicine. I have chosen to use the descriptor “folk” to emphasise the individual nature of practitioners in contemporary Java.

Also relevant is the distinction between “health”, a biomedical term defined as an absence of an identifiable pathology in a discrete body, and its focus on curing; and “healing”, which “generally refers to therapeutic practices that are embedded in local social relations and forms of embodied experience” (Connor 2001:3). In the present global epidemiological environment of increasing chronic, degenerative and terminal illness, curative medicine is facing its own limitations. In an area, such as Ponorogo, high levels of degenerative conditions and co-morbidity, limited biomedical facilities, and constrained economic resources, also combine to make these limitations apparent. In the last chapter I argued that it was this local ecology – this coincidence of factors

¹⁴⁵ Kleinman (1984) proposed that local health care systems comprise three major arenas: a popular sector, a folk sector, and a professional sector.

together with the historical use of other therapeutic agents – which informed the use of pharmaceuticals in the merging of regimens of prevention, protection, cure and maintenance. This chapter will focus on another aspect of this ecology - the practice of folk practitioners. The diverse range of therapeutic services they provide are encompassed by the wider concept of healing.

Javanese therapeutic knowledge is the product of a rich and varied past. Building on early shamanic traditions, consecrated and priestly practitioners became responsible for a range of healing, ritual and religious roles before the advent of Islamisation. Hefner speculates that these roles may even have been carried on by an elite group, of which the *juru kunci* is a remnant, as part of the “cultural compromise between Islamic religion and earlier traditions” until the growth of rural *pesantren* in the 19th century democratised Islamic learning (1985:109). In addition, there have always been, according to the traditions of the time, various figures – Rishi ascetics, mendicants, forest hermits, and Sufi mystics - who lived on the margins of society. They often possessed curative and magical powers, and were often associated with transgressive practices which were deliberately provocative to the established order. Trade and the growth of diasporic communities also made a contribution. Early Europeans describe the cross-cultural medical alternatives in the busy ports of Batavia and Banten as consisting of “Chinese physicians and apothecaries, Persian drug-sellers, and no doubt Arab and Indian (both Muslim and Hindu) medical specialists”, as well as Javanese healer/herbalists, known as *dukun*, who were also good at massage (Boomgaard, 1996:50).

As discussed in the last chapter it was the knowledge of herbs that most attracted Dutch physicians. Although in these early years European medical practice was “certainly not entirely free from ‘magical’ influences”, “most derision was reserved for the magico-religious side” of Indigenous medicine (Boomgaard, 1996:55). Archaic medical manuscripts (*usada*), written in Kawi (old Javanese) and Balinese, and still in use in Bali, as well as later texts collected by Dutch researchers, show that medicine was not a distinct body of knowledge, and that *materia medica*, magic, and mysticism were

integral to therapy.¹⁴⁶ In contrast to Bali and the Tengger region of East Java where practitioners are consecrated, Javanese practitioners were secularised during successive processes of Islamisation.¹⁴⁷ This detachment from the religious sphere and the types of knowledge they employ has presented an ongoing challenge to the Javanese *dukun*'s authority and legitimacy. It has meant that practitioners must continually adapt to the changing character of community and religious relationships.

Contemporary Java is undergoing a number of important changes. The first of these is the transformation of the rural economy which has dramatically changed livelihood patterns resulting in increased mobility and more spatially extensive social networks. Chapter 2 outlined Ponorogo's long engagement with greater Java. In recent years overseas contract migrant labour, especially of women, has provided access to resources in the form of non-agricultural employment, and income in the form of remittances. Yet another factor is the global dynamics of Islam, the move to Islamic orthodoxy, and renewed societal ambivalence surrounding Javanist healing practices. Also relevant is the influence of mass media and the bricolage of images and ideals of the body, medical knowledge, and the wonder cures which they project. All of these factors not only shape patients' search for wellbeing but also create new opportunities for healers. It is also within these dynamics that people experience the tensions and vulnerabilities latent in social transformation.

Given these contemporary interrelationships, and the issues discussed in the last chapter, I will explore the adaptive practices of folk practitioners, the types of services they provide, and how they maintain their legitimacy and utility for their clients. I will begin with a brief introduction to Javanese concepts of wellbeing and then analyse the practice of a range of healers. The contextual nature of folk healers means that services vary considerably, but they can be broadly classified into two main categories – those that treat mainly symptomatic conditions, and those that treat a range of aetiological

¹⁴⁶ A number of *usada*, which have been translated by Udayana University in Denpasar, can be accessed at <http://www.ringingrocks.org/projects/lontarArchive.php>. The National Library in Jakarta has also translated collections held by colonial Dutch institutes in Jakarta (e.g., Munawar *et al.*, 1992/1993).

¹⁴⁷ For the types and practice of Balinese healers (*balian*), see Connor *et al.* (1996:15-20). For the role of the Tengger priest (*dukun*), see Hefner (1985:189-191).

disorders and concerns. I will deal with these two broad categories and the types of practitioners they contain in turn.

Conceptual Frameworks of Illness and Wellbeing

As Marc Augé observed illness “is at one and the same time the most individual and the most social of things”. While illness can alienate the sufferer the way in which it is recognised, judged, identified and treated “are eminently social: to think about one's illness is already to make reference to others” (1995:24). This social dimension has always been particularly valued, especially by rural Javanese. Clifford Geertz (1976), researching in rural East Java in the 1950s, documented that Javanese strive for *slamet*, a holistic concept which, with an important modification, could be summed up by the World Health Organisation's Alma-Ata Declaration in 1978 – “a state of complete physical, mental, [spiritual] and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity”. The achievement of this dynamic equilibrium, which by its very nature can only be transitory, requires constant effort. “Wellbeing” is therefore a suitable translation of “*slamet*”; as a verbal noun it has the function of a noun while at the same time containing verbal properties.¹⁴⁸ It is sought through the *slametan*, the core communal ritual which brings together one's neighbours to share food, bear witness to the host's intentions, and promote social harmony. Andrew Beatty's later work found little had changed since Geertz' study. The *slametan* can be held for reasons as diverse as “the celebration of rites of passage, housewarmings, and harvests; a wish to restore harmony after a marital or neighbourhood quarrel, to safeguard a new motorbike or pair of oxen, to cancel the effects of a bad dream, and – among the commonest of reasons – to redeem a vow” (1999:30).

Like many societies Javanese address illness both symptomatically, through the use of medicines, remedies, and other therapeutic practices; and aetiologically in which the help of an appropriate specialist intermediary may be sought. The boundary between these two classifications is not immediately clear, being very much dependent on individual circumstances in which the former can be caused by, or transform into, the

¹⁴⁸ *Slamet* can then be thought of a Javanese „strange attractor’ which organises behaviour. In chaos theory a strange attractor is an organising principle in dynamical systems (Gleick, 1987:4).

latter. Everyday illness (*sakit biasa*) is normally treated symptomatically, but a straightforward example of the relationships that can occur, and one that fits well with Beatty's experience of the *slametan*, is a common injury among farm workers in Ponorogo – snake bite:

Pak Weling, a healer who specialises in treating snake bite, told me that labourers are often bitten while working in either a rice field or amongst sugar cane which snakes frequent to catch rats. He explained that there were three kinds of snakes in the area: *kobra* (cobra), which are the most dangerous and bites the most uncommon; *ular luwuk* (green pit viper) which account for the most bites; and the banded krait, a snake with alternating black and yellow bands, known as *ular weling*.¹⁴⁹ This latter snake usually appears when you have failed to redeem a vow, such as promising to hold a *kenduri* if your child recovers from an illness.¹⁵⁰ He explained that “*weling*” means “*pesan, untuk eling*” (a message which prompts you to remember) and the significance of this snake is summed up in a Javanese maxim: “*dielingné ditekani ulo weling*” (to be reminded by the arrival of a weling snake).

Pak Weling treats snake bite with turmeric to suck up the poison while reciting an Islamic prayer. He obtained his healing power (*ilmu*) from his grandfather through a dream and then sought out a *guru* (teacher) in West Java. Pak Weling was very forthright in telling me that some patients had died, but that the majority lived. He said that usually the reason for death was when the bite had been left too long without treatment. In my travels around the regency the importance of healers' therapies, like Pak Weling's, became apparent when I encountered a man who had been bitten on the ankle by a snake. He had sought treatment at the local Puskesmas, but the bite had turned into a deep putrid ulcer completely crippling him. His family were in dire straits. Having lost their main breadwinner, they were being supported by their neighbours.

¹⁴⁹ Most bites of the green pit viper only cause local swelling, but the venom remains in the body and may result in delayed severe systemic bleeding. The banded krait is highly venomous. Its bold striped pattern gives it good camouflage, but its small head, nocturnal habit, and reluctance to bite means that bites are rare unless, of course, one treads on a snake. The neurotoxic bite causes little pain or swelling, but can produce muscle weakness, loss of coordination and eventual respiratory paralysis.

¹⁵⁰ Beatty discusses the distinction in Banyuwangi between the *slametan* as a rite for the living, and the *sedhekah*, a prayer meal for the dead (1999:30). He says that he only heard the Malay term, *kenduri*, “used in certain villages among devout, reform-minded Muslims who have turned their backs on Javanese tradition (1999:249n). Pak Weling specifically referred to a *‘kenduri’*. One of the reasons may be his *guru* (teacher) who is from West Java, a more overtly Islamic area than either Central or East Java. When he went on to describe how he treated snake bite he made use of Islamic prayers, but also incorporated other Javanese elements.

Steve Ferzacca has proposed that this fluid and contextual understanding of mishap could be explained by a Javanese structure of experience (*pangalaman*) which understands the self “as winds and flows circulating in a culturally experienced phenomenal world, or labyrinth of coincidences and possibilities” (2001:24, emphasis in the original). Drawing on the already abundant ethnographic work which has been carried out in Java and Bali, as well as a key informant, Ferzacca posits that, for a Javanese, individual balance is achieved when one is able to align oneself (*cocog*) with one’s own particular set of circumstances or milieu (*alam*). This milieu, which he describes as “an open-ended series of apertures, open to a dynamic entanglement of persistent limits and emerging possibilities” (2001:20), is obviously in a constant state of flux, but, the more *ramé* (busy, noisy, congested, tangled) it is, the greater the possibility of coincidences. Coincidences (*kebetulan*), which I would translate as serendipity or a conjunction of happenings which occur at just the right time, “far from being avoided, ... induce cognitive puzzles or paradoxes. ... [they are] the way communication between unlikes occurs” (Becker in Ferzacca, 2001:21).¹⁵¹ As discussed in Chapter 2 in the writing of history, coincidences link aesthetics with awareness to reference what is important in people’s lives. Similarly, the ability to interpret their meaning when they occur is contingent on a mindful understanding of one’s own milieu (*ngelmu pangalaman* = experienced knowledge), and one’s consequent actions should resonate with *rasa* - an aesthetic sensual complex which links the outer physical senses and the inner emotional senses to higher consciousness or “the deepest mystical apprehension of the ultimate” (Stange in Ferzacca, 2001:79). Rather than a passive acceptance of fate, this experiential understanding places strong emphases on fluidity, sensuality and aesthetics; qualities that move people to seek out a remedy through their own diligent efforts in as wide a context as possible.

To provide a practical example of how this framework affects attitudes, Ferzacca compares American and Javanese reactions to a chronic illness, such as diabetes. Whereas many Americans (in the same manner as Australians) would react angrily with questions of “Why me?”, Javanese accept the news as part of their fate (*nrimo*) for

¹⁵¹ Ferzacca quotes Becker who explains that “coincidence (a causeless interaction) is *kebetulan* (or *kebenaran*), literally a ‘truth’ (an abstract noun derived from the adjective *betul/benar* meaning ‘true’) (in 2001:21).

which it is their role to seek out an appropriate treatment; for it is “only through individual effort that a particular disease becomes matched with an appropriate medicine” (2001:102).

Although Ferzacca’s study focussed on a particular subset of patients who had been diagnosed with, and were receiving treatment for, the chronic conditions of Type 2 diabetes and hypertension, his framework augments previous studies on Javanese concepts of healing and the dynamic relationships which underlie the search for wellbeing.¹⁵²

To explore further how this understanding of illness and misfortune shapes the search for wellbeing, the way people think about misfortune, and the activities of practitioners, I will begin with a description of symptomatic healers and their practices.

Symptomatic Practitioners

Symptomatic practitioners provide a range of services which differ from place to place. Among the most common are masseurs, bonesetters, and midwives. A practitioner’s legitimacy is not acknowledged through formal qualifications, but through popular recognition of his/her particular expertise. This expertise, known as *ilmu*, is usually inherited. It can also be learnt in other ways - through apprenticeship to a practising healer; a personal search involving ascetic practices; or, in the case of the *dukun tiban*, whose powers are temporarily endowed, gained suddenly and involuntarily.¹⁵³ Healers are commonly known as *orang pinter* (clever or skilled person) or by the generic name for a healer, *dukun*, followed by their specialty, e.g., *dukun bayi* (baby), a midwife.¹⁵⁴ They are predominantly male, except for midwives, wedding specialists and *dukun tiban* who are exclusively female, and masseurs who are also frequently women. Unlike Bali there is no scriptural basis to their practice; a result of the processes of Islamisation.

¹⁵² See, for example, (Geertz, 1976; Koentjaraningrat, 1994; Slamet-Velsink, 1996; Woodward, 1985). There are, however, other studies which take account of more extensive cosmological relationships, such as (Kasniyah, 1985; Yitno, 1985).

¹⁵³ *Tiban* (Jv. fallen, miraculously come down from the heavens).

One of the advantages of symptomatic healers, in contrast to biomedical services, is their proximity to their clients. Their practice is almost always incidental to other means of income. In the housing estate where I lived the masseur was the TV repairman at the end of the lane. The economics of their practice is similar to that described by Connor in Bali. Although not unlike craftsmen (*tukang*), who sell their specialised skills in the marketplace, symptomatic healers hold to a donation form of payment. Their reliance on customary social networks for clients “places constraints on the sort of economic relations they establish and hinders any rationalization of payment procedures (1996:25).”

The density of healers depends on local need and their expertise does not always fit into the distinct categories outlined in the literature. Answers from a survey of children asked to name the most prominent people (*tokoh*) in their highland hamlet, for example, revealed, in addition to the usual village administration officials, various people with healing abilities, including:

A man who treated diarrhoea; a man who treated scorpion stings; a man who treated diarrhoea as well as headaches; a man who treated headaches as well as those affected by sorcery; a man who treated toothache; two men who healed through mantras; a man who treated crippled cattle as well as facilitating their birth; and a man who treated children who didn’t want to go to school.

To illustrate the very real process of establishing legitimacy one child wrote the name of a man “who claimed he could heal, but when cross-checked with other children this claim could not be believed (*menurut pengakuan sendiri mbah (name) mampu mengobati orang tetapi setelah dicross cek bersama anak tidak percaya kalau bisa mengobati /ora percayo*)”.¹⁵⁵

I encountered this local knowledge many times when walking to areas with particular access problems. We normally attracted a large following of children who could readily

¹⁵⁴ See (Boedhihartono, 1982:23-24; Geertz, 1976:86-87; Koentjaraningrat, 1994:423-427; Suparlan, 1991:11-16) for a comprehensive list.

¹⁵⁵ This survey was carried out by Yayasan Dhita Bhaskara (Yogyakarta), an NGO working on a PLAN International Program.

tell us the names of various healers in their neighbourhoods. The most common areas of expertise were masseurs (*pijet urat*), midwives (*dukun bayi*), and *dukun suwuk* who specialise in treating children.¹⁵⁶

In the lowlands where mobility is greater, and social and information networks more spatially extensive, people have a wider choice and are willing to travel to access particular practitioners; a point borne out by Chernichovsky & Meesook's study (see Chapter 3). Two examples of how patients' decision making processes operate come from a motorbike accident and another incident involving a fall from a minibus.

Motorbike Accident

An accident occurred between two motorbikes, each carrying a passenger. One of the drivers was badly hurt and the uninjured driver took him to the Ponorogo public hospital where he was x-rayed and found to have a broken shoulder. He was advised that the cost of an operation would be Rp 4.5 million. The reason for this expense was because it would cost Rp 2.5 million to hire the equipment for the operation. A hospital nurse advised him that it would be cheaper to have the operation in a private hospital in Solo, a city in Central Java about 120 km northwest of Ponorogo, presumably because they would already have the necessary equipment. This expense was still beyond the means of the driver. At this stage the injured driver's family was called and the group reconvened at the uninjured driver's house. In the ensuing conversation it was decided to seek treatment in Kebak Kramat, a village on the outskirts of Solo famous for bonesetters (*dukun patah tulang*), known as *sangkal putung*.¹⁵⁷ This decision was based on the experience of the passenger travelling with the injured driver. He knew someone who had been treated successfully in this village, and told the group that the treatment would cost around Rp 50,000. The uninjured driver, although not at fault, gave the injured driver Rp 100,000 towards the cost of hiring a car to drive to Solo.

Fall from a minibus

Joko is 16 and comes from Jember, a large town about 250 km to the east of Ponorogo. He had fallen from a minibus on the way home from school. About two months after the fall his right knee became swollen, even though it was his left leg which took the brunt of

¹⁵⁶ *Suwuk* (Jv. treatment consisting of incantations and blowing on the patient's head).

¹⁵⁷ *Dukun patah tulang* have come to be called *sangkal putung* because they use an oil (*minyak sangkal putung*) obtained from snakes to treat their patients.

the fall. He then experienced fevers and had shooting pains in his leg, and finally could not walk. When he visited a local doctor he was given an injection, and diagnosed as suffering from arthritis (*rematik*). The doctor advised him to go to a physiotherapist. He went instead to a masseur (*tukang pijet*) and, when this didn't help, then went to see a *kyai* who advised applying ice to the knee and to refrain from eating flesh of any kind. After following this advice for three weeks without any improvement his uncle invited him to Ponorogo. Joko's uncle rents a front room from Pak Narto, an *orang pinter* who does some occasional healing. Pak Narto's treatment consisted of applying herbs, crushed into a paste, three times a day while reciting a mantra. After two weeks of this treatment Joko told me his leg had improved and he could now walk. He said he would now return to Jember, carrying a supply of the herbs, and Pak Narto would continue to recite the mantra for his complete recovery.

When I asked Joko why he hadn't returned to the doctor or visited a hospital, he said that this would mean extended treatment, such as physiotherapy or repeated injections. Evidently his aunt in Jember is a *bidan* and she had also given him an injection which only allayed the pain for a short time. His parents do not have constant employment. His father is an *ojek* driver (motorbike taxi) and his mother gets occasional work making food for neighbours, etc. Relatives, living in Jakarta, have sent some goods which his mother can sell to local shops to help with their income. For this reason, he said, they could not afford extended medical treatment.

These two examples illustrate issues surrounding the use of biomedical services discussed in the last chapter, i.e., their cost and the repetitive treatment required for chronic injuries, which were important in considering other treatment options. Personal experience and diverse social networks then play a part in determining the choice of practitioner and assisting with financial resources. In the case of the motorbike accident this was the personal experience of one of the passengers and his knowledge of the cost involved. In Joko's case his uncle's personal relationship with the healer meant that Pak Narto would only expect recompense for the cost of the herbs. Although I do not know the outcome of the treatment for the motorbike driver I did meet a couple of people who had been successfully treated by bonesetters in Kebak Kramat.

Symptomatic practitioners, because of the conditions they treat, would therefore seem to provide services which are complementary to those offered by biomedical

practitioners. This, however, is not strictly the case. An important aspect, which the case studies illustrate, is the use of social networks in selecting a practitioner. Obviously the informal nature of their practice means that unless, of course, there is one living close by, local knowledge is required in locating a practitioner with suitable expertise. Kebak Kramat is an exception to this rule in that it is a well known specialist area where evidently bonesetters do hang signs outside their houses advertising their services, but, even in the case of the motorbike accident above, the passenger who recommended the treatment would most likely accompany the injured driver and seek out the same bonesetter who had successfully treated his acquaintance.¹⁵⁸

More importantly, all folk practitioners are embedded in communal social and cultural reciprocal relationships and their attendant philosophical framework. As I mentioned previously, a practitioner's legitimacy rests on popular recognition of their therapeutic expertise, known as *ilmu*. Derived from the Arabic "*ilm*" which emphasises the unity and interrelatedness of all phenomena, *ilmu* encompasses all bodies of knowledge from the purely secular (e.g., astronomy, pharmacology, geography, sociology) to the sacred and metaphysical (Woodward, 1985:1010; Zaidi, 2006:75). Although many Arabic-derived words have found their way into Javanese, it is important to understand that the concepts they describe are typically Javanese and must always be understood contextually.¹⁵⁹ *Ilmu* is normally translated as knowledge, but "mystically inclined Javanese sometimes contrast this form of knowledge with *ilmiah*, or the knowledge of external, perceptible realities", of which "Western science provides the finest example", and which almost anyone can learn with the proper training (Hefner, 1985:189-190). *Ilmu*, by contrast, is akin to the creative techniques, like the "art of operating", proposed by de Certeau. It is an individual quality which can be acquired in a number of ways, but each person's *ilmu*, although of a certain type, is dependent on their own particular circumstances and abilities. Given the multidimensional and dynamic aspects of wellbeing it is not surprising that healers also require multidimensional powers, but it is this very multidimensionality, and the crossover with the Sanskrit-derived concept

¹⁵⁸ If the previous patient was in fact a mutual acquaintance, then this person would be likely to accompany the driver.

¹⁵⁹ See, for example, Ann Kumar's discussion (1997:401-405).

of magical power (*sakti*), which gives rise to ambivalence surrounding their role.¹⁶⁰ As Woodward reminds us the concepts of *ilmu* and *sakti* “are among the most complex aspects of Javanese mysticism” (1985:1010). I prefer then to think of *ilmu* in the way many have described the practice of medicine before its professionalisation, as craft where learning, manual dexterity and artistic skill are combined to create a practical yet distinctive product. Each person’s *ilmu*, like a craft, is unique. Craft, like *ilmu*, can also have derogatory connotations, such as cunning, guile, artifice, and secret power; as well as being completely suspect as in the practice of witchcraft. This unquantifiable quality is what gives *ilmu* its healing as well as its ambivalent power. Its unique nature and the concept of *cocog* (fit, match) means that one not only aligns oneself with one’s particular set of circumstances, but also with a particular healer. Biomedical practitioners, on the other hand, who are qualified in an exoteric science and who provide standardised medicines, are regarded as interchangeable.

As Hefner points out, the degree of ambivalence varies significantly according to the specific skill which is mastered, so masseurs, etc. “tend to be regarded as technical experts more than magical occultists” (1985:190). Personal recommendation is therefore important in reinforcing a practitioner’s moral legitimacy. This is much more important where practitioners are required to deal with more contentious issues; the subject of the next category of practitioners. But symptomatic conditions can be interpreted in aetiological terms, so practitioners often mediate between these categories of illness.

My own experience with an excruciating bout of sciatica gave me some insight into how practitioners acquire their healing power, and how the cause of symptomatic conditions can be interpreted. After visiting a blind masseur without success a cousin suggested a practitioner who lived in the next regency.

Mbah To (a pseudonym) looked to be about 60.¹⁶¹ He was a farmer and lived in a rambling old Javanese-style house which was located in the countryside and required

¹⁶⁰ Śakti is the cosmogenic female principle which appears in the form of various goddesses, such as Durga, Kali and Tara, which gave rise to the Hindu Tantric traditions (Urban, 1999:126).

¹⁶¹ *Mbah* (Jv.) is a term of address for one’s grandparent. It is an honorific title for an older person, applied to both men and women.

quite a long drive off the main road to reach. When we arrived there in the early afternoon there were already three people - two women and a man - seated in his living room. They were all schoolteachers from the local school and had come together. Although Mbah To would be classed as a masseur, one of the women had come for treatment for high blood pressure. She told us that she had been diagnosed by a doctor and given some medication, but she had heard about Mbah To from a friend (the woman who accompanied her), and had come to see him in the hope that her blood pressure would decrease more quickly. The man said that this was his third visit. He had come because of a problem with his vision. He said that when he looked at things it seemed as if they were swaying, and he also had a clear liquid coming from his hands which followed his lifelines. He had treatment after the woman. Mbah To used his feet to massage the muscles on the side of his thighs. While he was having his treatment my cousin and I spoke to the women. They said that all the teachers in this particular school had experienced some form of misfortune (*musibah*). Another teacher, for example, had suffered a stroke. They said that there was probably someone at the school who was jealous (*iri hati*) and was causing the problem. When the women asked Mbah To about this he replied that he only dealt with massage, and they would need to consult another *orang pinter* (practitioner) who dealt with such matters.

After this a young girl, around 9, arrived accompanied by her parents. She had had a fall that afternoon and now her arm was extremely painful. When Mbah To started to massage the arm the girl cried out in pain. After the treatment was finished she was able to move it more freely than before. It was then my turn. Mbah To told me to sit on the floor with my legs stretched out in front and started to massage my left hip working down the leg. The pain was intense, but the treatment made a noticeable difference to my symptoms and, after three visits, the pain had gone.

These visits gave me an opportunity to question Mbah To about his practice. He told me that his ilmu had been passed down through generations of his family, and that he had carried on from his father. His mother had also been a healer, but was more like a paranormal, a category of practitioner I will discuss next. The person who inherited the ilmu in the family could not be predicted; it depended on who was ready to receive it. Mbah To said he had not learnt his technique from his father, nor had he watched his

father work, or received any instructions, but had received the ilmu quite suddenly through *wahyu* (revelation).¹⁶² He now no longer needed to practice any form of asceticism, such as fasting, etc. to maintain his ilmu, but he did not receive patients on Monday or Thursday Pahing because this had been an instruction from his father.¹⁶³ He explained that he treated a patient by feeling the area which was painful and then focussing his attention in order to trace the flow of blood. Any area which was hot was a sign of congestion, while an area which was cold was a sign that there was no blood flow. His aim was to get the blood flowing normally again, so he would trace the cold areas until he found where the blockage was. The most important thing was to be able to focus his concentration. While this had required practice (*latihan*) early on, he had now acquired this skill. He had started his practice in 1975. When I asked him if any of his children would carry on from him he said that there was no one at present, but there was one who had shown an interest and would therefore probably continue in the future.

Mbah To's practice, just like that of Pak Weling's above, is an example of how symptomatic conditions can be interpreted in aetiological terms by patients and/or practitioners. In Mbah To's case it was his patients (the school teachers) who suspected that a person working with them was responsible for a perceived cluster of misfortune. Sorcery, the employment of a practitioner who uses their "magical craft or knowledge to harm or benefit others" (Stewart & Strathern, 2004:1-2), is a pervasive theme not only in Java, but throughout Indonesia. It is particularly suspected in cases of unusual or prolonged illness. In situations where people live close together in reciprocal relationships it is another measure of the vulnerability people feel and their dependence on social networks. Bubbling below the surface of social life there are always numerous small vendettas, hostilities, resentments, and family feuds ready to reveal themselves in times of crisis. Motives arise from these intimate relationships - commonly jilted suitors, inheritance issues, revenge for a perceived wrong, general envy - and,

¹⁶² In Chapter 2 I discussed *wahyu* and its role in legitimating kingship. This context refers to its original meaning of divine "revelation". In Islam it is associated with the light of Muhammad (*nūr Muhammad*), an external sign of being chosen by God (Zoetmulder, 1995:106).

¹⁶³ The Javanese week (*pasaran*), from the rotating market calendar, consists of five days – legi, pahing, pon, wagé, kliwon. Pahing will therefore coincide with a day of the standard week every 35 days.

increasingly, the economic and social competition attendant in the market economy. An example of this latter point came from Pak Weling who, apart from his practice in treating snake bite, told me that every two months he travelled to Jakarta where he had a practice in general healing, as well as *pelarisan dagangan* (increasing the custom and therefore the profits of traders). He told me he was especially sought out by *warung* owners who had been struck by black magic (*guna-guna*) which makes freshly cooked meat go immediately bad on cooling (*warung yang daging digoreng begitu dingin langsung busuk*).

The mobility of many of the healers I interviewed was especially striking. When I asked Mbah To if he also travelled he said that he was always at home because he did not want to inconvenience those that came for treatment. This seems a valid point because every time I visited him there was always a steady stream of patients who had suffered quite serious injuries, such as falls from moving buses, being kicked by bullocks, etc., but Mbah To also avoids the issue of sorcery altogether by suggesting the teachers consult another practitioner skilled in such matters. Having told me that his mother was a *paranormal*, Mbah To probably understands the controversy surrounding practitioners who treat conditions arising from strained social relationships.

Aetiological Practitioners: from *Dukun* to *Paranormal*

While symptomatic healers have fairly well-defined technical specialities, there are other practitioners who are consulted for a broad spectrum of reasons - ritual responsibilities, personal difficulties and aspirations, and conditions which do not, or are deemed unlikely to, respond to symptomatic treatment, such as intractable illness and other unusual circumstances. The roles and methods employed by these practitioners most strongly diverge from the biomedical field to encompass *slamet*, the Javanese concept of wellbeing. Apart from the increasing availability of biomedical services, socioeconomic and religious change has meant the services they provide have been dramatically transformed, especially with regard to how these practitioners establish their legitimacy to their clients. Tracing the trajectory of these changes is important in order to understand how these practitioners have adapted to a changing environment.

Given Hanna's still pertinent observation (published in 1967) that "it is a rare Indonesian ... who has never consulted a *dukun* with regard to some mysterious illness or other disquieting disturbance" (in Wessing, 1996:270) it is surprising that there are still relatively few studies about this category of practitioner. In his study *The Javanese Dukun*, originally published in 1978, Suparlan explains that *dukun* is a general term which can be used to refer to "any person engaged in the acts of healing others by using magical power, sorcery, or both", as well as those, described by Turner's framework, who act as a "mediator for a person, a community, and other microcosm, passing from one state into another through a disorderly condition (1991:11)." Examples of this mediatory role include ceremonial specialists, such as *dukun sunat* or *calak* for circumcisions; *dukun penganten* for weddings; *dukun siwer* to keep away rain or prevent plates being broken at ceremonies and events; *dukun wiwit* for the planting and harvesting of crops; and those who took part in *bersih desa* (annual village cleansing) festivals, *ruwatan bumi* (earth exorcism) for crop failure, and *arak-arakan* (village circumambulations) during epidemics. With these latter communal functions now almost non-existent, he goes on to explain, "because they are considered to be against the teachings of Islam and are associated with backwardness" the present day practices of *dukun* "are now limited toward individuals" (Suparlan, 1991:15).

These personal services, apart from treating illness, include a complex of practices involving magical manipulation which Koentjaraningrat divides into two categories - activities that are protective and those that are destructive (1994:424). Protective activities include *peramalan* (forecasting the future or finding lost objects); *petungan* (calculating the most auspicious day to undertake an activity) usually with the help of *primbon*; *susuk* (placing a slither of a precious substance, usually gold or diamond, underneath the skin to make one especially attractive); *kebal* (invulnerability); and treating illnesses or misfortune caused by sorcery.¹⁶⁴ Destructive activities include *guna-guna* or *pelet* (love magic); *tenung*, *santet* or *sihir* (sorcery to inflict illness or

¹⁶⁴ *Primbon*, a manual of Javanese numerology, calculates the best day to undertake any activity, such as setting up a new house, deciding on a wedding day, starting a new business venture, undertaking a journey, etc. It can also be used for other purposes, such as judging the compatibility of an intended marriage partner, or judging personal character. Calculations can be based on the conjunction of the seven-day week and the Javanese five-day week. More elaborate systems use combinations of the 30 seven-day *wukuh* weeks, the 12 Moslem lunar months, and the 8 *windu* years. *Susuk* can also be used to enhance talent or ability. I was given the example of a footballer having gold placed in a knee to attract the ball.

death); *gendam* which can be used by robbers or tricksters to relieve people of their possessions; and *sirep*, a spell which thieves use to cause the occupants of a house to fall into a deep sleep. Some or all of these services can be combined in one person's practice who was then known as a *dukun biasa* (a *dukun* of general practice), or just simply as a *dukun* (Suparlan, 1991:11).

Like symptomatic healers, where inheritance plays an important part, not all children of a *dukun* are able to follow their forebears, while some may become practitioners without the benefit of inheritance. Gaining the necessary techniques of a *dukun*, however, involves a more sustained and determined personal search, and an apprenticeship, usually under several teachers. One place to gain these special powers is Alas Ketonggo (Spirit Kingdom Forest from *Jv. alas* = forest; ketonggo from *kraton* = kingdom and *Jv. ongg* = spirits), a forest located just north of Ponorogo in the regency of Ngawi. Like Alas Purwo in the Blambangan Peninsula, Ketonggo is also a place of myth and legend. It is not only the site of Pesanggrahan Srigati, the shrine where Brawijaya V, the last king of Majapahit, is said to have dematerialised, but is also dotted with numerous reputedly empowered rock formations, rock pools, and caves. I visited at night, the best time to observe the many seekers of mystical wisdom who spend long periods in the forest in meditation and various forms of ascetic exercise. As well as learning from a practising *dukun* there are also certain *pesantren* known for specialist mystical knowledge (*ilmu tasawuf*). Apprenticeship may include knowledge of Javanese cosmology, incantations and mantras, how to perform certain rituals, exercising various kinds of power, and establishing certain degrees of relationship with invisible beings. Training is highly individualised, and the particular *ilmu* acquired is based on the student's ability (Suparlan, 1991:13-15).

It is obvious that these practitioners' power (*ilmu*) is of an entirely different character compared to that of symptomatic healers discussed previously, and that protective and destructive categories cannot be easily reduced to binary oppositions. They in fact rely on one another for their efficacy. As Bubandt explains:

“sorcery and magical protection, though moral opposites, are closely linked. On the one hand, over-indulgence in protective magic is said to lead to a penchant for sorcery. On the other hand, it is also roundly believed that those villages that have a reputation amongst their neighbours for being particularly infested with sorcery are also home to the people with the most powerful protective magic.” (2006:423)

Although this ambiguous aspect of their power endows a potent aura it has also long been a cause of widespread concern in ethnographic accounts. Geertz, for example, noted that the verb itself “*ndukuni* (,to *dukun* someone’) means both to cure a person of a disease and to sorcerize a person” (1976:96). For this reason many practitioners deny being a *dukun*, preferring to call themselves a *pitulung* (helper) instead (Boedhihartono, 1982; Geertz, 1976; Woodward, 1985).

In a later study, carried out near Malang in 1986, Cederroth found this ability to both counter, as well as act as black magicians, had gained in importance because greater access to biomedical services had decreased the demand for the curative powers of the *dukun*. He concluded that this was a symptom of the shift from a community-oriented to “a market-oriented individualistic society” and the inroads of orthodox Islam. In an atmosphere of increased economic and social competition the role of *dukun* and their ability to “manipulate the immense powers of the spirits” had been transformed into a negotiable asset “to gain extra advantages” over a competitor (1990:179-180). This trend has only continued to gain momentum and notoriety in a country of rapidly changing power relationships.¹⁶⁵

Religious Change

Both Cederroth and Suparlan mention religious change as an important contributor in modifying the role of the *dukun*. And, indeed, the material signs of a globally-engaged Islam were quite striking when returning to Indonesia, after an eleven year absence, in 2002. Some of these signs were the increase in Arabic and Quranic literacy; national Quranic recitation competitions; the number of small and large mosques topped by minarets; religious study groups in offices, homes, and local mosques; television

¹⁶⁵ See (Bubandt, 2006; Kasniyah, 2002; Wessing, 1996).

programs during the month of Ramadan featuring prominent Muslim thinkers and popular personalities to accompany the pre-dawn meal before the day's fast; the overwhelming number of books on Islam in bookstores and markets; the popularity of the *hajj*; the wearing of the *jilbab* (head covering); and the burgeoning number of shops for Muslim dress and accessories, to name a few.

Many attribute these changes to religious education. Since the middle of the 19th century Islamic education had been carried out by *ulama* (or *kyai* in Java) who returned to their villages and opened their own schools - *pesantren* or *pondok* (boarding schools) - modelled on the institutions they had attended in the Middle East. These institutions and their methods of teaching became associated with "Islamic traditionalism", and various devotional practices, such as the visiting of graves, and Islamic healing practices. In the early 20th century a wave of Islamic reformism, usually categorised as "Islamic modernism", espoused a return to "the pure and original Islam as practised by the Prophet Muhammad and his companions". These two streams resulted in the formation of Muhammadiyah, an urban-based modernist organisation which strongly opposed the devotional and 'magical' practices of the traditionalists, Nahdlatul Ulama (Awakening of Muslim religious scholars) which had strong support in rural Central and East Java (Azra, 2005:10-13; van Bruinessen, 2004).

Although almost 90% of the country's population is Muslim, Indonesia, in contrast to its regional neighbours with majority Muslim populations - Malaysia and Brunei - did not adopt Islam as the official state religion. In view of the new nation's multiethnic and multi-religious makeup, as well as the heterodoxy, especially of its Javanist Muslims, the 1945 Constitution adopted the Pancasila (five pillars) as the state philosophy which recognises "belief in one God" as its first principle.¹⁶⁶ Coming to power in 1965, in the wake of a failed Communist coup and intense political and religious polarisation, the New Order government required all citizens to profess an officially recognised religion.¹⁶⁷ It then set about using the Pancasila to neutralise

¹⁶⁶ The other four principles are (2) Just and civilised humanity; (3) Unity of Indonesia; (4) Democracy which is guided by inner wisdom in unanimity arising out of deliberation amongst representatives; and (5) Social justice for all the people of Indonesia (Effendy, 2003:10n).

¹⁶⁷ The officially recognised religions were Buddhism, Catholicism, Hinduism, Islam, and Protestantism.

political opposition by banning the use of religious symbols as party emblems, and forcing all political parties to adopt it as their sole ideological basis. Withdrawing from politics Muslim organisations ventured into the social field, especially education and preaching activities.¹⁶⁸ Muhammadiyah's distinguishing mark was the modern school modelled on Christian missionary schools. *Pesantren* and *madrasah* (Islamic day schools) also widened their curriculum to include secular education. The Gontor *pesantren* in Ponorogo, a direct descendant of Tegalsari, pioneered this new type of Islamic school which became popularly labelled as “Pondok Modern” (Castles, 1966:30). Evidence of the increasing importance of a Muslim constituency was the 1989 Education Act which included three important elements - “the term *iman dan taqwa* (religious devoutness) as part of the general statement of the goals of national education”; the recognition of the existence of Islamic schools (Zuhdi, 2006:424); and “the right of every Muslim student at public, as well as private, educational institutions to receive religious instruction according to his or her own belief” (Effendy, 2003:156).¹⁶⁹ Economic development, and a growing Muslim middle and professional class, saw many more parents willing to send their children to religious schools in the belief that they needed “religious values to protect them from the negative aspects of the secular world” (Zuhdi, 2006:424). This new environment led to the emergence of a dynamic and rapidly growing circle of young Muslim intellectuals; somewhat of a convergence of religious thinking between ‘modernists’ and ‘traditionalists’; and a reformulated Islam which was more inclusive and relevant to a contemporary Indonesian context (Azra, 2005:13-14).¹⁷⁰ The coincidence of the intellectual transformation of Islamic political ideas and practices, the weakening support of the

¹⁶⁸ This does not mean that Muslim organisations ceased to be political. In a 1991 interview Natsir, a former leader of Indonesia’s largest Islamic party, Masyumi, in the late 1950s, said, “We are no longer conducting *dakwah* [propagation of the faith] by means of politics, but engaging in political activities by means of *dakwah*. The result will be the same.” (in Hefner, 1997:82)

¹⁶⁹ While religious instruction was required in the mid 1960s, it was not required that instruction be in the student’s particular faith. Many Muslim students attending Christian schools were often solicited to take courses on Christianity; a situation which led to conflict between Muslims and Christians (Effendy, 2003:155).

¹⁷⁰ Although still political rivals, as Azra explains, young Muslim intellectuals of *pesantren* background were exposed to a range of other intellectual influences, such as social science, philosophy, liberation theology, and Marxism, while studying at State Institutes for Islamic Studies (IAIN). They introduced “the idea of ‘contextual’, ‘indigenous’ and ‘liberal’ Islam that has sometimes caused controversies among Indonesian Muslims.” Muhammadiyah, on the other hand, often categorised as “modernist”, tends to “stick only to the idea of purification without providing any substantive intellectual discourse regarding many issues under discussion in public” (2005:13-16).

army for Suharto's sixth term as president in 1993, and the increasing number of educated and middle class Muslims resulted in a number of policies which accommodated Muslim interests.¹⁷¹

Healers and Islamic Orthodoxy

Increasing Islamic orthodoxy, and its legitimization by the state, has had an effect on the practices of indigenous healers, especially the Javanese *dukun*. With traditions rooted in shamanism and the vernacular Tantrism of Javanese mysticism, religious difference has long been a recurrent source of cleavage in Javanese society. While most Indonesians would not be conversant with Islamic jurisprudence on matters involving magic and superstition, they would all be aware that these practices are morally suspect and therefore strongly discouraged.¹⁷² These issues, together with the already widespread ambivalence about the potential danger of *dukun*, make them susceptible targets, especially in circumstances of heightened tension; a subject I will return to in the next chapter. At present, though, I want to focus on the ways in which practitioners address these particular contemporary dynamics.

It is indicative of how stigmatised the term *dukun* has become that these practitioners now prefer to call themselves *paranormal*. Their role, however, does not seem to have diminished. A *Kompas* article in late 2001, "Becoming Modern with Dukun", described how the *paranormal* business was booming in a crisis-ridden Indonesia. The report detailed how a number of "*paranormal alias dukun*" had set up practices in large city hotels, had their own websites, advertised their services in specialist magazines, and conducted consultations via mobile phone and on radio programs. They boasted an extensive client base which even stretched overseas. So much so that a couple, known professionally as "Mbah Roso" and "Jeng Asih", were about to open a practice in both

¹⁷¹ These included the recruitment of Muslim leaders and activists into parliament; strengthening the power of religious courts; reversing the 1982 ban on the wearing of the *jilbab* at secondary schools; better regulation of the collection and distribution of *zakat*; the annulment of the state lottery; the foundation of an Islamic bank; and state sponsorship of mosque construction (Effendy, 2003:151-177).

¹⁷² Indonesian *fatāwā* state that magic (Ar. *Sihir*) is forbidden "because it leads the believer towards Satan", while branches of science, such as hypnotism, combined with prediction of the future, are problematic because they border on or involve magic and superstition (Hooker, 2003:161-162). Woodward explains that reformists are of the opinion that any use of magical power leads to damnation, while most *Sufi* mystics feel that pursuing magic is a form of passion, and therefore a distraction from the main goal of union with Allah (1985:1012).

Singapore and Malaysia.¹⁷³ Another practitioner, Suhu Herry, said that his “career” had really taken off (*melejit*) around 1995 when he took part in a paranormal exhibition in Surabaya. “Jeng Naniek Greng” explained how her name described her specialisation; namely that of “reinvigorating the sexual organs” (*membikin „geng’ alat vital*). Their legitimacy it seems is built on a clientele who include the rich and famous, such as film stars, singers, businessmen, and government officials. But they also gain celebrity status themselves. Jeng Naniek said that she had received 21 awards, including “Best Dressed Woman for Java/Bali”, “Best Executive for SDM” (*sumberdaya manusia* = human resources), and, together with her husband, also a *paranormal*, had been voted “The Best Man and Woman of the Year 1998” (30/12/2001).

While these high profile practitioners are protected by the celebrity and status of their clients, as well as the prosperity of their businesses, they still need to take account of increasing Islamic orthodoxy. “Jeng Asih”, for example, calls herself “Ratu Susuk Indonesia” (Queen of Indonesian *Susuk*). On her website she offers a number of products. One of these, *Susuk Berlian Samber Lilin* (Diamond Susuk of Striking Light) is:

*“For impact and lasting beauty, throughout life. If inserted in the face or another part of the body, [it bestows] an extraordinary gleaming aura. There is no taboo and no retribution in the hereafter, tried and tested magical power. Price Rp 2,000,000.”*¹⁷⁴

In view of its questionable standing this last sentence explaining that the product’s use does not attract religious sanction is an interesting addition. Given the substantial price of the product (another longstanding contentious issue surrounding the services of *dukun*) the term “*mahar*”, the Islamic term for bride price, refers to a quite different form of social exchange.

¹⁷³ It is worth noting the heavy reliance of both of these regional neighbours on migrant Indonesian domestic and manual workers.

¹⁷⁴ “Untuk ketampanan dan kecantikan abadi, sepanjang masa. jika dipasang di wajah atau bagian tubuh lain, aura gemerlap luar biasa. Tak ada pantangan dan tidak ada hubungannya dengan kematian kita besok kelak, sudah teruji daya magisnya. maharnya Rp 2.000.000,-” (www.djeng-asih.com)

In the *Kompas* article, I referred to above, Mbah Roso and Jeng Asih explain that they “hone their power” (*mengasa ilmu*) during the fasting month as well as visiting the graves of the magically powerful (*sakti*), like Imogiri and those of the Walisongo, while Mbah Roso emphasises his piety by performing *Umroh Lailatul Qodar* during the last two weeks of Ramadan (30/12/2001).¹⁷⁵

Even those practitioners who present themselves as more overtly Islamic, such as Ustadz Firman Langit, have fairly lengthy disclaimers on their websites:

*“We present a universal Spiritual Solution, which can be followed by all people from all religions. It definitely conforms to the tenets of each religion. Guaranteed free from syirik, does not use the power of jinns or devils and does not worship any being other than God.”*¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁵ Imogiri is where Central Javanese sultans are buried. The Walisongo (nine saints) are credited with bringing Islam to Java (see Chapter 2). Umroh, also known as the small *haj*, is usually performed at the Haram Mosque in Mecca where one confines oneself to the mosque for prayer and to receive blessing. Lailatul Qadar (the night of power) occurs during any one of the last 10 nights of Ramadan. If one stays awake and performs prayers on this night the fast of the day is equivalent to 1,000 months of fasting. Mbah Roso therefore asserts his piety by performing umroh for longer than the usual 10 days.

¹⁷⁶ “Kami menghadirkan Solusi Spiritual yang universal, bisa diikuti semua orang dari semua agama. Namun tetap sesuai aturan agama masing-masing. Dijamin bebas dari syirik, tidak menggunakan kekuatan jin setan dan tidak menyembah selain kepada Tuhan.” (www.mahaspiritual.com). Ustadz (lit. lord, master) is a term of address for an Islamic teacher. Firman Langit is Commandment of the Heavens. *Syirik* (Ar. *Shirk*) means associating other beings with Allah.

KARYA MAGIS DAHSYAT HASIL OLAH BATIN Jeng Asih

Dra. H. Asih Marlyna

Paranormal kondang dari lereng Gunung Muria, Jawa Tengah, ini dikenal kampuan menciptakan benda-benda magis untuk kecantikan abadi, terapi kejantanan dan frigiditas, kewibawaan, pengasih dsb, lewat lelaku batin bertahun-tahun di tempat-tempat keramat dan aura luar biasa. Kini dengan kerendahan hati, Jeng Asih mempersembahkanajian atau pegangan itu untuk anda.



• GURAH SUCI VAGINA

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Parody and the National Lottery

These national changes have impacted on Ponorogo where the term *dukun* is also out of favour. I was able to find out more about the reasons for this through an accidental slip of the tongue. In listing the teachers he had studied with one of the practitioners I was interviewing, who I will call Pak Amin, said that he had learnt “*ilmu perdukunan*” and then quickly changed this to “*ilmu paranormal*”. After he had finished recounting his story I asked him, why he had so quickly replaced the word “*perdukunan*” with “*paranormal*” and, “What was the reason nobody today wanted to be called a *dukun*?” He replied that, “In reality the two were the same, but the word *paranormal* had come into use during the New Order around the early 1990s.” It seems that now to be called a *dukun* is a form of insult (*penghinaan*) and the word *paranormal* is a more refined way of expressing the same phenomena in a way more suited to the present circumstances. One of the reasons for this change, he said, had come from unemployed young people who just for fun (*anak perangguran iseng*) had made a parody of *dukun*. They had said that people only patronised *dukun* to seek riches, and that *dukun* were only too prepared to be complicit in their clients’ request.

An example of this parody, which illustrates the changing perception of *dukun*, was brought home to me with a very popular *dangdut* song, *Embah Dukun*, by Alam, a young Sundanese singer, which seemed to be playing everywhere at the time of my fieldwork.¹⁷⁷ Released on DVD the video clip features a ‘*dukun*’, in the form of an old man in a cemetery at night, seeming to gabble incomprehensibly. The first verse and chorus are:

| | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| Here is <i>embah</i> (elder) <i>dukun</i> | <i>Ada embah dukun</i> |
| Treating his patient | <i>Sedang ngobati pasiennya</i> |
| It seems he says | <i>Konon katanya</i> |
| Your illness comes from being bewitched | <i>Sakitnya karena diguna-guna</i> |
| Muttering beneath his breath | <i>Sambil komat-kamit</i> |
| Embah <i>dukun</i> reads a mantra | <i>Mulut embah dukun baca mantera</i> |
| With a glass of water | <i>Dengan segelas air putih</i> |

¹⁷⁷ Dangdut is an eclectic form of Indonesian popular music which incorporates Arabic, Indian, and Malay folk music genres. The song is on the *16 Most Popular and Best Selling Dangdut Albums for 2002*.

The patient is then sprayed with a charm *Lalu pasien disembur*¹⁷⁸

Chorus gabbled by the *dukun*:

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Stupid demon stubborn demon | <i>Syaitan gendeng syaitan bandel</i> |
| poor demon! demon (x2) | <i>syaitan gombal! syaitan (x2)</i> |
| the one whose name is demon | <i>yang namanya syaitan</i> |
| don't cause trouble! don't delight in | <i>jangan ganggu yeuch! Jangan suka</i> |
| causing trouble, Leave demon! | <i>menganggu... Pergilah syaitan!</i> |
| don't cause trouble ... | <i>jangan ganggu...</i> |

The singer goes on to ask the *dukun* for help with a magic spell to make the daughter of the village headman fall in love with him, but ends with the reminder:

But *Embah dukun* don't misunderstand me! *Embah dukun jangan takabur yach!*
It is really God that decides! *Tuhan yang menentukan mah!*

Parody, Pak Amin said, had really come to the fore at the time of the national lottery when people had frequented *dukun* to ask for winning numbers.¹⁷⁹ Numbers, he said, had been the real downfall (*gara-gara nomer*).

Lotteries have long been a contentious issue in Indonesia. A national lottery had been in existence in a variety of forms since the late 1970s until it was finally instituted as SDSB (Sumbangan Dermawan Sosial Berhadiah = Social Donation with Prizes) in 1989. With the aim of raising money to fund sporting events, welfare programs, and disaster relief efforts, its day-to-day operation was in the hands of private enterprise, but the Department of Social Affairs was responsible for its oversight and administration. Gambling is forbidden under Islamic law and in an effort to quell criticism generous contributions were also offered to a number of socio-religious organisations and educational institutions (Effendy, 2003:166-167). Various *fatāwā* had gone to quite convoluted lengths to give it borderline legitimacy (see Hooker, 2003:221-226), but when MUI (Majelis Ulama Indonesia = Indonesian Council of

¹⁷⁸ *Sembur* (spittle) is used especially to describe spittle sprayed as a charm to cure someone.

¹⁷⁹ As Suwandi explains, the lottery was “linked to the Javanese symbolic system involving folk religion, cosmology, numerology, and literature” and was therefore “more than just a game of chance”. The winning number was believed to be “supernaturally fixed and people could learn the results before the drawing by interpreting various supernatural signs ... [or] from certain personalities with extraordinary mystical qualities” (2000:124).

Islamic Scholars) finally decreed it was forbidden (*haram*) in 1991 many of these contributions were returned.

Apart from the religious issue the lottery had severe socioeconomic consequences – blamed for an increase in crime, drawing money from regional economies, and decreasing purchasing power; its most devastating effects were on the poor who became obsessed with lottery numbers, trusting “their economic fate more to the lottery than to hard work” (Effendy, 2003:167). These negative socioeconomic consequences led to opposition not only from Muslim leaders, but also from leaders of other religious denominations, intellectuals, and activists. The lottery was finally cancelled after widespread student-organised campaigns in 1993.

An example of how lotteries affected the poor, and what Pak Amin was referring to in discrediting *dukun*, is captured in an exemplary tale by a popular writer, Mohammad Sobary, in a 1991 *Tempo* magazine column, which I have translated from Indonesian:

“Parmin, a pedicab driver, was indeed mad about the football pools. He had already been to many dukun. Like every crazy person and beggar in Yogyakarta he was a shadow of his former self: who was to know that what was nagging at him was to receive a sign of winning lottery numbers. Often he slept in cemeteries hoping for a vision. How exhausting it was pushing a pedicab and all of his money had been placed on Sitompul’s table, the lottery agent. For Parmin, life was the lottery. Senik, his wife, asked to be sent home to her parents’ house because she could no longer endure life in this feverish lottery environment. And Gafur, his oldest son, had left school because there was no money for the fees. In short, Parmin’s family was in disarray.”¹⁸⁰

As the tale continues Parmin eventually tires of going to *dukun* and decides to visit a local *kyai*, who tells Parmin that he cannot give him winning numbers and teaches him

¹⁸⁰ Sobary’s column appeared in *Tempo* on 2 February, 1991. A compilation of his stories and columns were later published in a book (1993). *Porkas* (Pekan Olahraga untuk Kesejahteraan Sosial = Weekly Sports Lottery for Social Prosperity), based on football pools, was a former name for the lottery.

how to pray instead. Parmin's gambling, it seems, makes it difficult for him to get his tongue around the Arabic words of the prayers, and the *kyai* advises that only when he gives this up entirely will his pronunciation be fluent. With the help of some magical inducement in the form of increments of "miracle money" found under his door and the guidance of the *kyai*, Parmin learns to turn his life around and comes to understand the value of a life lived by unreservedly placing his faith in God.

Like the *dangdut* parody, the exemplary tale of Parmin illustrates the increasing emphasis on religion. There are, however, important differences. The song is not as moralistic, or for that matter intolerant of *dukun* (the singer does after all enlist his help in enchanting the headman's daughter), whereas Parmin must give up his gambling altogether. The Parmin tale appeared in *Tempo*, a magazine mostly read by the educated middle class. Dangdut music, on the other hand, is popular with both young and old from a lower socioeconomic class. Its message therefore follows a more pragmatic line; one that takes account of changing circumstances and adapts to them, but one that also understands the elasticity required 'to get by'.

Just Rewards versus Ill-Gotten Gains

An interesting example of this pragmatism was the issue of lotteries which, although banned, had not gone away. In Ponorogo, and I'm sure in many other areas in Indonesia in 2002, you could bet on the winning numbers in both the Malaysian and Singaporean lotteries through numerous sellers.¹⁸¹ Known as *togel*, an abbreviation of *toko gelap* (blackmarket vendor), this practise was obviously illegal. The search for winning numbers was also still alive and well. Although there is no sanction in Islam against seeking to improve your economic circumstances, it is the methods employed which clearly illustrate the moral divide involved.

Due to its extensive historicity Ponorogo has its own 'topographies of power' (Pemberton, 1994:270), both monumental and geographical. How this potency could be

¹⁸¹ It seems strange that in Malaysia, where Islam is the official state religion, lotteries have not caused the same controversy. Hooker explains that here lottery proceeds can be used for religious purposes provided that some of the money comes via a government agency. This is premised on the fact that, although the state is not Islamic, it promotes and protects religion. In Indonesia some previous *fatāwā* thought that, although not condoned, proceeds used for good purposes could be seen to tip the scales in the relativity between good and harm (2003:222).

accessed was consistent with local traditions of place and ethos, discussed in Chapter 2, which not only accommodated wider religious and political sensibilities, in this case the new religious orthodoxy, but also recognised the resourcefulness required to make do with what is at hand. The benefits that could be obtained were in an unequal relationship which I characterise as „just rewards versus ill-gotten gains’. Those sites associated with an Islamic past, such as the graves of prominent figures, were regarded as *kramat* (sacred) and could be visited to request a respectable measure of prosperity and wellbeing, while those associated with a more distant pre-Islamic heritage were where you could go to gain riches through more morally ambiguous means. Falling into this latter category, and where you would find numerous scattered offerings - flowers, incense, and cigarettes – were the remains of old temples, less reputable graves, and well-known geographic locations.¹⁸²

Javanese, like Balinese, recognise two types of space - *adhem* (cold) and *angker* (hot). Places that are *adhem* give rise to life, growth, fertility, and prosperity; while places that are *angker* destroy life and the growth of living beings, cause sickness, misfortune, calamity, and all other kinds of disharmonious and disorderly states (Suparlan, 1991:3). Places that are *angker* fall into the categories of the wild, unusual, marginal, or liminal; such as forests, bodies of water; places with unusual geologic formations or where unusual events have occurred; crossroads; bridges; banyan trees; and places that are far away or outside „civilised space’ (Lovric, 1987:51-53; Slamet-Velsink, 1996:69). They are associated with the concentration of power and correspond with Lovric’s “space in which the unusual and the extraordinary are found” (1987:51), Wessing’s space which is dangerous because it has its own rules unknown to humans (1993:5); or Keeler’s “potency” (1987:39).

While most potent sites involved the more passive activity of leaving an offering and trusting to inspiration I did visit a place which involved a more active process. This site was located in the neighbouring regency of Wonogiri. The house of a local *paranormal* who was to accompany me was beside a large cockfighting ring which was completely packed on the day I had arranged to meet him. Parked in neat rows were motorbikes

¹⁸² When visiting these sites it was my custom to ask locals passing by why people left offerings. The most usual response was lottery numbers.

and cars, most displaying Ponorogo number plates.¹⁸³ The site he took me to was a new spring (*sumur tiban*) which had recently spouted in the middle of a ricefield. Evidently the female spirit of the spring was reputed to particularly favour women who made requests by giving them „good’ numbers. I had brought along the required offerings of perfumed oil and face powder. After waiting for the two women from Ponorogo who were already at the spring, my turn came. The *paranormal* burnt incense, smeared pieces of cigarette paper with the oil and face powder, and I then immersed them in the spring. What could be construed as a number did appear. I did buy a lottery ticket, along with many of my acquaintances, but unfortunately it didn’t win.

In contrast were the *kramat* sites - the graves of renowned local figures and past dignitaries. While requests, such as the favourable outcome of a village or district election, the success of a new business venture, a marriage, passing an exam, or obtaining a promotion were regarded as valid, the respective *juru kunci* (caretakers), and other visitors, were at pains to tell me that these were not places where it was appropriate to ask for numbers. For example, at the grave of a former bupati, a son-in-law of Pakubuwana III, I was told that meditating on numbers would quickly find you magically transported outside the gates.

In between these sacred and profane categories are other places where local residents have sought to transform the negative aspects associated with them. One example I came across was after visiting the *pendopo* built to mark the spot of Ki Ageng Kutu’s vanishing, the foe defeated by Bathara Katong in the Islamisation of Ponorogo (see Chapter 2). Not far from there a simple bamboo shelter marks the grave of the village founder, Mbah Murradin. Here there was an offering of flowers (*nyekar*) and incense which one of the local men said was probably made by a *dukun* from another village asking for the beneficial outcome (*keselamatan*) of a client’s request. He told me that the offering would not have been for a winning lottery number because this particular person (Mbah Murradin) would not approve of such a request.

¹⁸³ At this time the Ponorogo police were cracking down on gambling. Cockfighting is also illegal in Indonesia and articles of police raids on cockfights were quite common in the local newspaper. The Wonogiri police were more lenient in this respect. Gambling, however, was still pervasive. One of the most prevalent forms was betting on the outcome of village head elections.

The graves of founding ancestors (*cakal bakal*) are in a similarly ambivalent position vis-à-vis orthodox Islam to that of the *dhanyang* (guardian or tutelary spirit) who lived in a distinctive *angker* place within the village. Both became part of the complex which enabled human/animal/spirit transformations. As local identities they ensured the wellbeing and prosperity of the village and the unique legends surrounding them meant that the propitiatory offerings, some quite scandalous, required for their continued favour were also specific.¹⁸⁴ In agricultural societies these offerings were normally made at the annual postharvest *bersih desa* “village cleansing” festival, but healers also made offerings in order to maintain their healing power. The assertion of Mbah Murradin’s disdain of the search for wealth through dubious means was therefore a sign of the soul’s morality.

Another example of the attempt to transform ill-gotten gains was at the spirit kingdom of Klambis Ireng. Pak Samsi, who lived in a farmhouse nearby, told me that the kingdom had ancient origins and that it contained all the trappings of a usual kingdom with mosques, markets, transport terminals, places of work, etc., but, in order to see this, you need to “*menyatu dengan alam*” (merge with the elements of the locale; attain a state of union with the spirits of place).¹⁸⁵ If you don’t then it will look just like an ordinary ricefield. And, indeed Klambis Ireng, deriving its name from *klambis*, the name of the thorny tree which grows there, and *ireng* (Jv. black), looks just like a thick stand of trees growing in the middle of a ricefield.¹⁸⁶ Stories of enchantment surround the site - *becak* drivers suddenly finding themselves there and then fleeing and leaving their *becak* behind; and of a famous *dhalang* (shadow puppet master) who, on becoming conscious the next morning after a performance there, found an ear of corn which then turned into gold.

¹⁸⁴ For examples of these offerings, see (Beatty, 1999:93-98; Geertz, 1976:26-28; Pemberton, 1994:239-252).

¹⁸⁵ ‘*Alam*’ can be translated as ‘realm, nature or locale’. As Ferzacca (2001:19) points out, it is also the root of the noun *pengalaman* (experience) which, in Javanese philosophy, means to be in harmony “with articulations between the microcosm and macrocosm, and between humans with their locale.”

¹⁸⁶ The Klambis tree with its small divided leaves and long thorns looks like a mimosa tree. *Mimosa pigra* is now an invasive species in many parts of the world. Although this is not the case here, its aggressive nature and the fact that nothing else grows here give an impression of the unnatural.

People come to Klambis Ireng to gain material riches. People come here and disappear. They enter the kingdom, they cross over, are caught, and are then unable to return. Pak Samsi said that he had accompanied people to the site and seen this happen. Because of this Klambis Ireng is deemed to be dangerous. Apart from those that are lost, there are also those that succeed and carry gold away with them. Pak Samsi said that it was advisable to bring a go-between (*perantara*), someone with the appropriate skill (*ilmu*) to assist you. For those that are trapped inside life carries on as normal, but they are unable to return.



The *dukun* from the dangdut song *Embah Dukun* entreating demons to leave



Asking for lottery numbers at *sumur tiban*



Offering placed at grave of village founder, Mbah Murradin



Klambis Ireng

When I asked Pak Samsi why he didn't try to get any of the riches for himself, he replied, "What for (*untuk apa*)?", meaning that he already had sufficient so what would be the point of trying to get more. He was critical of those that visit the site, saying that they were already well-off, they had enough money or a good job, but they wanted more and so could be said to be "greedy (*rakus*)". This was also a criticism of the means they employed in order to gain material rewards. When I asked a man cutting grass nearby the site he said that many people came seeking good fortune (*mencari rezeki*) or to ask for lottery numbers, and that the most popular time was on Wednesday and Thursday evenings. The farmer explained that if the seeker's request was realised they would often hold a *kenduri* for the surrounding residents who, as there were no houses nearby, were usually those cutting grass in the field. In this way the beneficiary was attempting to ritually transform the gain and therefore legitimise it.

Differentiation of Practitioners in Ponorogo

This religious consciousness has also led to a differentiation of services provided by some practitioners in Ponorogo. In this chapter I have chosen to discuss practitioners under the categories of symptomatic and aetiological but, as with the distribution of *jamu*, markets are highly segmented. The fluidity of illness categories, as well as the range of techniques employed by practitioners, also make this distinction difficult. Furthermore practitioners are not only segmented according to the services they offer, but also hierarchically. In a previous study of healers in the village of Baran in Sukoharjo, Central Java, for example, Utomo & Soewarso (1991:112-113) identified four categories which differentiate practitioners on the basis of payment and the nature of their knowledge:

- *Tukang* or *tiyang pinter* (skilled person) - the lowest category. Their skill is relatively limited to one or two areas;
- *Tiyang saged* (a person with special ability) - also called *dukun*, who give advice and heal for payment, e.g. through massage, numerical divination, or herbs;

- *Kasepuhan* (elder), in the sense that they are wise and knowledgeable, who give advice and whose *ilmu* is very broad. They do not ask for payment and their clientele is usually drawn from their own village, but often from outside as well;
- *Kamisepuh* (*kami* [kr] indicating a more respected type of *kasepuhan*) - the highest category. Their *batin* is reputed to be very strong and they attract their clientele from far afield.¹⁸⁷

Batin, an Arabic word which means “inner, in the heart, hidden and mysterious”, is a counterpart to *lahir*, the outer aspects of life. In Java “[k]ebatinan mysticism views human existence in a cosmological context, making life itself a religious experience”, and the harmonisation of the inner and outer aspects of life a moral task. Those with strong *batin* understand “the Truth behind the obvious” through the development of *rasa* (Mulder, 2005:48-49). Although there are numerous mystical groups (*aliran kebatinan*) each person’s knowledge is obtained through individual inner revelation and so defies any systematic conceptualisation. This orientation which takes the body as its holy text is the distinguishing feature of Javanese mysticism in relation to Islam which stresses ritual compliance and devotion to the Qur’an (Beatty, 1999:158), and can be epitomised by the saying, “God is not be met in Mecca but in the heart” (Mulder, 2005:50). These orientations are, however, not mutually exclusive categories. The overwhelming majority of Javanists are Muslim, and there is considerable convergence around the issue of payment.

In Islam all wealth is bestowed by Allah. There are therefore strict moral guidelines on how it is to be acquired and used. Altruism and social responsibility are emphasised as a means of restraining greed and extravagance. These values are also a feature of Javanism. Those with very strong *batin* should emanate an aura of mystery and knowledge. They should be free of egoism and self-interest, and should not seek material rewards. Their intermediary role as an instrument of the divine should enact “the nothingness of man” (Mulder, 2005:53-55).

¹⁸⁷ Javanese has a number of language levels. The two main levels are Ngoko (ng), the basic level, used when talking to intimates; and Krama (kr) used in talking to hierarchical superiors or people who are socially distant (Robson & Wibisono, 2002:8). *Kamisepuh* is therefore a more respectful term of address.

As discussed previously it is the individual nature of a practitioner's knowledge and the intimacy of the client-practitioner relationship which gives rise to ambivalence. The morality of the practitioner is therefore a vital consideration. Personal recommendation and the way a practitioner presents themselves can allay anxiety, but practitioners should not seek financial gain. Healing can be a lucrative business opportunity, especially in areas where business opportunities are limited. In Ponorogo practitioners have become differentiated according to the services they provide. The following section will analyse three categories - religious healers, occasional practitioners, and *paranormal* – and how they address the issues of legitimacy and payment.

Religious Healers

Obviously the practitioners who have most benefited from this Islamic renewal are local *kyai*. One of these lived in my housing estate opposite the local mosque.

Pak Kyai's door was always open in the evenings for a succession of local residents, as well as those who came from further afield. On the nights I was there people came for a variety of reasons – about-to-be migrant workers to ask that their contract run smoothly and that they get a sympathetic employer; others requesting auspicious days for intended projects; others for finding lost or misplaced goods; and others for advice on personal problems. After listening to their request the *kyai* retired to another room to write an appropriate *asma* in Arabic script on a piece of paper. The petitioner was then either instructed to dissolve this in a glass of water and drink it, or to put it in an envelope and keep it with them at all times.¹⁸⁸

One night a man and his son arrived from Mojokerto, which is four hours away by bus. The man said that his wife sold chicken pieces and, in order to make her business more successful, she had been to see a *dukun*. This was over a year ago and since then she had become completely enchanted. She now went to see the *dukun* practically every night and also often visited *kramat* graves to make offerings of incense and flowers. The *kyai* gave the man the usual *asma* but also told him to recite two extracts from the Qur'an, the Ayat Kursi and Surat Yasin.¹⁸⁹ They then left to catch the night bus home.

¹⁸⁸ An *asma* describes the names and attributes of Allah. According to tradition there are 99, known as God's "most beautiful names" (Arabic: *al-asmā' al-husnā*).

¹⁸⁹ Both the Ayat Kursi and Surat Yasin are known for their efficacy. The Ayat Kursi (the "Verse of the Throne") tells of the supreme and absolute attributes of Allah, while the Surat Yasin is read at *tahlilan* for those who have

Pak Kyai told me his father had been a healer, and that he himself had studied for 12 years at several *pesantren*, which were recommended by his father. He had started his practice in 1975 before he was married, and said he often carried out various forms of asceticism, such as *puasa putih* (only eating white rice and drinking water) for a certain number of days, in order to use his knowledge to help people (*mengamalkan*). While I had not encountered such cases, he said that many people also sought help for illness. When I asked him if he treated victims of sorcery or troubling spirits, he said, “yes”, and that this usually occurred where the illness was “not normal” (*tidak biasa*). He would receive a sign (*dapat petunjuk*) that this was the case after praying and asking for guidance. In cases of sorcery, although he knew who the perpetrator was, he would not tell the patient. The most common reasons for sorcery, he said, were *saingan bisnis* (business competition), *putus pacar* (jilted suitors), and *rebutan warisan* (disputes over inheritance). In the case of “troubling spirits” he gave the example of an old teak tree which no one on the housing estate had been game to cut down. One night, during a rainstorm, one of the local residents broke off a small branch to use as an umbrella. When the man reached his house he discarded the leaves in the front yard and, by the time he went inside, his arm and his genitals had swelled up. Pak Kyai was called and, after treating the man, he then cut down the teak tree. This action upset the spirits who then came to Pak Kyai’s house in droves to complain that he had deprived them of their home. He told me he then conducted the spirits to the local graveyard to find a new home.

Troubled spirits are still very much a part of lived experience. The housing estate, like many in Ponorogo, is relatively new. Residents told me that during Dutch times it had been open fields used for fattening cattle and prison inmates were used for labour. After that the land was used to plant *jarak* (castor oil) trees which were harvested for their oil, and after this it had been a garbage dump. Because the land was uninhabited for so long it had become the home of troubling spirits (*setan*) and after the first houses were built it was decided to “cleanse” (*membersihkan*) the area. In 1987 a ceremony was performed at night by Pak Samsul Huda, a *kyai* known for his powers of

just died, or are sick. For those who are gravely ill the purpose is that they will die quickly with a minimum of suffering. Personally it can be read habitually by those who have a goal in mind, such as improving their business.

invulnerability, who has since died. Every household was asked to buy three copies of the Qur'an, all the lights were put out, and small children were sent away. Pak Samsul then moved the spirits to the local graveyard while explaining to them that the area was now the home of people and they must therefore move to another area. All the spirits, however, had not moved. Apart from the incident with the teak tree, an abandoned house on the estate was thought to be haunted, and some residents also said they sometimes saw the spirit of a Dutch woman, thought to be the wife of a Dutch commandant, who either died by misadventure or was killed by prison inmates.

Pak Kyai's practice is a blend of Javanism and Islam, which he told me were complementary. In this respect it is worth noting that, although Muhammadiyah has a presence in Ponorogo (there is both a Muhammadiyah hospital and university), being in rural East Java and containing about 40 *pesantren*, it is a stronghold of NU. Both of these huge organisations are not monolithic and contain a wide spectrum of views. It is often said that NU is more tolerant of melded practices, like that of Pak Kyai's. The reason for this is its *pesantren*-based membership allows for more flexibility in contrast to the hierarchical structure of Muhammadiyah. Orientation depends of the head *kyai* of the *pesantren* who in turn is rooted in the local community values of which the *pesantren* is a part. Pak Kyai is not the head of *pesantren*, but his practice addresses the personal concerns of his community. His religious credentials, and the fact that he will not accept payment, address his legitimacy and are consistent with the altruism and social responsibility that are emphasised in Islam. In appreciation for his help visitors brought either bags of sugar or Pak Kyai's favourite brand of cigarettes.¹⁹⁰ His religious standing means that he is able to address controversial issues, such as those concerned with spirits and sorcery.

Occasional Practitioners

In parallel with these religious practitioners there are, as with symptomatic healers, a range of occasional practitioners who obtain their clients through their reputation and the usual social networks. They would best align with Utomo & Soewarso's description of *kasepuhan* or *kamisepuh*. Two case studies illustrate how both patients and

¹⁹⁰ All guests of course are served with the customary sweetened tea. The sugar was given to the *kyai*'s wife.

practitioners diagnose and understand the aetiology of unusual or intractable categories of illness.

Supardi – a patient

Supardi suffered a mysterious illness between 1988-1990 which took the form of a cough and the vomiting of quite large amounts of blood. He had gone to the Puskesmas, and then to the hospital where he had been x-rayed, but the hospital had told him that his x-ray was clear and did not show any signs of a pathology.¹⁹¹ He had also been to doctors, been given medication and injections, but all of this had failed. He had then visited three indigenous practitioners, each of which told him that the illness was due to supernatural causes (*kenak angin*), but none of them could heal him. He had been told to drink chicken blood, but he didn't want to. He said that these healers lived a long distance away, indicating that he had made great efforts to find a cure. He had eventually gone to a local healer, who I will call Pak Yono, who he described as Islam Kejawen. Pak Yono also diagnosed a supernatural cause (*gaib*) and told him to follow a specific routine. This was to boil salt, onions, and nine coconut tree roots to make a tea and then to drink this mixture as often as possible until he was well. Before starting to drink the mixture he should wash in seven different wells or sources of water (*mandi tujuh sumur*), and then fast for three days and three nights. He did this and was well after a few months, and said that since this time he has experienced no further symptoms. He told us he had heard about Pak Yono from a friend and when he had gone to see him he got the impression that he was a good man. When I asked him if he had any idea about the cause of his illness he replied that this was not necessary, that the most important thing was that he was now well. Since his recovery he had become very religious and now worked as a cleaner at a local *pondok*. We met him just after *Maghrib* (the prayer at sunset) returning from the mosque. His turn to religion indicated that he saw the cause of his illness in transgressions that he had committed in the past, and his piety now played a large part in his continued wellbeing.

Pak Hadi – a practitioner

A practitioner, whom I will call Pak Hadi, is a teacher of *ilmu kebal*. In this capacity he often accompanies clients to areas all over Indonesia to protect houses from robbery or misfortune (*keselamatan rumah supaya tidak ada musibah*). He surrounds the house with

¹⁹¹ His symptoms seem consistent with tuberculosis, but at this time in Ponorogo radiography may have been rudimentary.

an invisible mystical shield (*pagar rumah dengan kebatinan*). Apart from this Pak Hadi also receives the usual requests for increasing the success of a business, gaining a better position at work, or finding a suitable marriage partner. He also treats common illnesses, as well as cases of mental disturbance. He said that he derives inspiration by reading the Qur'an and is then given a direction (*petunjuk*) to use a certain plant or herb. This may be cassava leaves, or any common plant, and is specific for each case. He related the story of a man from a neighbouring village who had non-specific symptoms - stomach upsets, headaches, and a general feeling of unwellness.¹⁹² He had been hospitalised in Madiun, then in Surabaya, where they performed various tests, including x-rays, but could not find any cause for the illness. All of this treatment had been very expensive, around Rp 6 million, and this was before the financial crisis. The family was wealthy, but had had to sell some of their ricefields in order to pay the cost of treatment. One of the unusual facts was that the man only experienced these symptoms every Monday, Thursday and Friday. On the other days he was perfectly normal. When all biomedical treatment alternatives had been exhausted Pak Hadi was called. After Pak Hadi finished praying in order to derive an explanation, the man vomited blood which contained whole dried rice stalks, as well as a length of coiled electrical cable. It had so happened that the man had been a university student in another city, and had met and become involved with a girl from Kediri. The family had even gone so far as to ask for the girl's hand in marriage, but then the wedding had fallen through. Pak Hadi and the family surmised the father of the girl had then gone to a *dukun santet* (sorcerer) in order to put a curse on the boy resulting in the unusual illness.

These two case studies demonstrate how illness is embedded in social and moral relationships, and the importance of religion in diagnosis and healing. They also reveal that, in the case of intractable illness, people usually turn to indigenous healers after biomedical alternatives have been exhausted. While the extent of the prior treatment sought depends on the economic resources of the patient, the choice of a healer depends on finding one that one is comfortable with (*cocog*). From my field experience this relationship, once established, is usually longlasting.

In the case of Supardi the enlistment of the patient in their own healing through following a challenging routine is similar to the methods reported in numerous

¹⁹² Although I was not able to interview the patient as in the case of Supardi above, I gathered many similar stories from healers. The story illustrates the discourse surrounding what is perceived as unusual illness.

ethnographic studies around the world. When I visited Supardi's healer, who I will call Pak Yono, he explained that people who were very ill were naturally troubled and needed to reach a state of calm. In order to recover one needed to be *ikhlas*, a key mystical concept meaning complete detachment. While the numbers 7 and 9 had numerological significance, the main reason for the routines he prescribed was to focus or sharpen a person's consciousness (*menajamkan diri*). This was confirmed by another longterm client who said that Pak Yono was someone you turned to when you were overburdened with worry or sorrow (*pelarian jibeg*). "When you had given up all hope you visited a person like Pak Yono who could clear your mind so that you could receive a direction from God."

In the case of Pak Hadi's patient the fact that they suffered symptoms only on Mondays and Thursdays, the customary fasting days outside of Ramadan, and Fridays, the Islamic holy day when men should attend the midday prayer at the mosque, marks the illness as resulting from a social/moral transgression. The unusual stomach contents signify sorcery.

These two case studies illustrate that the practice of occasional healers is similar to that of Pak Kyai's in dealing with the more specific local concerns of their clients. Although they do not ask for payment, in contrast to *kyai*, they will not refuse it from a patient who wants to show their gratitude. Like symptomatic healers clients may offer a nominal fee, but some make quite generous payments. I heard of gifts of cars after a successful cure. Like Pak Hadi many healers travel extensively at the expense of their clients. Clients suffering from certain conditions, such as stress or mental illness, often stay with the healer for prolonged periods. This was the case with Pak Hadi, and another *kyai* I interviewed who specialised in treating mental illness. The small and personal nature of their clientele means that, like *kyai*, they are not wary of addressing controversial issues, such as spirits and sorcery, which arise from strained social relationships and moral transgressions.

Paranormal

The next category of practitioner are those now known as *paranormal*, who equate to those previously called *dukun*. Because their practice is also a business, just like

paranormal with a national profile, they need to take account of the contemporary religious consciousness as well as addressing the problem of payment for services. Two examples illustrate how practitioners address these issues in different ways.

Material Exchange

I first visited Pak Atmo (a pseudonym) on a Sunday afternoon. He told me that most of his clients came from outside of Ponorogo and, as if to confirm this, one man arrived from Nganjuk carrying several melons which he had just harvested. The man told me that he had first come to Pak Atmo in 1986 after the hospital in Kediri had advised that he would need a kidney transplant. The cost being obviously prohibitive he had come to Pak Atmo who had given him some herbs, and he had completely recovered. Pak Atmo also has a practice in Wonogiri, about 60 km west of Ponorogo, where he conducts a clinic a couple of days of week. He invited me to accompany him, and the next day we left Ponorogo early in the morning and arrived at the clinic around 8:30 am. Wonogiri is characterised by the dry poor soils of much of Java's southern coastline. While the largest *jamu* factories today are located in Semarang, this is where the industry started with Jamu Jago in 1918, and it is still where many of the ingredients are sourced; either grown in private gardens or harvested from the wild. The clinic's reception area contains a large bank of drawers filled with various kinds of *jamu* which are in two forms - dried to be boiled in water, or as a prepackaged powder to be dissolved in water. When patients arrive they register at reception, are given a number, and then wait to see Pak Atmo in a small consulting room. After the consultation their 'prescription' is filled at the reception. Pak Atmo's practice is therefore similar to that of a biomedical clinic.¹⁹³

On the day that I went he saw about 30 patients, but his attendance records show that the average is usually around 50. While the patients were waiting to see him I spoke to a number of them. All had a similar story in that they had first sought treatment from a doctor, hospital or Puskesmas and, when their condition didn't improve, they came to see Pak Atmo at the recommendation of a friend or acquaintance. People came in groups, or accompanied by relatives, from various areas around a 50 km radius; some even from Solo where the standard of biomedical services is much better than rural areas. They complained about the high cost of repetitive treatment and its ineffectiveness. Those who had seen Pak Atmo before said they were happy with the treatment they had received.

¹⁹³ I heard of a couple of biomedical practitioners, known as *terkun* (from *dokter/dukun*), who used both herbs and pharmaceuticals in their practice.

Conditions on this day included a man who had been diagnosed with a kidney complaint (*sakit ginjal*), a woman who suffered from *migren* (migraine), and a woman whose symptoms were headaches (*pusing*) and pins and needles (*semutan*) in her arms. She said the Puskesmas had told her she had low calcium (*kurang calsium*), had given her an injection and prescribed redoxin. One man had come for his wife who had been diagnosed with lupus, but the treatment was prohibitively expensive. Others conditions were rheumatism and heart problems, and one lady had her right arm paralysed by stroke. Yet another lady said her stomach always felt full and she was constantly short of breath. After the clinic Pak Atmo broadcast his weekly local radio program in which people could phone in and ask advice about their health problems.

From this description Pak Atmo would seem to be a symptomatic healer. He, however, classes himself as a paranormal and he does see clients at his home for more non-specific reasons. I had met a couple of these. On the journey home we had a more general discussion in which he talked about the reasons he had structured his practice in this way. He said that under the New Order government, with its sponsorship of biomedicine, traditional practitioners had come under pressure. This had been the result of a two-pronged attack. The first being that state support of biomedicine had had some detrimental effects in that people had abandoned or lost their knowledge of everyday herbal remedies. For example, where before, if they had an upset stomach, people would make a home remedy containing *kunir* (turmeric), they now immediately turned to over-the-counter pharmaceuticals instead. Even older people followed their children who had grown up under the New Order. This was similar to what the village carik, who had his own medicinal garden, would tell me (see Chapter 3), and what I would notice in my interviews. Later others would also say that this change had begun in the 1970s when constant promotions on the radio, and trucks driving through villages equipped with loudspeakers, gave the impression that these herbal remedies were of no use and should be replaced by modern preparations. The second factor, Pak Atmo continued, was that the New Order had put pressure on traditional healers by spreading the idea that they were working with demons (*setan*).

When I asked Pak Atmo how he used his *ilmu* in treating his patients, he replied that the herbs he used were empowered by prayer (*doa*) when they were prepared, and he thought that this added to their efficacy. He did not tell his patients this because he

thought they would feel more at ease being given herbs which could be classed as medicine (*obat*). Taking away something material meant patients did not have to fear the use of magic or spirits.

Apart from the changing circumstances he mentioned, I feel Pak Atmo had also taken these steps because he had obviously been deeply affected by the mass slaughter of alleged communists at the beginning of the New Order. As we were talking he told me he was 18 at the time and remembers lists of those to be killed being drawn up by the military, and “young men being trained as if they were protecting their country from an alien threat. If people did not take part in the killings they were then said to be protecting enemies of the state. It was October at the end of the dry season and people were killed every night on the banks of dry river beds. Some were buried in mass graves and it didn’t matter how many bodies were put into these graves, when they were filled in, no mounds remained.”

For Pak Atmo it was as if the bodies had just disappeared without trace, as if the bodies had been taken by God. “Did people who had taken part in the killings experience any effects?”, I asked. He replied that some went crazy or suffered stroke, some after 5 or 6 years. He thought that the suppressed trauma of this time was still having an effect on the children; a result of the mental shock of their fathers. Indeed Pak Atmo’s retelling of his experience, falling into the present tense as he described it, contained the essence of a “durational memory”, a part of his inner reality, which Langer refers to as the “alarmed vision” characteristic of survivors of atrocity “who have no agency in their fate” (1996:53-58).

The killings of 1965-66 which resulted in the elimination of the Indonesian Communist Party, at that time the third largest in the world, “are a particularly difficult and dark subject” (Zurbuchen, 2002:564). Manipulated by the military, Muslim youth militia units, especially the NU-affiliated ANSOR, were “their most assiduous assistants” in conducting the killings in Central and East Java (Hindley, 1970:39). In addition to the hundreds of thousands who were killed (estimates range from 100,000 to 1 million), many thousands of people were tortured, detained, and imprisoned for many years without trial. Even today applicants for government jobs will be knocked back if there

is a hint of a suspicion of past communist affiliation. Although the New Order promoted an official version of events [which saw Suharto as a saviour, taking control of the country after a Communist coup, and periodically raising the spectre of renewed threat throughout his long tenure as president], “[t]o date there exists no single accepted and authoritative account” of the course of events (Zurbuchen, 2002:565-566).” As Zurbuchen points out “most Indonesians have lived in conditions of willed amnesia or fearful silence”, “unable or reluctant to share their memories with neighbours or even close relatives” (2002:566) ever since. Having lived in Yogyakarta and being aware of these acute sensibilities, I was constantly taken aback at the number of times people commented about these events and their aftermath without any prompting on my part. Apart from the killings Ponorogo also suffered memorable material and cultural destruction in the burning of *barong* masks, and the disbanding and targeting of *reyog* groups.¹⁹⁴

It was this prominent involvement of Muslims in the killings which gives rise to the ambivalence of some toward orthodox Islam; a memory which permeates the “studiously crafted order, harmonization, and overdeterminedness – an intricate and elegant structure built upon a history of violence and disorder”, which mutes the expression of religious difference in rural Javanese social life (Beatty, 1999:2-3). I certainly felt that this memory was a factor in Pak Atmo’s response. When I asked him if he thought there was any chance of a reexamination now that Suharto was no longer in power, he replied that, because of the present strong position of Islam, this would be unlikely.

Between the pressures brought on by state sponsorship of biomedicine and the consequent discrediting of traditional practitioners, and his own experience of the violent potential of Islamic radicalism, Pak Atmo had therefore made the decision to structure his practice to mirror that of a biomedical clinic in which empowered herbs were dispensed to patients. As he had pointed out, taking away something material made patients feel more at ease, and avoids association with the use of magic or spirits. This was also an astute move from two other perspectives. Firstly, it takes advantage of

¹⁹⁴ This may also be a measure of the trauma experienced. Suwandi, who did fieldwork in Blitar, an area which suffered a heavy toll, also recounts numerous stories of this period (2000:109-116).

the popularity of *jamu*, and secondly, it bestows a very real economic advantage. Equating herbs to medicine means that Pak Atmo, like biomedical practitioners, is able to charge a standard fee for service; thus avoiding the customary donation form of payment.

Visible Islamic Credentials

I have referred to Pak Amin earlier. He explained the reasons for the name change from *dukun* to *paranormal*. Although he looked much younger, he must have been in his sixties, because he told me he had started his practice in 1967 at a time when he was still in the process of deepening his *ilmu*. This process had been a long one, studying under several *kebatinan* and *kejawen* teachers, and in several *pesantren* around the Ponorogo area. From his large well-appointed house and his own ricefields, he seemed quite well off. His Islamic credentials were very visible. He had built a small mosque in front of his house and was very strict in observing the five daily prayers, even leaving during my visit for the Isha prayer.¹⁹⁵ He told me that he customarily stayed awake for the optional *Tahajjud* prayer, which is usually performed just after midnight. Clients consulted him for family problems, illness, finding lost goods, improvement in business, and getting a promotion. Another example of the adaptation to change was a *jimat* Pak Amin gave me. This was a piece of paper on which a protective phrase had been written, which was placed in the driver's seat as protection while driving. (Anyone who has driven between large cities in Java will appreciate the danger involved.)

He told me that if a client's problem was due to a supernatural cause, which was not common, he would not tell them that this was the case. The main reason, he said, was that the client would then suspect him of seeking to enrich himself. When I asked him why this was the case, he explained that, if a client is told that a *jin* (evil spirit) is responsible for their difficulties, they may then ask the *paranormal* what offerings the *jin* requested in order to leave them in peace, and would then pay any price to remedy the situation. This could therefore be interpreted as the *paranormal* seeking additional money to make the necessary offerings. He also explained that his impression of clients who offered money for a reason such as this was that they were looking for a "quick fix" (*jalan pintas*) rather than undergoing a true healing which involved a real change in lifestyle.

Pak Amin was therefore very sensitive to client perceptions of his practice, especially with regard to its financial aspect. Because of this he had sought to eliminate issues, such as those dealing with spirits, which could be construed as seeking personal enrichment, and reorient his practice within a more religiously orthodox framework.

Pak Amin's practice was similar to other *paranormal* I met – prosperous, living in large new houses, and projecting a confidence in their abilities so that a client would thoroughly believe in their powers. They had obviously benefited financially from the services they provided, and presented a contrast to occasional and religious practitioners who conform to the Javanese ideal of *rukun* (harmony) - unassuming and of seemingly modest means – indistinguishable from their neighbours.

The role of money in the practitioner-patient relationship has not only been a source of controversy in Java. It has presented difficulties in developed countries where doctors have also sought to rise above the images of the commercial salesman and the quack healer, and assure patients that treatment decisions were “motivated by altruism and knowledge rather than by self-interest”. The strategies employed to erect a wall between money and medicine have included professionalisation, in the form of lengthy systems of “training, examination, credentialing, licensing, and monitoring”, elaborate systems of drug testing, and health insurance schemes (Stone, 1997:534-537). Of course, all of these systems only exist in a rudimentary form in Indonesia. It is however interesting, in light of the political, socioeconomic and religious changes I have outlined in this chapter, that *paranormal* have sought to employ a similar strategy to improve their own image.

Entrepreneurialism and Professionalisation

I came to realise that practitioners who refer to themselves as *paranormal* are now another category qualitatively different from other folk practitioners. It would seem that increasing religious consciousness, and the memory of what state-supported religious zeal is capable of, has been crucial in the careful avoidance of practices associated with

¹⁹⁵ On my visits I was always conscious of prayer times, especially the Maghrib prayer which, performed at sunset, is the most fixed prayer time. The Isha prayer, although normally performed around 7:00 pm, has a lot more elasticity.

“magic or spirits” by *paranormal*. The processes of socioeconomic and religious transformation have both compelled and facilitated the emergence of *paranormal* out of the evolving role of the *dukun* who were the most entrepreneurial of Java’s indigenous practitioners. The increasingly individual nature of their services meant they were able to utilise the customary social networks of the indigenous economy to move into the expanding market economy. With their capacity for engaging in both protective and destructive activities, however, their role became more threatening.

Sorcery in Java was largely a domestic affair. As Clifford Geertz’ informant explained, when asked if people in Tebing (where there was reputed to be a lot of sorcery) ever sorcerised people in Mojokuto, “The enemies of the people in Tebing live in Tebing” (1976:110). In the previous insular local world of the ‘village’, where people were imbricated in reciprocal relationships and everyone was roughly on the same socioeconomic level, this threat could generally be contained. One usually knew who one’s enemies were, or were likely to be. This may be why in past ethnographic literature on Southeast Asia, in contrast to that of sub-Saharan Africa, sorcery and witchcraft were not reported as a “significant *social* problem” because there were “alternative ways of dealing with misfortune and conflict” (Ellen, 1993:1-3 emphasis in original). In the Javanese context ‘alternative methods’ included communal ritual, such as *slametan* and various performance genres.¹⁹⁶ The high probability of suspicion and, therefore, the prospect of becoming the target of reverse sorcery, would also militate against an individual embarking on such an action. This insular world has been fragmented by the infiltration of the market economy, greater mobility, increased socioeconomic differentiation and competition, and more diverse spatially-extensive social networks (trends which greatly accelerated during the New Order period). These circumstances make it increasingly difficult to identify the source of a threat and, therefore, to take remedial action. Apart from conflict management, this may also be a reason why contemporary practitioners refrain from mentioning a perpetrator.

¹⁹⁶ As we saw in Chapter 2, from the 10th century, rice terrace cultivation was used to integrate communities into cohesive work units. Public literary readings, temple architecture, and visual performances, e.g., *wayang kulit*, instilled the hierarchical structure and proper conduct. In Ponorogo, of course, *reyog* incorporated the area into the legends of Java, as well as constructing a common local ethos. Apart from these ‘community-building’ practices there were also the intimidatory cursing and exorcism rites of Tantrism.

The role of the *dukun*, embedded in the reciprocal relationships of the community and yet benefiting from the contractual relationships of the new economy, a potential ‘gun for hire’, also becomes considerably more contentious. Added to this is the move to religious orthodoxy and competition from increased access to biomedical services which further limits the services they can provide.

In response to these pressures some have been able to adapt and make use of the opportunities offered by these shifting alignments to remake their role as legitimate and ethical practitioners. Rebranding themselves, and abandoning the controversial areas of their practice to occasional practitioners and religious specialists, *paranormal* have modified their practices to appeal to a more religiously conscious and economically aspirational clientele. Most of their clients come seeking assistance with the ‘new economy’, such as help in business, or gaining a suitable position or promotion. Interestingly, this is also the most usual reason for visiting the empowered graves of figures of renown.

Dukun were always individual occasional practitioners who relied on community acknowledgement for their reputation. Rather than depending on customary donation, they were the first to command a fee for their services; a contentious issue which often led to the derogatory term of “*tukang*” (labourer, dealer, operator) implying a mercenary tradesman-like relationship. The point of this barb is that, although *dukun* learn their skills through an apprenticeship, their power is derived from their ability as mediators between the spiritual realm and everyday life; an ability which entails concentrating power through a variety of spiritual and ascetic practices. Even so, *ilmu* is bestowed not earned. While not undergoing the religious consecration of Balinese practitioners (see Connor, 1983:59), a ritual ceremony normally acknowledges the end of their apprenticeship.¹⁹⁷ As one *kyai* explained to me “*ilmu* cannot be sold” like a commodity. Reports of unscrupulous practices of *dukun*, or those purporting to be *dukun*, are practically an everyday event in selected Indonesian newspapers and TV

¹⁹⁷ Connor (1983:64) explains that the particular economic and social changes in Bali stemming from its development as a tourist mecca have provided opportunities to break this religious nexus. In “urban areas and centres of tourism” unconsecrated women practitioners can command high prices rubbing-down foreign tourists on beaches, or servicing “a more mobile, anonymous and affluent [non-Balinese Indonesian] clientele.”

shows which are exclusively devoted to sensationalising all manner of crime and deception (see Nitibaskara, 1993:52-65; Siegel, 1998).

Facilitated by the processes of modernisation – mobility, communications and media, democratisation, governance and accountability - *paranormal* have undergone a process of professionalisation. They have taken entrepreneurship to a new level, establishing their own professional associations similar to other business sectors, actively seeking clients. One of these associations, the FKPPAI (Forum Komunikasi Paranormal dan Penyembuh Alternatif Indonesia = Communications Forum for Indonesian Paranormal and Alternative Healers), even met in Jakarta in late 2001 to draw up their own “Code of Ethical Practice” in which the proposition that a member of the association be expelled for carrying out a service requested by a client which contravened Indonesian law, such as gambling or sorcery, became a topic of heated debate (Azril & Wijayanto, 23/10/2001).¹⁹⁸

Wellbeing as Strange Attractor

The Javanese concept of *slamet* encompasses more than physical illness. It understands and interprets the cause of both illness and misfortune as arising from an imbalance in an interconnected set of relationships – physical, psychological, spiritual, and social - which are contextually specific for each individual. In contrast to the universalist understandings of biomedicine the search for a remedy concentrates not only on a material cure, but may also involve a process of deeper reflection and transformation of one’s own particular circumstances; a process of healing. This task often requires the assistance of an appropriate and compatible specialist practitioner. The intimate nature of this relationship means that it must be one of mutual trust and respect.

Slamet is therefore a dynamic concept. It enables the proliferation of a diverse range of practitioners to service changing needs and aspirations. This chapter has examined how healers have modified their practices to adapt to contemporary socioeconomic and

¹⁹⁸ Another national association is the IPI (Ikatan Paranormal Indonesia = Indonesian Association of Paranormals). The Ponorogo branch of the Yayasan Parapsikologi Semesta (Foundation of Universal Parapsychology) held meetings of paranormal every *kamis kliwon* (Thursday night coinciding with the Javanese day *kliwon*), a particularly auspicious time in Java for religious or spiritual activities.

religious change in order to maintain their legitimacy and utility for the clients. Most affected have been those entrepreneurial practitioners at the local level who have sought to benefit financially from the opportunities offered by contemporary change. In contravening cultural ideals of how practitioners should present themselves they have had to tread a fine line to allay community anxiety about the misuse of their power. This has meant reframing the controversial aspects of their practice. Apart from taking advantage of new opportunities, local practitioners understand the very real threat that community unrest can pose. This will be the subject of the next chapter.

**BREACHING THE MORAL COMMUNITY: ECOLOGY OF
WELLBEING IN THE HIGHLANDS**

So far this thesis has mainly dealt with the central lowland plain of the Ponorogo regency. In this chapter I will turn my focus to the encircling highlands. Looking at a map it is difficult to understand their isolation. Standing on the plain one gets a better perspective. From there the purple, bare and rugged slopes, seeming always to blend into the haze of distance, appear far away; as if belonging to another place. This perception is substantiated in real time. For example, Ngrayun, one of the highest districts, is only 46 km from the town of Ponorogo, yet in my Suzuki Katana, which admittedly was not four-wheel drive, the journey took roughly four hours. The poor state of the roads, mostly dirt or rock tracks twisting around the mountains, which further deteriorate in the wet season, means that frictional distance (distance expressed as journey time) is what makes highland areas remote from the lowlands. It is a journey that few lowlanders make. Yet it was an event which occurred in an isolated highland settlement very soon after I arrived - the murder of a husband and wife by their own neighbours because they were alleged to be sorcerers – which was to influence the direction of much of my fieldwork in the course of the next year.

The highlands have a different feel. Although the environs of the town of Ponorogo could hardly be described as prosperous, I remember visiting some highland settlements in the 1980s on my brother-in-law's ice run and being shaken by the abject poverty I encountered there. As the articles written by Adam, the Dutch resident in the 1930s, make clear the central lowlands of Ponorogo, opening out towards the Madiun plain, have much in common with the lowlands of other parts of the former Madiun residency. When I first arrived I decided to familiarise myself with the area I was about to study. This included a trip to the Pacitan regency which, sandwiched between Ponorogo and the Indian Ocean, lies on the other side of the highlands. Difficult terrain and lack of roads mean that many highlanders are closer to Pacitan. I began to sense

that topography really did make a difference and in Jakarta I visited the historian, Onghokham, to get his impressions. Having written his PhD thesis in the 1970s on the former Madiun Residency, he was still regarded in Indonesia as the most knowledgeable on the area. During our chat he told me that, just as the Pasisir (north coast) region of Java is regarded as culturally distinct, he thought that this could equally be true of this southern coastal region. His remark echoes Pigeaud's observation that the series of "old-fashioned Javanese counties along the south coast" should be considered "as an important unity" and, in this respect, were worthy of more ethnographic and archaeological research (in Adam, 1938b:294).

Following Pigeaud's recommendations I begin this chapter with an overview of highland ecology, before moving on to how this ecology affects health and contributes to a distinctive ethos. I will then analyse the killing of the suspected sorcerers, not only because their murder articulates with the changing perception of aetiological practitioners I have discussed in the previous chapter, especially the importance placed on their morality, but also because this case study illustrates the multidimensional and very contextual understanding of the causes of illbeing.

Ecology and Chronic Poverty

Archaeological finds show that in prehistoric times there were a large number of settlements along the southern coast of Java.¹⁹⁹ With Austronesian migration, followed by the expansion of sawah cultivation and the rise of East Javanese kingdoms (see Chapter 2) these regions became depopulated. By the 17th century Moertono tells us that marginal forest and coastal areas in Central and East Java were sparsely inhabited by various "aboriginal" groups, such as the Kalangs, Pinggir and Gadjahmati, who were probably descendants of the original pre-Austronesian peoples. Marginal areas, such as barren hills, forests and swampy coasts, were also designated as colonies for exiles who were deported for life. They included political dissidents, convicts, adulterers and other criminals, as well as those suffering from disfiguring diseases, such

¹⁹⁹ So far about 130 sites representing a pattern of continuous human habitation stretching back to the Palaeolithic have been found scattered over the southern coasts of Central and East Java (see Bellwood, 1997; Simanjuntak, 2004).

as leprosy and yaws. Others regarded as bearing the stamp of evil, like cretins, albinos, and the deformed, were usually deported with their families (1968:148-150). Moertono speculates that the legend of Lara Kidul, the spirit-queen of the South Sea, who has a reputation for both causing and curing epidemic illness, may confirm the existence of colonies of untouchables along the southern coast. The legend relates that the queen, formerly a beautiful princess, was exiled to the Gunung Kidul area, south of present-day Yogyakarta, because she was suffering from a horrible and incurable skin disease. She “committed suicide by flinging herself from the high cliffs” into the treacherous ocean below. The sea restored her beauty and made her a spirit queen (1968:148).

The population started growing rapidly in the second half of the 19th century with people in search of new land, but also because of those “wishing to escape the feudal burdens of taxation and labour duties” (Nibbering, 1999:67). Labour services imposed on villagers were more onerous than taxes, and included not only work maintaining irrigation infrastructure, but also general repair of roads, construction of public buildings, work for various dignitaries, transport of goods, and military service. Exile and convict colonies were assigned the heaviest tasks, such as cutting and transporting teak in forest areas, or keeping fire beacons burning and towing ships in coastal areas. “[T]he only way to free oneself from the burden of tax and labor-levy was to leave the land” (Moertono, 1968:145-149). Out-of-the-way forested and mountain areas always offered a potential refuge. In this respect Kumar mentions that the term for „free men’ (*pradikan*, *wong mardika*) was most often used in the context of “those who were exempt from either taxes, or more importantly labour services, ... a striking example of the widespread concept that freedom was something unattainable except by those who were for some reason outside mainstream Javanese society (1997:349).”

Bands of bandits and robbers also used the woods for refuge. In remote areas they even formed regular village organisations. The *Serat Centini*, written in the 1820s, recounts the story of such a village where the brigand leader as the village headman “controlled the roads through the forests and mountain range”, and imposed tribute on the villagers and traders passing through (in Moertono 1968:85).

What separates settlements in highland Ponorogo is largely the nature of the terrain. It is not an interconnected mountain region, but consists of a series of conical hills, often first necessitating descent to the lowlands to reach the seemingly near adjacent peak. The inaccessibility of the terrain may have been attractive to fleeing refugees in former times. In the village of Sodong, for example, in the highlands of Sampung, there is a community who claim that their ancestors fled to these mountains in the 16th century to avoid Islamising forces, and that they still follow the original Javanese religion, known as *agama Budha*. Other remote communities, much like former bandits, deter strangers by erecting makeshift barriers to halt visitors, especially those travelling by car. The boom gates are only lifted after a token payment is made.

Just to add to this diversity are the highland regions themselves. The eastern highlands are part of volcanic Mt Wilis. They are extremely fertile and picturesque with terraced rice fields similar to those found in tourist brochures on Bali. In the highest areas households have planted clove trees and, apart from the sale of cloves, there are also some small home industries producing clove oil. In contrast the southern and western regions are part of the southern mountain chain, the *Gunung Sewu* (Thousand Mountains), a large hard reef karst area internally composed of hundreds of networked caves, which runs along the central part of Java's southern coast.²⁰⁰ These cave structures lead to the fast infiltration of rainfall into underground aquifers which then runs off into natural springs at the coastline, thus resulting in severe water scarcity in the dry season due to the absence of suitable water reservoirs (University of Karlsruhe, 2003). During the dry season, which can last up to 8 months, there is practically no running surface water often necessitating the trucking of drinking water and food to these mountain regions to help residents survive (see *Kompas*, 05/11/1997, 19/11/1994). As such the soils of this area produce low yields for agriculture, permitting almost no cropping for nearly half the year, but their limestone content and low elevation are particularly suited to teak production. One can get a better view of just how dry these teak forests can be by taking a lesser-travelled route to Ponorogo

²⁰⁰ As Simanjuntak explains this is actually a misnomer because the maximum elevation of the area is only 500m above sea level, and should therefore be more aptly called 'thousand hills' (2004:11).

which branches off the main highway between Yogyakarta and Solo and follows the contours of these mountains through the regency of Wonogiri.

From a distance the slopes appear to be heavily de-forested, but there is still 46,990 hectares of forest land, mainly montane pine plantations and naturalised exotic tree species, under the control of the State Forestry Corporation (*Perum Perhutani*). Local farmers obtain some income by tapping pine resin which is sold back to the Corporation at a fixed price.²⁰¹ Wonogiri and Ponorogo supply 80-90% of Indonesia's tree seeds. These are collected by small scale farmers and then sold through a chain of middlemen, seed agencies, and finally largely to government to be used in land rehabilitation programs. In this sequence farmers are in the weakest position. Companies control specific territories "limiting farmers' options and allowing companies to set seed prices" (Roshetko *et al.*, 2004:6-7). The regency government has recently embarked on a vigorous tree-planting program, called Gempur AC, in the hope of improving water retention.²⁰² Heavy forestry vehicles and trucks, which are the main means of transport (local residents often hitch a ride to the nearest cluster of trader's stalls, or to the lowlands in search of work), is another factor which contributes to the parlous state of rocky trails. These have often been built through *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation) where residents form work groups in their free time to break rocks in an attempt lay some type of surface capable of being used in the wet season.

Agriculture is very much dependant on the gradient of the land and the depth of the soil. Land is a vital resource, but productivity is low. Farmers therefore integrate growing crops with forestry and livestock to deal with adverse physical conditions. Although there is some rice production, the most common crop is cassava which many farm under a system called *tumpang sari*.²⁰³ Consequently even the diet is different.

²⁰¹ The pines seem to have been planted in the 1940s by the Dutch colonial government and were then taken over by the Indonesian government after Independence (personal interview). Trees are tapped for their resin from age 11 years, and are then logged after 20 years. The resin is used for industrial purposes, such as solvents, while the timber is used for the production of matches, chopsticks, crates, and paper pulp (Peluso, 1992:22 & 276n).

²⁰² Gempur AC is an abbreviation for *Gerakan Menaman Pohon Untuk Rakyat dan Anak Cucu* (Movement to Plant of Trees for the People and their Grandchildren). It's aim is to green critical areas and attract rain, and maybe even create new water sources.

²⁰³ The *tumpang sari* (intercropping) system is a reforestation method which was introduced in 1873 by W. Buurman. After a forest area is clear-cut, local cultivators clean up the land and plant teak seeds in ordered rows. Between these rows they can grow agricultural crops for one or two years. These crops belong to the planters, but

Whereas the staple food of lowlanders is rice, highlanders make a rice substitute from powdered cassava, called *nasi tiwul* or *gaplek*, or from corn (*jagung*). *Gaplek* is their staple food, not only because of its availability, but also because it is much heavier than ordinary rice and so fills the stomach for longer; an attribute I can personally attest to.²⁰⁴ The few *warung* (food stalls) in lowland Ponorogo which sell both cassava and corn rice substitutes are very popular with poorer labourers and students for this reason. Livestock is used to sell in times of crisis or for communal rituals, so diet largely consists of edible leaves and occasionally tofu and tempe.²⁰⁵

The relationship between diet and ecology was illustrated in a *Kompas* article. Dadi, the head of Sidowayah hamlet in Badegan, explains that in the wet season house yards appear full of various vegetables, such as cassava, corn, beans, and other leafy greens, but “if you really want to see the poverty of this hamlet come in the dry season” when the earth is cracked and dry, trees are withered and leafless, and nothing grows. Some residents then resorted to eating purslane (*daun krokot*) growing by the side of the road, and crickets (*jangkrik*). While people fought over crickets you could find some who still ate banana shoots (*pangkal pisang*), which were very popular during the time of the Japanese occupation.²⁰⁶ The staple food of the hamlet is cassava (*gaplek*) and corn (*jagung*) because ordinary rice does not really take away the pangs of hunger (*Kompas*, 10/04/1993).

Gradient also affects the proximity of housing. On the higher slopes, houses are isolated from one another perching on any available flat piece of ground. Houses are mostly of woven bamboo (*gedhek*) with dirt floors, no sanitation, windows, or running water.

they are also responsible for the health of the trees. After the two-year *tumpang sari* period control returns to the foresters (Peluso, 1992:63, 146).

²⁰⁴ A newspaper article quotes a hamlet head describing how this is prepared. Residents choose local species – *ketela pandesi* or *gondoruwo* – which, although poisonous, bear large fruit. To leach out the poison the cassava is soaked in water after peeling for 2 – 3 days, and then dried in the sun. After drying it is then soaked again, dried, then pounded into flour, and stored in airtight drums (*Kompas*, 10/04/1993). Apart from leaching out poisons this would obviously also leach out certain vitamins and minerals.

²⁰⁵ In rural areas people eat a variety of leaves from their home gardens as vegetables, such as papaya, sweet potato, jackfruit, bean, and melinjo (*Gnetum gnemon*) leaves. Tempe, an Indonesian product made from fermented soy beans, is probably the main national source of protein because it is cheap and readily available.

²⁰⁶ The Japanese occupation is regarded as the benchmark for hardship among older Indonesians.



The foothills of Mt Wilis



Gunung Sewu highlands



Drying *acacia alba* for *jamu*



Tapping pine resin

The lack of serviceable roads means that people living in the highlands have more contact with neighbouring regencies. There are numerous walking tracks and Pak Wo, a hamlet head in the village of Karangpatihan, which borders Pacitan, explained how many small traders (*bakul*) carry their goods to market on the other side of the mountains. They made this trip on market days (twice in the 5-day Javanese week) setting out around 2:00 am, arriving at the market around 7:00 am, and then arriving back home around 4:00 pm in the afternoon. After selling their own produce they bought other items which they could in turn sell in their own hamlet. He also told me that many residents in his area came from Pacitan; crossing the mountains in the 1950s because of economic circumstances and lack of food, and then from fear of the killings in 1965.²⁰⁷ These newcomers intermarried and stayed. The mountains in this area are now denuded of trees. Quite a while ago pine trees were grown and their resin extracted for use in paint manufacture, but many of these had since died and there were only a small number left. The trees had now been replaced by *Acacia Alba*, the fruits of which were harvested, dried, and then sold to be used for *jamu*.

In another hamlet at a lower altitude a project to grow orange trees was started 4 years ago. This was sponsored by the regency office of Agriculture (Dinas Pertanian) which had demonstrated how to care for the trees, but this was not on a constant basis and was only demonstrated to a few of the farmers. A number of the trees had contracted a virus and would have to be cut down. This does not bode well for the remaining trees. The Pulung orange, a distinctive local variety grown on the slopes of Mt Wilis which has a lucrative national market, was all but wiped out by the CVPD virus which is now endemic in most areas of Indonesia. In this hamlet farmers were too poor to buy the trees. They looked after them on a contract basis and received a percentage of the harvest as payment. They had planted mungbeans and peanuts between the trees, but because of the environmental conditions, these crops could only be grown once a year.

The difficulties experienced by these areas are consistent with those described in much of the literature published by the Chronic Poverty Research Centre (CPRC). They could be characterised as „spatial poverty traps’ which “result from low endowments of

²⁰⁷ In the 1950s and 1960s the Gunung Sewu area was hit by a series of famines following severe drought, accelerated soil erosion, and rat plagues (Nibbering, 1999:67).

„geographic capital’ (the physical, social and human capital of the area), with one household’s poverty reinforcing another’s”, and in which high levels of risk “contribute to the difficulties of emerging from poverty as well as the likelihood of destitution.” Chronic poverty is multi-dimensional and difficult to escape from because it includes “deprivations related to health, education, isolation, „voice’ and security” (Bird *et al.*, 2002:2-4). It is these issues I want to look at in this chapter beginning with the subject of health and the particular problems highland residents face.

Health Services, Burden of Disease, and Folk Practitioners

As discussed in Chapter 3 government health facilities dramatically decrease with distance from the town centre and the difficulty of the terrain. Highland areas are usually dependent on *bidan desa* (village midwife). An example of the difficulties experienced in accessing biomedical services is the village of Dayakan, situated on the western border of Ponorogo in a mountainous region known as Rejak Besi. The village is serviced by one Polindes (Polyclinic Desa) which is staffed by a *bidan* and open 2 days in the five-day Javanese week on Wage and Legi. There is also another *bidan*, who lives in the next village, and works in the clinic on market days which also occur two days in the five-day week. Villages are allocated on the basis of population (~5,000) so those located in the highlands can cover large areas. Even if residents could afford them, some areas are too steep for cars or motorbikes so those living on the highest slopes must walk to the clinic; a journey which may take between 1½ to 2 hours. Patients who are too sick to walk have to be carried on a *tandu* (litter). Obviously a *bidan* will only be able to treat common illnesses so, if a patient requires hospitalisation, this presents additional problems. The family must take into account not only the cost of the bed and medicines, but also the time, loss of income, and the cost of food at the hospital while they are awaiting the recovery of their family member. In addition, there is the cost of chartering transport to take the patient to hospital; approximately Rp 50,000-70,000. Problems of access would only be compounded during wet seasons.

With the low productivity, extensive leaching, and low nitrate content of highland soils the most pressing problems in these border areas are malnutrition and mineral

deficiencies, especially iodine deficiency. While the most notable sign is goitre, iodine deficiency is also the leading cause of mental impairment, has serious effects on physical development of children and young child mortality and, in women, is responsible for increased rates of abortion, stillbirth and congenital abnormalities (Pardede *et al.*, 1998:1122). In Ponorogo this range of disorders is known as GAKY (*gangguan akibat kekurangan yodium* = disorders resulting from iodine deficiency). I met Pak Wo and other hamlet heads in Karangpatihan through the members of Yayasan Dhita Bhaskara, an Indonesian NGO, who were carrying out a project under the auspices of PLAN International.²⁰⁸ I accompanied them on their various activities of community meetings, attending the monthly posyandu, and visiting local schools. Iodine deficiency was the reason for the members of the NGO visiting the two extremely basic primary schools in Karangpatihan. In this task we were accompanied by the *bidan desa* who carried out the palpitations; finding that 20% of the children had early signs of goitre.²⁰⁹ On the way to the schools we had seen several people with obvious severe mental retardation sitting outside of houses. I remembered in the late 1980s seeing people with large goitres. The fact that I did not see any during fieldwork this time may be due to the national salt iodisation program which was established in 1993. The problem of iodine deficiency is a particularly good example of the multi-dimensionality referred to by the CPRC and just how difficult it can be to tackle health issues when people are chronically poor and lack access to health facilities. It begins with varieties of coarse salt, not containing iodine, which are also sold in local *warung* and are more popular because they are much cheaper.²¹⁰ At the PLAN office in Ponorogo I learned that iodine evaporates easily, due to its low boiling point (20°C), and must be stored in airtight containers. They explained that salt is normally stored

²⁰⁸ As I mentioned in Chapter 1 the aid agency, PLAN International, has a large presence in Ponorogo. They had a central office in the town from which they coordinated a number of projects, especially in the remote highland areas of the regency. Their programs are carried out by numerous small NGOs who live and work in these outlying hamlets and who I was able to contact to get an understanding of very specific circumstances of each hamlet.

²⁰⁹ This is much better than a PLAN survey of the highlands which reported that 36-53% of primary school children, and 36% of pregnant women had enlarged thyroid or symptoms of goitre.

²¹⁰ PT Garam, a state-owned company, supplies half of Indonesia's table salt, but there are also some 25,000 – 30,000 small salt farmers who produce 75% of the country's salt which is used for all purposes. This salt is of poor quality, needs extensive washing to remove impurities, and is not well suited to direct iodisation. While all registered manufacturers are legally bound to iodise salt, many do not. The staple in rural villages is raw salt which is favoured because of its low price and availability. In addition, non-iodised salt, used in fertilizers and fish curing, is frequently diverted to human use (ICCIDD, 2003:3).

close to the cooking fire in open containers so that it can be easily used during cooking; meaning that much of the iodine will evaporate. Although some households have been supplied with airtight containers these have to be unscrewed making them less convenient to use. Because of its low boiling point iodised salt should be added when food has been cooked and is cooling down, but this has also met resistance because the taste of the food is quite different; an important consideration when faced with monotonous diets.

The hamlet of Tumpuk in Badegan has taken a proactive approach to the problem. A voluntary health worker told me that a survey they conducted in 1998 revealed that only 50% of households used iodised salt. After this they had shown kindergarten children how to test for iodine using salt which they brought from home. If the salt tested negative, she said that children would return home and complain to their mother saying that they would not eat food that did not contain iodised salt. This had been a big influence in changing people's pattern of use. The hamlet now had its own supply of iodised salt, pre-tested to ensure that it contained the proper concentration of iodine, which was sold to residents at a reduced price.

After conducting the palpitations we returned to the monthly Posyandu (mother and child services) which was being held in the hamlet head's house. This was well attended, in relative terms (usual attendance is 10-20), with around 30 women and their babies out of the total of 234. Babies were examined, weighed by the health cadre, given a half capsule of iodine, and some were vaccinated for DPT. Each mother was given a plastic bag of mungbean porridge (*bubur kacang hijau*) mixed with coconut milk, and a full capsule of iodine. Although a third of them were underweight, all babies seemed very healthy, except for one which had hydrocephalous. This mother seemed to be around 20, but this was her third child, meaning that she probably married around 14-15. Explanations for the low attendance may be distance or work commitments (the NGO had found that many women work outside the village as housemaids, not only overseas, but in large cities, such as Jakarta or Surabaya.) But the health cadre told me that previously some babies, who had been immunised, had become hot when they returned home. This effect of the immunisation had not been explained to the mother who then drew the conclusion that taking the baby to the

posyandu had been the reason for the baby being sick. She also said that babies usually cried because strangers were uncommon (an experience I often had), but also because of previous injections; strangers being equated with injections.

After the posyandu I spoke to the *bidan*. She said that there were three *bidan* in Karangpatihan because it had a population of around 5,000. The most common childhood illnesses were *muntaper* (short for *muntah perak* = vomiting and diarrhoea), a digestive infection (*infeksi pencernaan*), which was especially common during the rainy season and at the change of seasons, as well as typhoid (*typhus*), chickenpox (*varicella*) and measles (*campak*). She had a supply of antibiotics which she obtained from the government, as well as those she obtained privately, but when hospitalisation was the best solution this was out of the reach of most residents.

The *bidan*'s use of the term '*muntaper*' is an example of how in highland areas illness is more usually described in terms of folk categories or symptoms in comparison to the increasing infiltration of biomedical terminology in the lowlands. *Sarab*, for example, is a folk category which is never heard in the lowlands. Lovric described it in Bali in the early 1980s as encompassing a spectrum of diseases peculiar to newborns and infants, which may include "tropical sprue, a severe form of thrush, infantile beriberi, congenital syphilis, [and] the early signs of neonatal tetanus." (1987:385). Just as Lovric found in Bali, so too in this area of Java people identified different forms of this illness – *sarab Brahma* and *sarab wédang* – one of the cures for which was a white bracelet, said to contain some type of chemical, which could be bought in the market.²¹¹ Another material cure I saw was a small spear said to be made of *besi tawa* (a metal which counteracts poison) which is used to treat bites from scorpions, bees, wasps, and snakes. The healer explained that when the blade was applied to the wound it became wet and drew out the poison. He said that this was a long process, involving repeated applications over many hours. It seems that similar materials have long been used for this purpose. William d'Almeida, in his travels through Java in the mid 19th century, described the use of a polished stone taken from the head of a snake which on application to a snake bite on the foot "adhered so tightly to the flesh, that it was found

²¹¹ Lovric found 108 forms, many said to originate from Java, which were described by different symptoms. In my interview the illness was characterised by fever and difficulty in breathing.

impossible to remove it; and not until the swelling had completely abated, and the foot had resumed its natural size, did the wonderful stone detach itself and fall, leaving the patient free from pain (1864:175-176).”

Obviously the lack of public health infrastructure means a greater reliance on folk practitioners. In the highland hamlet of Sumber, for example, the only vehicle access is actually from Gemaharjo, the first village in the neighbouring regency of Pacitan. The journey involved another bone-jarring drive on a narrow twisting rocky track, during which I often contemplated turning back even though this was impossible because the track itself was not wide enough. (There is another shorter track leading to Slahung in Ponorogo, but this is only wide enough for motorbikes.) When we arrived two young men, Dwi and Dimsey from another NGO working with PLAN, were with a group of women and children practising for a performance they were going to present on International Children’s Day at the Ponorogo *aloon-aloon*. The children had made *wayang rumput* (puppets made from dry grass), and their mothers would accompany them pounding a large rice huller made from the trunk of a tree. Dimsey said that the main illnesses in the hamlet were skin complaints and hair lice, as well as the usual coughs and flu. The main reason for the skin complaints, he explained, was that during the dry season the wells dried up and people had to walk about 3 km to the river and then carry water back in buckets. At the end of the dry season, when even the river had dried up, it was necessary to dig for water with the obvious result that the water was quite muddy. The nearest health services were in Pacitan, but people could not use their health cards there. There were, however, quite a few *dukun*.

We visited a *dukun suwuk*, whom I will call Pak Slamet, who specialised in treating children. He said the most common illnesses were *panas* (fever), *batuk* (cough) *sesak* (difficult breathing), and *gatal-gatal* (itchiness). These were seasonal illnesses caused by the weather, as well as the diet, which was very spicy. He said that people did not eat all that many vegetables, and sometimes only ate *sayur lombok* (chilli cooked as a vegetable) together with *sambal* (a condiment made from ground chillies and salt). He treated children by *sebul* (blowing) while asking for help from God (*nuwun kepada Tuhan yang maha esa*). Pak Slamet told us that the road to the hamlet was built by the residents who, with only one day a week to spare, had taken around ten years to

complete it. Before this the road was extremely precipitous; in places people had to grip on to rocks and negotiate their way around them. With no road to the village, children could not attend school. In those days no one spoke Indonesian and they couldn't go to a doctor. People relied on traditional remedies and they still used these. Electricity had only been installed two years ago.

Ethos in the Highlands

In this environment mutual cooperation is important. Pak Slamet explained how everyone worked together building each other's houses and tilling the fields. If someone was very poor, he said, workmen would return home for lunch. This was to avoid the owner's feeling of shame that he did not have the resources to fulfil the usual custom of providing food for the workers. When I later asked Dimsey about this he said the reason for this ethos of cooperation was that most people in the hamlet were related. He also said that religious Islam was not as strong in the highlands. This was evidenced by a *dukun wiwit*, who still carried out the customary planting and harvesting rituals, which are now unknown in the lowlands.

Mbah Wiwit told us that he conducted rituals for the planting and harvesting of both ordinary rice (*padi*) and sticky rice (*ketan*), and then went on to describe the particular offerings and steps involved. He said that these rituals were performed to drive away spirits (*siluman*) and pests (*hama*) because previously rice crops had been mysteriously destroyed. While the crop appeared healthy, when the husks were opened, they were empty. He also carried out a ritual asking for rain which took the form of a *slawatan* (chanting of Javanese verses praising Muhammad accompanied by drumming). He said that the hamlet followed *adat* Ponorogo (customs of Ponorogo), but instead of *reog* every hamlet had their own *jaranan plok* performance.

„*Jaranan*’ is a wooden horse mask, while „*plok*’ describes the noise of the jaws as they clap together.²¹² There are many forms of *jaranan* performance. Tulus, my research assistant, told me that in Balong, another district of Ponorogo, the performance was

²¹² Masks of this type are also found in the Benanek Dayak of Borneo where they are reputed to represent a mystical ancestor (Jay, 2001:69).

known as *jaranan dor* - ,*dor*' describing the cracking of the large whip (*cambuk*) used by the trance dancer. He said that *jaranan dor* is no longer popular because of the havoc it caused among the audience. Entranced performers became uncontrollable chasing audience members who "offended" them by clapping their hands, whistling, wearing red clothes, or climbing trees. If the offending audience members were caught by the entranced dancer they were either hit, scratched or accosted in some other way. The neighbouring regency of Trenggalek is famous for its elegant *jaranan beling* performance in which the entranced dancer eats glass and *beling* (broken plates), and drinks from the river.

I saw a *jaranan plok* performance in a hamlet near Sumber, which was held to celebrate Indonesian Independence Day on 17 August. The *gambuh* (troupe leader), whom I will call Pak Katno, told me performances were also held at the end of Ramadan (Islamic fasting month) and on Javanese New Year.²¹³ He explained that *jaranan* was also a form of *reog* which originated in the neighbouring regency of Tulungagung where it is known as *reog sintherewe*, or *reog pegon*. He said that *reog singabarong* from Ponorogo is regarded as the highest form.

Before the performance a large table was prepared complete with bowls of cordial and food appropriate for the spirits who would be summoned. This consisted of grass, unhusked rice (*padi*), banana stalks, and raw unpeeled cassava for the wild pig (*babi hutan*; *Jv. celeng*) and the horse (*jaran*); peanuts and coconut for the monkey (*kera*); and perfumed oil (*minyak wangi*) which is inhaled by the dragon (*naga*). Pak Katno then invited the spirits to participate by burning incense and reciting a Javanese mantra. He told me later that the spirits summoned were those that dwelt in the sacred mountains of east and central Java.²¹⁴ Similarly to *reog* the performance began with the gamelan accompaniment and the introductory hobby-horse dancers. After this two young men, their faces painted white, danced with a wild pig leather puppet and the wooden horse mask (*jaranan plok*). As the performance went on the dancers, as well

²¹³ The troupe leader in this area is known as a *gambuh*, a type of *pawang*. Other types are the *pawang ular*, who is able to catch snakes and crocodiles; *pawang hujan* who can call rain; and the *gambuh* who can call and send away spirits.

²¹⁴ This was Mt Limo in Pacitan; Mt Srandil in Ponorogo; and Mt Lawu and Merapi in Central Java.

other young men from the audience, and one of the drummers, went into trance. The entranced subjects acted out the characteristics of their relevant spirit and ate its appropriate food. Kartomi, describing a *jaran képang* performance, known as *èbèg*, in Banyumas, calls this “role enactment hypnosis” (1973:165). Apart from the *gambuh*, as in Kartomi’s description, numerous helpers were also present. Their task was to closely watch the entranced dancers so that they could anticipate and be ready to fulfil their every wish. If they did not do this the dancers would become agitated and angry. One young man, who had been possessed by a dragon spirit, asked members of the audience for the special traditional clove cigarettes (*rokok klobot*) sold in Ponorogo.²¹⁵

The performance lasted for around two hours. The spirits were then asked to leave. In order to do this the dancers were lifted off the ground, their stomach (*ulu hati*) relaxed through massage, and in their ear the *gambuh* asked that the spirit leave the body quietly and slowly so as not to injure the dancer.²¹⁶ In some cases this did not work the first time and had to be done several times. Pak Katno told me that this technique can also be used for healing those who have become possessed for other reasons. The sick person is taken to the performance, and the person who becomes possessed by the monkey is able to ask the troublesome spirit to leave. This, he explained, is because the monkey is the oldest spirit.

Pak Katno said his *ilmu* enabled him to guarantee the safety of his troupe in the process of calling and sending away the spirits. This *ilmu*, however, was very specific in that he could encounter problems with members of other troupes who joined the performance. He explained that one of the men who had taken the role of the monkey could in fact summon the spirits of *reog*. Sending away his spirit was difficult requiring the help of several *gambuh* because the spirits of *reog* were more powerful. Pak Katno had learnt his art from a *guru* (teacher) in the village of Pucanganom in Pacitan. This man had inherited his *ilmu* from his father, who in turn had inherited it from his forebears

²¹⁵ These cigarettes are wrapped in the skin of a corn cob which has been boiled to make it pliable.

²¹⁶ This rubbing of the stomach is similar to the Ngaju Dayak where communication and ultimately union with the deity occurs during a state of possession, when the deity enters the stomach – rather than the head, as is customary in African traditions (Conner, 1993:34).

through many generations. This relationship is interesting in light of the fact that Pucangombo, a neighbouring village in Pacitan, traditionally holds a similar *jaranan* performance to protect the contents of the rice crop which suffered a similar mysterious disappearance to that described by Mbah Wiwit above.



Preparation for jaranan plok performance



Jaranan plok and wild pig dancers in trance



Entranced dancer eating raw rice plants



Gambuh asking the spirit to leave

In Chapter 3 I described Ponorogo as a „somatic culture’ characteristic of people whose livelihood depends on their capacity for physical labour, and Chapter 2 looked at how this ethos is celebrated through the impressive physicality of *reog*. In the highlands this physicality is tempered by a harsh and resource-poor environment. While people acknowledge they are very much a part of Ponorogo by following *adat* Ponorogo, accessibility and environmental similarity to Pacitan make these highland regions a liminal zone blending elements of Ponorogo and the regencies they border. The high profile of *reog*, the resources provided by state sponsorship, and the sheer expense of maintaining a *reog* troupe which is now beyond the means of highlanders, may be factors in the respect it commands. It also expresses the obvious disadvantage highland residents suffer.

For highlanders survival is tied to food security and the constraints of living in small and isolated communities. The limitations of Pak Katno’s *ilmu* in being able to treat only those members of his own troupe is a demonstration of this. In geographically isolated and ecologically fragile environments social harmony is highly valued when relationships with one’s immediate neighbours is the major source of social security. As Arzyana points out conflict avoidance (*rukun*) and respect (*hormat*) for one’s neighbours are two principles which have become deeply embedded in Gunung Sewu communities to help them survive adverse physical conditions (2004:8).

But physical isolation does not mean these highland areas are immune from the processes of social transformation occurring on the lowlands. For the rest of this chapter I will focus on how these processes, deprivation and disadvantage, and the interlinking cultural relationships of the highlands are articulated. My attention was drawn to these issues with a community killing of a couple accused of being sorcerers which occurred quite soon after I arrived in Ponorogo to begin my fieldwork.

Case Study: The Gembes Killings of Suspected Sorcerers

The account I present here was gathered from testimony given at the trial of those accused of the murders, as well as newspaper reports (*Jawa Pos*, 6/01/2002, 7/01/2002a, 7/01/2002b, 10/01/2002, 11/01/2002, 16/01/2002), records of police

interrogation, and interviews with residents of the settlement. In contrast to the pseudonyms I have used in the rest of the thesis I am able to use the real names of those involved in the case.

At 7:00 pm on 4 January, 2002, in a part of the isolated hamlet of Gembes, known as Blok Damplok, in the district of Slahung, Ponorogo, four men gathered at the house of Toiran to fill bottles and plastic bags with a mixture of petrol and kerosene. In the final meeting at 11.00 pm that night they were joined by four more men to complete the planning of the murder of Jaiman and his wife, Dasiyem. Each man was allocated to guard a specific point around Jaiman's house just in case he tried to escape. At midnight they left the house and made their way to Jaiman's house which lay at the entrance to the settlement. By this time the other residents of the hamlet had also gathered and had begun battering the house with stones. Not long after Jaiman and Dasiyem emerged arm in arm. Jaiman shouted at the crowd, "Oh my kin, my family why are you pounding my house with stones, what is my sin? (*Oalah dulur, dulur nyapa omahku kok brondong watu, dosaku apa?*)" at which the gathering replied, "Because you are a sorcerer (*Mergo kowe tukang tenung*)". The couple tried to run, but were pursued by the stone-throwing crowd until they eventually fell. They were then doused with the petrol mixture, the front door of the house was torn off and laid on top of them, and they were burnt alive.

At 1:30 am the village head of Slahung, after receiving a report from the deputy head of the hamlet, reported the murders to the nearest police station. He then accompanied the police to the scene where around 200 people were still gathered. The police did not immediately question anyone, but after a few days of investigation they arrested Subari, Jaiman's younger brother, who was accused of being the ringleader in planning and motivating the murders, and another 9 men, including the 8 who had met at Toiran's house, who were accused of varying levels of involvement in the crime. Their trial began at the Ponorogo Court House on 3 June.

Prior to my fieldwork, while in Australia, I had read newspaper reports of similar killings which had occurred around Banyuwangi between 1998 and 2000, and had written a research essay as part of my master's degree, part of which was published

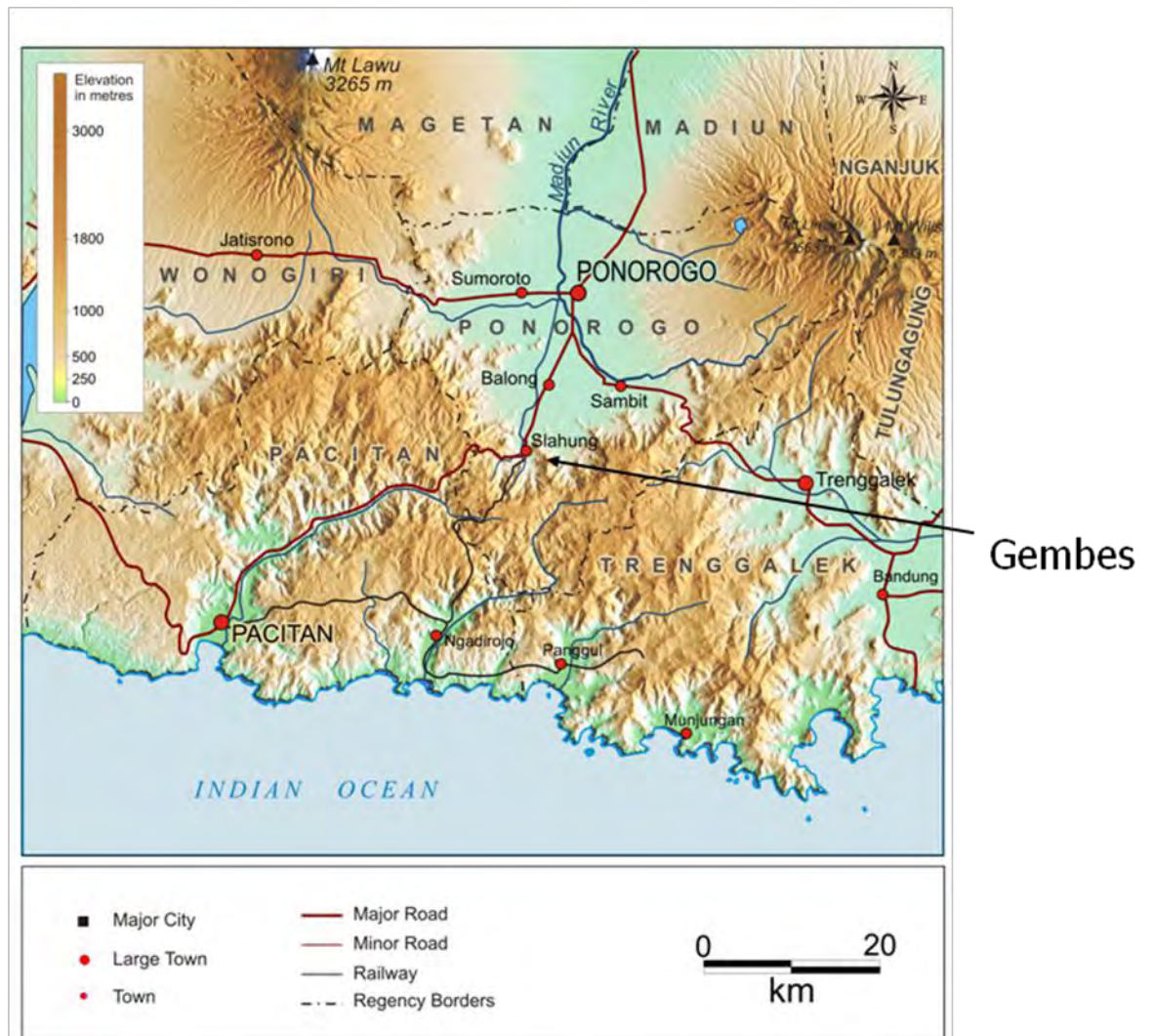
(Campbell & Connor, 2000). When I read reports of this incident I was keen to find out more, but nobody was willing to travel to the area. This was understandable in the circumstances. The people I knew had never been to highland settlements, such as Damplok, and would therefore have no social networks they could call on to accompany us to an area where social tension was obviously high. I then made enquiries at the Ponorogo Court House and spoke to one of the judges who told me when the trial would begin. I attended all of the trial sessions. On the first day Pak S, a member of the Slahung Village Council (the village of which Damplok is a part), approached Tulus, my research assistant, and invited us to visit the settlement. With this trip I was able to talk to residents and Jaiman's family, and see their living conditions and isolation.

At first we took an asphalted side road from the main village of Slahung, which rises and dips steeply, and then made a right turn on to a rough rocky road which winds around the hillside. After following this only a short distance we left the car by the side of the road and walked the rest of the way. Only four-wheel drives, forestry trucks, and motorbikes could negotiate the 1½ kilometre dirt track up the side of the hill which must be impassable in the wet season. Pak S told us that the residents had spent five years of voluntary work (*kerja bakti*) every Sunday to build it. He said that most of the residents were uneducated farm workers who left early in the morning on foot to seek work. From the trial evidence we knew that there were only three motorbikes in the hamlet and the closest stall (*warung*) selling fuel is located at the foot of the hill about 5 kilometres away. During the trial the owner of this stall (*bakul*), from whom one of the accused had bought the petrol and kerosene mixture used in the murder, was asked if she had ever been to the hamlet. "No", she replied, "the place is far away and the road difficult, [it is] remote" (*tempatnya jauh dan jalannya sulit, terpencil*). While there was now a primary level *madrasah* (Islamic day school), education beyond this level required the long trek downhill. We had seen one girl who attended the junior high school in Slahung walking home the previous afternoon when we had visited Pak S to make arrangements for our visit.

On reaching the settlement we passed the remains of Jaiman's house. It is in a strange location - below the road all by itself – with the only access an overgrown path leading

to the side of the house. Pak S told us that the house had always had the appearance of being uncared for and, because of this, was regarded as being *angker* (dangerous, haunted). The house itself was partly burnt and the roof tiles had been smashed in by a large tree which had been felled on top of it (see photos pp. 221-222).

Leaving Jaiman's house I noticed that the other houses, mainly constructed of wood, were very close together. Built on ledges following the contours of the terrain they seemed piled on top of one another. We went to the house of the RT (*kepala rumah tangga* = neighbourhood head), Pak Juri, and met one of the oldest residents, Mbah N. He acknowledged being extremely frightened of Jaiman and said that he had experienced itching (*gatal gatal*) for 3 years after being threatened by him. Evidently Jaiman had wanted to borrow money but, as Mbah N needed the money himself to build his house, he had refused. Mbah N said that he had once been to the Puskesmas but, after using up the medicines he had been given, the rash had reappeared. He told us that it had now cleared up completely, without the help of drugs, since Jaiman had died. Mbah N also cited the case of Jaiman's neighbour, whom he had threatened with *santet* (sorcery) after refusing to attend a *kenduri* that Jaiman wanted to hold for one of his pupils who had been learning *kekebalan bacok* (invulnerability to sharp weapons) from him. The neighbour had been so frightened that he had fled to Malaysia and had not returned.



Location of Gembes



Entrance to Slahung village looking towards highlands and Gembes



Road to Gembes



Entrance to Gembes settlement with Jaiman's house below the road on right



Ruins of Jaiman's house

Mbah N related that even as a child Jaiman had been a bully (*jago*) and egotistical (*sombong*) because his parents were the richest in the area. He had left for Banyuwangi at the time of food shortages (*zaman larang panen*), around 1963, but even this had caused controversy – leaving suddenly without holding the customary *slametan*. [That he was leaving for a long time and going far away is a sign of someone who is seeking *ilmu*.] He returned in 1977 with a wife. Although he had met and married Dasiyem in Banyuwangi, she was also from the area, coming from a hamlet located on the next hill, but nobody knew if she, like Jaiman, had also left to seek a *guru*. Mbah N said that in December 2001 a group of elders (*sepuh*) had gone to Jaiman's house and asked him to leave if he intended to keep practising sorcery. Jaiman had replied that this was not a problem. He could move, but would still be able to kill them all from afar.

Stories of Jaiman's aggressive behaviour were not only voiced by neighbours. His younger sister told us that the day before the killings Jaiman had come to her house and burnt incense (*dupa*) and threatened her with *santet*. She had become ill, short of breath (*sesak nafas*) with pains in her chest and back. She said that she had gone to Jaiman's younger brother, Subari, who is known as a *kyai*, for treatment and had recovered. His sister said that the reason for the threat was that Jaiman had once wanted to borrow a goat. When she refused Jaiman had commented that it was strange she was able to build a house yet could not lend him a goat. She said that no one wanted to lend Jaiman anything because he would never return it and, if asked, would threaten the person with sorcery. She also talked about Jaiman's neighbours, all of whom had been asked to lend him something, and then had died as a result; although in some cases, she admitted, their deaths had not occurred immediately. She told us that Jaiman had also sold one of his mother's rice fields and pocketed the money, and the land on which his house was built was also given to him by his mother. Jaiman had once even threatened his own mother and father with *santet dipring sedapur* (the death of a whole family). His sisters believe that the death of their father in 1992 was the result of Jaiman's sorcery.

The fear that Jaiman engendered also came out during the trial. Sukirman, the vice head of the hamlet and responsible for its safety/security, a position commonly known as *jogoboyo*, testified that he had heard talk that the couple were *dukun santet*. He said that they had a lot of visitors and people complained of various illnesses which they

attributed to Jaiman. When one of the judges asked why people didn't go to the Puskesmas, Sukirman replied that it was five kilometres away. [This question in itself demonstrated the judge's lack of knowledge of the area and the tortuous route in order to get to the nearest health centre.] When Sukirman was asked why he himself had not gone to Jaiman's house to check out the rumours, he replied that he had been afraid. He said that Jaiman had an aggressive manner (*pembawanya galak*) and bragged about his powers so that the villagers were afraid of him and therefore did not approach him much. His appearance was also forbidding with a thick moustache and a beard (*brewok*). He often demonstrated his invulnerability by using knives and swords (*demonstrasi kekebalan bajokan sendiri dengan pedang*) which did not cut his flesh. Another witness said that Jaiman threatened people with words such as, "I wouldn't even need to burn a handful of incense in order to kill you" (*kamu tidak menghabiskan kemenyan satu genggam*). Others also commented on Jaiman's appearance, saying that he gave the impression of being a *dukun santet* because he didn't care how he looked; appearing quite dirty, with a thick beard and moustache.

What lies behind this case is the overarching belief in the power of sorcery which, as discussed in Chapter 4, is pervasive throughout Indonesia – and the inability of the residents to resolve the social conflict which had occurred within the settlement. They had taken what measures they could under local *adat*. Previously I translated *adat* as 'customs', but *adat*, especially in rural areas, encompasses most areas of communal and private life, such as cultural beliefs, rights and responsibilities, customary practices, and social behaviour. As such "*adat* is a way of life, a social system structuring all aspects of life" (Moeliono, 2002:2); a moral community. While it is normally spoken about in relation to villages, *adat* can apply to varying levels of community, such as *adat Ponorogo* or *adat Jawa*. In isolated areas, like Gembes, each settlement has its own *adat*. For suspected sorcerers sanctions are customarily applied on a sliding scale beginning with social negotiation, social isolation, expulsion, and finally violence once all other alternatives are exhausted. *Adat*, however, conflicts with Indonesian national law. In 2002 the Indonesian criminal code was largely a translation of Dutch colonial law. Based on material proof it did not recognise the practice of magic, because there was no possibility of proving such an allegation. On the contrary it punished violence

carried out against suspected sorcerers as cases of summary justice [*main hakim sendiri* = taking the law into your own hands] (see Slaats & Portier, 1993:138-139).

Subari, Jaiman's younger brother, who was arrested as the ringleader of the crime, had actually played on this tension. During the trial it became evident that Subari had a close circle of followers. Two of these, Suyoto, Subari's nephew, and Toiran, had gone to Subari's house on 1 January, three days before the murders, to discuss what should be done with Jaiman. Suyoto's wife was mentally disturbed due, Suyoto believed, to Jaiman's sorcery. He complained to Subari, "What can I do uncle, I have already been everywhere looking [for a way] but have not found anything" (*Lapiye tolik wis tak golekno nyang endi-endi ora opo-opo?*). By this Suyoto meant that he had already visited a number of practitioners seeking a means which would make Jaiman and Dasiyem vulnerable. Subari had thought that one way to stop Jaiman would be to steal some of his clothes so that his magic power could be neutralised (*dilebur ilmu santetnya*), but both Toiran and Suyoto had not been brave enough to do this. When all had failed Toiran, during his cross-examination, reported that the following conversation had taken place:

Subari: "The best thing under the circumstances is that they be killed by a mob (*Dimassa ae*)."

Toiran explained, "was that the couple had to be killed by a lot of people by the method of burning (*maksudnya harus dibunuh rame-rame melibatkan orang banyak dengan cara harus dibakar*)."

Suyoto: "If they are to be killed by a mob let's report it first to the police (*Lek dimassa laporan disik neng Kantor Polisi*)."

Subari: "That's not necessary because all of the community agree (*Wis ora usah, masyarakat kabeh nyetujoni*)."

Toiran: "If this mob killing happens what if there is a problem (*Nek dimassa nek ono opo-opone piye?*)?"

Subari: “If there is a problem come to me, this is my responsibility, I will look after it (*Engko nek enek masalah jujuke lak mesti mreng, iki tanggunganku aku sing cawé-cawé*).”

Toiran: “What day should we do it (*Dinane apa*)?”

Subari: “The best days are Friday night *Legi* or Monday night (*Harinya malam sabtu legi utowo, atau malam selasa*).”²¹⁷

By suggesting that the couple be killed by the community and that there was community agreement Subari is appealing to *adat*. He thought that he and his followers would avoid arrest. Indeed when the nine men were arrested this had caused unrest in the community. In response around 200 people signed a letter which attempted to explain that the murders were necessary as an act of self-defence. This letter, under the stamp of the village head, which is equivalent to the way we would use a statutory declaration, was submitted at the trial. It stated:

Those who have signed below;

With this we say that truly and also without threat from anyone that;

We are all convinced that Jaiman and Dasiyem the victims of the burning on 4-1-2002 in Damplok settlement, Gembes hamlet, Slahung village, Slahung District, Ponorogo Regency were truly “sorcerers” who very much disturbed the community (all of the residents of Damplok) and had already consumed many victims including their worldly goods and lives.

We therefore present this letter with the hope that it will be used as material for [the court’s] consideration.

(*Yang bertanda tangan dibawah ini;*

Dengan ini menyatakan dengan sebenar-benarnya dan tanpa ada paksaan dari siapapun juga bahwa;

Menurut keyakinan kami semua Jaiman dan Dasiyem korban yang di bakar pada tanggal 4-1-2002 di dkh Damplok dsn Gembes Ds. Slahung Kec. Slahung Kab. Ponorogo benar-benar merupakan “Dukun Santet” yang sangat meresahkan masyarakat (Seluruh warga Damplok) dan telah banyak menelan korban baik harta maupun nyawa.

Demikian surat pernyataan bersama ini kami buat dengan harapan dapat dijadikan sebagai bahan pertimbangan.)

The use of thumbprints in the letter revealed that many of the residents were illiterate (see letter scan p.264). Like all official business in Indonesia trials are conducted in Indonesian, the national language. Many of the witnesses, however, could not speak Indonesian and even had difficulty with the Javanese used. My research assistant explained that this was because the language was probably too formal, even though most of it was in low Javanese (*ngoko*), and the questions probably too complex. The RT, Pak Juri, for example, was asked a few times:

Judge: “When Jaiman died were you pleased or not?” (*Bar Jaiman mati sampeyan syukuran apaora?*)

Juri: “There was no *slametan*” (*Mboten syukuran*)

The question, ending in *syukuran*, called for an opinion, but Juri couldn’t understand what the judge meant. *Syukuran* is another word for *slametan* and he therefore answered that there had been no *syukuran*. To get an answer the judge then asked a simpler question:

Judge: “What did the community feel?” (*Masyarakat piye?*)

Juri: “Thanks be to God. Those that were sick before all recovered” (*Alhumdulillah. Tiyang-tiyang sing rumiyen sakit sami mantun*)

²¹⁷ By his question Toiran was asking for Jaiman’s *hari naas* (bad luck day), a day when he was most vulnerable to attack. This may have been Jaiman’s day of birth. As a practitioner and Jaiman’s younger brother, Subari would have known this, hence his answer.

This demonstrates the particular difficulties in trials of this nature, especially if the judges and the prosecution do not know the local conditions. Judges and prosecution lawyers are normally posted throughout Indonesia, spending a few years in each place. In this case, however, none of the prosecution lawyers could speak Javanese, making it very difficult for them to follow the proceedings or to conduct a proper cross-examination; a problem the judges complained about. As they rightly pointed out it was not their role to conduct the case for the prosecution. Although all three judges were Javanese, none were from the area. In fact when I told them about the conditions people in Gembes lived under they found it difficult to believe. Luckily, one judge had been in Ponorogo for quite some time and so was able to ask appropriate questions in order to obtain needed information. The defence lawyers, although local, had probably never been to Gembes, and made nothing of the disadvantage suffered by residents. Another point to take into account is that this trial was held at a time when Indonesia had newly emerged from thirty years of authoritarian rule during which time courts were tightly controlled, thus leaving defence lawyers with very few skills in defending clients.

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| | 21 th | | |
| STRI | 32 th | | |
| TAM | 65 th | | |
| man | 65 th | | |
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| man | 51 th | | |
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| man | 31 th | | |

Portion of signed letter submitted to court vowing that both Jaiman and Dasiyem were sorcerers.

But, what of Jaiman? As we have seen in Chapter 4 sorcery is a secretive practice. Sorcerers do not admit to, let alone openly brag about, their powers, so Jaiman's behaviour is a bit of a mystery. It would seem from all of the above that Jaiman was an extremely disturbed character, exhibiting ever more erratic, anti-social and aggressive behaviour. The explanation for the possible cause of such behaviour came from his youngest daughter, Sujaryani. Jaiman had four daughters and Sujaryani was the only daughter still at home. Luckily she boarded out while attending a high school in Slahung. If she had been at home when the murders were carried out, she would also have died along with her parents. She was an impressive witness during the trial, refuting what others said about Jaiman's excessive demands and threats. She declared that her parents had been defamed (*difitnah*) and that if anyone fell ill it was the accused who would claim that this was because of her father's sorcery, thereby turning

the hamlet against him. She said that her parents were farmers who often helped people. Her father did not use incense, only water, and treated people who had ordinary illnesses, such as headaches (*pusing*) or sore bodies (*sakit-sakit badan*), and not those who were sick due to sorcery (*bukan sakit karena santet*).

When I spoke to her later she expanded on what she had said during the trial. She said that her father had returned to Damplok at the request of Subari in order to look after their aging father. At this time Jaiman had worked as a foreman (*mandur*) in a government agribusiness in Banyuwangi and was about to get a *surat keputusan* (SK) meaning that he would become a permanent public servant. Although government employees are poorly paid this would ensure a regular salary, free health care, and a pension when he retired. When he arrived back in Damplok he had just been left to fend for himself (*diterlantarkan*). He had had to search for a means of support and had eventually established himself as a farmer. Sujaryani said that he had at first lived in a tiny house, had worked hard, and eventually built the house that had been destroyed by the residents. His brother, Subari, was a teacher at the local *madrasah* (Islamic religious school) and still lived in a small house on land that was part of the school. Competition between the two brothers had arisen on several fronts. Both Jaiman and Subari had started their practices as *dukun* in 1994, but Jaiman had many more clients. Jaiman's children were also more successful - Sujaryani at high school, her two sisters working as nurses in Surabaya, and another sister living in a nearby hamlet and having the best house there. Subari's youngest children went to primary school at the *madrasah*, and the oldest went to the Pondok Ngabar *pesantren* in Ponorogo. Sujaryani said that Subari modelled himself as a *kyai*, and felt that his religious knowledge was far superior to Jaiman's.

Evidently this long-running rivalry had come to a head when there had been a dispute between her father and Subari about a *wayang lakon* (scene from a shadow puppet performance) for the marriage of one of her sisters in September, 2000. The story included a fight between members of a family and Subari had protested that this was inappropriate. Jaiman had refused to change the scene and had told Subari that he could hold another *wayang* performance at his own house if he wished. After this incident

Sujaryani said, “they had never wanted anything to do with each other again (*tidak saling menyapa*)”.

Sujaryani said that, although her father had been born there and had returned in 1978, he was still very much regarded as a newcomer. She said that having sought *ilmu* in various places, such as Malang and Lampung, as well as Banyuwangi, he had lived in cities and therefore had a wider knowledge of the world. Her mother had also come from the area, but had gone to Banyuwangi with her parents as part of a transmigration program, and they had met there. I asked her if people in the settlement ever consulted a doctor. She replied that this would happen only when the situation was critical. She said that her father had once treated a woman who was late in giving birth and, when he had recommended that she go to a doctor, she said people in the settlement had called him “*sombong*” (stuck up), saying that this was not appropriate for *orang desa* (villagers) like them. Jaiman’s erratic behaviour seemed then to stem from the fact that he was once again stuck where he had been born, having given up a good job to come back at the insistence of his brother with whom an increasing animosity had arisen. Finding work in Java is difficult enough and being much older he knew he couldn’t leave again. Knowing the rumours about him may explain Jaiman’s attempts at demonstrating his powers of invulnerability, feeling that people would be too intimidated to take action against him.

In view of the inability of the community to resolve the dispute I decided to visit the nearest police station to find out how they dealt with problems of this nature. At the Slahung police station, which first received information of the killings, we were told that none of the investigation had been carried out there; that it was immediately transferred to the main police station in Ponorogo (Polres Ponorogo). In spite of the fact that many people (from neighbouring settlements in the highlands, Pak S from the village council, and the local NU leader) told us the problem with Jaiman had a long history, the police we spoke to said that they had not heard any talk of Jaiman. When I asked them how they generally handled the issue of sorcery, they said, because it was not possible to prove that a person was in fact a sorcerer, they could only take preventive measures to avoid any problems. They said that people in the highlands would connect any illness, even if it had occurred a long time ago, with someone that

they suspected of sorcery. People could also suspect a person who was usually regarded as a healer, thinking that if they could heal they could also harm. When we asked if there had been any previous reports of *dukun santet*, one of the plain clothes policemen told us they had heard complaints about a man from Senepo, which is higher up the hillside than Gembes, at roughly the same time as the incidents in Banyuwangi. He said that, because people had obviously heard about the events in Banyuwangi, the police were afraid that this may motivate similar community action, and so they had approached the family concerned. After discussing the matter, they had decided that the suspected sorcerer should move to Sumatra and live with relatives there. The police had bought the man a bus ticket and had accompanied him to the bus agent, waiting until he had caught the bus. Unfortunately, he had returned a few months later and had died soon after.

Witnesses in the Gembes case referred to this previous incident, citing it as an example of police failure, which left them no option but to take matters into their own hands. It would seem strange then that the police knew nothing of Jaiman, but my research assistant said they had acted in the previous incident because it happened at the time of the Banyuwangi killings. Now the situation had cooled down, the police may have thought there was no longer an issue and would therefore not take any complaints seriously.

The Banyuwangi Incidents

Remote, marginal and uncivilised areas are held to be inhabited by dangerous or untamed spirits. Kalimantan, for example, with its jungle and Dyak tribesmen is thought to be among the most dangerous and potent regions in Indonesia. Two areas in Java renowned for the power of their sorcery are Banten and Banyuwangi. Sorcerer killings do occur in Banyuwangi, but in the last months of 1998 the number of victims increased dramatically. With attacks rapidly spreading to other areas in the Eastern Salient they became a subject of national debate and controversy; receiving extensive national press coverage and even making the international news (Liebhold, 1998; *The*

Economist (US), 31/10/1998; *World Press Review*, 21/01/1998).²¹⁸ This notoriety stemmed from the fact that some of the attacks reportedly involved groups of mysterious black-garbed and masked assassins, known as “ninjas”, and that they targeted not only suspected sorcerers, but also those with Islamic affiliations, such as *kyai*, *guru ngaji*, and members of competing political parties. That they occurred at a time of momentous political change in Indonesia led to speculation that the attacks were planned to cause instability; a common strategy employed by the previous New Order when it was under political threat. The overwhelming majority, however, involved attacks by community members against suspected sorcerers who were thought to have caused death or illness to those in their immediate environment.

Understanding why Banyuwangi has such a reputation for sorcery is not clear. Various *paranormal* I interviewed in Ponorogo explained that the actual source of sorcery was in fact Banten in West Java, and that it was especially potent from Banyuwangi because sorcery always sought its roots. From the easternmost point in Java it would therefore need to travel with more force to return to its source. This was why sorcery from areas west of Ponorogo would be ineffective.

Banyuwangi is home to the ethnic Osing who, although they consider themselves to be Javanese, are defined by their performing arts, which are strongly influenced by Bali, and their own dialect, *Jawa Osing*. With Bali only three miles away across the strait the Eastern Salient, or Blambangan as it was known, became a cultural frontier; a place of refuge for Majapahit’s fleeing nobles and literati when the empire fell to Muslim forces in the early 16th century. Blambangan remained a functioning Hindu state until 1768 when the Dutch, in an attempt to unify Java and cut off Balinese influence, obliged its rulers to embrace Islam. A series of bloody sieges and battles ensued resulting in the decimation of the population (Beatty, 1999:12-18).²¹⁹ Many of those who remained fled to Bali. The name Osing, derived from the word for ‘no’ in the local dialect, is said to

²¹⁸ According to the Dept of Defence 235 people died, but they do not give a timeframe for these statistics (Departemen Pertahanan, n.d). According to research carried out by NU 122 people died between August and the end of October, 1998. This is in comparison to 40 murders in the previous five years, from 1993 to July, 1998 (LAKPESDAM, 1999:14).

²¹⁹ An estimated population of 80-100,000 fell to 5-8,000 (Kumar, 1997:207).

originate from those who did not seek refuge in Bali (Saputra, 2001:261).²²⁰ To restore the labour supply the Dutch encouraged migrants to the area resulting in influxes of Chinese and Arab traders, Javanese, Mandarese and Bugis fishermen, and especially Madurese; so much so that today speakers of the Banyuwangi dialect only comprise around 50% of the population (in Beatty, 1999:17). According to a local cultural specialist (*budayawan*), consulted at the time of the attacks, *santet* was a power that all *Osing* possessed by virtue of their heritage and, in contrast to the rest of Java, *dukun* would tell their patient who was responsible for their illness; a practice which gradually led to feelings of mutual suspicion in the Banyuwangi community (LAKPESDAM, 1999:7-9).²²¹

The reason why the issue of sorcery became so explosive at this particular time awaits detailed research. James Siegel travelled to East Java at the end of 1999 when attacks, although much reduced, were still continuing. The people he interviewed and the accounts they gave bear striking similarities to newspaper reports of the time, and to what occurred in Gembes. Muki in South Malang, for example, seemed to engender the same fear as Jaiman. “[O]ne man said, ‘If he [Muki] wanted to borrow money from you and you didn’t give him any, he got angry’ – the implication being that one then fell ill.” This man’s brother was being held for trial and he was outraged because he felt “his brother was quite justified in killing a sorcerer since the man was a murderer”. Muki, it seems, had been a healer because one “woman said that at first she was grateful” because the large pills Muki gave her made her better. “But as time went on, she did not recover [and] ,many others got sick and they stayed ill and were killed’.” She had been sick for two and a half years. Even the doctor had said her illness “came from outside” and “was not the kind of illness he could cure” ... When Pak Muki was killed, she got well ... a young man broke in to say that if sorcerers did not use their

²²⁰ Although the exact origin of the dialect is still disputed, according to Stoppelaar the word *,using*’ is derived from *sing* or *hing* meaning ‘no’ (in Wirata, 1995:12), while Saputra states that ‘no’ is variously *sing*, *using*, *osing*, or *hing* (2001:261).

²²¹ That *santet* was an innate ability is also supported by Saputra who quotes the slogan “[one] isn’t an *Osing* if [one] can’t practise *santet* (*bukan orang Using kalau tidak dapat nyantet*). Evidently *santet*, meaning *pengasih* (love), originated as a love spell to either bind or separate a couple, but during the 1950s its meaning became conflated with that of sorcery (*sihir*) (2001:262-263).

knowledge it would attack them” (Siegel, 2006:111-112). This latter understanding is commonly stated in Ponorogo.

Many of those killed, however, were not healers. They were ordinary villagers, but, in the extensive press coverage of the time, fellow villagers seemed able to point to some history, some dispute or misbehaviour that made these victims suspect.

In seeking to explain what occurred Siegel turns to the history of the New Order regime which based its legitimacy on the two pillars of economic development and the maintenance of order. To achieve the latter there was the proliferation of bureaucratic surveillance on a micro level with the issuing of national identity cards, letters of identification and permits to do almost everything. There was also the introduction of the SARA (*Suku*: ethnic group; *Agama*: religion; *Ras*: race; *Antar Golongan*: inter-group) policy, ostensibly to diffuse community violence, and the reorganisation of local security which sought “to eliminate and discipline”, what Barker terms, “representatives of territorial power” (1998:8). Both political and criminal threats were dealt with ruthlessly. Violence, therefore, became the preserve of the state. In addition, Siegel points to the use of kinship terms, such as *Bu* (mother) used interchangeably for ‘Mrs’ and *Pak* (Father) used similarly for ‘Mr’, as an attempt to conflate the public and private realms in order “to bolster the authority of nationalism and weaken that of traditional kinship structures by displacing the authority of the latter from the family and from ethnic unities to the nation (2006:158).”

Siegel, therefore, concludes that contrary to “the usual European notion of totalitarianism” where “to be seen by the state is to be vulnerable”, in the Indonesian experience the state became “at once the chief source of murder and also the means of granting not merely immunity but innocence to its citizens. ...The perceived ending of state surveillance” with the fall of the New Order, and the severing of the local from the national, “thus produced suspicion.” This, combined with “a hierarchical tradition”, meant that in the absence of authority peasants “assumed they were seen by another power” which had “to be formulated within the immediate context.” The “unrecognizable face of malevolence”, replacing communists and criminals, became the witch, and witch hunts “a conservative movement, in that they wanted to put back

into place an order feared to be vanishing” (Siegel, 2006:159-161). He does concede, however, that “the fusion of Javanese and national hierarchies is central” to his analysis, and “one would need to take account of other conditions where other kinds of violence broke out” (2006:248n). His “geographical” limitation, however, is narrowed further by the fact that, although widespread witch hunts did occur in East Java, they did not occur in all parts of East Java, and to a much lesser extent in West and Central Java; the latter, of course, the very home of Javanese hierarchical culture.

In the Ponorogo regency there were no witch hunts, although one *kyai* told me that many had visited him at the time afraid for their safety in the event that the attacks should spread there. Clearly not being seen by the state did not represent a rift in the natural order in the isolated and neglected outpost of Gembes, but the consequences which might ensue from the murders was a matter for consideration. During the time Banyuwangi was such a focus of national attention there was no mention of punishment of those involved. In fact police themselves faced a dilemma. If they acted to catch suspects there were likely to be demonstrations to release them, or, if residents handed over suspects who were later released, or held potential victims in protective custody, police stations were burnt to the ground.

The Concept of Massa and the Gembes Killings

In this respect Siegel makes a point which is relevant to the Gembes killings. During the New Order violence was increasingly attributed to the *massa* (mob), as opposed to the *rakyat* (people), to justify the regime’s actions in enforcing security. *Massa* has the connotation of a leaderless and senseless mob of “decomposed people”, while *rakyat* is “„the people’ under the leadership of the educated”. The *massa* is open to political manipulation, which may partly explain the reports of ninjas or outside provocateurs.²²² That responsibility for the murders was taken in the name of the *massa*, Siegel conjectures, is a political statement. In the absence of the state the mob in effect became

²²² „*Massa*’, derived from the Dutch-German *masse(n)*, when first introduced into the Indies meant “the Marxist idea of the masses”. It competed with *rakyat* which meant “something populist and un-Marxist, and sometimes even „the nation””. In the 1950s *or-mas* (*organisasi massa* = mass organisation) were used by political parties to win elections. In the 1970s came *massa mengambang* (floating masses), “deliberately „not organized’ masses ... left to float” gradually becoming an “unorganized, floating, menacing mob (Siegel, 2006:247n). The term “ninja” first gained currency in East Timor where groups of unidentified and masked men burst into houses to kidnap, threaten and murder locals (Anderson in Barker, 1998:41).

analogous to the witch, not an instrument of violence but possessed by violence, in order to counteract the witch's possession by lethal spirits (2006:134-135). This decomposition of the people transforms the *massa*, stripping them of their social identity and denying the validity of "neighbor" (2006:147). From the murder reenactment and the trial evidence the murders of Jaiman and Dasiyem in Gembes were well planned. This insight by Siegel is instructive in light of the conversation which took place before the murders (see above) when Subari, with the words, "*Dimassa ae*", urged the involvement of the *massa*. Siegel also makes the point that "the people' or *rakyat* are always spoken for by their leaders" (2006:143). Subari, as a former Golkar representative, would have been very familiar with methods of manipulation.²²³ By involving the *massa* and not the *rakyat*, and not himself attending the murders, Subari was hoping to avoid any responsibility; even though he assured his followers to the contrary. Jaiman's appeal to the crowd as *„dulur*' (kin, family) was an attempt to subvert the *massa*, to reinstate social relationships. Subari, however, because of his manipulation of events and their similarity to what had occurred in Banyuwangi, came in for particular criticism. I have translated the words of one judge contained in his final summation:

"[The court] considers that the massa phenomenon is a tussle which always involves petty self-interest, although the conflict itself is couched in the name of the interests of the people (rakyat). Murder should not be something proper (kewajaran), yet murder in many places and also in Gembes, has become something proper, in fact even more seriously, it has become an heroic ethos. In this respect Subari, as a teacher of religion, community leader, and in this case as a hero who enveloped

²²³ Golkar (*golongan karya* = functional groups) is not considered a political party, although it was in effect the party of the New Order government. During the New Order's period of power all government employees and village officials were obliged to vote for Golkar. One government employee explained how public servants were given a special card at election time which enabled them to vote at several polling places. At many polling places only Golkar officials were present and any left-over voting cards would be punched (*ngeblos*) by the committee for Golkar. At the village level Golkar officials would 'demonstrate' the correct way to vote which involved villagers punching the picture of Golkar on the voting card. This was especially relevant for people who were illiterate. In this way a Golkar official was well versed in manipulation.

his hatred of his older brother in saving villagers from the evil influence of sorcery must bear responsibility for all that occurred."²²⁴

The accused were found guilty according to National law. Under the new regional autonomy laws which had come into force on 1 January, 2001, the prosecution lawyers were now able to determine a suitable sentence. Not confident of the situation they preferred to follow the previous practice of referring the case to the provincial capital in Surabaya. Subari and the original four men who had met in Toiran's house were sentenced to 5 years in prison. This sentence illustrates the influence of the Banyuwangi killings where some 40 people had in fact been tried and convicted; each receiving the same sentence of 5 years in prison (Departemen Pertahanan, n.d.). Apart from the sentences, the incidents in Banyuwangi were influential as a model for the killings in Gembes. The fact that Jaiman and Dasiyem had lived for many years in Banyuwangi was an important factor in the credibility of his sorcery powers.

In fact the events in Banyuwangi have resonated up to the highest levels, even influencing changes to Indonesia's penal code.²²⁵ They have also been significant in the transformation that has occurred in the services of folk practitioners in the Ponorogo lowlands; such as the change of name from *dukun* to *paranormal* and the sensitivity around matters dealing with sorcery. However, during the trial it became obvious that the practitioners residents consulted to neutralise Jaiman's power were located in Pacitan. This seems hardly surprising in view of the easier access to that regency by Ponorogo highlanders, and the social relationships which I have discussed earlier in the chapter. An examination of sorcery practices in Pacitan provides a further contextual understanding of the Gembes killings.

²²⁴ The comments about Subari are a summary. The judge in fact pointed out the parallels between Subari and "the crisis of leadership" in Indonesia today where leaders were opportunistic, but still commanded the blind loyalty of their followers.

²²⁵ The Indonesian Dept of Justice and Human Rights has since conducted a comprehensive review of criminal law statutes to make them more applicable to contemporary Indonesia. There are now 2 new statutes which were drawn up largely in response to the Banyuwangi attacks. Article 293 (1) states, "Any person who states they have supernatural powers notifies gives rise to expectations offers or provides a service to another person on the grounds that they can cause illness death mental or physical suffering of a person will attract a maximum sentence of five years gaol or a maximum fine under category IV.", and (2), "Any person who carries out the activities intended in verse (1) in order to gain financially or engages in it as their main means of support or habit the sentence will be increased by a third." (Depkumham, 2004)

Sorcery in Pacitan

Many practitioners and others I spoke to in Ponorogo had also noted that, apart from Banten and Banyuwangi, Pacitan was also known for its sorcery. Pacitan, however, had a more ethical reputation. In contrast to the first two areas which were blatantly commercial, *dukun* in Pacitan were reputed to only practise sorcery if there was a very good reason for doing so. The fact that it is closer to Ponorogo may explain its more favourable reputation.²²⁶

The chronicles of Pacitan have much in common with Ponorogo. They narrate that at the time of the fall of Majapahit Pacitan was a part of Wengker and its leader, Ki Ageng Buwana Keling, a man of great *sakti*, a committed Hindu and descendant of Majapahit, refused to convert to Islam and engaged in a prolonged battle with the emissaries of Demak and the army of Ponorogo's Bathara Katong. Buwana Keling was only defeated by magical means by one of these emissaries, Ki Ageng Petung, who reputedly cut his body into three parts and buried each part in a different location, separated by a river, to prevent him coming back to life (Adam, 1938b:292). Pacitan's reputation for magic and its close relationship with Ponorogo continued through the founding of the prestigious *pesantren* of Tremas by 'Abd al-Mannan Dipomenggolo in 1830. Mannan, a pupil of Kyai Kasan Besari at Tegalsari (see Chapter 2), came to Besari's attention one night as he was making his nightly rounds and noticed a bright light emanating from one of the *santri* sleeping in front of the mosque. With this obvious sign of God the *kyai* intensified his tutelage of the young student.

The 1755 Treaty of Giyanti, which divided central Java between its two main courts, the Dutch East India Company placed Pacitan under the administration of Yogyakarta, while Ponorogo was placed under that of Surakarta. This administrative arrangement no doubt reinforced Pacitan's similarities to the Sultanate of Yogyakarta and its Gunung Sewu regions with their sacred meditation caves, their distinctively Javanist variant of Islam, and their particular relationship with Nyai Loro Kidul, the spirit queen of the Southern Ocean.

²²⁶ My comment in this regard is purely speculative, and relates to the inverse relationship in Java between distance and potency.

Topographically, the highest density of karst hills occurs in Pacitan, where it averages 30 hills per square kilometre (Bartstra in Simanjuntak, 2004:11). The remaining 15% of the regency is the thin coastal strip bordering the ocean. Although it boasts a large harbour, Raffles' description still holds, "its exposure to the open ocean, the consequent high swell or surf which breaks on it, and its general want of good anchorage, [means it] is seldom visited by shipping" (Raffles, 1830:12).²²⁷ Pigeaud's classification of the southern coastal regions extended to Blambangan in the east; the cultural similarities, he proposed, were maintained through paths and roads.²²⁸ Some slim support for this relationship comes from the character Tawang Alun, a former ruler of Blambangan, who appears as a clown in a *wayang beber* story (in Adam, 1938b:293-294), and the curiously named Mt Wilis on the eastern border of Ponorogo.²²⁹ The southern mountain regions, similarly to Banyuwangi, also abound with stories of fleeing Majapahit dignitaries who sought refuge in the southern mountains and founded villages which still bear their names (see, e.g. Putranto, 2003).²³⁰

There are two main roads to the regency. The road from Ponorogo, twisting tortuously around the mountains, was almost constantly closed by landslides. During my fieldwork this was in the process of being extensively upgraded by the provincial government. The other road to Yogyakarta had just been completed and was, therefore, in much better condition. This situation seems certain to improve now that Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, who was born in Pacitan, is Indonesia's president. I really liked

²²⁷ We do know that Pacitan was used as a port in the nineteenth century for government-contracted salt and coffee ships as part of the Cultivation system (Rush, 1990:78).

²²⁸ Pigeaud thought that in ancient times there must have been roads and paths along the south coast linking Gunung Kidul, Wonogiri, Pacitan, Ponorogo, Trenggalek, Tulungagung, Lodaya, South Malang, Lumajang and Puger (in Adam, 1938b:294). No road is mentioned by Schrieke as existing in the 17th century (1959:109), but the very nature of the terrain would mean it was more likely traversed on foot.

²²⁹ *Wayang beber* (*beber* = unrolling) uses scenes painted on scrolls of bark paper which are unrolled as the story progresses. The art form only survives in Pacitan where the scrolls were reputedly given to an ancestor in the 15th century by a Majapahit king in gratitude for the healing of his daughter. I say that Mt Wilis is curiously named because there seems to be no story about it; unusual in an area where practically every hamlet has a story of its founding. Wong Agung Wilis, however, was a prominent figure in Blambangan. The half brother of the last Blambangan prince he enlisted Balinese support to rebel against the Dutch when they blockaded the straits of Bali in 1767 (Beatty, 1999:14).

²³⁰ One particularly interesting story concerns Betoro Katong, the man credited with Islamising Wengker (see Chapter 2). In contrast the hamlet of Betoro Kidul in Gunung Kidul was reputedly founded by Betoro Katong, a direct descendent of Brawijaya V, who fled from the Islamic forces and eventually dematerialised (*moksa*) there, still a Hindu (Putranto, 2003:228).

Pacitan. Blessed with the wide sandy beaches filled with rockpools so reminiscent of Sydney, it felt like the closest thing to home. Fortunately, Tulus, my research assistant, had lived for a time there so he had lots of contacts. In Ponorogo we had also been given some names of practitioners who treated problems resulting from sorcery.

Practitioners here, at least the ones we visited, differed from those in Ponorogo. They were much more guarded and secretive, and the classic plaque, *Bismillah al rahman al rahim* (In the name of God, most Gracious, most Compassionate) rendered in Islamic calligraphy, which is prominently displayed in the homes of most practitioners in Ponorogo, was missing altogether in Pacitan.²³¹ We met one practitioner, whom I will call Mbah Harto, who specialised in sorcery resulting from village head elections. These elections attract large wagers and often candidates have their own *dukun* to protect them. Mbah Harto explained that when candidates lose they may seek revenge. Because the winning candidate, through his *dukun*, is usually invulnerable to attack, the sorcery strikes a member of the winner's family. It is these victims who make up Mbah Harto's client base. Signs of sorcery included an itchy rash which was scratched until the victim's hair fell out; insanity; extreme weakness which confined the victim to their bed; and the usual enlarged stomach. He was able to cure these afflictions, but the patient had to promise that they would not seek the perpetrator of the problem because Mbah Harto himself may then become a victim of sorcery. This had once occurred and now he was very careful that his identity be protected.

Another practitioner we met, whom I will call Pak Parno, said that the most common problems he treated arose from land disputes, inheritance, and business competition. In the case of the latter he gave the example of a new *warung* in Solo where freshly cooked rice and meat had immediately gone off when placed in its containers for sale. Another case involved several truckloads of watermelon which went bad as soon as they were unloaded.²³² Pak Parno said that clients from Ponorogo most often consulted

²³¹ Of course this is a generalisation drawn from the practitioners I interviewed, and the particular nature of their practice. Pacitan contains a number of prestigious *pesantren* and, therefore, obviously a number of learned *kyai*.

²³² As an example of the animosity generated by business competition an article in the Yogyakarta paper, *Kedaulatan Rakyat*, reported the story of Mrs Wak, a street peddler, who, on learning from a *dukun* that her neighbour was responsible for her lack of customers, attacked the neighbour viciously scratching her face and loosening several teeth (28/04/2002).

him for problems arising from land inheritance and work disputes. Yet another practitioner told us he was a teacher of *ilmu kejawen* specifically directed at protecting oneself from all types of illness resulting from sorcery. He said that he had many students from the mountainous regions of Ngrayun, Slahung, Sooko, and Pulung in Ponorogo.

All of these examples are similar to the practices of sorcery discussed in Chapter 4. They illustrate the usually reported understanding of sorcery as arising from personal relationships and its increasing spatial distribution with greater mobility, wider social networks, and economic competition, as well as the fact that one seeks a sorcerer, or seeks to treat its effects, outside of one's immediate environment. It is also no surprise that secrecy surrounds their practice. As in previous literature no practitioner would ever admit to practising sorcery, although the fact they could treat its effects meant that they had the capacity to do so. In this sense it articulates with Javanese concepts of power where potency lies in concealment (see Chapter 2).

Naturally, the Gembes case was a topic of lively discussion in Pacitan. This was the reason we had enquired about the practise of sorcery. In our interviews we obtained examples of what people in Ponorogo had described as the more ethical use of sorcery in Pacitan. These examples involved three corrupt district officials who had died in the 1990s. One involved a property dispute, and the other two the sale of land for which certificates had never been issued. In all of these cases the deceptive officials who had promised successful outcomes, even receiving bribes to ensure this, had not delivered on their promise. It was rumoured that the deceived parties had then combined, engaging sorcerers from a particular village in Pacitan. There was general agreement that it was only fitting that the officials should die as a result of their trickery. We were, however, also told of three cases, to which I will now turn, where suspected sorcerers were killed by their neighbours in the 1980s.

Community Sorcerer Killing in Highland Pacitan

The three killings of suspected sorcerers occurred in mountain hamlets. Visiting one of these hamlets we spoke to a man who talked about a murder which had taken place in 1983. The problem concerned one man, whom I will call Pak Parman, who was born in

the hamlet. The problem with Pak Parman, our informant told us, was that he was crazy about being respected (*gila terhormat*) to the point that it had become an obsession. If, for example, he was invited to a wedding and was not given the proper attention, he would afterwards cause trouble. Although he tried to blend in and be friendly, he could not maintain this for long and was very easily offended. If someone pruned trees that fell on his property, he would complain, or if his chickens went into another person's yard and were shooed away with stones, he would be angry. In this way he always ended up causing trouble with people. People who had problems with Pak Parman got sick, suffering all kinds of complaints, such as stomach upsets and headaches. When they went to a local *dukun* for treatment, the *dukun* would say that the illness was the result of sorcery, and then ask the patient if they had recently had problems with anyone. This was not the pronouncement of just one *dukun*, but of many. Inevitably, the cause would then fall at the feet of Pak Parman. This made the residents anxious, and they tried for three years to resolve the problem. They held a *reog* performance with this end in mind, and carried out various community rituals, but all to no avail. Eventually, the men of the hamlet devised a plan to kill Pak Parman. They asked him to take part in a community work project on an isolated mountain top. During a rest break, when they were all sitting together, one man approached Pak Parman from behind and wound a rope around his neck. They then pulled him to the nearest tree where they hanged him, buried his body on the mountain top, and returned home. When his wife asked where he was they all pretended to search for him.

Eventually though, through gossip, the police heard of the incident and came to the hamlet. Everyone in the hamlet confessed, the grave was opened and the corpse autopsied, and then reburied in the local cemetery. Even though, by this time, the body had been in the ground for 100 days, it was still in good condition and had not started to decay (a sign that this was indeed a man who possessed powerful *ilmu*). The police and village officials decided to take just one man from each household, a total of 36, to stand trial in Pacitan. The men were each sentenced to 6 years in prison. Although this sentence was a burden for the hamlet because it meant the women then had to work the fields, our informant told us there had been positive consequences. The hamlet is still rather isolated, but in response to the killing the regency government built a road which

made the town of Pacitan marginally more accessible, and enabled children to attend school and residents to access medical facilities.

Sorcery and Transformation

Apart from the reversal of the normative practice of sorcery where sorcerers do not operate or harm those within their immediate environment, this community killing, which occurred in highland Pacitan 19 years before, shares similarities with the killings in Gembes. Mary Douglas' structural approach where sorcery accusations "are a means of exerting control where practical forms of control are difficult" (in Kapstein, 2002:95) seems applicable here.²³³ In both of these communities the breaching of the highland ethos of conflict avoidance (*rukun*) and respect (*hormat*) manifested spatially and somatically on the body of the community. Inability to resolve conflict led to the death of the aberrant personality, and the re-establishment of order. While expulsion from the community is preferred, isolation and lack of mobility make exile a less feasible option. This was evident in the unsuccessful efforts of police to relocate a suspected sorcerer prior to the Gembes killings, even though this man had relatives in Sumatra.

On my travels throughout the Gunung Sewu highlands in both Pacitan and Ponorogo narratives of sorcery were very common, so the infrequency of killings attests to the usual effectiveness of conflict resolution procedures. An example of this came from another highland hamlet in Pacitan where a suspected sorcerer had left before being attacked by residents. This had occurred nine months before the Gembes killings. The village, hamlet, and neighbourhood heads had spoken to the man and he had signed an official letter in which he vowed not to repeat any actions that would harm (*merugikan*) his neighbours, or threaten, use or say anything that would offend (*menyinggung*) the feelings of another person. This undertaking had enabled him to return to his home without any further problems. In the Pacitan killing, Pak Parman had been unable to modify his behaviour and the residents had carried out numerous community rituals, but had failed to restore harmony. The proof of Pak Parman's powerful *ilmu* in the lack

²³³ I owe this reference to Mary Douglas' work to Helen Kapstein's (2002) detailed analysis of a dramatic increase in witch killings which occurred in rural areas of South Africa's Northern Province during "the emotional transition" from apartheid; a regime, like that of the New Order, characterised by extreme state-sponsored violence and repression.

of decomposition of the body clarified and verified that he was indeed a sorcerer, thus assuring the residents that they had taken the proper recourse to restore the community's wellbeing. In the case of Gembes fratricidal conflict occurred in the most influential family in the hamlet. While Pak Sukirman, the vice hamlet head, testified during the trial that he had not intervened because he was afraid of Jaiman, the social position of the two disputants would have been an element in his reluctance to get involved. Subari, as both an acknowledged *kyai* and a political leader, would normally be expected to take part in resolving disputes, but he had a vested interest in the outcome, and Jaiman had reacted aggressively to the deputation of elders who asked him to leave the hamlet. The perceived failure of the police to resolve the problem of a previous sorcerer seemed to leave the residents no option.

There are therefore strong reasons why dispute resolution failed in the Pacitan and Gembes killings. As Renan reminds us violence is an inherent part of all political formations be they vertically or laterally imposed (in Kapstein, 2002:91-92). So while Siegel contends that witch hunts are “a conservative movement”, it is important to note that the order they “put back into place” (2006:161) also encompasses change. As our informant told us the Pacitan killing had resulted in action by the regency government in the building of a road which had enabled children to attend school and residents to access medical services.²³⁴ He also told us that, while serving their sentences in the town of Pacitan, the men had been given work and had established longlasting relationships with the prison guards, thus gaining both an economic benefit as well as widening their social networks.

It is, however, in the Gembes killings that this change becomes most apparent in its articulation with religious change in the rest of Java. In Javanese families respect is accorded to age. This is learnt from the time one speaks in the terms of address for younger and older siblings – *mas* (from *kangmas*) for an older brother, *mbak* (from *mbakyu*) for an older sister, and *dhi* (from *adhi*) for younger siblings. This hierarchical classification is extended bilaterally to one's parents' siblings, and their children, who

²³⁴ The Gembes killings provoked a similar reaction. The head of the local health department phoned one of the judges after the verdict with the promise of more accessible health services, but as of 2008 these had not materialised.

are divided into senior and junior categories, so that an aunt who is an older sibling of a parent is addressed as *bu dhé* (from *gedhé* (great) = older mother), while a younger sibling is addressed as *bu lik* (from *cilik* (small) = younger mother). Respect may explain why Jaiman accepted his younger brother's request to return to the hamlet, thinking that he would take over as head of the family once his father had died. Respect and status had been paramount in the rivalry between the two brothers.²³⁵ Rivalry was also a feature in the competing models of their healing practices.

Pak Min (a pseudonym), the head of the local branch of NU in Slahung, whom we met after the Gembes verdict had been handed down, told us that he had known about the problems between Subari and Jaiman for a long time and there had long been competition between the two brothers. Subari had switched his political allegiance from Golkar to PKB after the fall of Suharto.²³⁶ According to Pak Min both Subari and Jaiman had large egos. If Subari promised his followers protection (produced through mystical means), Jaiman would often disturb this by proving he could still cause harm so that belief in Subari was diminished. Although Subari had a larger following, every time someone was about to hold a ceremony they would always visit Jaiman to ask that the ceremony go smoothly because they were afraid that, if they didn't, then something untoward might happen. Pak Min said that Jaiman would often show off his powers of invulnerability. If he saw someone cutting grass, he would take their knife and try cutting his body to display how they could not hurt him. Jaiman, he said, "disturbed Subari's world and his followers".

Subari's switch to PKB, the party of the former long-time leader of NU, demonstrated how he was quick to take advantage of the changing tide; both political and religious. In fact the gossip in another mountain hamlet we visited, where relatives of the family lived, was that the disagreement between Subari and Jaiman was primarily over religious differences. As discussed in the previous chapter, Subari's choice to model himself as a *kyai*, while conferring higher status and the moral high ground, also

²³⁵ For a review of the scholarly literature on the centrality of prestige to leadership in Malay society (see Peletz, 1996:55-70).

²³⁶ PKB (Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa = National Awakening Party) was founded by Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur), the long time president of Nahdlatul Ulama who was the first elected president (1999 – 2001) after the fall of Suharto.

entailed economic disadvantages. The need to visit Jaiman before ceremonies were held meant that his income would be much larger than Subari's. This fact was evidence by the large house Jaiman had been able to build. Jaiman would be able to demand payment because of his potential to cause trouble, while Subari may not have been paid at all. As a *kyai* Subari's attitude should be one of *ikhlas*, leaving it up to the client to offer payment or not. This, together with his loss of face, seemed appropriately summed up by the Javanese maxim I was often quoted to convey the intensity of feeling which can be provoked by such a dispute:

Sadumuk batuk sanyari bumi

Dibelané nganggo pecahing dada kutahing ludira

(the slightest disrespect or piece of earth

will be defended by cleaving of the breast and the spilling of blood)

Going with the Tide, and Going against it

In Java unusual geologic formations are associated with potency. The volcanic mountain chain forming the island's central spine is responsible for the spectacular fertility of its lowlands, especially its capacity for *sawah* (wet-rice) cultivation. East Java's landscape is dramatic and varied. The central volcanic peaks break up into six separate ranges, forming cool highland islands dominating the plains below. Along its southern shore are the rugged cliffs and deep ravines of the uplifted Sunda Shelf which itself drops steeply into the open expanse of the Indian Ocean a few kilometres offshore, creating turbulent currents and dramatic surf. These topographic features have their own distinct ecologies, and the communities which lived in them developed their own local cultural complexes which differed from the predominant *sawah*-influenced cultures of the lowlands. The collapse of the Hindu-Buddhist state at the turn of the 16th century and the steady, yet uneven, growth of a more avowedly monotheistic Islam ever since has meant that these minority communities in East Java have had to make a number of cultural compromises.

Hefner's (1985) earlier study of one of these communities – the Tengger Javanese, who live on the slopes of volcanic Mt Bromo – provides an example for changes occurring in the Ponorogo highlands. Claiming descent from Majapahit, and still espousing the pre-Islamic religion *Agama Buda*, Hefner found three distinct communities - “lowlands”, “midslope”, and “upperslope” - which he characterised according to the penetration of Islam into cultural and religious practices. This penetration began with the growing influence of Muslim traders, and labour immigration from Madura and other areas of Java, which was encouraged by the Dutch in the 18th century after the Blambangan war. As “a largely defensive initiative” (Hefner, 1985:262) against the intense sectarianism of the 1950s the upperslope Tenggerese decided to affiliate themselves with the Hindu reform movement, Parisada Hindu Dharma, based in Bali, and re-identify themselves as Hindu.

In the Ponorogo highlands there are similar examples of communities which have followed the path of affiliation and extra-local support to maintain their identity. On the volcanic slopes of Mt Wilis is the impressive Catholic sanctuary of Gua Maria (Mary's Grotto). Situated high in the mountainous region of Sooko above the predominantly Catholic village of Klepu, Gua Maria, modelled on Lourdes, attracts pilgrims seeking the healing waters of its natural spring. While there is a large Catholic Church in the town of Ponorogo, the sanctuary is largely maintained by a roster of priests from Yogyakarta. The second example is the highland community of Sodong, which I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. Situated in the dry mountains on Ponorogo's western border, they are very proud of their pre-Islamic heritage and, although classifying themselves as previously belonging to the Mahayana school of Buddhism, have affiliated themselves with a Theravada group in Malang.

In this respect, Hefner explains, Tengger affiliation has not been without its difficulties. The Tenggerese, professing themselves as *Buda*, the religion of Old Java, have always been very much a part of Java, and have made their own compromises with Javanese Islam. The fundamental changes entailed in affiliation with Balinese Hinduism, and the need to sacrifice traditions integral to their identity, is an ongoing source of tension, which reflects the dynamics of religious change in Java and the need to establish legitimacy “in national rather than regional terms” (Hefner, 1985:259-265). In a later

study in Yogyakarta, Gunung Kidul, and Klaten, in Central Java, Hefner (2004) found that efforts at a Hindu revival were not so successful. After an initial growth in Hindu numbers, spurred on by the financial backing of the Department of Religion for religious education and temple construction, the Bali-centeredness of the reform movement and its differences with Javanist culture generated serious tensions. Parisada in Yogyakarta is dominated by Balinese who, after thirty years in the area, are “the only people qualified to train priests and perform important rituals” (Hefner, 2004:103). In contrast the Sodong community has made a compromise which does not involve inter-ethnic tensions, but it is in a different position to the Tengger. It is a very small community which seems quite self-sufficient. This, and its remote location, means the community feels less threatened, but still understands the need to redefine itself within a larger religious tradition.

However, in this chapter I have focussed on a particular Gunung Sewu area because of the tragic events which occurred in Gembes. They brought into sharp focus the intimate relationship which exists between ecology and culture. In a surprising way they seemed to mirror the combative nature of religious change, recounted in the chronicles of Ponorogo and Pacitan, which reputedly occurred during that first wave of Islamisation in the Javanese past. This adds weight to Onghokham’s contention that, especially in the mountainous regions, the scarcity of fertile land meant, “there was more involved than mere religious conflicts” (1975:31). Just as in the past, the events in Gembes went with the tide of Islamisation; albeit under the guise of an ambitious younger brother. Following on from Gembes was another tussle in another mountain village which also saw a younger ambitious leader bring about the disrepute of an older Javanist healer.²³⁷

Hefner goes on to tell us that the local level difficulties in Central Java were only compounded by the drastic curtailment of government support for non-Islamic minorities in the wake of the Suharto regime’s turn to Islam in the late 1980s, and the high profile of Islam professed by “politicians, long-haired rock stars, [and] sexy soap opera actresses”. Not surprisingly, it was in Gunung Kidul that the Hindu movement suffered most from a chronic lack of resources (Hefner, 2004:103). These factors, along

²³⁷ Unfortunately, I do not have the space to discuss this incident here.

with the barriers to acquiring status within Hinduism, are important in the Islamisation taking place in the Gunung Sewu highlands of Ponorogo.

“Crick’s view is that witchcraft beliefs are inextricably tied up with moral systems and have to be understood in context” (in Moore & Sanders, 2001:4). For residents in Gembes the moral landscape is broadening as they seek work and further education in the lowlands. The murder of Jaiman and his wife demonstrated how events in greater Java are incorporated on the local level.

The murders also represented other changes which are occurring throughout Java, and Indonesia as a whole, as it faces the challenges of democratisation and accountability after the demise of a longstanding authoritarian regime. Although still isolated, these highlands are now very much a part of Ponorogo. The extended trial was held in the town’s main courthouse. After the sentences were handed down a delegation from Gembes, confused by what they saw as the harshness of the sentences, approached Pak Min, the head of the Slahung branch of NU, to seek his advice on whether they should appeal the sentences. He told me that he had explained to the residents that Indonesia had changed. It was the era of *Reformasi*. The nation was becoming a democracy where people now had to be responsible for their crimes. Of course, for the people of Gembes, this must have seemed a somewhat lopsided pronouncement in view of the fact that they failed to gain any of the benefits of this new era.



Catholic sanctuary of Gua Maria

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

My research focus in Ponorogo was the role of the non-specialist healer, the *dukun*, and how/or if this role had been impacted by contemporary medical and healing practices. While the researcher goes armed with a certain agenda to answer the research question it is the interactive and contingent nature of ethnographic fieldwork, an activity which Castañeda (2006) compares to street theatre, that ultimately determines the type of answers a researcher obtains. This disciplined, yet serendipitous, practice of ethnography, provided a turning point in the direction of my research. From an original more limited focus on interviews with various actors in therapeutic relationships the community killing in Gembes raised my awareness of the regency as a whole, its ecological and topographical differences, and the inequalities associated with them.

This decision to widen my focus revealed a complexity and depth which, as other regency-wide studies of Java have found, “is not easily characterized under a single label or easily pictured in terms of a dominant theme (Geertz, 1976:7). Like these, my study of Ponorogo also revealed that, while the regency has its own ‘character’, which I have termed place and ethos, this character is a reflection of an ongoing “centuries-old, mutually influential dialogue with the wider society” (Beatty, 1999:10) of which it is very much a part. This dialogue is responsible for the way people in Ponorogo, address problems of illness and misfortune.

A doctoral thesis is, of course, a very specific text. It is written as a conversation with a defined academic community, and makes use of research relevant to the area of focus. In medical anthropology I have had the benefit of tapping into an area which brings together many bodies of knowledge. While challenging, this also provides opportunities to broaden one’s perspectives. Part of my inspiration in thinking about my research has been a mindful meditation on Duden’s oft-quoted phrase, to fully appreciate human biology it is necessary to recognise that there is an entire “history

beneath the skin” (in Merrill, 2001:112). In Chapter 2 I stretched back further than most. This is a product of place because what this particular corner of East Java lacks in the exquisite lyrical literature of classical Java it makes up in archaeological depth. Fragmentary and varied though the sources were this long history of habitation forms, as the archaeologist Truman Simanjuntak contends, “a continuous, overlapping series, in the sense that there is no ‘rupture’ at any time” and in which there was “not a process of replacement, but rather one of enhancement, with each new period characterised by the introduction of new elements” (2004:28). These overlapping layers are displayed in the performance of *reog* and it is their complex heritage which influences the search for wellbeing; a search which has a strong aesthetic element.

The Aesthetics of Wellbeing

Central to therapy is the achievement of *slamet* (wellbeing), a transformative and dynamic concept requiring the harmonisation of an interconnected set of relationships – physical, psychological, spiritual, and social - which are contextually specific for each individual. As Ferzacca (2001:20-24) has shown this experiential equilibrium is the product of a number of key elements which place strong emphases on fluidity, sensuality and aesthetics; qualities that move people to seek out a remedy through their own diligent efforts in as wide a context as possible. For this reason I have characterised *slamet* as comparable to a strange attractor, an organising principle in dynamical systems, which is open to multiple interpretations enabling the proliferation of a diverse range of practitioners to service changing needs and aspirations. *Slamet* also accords with phenomenological approaches which go beyond the discrete biological body to focus on lifeworlds and structures of feeling.

In Ponorogo this aesthetic aspect is embodied in the impressive physicality of *reog*. Feats of acrobatic dexterity and physical mastery celebrate a long tradition of militant opposition to, and inevitable defeat by, successive centres of extralocal power, while its reputation for magic, violence and criminality signify its rural character. Ponorogo therefore asserts itself as a place of the *wong cilik* (Jv. common people), and the ethos underpinning *reog* self-confidently distinguishes itself from the values of an aristocratic

Javanese culture. Such celebrated heroic fatality is captured in de Certeau's (1988) work on the arts, skills, and wily ways of operating which make up everyday practices.

I have made reference to de Certeau's work throughout this thesis. In arriving at his characterisation of the practices of aesthetic manoeuvring in unequal power relationships he combines non-Asian sources – Brazilian *utopian* space, the skill of Italian drivers [expressed in *l'arte di arrangiarsi* = the art of getting by], Greek practical intelligence (*mētis*), and the “practical sense” of the peoples of Southern France and Kabilya (1988:15-19) – but one can find resonances, for example, in the Buddhist concept of skilful means, and the legacy of vernacular Tantrism which is inscribed in stone on Java's temple complexes. These transgressive religious aspects inherent in *reog* add further dimensionality to de Certeau's characterisation.

The Use of Biomedical Services

Where the vast majority of livelihoods are earned through manual labour, maintaining strength and stamina are crucial considerations. This aesthetic of physicality then articulates with Scheper-Hughes' concept of a „somatic culture', which privileges the body through “close attention to the physical senses and symptoms” (1992:185). In Chapter 3 I discussed how the coincidence of high levels of degenerative conditions, co-morbidity, the limited nature of rural biomedical services, the particular dynamics of the provision of health care to developing countries, and the historical and contemporary use of other therapeutic agents has led to the pragmatic use of the predominant signifier of biomedical treatment – pharmaceuticals, especially in the form of injections – because of their reputation for fast symptomatic relief. Widespread distrust of the quality of the generic medicines offered by government health centres has meant that patients prefer to pay higher fees to obtain, what is perceived as, stronger medications from, mostly government employed, biomedical professionals in their out-of-hours private practices. With limited economic resources and the need for repetitive treatment this recourse to private practitioners can only be occasional.

Pharmaceuticals, however, compete directly with the highly segmented *jamu* (herbal mixtures) market. The close interrelationship of these markets, together with weak

government regulation, has seen the evolution of adulterated *jamu* products – potent mixtures of herbal ingredients and pharmaceuticals – which, because of their cheaper cost, are consumed on a regular basis as a substitute for pharmaceuticals. In this way pharmaceuticals have been incorporated into existing regimens of prevention, protection, cure and maintenance.

This “indigenisation of pharmaceuticals” (Whyte, 1998:320), and the specific pattern of consumption which results in different contexts has been documented by many medical anthropological studies. The precedent for the contemporary use of pharmaceuticals and adulterated *jamu* products in rural Java lies in the historical use of herbal mixtures and other pharmacological agents, such as mild narcotics. What is particularly worrying here is the obvious concerns of decreasing efficacy and multi-resistance; a situation compounded by the aggressive marketing of unnecessary and ineffective pharmaceutical formulations and the prevalence of black market and counterfeit medications.

The Changing Role of Folk Practitioners

In addition to this widespread use of pharmacological agents, clients and patients continue to turn to a variety of occasional folk practitioners. The types of therapeutic services they provide was the focus of Chapter 4. I broadly classified practitioners into two main categories – those that treat mainly symptomatic conditions, and those that treat a range of aetiological disorders and concerns. While these illness categories exist along a continuum, and are highly fluid in nature, it is important to understand that Javanese do distinguish and treat illness differentially. This not only explains the pragmatic use of pharmaceuticals and other pharmacological agents, but also the reason why folk practitioners do not need to compete with the biomedical sector, as they do in many other contexts, for their legitimacy.

Unlike the professional academic qualifications of biomedical practitioners, a folk practitioner’s legitimacy rests on popular recognition of his/her therapeutic expertise, known as *ilmu*, which can be compared to a craft - an individual skill dependent on a practitioner’s own particular circumstances and abilities. There are, however, major

issues surrounding the possession of *ilmu*. Firstly, although derived from the Arabic “*ilm*”, which emphasises the unity of all knowledge, *ilmu* incorporates elements of magic and mysticism from Java’s rich and varied past. It is this unquantifiable quality which gives *ilmu* its healing, as well as its ambivalent power. And secondly, in contrast to Bali and the Tengger region of East Java where practitioners are consecrated, Javanese practitioners were secularised during successive processes of Islamisation. These issues make the individual morality of a practitioner crucial.

In a rural area, such as Ponorogo, the most commonly consulted are ostensibly symptomatic practitioners, such as masseurs, bonesetters, and midwives. With the limited nature of biomedical services it would then seem that the demand for these services would decline as access to and affordability of comparable biomedical facilities improves. Given Indonesia’s population, logistics, and present health care expenditure this will be a very long-term process, even for Java. Of course, this may occur to a certain extent, but the expansive framework of *slamet*; the fluid understanding of illness; and existing regimens of prevention, protection, cure and maintenance, mean that there will still be a demand for these practitioners. It is important to understand that their services are not equivalent to those offered by biomedical practitioners because the healing power they possess is also transformative. In the present climate the main effect for these practitioners has been the avoidance of controversial areas of practice.

While ostensibly symptomatic practitioners have been little affected, issues of morality are most crucial for those practitioners, known simply as *dukun*, who are consulted for a range of personal difficulties and aspirations. According to the available literature their position has become increasingly contentious as the availability of biomedical services have modified the services practitioners provide, and socioeconomic change and the favoured position of Islam have transformed social relationships and religious consciousness. For these reasons many practitioners have avoided the title of *dukun*, preferring various names, such as *pitulung* (helper) or *orang pintar* (skilled person).

When I arrived in Java, I found this process continuing with the emergence of a new class of practitioner who preferred the modern title of ‘*paranormal*’, even though it was

widely acknowledged that this was interchangeable with *dukun*. This practitioner had taken advantage of the opportunities offered by Indonesia's burgeoning middle and upper class, and the increasing cult of celebrity. Their services seemed geared to enhancing the charisma and influence of their rich and famous clientele. They commanded high fees, and had set up practices in large city hotels, had their own websites, advertised their services in specialist magazines, and conducted consultations via mobile phone and on radio programs. While still engaging in magical manipulation, these practitioners had taken account of increasing Islamic orthodoxy by including lengthy disclaimers about the religious legitimacy of their products and services.

In Ponorogo both patients and practitioners were more mobile. Patients making use of spatially extensive social networks to access suitable, or more affordable, folk specialists; practitioners dividing their time between practices in Ponorogo and other towns or cities, or being summoned by clients in areas all over Indonesia. In the case of mobile practitioners it was interesting that the services they provided often differed according to their geographical practice. Symptomatic practitioners in Ponorogo often dealt with problems of business competition in more distant cities. While business competition manifests in material damages, such as ruined or decaying merchandise, disturbed social relationships are embodied in unusual or intractable illness. It seems reasonable to assume that sorcery's potential to cause open conflict was responsible for the evolution of strict protocols and sanctions, and secrecy surrounding its practice. With the articulation of the domestic and global turn to Islamic orthodoxy the nature of the power practitioners must access to treat sorcery has become ever more contentious. Just as in the national context, practitioners need to tailor their services to this religious consciousness. In this climate religious healers (*kyai*) are advantaged, while other folk healers prefer to adhere to the cultural norms of altruism and restrict their clientele to those obtained from trusted social networks.

Although obviously not being able to command the fees of their high profile urban counterparts, *paranormal* in Ponorogo were a new class of entrepreneurial practitioner. They had carefully eliminated contested practices, especially those associated with magic or spirits, and modified their services in various ways to remake their role as legitimate and ethical practitioners. The clientele they targeted were mostly those who

had benefited from the economic changes which had occurred during the period of the New Order government, as well as circular and overseas contract migrant labour.

The penetration of religious orthodoxy was illustrated in an unexpected way. Ponorogo is a poor area where the modern concept of multi-tasking is all too familiar. Here most households make use of the informal economy to earn small amounts of money through various means. Any extra windfall is therefore very welcome. Apart from gambling, there was avid betting on the Malaysian and Singapore lotteries through the black market. Knowing that this practice is forbidden by Islam people made creative use of Ponorogo's many pre-Islamic sites to ask for winning lottery numbers.

Social Inequality

While this picture was an indication of Ponorogo's participation in the transformation of the rural economy, a community killing in the highland hamlet of Gembes demonstrated that this was not everywhere the case.

Lack of infrastructure, difficult terrain, resource-poor environments, and small geographically isolated communities qualify many highland areas for chronic poverty, especially those located in the limestone hills of the *Gunung Sewu* mountain chain which form Ponorogo's southern and western borders. In these insular communities, where social relationships are the major source of social security, conflict avoidance and respect are vital to survival.

The case study of the community killing in Gembes in Chapter 5 revealed a protracted fratricidal conflict, fought through the rhetoric of sorcery, which became embodied in widespread community illness. Inability to resolve the dispute resulted in the killing of one of the brothers and his wife. Apart from highlighting the very real disadvantage of these communities, this case study underscored a number of themes discussed in the previous chapters. Firstly, the social aetiology of illness which is defined by the multidimensional understanding of *slamet*. Secondly, the very real potential for conflict presented by sorcery allegations provides an understanding of why many practitioners may wish to avoid diagnosing it as a cause of misfortune, especially in the current religious climate. Thirdly, the dispute in Gembes was not only a battle between

brothers, but also between competing practitioners and religious difference. That a younger brother modelling himself as a *kyai* was able to assert moral authority and leadership over an older brother with proven powers of sorcery, gained in Banyuwangi, an area renowned for its potency, attested to the depth of religious change occurring in contemporary Java.

The Highlands - A Postscript

When I returned to Ponorogo in 2004 there were no signs of improved infrastructure in the highlands. There were changes, however, especially in the pattern of overseas labour. Previously it had been the case that contract labour migrants usually came from the lowlands, while those in the highlands used informal networks to become, mostly illegal, labour migrants. The change had come about due to a new business venture under the banner of Radio Goong. With a signal covering the coastal highlands and reaching in an arc as far north as Ngawi, this large new radio station targeted lower socioeconomic groups through its *dangdut* and pop music mix. Radio Goong staged regular concerts and competitions in which entrants could win substantial prizes, such as motorbikes; paid for treatment at selected Puskesmas twice a week for the first 100 attendees, and chartered buses to take listeners on *ziarah makam* (a tour of the sacred graves) in East Java. In addition Radio Goong had a recruitment agency for overseas contract labour. For this business it chartered buses to take departing migrant labourers to an airport, and even picked them up after their contract had finished. This latter service is very important in view of the number of returning migrants who are kidnapped, drugged, mugged, and even murdered to rob them of their earnings when they return. These buses stopped at Radio Goong headquarters on the way home which conveniently has a large underground retail outlet equipped with just the type of goods returning labour migrants like to buy, such as household appliances, clothes, and electrical goods.

While this development may improve living standards to a limited extent, it is yet another illustration of the uneven topography of the new global landscape, and the importance of place in experiences of globalisation. As a product of international competition and strategies to reduce labour costs, the demand for contract workers is very much dependent on the state of the world economy. There is also increasing

competition between labourers as countries, like Indonesia, with large reserves of unemployed, see the financial benefits of remittances for their foreign exchange. Indonesia is surprisingly frank in this regard. TKI are often referred to as *pahlawan-pahlawan devisa* (heroes of foreign exchange). I remember a large sign which read „welcome home heroes of foreign exchange’ the last time I was at Jakarta airport. But, as the latest resource to be mined, this competition does not bode well for highland residents. I noticed that the most popular destinations for labour, i.e., South Korea and Taiwan, were becoming increasingly choosy in setting higher physical standards, such as height and health requirements; requirements that will again disadvantage highland residents because of their poor nutritional status.

Labour migration has both positive and negative social consequences. With respect to the topic of this thesis it also changes perspectives on health and healing. Encounters with superior biomedical infrastructures, and other forms of healing, expose workers to wider knowledge, interpretations, and aspirations.

Transformation of Healing

The complexity of the religious terrain in Java has long been a focus of study. As a marker of political and social tensions, much like the volcanic landscape, the relationship between its forms is liable to erupt with little warning. As this thesis has shown this relationship also influences the provision and use of folk therapies. While it may seem, especially in the present global political context, that destabilisation is a particular attribute of Islamic orthodoxy, there are similar examples in other contexts.

In writing about Sherpa shamanism in Nepal Sherry Ortner attributed its recent decline to the expansion of a revitalised Buddhist monasticism. According to the religious discourse what was at stake was the personalistic nature of the shaman’s power, his relationship and ability to deal with the demands of spirits from local social worlds, and an inherent fallibility engendered by self-interest, pitted against the “more moral, more powerful, and more reliable” decontextualised knowledge of religion (1995:359-362). Although this religious critique of shamanism had a long history, Stacy Pigg observed that what gave it effect at this particular time in the late 20th century were the processes

of national development and “the ways these transform localities”; setting up distinctions and making people self-conscious about how they live. In Nepal, as elsewhere, shamans come to epitomise the oppositions these processes evoke – “oppositions, such as magic to science, tradition to modernity, belief to reason, past to future” – oppositions which make shamanic healing “increasingly problematic for people” (1995:25-33). Within this context of change Ortner found that in fact part of the decline involved a transformation: the increasing popularity of “a religious version of the shaman”, the reincarnate lama, whose bodhisattva association makes him highly respected and above reproach. Her point is that people make use of their own cultural resources and histories to construct “their own forms of modernity” (1995:381-384).

A similar transformation is also occurring in Java. In what has been termed the “re-enchantment of modernity” contemporary Muslim thought is attempting to integrate all knowledge into an Islamic perspective by questioning the reliance upon a strictly rationalist-empiricist epistemology that excludes “all other possibilities of knowing and destroy[s] the sacred and metaphysical foundations of knowledge” (Zaidi, 2006:72-75). Java’s religious heritage also includes variant forms of Islam where there has long been an unresolved tension between the Sufi immanent conception of the world (“its magical and animistic elements”) and the transcendent metaphysics of Islam (its emphasis on “God’s Omnipotence and Otherness”) (Zaidi, 2006:76); a tension which has long been characteristic of Javanese religious philosophy (see Zoetmulder, 1995). It is this tension and the fluid concept of *slamet* which have enabled entrepreneurial healers to reinterpret and retain some of the less controversial magical aspects of their practice.

Europe’s tradition of Cartesian dualism has enabled the development of clinical biomedicine and its spectacular success in addressing many of the world’s preventable diseases; a success which is usually tempered in developing countries by factors, such as poor health facilities and public health measures, and inadequate nutrition. However, this view of the body as mechanism, abstracted from context, is constantly challenged by the subjective experience of states of disease and distress, usually distinguished by the term illness. Attempts to deconstruct and dissolve these oppositions; to acknowledge the myriad interconnections between mind, body, and society has, as Scheper-Hughes and Lock point out, left us “suspended in hyphens” (1987:10). For

Javanese, as for much of the world's population, conundrums such as these have never existed. Encompassing complex relational concepts, such as *rasa*, *cocog*, and *kebetulan*, wellbeing can never be the personal achievement of a discrete body. It requires an ongoing process of constant negotiation, often with the assistance of an appropriate expert intermediary.

This is not to idealise Javanese systems of knowledge. This thesis has shown, even with these rich relational resources at hand, Javanese society is permeated by social rivalry and violence. As an ethnographer one is privileged to be immersed in other lifeworlds. The contrasts between Australia and Indonesia could not be more pronounced, and one soon comes to realise that, while endemic corruption plays a role, colonial pasts and the present increasing inequality of the world order are responsible for many of the difficulties faced by people in this corner of Java. In the words of Peter Herschok writing about the limits of rationality, “absolute objectivity ... *marks the definition of a point of view* – the limitations of our relationship with our situation” (2003:259, emphasis in the original). I think in this we can learn much from the Javanese.



Radio Goong

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