

**Of Sacred Wells and Shopping Malls:  
Glimpses of the Reconstruction of Social Confidence  
in Solo after Soeharto**

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“L’individu est une valeur, ou plutôt fait partie d’une configuration  
des valeurs *sui generis*.”

[Louis Dumont 1979:23]

### **Introduction**

It will be many years before historians, economists and other social scientists have a clear perspective on the changes wrought in Indonesia by the fall of General Soeharto's regime in 1998. Javanese wayang, a highly "traditional" art form might be expected to evolve more slowly than other social indicators, artistic or otherwise, in reaction to such political upheaval. However, the very nature of wayang theatre, the nature of any living "tradition", is indeed to evolve within its own structures. For once "tradition" becomes a completely static and immovable entity, it is in textbooks and museums, but not in the streets in tense times of rapid social change. Within wayang, the purification, or *ruwatan* genre, occupies a receptive place for change. For how can one claim to purify unless one heals today's ills? The agency of wayang during exorcisms addresses the current needs of the local populace, but how does it do so? More specifically how can it address such all-encompassing social crises as the fall of the New Order regime?

The fall of General Soeharto created many new social currents in the later half of 1998 and during 1999. The social reconstruction of confidence, required for society to go on, took many forms. Local neighborhood committees in the town of Surakarta, as in many other places, were mobilised to protect the neighbourhoods (*kampung*) at night

and help the poorest to get by through aid in kind and money<sup>1</sup>. The major Muslim movements increased their stress on religious tolerance and could be called upon to protect churches threatened with being burned down.<sup>2</sup> After the fall of Soeharto in May 1998, the status of the state was in question due to the daily lack of order and confidence. For instance, no one in Solo believed that the police were really police, just cowards and profiteers. The police, knowing they had lost their authority, kept a low profile. During the course of thirty lengthy interviews with Solonese of all walks of life in January and February, 1999, I heard described various types of efforts at the social reconstruction of confidence that had occurred after May 1998: new labour unions, aid associations (*panguyuban*), NGO legal aid networks, and peddlers' cooperatives.

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<sup>1</sup>- Hari Mulyadi, Soedarmono and a team of researchers belonging to the Lembaga Pengembangan Teknologi Pedasan (LPTP) produced in 1999 a 659 page book entitled, *Runtuhnya Kekuasaan "Kraton Alit" (Studi Radikalisasi Social "Wong Solo" dan Kerusuhan Mei 1989 di Surakarta)* [The Collapse of the Reign of the "Small Palace". A Study of the Social Radicalisation of the Solonese populace and the Riots of May 1998 in Surakarta.] The title does not give justice to the breadth of economic, social and political analysis. It is as if after more than thirty years of stultifying demagoguery, the social lens of the Solonese suddenly focused on the realities that previously had been taboo and social scientists suddenly saw their whole history, and not just the last thirty years, brought into focus. The urban history and the ethnic relations that were weaved into that history, just as the radicalisation of the population, are seen in the perspective of the whole twentieth century political and economic developments. The state violence against citizenry, and the clashes between social classes against, are not ignored. As many social facets of the aftermath as possible were taken into consideration: from the "national" purification ritual (*ruwatan*) held by the Brayat Ageng Masyarakat Surakarta on the 23rd of July 1998 (1999:553-555) to the numerous "marché aux puces" (*pasar klitikan*) that grew up after the looting of the city. This attempt of a description of the total social fact in a regional, here urban, monograph is especially welcome.

<sup>2</sup>- Interview with the head (*ketua*) of the Solo branch of the Nadhatul Ulama (2 February, 1999), H. M. Dian Haji. Few foreign observers, reading about the provoked and unprovoked outbreak of inter ethnic and religious violence in Indonesia 1998 -99, have been able to integrate into their vision, an Indonesia seeking better relations between Christians and Muslims. Robert Hefner's *Civil Islam* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2000) is an important exception to this failure.

Eldar Braten<sup>3</sup> has asked what relationship exists in Java between contemporary experience and cultural representation. Against the backdrop of rapid social change, we are asking how did wayang react? More precisely, one month or six months after the events of May '98, did cultural representations in Solo reflect public experience? Many things changed in the Javanese way of being in the world in 1998-99. Obviously that had to be true on a personal level, but were there changes on the social plane as well?

Collective experience had always been reflected in ritual and theatrical discourse. In the purification rites I studied between 1983-1993<sup>4</sup>, the dhalang always included in his monologues and dialogues references to the persons purified and their place of habitation, family background etc. The 1996 ecologically-oriented, "installation-art" earth purifications (*ruwatan bumi*) as well as the farcical imitations by live actors of political figures resonated with the concerns surrounding current events<sup>5</sup>. Commenting on the recent debacle of Soeharto, Ward Keeler (ch.?:23) stressed that not only the Javanese dhalang, but also his sponsors and fans would be likely to take wayang in new directions in the coming years. Yet during second half of 1998 theatre often illustrated a tendency which Hatley<sup>6</sup> describes:

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<sup>3</sup>- Eldar Braten "Recapturing "Java": a call for a Javanese Anthropology". unpublished ms. pp. 9-10.

<sup>4</sup>- Cf. S. C. Headley, *Cosmogeny and Exorcism in a Javanese Genesis. The Spilt Seed*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2000.

<sup>5</sup>- Cf. The *Surabaya Post* April 6th. 1998 article describes a provisional schedule of performances including "seni instali", performance art, ketoprak, comedies, danse theatre (jatilan), pantomime, and shaddow puppet theatre. The program began on Idul Adha (7 April 1999) and apparently only borrowed the term *ruwatan* to baptise ther sereis of assoicated performances. In the same vein an author claimed (Suara Merdeka 6 April 1998) for his exorcistic qualities *Sastra Tegalana*. The idea that one needs to purify the kingdom (or nation) during times of disorder is a very old one already present in the Panji corpus some four hundred years ago.

<sup>6</sup>- Barbara Hatley, "Cultural Expression and social transformation in Indonesia" p. 268 in Arief Budiman, Barbara Hatley and Damien Kingsbury, *Reformasi. Crisis and change in Indonesia*. Monash Asia Institute, Clayton, Australia 1999.

“If performances of traditional theatre genre ...celebrate the world as it is, modern theatre typically interrogates and problematises from a distance.”

Indeed, contesting the Soeharto regime had not been a major feature of traditional Javanese theatre, but of other more innovative theatrical genres. But once the regime fell, wayang, with its epic metaphors and tropes, set to work on the new situation, that is to say post-Soeharto Indonesia.

What it meant to be Solonese was being reviewed in the wake of the “war”, as the inhabitants often called the chaos that had devastated their town. The issue of who organised the riots has never really been clarified, but it was clear that the impoverished population had not been hard to provoke, and that outside criminal elements had been employed by elements in the army "loyal" to Soeharto to destroy the city. This pattern was avoided *in extremis* in Yogyakarta at the same period by a remarkable alliance of the court, the population and the universities.

During the night of 6 February 1999 I attended a purification (*ruwatan*) of a Solonese shopping plaza, followed by the performance of the wayang *Pandhawa Timbul* (the Appearance of the Pandava) by Ki Dhalang Manteb Sudarsono. That evening ritual is compared with the offering of a wayang play, *Wahyu Kamulyan* (The Revelation of Glory) by the dhalang Ki Warseno Slenk at another purification ritual, this time at the well of Mbah Meyek in the nearby neighbourhood of Bibis Kulon<sup>7</sup>. The latter took place on 11 June 1998, after having been delayed a month by the May riots in Solo and the collapse of the Soeharto regime.

During a shadow puppet theatre, the dialogue (*ginem*) between a wizen old mother (Cangik) and her plump and slow daughter (Limbuk) deal with many topical issues. The final chapter of Jan Mrazek’s dissertation<sup>8</sup> has demonstrated the importance of these *limbukan* exchanges for understanding the place of wayang theatre in the social

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<sup>7</sup>- My understanding of the event in the village of Bibis Kulon is entirely second-hand and based on Sarwanto’s master’s thesis ( *tesis S-2*), *Wayang Kulit Purwa Dalam Upacara Bersih Desa di Bibis Kulon, Surakarta*. Gadjah Mada University, 1999. This study included a transcription of the play.

<sup>8</sup>- reference ??? [JAN- can you supply this?]

debates of the late 1990's. Day's discussion here(ch.?) of the treatment of hybrid identities in East Java wayang also encouraged me to scrutinise the ritual accompanying the play and the dialogues of Limbuk and Cangik in these two Solonese wayang performances for glimpses of the social reconstruction of confidence in central Java.

Both theatrical events described below contained a distinct ritual dimension. They also both provided ample opportunity for the dhalang to comment on events. The village well purification was an annual event that never before had occurred in such an atmosphere coloured as it was by the recent riots. When village well purification was celebrated the city was still a series of burnt out ruins. The burnt-out shopping mall purification which took place eight months later occurred next to a cleaned up, but not rebuilt building. The Bètèng plaza purification was a direct result of the rioting which took place in Solo seven days before Soeharto's fall. The parallel dimensions in the two performances, one in an urban village and another in a shopping mall just north-east of the main Solo palace, across the street from the eighteenth-century Dutch fort, suggested that a comparison should include at least two levels, the ritual and dialogic. The longed-necked, scrawny peasant Cangik and her plump indecisive daughter Limbuk could not ignore the recent events which encroached massively on every aspect of Solonese life. I have chosen to present the village purification after the shopping mall purification. The village *ruwatan* presented neighbourhood bonds and social linkage with home which the "non-lieu" of a shopping mall can't claim to possess. On the other hand, the shopping mall ritual united the Bètèng plaza merchants with mutual economic interests far greater than that those between the villagers of Bibis Kulon. How purification (*ruwatan*), the communal ritual meal (*slametan*) and wayang theatre relate aspects social morphology and facilitate the exchange of values will be taken up in the conclusion

### **Résumé of the Plaza Bètèng *Ruwatan*:**

At the beginning of the evening of the purification ritual, after the committee of sponsors presented the evening's schedule and one of their members, Bapak Suhardi, had prayed, the sponsors handed over the puppets of Bathara Kala and Bathara Wisnu to their respective dhalangs

(Ki Suloto Guno Sukasno<sup>9</sup>, and Ki Mantep Sudarsono). This brief purification play began with a request:

*Sponsor- Please Sir, for your assistance I request that you stop at the Bètèng Plaza here. I request that younger brother dhalang be willing to do a Birth of Kala purification of the Bètèng market plaza here in order that our families (literally, sibling) who are merchants in whatever, might (do business) smoothly and that later on no impediments whatsoever may appear .*

*Dhalang Kandha Buwana<sup>10</sup>- Yes I have already received your request. I, an ordinary mortal and subject to the authority of the Almighty Lord, my action will initiate the purification of the Bètèng Plaza here and so expedite prosperity without any obstacles. After I hold the exorcism ritual, all the traders (bakul) here will be prosperous . Later no obstacles will be encountered. Those I have “cooled” will be healthy, selling quickly, whoever has suffered also. Yes according to (their) plans, they be able to carry things out. Let’s start holding this purification for the authority of Hyang Widi can make one impervious to any obstacles....*

After the second mantra<sup>11</sup>, the second sequence showed how Kala came to identify the dhalang Kandha Buwana with the person of Ki Dhalang Suloto Guno Sukasno representing the “family” of the shopping mall merchants. This recognition and the fact his descendance in six

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<sup>9</sup>- This dhalang is the younger brother of Ki Warseno Slenk who performed the Wahyu Kamulyan in Bibis Kulon. This I mention to show that although greater Solo is a city of almost a million people, the dhalang have often been interrelated for generations. They are very well aware of who each other are and what each one is doing, theatrically speaking. The morning’s performance in Bibis Kulon described below was done by Ki Warseno Slenk’s “elder cousin” (*kakak sepupu*), Ki Wijiyanto. Ki Warseno was born in 1965, fifth of eleven children of the dhalang Ki Harjodarsono; the eldest child is the prominent dhalang and “politician” Anom Suroto.

<sup>10</sup>- Literally “Telling the World”, i.e. Ki Dhalang Suloto Guno Sukasno.

<sup>11</sup>- It was difficult to identity which mantra were used from the tape recording, and by the time I realised this it was too late to ask the dhalang. The subsequent dialogue clearly suggests that this second mantra was “*gumbala geni*” and “*waringin sungsang*”. I have presented a transcription of these mantra in S. C. Headley, *Il n’y plus de cendres, Ethno-histoire du finage d’un hameau javanais*. Doctorat 3è cycle EHESS et Paris V, 1979:459-489.

generations from Bango Thonthong, qualifies the young dhalang to open the purification mantra book and purify “the household earth” (*banjar bumi*) of the mall. Afterwards anyone using common sense (*ngupaya duga*) in trading, will experience fluency (*lancar*). The dhalang claimed that he knew everyone of Kala’s desires. Then Kala asked if the dhalang could read his distinguishing marks (*cap*) on the nape of his neck. The dhalang replied that the “letters of clarity” (*sastra cetha*)<sup>12</sup> were at the top of Kala's forehead and he recites the third mantra. After this “reading”, which was actually done using the dhalang’s heirloom mantra book, Kala describes what has come over him:

*Kala- Oh, oh, oh, Dhalang, you’ve made my heart feel so relieved. That is the good feeling of the “light letters”. Mankind should worship each according to his own beliefs. Since this is the way it is, sire Dhalang never again will I create obstacles (or) riots in the Bètèng plaza here. May those who are engaging in commerce, operate with ease. Let there be no obstacles whatsoever. I will return to the Southern Ocean.*

This extremely short version of the play ended with the dhalang asking the "Broom of the World" (Sapu Jagat, a puppet representing the wind god) to cleanse the plaza from any remaining members of Kala’s army. Sapu Jagat then accepted to sweep this filth back to the Southern Ocean. Once he declared that all this *rereged* had been dumped into the ocean, the dhalang implored that the shopping mall remain clear and transparent (*padhang trawangan*) from any further dirt or obstacles. The dhalang then evoked, in a *suluk*, the unsettled, agitated earth and the quaking sky which looked as if it has been distanced (*katon lir cuncanging*). The pronouncing of the syllable "Om" ended this episode

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<sup>12</sup> - Cf. Soewito Santoso, “Sastra Harjendra Yuningrat in the Wayang” pp.337-354 in Lokesh Chandra (editor), *The Art and Culture of South-East Asia*. International Academy of Indian Culture and Aditya Prakashan, New Delhi, 1991.

Cf. Stephen C. Headley, Nier Allah? Réflexions javanaises sur la conversion à l'Islam" in Colloque "Nier Dieu" , MMSH, Aix-en-Provence, 1-2.IV.99; to appear at Presses Universitaire de Provence.

In the final exchange between the dhalang and the sponsor, the dhalang implored the Lord to fulfil the aspirations (*gegayuhanipun*) of all the families installed in the plaza Bètèng and asked Allah to grant their hopes, which were expressed in these prayers (*ngijbahi*). The sponsor replied saying that he acknowledged that he is ready to receive these prayers/offerings for the well-being (*puji hastuti*) of the dhalang.

In this volume Tony Day's (ch. ?) describes a *ruwatan* which lasted only twenty-five minutes, beginning at 4 A. M. Until ten years ago purification plays had to take place in the morning and lasted roughly four hours. For the older generation of Javanese this performance at the Bètèng plaza represents a change in scheduling and a radical shortening of the performance. The purification play has become an increasingly familiar ritual to many Solonese during the last two decades due to grouped exorcisms of many families, in the last five or so years its half hour version has also become common. Therefore a very short purification play after an all night performance of a first play or before, as is here the case, does not present insurmountable obstacles for situating the concise selection in the remembered context of the full-length play. Little about the contents, except the brevity, innovates if one is aware what a full telling of the myth entails. It is almost as if the perceived formulaic quality of the purification mantra, allows the play itself to be performed in a *pars pro toto* manner.

Although the upper and more luxurious floors of the mall were still burnt out and remained unrepaired, the basement section of the Bètèng plaza had been reoccupied by dozens of modest cloth merchants representing a cross-section of social and religious categories similar to the nearby and much larger Pasar Klewer *bathik* and cloth market. The diversity of ethnic and religious commitments represented that evening by the Bètèng traders association required tolerance by all concerned. The dhalang was also discrete, as seen above when he says: *Mankind should worship each according to his own beliefs*. At the beginning of the play, the dhalang modestly claimed to be only a mortal man, at the same time as using the traditional name of Kandha Buwana, indicating he was an incarnation of Visnu. Allah is prominently mentioned at the end as the one who will grant the fulfillment of prayers. The story is told

without the habitual spilt seed motif that explains the presence of Kala and his ogre army on earth where they destroy human destinies by eating these prey. If one wanted to find a way to slip a purification play into an evening's entertainment without running any risks of offending Muslim conservatives, this certainly was a successful arrangement. But this is, in itself, a surprising strategy because, although the Javanese are not given to "in your face statements", the purification ritual is what is supposed to eliminate the risks, not present any.

The *Solo Pos* newspaper discussed matter of factly that it had been eight months since the plaza had been ravaged and that only twenty percent of it had been refurbished. In its editions on the fifth and sixth of February, it gave front page coverage to the event, with a discussion on the second day of the appropriateness of the choice of the day in terms of its character (*watak*) as judged by Javanese divination. The eve of that Sunday's character was "wind blown" (*lebu katiyup angin*), a negative prognostic. The *Solo Pos* report said that a group (*massal*) ruwatan, was deemed to be more flexible in its calendric dating because of its intentions (*tergantung pada tujuannya*). What seemed to characterise the post Soeharto social crisis in Solo was both a new openness in expression and concern that it not jeopardise social harmony. This was to be done by expressing concerns for the "intentions" of others. Steering clear of what might be perceived as doctrinaire points of view, the reconstruction of social confidence is favoured and that in the classic Solonese commercial sphere of cloth and garment sellers who had been hard hit by the economic deflation that began in 1997.

### **Résumé of Pandhawa Timbul**

Around ten thirty at night we were quickly moved on from the ritual play dealing with Kala to an epic narrative that lasted seven hours. This second performance described the emergence of the Pandhawa after an exile from their kingdom of Astina which had been lost at the gambling table. The recovery of freedom, the need for reconciliation and the risks of subversion are the main themes that structure this play. During the twelve years the Padhawa wandered in exile in their forest kingdom and spent a thirteenth year, after their return, incognito. The play begins with the sage Bima counseling Duryadana, the king of the Kurawa,

reconciliation with his exiled cousins. The sage describes the virtues each one of these five brothers has imparted to a given site. The vizir, Sengkuni, plots deception so that the Pandhawa can be exiled another thirteen years. Then King Sukrasuno arrives, seeking Duryadana's help to attack the weaker kingdom of Wirata. The sages Bisma and Dorna violently dispute Sukrasuno for proposing this unethical and ill-considered war, concluding that, although Wirata is weak, it has many allies.

At this juncture the conversation ensues between two peasants, Cangik and her daughter, Limbuk. Their dialogues are called Limbukan, after the relatively unresponsive daughter. One isn't far enough into the *Pandhawa Timbul* story to be able to predict how it is going to be interpreted, so the dialogue is doubly detached from all that precedes it in the play. Surprisingly the wayang by this famous dhalang from Baturetno south of Wonogiri was poorly attended. Perhaps one should ascribe this to the light rain that night or to fears of insecurity in the center of town in the early hours of the morning. Anyway the small audience relaxed for what was expected to be a lively interlude from the Pandhawa Timbul epic narrative.

### **Résumé of the Cangik - Limbuk dialogue**

Cangik starts out saying that though nepotisme (*wong sak omah maju breng ki*) is understandable, it is better that artists don't take part in government. Artists only get pensioned off at death. "What's heavy work it is sitting here cross-legged till four in the morning. The dhalang gets so tired...[first *tembang*]."

Cangik suggests that she and her daughter will pray for the large family of Bètèng plaza traders (*tanggi brayat ageng pedagang Beteng Plaza Solo*). Cangik goes on to give an extended commentary on the ruwatan. In order that the damage of the rioting (*ontran2*) in the recent past be repaired and that it not be repeated, the urban family (*warga kutha*) of Solonese must return to a inner serenity (*rasa katentreman*). Social solidarity is linked to group aspirations:

*"Let us pray together! Besides tonight by performing the ruwatan, let us us never cease in our devotions. To perform devotions is to follow religious belief with*

*conviction. To pray to God so that the present situation may soon become calm. May the serenity of the example of the dhalang return regularly to each one (of you).<sup>13</sup>*

Limbuk asks for an example of these group's aspirations. Cangik says this must have practical, concrete repercussions; for instance, by the government promulgating new regulations inspired by *Refomasi* movement and promoted by the students. This way the name Indonesia won't connote "wild forest". True justice must be created by standing before Allah and seeking the will of God. This way religion entrusted to mankind brings order on earth. Otherwise all this tension (*ramé*) exhausts our strength. The students' struggle was a just one. Let us not retreat from it to further our own private ends. Let no one jump on the bandwagon (*mboncengi*). Let the *agents provocateurs* stop.

*"Don't ransack (the town), don't create disturbances. Have mercy on the little people!" (Aja nggawé rusak, do nggawé kisruh. Mesaké rakyat cilik.)*

Cangik goes on to explain that if the price of hot peppers has risen so astronomically it is because of dishonest (*culika*) people. Anyway by June everything will be better once the elections have taken place. Limbuk is not so sure. But Cangik remembers when as a child there were lots of political parties presenting candidates (with ikons of Gareng, flatirons and hoes). Now we are free, not like the ducks [in a row] we used to be, regimented all day long. The election spirit means to stand firm. "A time like this is heavy to think about. (*Jamané kaya ngéné mikir abot*2.)

The dialogue returns to the relatives of the large family of Bètèng plaza. The spirit of mutual love which should characterise nationalism is defined as the sensation of love towards the light of life. (*Rasa kebangsan kuwi rasa tresna marang papadhanging urip*.) Three explicit examples of mutual aid are given to illustrate this: a person who falls down, a person who is in a bus accident and that of a person who asks for help. Now if others have different opinions, says Cangik, let's hear about it!

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<sup>13</sup>- *"ayuh bareng2 nyenyuwun, kejobo bengi iki anggoné ruwatan, aja kendhat2 nggoné nindaké pangibadah....muga2 kahanan iki enggal diparingi ayem tentrem ibaraté nèk dhalang yo balio nyang pakemé dhèwé2.*

The exchange now moves on to the calculation of the right day according to *Pancasuda Paarasan* (i.e. *pawukon*) almanac calculations for rituals events like this ruwatan. Here the dhalang repeats the caveat about proper intentions, if the commitment is clean then God blesses [...whatever date is chosen] (*nèk niaté ki resik mesti Gusti ki ngaprengaké*). The six female singers (*waragononé*) are then introduced, each singing a popular (*ngatrend / barungetop*) song chosen from written requests by fans.

Finally Cangik says that even if a dhalang doesn't have the proper ruwatan genealogy, this doesn't matter for it all depends on one's inner intention. (*Yo ora popo, tergantung niaté bathin.*) What are we to make of this departure from tradition in order to validate an authentic inner self (*diri sejati*)? Are we spectators to the re-emergence in the shambles of post Soeharto central Java of the secularisation of this archaic ritual? It doesn't feel like it. The ritual's very marginality seems to equip it for new tasks. In 1996-97 Cangik puppets across Java were mouthing Golkar slogans during these dialogues and only occasionally making critical political remarks<sup>14</sup>. However after the fall of Soeharto, Cangik is represented as believing that the social reconstruction of mutual confidence is more than simply of getting back to regular business and commercial exchange. Cangik believes in *reformasi*, in mobilising good will. To this extent Cangik really reflects popular aspirations. She is a "healthy" conformist to her audience's aspirations. That is another way of saying that dhalang are, as any good public speaker, well aware of what his audience needs to hear.

### **Cleansing of the well of Mbah Meyek (Mèyèk?)**

Bibis Kulon is situated in Surakarta in the village or *kelurahan* of Gilingan (1997 population, some 22,000). It is bordered on the west by the *kelurahan* of Manahan and to the north by that of Nusukan. Every year, during the month of Sura on Kliwon Friday, Bibis Kulon proceeds with a ritual purification of its territory. Local notables, the headmen of

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<sup>14</sup>- This point was called to my attention by Jan Mrazek

the three areas where shrines are located (*rukun warga*<sup>15</sup>; nos 16, 17, and 18), and the leaders of some thirteen neighbourhood units (*rukun tangga*) situated in these areas organize the event. In these government officials' clichéd explanations, they claim that this event celebrates Java's traditional culture. Such descriptions are often called secularised ones (literally "culturated" *dikabudayaké*) as opposed to the more traditional religious ones. In fact the village prayers and offerings are made to the local spirits (*roh leluhur*) and personifications of sacred pools, trees, etc. (*dhayangs*) capable of protecting the village. About thirty percent of the population of this *kelurahan* is registered as non-Muslim. Despite the proximity of markets Legi, Ngeplak and Mojosoango, the majority of its population are, or were, employed as construction or industrial workers. Apparently, differences in religion present few impediments to respecting the custom or *adat*, considered as an inheritance from one's ancestors. To accomplish the purification of Bibis Kulon there are six complementary events:

- (1) the cooperative labour of cleaning the sites.
- (2) the offerings and *slametan* at the shrine (*pundhèn*).
- (3) the procession of the puppets (*kirap wayang*), involving worship at each offering sites (*sungkeman pundhen*).
- (4) the village communal meal (*slametan dhusun*).
- (5) the full night wayang.
- (6) the following morning wayang.

The final two element, the wayang, is the only one openly treated as entertainment, whereas in fact they all involve both worship and communal eating. There are four *pundhèn*::

- 1- the pool (*sendhang*) of Mbah Meyek<sup>16</sup>.
- 2- the well or Sumur Bandung.
- 3- the tamarind tree of Mbah Asem Ageng.
- 4- the tamarind tree of Mbah Asem Kandhang.

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<sup>15</sup>- *Rukun warga* and *rukun tangga* are the two smallest administrative units dividing village or urban areas.

<sup>16</sup>- The greatest of the four. The *putat* tree (*Planchonia Valida* BL.) and tamarind (*asem*) tree of Mbah Kaji are called the *pundhèn*. of Mbah Asem Ageng.

According to a villager, Prawirowidjojo, the choice of Javanese calendrical date goes back to 1937. A well-known village official (*bayan*) named Tirtawidjaja, who was in office between the wars, dreamt that a girl with Chinese features wearing a *kain kebaya* was walking along "belabouredly" (*miyik2* ?= *miyeg2*). Her *pundhèn* has been called Mbah Meyek ever since. For such a vibrant tradition as the cult of this sacred well, the etiology of the cult is appropriately discreet. It challenges nothing.

During the Japanese occupation these village purification ceremonies were outlawed until an outbreak of illness in 1944, then *bayan* Tirtawidjaja and the *demang* Pantjanarmada asked the Mangkunagaran palace for permission to reinstate the ritual. Ever since that date lest further outbreaks of illness occur due to the curse of these local "protecting" deities or *dhanyang*, who when unpropriated become angry, these annual ceremonies have been carried out. There is a collective village memory of the *dhalang* chosen to perform the all-night play as well as the play selected to be presented. In 1991, Ki Manteb Sudharsono put on the play *Anoman Obong* (Hanoman burns), thirty five days later the Bibis Kulon furniture factory went up in flames. This was considered the consequence of the poor choice of play. In 1998 it was a young and popular *dhalang* Ki Warseno Slenk<sup>17</sup>.

The organisation of these annual rites involves large numbers of villagers organised into nineteen separate sections each with their own tasks. The Kamis Wagé and Jum'at Kliwon of 1998 fell on the 14-15th. of May. The morning of the fourteenth the "spontaneous" work teams for weeding and cleaning the four *pundhèns* began. Cleaning (*nguras*) the well involves draining it and descending into the shaft out of which a tree is growing.

By eleven o'clock the Islamic prayer leader or *modin*, Achmad Charun began the offerings (*sajèn*)<sup>18</sup> at two *pundhèn*, that of Mbah Meyek and Mbah Sumur Bandhung. Sarwanto commendably reproduces the entire invocation or *ujub* used by the religious leader (1999:54-55). It

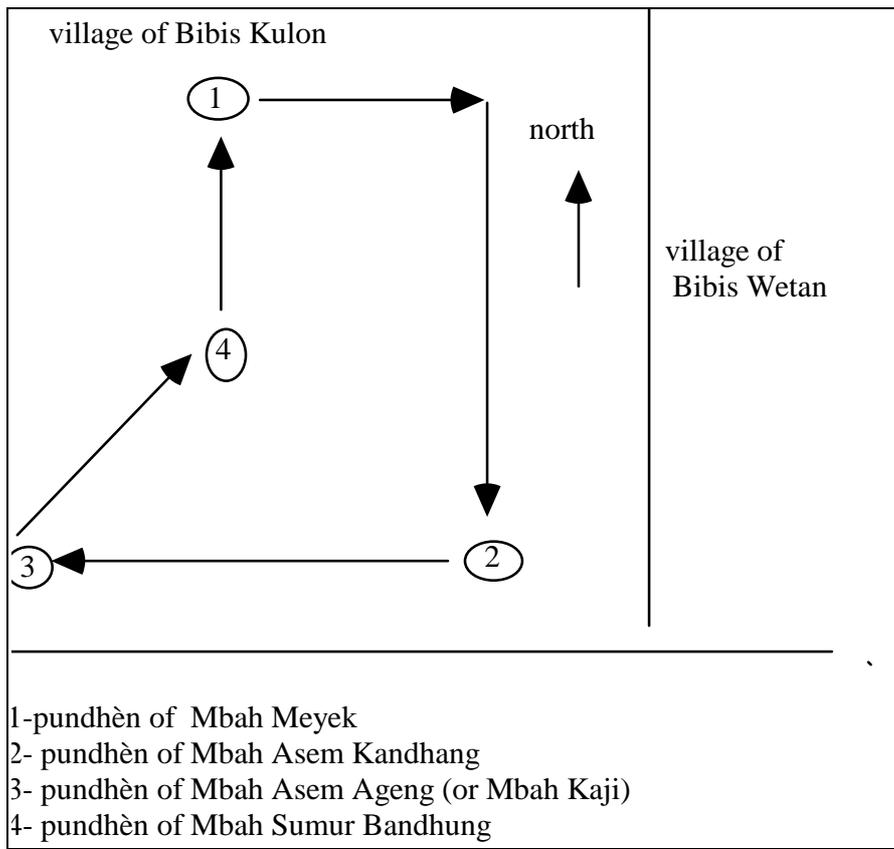
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<sup>17</sup>- Slenk = "I prefer watching you." (*Saya lebih enak nonton kamu*).

<sup>18</sup>- Here ten of the offerings (*sajèn*) were made: *sekul golong*; *sekul wuduk*; *takir* (*kedelai goren*); *takir* (*rambak goreng*); *takir* (*cagé merah, bawang merah, garam*); *pisang ayu setangkep*; *kembang setaman*; *suruh ayu*; *jajan pasar*; *ingkung ayam*.

proves to be a *mélange* of explicit Islam (the closing third is in Arabic) and an affirmation that the connections between the offerings and the cardinal directions will guarantee the same distancing of hindrances (*sambékalanipun* and *kacelakna*) we heard about during the Birth of Kala play at the Bètèng plaza. The attendance was young and mostly male; that of the seated slamentan *strictu sensu* was of course exclusively male.

At three in the afternoon representatives of the village population dressed in formal Javanese clothing carried the five Pandhawa (Puntadewa, Werkudara, Janaka, Nangkula and Sadewa), Kresna, Bathara Guru, Bathara Narada, the pankawan (Semar, Gareng, Petruk and Bagong), as well as a sign ("*Bersih Desa Bibis Kulon*"), the national and the village flag, and a hoe ladened with in-between harvest crops (*palawija*) and rice. This procession was followed by the Panji lion-headed transe dances (*réog Singa Manggala*), and proceeded clockwise (*pradaksina*), symbolising, so we are told, the process from birth to death. The route taken is as shown below; the village is not at the center, but on the periphery of the procession:



At each *pundhèn* the men stand around the tree or well carrying the wayang puppets upright and a prayer is said. At this moment that the wayang figures are made to bow to the female spirits associated with the tree or well, thus paying their respects. This is followed by the *selamatan kampung* to the west of the shrine of Mbah Meyek. The individual families do not each bring the rice accompanied by vegetables (*sekul ambengan*) as is customary in village harvest festivals, although they will later eat these offering together. The offerings are prepared by the appropriate section of the organising committee, which has already solicited contributions to this effect.

In general offerings are classified by the number nine, symbolising the nine *wali* of Javanese Islam, the nine directions of the compass and the nine elements (water, fire, wind, earth, star, moon, sun, mountain and fire). In the Javanese system of correspondences, this act of synthetic classification is in and of itself a request for cosmological blessings from these three sets of nine. This refers to the belief that a man who is able to shut the nine openings/appetites of his body (*nutupi babahan hawa*

*sanga*) may obtain these blessings. In addition, the nine complete sets of offerings correspond to the nine gods (Wisnu, Sambu, Iswara, Mahaswara, Brahma, Rudra, Mahadewa, Sangkara and Siwa). The Muslim prayer pronounced here, explicitly prayed against looting (*mangké ora kena rayahan inggih*), and kept well away from any reference to the cosmological destination of the food offerings<sup>19</sup>, stressing the *guyuban* or mutual reciprocity resulting from village togetherness, free from complications (*sambékala*).

### **Revelation Restored (Wahyu Kamulyan) in Bibis Kulon**

The play performed to invoke the multiple divinities and ancestral spirits (*hyang*) and the village protecting spirit or *dhanyang* ensured that the obstacles presented by evil spirits were removed and blessings (*rèstu, pangèstu*) reward the villagers' good intentions and ritual endeavours. Sarwanto's informant Pak Prawirowidjojo insisted on the fact that the good spirits became the bad spirits if not propitiated, and that therefore the choice of the shadow puppet play was critical. Other offerings left for the spirits during the wayang performance<sup>20</sup> are not there to be shared by the participants like those made during the earlier village *slametan*. The dhalang may give them away after the wayang performance. The dhalang is there not only to give the village a spectacle but also to provide a role model by praying. It is the village that sponsors the performance just as it makes the offerings, but the dhalang's role is to execute the ritual duties.

The first spectacle, the all-night wayang performance, had been scheduled to take place beginning at nine o'clock in the evening after the afternoon village *slametan* described above. In the meanwhile rioting and looting had engulfed the entire city. Some of the youth had gone out to participate and/or observe the excitement. Most hid in village alleyways, hoping to be spared any violence. Some were ready to defend their neighbourhood. The committee quickly postponed both wayang performances from Wagé Thursday (i.e. eve of Jum'atKliwon, 14 May).

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<sup>19</sup>- Such *takhayul*, superstitions, are formally not approved of by reform or Muhammadiyah Islam.

<sup>20</sup>- *nasi tumpeng; ayam panggang; sayur2-an; jajan pasar; pisang ayu*; objects like a comb, a mirror, a *kendhi*, etc.; a chicken; Sarwanto 1999:184.

Later it was rescheduled for Pahing Thursday (the eve of Jum‘atPon, 11 June). Ki Warseno Slenk from Makam Haji (Sukoharjo) was the dhalang chosen. It was thus to him that the puppet Puntadewa was to be presented before the performance. He was considered ideal for he was popular with the youth for his trendy Limbukan dialogues as well as his action-packed war and turbulence scenes (*gara2*). The bicycle and motorcycle parking attendants and the food hawkers also liked him because of the crowds he brought, an important financial consideration after the recent riots. Nonetheless the *camat* (sub-prefect) of Banjarsai, Iman Sutop, was consulted before any final choice of dhalang. The late morning wayang play (*Wisnu Krama*) of Jum‘at Pon 12 June was performed by a male elder cousin (*kakak sepupu*) of Ki Warseno Slenk the dhalang Ki Wijiyanto from Juwiring, Klathèn.

The choice of which all night main wayang play to present is important. The possibilities are initially limited by which of the ten kinds of play is chosen<sup>21</sup>. This is not only an aesthetic consideration, but must fit the needs of the sponsoring community. Although for a rural village purification (*bersih dhusun*) ceremony, a play about planting rice, Sri Mulih, or some “construction” theme, are often used. In urban “villages” a *wahyu* play is considered to have a good effect. The dedication (*diujubké*) of these good effects of the play are usually to be found in the

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<sup>21</sup>- There are ten basic types in the Surakarta area according to Bambang Murtiyoso and Suratno cited by Sarwanto (1999:101): (1) birth (*lahiran*) plays, (2) marriage (*rabèn*), (3) death (*gugur/léna*) of a hero, (4) his role as ambassador (*duta*) or (5) his becoming king (*jumenengan*), (6) the reception of a revelation or a blessing (*wahyu*), (7) elopements (*alap2-an*), (8) biographical (*banjaran*), and (9) construction themes (*mbangun*) and (10) named characters. The mythological agricultural plays are apparently not included in this classification. The elders of Bibis Kulon could remember the plays used for their village purification ritual, namely: the agricultural plays like *Sri Mulih*, and *Mikukuhan*; among the construction plays, *Semar mBangun Klampirireng*, *Semar mBangun Kayangan* and *Sesaji Raja Suyu* (cf. Headley 1999b); among the revelation plays *Wahyu Cakraingrat*, *Wahyu Makutharama*, *Wahyu Jatiwisesa*, *Wahyu Jayaingrat*, *Wahyu Katentreman*, *Wahyu Tri Manggala*, *Wahyu Tri Margajaya*, *Wahyu Topeng Waja*, *Wahyu Purga Kayun*, *Wahyu Songsong Umbul Naga*; and *Anoman Duta* and *Anoman Obong*. The rice related plays fell out of favour after the 1960’s when the kampung no longer had any arable land. The subsequent predominance of the revelation plays is overwhelming.

mouth of Semar at the end when the cosmic tree leather ikon or *kayon* is being planted.

Sarwanto (1999:115-120): provides a scenario sketch of the first play, Wahyu Kamulyan, which he claims is an original composition<sup>22</sup> of the dhalang. The background to this drama begins when Baladewa Prabu Baladewa arrives in the court of Dwarawati to ask Prabu Kresna, in the presence of Samba and Setyaki, why Prabu Puntadewa of Amarta has left without informing his siblings. Before they have had the time to finish this conversation Begawan Sidik Wacana arrives, delegated by the court at Astina, to borrow the *Kembang Wijaya Mulya* (the flower of august victory). Kresna refuses him this request. On the square in front of the court of Dwarawati, Begawan Sidik Wacana then tries to take it by force and is defeated in combat by Prabu Baladewa. The rest of the drama revolves around another amulet or *aji*, the *Wahyu Kamulyan*, which Puntadewa receives during the act *Kahyangan Alang2 Kunitir*. Two masks or disguises permit members of the two families to deceive one another as to their identity. In the final *adegan* in Amarta, Sanghyang Wenang disguises himself a crow before Puntadewa until this king, Prabu Puntadewa, proves his total inner serenity by preparing to sacrifice himself for the life of a sparrow (*Passer montanus malaccensis*) which the crow is pursuing. The final act ends with Puntadewa facing Prabu Kresna, and Baladewa, Seno and Semar while giving thanks for having received the revelation, Wahyu Kamulyan, which has brought back peace and happiness to the entire kingdom of Amarta.

### **The Limbukan Dialogue**

This lengthy exchange, some twenty-two pages in Sarwanto's transcription (1999:227-249) seems a likely place to find reflections on the reconstruction of social confidence in Surakarta. Their conversation starts out with an affirmation. The mother and daughter are in fact divinities incarnate as peasant women intending to make their annual visit to Mbah Meyek. The opening dialogue between the mother Cangik and her "most lovely daughter, Dewi Krisis", now incarnate as Limbuk,

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<sup>22</sup>- The original aspects of the composition in term of *adegan* and *pathet* are described in Sarwanto 1999:115.

presents a vision of their function in the play. Afterwards most of the *Limbukan* is devoted to thanking the sponsors (Sarwanto transcription 1999:230 ff.), introducing the singers or *pesindhèn* (1999:237 ff.), satisfying song requests, and improvising in Sundanese with a singer from Bandung (1999:243 ff.), and presenting brief instrumental selections of the drum and separate instruments from the gamelan (1999:247 ff.). Their opening exchange is translated below:

*Limbuk: What did you say mother?*

*Cangik: You and I see in true perspective the incomparable revelation that we have received from the Lord. We accept that immeasurable honour.*

*Limbuk: Why is that?*

*Cangik: As long as I become Cangik and you become Limbuk, thirty-three years of age, during the village purification, we will pay a visit to Mbah Meyek who lives in Mbibis.*

*Limbuk: Yes.*

*Cangik: Because you and I have a fortunate destiny, namely that of benefiting mankind so that they not become jealous, right?*

*Limbuk: Yes*

*Cangik: What is more, my child, mankind can receive that good fate by following the sayings of the elders and the wise that must be based on [the following]. one must fast (from sleep and food) a great deal and pray (prihatiné); secondly one must be diligent and careful as well as honest in whatever aspect of what one is working on.*

*Limbuk: Like that.*

*Cangik Be unremittingly responsible in furthering mankind's existence.*

*Limbuk: Yes, like that.*

How does this compare with other general statements about the relation of the play to the collective consciousness of the villagers? During the dhalang's first words (the *janturan jejer*, transcription 1999:210), one hears the following pronouncement:

*During this calm and empty situation, sire Dhalang is going to pray for the existence of life<sup>23</sup> Under the sign of the Bhineka Tunggal Eka (unity in diversity), becoming the inner strength of cultured life, as a tool for fivefold guidance, that is to say worship of the Almighty (panembah mring hyang Kuwasa), love for one's equals (tresna asih mring sesama), ethnic brotherhood (kedadang sami bangsa), consultation as a means to wisdom (sarasihana sarana wicaksana), working for the ideal of a just and good (society) (kinarya anggayuh adil lan para marta). This cultural fragrance reaches even abroad; shadow puppet theatre flourishes in Java providing a model, a means of teaching the highest wisdom, conveyed by the nine holy Muslim Wali. Thus wayang kulit contains teachings concerning the refined and the coarse (alus agal) for the people now gathered together here, so here is nothing strange in the fact that the essence of these teachings accords with the purpose of reinforcing harmony and unity while not diminishing the sentiment of submission (tawakal). Evil traits of character (watak) must be thrown away, the sentiment of jealousy and envy destroyed and cut off, for good deeds will be disposed (of them) by the magnitude of the blessing.*

The dhalang's capacity to perform a wayang that cleanses evil destinies depends on his genealogy and his capacity to intercede. The modelisation of the Solo city crisis is never explicit, but the claim to be able to annihilate evil traits implicitly reflects the need for re-structuring society, social group by social group rather than individually. The Mangkunagaran palace of Surakarta held such a rite to calm the unrest in Solo in 1949 and many other precedents exist for using ruwatan to combat pests, epidemics, etc. The dhalang as the priest of a ritual, addresses present needs. This is reflected in Semar's assessment of the accomplishments of the performance just before the end of the play (*tancep kayon*; transcription pp. 310-311). These are the final words of the dhalang said by Semar, the paramount ancestor:

*Thus is the supplication, now complete. Let us put out of our minds [all that, now that] well-being, peace and prosperity have been given. Let us give thanks for*

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<sup>23</sup>- This is Sarwanto's completely free paraphrase of the opening formula, *Swuh rep data pitana*, which may mean something like, "Destroyed the darkness, see now how...".

*Almighty God who so wills. May he always give (us) victory from above (jaya2 wijananti), interior and exterior serenity, serenity for the people and the village, interior and exterior purity, far from troubles and chaos (retu) whatsoever, that the village might be increasingly cleansed from feelings of greed, anger and meanness and thus secure, secure and giving thanks unto the Lord.*

Without any of the ruwatan's mythic structure (a cosmogony retold to re-form the present destinies of the sponsors), the Bibis Kulon village purification by moralistic exhortation performatively accomplishes a cleansing of the village from hindrances and moral obstacles. Perhaps in 1997 the words chaos (*retu*) and rioting (*rebut*) would have not yet appeared, but the need for the conventional purification of the village was certainly felt more pressingly in 1998 than in other years.

### **Conclusions**

It remains to be seen how a theatrical production like wayang materialises a perceived ritual and moral need. Both the Bètèng plaza traders and the villagers in Bibis Kulon had suffered direct material loss from the riots and looting in Solo in late May 1998. The population felt strongly about their need to restore a vanished equilibrium, but their requests appear to be contained in a few nearly incomprehensible mantra during the Birth of Kala or in the prayers in front of the village shrines and offerings displayed at the well of Mbah Meyek. The two plays, however, incorporate these desires in a different and lengthier discourse, articulating and embedding in a vaguer manner all the aspirations placed in the plaza and village rituals of purification. These entertaining spectacles bring together and hold the attention of the local social agents by providing theatrical relief and occasional invocations. The dhalang didn't moralise about private personal serenity (*iklas*), patience (*sabar*) and acceptance (*trima*). He articulated a social aspiration speaking directly of its realisation: a healthy, tolerant community.

The crowd present at a popular dhalang's performance is already a sign that "things are getting better". The *Limbukan* dialogues and *gara2* turmoil are the most prominent scenes (*adegan*) to crystallise this popular confidence by focusing on the personal taste in music and humour of a dhalang and that of his spectators. Through the interplay of

identities of the actors, masked in the leather puppets, the marionnettiste and spectators attain mutual attunedness, providing one kind of the inner satisfaction (*kapuasan bathin*) that contributes to the inner clarification (*pernyataan jati diri*) needed after such a trauma as the sacking of Solo city. The endless verbiage of Pancasila moralism may have been vacuous, but moral exhortation has certainly always occupied a large place in Javanese discourse. Of this, the nineteenth century provides many examples of enduring literary quality.

F. Tonnies, writing in 1887, noticed that communities based on kinship, neighbourhoods, friendships differed from those where the typically social acts of exchange brought together perfect strangers in contractual relationships. Even if this broad distinction has limited use in Java, such a social construction of confidence is still the main issue<sup>24</sup>. Both of these performances stress *socially-constructed* confidence as an essential factor for social cohesion, providing a passage from suspicion and defiance to confidence.

Certain social attitudes are crucial. Confidence institutes society by maintaining and guaranteeing alterity and otherness. Confidence is initially a sign of alienation. As Levinas has written, "The future is another person." The violent attacks on private property, the abuse, rapes, beatings and killings that occurred in May 1998 convinced the Javanese of Solo that their social fabric was unravelling; "society" was coming to an end. The two performances presented above in the media of invocation and spectacle provide an alternative vision Solo, a virtual return to the desired normality of social harmony. It was a very long time coming. As far back as April 1982 Goenawan Mohammad was writing in his weekly column in *Tempo* that when a state ceased to be a state serving the nation, it is normal that it no longer existed as a focus of loyalty and service. What seems to have reappeared gradually over the last twenty-five years is an understanding of society as a family with organic social bonds at many different levels, each demanding mutual confidence one from another. The role of NGO's was primordial here.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>- Cf. Ph. Bernoux and J.-M. Servet (editors) *La Construction Sociale de la Confiance*. Paris: Association d'Economie Financière et Montchrestien, 1997.

<sup>25</sup>- Cf. Muhammad AS Hakim "Non-Governmental Organisations and the Empowerment of Civil Society", pp.217-232 in Richard Baken, et al (editors)

The communality of the wayang that arises while these issues are being discussed provides the perspective that mutual confidence, the topic of many of the dialogues, can be achieved. Therein lies a catharsis to the burning of Solo.

How do purification (*ruwatan*), the communal meal (*slametan*) and wayang theatre facilitate the circulation of values inside the Javanese social morphology? What does the exchange of values mean when we are talking about the end of the New Order regime? For the classical Javanese kingdom, it is clear that the circulation of values ideally was redistributed from the centre, and by apical demotion through high social status. Royal kinship granted the privilege to raise taxes through the apanage system; taxes allowed one to raise armies and armies guaranteed rights of succession which in turn permitted the royal kinship to reproduce itself, at least in times of stability. In all three events described above, purification rituals (*ruwatan*), the communal meal (*slametan*) and wayang theatre, there was a coming together on the basis of a communal intention (*niat*) and a spoken common declaration (*ujub*) over the offerings. In Indonesia, during Gayo (Sumatra)<sup>26</sup>, Tengger Hindu (Java)<sup>27</sup> or Banyuwangi Osing (east Java)<sup>28</sup> slametan, the unsaid and under interpreted (Gayo), the hiding of communal rites from public exegesis (Tengger) or on the contrary, the systematic integration of disparate ideas (Osing Javanese) all display a variation of the same value seen in the two events in Solo, namely a refusal to contest common social qualities on the basis of doctrinal disagreements. So how are the Solonese celebrating their body social in the ruins of their city in any way demonstrating their harmonious belonging to a family (*warga*) of a given scale? What do these groups imagine to be their permanence? What founds and charters their social bonds?

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*Indonesia, the Challenge of Change*. The Netherlands / Singapore, KITLV Press & Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1999.

<sup>26</sup>- Cf. ch. 10 in John Bowen's *Muslims through Discourse. Religion and Ritual in Gayo Society*. Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1993.

<sup>27</sup>- Cf. ch. 1 in Robert Hefner's *Hindu Javanese. Tengger Tradition and Islam*. Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1985.

<sup>28</sup>- Cf. ch. 1 in Andrew Beatty's *Varieties of Javanese Religion. An Anthropological Account*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999.

The expression of their shared values is manifest in the food offerings. There the four foetus sibling<sup>29</sup> of which ego is the fifth and central partner, are materialised out of the cosmos. There one finds the correspondences with that cosmos, which is, as Pigeaud puts it<sup>30</sup>, is one's community. The micro-macrocosm (*jagad alit / jagad gedhé*) linkage becomes accessible through these protective four-five sets on which ego as a member of his the community is centred. The Javanese over the centuries have developed their interpretations of food offerings with great subtlety. Although the santri may treat this Javanese lore as custom, that *adat* in its present form is in fact the fruit of earlier generations of Javanese reflections on Islam, especially Muslim cosmography. As Beatty has shown in his penetrating analysis of the Banyuwangi rituals<sup>31</sup>, the formal properties of this conceptualisation of the whole as centre are of two kinds:

- (1) the centre encompassed the four outer components
- (2) the centre presenting their combination.

Now if the Solonese purification ceremonies sweep away to the Southern ocean the parasitic Kala and recreate the constellation of four/five harmony, the wayang plays contain prayers and declaration of intention for much the same thing, but in a more muted and discreet way. In either case the community sponsoring the two events is busy cleansing their body social of obstacles and dirt. So much is said about obstacles and dirt being expelled that one forgets to ask what is actually being cleansed? Clearly, here a real sociological community senses its welfare is linked to a healthy connection with its cosmic matrix. But what is this Javanese community or family's relation with the macrocosm (*jagad gedhé*) about which it expresses so much concern? Startlingly for our

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<sup>29</sup>- Cf. Stephen C. Headley, 1987 "The Body as a house in Javanese society." pp. 133-152 and "The Idiom of siblingship." pp. 209-218 in *De la hutte au palais: sociétés" à maison en Asie du Sud-Est insulaire*. Textes réunis par Charles Macdonald. Paris Editions CNRS.

<sup>30</sup>- Th. G. Th. Pigeaud, "Javanese Divination and Classification" [Dutch original, 1928] p.65 in P.E. de Josselin de Jong, *Structural Anthropology in the Netherlands*, Koninklijk Institut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde Translation Series no.17. Foris Publications Holland/U.S.A. 1983

<sup>31</sup>- p. 41 in Andrew Beatty, 1999. Cf. note 28.

"modern" mind, these "individuals" conceive of themselves, of their community grounded in an other greater outer world.<sup>32</sup> Their sociological vision focuses on this macrocosm. Whereas "we" situate all humanistic values and indeed all human beings who lie outside ourselves in this world, Javanese despite of all the acculturation and economic remodelling of three hundred and fifty years of Dutch presence, at the end of the twentieth century remains in many ways a holistic society. Their supreme value lies in society as a whole, identified with the macrocosm (*jagad gedhé*) and not in the individual. Such a category of person as community is well expressed in these two recent events centred on a shopping mall and a scared well as the Solonese try to recentre their society on the patterns of the cosmos.

**Bio-data:**

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<sup>32</sup> To use Louis Dumont's terminology. Cf. ch. 1 in his *Essais sur l'individualisme. Une perspective anthropologique sur l'idéologie moderne*. Paris, Edition du Seuil, 1985.